

# Journalism Education in Universities: The Global and Local Migration of Concepts between Discipline and Practice

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## Abstract

This study deals with the relationship between university-based journalism education and journalism as a social practice. It is argued that the construction of this relationship can be better understood in context of its location within the history different conceptions of social knowledge. The purpose was to gain insight into how this relationship was shaped by the location of journalism education within global and local histories of such knowledge. This goal was pursued through an exploration of the international development of university-based journalism education and a more detailed consideration of the South African example.

The study consists, firstly, of a literature review which demonstrates how the construction of the relationship between journalism education and journalism as practice has been implicated in the history of different conceptualisations of authoritative knowledge. The review traces the role played by Mass Communication Studies and Cultural Studies in shaping this relationship. It is concluded that the way in which these two fields have located themselves within the politics of authoritative knowledge has contributed to the marginalisation, within journalism education, of critical engagement between academic knowledge and knowledge of journalistic practice. The review also teases out how South African journalism education has positioned itself within the broader history of university-based journalism education. It is concluded that although the marginalisation of critical education is reproduced within the South African example, a close study of journalism education in this country reveals the potential for a more critical engaged approach to teaching.

The study includes an empirical research component focusing on South African journalism education. This serves as a more detailed exploration of the themes emerging from the literature review, pursued in context of an examination of a historically situated example of university-based journalism education. A central aim of this empirical component of the study was to explore the potential for the realisation of a critically engaged tradition in journalism education in South Africa. The study drew, for this purpose, on interviews with individuals who have experience both of working as journalists and of studying and teaching in university environments in South Africa. One conclusion drawn from these interviews is that journalism education, as it exists in this country, has primarily defined itself in relation to a mainstream and 'liberal' understanding of authoritative journalistic knowledge. It is demonstrated that it becomes possible to imagine a more critically engaged and transformative relationship with journalism practice if teaching acknowledges the existence, in the South African context, of alternative approaches to authoritative journalistic knowledge. It is also shown that within existing traditions of critical education, the relationship with practice tends to be one of the 'deconstruction' of the liberal conceptualisation of journalistic knowledge. The study proposes that 'critical engagement' needs, instead, to be reconceptualised as a relationship of 'supportive critique' with historically situated examples of journalistic practice.

## Abstrak

Hierdie studie ondersoek die geskiedenis van die verhouding tussen universiteits-gebaseerde joernalistieke onderrig en joernalistiek as 'n sosiale praktyk. Die studie voer aan dat die ontwikkeling van hierdie verhouding beter begryp kan word deur dit te kontekstualiseer binne die geskiedenis van sosiale kennis. Die bedoeling was om insig te verkry in hoe die verhouding tussen universiteits-gebaseerde joernalistieke onderrig en joernalistiek as 'n sosiale praktyk gevorm is deur ontwikkelinge in internasionale sowel as in die plaaslike Suid-Afrikaanse verband. Met die oog hierop word 'n oorsig van die internasionale ontwikkeling van universiteits-gebaseerde joernalistieke onderrig verskaf sowel as 'n nadere ondersoek van die Suid-Afrikaanse geval.

Die studie bestaan, eerstens, uit 'n literatuuoroorsig wat demonstreer hoe die uitbou van 'n verhouding tussen joernalistieke onderrig en joernalistiek in die praktyk ingebed was in die vestiging van gesaghebbende sosiale kennis. Die literatuur-oorsig beklemtoon die invloed van onderskeidelik Massa Kommunikasie Studies en Kulturele Studies op die ontwikkeling van hierdie verhouding. Een gevolgtrekking is dat die rol wat dié twee studieveldde gespeel het binne die politiek van sosiale kennis bygedra het tot marginalisering van 'n kritiese verhouding tussen akademiese kennis en kennis van joernalistieke praktyk. Die ontwikkeling en rol van joernalistieke onderrig in Suid-Afrika word ook ondersoek binne die breër geskiedenis van universiteits-gebaseerde joernalistieke onderrig. Dit word bevind dat hoewel kritiese onderrig ook in Suid-Afrika gemarginaliseer is, 'n nadere studie aantoon dat daar wel potensiaal is vir 'n meer kritiese benadering in joernalistieke onderrig.

Die studie sluit 'n empiriese navorsingsprojek in van joernalistieke onderrig in Suid-Afrika. Die temas wat as deel van die literatuuoroorsig bespreek is word sodoende in hierdie besondere historiese konteks ondersoek. 'n Belangrike doelstelling van hierdie empiriese komponent van die studie was om die potensiaal vir 'n meer krities-betrokke tradisie in joernalistieke onderrig in Suid-Afrika te ondersoek. Onderhoude is gevoer met individue wat ondervinding het van joernalistiek in die praktyk sowel as van joernalistieke onderrig. Een gevolgtrekking uit hierdie onderhoude is dat Suid-Afrikaanse joernalistieke onderrig tot dusver sigself in eerste instansie definieer het in relasie tot die hoofstroom van joernalistieke praktyk en deur middel van 'n 'liberale' konsep van gesaghebbende joernalistieke kennis. Die navorser voer aan dat 'n meer kritiese en transformerende verhouding tussen joernalistieke onderrig en die praktyk van joernalistiek wel moontlik word as die bestaan van alternatiewe benaderings tot gesaghebbende joernalistieke kennis binne die Suid-Afrikaanse konteks erken word. Binne bestaande tradisies van kritiese onderwys word die verhouding met die praktyk dikwels gedefinieer as 'dekonstruksie' van die liberale konseptualisering van joernalistieke kennis. Hierdie studie stel voor dat 'n kritiese benadering tot onderrig in joernalistiek eerder gebaseer moet word op 'ondersteunende kritiek' wat gebruik maak van histories gekontekstualiseerde voorbeelde van joernalistieke praktyk.

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## INTRODUCTION

### 1. Conceptualising the study

This study deals with the history of university-based journalism education. It asks whether different examples of such education have operated primarily to reproduce journalism practice as this exists within their social environments, or to make critical interventions into such practice. As such, it focuses on the relationships that have come to exist between journalism education and journalism as a social practice. The aim is to gain insight into the ways in which such relationships have been shaped by context, both as this is represented by the globally shared circumstances of university-based journalism education and by more localised conditions. The study pursues this goal through an exploration of patterns in the international development of such education and also considers the South African example in more detail.

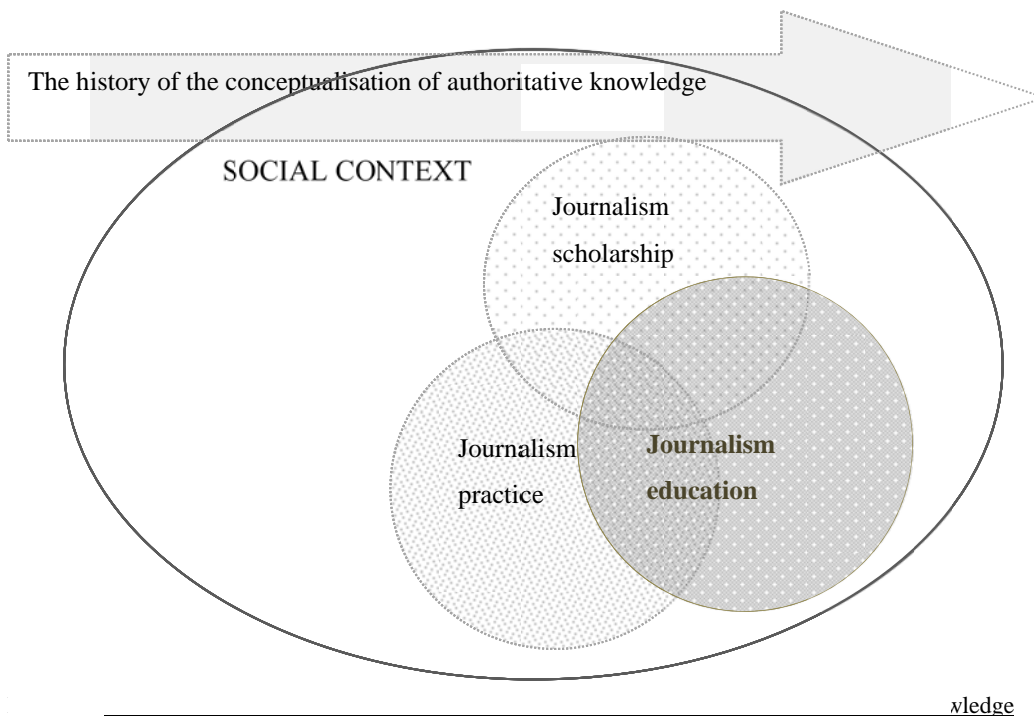
The study begins with the assumption that the relationship between journalism education and journalism practice can be better understood when one considers its position within broader patterns in the history of the conceptualisation of authoritative knowledge. With this argument in mind, it focuses on claims about the nature and purpose of authoritative knowledge through which such education has sought to establish and maintain its own credibility in society. It traces the role played by processes of legitimisation in shaping the relationship between examples of university-based journalism education and journalism practice. It teases out the consequences of these processes for the extent to which such relationships can be said to be based either on the principle of instrumental service or critical engagement.

It is then also proposed that the history of university-based journalism education can usefully be described as a process of interaction between communities of epistemic practice. The study understands these communities to be located in three 'spheres'; that of journalism practice, -scholarship and -education. The actors in each of these spheres approach knowledge from different perspectives, and conceptualise what is assumed to be authoritative knowledge in each sphere differently. The study explores interactions between these communities and their role in negotiating the conceptualisations of authoritative knowledge within and across the different spheres.

The sphere of journalism as a social practice is dealt with primarily as it becomes visible in context of the other two spheres. The research deals, in other words, with representations of journalism practice that exist within journalism scholarship and journalism education. The central focus is, more particularly, on conceptualisations of authoritative knowledge within the third sphere, of journalism education. The study considers whether such conceptualisations can be said to be co-defined by the processes of its interaction with the other two spheres.

The study also takes note of the fact that epistemic communities engage with knowledge within the political-social context in which they are located. Their approaches to knowledge can then be seen to vary as a result of differences that characterise such environments. The ideological identity

of a particular social context can, for example, be seen to co-define what counts as authoritative knowledge within the three spheres of journalism. Interests external to these spheres therefore impact on approaches to knowledge within journalism education (see Figure 1). Furthermore, social interests are articulated not only at the level of ideology but also in the material circumstances around which the spheres are organised. The study deals with such context as it pertains to the international domain, and as it is articulated in the South African instance.



The study describes the interaction between the three spheres of journalism in terms of Babbie and Mouton's distinction between three kinds of knowledge, situated in different knowledge 'worlds'. This framework distinguishes between knowledge as it exists in World One (everyday life), World Two (science or scholarship) and World Three (meta-scientific reflections on knowledge) (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:4-17). The sphere of journalistic practice and the knowledge that it produces is understood, in this analysis, to be situated in World One. The sphere of journalism scholarship is positioned in World Two, engaging from this position with journalism in World One as its object of inquiry. Such scholarship can also be situated in World Three, when it reflects on the nature of knowledge and on the processes of knowledge production in journalism. Journalism education is situated in World One but facilitates the relationship between Worlds One and Two, by drawing both on knowledge of journalistic practice and academic knowledge. The study is concerned with the interaction of concepts between these knowledge worlds, within the three spheres of journalism.

As part of its examination of the history of the conceptualisation of authoritative social knowledge, the study includes a focus on conceptions of such knowledge which have been developed

in World Three. It considers the extent to which these conceptions have found their way into World Two in context of disciplines that have concerned themselves with the academic study of journalism. It then explores the degree to which these conceptions can be seen to exist at the level of World One, within journalism education and journalism practice. As such, it explores how patterns in the conceptualisation of authoritative knowledge within World Two and World Three can be seen to recur in journalism education at the level of World One.

It is proposed in the study that debates about journalistic practice within each of the three spheres of journalism are characterised by contesting approaches to authoritative knowledge, expressed within and between all three knowledge worlds. Furthermore, such contestation and the disciplinary and ideological struggles in which they are based are not coincidental to the academic history of journalism and can be identified in many other environments within the university. It can, indeed, be seen as symptomatic of broader struggles characterising the history of authoritative knowledge about society during the last hundred years, both in and outside the academy. The study identifies a spectrum of positions within such contestation, informed by opposing epistemological understandings of the relationship between knowledge and reality. At one end of this spectrum, the authority of knowledge is understood in positivist terms, based in its correspondence to an externally verifiable and independent reality. At the other end, which is described in the study as a 'constructivist' position, it is assumed that knowledge is always social, existing as a shared reality, necessarily informed by the relations of power and ideological interests.

It is also proposed that, since journalism education first entered the academy in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the first of these perspectives has consistently occupied the dominant position. This dominance should be understood in context of the fact that the positivist perspective forms part of an epistemological paradigm that has gained general acceptance within 20<sup>th</sup> century scholarship and also in contemporary society. It is argued that the pervasiveness of the positivist paradigm, both in and outside the academy, may be one reason why the second perspective, in which reality is approached as a social construct, has tended to become marginalised within the academic history of journalism. It has, nevertheless, continued to exist both within education and scholarship, representing an important challenge to dominant conceptualisations of knowledge about journalism.

In its examination of contestation between different approaches to knowledge about the social, the study looks at the articulation, within communities of epistemic practice, of criteria for the evaluation of such knowledge. It suggests that from a 'positivist' position, such criteria are framed by the ideal of knowledge that is objectively produced, free from the influence of social interest. Reference is also made to the value of universally reproducible knowledge that is context independent. From the 'constructivist' position, an opposing position is articulated which evaluates the role played by relations of power in the production of knowledge, and which emphasises forms of knowledge that are sensitive to or even dependent on specific contexts. Invocation of these principles

can be traced in the histories of the university-based journalism scholarship and education, and have important implications for the nature of their engagement with journalistic practice.

The study includes reference to the role that processes of professionalisation have played within the history of journalism scholarship and research. This can be observed, for example, in the discussion of the disciplinary history of social science, in descriptions of universities as institutions involved in the production of social knowledge, and in discussions of the role that academic research and teaching has played in the 'professionalisation' of journalism. Such references serve as an important backdrop to the examination, in the study, of the relationship between journalism education and the history of authoritative social knowledge. It is acknowledged, in such discussion, that the term 'professional' can be understood to have more than one meaning. In literature dealing with the sociology of professionalism (Aldridge & Evetts 2003; Evetts, 2003; Evetts, 2006; Burrage & Torstendahl, 1990) it is explained that the concept of 'becoming professional' is defined in distinct ways, within different paradigms of research. Studies from the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century describe this as a process through which an occupational group adopts particular traits, which are associated with professional identity. The emphasis is placed on the normative role played by these traits in ensuring that such a group operates in the service of the public good (Evetts, 2003:399-401). Post-1970 scholarship is framed more critically, emphasising the institutional operation of professionalism as a mechanism of self-legitimation. Here the focus turns to the ideological strategies through which a professional community establishes occupational controls and protects its own market position (401-402). This emphasis on occupational closure is seen to be characteristic of an Anglo-American approach to professions (Freidson, 2001). It has, however, been argued that these two conceptualisations can usefully be combined, so that one can trace how both normative and ideological elements of professionalism play themselves out within a community of practice (Evetts, 2003:402-415). It is argued, in the discussions that follow, that one can indeed see both of these elements of professional identity at work within the context of the disciplinary environments in which the study of journalism became institutionalised.

Throughout the study, reference is also made to three terms describing traditions of teaching within the university; that of the 'liberal arts', that of 'vocational' and 'professional' teaching. These terms are defined in the way in which they are most frequently employed in journalism education literature, which forms a primary point of reference for this study. In such literature, the term 'liberal arts' is generally referred to in context of discussions of liberal arts degree programmes. It is understood, within these discussions, that such programmes may include courses dealing with the humanities, social sciences and natural sciences. They are distinguished both from 'professional' and 'vocational' curricula. 'Vocational' teaching then describes programmes that serve as technical preparation for the world of work. It is distinguished from education that has broader, more reflective goals, such as that of the facilitation of a growth in understanding and critical ability. It is assumed that vocational teaching does not depend on the liberal arts, or any other categories of knowledge



traditionally associated with university-based education. In contrast, ‘professional’ education is understood, in such literature, to serve as preparation for work, but is founded on knowledge that is central to higher education.

## 2. The research design

The study consists, firstly, of a literature review focusing on three subject areas; the international history of the theorisation of knowledge, the academic study of journalism and university-based journalism education. The review draws on the history of reflections about social knowledge in order to develop an understanding, at a meta-scientific level, of the claims that have recurred internationally within both journalism scholarship and –education with regards to the nature of authoritative knowledge. It identifies shifts that have taken place, at different moments in history and in different social contexts, in the conceptualisation of these claims. It then attempts to clarify the consequences of these shifts for the interaction between the spheres of journalism scholarship, -education and -practice. In this way, the review demonstrates how the history of the construction of the relationship between these three spheres has been implicated in broader negotiations about the nature of authoritative knowledge. It also teases out the implications for the way in which the South African history of university-based journalism scholarship and education has positioned itself both within these broader patterns, and in context of the more localised history of knowledge as this developed in this country.

Secondly, the study includes an empirical research project focusing on the South African example of journalism education and draws, for this purpose, on semi-structured interviews with key informants. This serves as a more detailed exploration of the themes emerging from the literature review, pursued in context of an empirical study of an historically situated example of journalism education.

It should be noted that although the literature review includes a focus on the history of journalism scholarship, the main purpose of the study remains that of throwing light on the conceptualisation of authoritative knowledge within the sphere of journalism education. For this reason, both within the literature review and the empirical study, the examination of the relationship between education and –scholarship is not designed to provide a full account of how educators have engaged with particular examples of scholarship. Instead, the discussion deals in broad strokes with the way in which such educators have evaluated the role that categories of scholarly knowledge can play within their teaching.

It should further be noted that, although the dissertation locates itself as a study in social science methods, the aim is not to engage in technical discussion of methodologies within the social sciences. The focus on matters of methodology is, rather, framed as a meta-scientific discussion that elaborates broadly on the history of authoritative social knowledge. For this reason, the dissertation does not include a separate chapter on methodology. Instead, the discussion of methodology is

generally pursued in context of the exploration, as noted above, of the histories of the theorisation of knowledge, of the academic study of journalism and of university-based journalism education.

### 3. The structure of this dissertation

Part One maps out an argument about the relationship between the global history of the academic study of journalism and trends in the international history of authoritative knowledge about society. Chapter One proposes a conceptual framework that makes possible a discussion of these trends. It draws for this purpose on scholarship dealing with the theorisation of social science, as well as traditions of scholarship within the social study of scientific knowledge. It identifies debates about the nature and purpose of authoritative knowledge that are key to the history of scientific knowledge. Chapter Two demonstrates the relevance of these debates to the World Two environments in which the academic study of journalism has become established. Chapter Three then demonstrates their relevance to the knowledge claims made within the history of journalism scholarship. It teases out the consequences of these claims for the way in which journalism scholarship engages with journalism practice at the level of World One.

Part Two again demonstrates the relationship between the academic history of journalism and the broader history of authoritative knowledge, but this time in context of journalism education, as the main object of study of this research. Chapter Four deals with the history of American journalism education, which is presented as particularly influential within the global history of such education. Chapter Five then looks at global patterns in the establishment and advancement of such education. Both chapters demonstrate that the history of journalism education is embedded within broader contestation about the nature of authoritative knowledge, as mapped out in Part One. Chapter Six deals with the history of South African journalism scholarship and education and in this context traces patterns in the conceptualisations of authoritative knowledge that have been identified within the international domain. It also argues that this example of the academic study of journalism has been shaped by characteristics of the history of social knowledge that are particular to this country. It proposes that, because of this, South Africa offers a valuable opportunity for an investigation of the extent to which one instance of journalism education can be seen to be informed both by global and local patterns in the conceptualisation of authoritative knowledge.

Part Three deals with the empirical study of the South African example of journalism education. The chapters presented in this section draw on key informant interviews with individuals who are well placed to comment from personal experience on the academic and journalistic histories described in Chapter Six. Part Three opens with an introduction, which describes the research design of this section of the study, commenting on the methodological framing and the choice of research methods. It also discusses the approach taken to the selection of research participants, the design of the interview process and the analysis of interview material. The first two chapters then describe the explanations that these individuals offer of their experience of journalism education at different

moments in time, and within different academic environments. The chapters piece these explanations together into an historical account, as offered by the research participants, of the conceptualisation of authoritative social knowledge in South African journalism education. This account serves to demonstrate trends that the participants observed, in the social spaces that they occupied, with regards to the renegotiation of authoritative social knowledge. The final two chapters deal with the way in which these research participants have come to understand the implications of these negotiations for the relationship that has come to exist, within the South African context, between journalism practice and the academy.

**PART ONE - LEGITIMISING SOCIAL KNOWLEDGE: ACADEMIC HISTORIES**

## **CHAPTER ONE: DEFINING THE AUTHORITY OF SOCIAL SCIENTIFIC KNOWLEDGE**

Histories of theorisation in social science and the social study of science

### **Introduction**

This chapter draws on two categories of scholarship in order to develop terms of reference for the examination, in subsequent chapters, of approaches to the conceptualisation of authoritative knowledge about society. Section One of the chapter focuses on 19<sup>th</sup> century contributions to the theorisation of social science. Section Two deals, in turn, with the social study of science, as this developed during the 20<sup>th</sup> century and beyond. The chapter identifies both kinds of scholarship as spheres in which scrutiny has taken place of the conceptualisation of the relationship between science and society. Scholars in both spheres have reflected on the implications for the nature and purpose of authoritative knowledge and the idealisation of science more particularly. As such, their work provides insight into shifting patterns in the assumptions that have informed the history of such conceptualisation. Theorisations of social science are of particular significance to this study because they represent important intellectual foundations for the conceptualisation of the relationship between science and society that came to dominate academic environments during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The chapter demonstrates that the history of the social study of science is also centrally informed by fluctuations in the perceived legitimacy of this conceptualisation.

The analysis focuses on discussions, in both categories of scholarship, of the principles of objectivity and universality. Reference is made to arguments in support of these principles, as outlined within positivist theorisations of knowledge, and also to alternative conceptualisations that view scientific knowledge as a social construct. The discussion aims, firstly, to identify the spectrum of positions that may be adopted within debates around the ideals of objectivity and universality as subjects of contestation and to clarify the consequences of each for conceptualising authoritative knowledge. Secondly, it identifies points in the history of such debate when particular epistemological perspectives on these ideals held greater legitimacy, while at others they become challenged. It teases out the relationship between such fluctuations and historically situated struggles around disciplinary identity and ideological interest.

### **1.1 The theorisation of social science**

This section deals with patterns in the conceptualisation of the relationship between scientific knowledge and social context, as these can be traced in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century. It then focuses on 19<sup>th</sup> century contributions to the theorisation of social science, which, it will be argued, have established fundamental terms of reference for the history of the study of science, as this has

developed in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The first of these contributions occurs in mid-19<sup>th</sup> century French and English scholarship concerned with the construction of a positivist approach to social science. The authors most commonly associated with this construction are Henri Saint-Simon and Auguste Comte in France and John Stuart Mill and Herbert Spencer in England. The French sociologist Emile Durkheim is also often mentioned as expanding this conceptualisation by implementing the principles of positivist philosophy within an empirical approach to social research (Bryant, 1985:12; Babbie & Mouton, 2001:20-45; Delanty, 2002:15). In the discussion, the significance of this tradition is explored in context of the conceptual foundations of social science developed by Saint-Simon and then further articulated by Comte. The second tradition, situated late in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, is represented by Max Weber's theorisation of social science as an autonomous discipline. As will be demonstrated, both contributions have concerned themselves centrally with the principles of objectivity and universality, and the relationship between them. In each case, the treatment of these principles can be understood to have been informed by a preoccupation both with the need for progressive social change and the maintenance of social stability. The theoretical solutions that Comte and Weber articulated in order to balance these preoccupations can be seen to have played a role in the broad acceptance, within 20<sup>th</sup> century academic environments, of a 'liberal' conceptualisation of science.

#### 1.1.1 The conceptualisations of science in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century

It has been noted that the modern history of science has, from its inception, included an image of scientific knowledge which was consciously partisan, acknowledging the social interests in which it was based. This image of science tended to be linked, furthermore, to a commitment to social reconstruction (Root, 1993). Important examples can be seen in the work of the philosophers of the English empiricist school such as Francis Bacon and later John Locke, who contributed significantly to the conceptualisation of science as a system of knowledge that based its authority on the principles of systematic method and public scrutiny. These principles would become foundational to the 20<sup>th</sup> century construction of science (Delanty, 1997:15-16). In contrast to the 20<sup>th</sup> century positivist conceptualisation, however, the 17<sup>th</sup> century image of science in England was linked explicitly to locally grounded social and political goals, particular those relating to the democratisation of English society (Mouton, 1993a:4; cf Root, 1993).

The history of science, as it unfolded over the next two centuries, oscillated between a partisan and locally grounded conceptualisation of science and one that is geared towards the establishment of objective and universal truth. It can be argued that the first understanding tended to be informed by an interest in progressive social change, while the second typically operated according to instrumental goals, in service of the maintenance of social stability. By the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century in England, for example, scientific study associated with social reconstruction became marginalised. Instead, science was increasingly institutionalised by the state and economy, defined by social

administration, and associated with a depoliticised academic culture. Social transformation became the concern of intellectuals isolated from this culture, based outside universities (Delanty, 2001:20).

It is only during the Enlightenment in the 18<sup>th</sup> century that one can again see the emergence of a politically situated approach to science, when Scotland begins to play a leading role in the formation of modern social science, through the work of philosophers such as David Hume and Adam Smith (Delanty, 2001:6-7). One can also see this emphasis in the theorisations of social science that formed part of the French Enlightenment, for example in the work of Condorcet, expressed as a commitment to the emancipation of humankind through reason (Mouton, 1993a:1). In this instance the partisan conceptualisation of scientific knowledge was again situated outside the university, emerging out of court society and then locating itself in civil society in the culture of the salon intellectuals of Voltaire and Rousseau. Here, again, the radical Enlightenment conceptualisation of knowledge developed in opposition to the institutionalised science of university and state (Delanty, 1997:22).

It has also been pointed out that the idea that the study of nature should be limited to questions of universal truth, and that it should not deal with what is morally or politically desirable, has a history within European thought that can be traced back well before the modern era, to Greek and Roman philosophy. In contrast, the argument that the study of the moral and social world should be value-neutral only emerged in the last three centuries, as part of the emergence of the world view of modernity. It is, furthermore, only in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, in context of theorisations of social science, that such argument became explicitly applied to the study of society (Root, 1993:17). The dominance of the idea of value-free, objective scientific practice that leads to the discovery of universally relevant knowledge was, then, not inevitable to the history of social science in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It is possible to imagine an alternative conclusion to this history, in which the dominant ideal was still that of systematic empirical inquiry, but one that is partisan.

#### 1.1.2 The 19<sup>th</sup> century theorisation of social science: Auguste Comte

In making sense of the arguments put forward by Comte about the positivist theorisation of social science, it is important to acknowledge that these were informed by the general climate of political thought that existed in France in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Public consciousness of this period inherited from the Enlightenment the ideal of a Utopian society, and the conviction that this ideal could only be realised through the power of reason and scientific knowledge (Mouton, 1993a:2). In the wake of the French Revolution, this was accompanied by a deep mistrust of traditional certainties, particularly concerning the rationalisations of religion and metaphysics. At the same time, French society responded conservatively to the events of the Revolution and its aftermath, and consequently there was a preoccupation with the role that scientific knowledge could play in ensuring social order. The high hopes that many Europeans had attached to the Revolution had been dashed, in context of political violence and the failure to realise the ideals of a French society based in justice and freedom (Seidman, 2004:16). In this context the call for an empirical science of the social became assimilated

into arguments for the role that such knowledge could play in re-establishing order (Delanty, 1997:3). Furthermore, with the spread of the values and ideas associated with the Industrial Revolution through Western Europe, there was increasing recognition of the practical application of scientific knowledge in service of the economy (Ward, 2004:79).

This combination of a commitment to both stability and change was central to the conceptual foundations of positivism developed by Saint-Simon and Comte (Halfpenny, 1982:18). It informed the argument they put forward for empirical science as the key knowledge system through which to make sense of society. It is important to note that within their proposal scientific knowledge would play this role not only in context of specialised expertise, but that it also becomes part of a pervasive commonsensical understanding of society. They saw the centrality of social science to society to be supported, in other words, by a more general, everyday culture of science. This conceptualisation of science in society was designed to engage with the profound shifts that had taken place, within 19<sup>th</sup> century public understanding, of the nature of authoritative knowledge. Saint-Simon argued that the movements in metaphysics of the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century had made people acutely aware that the central institutions of society were founded on what he referred to as prejudice and superstition. He pointed out, however, that this perspective operated negatively, to break down the certainties of tradition, and was unable to offer new certainties in their place. Because of this he saw the Enlightenment as a transitional period in the establishment of a new social order, in which theological, metaphysical and scientific knowledge systems vied for supremacy. The uncertainty that was created by this struggle could only be resolved once empirical science became established as the legitimate mode of knowledge. Where the metaphysical philosophy of the 18<sup>th</sup> century has been “critical and revolutionary”, 19<sup>th</sup> century philosophy, which had transformed itself into science, would be “inventive and constructive” (Bryant, 1985:23). It is possible to see, in these formulations, the emergence of two meanings associated with the word ‘positive’. Firstly, there is the ontological meaning, in which positivism equates itself with empirical science and marks itself off from the abstraction of the metaphysical. Secondly, there is the practical meaning, in which positivism equates itself with the constructive and with the establishment of certainty (Bryant, 1985:174). Both meanings can be identified in Comte’s theorisation of social science, in which ‘positive’ refers to that which is ‘posited’ by science as objective fact, in distinction from what is simply believed and taken at face value, as a matter of faith (Mouton, 1993a:5).

It is also the above analysis of the shifts that had taken place in the status of knowledge systems that informs Comte’s articulation of the three-stage law of advancement of human reason, according to which it progresses from a theological to a metaphysical and finally a ‘positive’ and scientific explanation of the world (Mouton, 1993a:5). Within his conceptual framework, one can see the operation of both meanings of positivism introduced in Saint-Simon’s analysis. Comte expands this analysis to the history of the development of scientific



disciplines, arguing that the first to develop are those furthest away from human beings' involvement in and control of their environment. He sees the subsequent history of science as a progressive movement inwards to the disciplines concerned with the study of the social (Giddens, 1978:1). Saint-Simon's 'positivist' stage would be achieved once such disciplines became fundamental to the operation of society. Here Comte introduces a third, epistemological and methodological meaning of the word 'positivism', in which it is marked off from the 'unscientific' by the use of the right methods and techniques of inquiry. He argues that, for a positive science of the social to be established, it would have to adopt the same research methodology as the natural sciences and as part of this commit itself to establishing causal laws which can describe the relations between observable phenomena (Mouton, 1993a:10).

These three meanings of the term 'positivism' also inform Comte's vision for a unity of science. The unity of science thesis visualises the relationship between different scientific disciplines as cohesive structure of knowledge. The thesis holds that even if one discipline is not reducible to another, their theoretical frameworks should not contradict each other. This means that the philosophy of science of one discipline could be transported to another (Hess, 1997:14). Within Comte's version of the unity of science, the 'simpler' disciplines such as mathematics and chemistry, which are remote from human affairs and therefore yield more easily to scientific analysis, form the foundation of a hierarchical structure of knowledge while the most 'complex' discipline of sociology is placed highest (Bryant, 1985:28). Sociology holds this position because without the guidance of its laws, the discoveries of the 'lower' sciences cannot become of maximum service to humanity (Halfpenny, 1985:15). The unity of the science would, in other words, ensure that social science was positivist not only in the ontological sense but also in terms of the practical meaning, making possible a society founded on scientific principles and harnessing scientific knowledge for the benefit of humanity. Comte also understood this unity to be 'positivist' in the methodological sense of the word, because it would be made possible only by the general adoption, throughout this hierarchy, of the methods of the simpler sciences – those of experimentation, observation and comparison (Bryant, 1985:29). Society could be founded on scientific principles, but only if social science obtains the same control over its domain as is the case with the natural sciences (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:3). The final 'positive' stage of the advancement of human reason was, in other words, only possible by mean of this shared methodology.

Comte's theorisation of the relationship between science and society can be seen to depend both on an assertion of the importance of social relevance, and on a commitment to the ideals of objective scientific inquiry and that of science as universal truth. On one hand, he proposes that all science, both about the natural and social world, is governed by a shared set of methodological principles. These principles must be followed in all scientific domains through a positivist methodology based, in particular, in objective empirical observation of phenomena. It is assumed, furthermore, that the purpose of such observation is to establish universal laws which can describe

and explain the relationship of causality between such phenomena. On the other hand, although this approach is bounded by a commitment to the search for universal and objective truth, it is also understood to ensure that science operates in service of the social contexts in which it is produced.

The positivist theorisation of science nevertheless presented limitations, particularly with regards to the study of subjective social experience. These limitations are acknowledged in Comte's theorisation, and can be observed in his argument that the social world is more 'complex' than the natural world, and therefore more difficult to explain through the methods of positivist scientific inquiry. It is also these limitations that would become central to Weber's theorisation of science about the social, which attempted to incorporate epistemological traditions other than that of positivism.

### 1.1.3 Social science reconceptualised: Max Weber

Weber's conceptual work was organised around his formulation of three theoretical principles: of 'explanatory understanding', of 'ideal types', and of the 'ethical neutrality' of science (Delanty, 1997:48–51). These principles can be seen to represent an epistemological framework that incorporates the ideals of objectivity and universality but are designed to transcend their limitations in the context of the study of the social world. The need to do so can be better understood against the background of Weber's determination to reconcile the intellectual heritage of hermeneutics with the methodological rigour of positivism (Giddens, 1974:5). The theory of explanatory understanding proposed that social science needed to combine into a unitary methodology the positivist commitment to explanation and the emphasis on understanding or 'verstehen' in hermeneutics (Delanty, 1997:49). Within such a methodology, to recognise that human life is subjective would not preclude the possibility of an objective confrontation of social reality.

Weber attempted this synthesis with the theory of ideal types, which offers a justification for the role of interpretation in social science. He starts from the proposition that the social world of meaning is too complicated to be understood directly. Social research differs from natural science, in which it is possible to generalise from natural phenomena to the development of general laws. In social science, an insurmountable gap remains between theory and data, and Weber proposes that this can only be bridged by means of value judgements. It is, he argues, only through such judgement that the significance of cultural phenomena can become clear. Based on this argument he introduces the notion of ideal types, which are abstract concepts that operate as analytical tools, performing a heuristic purpose in allowing the researcher to reflect on the significance of social data. Social science is then understood to be the objective study of reality under the guidance of values, which makes it possible to explore the significance of its subject matter (Root, 1993:44-48).

This emphasis on the role of value in social science also informs the third theoretical principle in Weber's conceptual framework, that of the ethical neutrality of science. Weber argued for the value-free status of social science by distinguishing between three spheres – that of science, aesthetics

and politics. He proposed that moral and ethical issues should be eliminated from the disciplinary domain of science and through this principle endeavoured to make robust the distinction between politics and science (Root, 1993:33). His insistence on this distinction was motivated by the need to challenge the relationship that existed at this time between the university and government in Germany. In particular, he was arguing for an understanding of the university in which it would no longer be controlled by political officials. Value freedom would, in his conceptualisation, also ensure that scientific work could take place autonomously. The principle of value neutrality is designed, in this context, to empower the intellectual community, and to guarantee academic freedom (Root, 1993:34). Weber was not, however, suggesting that social science could be conducted without reference to values, since this would stand in contradiction to his theoretical framework. He rejected the assumption that the context of justification of research is informed by values while the context of discovery is value-free (Root, 1993: 40). He introduced the distinction between 'value freedom' and 'value relevance', arguing that social science should adhere to both ideals. 'Value freedom' refers to the language in which research is expressed, and it is both a pragmatic requirement and a logical necessity. The pragmatic requisite applies to the elimination of personal values from the public spaces in which scientists operate, particularly that of lectures and academic publications. The logical inevitability is created by the fact that one cannot infer value from fact, or 'ought' from 'is'. Scientific reasoning, within this view, is necessarily reasoning about means and is not equipped to concern itself with ends (Root, 1993:15). 'Value relevance' refers to the values through which scientists rationalise the judgements they make about the cultural significance of empirical reality. They may refer to such values in order to identify questions, and also in formulating answers to those questions when interpreting their findings. The description of findings, on the other hand, must be presented in language free from value (Root, 1993:40).

In these formulations, Weber offers an approach to social science which discards the idea of a unity of the sciences, and with this one of the foundational principles of positivism. He rejects, in particular, the ideal of natural science as the benchmark against which social science should measure itself. Within his framework, the natural sciences nevertheless remains closely associated with the ideal of objective knowledge, and are seen to concern themselves with the identification of universal laws governing empirical phenomena. The social sciences are also understood to be governed by these goals, but are at the same time distinguished by their endeavour to gain knowledge of the cultural significance of human life. Weber achieves a balance between these goals by identifying particular moments in the research process in which a methodology of objectivity applies, while at others subjective insight into social experience can be acknowledged. He remains committed, then, to the task of creating an approach to social science which balances an acknowledgement of subjective social experience with a commitment to the ideals of objectivity and universality.

Within both Comte's and Weber's theorisations of social science, it is possible to observe an attempt to reconcile the acknowledgment of the inevitability of uncertainty and subjectivity with a

commitment to the idealisation of science as a practice committed to the verification of an externally verifiable reality. In both cases, this involves an attempt to reconfirm the importance of objectivity and universality as principles against which to measure the credibility of scientific knowledge. Weber, in particular, was acutely aware of the limitations of these principles, but was also committed to their accommodation within his theoretical framework, at least partly to ensure that social science could claim autonomy from political and economic interference. He achieved the accommodation of these principles through a compartmentalisation of the scientific process, emphasising the role that subjective judgement can play in controlled moments within this process. Within this framework, social science becomes context-sensitive but can still adhere to the ideals of objective and universal truth. Both Comte's and Weber's theorisations of social science can, then, be understood to represent philosophical solutions to the accommodation of an inherent tension between the positivist conceptualisation of natural science and the requirements of studying the social world. Their work can be seen to have contributed to the structured existence of this tension within the intellectual foundations of 20<sup>th</sup> century social science.

## **1.2 The social study of science**

Commentators note that the above traditions in the theorisation of social science also represent important foundations for the history of the social study of science, as this was to develop in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Of special relevance is the theorisation of the appropriate purpose of science about the social and within this the justification of approaches to methodology and the selection of objects of study (Meja & Stehr, 2005:1-19). As we will see, the commitment established in 19<sup>th</sup> century scholarship to the accommodation of the positivist conceptualisation of natural science, and the ideals of objectivity and universally valid knowledge, would for some time remain a central concern within the history of the sociological study of science. The first subsection, below, provides an outline of the fields that have concerned themselves with such study, in order to define the intellectual terrain in which the discussion will be based. In doing so, it identifies categories of scholarship that have been particularly concerned with the treatment of the ideals of universality and objectivity. The second subsection then deals, in more detail, with particular theorisations of these ideals in such scholarship.'

### 1.2.1 Delineating the history of the sociology of science

The study of the social dimensions of scientific knowledge emerged as recognisable traditions of empirical research in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. There are conflicting proposals, within reviews of these traditions, about the appropriate way to distinguish between schools of thought and areas of subject matter and how to situate these within disciplinary domains. The traditionally accepted proposal, which emerged within positivist theorisations, has been that one should divide the literature about the social dimensions of scientific knowledge into two broad categories: on one hand, those that fall

within the philosophy of science, drawing particularly on Anglo-Saxon and German traditions of such philosophy and, on the other, social science-oriented studies (the 'sociology of science') with an empirical emphasis. The philosophy of science is then defined in separation from studies of science dealing with the social context of knowledge. The first category of scholarship is described as being concerned with the problem of the justification of scientific laws and theory, which is understood to be the 'rational' and 'logical' aspect of science that operates outside society and culture. There is an assumption, within this description, of a distinction between scholarship dealing with the 'context of justification' of science, and that which deals with the 'context of discovery'. The latter is understood to be concerned with analytical or empirical studies of how scientists produce knowledge, and is then conventionally relegated to social and historical accounts of science (Hess, 1997).

Commentators have pointed out, however, that it is possible to develop social accounts even of rational processes such as methodology and logic, so that the distinction does not hold. One suggestion is that one should instead refer to *prescription* and *description* to differentiate between the positions from which these two kinds of scholarship define their approach to the study of science. Philosophical studies tend to place emphasis on the prescriptive definition of scientific concepts, presenting themselves as dealing with the problem of making clarifications that could help scientists to decide how to conceptualise of science and how to conduct science. In contrast, sociological studies of science define their identity in terms of descriptive, historically situated empirical research. The two categories can then be seen to form elements within a shared conversation about the social construction of scientific knowledge (Hess, 1997:6-7). With this argument in mind, the chapter refers to both categories of scholarship, and traces the relationship between them. The aim is, however, not to provide an inclusive overview of these two kinds of scholarship, but rather to focus selectively on discussions of relevance to the ideal of objective and universal truth.

From the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, it becomes possible to trace the emergence of interdisciplinary debate about the empirical study of science, informed by a shared interest in such research. Such debate includes a number of foci, such as the tracking of the history of scientific disciplines, the analysis of the dynamics of science as a social institution and elaboration of the philosophical basis for the social construction of scientific knowledge (Hess, 1997:1). Discussion remained limited, however, by the existence of conflicting and sometimes incommensurable perspectives on scientific knowledge. It is, for example, possible to identify at least two opposing perspectives from which to conceptualise the relationship between scientific knowledge and its social context. Within one, science is accorded a special status, as a form of knowledge that exists separately from social influence. Within the second, the special status of science is often still acknowledged to a degree, but the emphasis turns to the critical and historicist scrutiny of the role played by knowledge in the establishment and maintenance of social institutions. Because of this it is not a simple matter to identify, across the academy, a mutual language or a shared framework of analysis. Furthermore, scholarship about the relationship between authoritative academic knowledge

and social context forms part of ongoing disciplinary struggles and often operates to confirm the boundaries between and within disciplines rather than enabling cross-disciplinary communication. Indeed, a substantial part of the history of such scholarship seems concerned not with the establishment of a shared language, but rather with narrowing down the study of science to specific perspectives. In the discussion below, it is argued that the social study of science has in fact been characterised by an oscillation between the different perspectives. By the late 20<sup>th</sup> century it is nevertheless possible to trace the growing acknowledgement, within academic debate, of a broad spectrum of positions from which scientific knowledge can be conceptualised.

#### *1.2.1.1 1920's to mid-1930's: Divergent possibilities*

Reviews of the empirical study of the social dimensions of scientific knowledge explain that such scholarship was slow to emerge as a recognisable field. It is suggested that one reason for this may have been the depth of commitment that had been established within academic environments to the 'positivist' separation of the production of scientific knowledge from the influence of social interest and social context. It is assumed, from this perspective, that science should ideally exist in firm, uncontested terrain, defined by rational thought, outside the realm of socio-historical experience (Meja & Stehr, 2005:5). Perhaps not coincidentally, the first major impetus for the establishment of a field that concerned itself with the social study of science surfaced in the years between the two world wars in Europe, when the foundations of this commitment seemed more fragile. The post-war period has been described (Harwood 1986) as one of "tragic consciousness", in which philosophical debate became preoccupied with relativism and scepticism, challenging the absolute claims of a rationalist world view. It is then argued that, in this context, a space opened up for discussing the sociological aspects of authoritative knowledge (175). In Germany in the 1920's, Max Scheler and Karl Mannheim defined such work as the 'Sociology of Knowledge'. They understood this field to be concerned with the analysis of the way in which groups construct systems of knowledge and to focus, in particular, on the role played within such construction by ideological interest (Delanty, 2001:12-17). Their work was influential in European academic environments, and is said to have opened up possibilities for the study of the social dimensions of science (Gittler, 1940:351).

It is often pointed out, however, that the Sociology of Knowledge stopped short of rejecting the idea that certain categories of knowledge can stand apart from the influence of social interest. This can be seen, in particular, in their exclusion of mathematics and natural science as appropriate objects of inquiry for the social study of knowledge (Harwood, 1986:175; Fuller, 2002:4). More radical approaches to the study of science can in fact be identified, at this time, in the philosophical work of scholars elsewhere in Europe, who developed their ideas in isolation from the German literature in the Sociology of Knowledge. One such example is represented by the work of the Polish biologist Ludwig Fleck, who, in the early 1930's, developed theoretical concepts for the examination of how scientific ideas change over time. His work is said to have anticipated some of the arguments



that would later, both in the Anglo-Saxon and German context, serve as the foundation for an empirically oriented sociology of scientific knowledge (Harwood, 1986:174). The Soviet physicist Boris Hessen is also cited as having contributed in the 1930's to these foundations and is, in fact, understood to have influenced the social study of scientific knowledge more directly than Mannheim and Scheler (Hands, 1997:702). Of particular significance is his historical analysis of the formation of Newtonian physics, which he described as embedded in the constraints and impulses of the political and economic context of 17<sup>th</sup> century England (Graham, 1985:705). This work was thought to demonstrate that scientific institutions can be explained in terms of their reinforcement of historically specific economic relations of production. The study impacted on the development of a Marxist historiography of science in England and America, particularly in the work of J. D. Bernal (Hands, 1997:700-701). Even these examples of scholarship did not, however, view the content of science as itself socially constructed. The focus was, instead, on the role played by the social world in influencing aspects such as the speed and direction of research, and the application of knowledge (Hands, 1997:702). Through the emphasis on Marxist analysis, these scholars nevertheless provided conceptual tools which allowed for a critical scrutiny of the relationship between science, history and institutions of power. It would, however, be some time before such analysis would be incorporated into a more inclusive empirical study of the social dimensions of science.

The inter-war period in Europe is also associated with the emergence of logical positivism, a tradition in the philosophy of science that asserted a very different perspective on the study of science. The conceptual foundation of this tradition was articulated by philosophers and scientists in Austria, many with a background in physics, who referred to themselves as the Vienna Circle. Their work was, again, expressive of the spirit of the times, responding to a public climate shaped by the historical crisis of World War I and its aftermath. In this case, however, the response was to reassert the special status of science as separate from social influence. Logical positivism can, indeed, be seen to represent an alternative response to the uncertainty of the post-war period to that of Mannheim, Scheler, Fleck and Hessen. It served to consolidate an epistemology that worked against the critical empirical scrutiny of the relationship between historical context and the formation of scientific knowledge. In the interwar years, Austria experienced severe internal political conflict, with little hope for the establishment of social stability, and it should not be surprising that these scholars were preoccupied with the role that science could play to introduce order into this environment (Ward, 2004:84). The Vienna Circle was formed in 1907, but it was only from 1922 onwards that they developed the conceptual framework of logical positivism (Hess, 1997:4). The group did not exist for much longer as an entity, disintegrating in the late 1930's with the emigration of many of their more prominent members to America and the United Kingdom in particular – most of them being Jews fleeing for their lives. Commentators suggest that a key reason for the significance of this conceptual work to the empirical study of science is the ease with which it circulated into a wider academic

culture. The ideas that the Vienna Circle generated were quickly assimilated both into the philosophy of science and into social science itself, particularly in Anglophone countries. It came to inform an approach known as logical empiricism, which remained the dominant position in Anglo-Saxon philosophy of science until the early 60's (Mouton 1993:3; Hess, 1997:4).

It is possible, then, to identify in the inter-war years the articulation of two very different epistemological approaches, with contrasting implications for the empirical study of the social dimensions of science. The first represented conceptual resources for the establishment of a critical approach to such study, in which science is seen as necessarily socially constructed. The second reasserts the special status of scientific knowledge as existing outside the realm of social experience. As will become apparent in the discussion below, it is the second of these positions that would most powerfully influence the social study of science for the next three decades. In context of such influence, it is possible to identify a reinvestment in principles of objectivity and universality as ideals against which to evaluate the credibility of scientific knowledge.

#### *1.2.1.2 The 1940's to 1960's: A turn to positivism*

After the early emergence of the Sociology of Knowledge, the second significant moment in the institutionalisation of the empirical study of science is thought to have occurred in the 1940's in the functionalist school of American sociology. Within this tradition, which is closely associated with the work of Robert Merton, it is possible to observe a return to the invocation of the rationalist conceptualisation of science. The approach to the study of science that developed in this context was framed by the positivist idealisation of natural science as a template against which to evaluate the credibility of scientific knowledge. Beginning at Harvard in 1938 with the publication of *Science, Technology and Society in 17<sup>th</sup> Century England* and continuing with his work at Columbia University, Merton put in place conceptual tools for an approach to the study of science which asserted the positivist ideal of science (Knorr-Cetina, 1991: 522-523). The framework that he developed served as the foundation for the development of the 'sociology of science' or the 'institutional study of science', which can be defined as a subfield of sociology, with its origins in the study of occupations (Hess, 1997:54). As such, it formed part of a field that concerned itself with the sociology of groups, particularly that of professionals and intellectuals (Delanty, 2001:15).

This field acknowledged earlier examples of the social study of science, both as represented by the Sociology of Knowledge and the historical literature of Hessen and Fleck. As in these examples, the aim was not to examine scientific content as socially constructed, but rather to study aspects external to the content of science, such as the direction and momentum of research. Social context was, however, even more narrowly defined than in the European examples, with the focus moving away from the analysis of relations of production to that of culturally specific norms and values (Hands 1997:702). Indeed, the institutional study of science has been described as 'normalising' the earlier traditions of Marxist scholarship, absorbing them into the conceptualisation



of science and society that dominated American sociology at this time. The focus shifted, in particular, from the critical analysis of economic relations and turned, instead, to a functionalist assessment of the formation of knowledge. This reconfirmed the special status of natural scientific knowledge as existing in a rational sphere, separate from social influence (Meja & Stehr, 2005:1-19). The approach to the study of science established in this context came to represent the most significant tradition in the social study of science for the next thirty years (Delanty, 2001: 15).

#### *1.2.1.3 The 1970's onwards: A turn to constructivism*

Starting in the 1930's, it is possible to observe a sustained history of critique of positivism from within the philosophy of science. Such critique, which became prominent in the 1960's, includes the work of scholars such as Willard Quine, Paul Feyerabend, Michael Polanyi and Thomas Kuhn. Kuhn's work, in particular, represented a crucial corrective to the underlying conception of science within positivism (Mouton, 1993b:74). His analysis also challenged the functionalist conception of science, which assumes that it is organised to serve an overarching and coherent social goal (Sismondo, 2005:12). Critical analyses of positivist conceptualisation of science, particularly as represented by Kuhn's work, provided terms of reference for the emergence of the third 'moment' in the institutionalisation of the social study of science, occurring in the 1970's in Europe and England.

The classic tradition of such science defines itself as the 'sociology of scientific knowledge' or 'social study of scientific knowledge' (SSK). Although this field encompasses a diverse range of scholarship, its initial conceptualisation is understood as having been elaborated during the 1970's by the 'Strong Programme' in the United Kingdom. This school was primarily established by the Science Studies Unit at the University of Edinburgh, with scholars such as Barry Barnes, David Bloor, Donald MacKenzie and Steven Shapin. It is also represented by the 'Bath' school, based at the University of Bath, and represented primarily by Harry Collins. The Strong Programme claimed to represent the starting point to a constructivist tradition in the empirical study of science (Pickering, 1992:1). It tended to deal dismissively with the institutional study of science, and saw itself instead as involved in debate with the philosophy of science, which shared its interest in the mechanisms through which scientific content are produced. At the same time, it placed itself in opposition to approaches to the study of science within much of the philosophy of science. Scholars within the Strong Programme argued that both the institutional studies and the philosophy of science have been too narrowly conceived, failing to analyse the cognitive construction of scientific knowledge in itself. They accused these traditions of leaving the 'black box' of content unopened, reacting, in particular, against the lack of detailed focus on the construction of research content and more broadly on the cognitive dimensions of scientific practice (Hess, 1997:14). They accepted that science was social in nature and insisted that the study of science should therefore be based in empirical, naturalistic inquiry (Pickering, 1992:1).

It has been suggested that one limitation of the classic SSK studies was that, although they provided valuable conceptual tools for discussing science as an object or a form of knowledge, they did not as yet lend themselves to the study of science imagined as a social activity. In the 1980's, one can observe the development of a wider variety of approaches, more internationally based than in the previous decade, which do engage with the idea of science as activity or practice. These have been described as 'SSK-like' studies, sharing with the 1970's scholarship an interest in the social dimensions of science and a rejection of 'apriorism'. Traditions that falls into this category include detailed ethnographic studies of the laboratory work. Key landmarks within the laboratory tradition were the appearance in 1979 of *Laboratory Life*, written by the French and British sociologists Bruno Latour and Steve Woolgar, and *The Manufacture of Knowledge* in 1981 by the Austrian sociologist Karen Knorr-Cetina. In America, Harold Garfinkel, Michael Lynch and Eric Livingston also produced ethno-methodological studies of laboratory-based activities (Pickering, 1992:2). This work focused on what scientists actually do in laboratories and as such helped to establish the foundations for the study of science as practice. A related tradition of study can be seen in discursive analyses of scientific work, as represented by the scholarship of Michael Mulkay (Hess, 1997:103). Another tradition established at this time, that also dealt with detailed study of the scientific practice was that of Actor-Network Theory (ANT). This work, which described scientific practice as a network of negotiated relationships between human participants and non-human elements, was originally represented by the work of Michel Callon and Bruno Latour (Hess, 1997:106-111).

We see, then, in science studies in the 1970's and 1980's, the development of a sophisticated range of conceptual tools for the examination of the social dimensions of scientific knowledge. From one wave of publications to the next, scholars redefined constructivism, and in this way greatly expanded the way in which scientific knowledge could be approached. It has been pointed out, however, that much of the work was defined by the object of study (for example the focus on laboratories or scientific experiment, and the distinction between science as a form of knowledge and as a social practice) or by the method of research (such as ethno-methodology and discourse analysis). These studies did not, in particular, define themselves in terms of the political implications of their research outcomes. More recently, science studies have defined themselves as making direct interventions into the ideological operation of science. Such work has, for example, emerged from cultural studies and gender studies (Segerstrale, 2000:3). These studies tend to be multidisciplinary, drawing for example on literary theory, cultural studies and anthropology and are particularly preoccupied with the making of scientific meaning (Longino, 2005:4). It may be that, within such work, one can finally identify a return to the critical emphasis of the Sociology of Knowledge, but without the limitations of the positivist conceptualisations of science.

### 1.2.2 Objectivity, universality and the social study of science

The discussion, above, offers a broad historical overview of traditions in the sociological study of science that have concerned themselves with debates around the ideals of universality and objectivity. The next subsection returns to a discussion of these traditions, dealing more systematically and in greater detail with particular theorisations of these ideals. The focus is on the way in which such theorisations operated both to acknowledge the role played by subjectivity and historical specificity in the construction of science and to invoke objectivity and universality as ideals against which to measure the authority of knowledge.

#### *1.2.2.1 Reconstructing positivism: The Vienna Circle*

The re-conceptualisation of positivism, as this was articulated by the Vienna Circle in the 1920's, was deeply invested in the special status of natural scientific knowledge. Their approach to the objectivity of science was articulated at a very different moment in the development of natural science than that of either Comte or Weber. The logical positivists were acutely aware of recent theoretical developments in physics, which put into the question the old certainties of Newtonian science so that the philosophical conceptualisation of natural science was in itself up for debate.

Newtonian physics is based on the understanding that the universe is a system consisting of physical components, and that the interactions between these are causally determined, governed by fixed and absolute rules of time and space. Newton's work contributed greatly to the scientific articulation of the laws of physics, and during the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries other scientists built on this foundation to establish what seemed to be a comprehensive explanation of the operation of the universe. By the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century it was generally assumed, within the scientific community, that most of the mysteries of the physical world had been unlocked. It seemed possible to describe the phenomena of the external world 'objectively', by referring to known universal laws of physical interaction (Bryson, 2003:103). This view was central not just to modern science, but pervasive to modern society, part of a fundamental, subconsciously accepted way of understanding of the world. Although the development of quantum mechanics did not make much impact on popular understanding, it did radically challenge the certainties that existed within the scientific community. The work of the physicists such as Max Planck and in particular Einstein, as well as that of astronomers such as Edwin Hubble, suggested that laws of space and time are not, in fact, static and that their operation is relative to both the observer and the observed (Bryson, 2003:103-118). While these scientists achieved a profound reinterpretation of the large-scale structure of the cosmos, other physicists such as Ernest Rutherford, Niels Bohr and Werner Heisenberg were revolutionising the understanding of the basic working arrangements of atoms and molecules. They set in place the foundations of quantum mechanics, which introduced a new set of laws to the explanation of the universe at an atomic level. What was particularly unsettling about these laws was that they were in contradiction to those principles that operated at a larger level (Bryson, 2003:119-232). Because of

these developments, the certainties that the scientific community had inherited from Newtonian physics were fundamentally undermined.

It was therefore against a backdrop of general uncertainty, both about the possibility of social stability in European society and about the nature of the universe, that the Vienna Circle developed their conceptualisation of science. They reacted against the German idealist separation of philosophy from science, returning to 19<sup>th</sup> century positivism in order to articulate a set of philosophical guidelines that could be a framework for establishing the legitimacy of scientific knowledge (Hunt, 2005:129). They, like Comte and Weber, assumed that philosophy should provide science with a basis for rational action in the world, one that would ensure that the disastrous violence and social disorder of the recent past would not be repeated (Halfpenny, 1982:47). Also like Comte, they proposed that this would necessitate a unity of the sciences (the 'Ideal of Unified Science'), which they interpreted as the need to strive for a truly international philosophical methodology that would create the possibility of a cohesive scientific community (Jacquette, 2000:4-5). This emphasis was informed by recognition of the role played by nationalist ideology in the events of the war, and by the argument that objective science offered the possibility of a universal language that could work against such ideology and contribute, instead, to global unity. They nevertheless rejected the idea that science could provide a guiding map for social progress, arguing instead that it cannot explain what should happen, only what will happen given certain conditions (Halfpenny, 1982:47).

Their understanding of what scientific unity would involve was also based on very different epistemological assumptions from that of the 19<sup>th</sup> century positivists. They were concerned with the implications of the law of relativity and quantum mechanics for an understanding of scientific knowledge. Because of this, they suggested that what we know about the world is only the effects that we can observe from our own perspective as human beings, and in the context of scientific experiment, it is what we can observe as the result of an intervention. This became the basic premise of the 'Copenhagen' interpretation of quantum physics. It was an approach to epistemology which accepted the inevitability of uncertainty, except in two deliberately limited contexts; that of direct empirical experience and logical reasoning. These were, they proposed, the only two sources of certainty on which a philosophical framework for the guidance of scientific work could be based (Hunt, 2005:130). Like Weber, then, the logical positivists concerned themselves with the compartmentalisation of scientific practice – this time to identify moments in which objective certainty can be seen to apply.

A key difference between Comte's positivism and that of the Vienna Circle was that the latter was preoccupied purely with clarifying the logical language of scientific inquiry (Halfpenny, 1982:54). A scientific problem was to be investigated by reconstructing it in a formal language which uncovers the relationship between the propositions that constitute that problem (Halfpenny, 1982:51). Although much of their discussion focused on the natural sciences, they applied this argument to social science, proposing that it should be purged of all speculative and metaphysical terms. In this

context they formulated the ‘verifiability principle’, which posits that statements are meaningful because they are verifiable (Hess, 1997:10). More specifically, the only ‘meaningful’ scientific propositions are those that can be reduced, through logical analysis, to propositions about empirical reality that can be verified or falsified through empirical testing (Mouton 1993:17). The emphasis on ‘meaningfulness’ indicates that the principle deals not so much with what can be known, but rather with what can be intelligibly communicated within the language of science (Bryant, 1985:112). This principle has been called the core concept of logical positivism (Mouton, 1993a:15).

As in the case of Comte and Weber, then, logical positivism can be read as an attempt to reconcile an acknowledgment of the inevitability of uncertainty and subjectivity with a commitment to the idealised conceptualisation of scientific knowledge. Here, again, this attempt was expressed as a confirmation of the importance of objectivity and universality as principles against which to measure the credibility of scientific knowledge. Like Weber, the Vienna Circle achieved this through a compartmentalisation of the scientific process, from an opposing perspective. Weber focused on isolating moments in which subjective evaluation could be appropriate to scientific inquiry, and therefore still understood the core processes of such inquiry as defined by the ideals of objectivity and universality. The logical positivists, in contrast, focused on identifying dimensions of the scientific process in which certainty could be said to apply, and understood the remainder as being defined by subjectivity. One can see, within the shift from Weber’s conceptual framework to that of the Vienna Circle, a narrowing down of the terrain within scientific study that could be defined by rational thought, outside the realm of socio-historical experience.

#### 1.2.2.2 *The normalisation of the study of science: Robert Merton*

The early history of the empirical study of science, which as we have seen occurred within the same period as the later stages of the conceptualisation of logical positivism, is also strongly informed by a consciousness of uncertainty. Like logical positivism, it describes the uncertainty of scientific knowledge in terms of the influence of subjective perspective, but this time the emphasis was more strongly on ideological subjectivity. Mannheim argued, in particular, that positivist science is bound up with liberal ideology, and that its commitment to objectivity is in fact impossible to achieve. He, like the logical positivists, understood this conclusion to be inherently problematic. It led to what has been termed the ‘Mannheim Paradox’; the argument that, if all systems of thought are ideological in nature, and an objective science is therefore impossible, then the sociological study of science becomes in itself a futile exercise, because this perspective can claim no more validity than that of its objects of study (Mullins, 1997:142). The fundamental assumption remains, then, that the authority of knowledge is necessarily grounded in the certainty of objectivity.

Mannheim’s response to this problem (in *Ideology and Utopia*) can, in some respects, be seen as an attempt to escape the relativist implications of his own arguments, by formulating mechanisms through which the scientific community could strive for a disinterested evaluation. He did so, for

example, by exempting natural science from social scrutiny and by identifying aspects of social science which could achieve 'law-like formations' (Meja & Stehr, 2004:5). He also identified a social grouping, that of the 'modern intelligentsia' which, because their membership was supposedly not defined by class, had the potential to study science from a relatively neutral perspective (Mullins, 1997:144-145). At the same time, in the spirit of his original argument, he suggested a 'relationist' approach to the study of science in which the emphasis was on the unique social location and interests of individuals and groups in shaping knowledge. His proposal was that it is only when one holds to a theory of knowledge as abstract and disembodied that the recognition of perspectives shaped by differences in time and social location leads to concerns about relativism (Mullins, 1997:142). It has nevertheless been suggested that, in Mannheim's work, one can see the classical sociology of knowledge at a crossroads. On one hand, the search for objective, certified knowledge had been placed fundamentally in question; on the other, critique of such knowledge had opened up the problem of relativism (Elkana, 1976:906).

It was in this context that the Sociology of Knowledge became a significant point of reference for Merton's approach to the institutional study of science. Merton provided a framework which was designed to counter a relativist vision of scientific knowledge, as exemplified by Mannheim's theorisations. This framework was one of his central contributions to sociology of science – and particularly his description of four behavioural norms or 'institutional imperatives' of scientific practice (Hess, 1997:56-58). These norms were supposed to describe the guidelines that are generally followed within the scientific community in order to ensure appropriate practice. It is possible to observe, within them, the positivist image of scientific knowledge which achieved hegemony in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century both within scientific practice itself and within the broader public domain. According to this image, scientific practice is characterised by self-imposed processes of assessment and regulation concerned primarily with ensuring that it succeeds in the pursuit of truth. These processes are seen to include, firstly, formal methods of research and, secondly, the scrutiny of research activities and results by the scientific community, through processes of publication and peer review. Merton's institutional imperatives provide a neat articulation of both guidelines. The first norm, of 'universalism', emphasises the impersonality of scientific laws, describing them as applying outside the specificity of social context or individual interest. The second, of 'communism', stresses that it is generally understood that scientific knowledge is commonly owned, and that access to such knowledge should be facilitated within the scientific community in order to ensure that the ends of science can be better served. The third norm, that of 'disinterestedness', claims that there is a shared belief within the scientific community which states that scientists' personal ambitions should not compromise the ethics of their practice. Scientists should, for example, avoid fraud, and report results fully, no matter the theory supported by the results of their research. The final norm is that of 'organised scepticism' which Merton describes as the tendency within the scientific community to



disbelieve new ideas until they have been thoroughly scrutinised and well established (Sismondo, 2004:21-22).

The value of these norms to the study of science have been questioned from various perspectives. One such criticism relates to the limitations placed by Merton's theoretical framework on the way in which the research objects of science studies are defined. It has been argued in this respect that Merton succeeded in normalising Mannheim's sociology of knowledge, assimilating it into the predominant conception of science in sociology. This conception interpreted the cognitive processes of science primarily in terms of a logical rather than a socio-historical point of view, which is thought to be unhelpful for a consideration of the social dimensions of science. The functionalism of Merton's framework, and his continued insistence on the special epistemological status of scientific knowledge, is said to reduce the sociology of knowledge to a narrowly conceived field, limited in its application. His conceptualisation of science contributed to the tendency, amongst sociologists, to refrain from examining scientific knowledge sociologically (Delanty, 2001:5; Meja & Stehr, 2005:6). It is also noted that norms that he identifies do not, in fact, necessarily describe how science is practiced at all, and that the emphasis on these ideals obscure the importance of studying what scientists actually do (Sismondo, 2005:32).

It may be that Merton's preoccupation with relativism, and therefore with the normalisation of the study of science, was a product of the historical moment. One reason for this preoccupation was certainly the example represented, at this time, by Nazi and Soviet science. These traditions of science were seen to pose a threat to the ideals of liberal democracy, and Merton felt that a relativist vision of scientific knowledge could not provide guidelines to ward against this threat. It has been noted in this context that, within the contemporary social context, Merton's concern about the autonomy of science is in need of redefinition. The emphasis on institutional norms may have been important at a time in which the association of science with the interests of totalitarian governments was widely understood to pose threats to democratic values. By the 1980's, however, the more important threat to scientific knowledge had been acknowledged as that of private capital and the increasingly permeable boundary between the university and industries. In this context, state intervention into the autonomy of science becomes less problematic (Hess, 1997:58).

From the 1960's onwards, many empirical studies that emerged from the institutional tradition, both at Columbia and other American institutions, can be seen to have avoided some of the limitations of a Mertonian framework. Such studies offered nuanced and diverse perspectives on the practise of science, and in fact challenged the functionalist image of science as an efficient meritocracy, ruled through objective hierarchy. They suggested, for example, that science tends to work more like an 'old boy's network', operating in the interests of particular groups within the scientific community (Sismondo, 2005:33-35). This image can be observed in the 'stratification' studies of the 1960's, which helped to illustrate the extent to which conservative forces govern career attainment and recognition in science, disfavours certain social groups such as women and

underrepresented racial or ethnic groups (Hess, 1997:59-64). Studies focusing on scientific innovation and productivity also illustrate that major advances often occur within scientific communities outside the mainstream, presumably because such groups are less invested in existing theoretical frameworks. This, again, illustrated the subjective and social nature of the scientific process (Hess, 1997:70-75). Thomas Gieryn's studies of 'boundary work' in the 1980's and 1990's also expand on the social dimension of science, focusing on the rhetorical processes through which science maintains the distinctions which determine, for example, what qualifies as 'true' science (Sismondo, 2005:30; Gieryn, 1995). There is no doubt, then, that the institutional tradition has offered important insights into the social and ideological operation of scientific practice, and in particular through light on the role played by the ideals of objectivity and universality within this. It has, nevertheless, limited such study to the examination of the institutional systems of science rather than focusing on the mechanisms of practice through which scientific knowledge itself is produced. Such a focus would only emerge in the constructivist tradition of scholarship that set out directly to reject the ideals of objectivity and universality, and the positivist conceptualisation of scientific knowledge in which they were based.

### *1.2.2.3 The philosophical foundations of constructivism: Thomas Kuhn*

It is possible to observe, within Kuhn's conceptual framework, a rejection of the idea that one can identify a 'master narrative' in science; a linear, cumulative and unified story, grounded in timeless rules of inquiry such as that of an objectivity and logic. Instead, Kuhn asserts that the products of science are constructed rather than discovered, and that this occurs in context of localised communities of experts rather than through the work of isolated individuals (Nickels, 2003:3-5). He advocated a historicist approach, in which empirical facts about scientific practice becomes of crucial significance (Hess, 1997:23). Within this description, it was no longer possible to understand the production of scientific content as existing separately from historical context (Nickels, 2003:3-5).

Kuhn's critique of positivism focused on two concepts that underpin the conventional understanding of natural science; the idea of scientific progress, and of convergence to truth. According to these conventions, science is understood to grow by means of an accumulation of knowledge, and it is assumed that, if such science adheres to principles of rational and objective practice, the result will be a general convergence on truth (Mouton, 1993b:70). For the logical positivists, the key principle for ensuring such convergence was that of verifiability, in which science works inductively, starting from empirically testable propositions and proceeding from there to theory. Kuhn argued that such formulations do not in fact describe what scientists actually do, pointing out that they often continue to operate within a given theoretical framework even when new facts emerge which appear to refute such theory (Hess, 1997:22).

In order to explain this tendency, Kuhn suggests that science goes through periods of 'normal' and 'revolutionary' practice, and that these periods are defined by the development of scientific



'paradigms'. A paradigm represents the shared conceptions of science that exist within a given scientific community. It includes the theories and laws of such science, its preferred methodology and understandings about its appropriate objects of study (Mouton, 1993b:67-69). Paradigms operate, furthermore, as the achievements within a particular scientific community that serve as examples for others to follow, providing terms of reference for further research. These elements of a paradigm are defined during the 'pre-normal' stage of the development of a discipline. During the 'normal' stage they are internalised and finally taken for granted, so that a given community of scientists can be seen to share recognition of past achievements and to accept the same theories, problems, and methods as key to their work. However, as anomalies begin to accumulate within a particular paradigm, the fundamental framework becomes challenged (Sismondo, 2004:12-19). In later refinements of this argument, Kuhn explains, firstly, that a paradigm can be seen in a sociological sense as consisting of 'group commitments' that govern a community of research practice, placing limitations on possibilities for change from one paradigm to another. Secondly, education can be seen as a socialising process through which such commitments are internalised; one which operates tacitly rather than through the formulation of explicit rules (Mouton, 1993b:67-69). This helps to explain why, even when new facts create anomalies, a given paradigm will remain dominant (Mouton, 1993b:76). Kuhn also introduces the concept of 'incommensurability', arguing that the transition between one paradigm and the next does not take place through logical progression but rather as a subjective leap of faith in the early stages of the development of a new paradigm. Communication between one paradigm and another can therefore be difficult (Mouton, 1993b:80).

Through such theorisations, Kuhn highlighted the tendency within the positivist tradition of the study of science to neglect descriptive empirical study of the contexts of scientific practice. In this way, he identified an opportunity for scholars to begin thinking about science in localised terms, focusing on what scientists do in practice, rather than measuring science against the broad and abstracted ideals of 'scientific progress'. This emphasis within his work is of great importance to the study of scientific knowledge, because it created a space in which scholars could begin thinking about science in localised terms, with regards to what scientists do in practice, rather than measured against the broad and abstracted universal ideals of 'scientific progress' (Sismondo, 2005:12).

#### *1.2.2.4 The establishment of a constructivist approach to the empirical study of science*

The Edinburgh scholars pursued such 'localised' research by means of case studies of specific scientific controversies, subject matter which was thought to lend itself to the study of the social shaping of science (Hess, 1997:95). They focused, in their analysis of these case studies, on 'macro-sociological' forces, identifying these by means of retrospective historical methods (Hess, 1997:100). Steven Shapin, for example, argued for a study of science as sociological reconstruction, through the analysis of the role played by social interests in the production of scientific knowledge. This argument operated as a rejection of the assumption that scientific change is governed only by the

internal imperatives of science, such as a search for truth. Social influence is understood apply, furthermore, both to the processes of 'discovering' scientific knowledge, and to the justification and evaluation of knowledge (Longino, 2005:4). The focus was, more particularly, on conflicting interests that are historically specific in nature, and which inform opposing sides of a given scientific dispute (Yearly, 2005:44). Through such studies, the Strong Programme in the Sociology of Knowledge attempted to identify correlations and causal connections between two sociological variables: those of social interest and scientific content (Pickering, 1992:1). They attempted, in particular, to explore correlations between broad societal events and conflict that emerged in the context of particular intellectual controversies (Sismondo, 2005:46). In contrast, at the University of Bath, the Empirical Program of Relativism (or EPOR) focused on micro-sociological processes and used observational methods (Hess, 1997:94). What also differentiated EPOR from the Strong Programme was that they attempted more detailed empirical study of the mechanisms that determine the social shaping of science. They focused, for example, on an analysis of debate about controversies as a process of negotiation between scientific actors, arguing that within this context controversies tend to be resolved through persuasion rather than reason (Pickering, 1992:1; Yearly, 2005:33). Such study emphasised that cultural and social factors were the main explanatory factors in settling the outcome of scientific controversy (Yearly, 2005:30).

In his 1976 book *Knowledge and Social Imagery*, David Bloor articulates four 'tenets' for a 'strong' approach to the constructivist study of science (Hess, 1997:86). Through these tenets, he and his colleagues attempted to distance themselves agnostically from the idea that science was a 'special' category of knowledge, uniquely suited to the pursuit of truth. They represented guidelines for ensuring that, in studying science, pre-conceived assumptions about the validity of particular kinds of knowledge could be suspended. The tenet of 'symmetry' states that social science should treat all kinds of knowledge equally. They should, for example, be studied with the same tools, which were understood to be those of empirical and naturalistic science. The tenet of 'impartiality' argues further that even beliefs that are regarded as true should be given the same treatment as those that are regarded as false. The social study of science should, then, scrutinise the causes of the credibility of scientific knowledge irrespective of whether it is regarded as true or false (Longino, 2005:5). The strong programmers reacted, here, against the pattern of explanation in the assessment of scientific work in which 'true' beliefs are seen to require rationalist explanations focusing on processes internal to the scientific system, whereas 'false' ones require external and social explanations (Sismondo, 2005:43). One should not, in other words, explain 'good science' by appealing to rationality and 'bad science' by appealing to distorting social factors (Longino, 2005:11). The third and fourth tenets, those of 'causality' and 'reflexivity', point in very broad terms to the methodological framework within which the strong programmers would pursue their inquiry into science. The tenet of 'causality' states that all knowledge should be studied with the same aim in mind, that of explaining the conditions which bring about certain beliefs and kinds of knowledge in a given society. The tenet of

'reflexivity' refers to the need to be self-conscious about the implications of such study for the critique of SSK as a form of science in its own right (Yearly, 2005:21-25).

Within the 1970's studies, the relationship between scientific knowledge and its social context was understood to be a causal one, with the 'arrow of causality' necessarily pointing from the social to the scientific (Hess, 1997:84). Knowledge and beliefs are seen as objects, which come about through social reasons or causes, and it is the job of the sociologist to explain these causes (Sismondo, 2005:42). In the work that emerged in the 1980's, the assumption was instead that content of science is constructed along with social relations and structures in the wider society, so that science, context and content shape each other, with arrows of causality pointing both ways (Hess, 1997:85). The emphasis was, then, on an exploration of the complexity of this relationship through an examination of the fine detail of scientific practice. At the same time, they adopt a more flexible approach to constructivism, thus allowing for the emergence of more varied approaches to the study of scientific knowledge (Sismondo, 2005:450).

The empirical laboratory studies, for example, understood science as socially constructed in the sense that the procedures of science involved social interactions, and argued further that it becomes impossible to distinguish between 'purely' cognitive and socially based processes (Longino, 2005:11). Knorr-Cetina deliberately adopted the position of the 'naïve observer' typical of anthropological study, in order to study, in detail, the complex processes of decision-making through which scientific objects are produced (Longino, 2005:7). This approach was based in the recognition that the accounts that scientists provide of their own processes of knowledge production should not be taken at face value; they often operate, in fact, as accounts of what should have happened, given the normative guidelines of the scientific practice (Fuller, 2002:13). Knorr-Cetina also understood the process of science in communal terms, as forming part of the interactions within a scientific community, based in a network of both shared and conflicting interests (Longino, 2005:7).

ANT, in particular, took the tenet of 'symmetry' within the strong programme one step further, arguing for a 'supersymmetric' perspective. Within this approach, it is not just different kinds of knowledge that should be treated symmetrically, but also social and natural elements within the research process (Yearly, 2005: 56). One can observe, in this, an approach to constructivism which understands context and content as shaping each other, so that causality works in both directions.

ANT proposed that humans and the material elements involved in research are given equal status as 'actors' with recognisable 'interests'. Humans and 'non-humans' involved in a research practice are thus understood equally as agents existing within a 'network' of relationships (Hess, 1997:106-111). The aim is then to map how such networks function, and in particular how different interests are shaped through the negotiations and interactions that characterise the relationships within the network (Yearly, 2005:55). A key argument, within ANT's description of the operation of this network, is that interests are dynamic in nature, with one actor's interest becoming 'translated' into that of another through processes of persuasion. This theorisation is based in an

understanding of science which no longer starts from the assumption that knowledge is the product of either society or of nature. Instead, knowledge is the outcome of multiple translations, in which the distinction between the social and natural become immaterial (Yearly, 2005:67).

Of particular value, both within the Strong Programme and the later studies, was the description of the scientific process as being situated within communities of scientific practice, and informed by networks of social interests (Longino, 2005:37). Such scholarship nevertheless continued to place limitations on the extent to which research was able to deal explicitly with the social purpose or responsibilities of science. ANT, in particular, describes the operation of research with little sensitivity to the power relations that determine the inclusion and exclusion of actors from networks. Although it offers a methodology that is useful in identifying the strategies that have led to the success of scientific and technological entrepreneurship, it does adequately explain why the playing field of scientific research is not level (Hess, 1997:111).

It is only in the most recent studies of science that moral and ethical neutrality has been seriously questioned, particularly in context of the gendered study of science. Feminist studies of science have a well-established history that can be traced back to at least the 1960's. In the last few decades, however, they have actively challenged the notion of value-neutrality in itself (Yearly, 2005:69-72). Helen Longino, for example, formulated an approach in the 1990's that was deliberately asymmetrical with regards political values, by positioning herself not only as an analyst but also a participant in the evaluation of scientific knowledge (Yearly, 2005:79). It can be argued that in this work one finally observes an approach in which the special status of scientific knowledge, as exempt from social influence, is dissolved. Within such work, what Steven Fuller refers to as the 'Cartesian gesture' of withdrawing from social discourse in order to engage in scientific reflection, gives way to a conceptualisation of scientific practice based within the social world, as the appropriate sphere in which to deliberate about scientific judgement (Fuller, 2002:3).

## **Conclusion**

This chapter reviews different theorisations of the relationship between science and society, observed both in scholarship about social science and in the social study of science. It is therefore concerned with the third of Babbie and Mouton's 'knowledge worlds' [see pg. 2]. The chapter points out that the history of scholarship about science has, from its inception, included acknowledgement that the production of scientific knowledge is necessarily informed by social interest and local context. It is noted, furthermore, that the response to such acknowledgement that gained hegemony within scientific communities in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century was based within a positivist paradigm, in which the authority of science is measured against the ideal of objective and universally relevant knowledge. In the latter half of this century, there was growing acknowledgement within meta-scientific debate of an

alternative conceptualisation of science, as socially constructed knowledge. Despite this, the positivist conception of science has remained dominant both within academic communities and in society more generally. The chapter notes that the persistence of this conception has for long placed limitations on establishment of traditions of empirical research that deal with the critical scrutiny of the relationship between science and its social context.

It is argued, here, that an acknowledgement of the social dimensions of scientific knowledge represents a central impetus for the establishment and development of the social study of science in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The theorisation of science has, however, also for long remained characterised by on-going attempts to reconcile such recognition with an idealised conception of science as free from social interest. Early examples of the sociology of knowledge, as represented by Mannheim, Scheler, Fleck and Hessen, were based in a historical and materialist analysis of society. As such, this work opened up the possibility of a critical-empirical scrutiny of science as socially situated practice. These theorists nevertheless continued to confirm the existence of a terrain, situated outside socio-historical experience, in which science remains defined by reason and a search for objective and universal truth. Consequently, their scholarship stopped short of establishing the intellectual foundations for a critical study of science as social practice. In Merton's 'sociology of science', the critical potential of their work became further marginalised, as the conceptual resources that they had generated were assimilated into a functionalist conceptualisation of society.

In contrast, in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, meta-scientific scholarship began to define the rational terrain of science more and more narrowly, and to acknowledge the social and historical dimensions of science more inclusively. Scientific knowledge became described, with increasing confidence, as informed by social interest and as drawing its authority from historically situated relations of power. Nevertheless, even within such work, the wholesale acceptance of the socially constructed nature of authoritative scientific knowledge was slow to emerge. Within the social study of scientific knowledge (SSK) of the 1970's, the assumption was that the 'arrow of causality' points one way, from social context towards scientific knowledge. The 'SSK-like' studies that followed in the 1980's understood the relationship between science and society in more dynamic terms, with science situated as a social practice. In this work, the 'arrows of causality' point both ways, so that science and society are understood to impact on each other. Finally, in politically situated studies such as that of Longino, the conceptualisation of science as defined by a rational centre, existing outside of socio-historical experience, can be seen to dissolve.

A central aim of this chapter has been to offer explanations for the slowness with which the full acceptance of the socially constructed nature of scientific knowledge came about in meta-scientific debate, and the persistence, in scientific environments and more generally, of the positivist conception of science. It is suggested, firstly, that the continued dominance of this conception should be understood in context of contributions made by 19<sup>th</sup> century scholars, such as Comte and Weber, to the theorisation of social science. Within such theorisation, one can observe the recognition that

knowledge about the social necessarily requires engagement with subjective experience. It is also in such work that this recognition first became assimilated within a positivist conceptualisation of social science in which the certainty of knowledge becomes linked to the ideals of objectivity and universal relevance. This led to a tension within the conceptual foundations of 20<sup>th</sup> century social science between opposing conceptions of science, in which acknowledgement of social dimensions of knowledge is repeatedly reconciled with the invocation of the ideals of objectivity and universality. The influence of this intellectual heritage can be traced both within the history of the social science and that of the social study of science.

It is further proposed that the persistence of this conceptualisation of science should be understood in context of social interests operating at the level of World One, that have informed the history of the theorisation of authoritative scientific knowledge during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Reassertion of the ideal of objective and universally relevant scientific knowledge can, in particular, be seen to form part of attempts to contribute to the establishment or maintenance of social stability. The chapter points, for example, to literature in which it is explained that the logical positivists reacted against the violence and disorder of their own social context by articulating an approach to science that could help to establish a society based on rational action. Merton's re-assertion of the objectivity and universality of scientific knowledge has, in turn, been read as response to the perceived threat posed to democratic society by a relativist conception of science. His work has also, however, been described as forming part of the broader establishment, within American social science, of a functionalist paradigm in which the critical scrutiny of science as a social practice became marginalised. The existence of this paradigm is, furthermore, seen to have informed the ease with which concepts drawn from logical positivism came to circulate within the philosophy of science in Anglophone environments.

At the same time, challenges to the dominance of particular conceptualisations of authoritative social knowledge can also be seen to occur as a response to historical events and in particular to moments of profound social disruption. It is noted at the beginning of this chapter that the revolutionary events of the late 18<sup>th</sup> century contributed to mistrust of the traditional certainties offered by religion and metaphysics. This opened up the possibility of delinking the authority of knowledge from an association with tradition and faith and instead situating them in the certainty of an empirical science of the social, based in systematic method and rational thought. Conversely, in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the years between the World Wars represent a moment in the history of knowledge when the foundations of this commitment to a rationalist world view become challenged. This made possible the acknowledgement of the sociological aspects of authoritative knowledge, as articulated in the Sociology of Knowledge. As we will see in subsequent chapters, another moment could be that of the 1960's and 1970's, when the articulation of critique of positivism within scientific communities can be seen to form part of the broader emergence, in society, of challenges to established modes of thought about authoritative knowledge.

It can be argued, then, that World Three conceptualisations of the relationship between science and society have been informed and influenced in important ways by historical context, and by concerns within scientific communities about the need for either social change or social stability. In the next two chapters, the relationship between such context and authoritative knowledge about the social will again be examined, this time in context of World Two, within the disciplinary environments in which journalism became established as a subject of academic study.



## CHAPTER TWO: AUTHORITATIVE KNOWLEDGE AND DISCIPLINARY SETTING

### A contextualisation

#### Introduction

Chapter One dealt with theorisations of the relationship between authoritative scientific knowledge and society that have been articulated in what Babbie and Mouton refer to as World Three, or the world of meta-scientific inquiry. This next chapter again focuses on the conceptualisation of authoritative knowledge, but this time examined at the level of World Two, or the world of scholarship. It is important to note that this discussion does not focus on journalism scholarship, or on the fields in which such scholarship has been based such as Mass Communication Studies and Cultural Studies. The international history of journalism scholarship will, instead, be addressed in Chapter Three. The aim is, rather, to provide a contextualisation for the examination, in the remainder of this dissertation, of the academic histories of journalism. In order to do so, the chapter focuses on the disciplinary settings in which journalism education and scholarship became established and looks at the recurrence within these settings of the conceptualisations of authoritative social knowledge that have been described in Chapter One. The implications of this discussion for the study of journalism are not, however, as yet directly addressed.

As background to this chapter, it should be noted that in reviews of the history of journalism scholarship, sociology is identified as having for long presented the key disciplinary perspective for the study of journalism. Sociology's engagement with journalism is described, furthermore, as based within the field of Mass Communication Studies, which became established in American universities in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century and then circulated internationally (Zelizer, 2004b:45 – 80). By the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, however, sociology was abandoning the empirical study of journalism, so that such work became decoupled from the identity of this discipline (Schudson, 1997:381). This occurred at the same moment as other fields in the social sciences began to embrace the study of culture, with an emphasis on media (Hardt, 1992:7). Cultural Studies, in particular, became concerned with such scholarship, so that this field came to challenge sociology internationally as the 'default setting' for the study of journalism (Zelizer, 2004b:106). This next chapter is informed by the argument that the way in which Mass Communication Studies and Cultural Studies engaged with journalism at different points in history can usefully be understood in the context of occurrences in the disciplinary domains on which they drew. The chapter therefore concerns itself with this broader disciplinary context, dealing with developments in the conceptualisations of authoritative knowledge in academic environments which have been of particular significance to the establishment of university-based journalism studies and education.

In Chapter One it was argued that the persistence of the positivist conceptualisation of science within 20<sup>th</sup> century meta-scientific scholarship can be better understood when placed in historical



context, at the level of World One. It was suggested that developments in the conceptualisation of such knowledge are embedded in processes of negotiation and struggle within their socio-political environment, around social change and social stability. In the discussion that follows, it is proposed that the impact of these processes can also be traced at the level of World Two, in the context of the 20<sup>th</sup> century disciplinary history of social science. It is argued, in particular, that this history has been framed in important ways by processes of change associated with the ‘modernisation’ of society. One such process, that can be clearly identified in relation to the disciplinary histories discussed in this chapter, is understood to be the ‘professionalisation’ of systems of knowledge production, both within universities and more broadly.

Section One of the chapter is a discussion of the role played by the ideal of positivist scientific inquiry in the establishment of American sociology. It should be noted that this discussion intersects with a significant moment in the World Three history of the conceptualisation of authoritative social knowledge described in Chapter One. This moment is represented by Merton’s articulation of the conceptual foundations of the institutional study of science in the 1930’s and ‘40’s. In context of this intersection, it is possible to trace a direct line of influence between the positivist conception of knowledge articulated at this time in World Three and the approach to the study of society that came to dominate sociology, as a World Two environment. In Chapter Three it will be argued that this line of influence can be seen to have contributed to the functionalism of the traditions of journalism studies that emerged from the field of Mass Communication Studies.

Section Two traces the emergence of challenges to the authority of the positivist ideal from the 1960’s onwards, in context of the circulation, within academic environments, of alternative World Three conceptualisations of knowledge that drew on critical theory and postmodern philosophy. The emergence of such challenges can, again, be understood to intersect with one of the key moments in the development of theorisations of scientific knowledge, as described in Chapter One. In this instance, this moment is represented by the growing authority of constructivist critique of the conception of science in positivism, particularly through Kuhn’s theoretical contributions. In contrast to Merton’s role in relation to Mass Communication Studies in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, it is, however, not possible to trace as direct a line of influence between Kuhn’s work and Cultural Studies, as a World Two environment in which the study of journalism became established. It is argued, in this dissertation, that the absence of such influence represents a lost opportunity for the critical study of journalism.

## **2.1 American sociology and the positivist construction of knowledge**

As noted already, in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century in America, the construction of the disciplinary identity of social science generally, and sociology in particular, had become strongly informed by a positivist conceptualisation of the appropriate function of authoritative knowledge about the social. It is argued,

in the discussion below, that this disciplinary environment was also framed by functionalist analysis of society and by the marginalisation of the critical scrutiny of the institutions of Western liberal democracy. The discussion traces these patterns in the conceptualisation of authoritative knowledge both within the broader environment of American society and in the particular context of social science. As will be demonstrated, the ideal of objective and universally relevant knowledge, which was identified in the last chapter as a central to the theorisation of science at the level of World Three, was also of particular importance as a term of reference within this disciplinary context. Here, as in the history of the study of science, this ideal also exists in tension with an acknowledgement of the socially constructed and subjective nature of social knowledge.

It is also proposed that the dominance of both positivism and functionalism in social science can be better understood in context of processes of change that were characterising the formation of American society at this time. These processes can be seen to form part of the growing dominance, both in America and within the international domain, of an approach to authoritative social knowledge that is based in the ideal of 'modernisation'. A key context in which this ideal can be identified is in the 'professionalisation' of American society, which is understood to have occurred from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century onwards. This process can be identified in the history of a wide range of occupations that came to associate themselves with the notion of expert service, and more particularly with the production of credible knowledge about society. Professionalisation also impacted fundamentally on the transformation of universities and on the role that they came to play with regards to the production and circulation of specialised knowledge both in the context of education and research. The influence of professionalisation can be observed, in particular, in the relationship that was established between universities and professionalised occupations, with higher education becoming valued primarily in terms of the degree to which it helped to establish systems of expertise that operated in service of society (Nordenstreng, 2004:6). Furthermore, it can also be discerned in the relationship that came to exist between these systems of expertise and the state (Carey, 1978:847-848).

In the discussion of the history of American sociology, below, the relevance of these social processes will be demonstrated. The discussion is organised around four historical phases, which are those that are often identified within studies of developments in social science of this period (Sproule, 1987; Platt, 1996; Plummer, 2001). These correlate with events that shaped the broader social and political context, and which signalled significant shifts in the position that sociology occupied within political power structures. The first of these phases falls in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and forms an important background to developments around the conceptualisation of knowledge in the next century. The second is that of the 'Progressive Era', which is generally described as falling between 1890 and 1920. The third is that of the 'inter-war period', which stretches from 1918 to the mid-1930's. The fourth phase is usually described as starting in World War II and covers the post-war period, until the end of the 1950's.

### 2.1.1 The 19<sup>th</sup> century and the changing status of social science

The representation of scientific knowledge that is said to have become dominant in American society at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century is that of science as ‘consonant’ with society. It is an understanding that is thought to have emerged in America in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, as part of major shifts in social relations of power. America as it existed before 1830 is described as a society still dominated by tradition in the form of aristocratic values and family connections. By 1890, it is thought to have transformed into a democratic market society governed by what was, at least in theory, fair and objective procedure. In this context, strong alliances had been established between political power and scientific knowledge. By the turn of the century, there was general consensus that the key to progress in all areas of society was information untainted by bias or subjective interpretation. Politics came to be seen as an administrative science that required the value-free knowledge of experts (Ward 2004:224-227). American society can be said to have become rooted in the liberal idea of a rational public, capable of engaging with such knowledge in order to make informed political decisions (Schudson, 1976:83).

One manifestation of the rising recognition of the value of scientific knowledge about the social could be observed in the growth of systematic empirical enquiry into demographic and economic facts about the American population, and in the recognition of the role of such information as an essential aid for social administration. There was a surge of interest, during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, in the gathering of such information first in Britain and France and later in Germany and America. This contributed greatly to the development of survey methodology and the related science of statistics (Halfpenny, 1982:27-30). One could argue that this interest in scientific knowledge about the social was informed both by a progressive impulse and by an interest in controlling processes of social change. The impetus for social research often came from social reformers within the new bourgeoisie, who recognised in scientific knowledge a weapon to be wielded in the name of progressive change (Harkavy & Puckett, 1994:306). Theirs tended, however, to be a fairly narrowly defined understanding of democracy, in which the ‘public’ was imagined to be white and middle class. Their preoccupation with the role of science was in fact also informed by concerns about the impact on American society of processes associated with modernity, such as industrialisation and rapid urbanisation (Halfpenny, 1982:27-30). By the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, because of these processes, the vision of the United States as a white, Protestant nation was disintegrating, particularly as a result of increasing immigration. A widely shared response to the resulting uncertainty of a white and middle class perspective was to turn again to practices of systematic social investigation. By engaging through such research with the complexities of modern urban life, for the explicit purpose of civic improvement and social reform, the ideals of progress and community development could be pursued in a way that ensured the maintenance of a stable society (Gordon, 1973:291; Friedland & Campbell, 2004:33). Scientific knowledge was, in other words, recognised not only as a resource for progressive change but also as one that could help to stabilise political power structures.

An important manifestation of the alliance between scientific knowledge and political power can be seen in the relationship that emerged between institutions of tertiary education and the American state. Until the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, such institutions still defined their approach to academic knowledge in terms of the classical categories of liberal education. An American college education typically included subjects such as Latin, Greek, logic, rhetoric, theology, philosophy and mathematics. Students usually attended such colleges to prepare for a middle class professional occupation such as that of the ministry, law or medicine (Dickson, 2000:2-3). It is possible to discern a shift from this emphasis within education to a more vocational slant as early as the 1820's, with the introduction of modern languages and new branches of science. The approach to education that would for long remain dominant was nevertheless that colleges were not meant as a preparation for 'mercantile' occupations (Dickson, 2000:2-3). It is only from the 1860's onwards that colleges were increasingly expected to operate in service of the 'public good' and of 'national interest'. This shift in approach to the role of higher education occurred simultaneously with the growth of interest in progressive social reform (18-19). This movement strengthened support for the democratisation of higher education through the introduction, in tertiary education, of vocational training and of subjects that could contribute to the welfare of local communities (36). These ideals were embodied by the Morrill Act of 1862 that founded vocationally oriented 'Land Grant' colleges. The act provided states with grants of land for the funding of educational institutions which prioritised teaching and applied research. The focus was on 'useful' knowledge, such as that of agriculture and technology that contribute to economic progress within the local environment (Harkavy & Puckett, 1994:301; Mirando, 2001:24). At first, the focus within these colleges was not one of specialised expertise or reform, nor did they define themselves primarily in relation to national interest. Instead, they saw their responsibility as one of ensuring stability within the communities in which they were based, and as such their main goal was that of a very general education in which the next generation of the middle classes were prepared broadly for moral, civic and intellectual leadership (Morgan, 1970:162-165). From the 1870's onwards, however, American tertiary institutions started shifting into the mode of the 'research university', modelled on the German ideal.

What came to be called the 'German model' of the university can be traced back to the early 19<sup>th</sup> century when Wilhelm von Humboldt developed a set of guidelines for conceptualising the university. These guidelines emphasised the importance of the university as a space of reflective reason and academic autonomy which could make possible the production and transmission of new scientific knowledge. Humboldt argued for a pragmatic social contract in which universities committed themselves to producing the knowledge systems necessary for the functioning of society, but at the same time were provided with the autonomy of regulating themselves in the context of disciplinary knowledge. Teaching was of central importance to this relationship, but it functioned in service of the central mission of the university, which remained the pursuit of scientific knowledge (Readings, 1996:69; Delanty, 2001:34). From the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century onwards, the German model

became highly influential to the understanding of universities across the world. It was, however, in America that the model established itself most powerfully, becoming the basis for the modern research university (Delanty, 2001:40).

In the American context the German model was grafted onto the institutional environment of the Land Grant colleges. Such colleges operated according to principles that in some respects contradicted the ideals on which the German model was based. This model emphasised graduate education and research, in direct contradiction to the colonial college values, which prioritised the teaching of undergraduates (Dickson, 2000:9). Also, whereas the German model prioritised service to the state, American colleges defined themselves in service of civil society. The idea of a university dedicated to the state was, however, becoming more central to American universities, and the emphasis in some institutions was also turning to postgraduate study (Delanty, 2001:40). This transformation can be seen to form part of a broader, global emergence of the university as the ideological apparatus of the nation-state. The American university was, certainly, increasingly expected to become a national institution, an arm of the state, capable of responding to processes of modernisation. By the turn of the century, there was a general optimism about the leadership role that universities could play in the progressive reorganisation of society, changing the world for the better (Harkavy & Puckett 1994:301).

Linked to this, there was an increase in emphasis on the university's role in training for professions that would become central to their function in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. James Carey describes this as the professionalisation of higher education, and argues that the integration of academic and professional ideals within one educational system was made possible by the general structural transformation of American higher education (Carey, 1978:848-9). This meant, crucially, that by the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, university education was organised around a modular system in which practical 'vocational' subjects could be mixed in with academic subjects. It was, however, understood that the liberal arts remained central to the purpose of the university, as a social institution dedicated to preparing graduates for intellectual leadership within the American democratic system. Such education helped, in particular, to ensure that students developed the habits of analytical reflection and a commitment to civic participation and professional service (Reese & Cohen, 2000:216). More 'applied' subjects could be incorporated into this 'idea' of the university, and gained a professional identity, because the liberal arts were thought to have a rationalising and civilising influence that could ensure a relationship of independence between vocational knowledge and forces of economic and political interest (Nolan, 2008:745). As a result, subjects such as business, education, and public policy could become central to American higher education in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This arrangement contrasted with the European, continental model in which such subjects were the domain of separate and less prestigious technical institutions (Stevenson, 2002:131; Phillips, 2005:233). There nevertheless remained a distinction, in American universities, between subjects that were thought to meet the requirements of the 'true' professions and those that could only be accorded the status of

'quasi-professions'. The 'real' professionals, such as architects, lawyers and doctors, were educated exclusively at postgraduate level, and it was assumed that the core knowledge to which they were exposed within such programmes represented an adequate basis for university-based study. The 'quasi-professions' such as pharmacy, teaching, nursing and journalism were not awarded such status. In contrast to the 'true' professions, they were approached as undergraduate subjects, embedded in liberal arts programmes (Stevenson, 2002:132).

An important aspect of the transformation of American universities, during this time, was the emergence of new disciplinary research traditions. In the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, new forms of specialised knowledge established themselves within tertiary environments, characterised by professional compartmentalisation. By the end of the century, the core of disciplinary categories had been reshaped, defined by what we now recognise as the principal academic disciplines, such as literature, physics, history, biology, political science and indeed sociology (Rowland, 1988:60–61). The new sociology departments that were established at this time, as part of the rapid expansion of universities, were strongly informed by the nationalist project of modernisation (Halfpenny, 1982:40). It remains, however, of significance to the establishment of sociology that in the American example of the research university, the German model was often grafted onto the existing institutional structures of the Land Grant colleges. It has been pointed out that this understanding was still present as an organisational culture that framed the transformation of these colleges into research universities (Morgan, 1970:162-165). In the hybrid model that emerges from this one can, again, see the operation both of an interest in conserving tradition, and an interest in liberation from traditional values. It may be that this was one reason for the marginalisation of critical scholarship that, as we will see, became characteristic of sociology of the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century.

### 2.1.2 The Progressive Era (1890 – 1920)

By the turn of the century, systematic social research had become well established both inside the university and around sites outside the academy as part of the general reform movement. It is characteristic of the Progressive Period that such research practices were primarily defined by the common objective of reform. The distinction between research situated in- and outside the university was not, in other words, clearly marked. The practices and preoccupations of research communities were characterised, instead, by an interconnectedness, in which they defined their work in terms of a shared commitment to engaging with social problems that cut across institutional boundaries. Social workers based in the volunteer-driven tenement houses, such as Hull House in Chicago and Henry Street Settlement in New York, made a particularly important contribution to this research tradition. These researchers, who were primarily women, were routinely trained in the systematic collection of social data. They produced in-depth studies of urban landscapes, of which the *Hull House Maps and Papers* are a well-known example, well before such work was being generated by university-based sociologists (Platt, 1996:260). The social survey movement contributed in similar ways to scientific



knowledge about American communities before the emergence of such work in universities. (Friedland, 2004:30-32). Indeed, these two traditions in empirical method and analytic technique formed the foundations of the approach to sociology established at the University of Chicago, which is generally regarded as one of the most important sites for the development of this discipline worldwide during this period (Delanty, 1997:28). It has been argued that the work produced by the Chicago School of Sociology during most of the Progressive Era was inseparable from the activities of the Hull House social workers (Harkavy & Puckett, 1994:304). It would seem, then, that these strands of social science research were interrelated, and that the development of university-based sociology depended on these connections.

The distinction between the methodologies employed in the various strands of social science was also far more fluid than it would become in later years. Social research tended to be interdisciplinary and multi-method. It defined itself according to its objects of study and in terms of the problem that it elected to engage with rather than its choice of method. Research objectives were, in other words, more important to the identity of such science than, for example, the decision to work with qualitative or quantitative methods. The Chicago researchers as well as practitioners associated with the social survey movement and tenement houses tended to work pragmatically, developing new techniques of investigation that allowed them to engage with their research preoccupations. They borrowed and invented any research techniques that could help them to do so (Abott, 1997; Friedland & Campbell, 2004). It would seem, furthermore, that the objective of social reform was closely connected with a belief in the importance of placing social science knowledge within the public domain. This can be seen, for example in the emphasis on public presentations such as the travelling exhibition associated with the Pittsburgh surveys and publication in newspapers and magazines (Friedland & Campbell, 2004:32). The assumption appeared to be that reform could best be achieved by creating awareness about the nature of social problems. An informed public would, in other words, help to ensure the democratic processes that would lead to social justice.

It would seem, then, that during this period, the interest in the transformative power of knowledge was more dominant than preoccupation with its role as a tool of social control. This can be seen in the interconnectedness and fluidity of research communities, in which knowledge was understood to be a shared resource, produced in a participatory context, in service of public interest.

### 2.1.3 The inter-war years (1920 – 1935)

In the period between World War I and II, it is possible to identify a change in the relationship between university-based social science and its broader social context. This change mirrored a general trend within universities in which they became increasingly concerned with the establishment of their institutional authority. One could observe this in a growth in specialisation, in which the identity of research practitioners became more strongly defined by their own discipline. There was also a tendency towards scientism, in which legitimacy was claimed by invoking a positivist model of

research which was supposed to be based on the methods of the natural sciences. Within critical discussion of these institutional developments, it has been argued that such trends weakened the role that the university could play in contributing to processes of democracy and social justice. Specialisation and scientism meant that disciplines necessarily became less connected to the general university mission of service to society and community. There was, because of these trends, an increasing fragmentation of knowledge, and a separation of scholarship from direct contribution to society (Harkavy & Puckett, 1994:307-309). The history of sociology in the inter-war period shows evidence of this retreat from society. By 1929, Chicago sociologist William Ogburn summarises this sentiment clearly in his presidential address to the American Sociological Society:

Sociology as a science is not interested in making the world a better place in which to live, in encouraging beliefs, in spreading information, in dispensing news, in setting forth impressions of life, in leading the multitudes or in guiding the ship of state. Science is interested directly in one thing only, to wit, discovering new knowledge (quoted in Bulmer, 1984:182).

As sociology became more discipline oriented, the separation between different domains became more important with clear lines drawn between knowledge production and knowledge use and between social science and social reform. It is of interest that, within this reconceptualisation, the pragmatic approach to scientific knowledge in service of democracy is replaced by a growing emphasis on the idea that scientific knowledge should be free from the taint of social interest.

In the case of the Chicago School, these changes led to a deliberate disconnection between the practices of the university-based sociologists and the work of the Hull House researchers. Robert Park and Ernest Burgess, who represented the second generation of leaders of the Chicago school, had assimilated much of the ideas and methods of the Hull House tradition within their approach to sociology. The Hull House researchers were, in the early stages of this relationship, acknowledged as sociologists. Now, however, the Chicago scholars distanced themselves from this tradition, redefining it as a practice of ‘applied social work’ that could not claim to be social science. Their own practice was positioned, in contrast, as the true, pioneering foundation of urban sociology. The Hull House research also became redefined as an ‘earlier’ stage of sociology on which more systematic and scientific university work has built.

It has been proposed that in reality, the distinction between the sociologists and researchers working outside the university was not clear at all – and the idea that such practices were ‘subsidiary’ was questionable (Harkavy & Puckett, 1994:304; Platt, 1996:260). One could argue that this polarisation was at least partly rooted in the contrasting political interpretations of social reform that now framed each of these traditions of social science. The Hull House women remained part of a radical tradition which was strongly informed by socialism and feminism, and by a critique of racism. Many of the Chicago school sociologists were, however, more conservative in their political identity (Sibley, 1995). The exclusion of the Tenement House tradition in sociology could be said to have operated as a marginalisation of a critical research paradigm.



The trend towards specialisation and systematisation became visible, within sociology, through the emergence of a body of writing on method and methodology. Indeed, even if the Chicago scholars were not really, as they claimed, the pioneers of the research practices that they had adopted, they did contribute substantially to naming and analysing these practices (Platt, 1996:260). Through this writing, distinctions also began to emerge between approaches to authoritative knowledge about society within the academy. One could, in particular, detect a split between subjective, qualitative and case-based approaches and objective, quantitative and variables-based approaches (Abbott, 1997:161). Within this emerging body of theoretical writing, scholars appeared to be in agreement that both qualitative and quantitative approaches had a role to play (Plummer, 2001). Nevertheless, when one examines the history of sociological research practices during this period, one can detect an increasing marginalisation of qualitative work. At the beginning of the inter-war period, the 'life history' method was of central importance, as exemplified by two studies that were to gain a canonical status. These were *The Polish Peasant in Europe and America* which drew intensively on personal documents, and the 'delinquent' life histories gathered by Clifford Shaw (Plummer, 2001:104). These research projects inspired a series of life history studies during the interwar period, a tradition that was actively encouraged by Park and Burgess. The broad pattern of change in research practice was, however, towards quantification and towards a growing body of systematic empirical research in which sociologists created their data (Platt, 1996:130).

#### 2.1.4 World War II and after (1935 – 1960)

During the next 25 years, the ideal of value-free, objective research practice became dominant within sociology. During this period the Chicago School became less central to sociology as a discipline. The focus shifted instead to the development of a functionalist theorisation of sociology at Harvard University and also the establishment of the more empirical tradition of sociological research at Columbia University (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:7).

At Harvard, Talcott Parsons and Robert Merton set in place the foundations of the theoretical tradition of functionalist sociology (Mouton, 1993a:23). At Columbia in the 1930's, Franklin Giddins and Samuel Stouffer also made an important methodological contribution, helping to establish a theoretical framework for survey methodology (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:52-53). From the time of his appointment at Columbia in 1894, Giddins had prioritised the quantitative methods associated with natural science (Halfpenny, 1982:41). Under his headship, Columbia became central to the training of researchers in the application of quantitative method and in particular of the social survey (Halfpenny, 1982:41). It is within this tradition that surveys and quantitative research generally became more exclusively associated with a positivist framework. Paul Lazarsfeld, who worked at the Columbia-based Bureau for Applied Research from the late 1930's onward, strengthened this tradition through the development of a body of empirical method (Mouton, 1993a:23). Between them, the

combined effort of the empirical tradition at Columbia and the theoretical work of Harvard ensured the dominance of positivist quantitative sociology in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century.

Within both traditions of sociology, it was assumed that the social context of research is that of an ordered system based on consensus. This can be seen, firstly, in the functionalist explanation of society provided by the theoretical sociology of the Harvard tradition. Within Parson's formulation of structural functionalism, the assumption is that science is one of a number of institutions that structure society, which for example also include religion and government. When these institutions work well in terms of their internal regulation and in relation to each other, they fulfil necessary functions, contributing to social stability and wellbeing. The role of the institution of science, within Parson's structural system, is that of providing knowledge that will enhance the overall functioning of society (Sismondo, 2005:20–23).

The methodological framework of the Columbian empirical tradition was also based in this understanding of the function of science in society. It assumed that the role of social science, at least within an American liberal context, is to study how well social structures are functioning rather than concerning itself critically with the legitimacy of those structures. This understanding is based, furthermore, in a vision of society which does not make visible the fact that its individual members are differently positioned within those structures. The survey method lends itself to a conceptualisation of social groups in which it is assumed that they are the consequence of the aggregate of their separate component individuals, and that social phenomena derive from the independent motivations of these individuals. Within such an understanding, it becomes difficult to make visible tensions and conflicts that might exist within the relationships of power operating in such groups, and the extent to which these might form part of the basic structure of society (Bryant, 1985:140). In this context, the more subjective social and political implications of empirical observation become difficult to address. The emphasis on the identification of variables also means that survey-based studies are necessarily disassociated from localised realities. People and events are not located in time and space; they are represented by abstracted 'units of analysis' rather than acknowledged as actors in social relations (Abbot, 1997:115). Within such an approach to the study of the social, it becomes difficult to formulate arguments about what may be problematic about the structures of society.

The shift from social reform to functionalism was accompanied by broader shifts in the academic conceptualisation of American society. Within the American intellectual community, one can identify a loss of confidence, during this time, in the social institutions which are supposed to enable the existence of an informed public, and in fact in rational public opinion in itself as a means of self-governance. There was concern about the extent to which processes of democracy might be compromised by the subjective, emotional opinion of the 'masses' and a growing consensus that ordinary people did not have the time, interest or even the ability to judge the issues of modern society (Ward, 2004:224-230). It is in such terms that social science explained their retreat from action-

oriented, reformist research into a scientific approach, in which it was deemed inappropriate for scholarly inquiry to be guided by an interest in creating a better society (Harkavy & Puckett, 1994:306). Social science would eventually position itself in opposition to what was now the 'mass society' of the public sphere (Schudson, 1976:83).

The opposition between science and society was consolidated by the establishment of a more direct relationship between university-based social science and the American state. This helped to establish a tradition of science that understood its purpose as that of social administration, in service of governance. From the 1930's onwards, the American government recognised a great need for the gathering and analysis of quantitative data, first about the Great Depression and then World War II. It turned to universities for the necessary expertise and, as a result, social scientists were provided with unprecedented opportunities for working substantively with research methods (Platt, 1996:40). Army research, in particular, gave social scientists the chance to carry out massive empirical studies, and in this context to test and refine quantitative research strategies such as that of the survey (Platt, 1996:20). Many of the most prominent empirical sociologists became involved in the wartime research effort, along with their graduate students. They were provided with opportunities for quantitative sociological research on a scale never before available, in an environment that was framed by a strong sense of shared commitment and intellectual excitement (Platt, 1996:231). After the war, the success of these research programmes gave social science a prestige which encouraged continued support from government and other funding sources. The GI Bill also helped to ensure that the momentum of wartime research was sustained, contributing a large body of graduate students who could carry forward the ideas developed during the war (Platt, 1996:271). Sociologists were able to draw directly on the work produced during the war years for the strengthening of quantitative methods. The *American Soldier* research is one important example of such work. Merton and Lazarsfeld had been close to the research team who produced this research, and they were now able to draw out its methodological implications (20). These events consolidated the sharp decline from the late 1930's onwards of qualitative research practices within sociology such as those of the life history, and the ascendancy of more 'scientific', less subjective approaches (Plummer, 2001:114). They also facilitated the final dissolution of the relationship of sociology with social reform (Platt, 1996:271).

C Wright Mills, who can be seen as Parson's main adversary in the conceptualisation of social scientific knowledge during the 1950's, argued that these trends were compromising the responsibilities of social scientists as public intellectuals. He proposed, in this respect, that democratic society depended on an educated, politically engaged public, and in order to ensure its existence there was a need to sustain a public intellectual discourse that addressed social realities in practical terms. He crafted a moral vision of a critically engaged 'public sociology', drawing for inspiration not just on the European examples of Karl Marx and Max Weber but also on a generation of American intellectuals from the early decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. These included the American pragmatists such as William James, John Dewey, Charles Pierce and George Herbert Mead. He also

saw the muckraking journalists and independent cultural critics of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century as playing a similar role. Mills pointed out that this generation of intellectuals approached ideas from a position of activism, with an eye to their social consequences rather than focusing only on a quest for truth. He suggested, further, that in the post-war period, the American intellectual community had abandoned this critical role, partly because of the perceived threat of communism, but also because of the professionalisation of academia and as part of this the increasing dominance of the university within intellectual culture. In this context sociology had renounced its critical role both through the grand theory of functionalism and the abstract empiricism of the Columbian school and had placed itself in the service of the power elite. In this way, Mills provided an important critique of the quantitative tradition. Until the 1960's, Parson's theorisation of science nevertheless remained dominant, while Mills occupied the position of the critical outsider (Seidman, 2004:97-104). It was only in the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century that analyses such as the one offered by Mills would become a central point of reference for the conceptualisation of alternative approaches to studies of the social.

## **2.2 Critical theory, postmodernism and the recovery of critique**

In the 1950's, the influence of the positivist tradition of social science and the conceptualisation of society in which it was grounded impacted internationally on approaches to the study of the social. It has been noted, however, that global receptiveness to American intellectual work and to positivist social science in particular was partly due to the extent to which the events of World War II had disrupted academic traditions elsewhere in the world. For this reason, the influential status of American ideas was in some respects temporary in nature. By the 1960's, earlier approaches to academic knowledge were reasserting themselves in Europe, with the resurgence of pre-war theoretical traditions such as that of Marxism and phenomenology (Carey, 1997:109; Carey, in Hardt, 2001:xi). This can be understood as the re-emergence of compelling alternatives to the ideal of positivist scientific thought. In the 1960's and early 70's the surfacing of new approaches to knowledge in context of post-structuralism and post-modernism are seen as key examples of such alternatives (Seidman, 2004:202). In context of this study the significance of such challenges can be identified in the role that they played in scrutinising the relationship that exists between dominant approaches to the conceptualisation of authoritative knowledge and exploitative relations of power. They can be said, in this respect, to offer an important alternative to the approach adopted within positivist social science to progressive social change.

It is, indeed, primarily in context of an interest in such change that Cultural Studies turned, in the establishment of its theoretical identity, to these conceptualisations of knowledge. It has been proposed, in literature dealing with the history of Cultural Studies, that two epistemological traditions that have been of particular importance to the conceptualisation of credible knowledge within this field is that of critical theory and postmodernism (Hardt, 1992; Morley, interviewed in Jin, 2011).

The discussion in this next section explores the approach to knowledge that informed these two traditions and the potential that they therefore presented with regards to the articulation of alternatives to the positivist paradigm and the liberal conceptualisation of society that it serves to reproduce. It is also of significance to this discussion that the foundations of critical theory were articulated at the same time as those of positivist social science, and shared the same institutional environment. Until the latter part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, such theory nevertheless remained marginalised within American social science, and therefore within the key disciplinary environment in which journalism scholarship and education established itself.

### 2.2.1 Critical theory

The academic environment in which American sociology emerged in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century is, ironically, also closely associated with the articulation of critical theory, a tradition of thought which offered important alternatives to positivist conceptualisation of knowledge. Max Horkheimer was appointed in 1931 as the director of the Institute of Social Research in Frankfurt, where he established the 'Frankfurt School'. However, the rise of Nazi Germany soon made it necessary for scholars within this school to emigrate, and by 1934 the institute had relocated to Columbia University. It would remain in America until it was re-established in Frankfurt after the war, in 1951 (Bryant, 1985:116-118). Before Horkheimer's appointment and the relocation to America, the institute focused primarily on empirical studies in history and economics. In the period of its exile, however, a more philosophical approach began to be fore-grounded. Many of the distinctive ideas of critical theory were formulated at this time, particularly through the work of Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno (Bottomore, 1984:12).

The Frankfurt School was, at least initially, concerned with studying the forces that might lead to the formation of a free and just society (Held, 1980:15). Their approach to this subject was situated within a neo-Marxist tradition of thought, and positioned in opposition to positivism. Indeed, Horkheimer saw the basis of critical theory as that of challenging positivist science, as it is expressed within 19<sup>th</sup> social theory, particularly in the philosophical work of the logical positivists and also what he saw as the 'covert' positivism of orthodox Marxism (Bottomore, 1984:15). The Frankfurt School argued, firstly, that positivism was inadequate as a mode of analysis for social reality. Secondly, they suggested that positivist science is inherently conservative, because it tends to focus only on what already exists and in this way sanctions the present social order. Thirdly, it reproduces 'scientific and technological rationality' which operates as a new form of domination in advanced industrial societies (Bottomore, 1984:28). In opposition to the theoretical frameworks of positivism, the Frankfurt School's approach to knowledge was based in a rejection of the idea of value free social science and of an instrumentalist approach to social theory. The central concept within its theorisation of science was, instead, that of the Marxist interpretation of the Kantian 'critique' of knowledge (Connerton, 1976:17). According to this interpretation, the foundation of critique in social science is derived not

from a scientific interest either in the truth-value of knowledge or the effectiveness of research instruments in explanation and prediction, but rather from a commitment to emancipation (Delanty, 1997:73). Marx argued that the aim of theory in social science should not only be to explain or interpret the world, as it was within the positivist and hermeneutic traditions respectively, but also to change it. Scientific knowledge should, in other words, position itself in a 'critical' relationship with society (Seidman, 2004:32). Within this relationship, social science would not transcend society but rather transform it, by identifying with the most advanced form of consciousness in that society. Marx argued that, in the context of capitalism, this was the consciousness of the working classes. He also placed the critique of political economy as central to social theory, arguing that history must be understood in its material context. He drew on the Hegelian concept of dialectics in order to argue that capitalist societies are structured around economic contradictions and that social change occurs when such contradiction reaches a point of crisis (Selden, 1985:83).

Marx's ideas had evolved at the time of the formation of the unions and socialist parties of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, a context in which social revolution seemed imminent (Seidman, 2004:122). The Frankfurt School reinterpreted his theoretical principles in context of very different social trends in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. These included the Great Depression, the failure of working class revolutions of central and Southern Europe after World War I, the ascendancy of Stalinism in Russia and the emergence of Nazism in Germany and fascism throughout Europe (Held, 1980:17-18; Seidman, 2004:122). Once they had relocated to New York, they saw similarities between the trends towards totalitarianism in Europe and the commercialism of American culture, particularly in the context of the dominating role of the mass media (Selden, 1985:91). In response to these trends, the Frankfurt School committed themselves to a reappraisal of Marxist theory, especially with regards to the relation between theory and practice (Bottomore, 1984:11). They set about recovering constructivist aspects of Hegelian theory within Marxism, which had been downplayed by Marx in his interpretation of the concept of dialectics. They criticised Marx for reducing this concept to an analysis of political economy, and proposed a broader approach in which dialectics forms part of all aspects of society rather than just the economy. This allowed them to establish an approach in which ideology was understood to be an inescapable part of the construction of reality. The 'cultural industry' of the mass media became, in this context, a key object of study for the Frankfurt School (Bottomore, 1984:19). They remained committed to a critical purpose for social science, which could still play a role in disrupting the construction of reality in modern society. They threw doubt, however, on the Marxist idea that social transformation could be located in proletarian class consciousness (Connerton, 1976:21) and argued instead, that it was the role of intellectuals to convey critical consciousness to the working class (Bottomore, 1984:17). In this respect they also awarded art and literature with a privileged status as knowledge systems, representing the only spheres in which the domination of a totalitarian society could be resisted (Selden, 1985: 91).



The formulation of these principles within the Frankfurt School occurred at the same time as the rise of quantitative social science in America. The role of critical theory as an intervention into the American context is not immediately obvious, even though the Institute was located at Columbia and as such at one of the central sites of the production of the quantitative paradigm. One reason for this may have been the fundamental difference in social analysis that underpinned the two approaches, so that they stood in a relationship of incommensurability with each other. It is also of relevance that until the outbreak of the war, much of the work of the Frankfurt School appeared in German, in the *Zeitschrift for Sozialforschung*, because members of the school wanted to ensure the survival of critical scholarship for European audiences (Connerton, 1976:11). Lazarsfeld was one of the few American scholars who maintained contact with them during this period. His approach to sociology remained, however, in opposition to theirs (Bryant, 1985:118; Hardt, 1992:134). Their influence only really began to spread, both in Europe and America, in the late 1950's, and peaked with the rapid growth of the radical student movement in the late 1960's (Bottomore, 1984:13). Their work impacted, in particular, on social science in the 1960's and 1970's, playing a role in the renewal of Marxist social theory, and the strengthening of the ideal of social science as a critical practice (Bottomore, 1984:7; Delanty, 1997:75). It was particularly influential in context of the critique of mass culture and debates about the potential of authoritarianism in American society (Connerton, 1976:12). With the deaths of Adorno and Horkheimer, and the decline of the radical student movement in the 1970's, the influence of the Frankfurt School's approach began to wane (Bottomore, 1984:55). It can be argued, however, that the Frankfurt School's contribution to the conceptualisation of authoritative knowledge continued to be of significance within the neo-critical work of Jurgen Habermas who represents a later generation of critical theory. It is, again, possible to trace connections between Habermas's theorisation of knowledge and surrounding historical events. He, unlike the Frankfurt School, established his intellectual identity in a time of economic prosperity, and of renewed democratic political activism in the student protests and the new social movements of the late sixties. In this context, it seems understandable that his reformulation of the Frankfurt School's critique of positivism was much more optimistic than theirs (Seidman, 2004:122). He established, in this way, a new theory of knowledge, which contributed to a wave of debates in the 70's and 1980's about the science of the social, conducted in Germany and in American universities with strong links to German thought (Delanty, 1997:16).

Habermas's theorisations of the foundations of social science countered the narrowness of the positivist understanding of science. He achieved this, firstly, by developing a framework acknowledging the legitimacy of both natural science and the human sciences, while at the same time providing each with its own purpose within that broader framework. In doing so he resisted the primacy of positivism, but also argued that hermeneutics or critical theory did not provide adequate alternatives on their own. He proposed a restructured Marxism that integrated the hermeneutical tradition, the critical theory of the Frankfurt School and aspects of positivism into a unified

framework (Held, 1980:15). Secondly, his framework grounded scientific knowledge more explicitly within the broader social reality. He achieved this in his earlier work by connecting science with three cognitive interests, which lead to the production of three kinds of knowledge. The first was 'technical', grounded in material needs and labour, which forms the basis of the empirical-analytical sciences. The second was 'practical' and concerned with communicative understanding; it gave rise to the historical, interpretive and cultural sciences whose aim is to clarify meaning in order to promote mutual understanding. The third interest is 'emancipatory' representing the domain of self-reflective and critical knowledge, and informing the critical sciences such as that of Marxism and psychoanalysis (Seidman, 2004:124-125). By creating this link between scientific knowledge and the interests that exist within the broader social reality, Habermas also established a broader account of the normative foundations for science generally. He does so in a way that would deny the claims of empirical-analytical science to exclusive validity and also overcome the dichotomy of fact and value. In his later work, he abandons the distinctions between interests and instead presents an approach to science based in a theory of language and communication, and the concept of the critical public sphere. He argues, here, that a common social world is only possible if human beings achieve consensus, through communication, about what is real and about which social norms are appropriate (Seidman, 2004:125).

### 2.2.2 The postmodern turn

Postmodern theorisations of society, which emerged within academic debates in the late 1960's and 1970's, also offered important alternatives to the conceptualisation of knowledge of positivist social science. Such theory does not merely critique this conceptualisation, but argues instead for the abandonment of the entire intellectual enterprise of modernity in which it is understood to be based. A central theme within postmodern theory is, for example, the rejection of the idea that social science should develop 'grand narratives' in order to explain, interpret or change society. We find, instead, an acceptance of scepticism and uncertainty. It has been argued that within this tradition of thought, engagement with the methodology of science is no longer a critique of positivism. It is, rather, a deconstruction of the mythology of a unified subject that can interpret or explain reality, of the 'liberal' project of emancipation in itself, and even of the idea that science can have normative foundations (Delanty, 1997:95).

Postmodern theories of knowledge first emerged in the context of post-structuralism. The post-structuralists, in turn, formulated an approach to the analysis of social meaning in reaction to the French theoretical tradition of structuralism. Structuralism had incorporated ideas drawn from the linguist Ferdinand de Saussure, focusing in particular on his proposal that there was no direct relationship between language and reality. Saussure held that the relationship between 'signifiers' (representation) and the 'signified' (reality itself) was arbitrary, and on this basis made a case for a view of language as a system of signs in which meaning is generated by the relations of difference



amongst these signs. The anthropologist Levi-Strauss applied this view of language to a conceptualisation of social meaning in general, arguing that structural social enquiry could examine the relations of difference among units that form part of a system of social phenomena, and thus discover universal laws (Seidman, 2004:163). It has been argued that it is no coincidence that the articulation of this approach to social science coincided with the post-war period in France, in which the emphasis was on establishing a stable social order. This was, however, a context that would change dramatically in 1968, with the rise of the student- and worker movements. In the wake of these events, structuralism no longer seemed an attractive option, and it was at this point that post-structuralism emerged (Seidman, 2004:166-167).

It is also perhaps not coincidental that the postmodern conceptualisation of knowledge established itself within French intellectual culture, and was slow to do so in the American context. We have seen that American universities, in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, were central to the theorisation of social science, and that they were also increasingly dominated by a focus on professionalisation, specialisation, and a functionalist approach to empirical inquiry. As we have seen from Mills' critique of the university culture that resulted from this, there was little room for an emphasis on the role of scientists and academics generally as public intellectuals. Because of the way in which universities had become institutionalised in France in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, French academic culture shared certain aspects of the American approach. Here, too, academic knowledge had become defined as expertise in service of social administration. Critical intellectual culture nevertheless survived in the French context, existing at first primarily outside the university (Delanty, 1997:18). 20<sup>th</sup> century universities in France inherited this culture of intellectual criticism and because of this, unlike their American equivalents, university-based academics were expected to be general intellectuals, articulating perspectives that address a broader public outside that of academia. It was therefore public culture rather than specialised science that represented the most important point of reference for the postmodern conceptualisation of knowledge. It may also be relevant that the migration of the logical positivists to American and English universities had helped to consolidate an academic culture in these countries in which science and philosophy were closely associated, while the 'continental' tradition of philosophy still defined itself in critical opposition to scientific knowledge (Seidman, 2004:161). In this context, it begins to become clear why the postmodern theorists defined themselves in relation to public culture rather than the domain of science.

It can indeed be argued that the theoretical work of post-structuralists such as Jacques Derrida and Roland Barthes was shaped by an intellectual shift that was taking place within French society. Key to their work and to the tradition of postmodern theory that would follow from this was the argument that the general world-view in post-industrial society was moving beyond the terms of reference of modernity (Delanty, 1997:100). The post-structuralists did not define in detail what a postmodern society would be. They did, however, generally propose that to remain relevant to the new social context, the principles of structuralism should be reformulated in order to engage with the

politics of knowledge and of language. The structuralists aimed to uncover general linguistic and social patterns organised around binary oppositions. Derrida, in contrast, held that the meaning of signs is multivocal and changing, and therefore argued for the exploration of their political implications within historically specific contexts. The point of deconstruction becomes, within his theorisation, that of a politics of subversion, undermining the authority of dominant systems of meaning (Seidman, 2004:168-9).

In the late 1960's and 1970's, post-structuralism and the postmodern conceptualisation of knowledge were mainly confined to the continental tradition of philosophy. Within such scholarship, we see a more detailed theorisation than that of the early post-structuralists with regards to the nature of postmodern society. In this context, scholars such as Michel Foucault, Jean-Francois Lyotard and Jean Baudrillard offered alternative conceptualisations of knowledge, which ran counter to the positivist approach (Delanty, 1997:104). Key to their understanding was the recognition of the importance of knowledge outside the specialised context of science and a questioning of the privileging of science as truth. They argued that the idealisation of science marginalises non-scientific thinking, and with this the communities in which such thinking takes place. They, and other postmodern theorists, favoured a pluralistic approach which recognises different forms of knowledge (Seidman, 2004:202).

Postmodernism also became influential within Anglophone academic traditions, where it first remained limited to the context of literary criticism and then became instrumental in the development of Cultural Studies. It is, indeed, here that postmodernism first impacted on Cultural Studies, in context of the Birmingham School, and in particular the work of Stuart Hall. In Hall's work, too, one can see a reaction against the privileging of elite knowledge systems. His approach also drew on critical theory but he argued, in contrast to the Frankfurt School, that the study of high culture should not be awarded a favoured position over that of popular culture; instead, all culture should be viewed equally as an expression of lived experience (Seidman, 2004:135). In this way, the Birmingham School succeeded in making culture in general crucial to social analysis (Dickens & Fontana, 1994:2)

It is at least partly because of this achievement within British Cultural Studies that postmodern concepts finally became a prominent feature of social science in the 1980's. This influence can be seen in the scholarship that has emerged at this time around the fragmented identity politics of race, gender and sexuality (Seidman, 2004:207-208). It can also be observed in sociological studies of the last decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century dealing with the role of knowledge in contemporary society. Such studies include, for example, the literature of post-colonial thinkers such as Edward Said, who base their analysis of knowledge in a reaction against the cultural legacy of Western colonialism, and the work of the American literary critic and political scientist Fredric Jameson (Seidman, 2004:265-269). In context of such scholarship, new resources emerged that allowed fresh perspectives on the analysis of knowledge in society.

It has been argued, however, that postmodern social science does not on its own provide all the terms of reference necessary for a post-positivist formulation of the role of scientific knowledge in contemporary society. One problem is that the deconstructive methodology of such scholarship tends to be characterised by a ‘culturalist’ focus on textuality, which is not necessarily appropriate to the study of all social meaning, and more specifically not that of the practices of knowledge production. Much of such scholarship is also characterised by a retreat into a ‘theory-heavy’ discourse, so that the significance for practices of knowledge production becomes difficult to determine (Delanty, 1997:17-18). In this sense, then, postmodernism still did not provide an escape route for social science from the framework of modernity. As we will see in the next chapter, these limitations also impacted on the position that Cultural Studies came to occupy in relation to the study of journalism.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter identifies two contrasting ‘moments’ in the World Two history of authoritative social knowledge in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. The first is associated with the orthodoxy of positivism in American social science in the 1950’s. The chapter notes that it is possible to observe, within this moment, the existence of traditions in the conceptualisation of authoritative social knowledge that represent alternatives to positivism. Two such traditions are represented by the intellectual heritage of the Chicago School of the Progressive Era, and the theorisations of the Frankfurt School. It is pointed out that the early 20<sup>th</sup> century history of the Chicago School offers an example of social science characterised by a fluid and interconnected approach to authoritative social knowledge, produced within and outside the institutional boundaries of the academy. This understanding of knowledge does not place its centre of authority inside the university as a domain untainted by social influence, defined in opposition both to the market place and the political sphere. It also does not define its disciplinary identity primarily with reference to its choice of methodology, in the way that became characteristic of positivist social science. Instead, it defined itself in terms of the social problems that it chose to engage with. Its understanding of credible knowledge is also consciously partisan, defined by a commitment to public deliberation and social reform. The significance of this disciplinary tradition can be seen, then, in its operation as a research practice that demonstrates alternative epistemological, ontological and methodological principles to that of positivist social science. The value of the Frankfurt School can, in turn, be identified in the analytical tools that it offered for the evaluation of knowledge. Of particular importance is the emphasis, within critical theory, on the emancipatory potential of knowledge, and the assertion of the inevitable role played by ideology and culture in the production of knowledge.

In context of the existence of these intellectual resources, the chapter argues that it was not inevitable that social science in mid-20<sup>th</sup> century America should have marginalised the critical scrutiny of the institutions of Western society. Such marginalisation can be understood, rather, as

resulting from choices that were made by social scientists, at this time, with regards to the theoretical identity of the disciplines in which they were based. These choices can, furthermore, be seen to be implicated in broader negotiations that were taking place, at this time, around the conceptualisation of American society, and of the role that World Two knowledge played within this. Of particular importance, within this, was the retreat, within the American intellectual community, from an interest in social reform to an investment in a functionalist view of society. This was accompanied by an investment in the 'professionalisation' of society, and with this the establishment of disciplinary traditions that understood their purpose as that of social administration, in service of governance. This process is, furthermore, closely associated with changes in the conceptualisation of the role that universities play within society, as systems of knowledge production. It was increasingly assumed, as part of such change, that the value of universities could be identified in the contribution that they made to the establishment of systems of expertise that operated in service of society.

The second World Two 'moment' in the conceptualisation of authoritative social knowledge discussed in this chapter is that of the international emergence, during the following two decades, of emancipatory alternatives to positivism. The chapter proposes that, within this moment, the critique of positivism can, again, be seen to form part of shifts in the conceptualisation of knowledge that took place within a wider social context. The discussion deals with such critique as it is represented by the examples of critical theory and postmodern theory. It is argued that these traditions of theory are embedded in the international emergence from the 1960's onward of a series of challenges to established modes of thought about authoritative social knowledge. These challenges occurred not only within the context of disciplinary knowledge, but more broadly within the socio-political sphere. A key example is represented by the interventions made into higher education by social movements such as that of socialism and feminism, which claimed universities as sites within which to advocate for political and social rights. In context of these challenges, the history of authoritative knowledge could no longer be described in terms of any established hegemony of positivism. Instead, it became characterised by on-going struggles over appropriate definition. It would seem, then, that during this period a space opened up in which emancipatory approaches to the production of social knowledge could assert their authority.

In its discussion of scholarship concerned with the critique of positivism, the chapter also draws a distinction between intellectual traditions that deal with knowledge as 'science' and those that are concerned with knowledge as 'culture'. Critical theory and postmodernism, as we have seen, opposed the privileging of science as the guarantor of truth. Instead, they identified with a pluralist and partisan conceptualisation of knowledge, seen to exist outside systematic and specialised empirical inquiry and produced in the context of public culture. The critical scholarship that emerged from these traditions of thought was, indeed, directed to the study of culture rather than that of science. Such scholarship was not, therefore, centrally concerned with the critical re-conceptualisation of science and defined itself, instead, in opposition to the prioritisation of scientific

knowledge. The perspective that was opened up for the redefinition of credible social knowledge can, then, be seen to have existed in parallel to that of positivist social science, rather than providing an alternative to it. Within this understanding, the idealised conception of science as objective and universal relevant knowledge, and the role that this conception played within a functionalist understanding of the relationship between science and the social, is not directly challenged.

One implication of this disciplinary arrangement is that the cultural scholarship evolving from critical and postmodern theory were not strongly informed by World Three scholarship dealing with the social study of science. As we have seen in Chapter One, this conceptual tradition provided important critical challenges to the positivist perspective on authoritative social knowledge. Of particular significance, within this, was Kuhn's contribution to the conceptual foundations of a constructivist approach to the study of science. This work played a significant role in the establishment of empirical research that dealt with historically situated examples of science as social practice. It is noted, above, that because of the strong 'textual' focus within critical studies of culture, it is exactly this emphasis on knowledge production as social practice that becomes neglected. The isolation of such work from the intellectual resources offered by the study of science could, then, be seen to represent a missed opportunity for the establishment of a more inclusive set of reference points for the critical study of social knowledge.

## CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCHING JOURNALISM

### A global perspective

#### Introduction

This chapter deals with the history of the academic study of journalism, and with the relationship between this history and broader developments in the conceptualisation of authoritative social knowledge in universities. Chapter Two mapped out the frame of reference for this exploration through a discussion of the disciplinary environments that have been closely related to journalism's establishment in the academy. It focused on approaches that have been adopted in these environments to the conceptualisation of authoritative knowledge and proposed that these have been of importance in shaping the history of the study of journalism. This next chapter explores this proposal through an examination of the history of journalism scholarship. It describes patterns in the global development of such scholarship and reviews literature critiquing the implications of these patterns for the way in which universities engage with journalism as a social practice.

The chapter responds to the assertion, within historical accounts of Mass Communication Studies (Rogers & Chaffee, 1994; Rogers, 1994; Chaffee & Rogers, 1997) that it is only in the 1950's, in context of the establishment of this field, that journalism scholarship became associated with a disciplinary space which could provide it with a consistent identity. It is also informed by the suggestion that, in the second half of the century, with the emergence of Cultural Studies, it becomes possible to identify an alternative intellectual domain from which to engage with journalism (Zelizer, 2004b:106). It is argued, within such commentary, that the development of both fields contributed to the establishment of more coherent bodies of research about journalism. This is thought to be true for the countries in which these fields originated, but also in the academic environments to which the intellectual traditions of Mass Communication Studies and Cultural Studies migrated. As we will see, the approach to the study of journalism established through Mass Communication Studies was positivist in its emphasis and informed by a functionalist conceptualisation of society. The discussion in this chapter explores the relationship between these characteristics and the conceptualisation of knowledge that had become dominant within American social science at this time.

It is, at the same time, acknowledged that outside the American context the university-based study of journalism became a reality much later into the 20<sup>th</sup> century. As such, it has in many cases emerged subsequent to the era of positivist hegemony, framed by a different set of circumstances in the history of knowledge. It will nevertheless be argued that, even when viewed internationally, journalism scholarship has remained profoundly influenced by the positivist conceptualisation of knowledge dominated discourse in American universities in the 1950's.

In discussing such patterns, the chapter identifies four sequences in the history of journalism scholarship. The first, which falls in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, can be described as the process

through which journalism scholarship moved from a state of fragmentation to one in which it became closely tied to the disciplinary identity of Mass Communication Studies. The second, which occurs between the 1950's and 1980's, concerns the establishment of positivist journalism scholarship as a substantial tradition, in context of Mass Communication Studies. This sequence overlaps with the third, which covers the period between the 1960's and 1980's and involves the emergence of critical responses to the positivist conceptualisation of journalism. Such responses are identified, firstly, within Mass Communication Studies itself and then also in other disciplinary contexts. The fourth phase, which starts in the 1990's and stretches into the 21<sup>st</sup> century, concerns the emergence of Journalism Studies as a field. It is argued that in this development one finally observes journalism scholarship that no longer defines its identity in relation to either the confirmation or critique of a positivist conceptualisation of knowledge.

### **3.1 The first fifty years: From fragmentation to a positivist orthodoxy**

In contemporary accounts of the history of Mass Communication Studies it is claimed that it is only with the emergence of this field, in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, that journalism became the object of systematic study (Rogers & Chaffee, 1994; Rogers 1994; Chaffee & Rogers, 1997). The discussion, below, acknowledges that it is indeed in context of the establishment of Mass Communication Studies that a space first opened up within academia for the sustained and substantive study of journalism. As such, the institutionalisation of the study of journalism is implicated in the articulation of the 'orthodoxy' of positivism that characterised this moment in history. As we have seen in Chapter Two, this moment is associated with the marginalisation, in American social science, of the critical scrutiny of knowledge as it exists within the institutions of Western liberalism. It is argued, below, that because of these circumstances the terms that came to define journalism scholarship placed limitations on its critical potential.

Of particular importance to this argument is the conceptualisation of authoritative scientific knowledge that came to underpin approaches to scholarship within Mass Communication Studies. More particularly, the field defined its own legitimacy as a perspective from which to study mass communication in terms of an emphasis on the importance of empirical inquiry. Empiricism was understood, furthermore, in terms of a positivist distinction between observable 'facts', and socially specific 'values', with the legitimacy of empirical research depending on the extent to which this distinction could be maintained. It will be argued that the assertion of the principle of value-freedom tends to obscure the fact that the approach to journalism scholarship that emerged within this field remained informed by a liberal conceptualisation of society. Because these ideological foundations are not acknowledged, the possibility for the establishment, within this field, of scholarship based in an alternative conceptualisation of empiricism remains limited.



In order to establish a context for this discussion, the first subsection considers different attempts that can be identified, during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, to institutionalise the study of journalism in the academy. This discussion confirms that it is only in the context of Mass Communication Studies that such attempts led to the establishment of a sustained tradition of journalism scholarship. The second subsection considers the way in which Mass Communication Studies positioned itself, in the 1950's, in relation to existing traditions of scholarship about journalism. It is argued that, as part of this process of positioning, Mass Communication Studies acknowledged certain intellectual resources that existed within the academy for the study of journalism, while disregarding others. In doing so, the perspectives that opened up from which the study of journalism could be conducted became closely associated with a positivist and functionalist conceptualisation of empirical inquiry.

### 3.1.1 Journalism education and scholarship: A shared history

Until well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century, viewed internationally, occurrences of scholarship about journalism were widely scattered within the social sciences and humanities, taken up amongst many other interests (Wahl-Jorgensen & Hanitzsch, 2009:6). It is, nevertheless, possible to identify at least three instances, during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, in which there were attempts at institutionalising the study of journalism within universities in context of a more coherent disciplinary identity. These are represented, respectively, by the 'soviet' model of journalism scholarship, the German tradition of *Zeitungswissenschaft* and the American study of journalism. It is possible to trace a correlation, in each of these examples, between the institutionalisation of the study of journalism and the rise of university-based journalism education. In each case, research and teaching about journalism emerged simultaneously, as a shared response to a growth of interest in knowledge about journalism within the environments in which such traditions based themselves. In each of these environments such interests were, however, expressive of very different social circumstances and ideological paradigms.

The soviet model emerged in the Soviet Union and allied countries in the 1940's, and was strongly informed by an interest in the articulation and circulation of an alternative conceptualisation of journalism to that of Western liberalism. A teaching programme based in this model was first established in Soviet Russia, grounded in a theorisation of journalism developed by the Bolshevik government. Programmes based in this model were then exported to other states with Communist Party governments. The theorisation of journalism circulated in this context drew on a critique of the press developed by Marx and Engels in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, in which journalism was described as a class-defined institution. Within the Bolshevik theorisation, journalists were expected to respond by renouncing 'bourgeois objectivism' and instead acting as agents for the proletarian revolution. A version of this approach to the study and teaching of journalism was also established after 1945 in East Germany. However, although examples of education and research based in the 'soviet' model can be traced well into the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the history of this tradition has been discontinuous and fragmented. By the 1990's, it is possible to identify a sharp decline in acceptance



of the theoretical framing for such study and teaching (Löffelholz, 2008:17, Weischenschaft & Malik, 2008:158; Zelizer, 2011:6).

Unlike the soviet model, *Zeitungswissenschaft* or 'Newspaper Science' was not explicitly preoccupied with the political purpose of journalism scholarship and teaching. The emphasis was, instead, on the establishment of academic legitimacy for the study of journalism, and on the role that specialised journalism education could play in the professionalisation of journalists (Ruhl, 2004:4). The foundations of this tradition was established in Germany by Karl Bucher, who set up the first university-based centre dedicated to such study at the University of Leipzig in 1916 (Weischenberg & Malik, 2008:158). Bucher had some experience working as a journalist, and later established himself as a social scientist, specialising in political economy and finance. He became increasingly interested in the role that specialised education could play in the professionalisation of journalism, and developed a curriculum designed for this purpose. Similar programmes, and associated research, were also established in other institutions in Germany, but by the late 1930's they had been co-opted by the Nationalist Socialist government. Subsequent to World War II, as in the instance of the soviet model, *Zeitungswissenschaft* did not survive as a sustained and substantive tradition of scholarship (Hardt, 1979:121).

In America, the emergence of a coherent tradition of journalism scholarship was also linked to the establishment of university-based journalism education. Commentators note that such programmes represented the one institutional space in American universities which concerned itself centrally with the study of journalistic practice (Wahl-Jorgensen & Hanitzsch, 2009:5). Here, as in the case of the German model, the emphasis was primarily on education in the service of the professionalisation of journalism. Knowledge about journalism generated in this context tended to be technical in nature, presented in the form of practically oriented textbooks geared towards the preparation of journalists for professional practice. From the early 20<sup>th</sup> century onwards, academics working within these programmes nevertheless also produced more scholarly work, primarily in the form of journalism histories. Journalism educators' research contributions typically took the form of anecdotal organisational histories of newspapers or memoirs and biographies of famous editors and publishers (Zelizer, 2004b:92). Such work has been described as a continuation of a strand of historical scholarship about journalism that first surfaced in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, both within British and German scholarship. They formed part of what has been referred to as a 'Whig' narrative in a broader body of historical work that emerged, at this time, and which traces the progressive expansion, in democratic society, of the institutions of liberty. Such scholarship celebrated the role played by journalism in the strengthening of liberal democracy, with the institutionalisation of freedom of the press as a key term of reference (Nerone & Barnhurst, 2003:19). The literature produced by 20<sup>th</sup> century journalism educators in America can be seen to continue this tradition through their account of the history of the American press. As in the case of the 'soviet' tradition, the

conceptualisation of journalism produced within these studies was therefore framed by ideological interest, this time that of liberalism.

The historical chronicles that journalism educators produced were, however, at odds with the aims which guided research in American academic environments at this time. Within the broader university context, and particularly when viewed from the perspective of the field of historical inquiry, they were regarded with suspicion and questioned for their thinness and lack of analysis (Zelizer, 2004b:84-85). It has been suggested that the growth of such scholarship resulted from struggles that were taking place, in the American context, around the legitimacy of university-based journalism education within the academy. Academic staff in the new schools and departments of journalism recognised the importance of establishing the integrity of their teaching through the production of academic work (Zelizer, 2004b:85). The literature they produced was nevertheless still shaped by the fact that, as educators, they were primarily concerned with the preparation of journalists. The studies produced in this context were intended, first and foremost, as terms of reference for the training of aspirant journalists, providing them with examples of good practice (Nerone & Barnhurst, 2003:22). They were, in other words, not primarily informed by an interest in the development of new theoretical knowledge but rather by the need to reproduce the established conventions of mainstream journalistic practice (Zelizer, 2004:84-85).

It is only in the 1950's, half a century after journalism first entered the American academy, that journalism scholarship began to gain some legitimacy within the university context. Such legitimacy was not, however, associated with the journalism education historians, depending instead on the work of social scientists who concerned themselves with the impact of journalism on audiences. These studies occurred in context of the rapid acceptance, within American social science at this time, of the paradigm of positivist empirical research. They represent, more particularly, a response to the growth of interest by the American state in knowledge that could be produced through such research about the social impact of mass communication. A number of academics involved at this time in the study of mass communication capitalised on this interest, developing an approach to the study of journalism and communication more generally which was based in positivist empirical inquiry. In this way, they laid down the foundations of the field of Mass Communication Studies and thus managed, for the first time, to establish an acknowledged disciplinary identity for the study of journalism (Zelizer, 2004b:17).

Even so, the establishment of this foundation was only achieved in context of a partnership with journalism education programmes. It is generally suggested, in literature dealing with this history (Medsker, 1996; Zelizer, 2004b) that journalism programmes accepted this partnership because it allowed them to be associated with more rigorous academic scholarship than that of the journalism histories. The field of Mass Communication Studies, on the other hand, is thought to have benefited because it was able to graft itself into the university by utilising the institutional resources of university-based journalism education (Medsker, 1996:56-7). A key facilitator in the founding of this

partnership was Wilbur Schramm, who was in charge of journalism education at the University of Iowa after World War II (55). He consolidated the relationship between journalism education and social science by incorporating elements of Lazarfield's approach to sociology, as well as drawing on a functionalist approach to political science and social psychology (Zelizer, 2004b:13-44). The result was a curriculum in which Mass Communication Studies represented an important element, taught separately from journalism production skills (Medsger, 1996:55). Later, Schramm would establish institutes for Mass Communication Studies at Stanford University and the University of Illinois. Graduates from these institutes were employed to teach journalism education across the country, and by the 1960's most programmes were founded on a relationship with Mass Communication Studies (Medsger, 1996:56; Dickson, 2000:69).

The approach to the study of journalism that started to take shape in context of Mass Communication Studies contrasted sharply with the historical work of the journalism educators, offering a far more systematic approach to academic research. The communication scientists in fact distanced themselves from these journalism historians, who became marginalised as academics within their own institutions, isolated from the mainstream of mass communication scholarship (Zelizer, 2004b:86). For many years, the disjunction between the two approaches to knowledge about journalism studies caused tensions within such institutions. This was often expressed as a power struggle between the communication scientists and those members of faculty who taught the 'practice' of journalism. In histories of these institutions, reference is often made to the conflict that existed between the so-called 'Green Eyeshades' – the celluloid visors once worn by copy editors – and the 'Chi-squares', pointing to communication scientists' emphasis on quantitative research (Medsger, 1996:57). Within this arrangement, both the communication scientists and journalism educators defined their approach to knowledge about journalism by offsetting them against each other.

Within all three traditions of the study of journalism referred to above, journalism education clearly represented an institutional space which made it possible for journalism scholarship to establish a coherent disciplinary identity for itself within the academy. This space did not, however, in itself ensure the survival of any of these examples as powerful academic traditions of scholarship. Of the three traditions, it was only the American example that resulted in a sustained tradition of research. Also, as we have seen, it only achieved a strong disciplinary foundation once it disassociated itself to a degree from journalism education, and instead became associated with the paradigm of rigorous empirical social science. However, the relationship between Mass Communication Studies and journalism education remained of central importance to the dominant role played by this field within the history of journalism scholarship. A closer study of processes of self-definition, within this field, suggests that the spectrum of positions that it offered from which journalism could be imagined within American journalism scholarship was defined by the opposition between these two groups. At one end of this spectrum, there is the normative approach of traditional journalism history, with its explicit emphasis on liberal values; at the other, the rigorous empirical

approach of Mass Communication Studies, and the emphasis on value-freedom. Commentators have noted, however, that the spectrum is very narrowly defined, omitting important perspectives from which to represent journalism. It fails, in fact, to acknowledge important examples of journalism research, both in context of a history of such scholarship, and in terms of work produced by contemporaries of the communication scientists. As will be demonstrated in the next section, this process of exclusion can be clearly observed in the official accounts that Mass Communication Studies provides of its own emergence as an academic field.

### 3.1.2 Mass Communication Studies and the rewriting of scholarly history

The construction of the terms that defined the disciplinary identity of Mass Communication Studies can be traced in the account that the field provided of its own emergence. Carey explains that this account was first articulated in the 1950's within a "minor canon" of historical texts, produced by Lazarsfeld and Schramm. He argues that the disciplinary history presented in these texts involved the selective description and in some instances the misrepresentation of the roots of the field. The resulting 'myth of origin' was widely reproduced in Mass Communication Studies textbooks and journals and in this way gained general acceptance (Carey, 1996:14-15). The Mass Communication Studies myth could be seen to justify the partnership of journalism with the tradition in media sociology represented by Lazarsfeld and Schramm. It can, furthermore, be said to have operated as a marginalisation of more reflective and critical approaches to journalistic scholarship.

The narrative of this myth begins in World War I. It describes the history of media scholarship of this time as the record of flawed and failed theorisation. It is usually explained that the war, combined with the growth of the public relations industry, triggered widespread concern about the power of the media, and in particular about propaganda. The scholarship that resulted from this was supposedly based in the belief that media messages worked like 'magic bullets', which could be 'shot' at passive audiences to make a powerful impact. Within this understanding of the media, it was seen to have limitless power for manipulation (Sproule, 1989:226). It is also asserted that, during the Depression, these concerns were further fueled by ongoing suggestions of the powerful role played by the media in mass society. One event that is often cited in this regard within the Mass Communication Studies narrative is that of the impact of Orson Welles's broadcast of "The War of the Worlds" (Carey, 1996:15). The myth claims that 'magic bullet' scholarship was based on anecdotal evidence and incoherent arguments. The narrative then points to a more sophisticated and empirically grounded body of research which emerged in the late 1930's and 1940's, generated in particular by the Bureau of Applied Social Research at Columbia and by social science projects based in the Office for War Information. This research was designed to demonstrate that audiences were protected from the manipulative power of the media through various mediating factors, such as their own psychological dispositions and the stable social networks in which they were located. The underpinning argument was that media operates, fundamentally, in support of the functioning of a

reasonable society and does not, in itself, constitute a social problem. Audiences could immerse themselves in a media system saturated by propaganda and mass consumer culture, but within an American context their responses would not threaten the underlying conditions of democracy (Carey, 1996:15-17).

There had, indeed, been widespread concern in America in the interwar years about media manipulation. It is a concern that formed part of a more general realisation within the public consciousness that the established social institutions would not, necessarily, always operate in the public interest. Expert knowledge was, for example, still believed to be of central importance to the management of society but it was no longer assumed that it was guaranteed that such knowledge would lead to societal improvement. This realisation was intensified by Americans' experience of the brutalities of war, and the culpability of the institutions of governance, professional expertise and communication in promoting such brutality. This damaged public faith in the idea of societies governed by informed reason. The disillusionment was, in part, a response to the manipulative role that the media has played within the American government's propaganda strategies. The success of war propaganda showed how the government, press and scientific community could work together to manipulate public opinion in the support of war (Ward, 2004:228).

It has been suggested, however, that the reference within Mass Communication Studies history to a body of scholarship informed by the 'magic bullet' theory is questionable. Critics of the Mass Communication Studies account of media scholarship have pointed out that there is in fact no definable body of research based in such a theory of media. Michael Sproule (1989) suggests that a core tradition of media criticism in the interwar years is represented, instead, by what he refers to as 'propaganda studies'. These authors did not form part of a coherent field but wrote, instead, from their bases in a variety of disciplines and positions in society, both in and outside the academy. They were influenced by the 'muckraker' tradition in journalism of investigating corrupt institutions. They shared with this tradition a preoccupation with the role played by media manipulation in such corruption. Their research did not focus, in the idiom of the so-called 'magic bullet' scholarship, on the reception of messages by a passive audience. They also did not concern themselves much with developing a grand social theory about the reception of messages by a 'mass audience'; this preoccupation was, rather, representative of the interests of the communication scientists themselves (226). Instead, these writers tended to work with empirical case studies which showed how propaganda figured in specific social contexts. The aim was one of social reform, by documenting how institutional propaganda threatened democratic life. This reform would be achieved by identifying "... whose interests were being served by the media, why, and with what ethical implication for democratic social progress" (232-235). The propaganda critics intended, furthermore, to make this evidence publicly available so that audiences of such media would be alerted to their operation. Unlike later work, these writers also did not insist on a sharp distinction between their role as researchers of media and their responsibility towards contributing to democratic process (229).

It is not only the ‘propaganda critics’ that are omitted from the standard history of Mass Communication Studies. Accounts of this history also tend to sideline the important contributions made by followers of the Frankfurt School who, between the 1930’s and 1960’s, were producing studies of journalism outside the mainstream of mass communication research. As we saw in Chapter Two, these scholars were based within American academia for a substantial period of time. Their work was, however, largely ignored by the academics who controlled teaching and research in mass communication in US colleges and universities, so that they played a marginal role in the development of the discipline (Switzer, 1985:57). The scholarship about journalism that emerged earlier in the century at the University of Chicago is also given little attention, despite the fact that many of the major figures in early American scholarship on mass communication and journalism were based here. These include the pragmatist philosophers John Dewey and George Herbert Mead, and the sociologist Robert Park, discussed in the last chapter in context of the Chicago School of Sociology (Hardt, 1992; Hardt, 2001; Wahl-Jorgensen & Hanitzsch, 2009). It has been noted that Park worked first as a journalist from about 1888, and only became an academic sociologist in 1912, at the age of 48 (Shills, 1996:89). He remained interested in the role of journalism as a research practice, and in the contribution that newspapers could make in publicizing social research information. Park envisioned a newspaper, called *Thought News*, as a way of bringing together journalism and social science knowledge (Zelizer 2004b:16).

Carey suggests that the myth of magic bullet scholarship sets up a “straw man”, which could then easily be toppled in order to legitimise the theoretical heritage of Mass Communication Studies. This false target operated to contain and neutralise intellectual work that was framed by a critical theorisation of modern society and of the role of media within this (Carey, 1996:19). Certainly, a characteristic that distinguishes much of the scholarship omitted from the official history of the study of mass communication was that they were based in an approach that was critical in orientation, dedicated to the formulation of theorisations through which the liberal conceptualisation of journalistic practice could be interrogated. The majority of such work also focused on the cultural dimensions of public knowledge, and as such acknowledged the social construction of meaning. This influence can be observed in the arguments developed by Dewey and Mead in the 1920’s with regards to the role that journalism should play in the production of public knowledge (Hardt, 1992:73). It surfaces again in studies of journalism that Park initiated in the Chicago School of ethnography in the 1930’s, which drew on the pragmatists’ philosophical work (Zelizer, 2004b:147, Iorio, 2004:7). Park, in fact, argued explicitly for an approach to journalism research that emphasised the importance of understanding journalistic practice by analysing the shared codes through which journalists structure knowledge (Löffelholz, 2008:23). A further example can be found in the work on the history of newspapers of the Canadian economist Harold Innis, published in the 1940’s. Innis studied in Chicago in the 1930’s and was strongly influenced by Dewey and Park’s thinking about the social role of mass communication (Carey, 2001:xiii). We will see, later, that although these more critical



traditions of journalism scholarship would for long remain marginalised within the American context, they were of central importance to the establishment of alternative approaches to the study of journalism. Such scholarship developed in a more fragmented form elsewhere within the American academy, outside the context of Mass Communication Studies and more broadly within international scholarship (Zelizer, 2004b:49).

The one tradition of journalism scholarship that is in fact acknowledged, within the Mass Communication Studies account, is that of the liberal tradition of journalism education, both as it is represented by the scholarship produced by American journalism educators, and by their German and British predecessors within the Whig tradition. The acknowledgement of such scholarship is, as we have seen, primarily framed as a dismissive critique, since the communication scientists staked their claim to the empirical study of journalism in opposition to this historical scholarship, which was criticised for its normative inflection and lack of theory. By the late 1950's, textbooks dealing with the theory and method of research about journalism and mass communication deliberately excluded references to the historical tradition, focusing instead on research framed within a quantitative social science paradigm (Avery, 1990:299). The dismissal of such scholarship is not surprising, given the emphasis, in Mass Communication Studies, on rigorous empirical study. The 19<sup>th</sup> century Whig tradition is not generally regarded as an example of systematic scholarship. It has been suggested that such work was based in an essentialist understanding of journalism, in which the normative ideals that inform journalistic practices are accepted as unproblematic. One way in which this manifests is in an emphasis on individual practitioners, for example through narratives about the 'great men' of newspaper journalism. Such narratives did not systematically interrogate the institutions and the social contexts of journalism. Commentators have argued that, because of this, the Whig tradition does not offer theoretical concepts which could adequately assist in the understanding of journalistic practice, nor do they provide the impetus towards its empirical investigation (Zelizer, 2004b:94; Nerone & Barnhurst, 2003:19).

It has however been pointed out that the Whig tradition of journalism history was not the only version of normative journalism scholarship to take shape in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. A second strand surfaced in Germany, one that was far more rigorous and critical in its approach to the theorisation of journalistic practice. In revisionist histories of the study of journalism (Hardt, 1992; Carey 1996; Hardt, 2001; Wahl-Jorgensen & Hanitzsch 2009), it is suggested that this strand represents an important antecedent to American scholarship about journalism. An early example can be found in the history of journalism published in 1845 by the literary historian Eduard Prutz (Löffelholz, 2008:16; Wahl-Jorgensen & Hanitzsch, 2009:5). In this text, Prutz developed a detailed theorisation of German journalism, focusing on its operation as a system of public communication and its relationship to democratic process (Ruhl, 2004:3). From this point onwards, throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century, it is possible to trace a continuation of such theorisations of journalism within German academic literature. This occurs in the work of social theorists who are more generally known for



their contribution to the establishment of the disciplines of political economy and sociology, and include scholars such as Albert Schaffle, Ferdinand Tonnies, Karl Knies, and (in fact) Karl Bucher. Hanno Hardt argues that, although journalism was not their main focus, the ideas that these scholars formulated with regards to the role of the press was of integral importance to their theorisation of society (Hardt, 2001:15). The value of their work on journalism is understood to lie, firstly, in the normative questions posed about what the press ought to be in context of the requirements of social communication and deliberation (Wahl-Jorgensen & Hanitsch, 2009:4-5). The focus, in this respect, was on the role that journalism should play in contributing to public opinion in a society that was experiencing the pressures of modernisation, such as rapid industrialisation and urbanisation (Hardt, 2001:15). Bucher, in particular, was motivated by a concern about the potential for journalism to operate as propaganda, based on his observations of the media during World War I. At the same time, in contrast to the approach adopted in Mass Communication Studies, this emphasis on the normative is not understood to be in opposition to an impetus towards empirical research. Indeed, although such work was not empirical in nature, it is understood to represent a valuable reference point for journalism scholarship because it implicitly presents justification for empirical research. It achieves this through its insistence on the importance of analyzing the relationship between journalists and their social context (Löffelholz, 2008:17). Max Weber's call in 1924 for an empiricist study of journalism can be seen as continuous with this tradition in scholarship. Weber spoke of the important role that journalists play as political actors, and in this context proposed a survey of the 'sociology of newspapership' with an emphasis on the production environment (Ruhl, 2008:29).

It is possible to trace a relationship, both in the Whig histories and this strand of normative-critical German scholarship, between the study of journalism and an articulation of principles of democracy. The two traditions nevertheless represent very different intellectual foundations for contemporary journalism research, and have contrasting implications for the way in which scholarship can conceptualise of the empirical study of journalistic practice and its relationship to democracy. The first, as represented by the journalism educators' histories and the Whig scholarship on which they drew, treats journalistic practice and its relationship to the social as unproblematic, and equates such practice with the interests of liberal democracy. It seems significant that it is this tradition that is acknowledged by the Mass Communication Studies account of journalism scholarship, even if in context of critical dismissal. The second tradition, as represented by a critical-normative interrogation of journalistic practice and its relationship to social context, is not acknowledged within the Mass Communication Studies account as a perspective from which to conduct research about journalism.

The journalism histories could, in fact, be said to have continued to exist in an uneasy alliance with Mass Communication Studies. It may be that, as in the instance of 'magic bullet' scholarship, reference to the journalism educators' work operated as a 'straw man', diverting attention from more important intellectual perspectives that could challenge the disciplinary identity of Mass Communication Studies. What becomes lost in the opposition between the approach to knowledge of

the communication scientists and journalism educators is the fact that each group represented a particular paradigm of knowledge about journalism and that other more critical positions are also possible. It is possible that some of this scholarship was omitted from the official account because their conceptualisation of journalism could not be homogenised or integrated into the disciplinary lens of Mass Communication Studies. It would seem, then, that Mass Communication Studies staked its claim as the definitive space for the study of journalism by narrowing down the way in which journalism could be conceptualised.

Sproule (1989) points out that the myth of the magic bullet was constructed just after World War II, at a time in American history when, because of international conflict, there existed a heightened atmosphere of national solidarity (226). During the war, survey and experimental researchers had become involved in a form of communication scholarship that was in direct contrast to that of the critical study of journalism. Now the main aim was to illustrate how communication could be used to win over audiences (235). These researchers were "... demonstrating their power to render useful national service", and in this context progressive media scholarship seemed politically inappropriate. On the contrary, within this research environment, studies of journalism began to focus on the role that it could play as a tool of propaganda, contributing to America's readiness for war (Zelizer, 2004b:14). Sproule argues that the denial, by Mass Communication Studies, of the existence of research about media that was framed by a critical paradigm formed part of a much broader 'amnesia' about the implications of modern institutional practices for democratic life (Sproule, 1989:226). It represents an approach based in a functionalist theorisation of society and of mass media that takes for granted that American institutions operate in the public interest. The aim of such scholarship was not so much to critically analyze institutional strategies of persuasion but rather to show how they could work better (236). Todd Gitlin's critique of the Mass Communication Studies tradition (1978) is, similarly, based on the argument that it drew attention away from the power of the media, and legitimised the power structures that scholars of media should be challenging. According to this argument, then, the institutionalisation of Mass Communication Studies operated in context of the establishment of a functionalist theoretical framework, in which critical analysis of the media becomes marginalised. Sproule describes this 'amnesia' as persisting until the 1960's and 1970's, when the American intellectual community again began to acknowledge the manipulative power of social institutions. He suggests that, even with such renewed interest, the body of critical thought that had been established in the interwar years has not been fully recovered within contemporary critical studies of the media (Sproule, 1989:226-227).

The patterns within Mass Communication Studies can be seen, then, as one example of the shift within American social science of the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, as described in Chapter Two, away from critical scholarship and towards a functionalist theorisation of society. As we will see, this would have important implications for the history of positivist journalism scholarship.

### **3.2 The 1950's to 1980's: Journalism scholarship within the positivist orthodoxy**

The theoretical concepts in which Mass Communication Studies based itself when it emerged in the 1950's as a recognisable field were drawn from social science disciplines such as sociology, psychology and political science. The researchers who first applied these concepts to the study of mass communication were not themselves centrally concerned with the institutionalisation of Mass Communication Studies. Their association with this field resulted, rather, from the efforts of scholars who were less grounded in social science disciplines and instead established their academic identities in context of journalism education (Tankard, 1990:247; Hardt, 1992:82). Schramm, who is generally identified as an important contributor to this process, was also the first academic to gain the title of 'professor of communication'. He played an important role in ensuring that certain texts became recognised as representative of a 'canon' of Mass Communication Studies scholarship (Dickson, 2000:69). Through such efforts the field constructed an authoritative identity for itself, one that was quickly reproduced within academic environments across the world.

It can be argued that a central reason for this successful reproduction was the responsiveness of Mass Communication Studies to three paradigmatic trends that dominated social science during this period of global history, as described in Chapter Two. The first of these trends concerns the modernist conceptualisation of the nature of society, and of the role of scientific knowledge in society. At this time, mass communication scholarship was preoccupied with describing and explaining the social impact of processes of modernisation. It was generally argued that, internationally, such processes were leading to the emergence of social orders no longer defined by culture, tradition and community but rather by depersonalisation and atomisation – an analysis that resonated more generally in social science. It is through such a lens that Mass Communication Studies viewed members of audiences and producers of media, in isolation of social relations, focusing more on the role of such individuals as active agents who freely choose to use media in particular ways (Hardt, 1992:77; Singer, 2008:146).

In explaining the social context in which these individuals were based, mass communication scholarship mirrored a second tendency in social science described in Chapter Two, towards a structural functionalist analysis. Within this conceptualisation, society was understood to be based on internal stability, due to the existence of broadly shared norms and interests. It was assumed, furthermore, that social science served primarily as an evaluation of the effective operation of the systems that form part of this social order. Mass Communication Studies exhibited the more general preoccupation in social science with the production of knowledge that was of relevance the regulation of these systems, and therefore to social administration, defined by the needs of an industrialising society. Harold D Lasswell's introduction, in the 1940's, of the term 'mass communication' was important in consolidating this emphasis, since it signaled a focus on the role of bureaucracies and their communication technologies (Hardt, 1992:78). In this context, there also emerged a

prioritisation of 'administrative' studies, designed to be of service to the institutions of government and mass media. Indeed, the authority of Mass Communication Studies as a framework for the study of media was for a long time guaranteed not just by acknowledgement from inside universities, but also support from commercial and governmental interests (Hardt, 1992:11-12).

Thirdly, Mass Communication Studies followed the broad epistemological trend within social science by adopting the premises of empiricism as it is conceptualised in context of positivist analytical philosophy (Löffelholz, 2008:18). The analytical empirical perspective requires that research be based on observable, measurable evidence. It is assumed, from this perspective, that it is possible to produce credible research only through quantitative measurement of such evidence, free from the influence of value systems. An important contribution towards achieving such requirements was made through work in content analysis, a method of research that was already in practice by the 1930's. Such research focused on the quantitative study of journalistic texts, counting recurring features, such as those of words, phrases, stories and images. Because this analysis was quantitative, it came to be regarded as an empirical method worthy of scientific recognition within the Mass Communication Studies paradigm (Gerbner & Schramm, 1990; Tuchman, 1991:82; Zelizer, 2004b:115). Content analysis was thus established as a longstanding international tradition, focusing in particular on the scrutiny of journalistic bias. These studies set out to measure the absence or presence of bias in news on the basis of the number and frequency of textual features (Zelizer, 2004b:117). Within this framework, the credibility of representations of reality is, therefore, measured in terms of the degree to which it can be regarded to remain untainted by the influence of value systems.

In the 1940's, further steps were taken towards establishing the analytical empirical paradigm in the study of mass communication through the work of Paul Lazarsfeld, Carl Hovland and Harold Lasswell (Wahl-Jorgensen & Hanitzsch, 2009:6). Claude Shannon and Norbert Weaver's mathematical conceptualisation of the communication process was also important in this respect. Within this approach, communication became defined as a systematic activity, concerning the linear transmission of messages, with audience effects that could be examined empirically, through quantitative measurement, in order to develop testable theory (Singer, 2008:146). The emphasis was, furthermore, on the limited nature of effects, in sharp contrast to the concern with the power and responsibility of the media that shaped earlier scholarship. The journalism research that drew on these theoretical concepts was predominantly framed by an emphasis on the effects of print and broadcast news on mass audiences. The general suggestion was, also, that journalism like the media more generally played a minimal role in the formation of public opinion (Zelizer, 2004b:60-61). The conceptual trends noted above regarding the definition of authoritative knowledge and the analysis of society can therefore both be seen to characterise such research, and possibly even to sustain each other. The emphasis on the quantitative measurement of observable evidence may have served, for example, to support proposals regarding the limited impact of mass media, since more qualitative

aspects of social impact are bracketed. It can be argued, in this respect, that the approach adopted within this research to empiricism helped to consolidate a functionalist conceptualisation of society.

At the same time, from the early 1950's onwards, there was growing acknowledgement in Mass Communication Studies itself that the study of audience effects was not on its own an adequate basis for the development of academic knowledge about journalism. Indeed, attention in journalism-specific research was slowly turning from the positivist study of media effects to a more interpretive consideration of journalists and their practices and values (Wahl-Jorgensen & Hanitzsch, 2009:6). Scholars of journalism articulated, in this context, a theorisation of journalism which in fact contradicted the assumption of limited effects and affirmed the importance of the social power of journalists. Much of this scholarship originated in the United States, and then circulated internationally. A key contribution was that of the gatekeeper studies, which tracked the flow of news 'items' through the processes of selection that form part of newsroom settings. Theories of gatekeeping were first articulated in the context of social psychology by Kurt Lewin, who proposed that psychological forces can be studied mathematically by conceptualising of human behavior in terms of systematic channels or gates, controlling what passes through them by means of a process of selection (Shoemaker et al, 2009:73). David Manning White applied Lewin's theorisation to journalism through a case study of the decision-making processes employed by wire editors. White concluded that journalists are often subjective and politically motivated in their selection of news items for publication (Schudson, 1991:142). His research, and those of subsequent gatekeeper studies, asked questions about the implications of such processes for the agency of journalists (Shoemaker et al, 2009:73). The conclusion tended to be that journalists play a pivotal role in determining the information that the public receives (Singer, 2008:146). The suggestion was that the presence of subjectivity and political motivation in the selection of news clashed with the professional ideal of objectivity (Schudson, 1991:142). As with content analysis, the focus is, again, on the presence of bias within the decision-making processes of journalists, with the credibility of journalistic knowledge evaluated in terms of the degree they could be said to be free from the influence of value. Even though such research can be seen as an attempt to move beyond the limitations of positivist journalism scholarship, the framework in which it is based leaves unchallenged the ideal of journalistic objectivity, and of the principle of value-freedom more generally. It also did not challenge the functionalist conceptualisation of society on which Mass Communication Studies was based.

The theoretical concepts that were articulated in this research have nevertheless remained highly influential in the international study of journalism until at least the early 1980's. They have, in doing so, established traditions of research that have escaped some of the limitations of functionalist research. In particular, they have informed the establishment of a dominant strain in journalism scholarship focusing on news selection processes (Wahl-Jorgensen & Hanitzsch, 2009:6). This last tradition is exemplified by the work of Norwegian scholars Johan Galtung and Mari Ruge, who in a

1965 study of international news coverage formulated an important hypothesis with regards to the role played by news values in journalistic selection processes. This study is understood to have made a seminal contribution to scholarly understanding of processes of news selection and production (Zelizer, 2004b: 55). Gatekeeper research is also closely related to the later agenda-setting studies, pioneered by Maxwell E McCombs and Donald Lewis in the early 1970's, which combined content analysis of media coverage with surveys of public opinion. Such studies dealt with the ability of news media to influence public opinion, and at first tended to focus strongly on election coverage. These early agenda-setting studies identified a strong correlation between the social issues emphasised in news coverage of elections and public perception of the issues that should be prioritised within election processes (Hansen, 1998:92). Many such studies have been published since this time, not only in the context of election coverage but dealing with a wide range of media-related topics (McCombs & Shaw, 1993). Today, agenda setting theory continues to be prioritised within Mass Communication scholarship about journalism (McCombs, 2005).

From the late 1960's onwards, there was also increasing interest in empirical research about journalists and their organisational settings. This work was not limited to the Mass Communication Studies paradigm as it was articulated in the American context. One such tradition emerged in Germany, particularly through the work of Manfred Rühl, who combined empirical research with a conceptualisation of journalism that drew on systems theory (Weischenberg & Malik, 2008:161). Although his scholarship built on Parson's theorisation of social institutions, Rühl also shifted away from the individualistic emphasis in this work (Löffelholz, 2008:19). The research tradition that resulted focused on journalism as a practice of production taking place within an organised social system (Weaver & Löffelholz, 2008:5). There was also, at this time, a growth in studies focusing on the occupational identity of journalists, in context of professionalisation, particularly in the United Kingdom (Schudson, 1991:149). Up to this point, sociological studies of journalism had been slow to take off in Britain, also because sociology itself became established much later here than in the United States. Jeremy Tunstall now laid much of the groundwork for research about journalism in the British context. His work was framed by debates about whether journalism could be defined as a profession or a craft (Wahl-Jorgensen & Franklin, 2008:175). During the late 1970's and 1980's, this was followed by studies by researchers such as Philip Eliot, Philip Schlesinger and Peter Golding, dealing with the routines of news production (Wahl-Jorgensen & Franklin, 2008:175). These studies made use of participant observation, driven by grounded questions (Zelizer, 2004b:64).

It is, however, still in the paradigm of Mass Communication Studies that the most sustained tradition in the empirical study of the professional identity of journalists can be identified. These studies tended to focus on the extent to which journalism has achieved professional status, measured against 'traits' of professionalism (Schudson, 2009:88). Here we finally witness the first comprehensive attempt to realise Weber's vision of a sociological study of journalists, as described earlier in this chapter. The focus was also on journalists' conceptualisation of their own practice.



Such questions were framed in quantitative terms, and primarily took the form of national surveys focusing on demographic information about journalists, and also on the role perceptions of journalists. One of the first surveys dealing with the demographics of journalists was produced by Johnstone, Slawski and Boman in 1976, and a further important study by David Weaver and G Cleveland Wilhoit in 1986 and again in 1996. This last study has since been replicated in many countries across the world (Zelizer, 2004b:57; Pan et al, 2008:199).

The Mass Communication Studies paradigm nevertheless continued to place serious limitations on the overall potential of studies of journalism as a socially constructed product and practice. Indeed, recent reviews of the history of journalism scholarship argue that this paradigm presented obstacles to the general development of academic knowledge about journalism. A key problem identified in this regard is that, because Mass Communication Studies deals with the study of journalism along with many other kinds of media, the theories developed were not designed to be of particular relevance to journalism. Furthermore, even when studies focused on journalism, the Mass Communication Studies paradigm did not allow for an adequate scrutiny of the internal workings of journalistic practice (Zelizer, 2004b:48-49). As a related problem, within this paradigm, the social importance of journalism in terms of its contribution to democratic process was regarded as self-evident, and the role it played in this respect was not critically examined (Schudson, 2009:88). Such criticism applies, for example, to the surveys of journalists' professional identity. It has been pointed out that these surveys typically start from the assumption that the importance of journalism is self-evident, needing no further examination. There is also an assumption that the goal of objectivity is a necessary requirement for the establishment of the occupational ideology of professionalism in journalism (Schudson & Anderson, 2009:92). These assumptions remained unchallenged because such studies were for a long time not complemented by empirical inquiry into diverse examples of journalistic practice, in a range of social environments within the international domain.

Such studies of news selection processes and occupational identity did attempt to break out of the narrow confines of 'effects' research in order to focus on journalism as it is practiced. As such, they put into question the coherence of the 'canon' of Mass Communication Studies. At the same time, they remained based in the tenets of individualism, functionalism and positivism, and in this context continued to reproduce the Mass Communication Studies paradigm. In the gatekeeper studies, for example, this can be seen in the tendency to assume that as long as journalists were diligent in their maintenance of the ideals of professionalism, and faithful to dominant cultural values, society need not fear their decisions (Shoemaker et al, 2009:77). The foundational assumption remains that of structural functionalism, in that communication practices are seen to form part of a balanced set of social structures which contribute to the stability of a social system that is not in itself questioned (Tuchman, 2002:79). These studies sidestepped the analysis of organisational structures and systems, conceptualising instead of journalists as if they are free agents (Ruhl, 2008:28). More advanced versions of gatekeeper scholarship, such as that of Walter Gieber in the mid-1950's, did



include an acknowledgement of social context, arguing that the patterns of decisions by editors are not completely individualised (Schudson, 1991:141). Social context remained, however, under-examined, since such studies continued to focus on the way in which news items are selected and neglected questions about the way in which these items are in themselves constructed (Schudson, 1991:142).

From the late 1970's onwards, the limitations of the Mass Communication Studies paradigm became increasingly acknowledged within its own scholarship, both generally and in context of the study of journalism. In an important contribution to this debate, Todd Gitlin (1978) argued that the focus on short term effects and individual agency deflected academic attention from the role played by the media in consolidating dominant social interests (207). Weaver and Gray (1980) also pointed out that because of the emphasis on audiences and effects there has not been enough critical scrutiny of journalistic messages in themselves, or of the systems and practices through which such messages are produced. They argued, furthermore, that there is a need to acknowledge the fact that causal relationships can operate in the opposite direction, with social context affecting journalistic practice. In context of the Mass Communication Studies paradigm, such practice, and its involvement in relations of power and control, is left largely unexamined (cited in Weaver & Löffelholz, 2008:5).

It is, nevertheless, possible to identify two bodies of literature, emerging in the 1950's in context of Mass Communication Studies, which did deal explicitly with the relationship between media and social context. It can be argued that, in context of this emphasis, the ideological underpinnings of the Mass Communication Studies paradigm became more visible. It may be that it is for this reason that this work would later become of such central significance as an object of critique, within critical responses to the positivist tradition of journalism scholarship. The first of these bodies of scholarship focused directly on journalism, particularly through large-scale studies of the relationship between the conceptualisation of journalistic practice and political systems. Studies of this kind surfaced in the years immediately after World War II, and at this time was influenced by concerns that dominated public debate about the role that media plays in contributing internationally to social change generally, and democratisation more particularly. In contrast to the empirical studies of journalistic practice, the research that emerged from this context had a strong normative inflection, concerning itself with an articulation of democratic ideals that journalism should necessarily be guided by in order to qualify as journalism (Zelizer, 2004b:167). Of particular importance in the establishment of such a framework is *Four Theories of the Press* by Frank Siebert, Theodore Peterson and Wilbur Schramm, published in 1956. Siebert et al present their book as an attempt to identify distinctions between models of journalism that develop in different social environments across the world. It is argued that media production practices, and journalistic practices more particularly, are expressive of the social and political structures in which they are based. In this way, they identify four 'theories' of the press that can be seen to operate in a spectrum of social environments, ranging from libertarian to authoritarian. This analytical framework was highly acclaimed, becoming

regarded as baseline for thinking about media systems around the world. As such, it became reproduced internationally in a longstanding tradition of studies, applied to a range of political systems (Zelizer, 2004b:168; Nordenstreng, 2007:17).

The second body of scholarship emerged in the 1960's, focusing on the role of communication in the facilitation of social change in the 'developing' world. Daniel Lerner's *Passing of Traditional Society*, published in 1958, is generally regarded as the classic example of such research. This book, which is a study of the process of modernisation in the Middle East, argued that communication was playing a central role in facilitating the transition of various societies from 'tradition' to 'modernity' (Curran & Park, 2000:4). The study was unusual in being one of the few research projects of its time to be based in a detailed empirical study of the relationship between media and social change. It became well known in the field of development studies, particularly amongst writers who were concerned with the role of communication as a catalyst for modernisation. It has been suggested, in fact, that *Four Theories* and the *Passing of Traditional Society* set in place the main framework within which problems of communication and development were to be debated for several decades (Thompson, 1995:188). This framework also represented an important resource for American state policy around the role of communication within international aid. It supported the conviction, within such policy, that a 'free flow of information' is essential to the establishment of global processes of modernisation and democratisation (Hanitzsch, 2009:415).

In more recent years, there have been important critical responses to this framework, as it has been articulated within journalism scholarship (Curran and Park 2000; Hallin & Mancini, 2004; Josephi 2005; J Hanitzsch 2009; Josephi 2010). These suggest that despite their conscious exploration of the role played by journalism and communication more generally within social relations, Siebert et al and Lerner still side-step a scrutiny of the involvement of communication in relations of power. In this sense, then, this work is characterised by the same weaknesses as identified, above, for content analysis, effects studies, gatekeeper research and surveys of professional identity. It has been argued, furthermore, that while such scholarship presented itself as objective discussion of the role of communication in different social environments, in reality, its perspective remains American and Western (Hanitzsch, 2009:415). It offers arguments for only one position within the spectrum of social environments– that of liberalism. The model developed by Siebert et al is based in a binary opposition between democratic and oppressive systems, which does not allow for a nuanced analysis of the operation of power in Western liberal societies (Josephi, 2005:576). The underlying assumption is, furthermore, that the approach to journalism that emerged in such societies represents a universal ideal against which journalism from elsewhere in the world should be measured. Lerner's analysis, similarly, still assumes that modernisation implies the adoption of the social institutions that have emerged in Western society. Both *Four Theories* and the *Passing of Traditional Society* are, in fact, informed by the political perspective that dominated Mass Communication Studies generally in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, and which was widely endorsed in Western

countries at this time. This perspective has been described as a ‘cold war’ analysis of the world (Curran & Park, 2000:4), in which the United States is understood to be the central term of reference, and other social environments are framed as ‘the rest’. Within this analysis the ‘modern West’ is, for example, typically juxtaposed with the ‘traditional East’ (Hanitzsch, 2009:145). The assumption is still that journalism is by definition linked to the political ideals and normative frameworks that supposedly characterise Western liberal democracy (Joseph, 2005:576). In the years that followed, this ‘cold war’ perspective became difficult to sustain, both from within the Mass Communication Studies paradigm, and in context of the development of alternative traditions in media scholarship. From the mid-1970’s onwards, as we will see in the next section, challenges to modernisation theory began to emerge, in which the ‘West and the Rest’ framework of analysis became replaced by a dualism between ‘North’ and ‘South’.

### **3.3 The 1960’s to the 1980’s: Studying journalism in reaction to orthodoxy**

In 1983, a debate about the status of mass communication research was published in a special issue of the *Journal of Communication*, an influential ‘left of mainstream’ periodical produced by the Annenberg School of Communication at the University of Pennsylvania. The debate presented in this journal centered on the emergence, of ‘new’ critical approaches to the study of mass communication. The issue was entitled ‘Ferment in the Field’, suggesting that such scholarship was leading to new and exciting trends in research. What was new, however, was not this scholarship in itself, but rather the interest amongst American academics in the assimilation of this work into mainstream empirical studies of mass communication (Switzer, 1985:57). In reality, the traditions of criticism referred to in this journal had been well established outside the context the Mass Communication Studies orthodoxy for some time. Certainly, by the 1980’s, important work about media generally and about journalism in particular had for some time already been established in other disciplinary environments.

From the 1960’s onwards, it is possible to trace a growing dissatisfaction amongst journalism researchers working both within the social sciences and humanities with the epistemological framework that had become dominant in studies of journalism. Because of this, new approaches to journalism scholarship emerged, which defined themselves in reaction to the Mass Communication Studies paradigm. It is argued in the discussion below that the significance of these challenges should be understood in context of their relationship to broader shifts that were taking place from the 1960’s onwards within approaches to credible social knowledge. Chapter Two describes these shifts as relating to an ‘emancipatory’ moment in the history of knowledge, in which there was a general growth of challenges to the established conceptualisation of authoritative knowledge. It was explained, in this chapter, that such challenges were not limited to the academy but occurred more generally within the socio-political sphere, in context of social movements such as that of socialism, feminism, and the struggle for self-determination of countries based in the ‘developing’ world. In the

face of such challenges, the hegemonic acceptance of the authority of positivism was disrupted, giving way to ongoing struggles over the appropriate definition of credible knowledge.

The discussion that follows below deals with the implications of the ‘emancipatory’ moment for the development of journalism scholarship. It is argued that the impact of this moment has remained of fairly marginal significance within broad developments in the history of journalism scholarship. The section attempts to demonstrate that such limitation resulted, in part, from the disciplinary preoccupations of the fields that concerned themselves at this time with the study of journalism. It is also argued that the potential of the ‘emancipatory’ moment was compromised by a shift in the global economic context that began to take effect in the 1980’s.

The discussion is organised around the identification of three categories of critical response to the positivist tradition of journalism scholarship. It is argued that each of these responses is concerned with an argument regarding the inherent importance of social forces in the construction of knowledge. Each of these arguments is, furthermore, situated within broader debates about knowledge that had opened up within their environment as a result of the ‘emancipatory’ moment in the history of knowledge. In each case, however, the assertion about the social construction of knowledge is articulated in different terms, focusing on separate aspects of journalism, drawing on separate critical resources within the broader debates and challenging distinct elements of the positivist conceptualisation of knowledge.

### 3.3.1 International relations, social change, and the assertion of self-determination

The first category of response is not only concerned with journalism scholarship but more generally with the articulation of the ‘media imperialism’ thesis in academic studies. This thesis, which served as a critique of the assumption of a mutuality of interests between the industrial world and the ‘third world’, shaped much of the research on the international communication in the late 1970’s and early 1980’s. The analyses that emerged allowed scholars to deal with issues that earlier mass communication models ignored, particularly through the critique of the modernisation paradigm (Strelitz, 2005:34-35). Such analysis was of particular significance to debates about the role played by journalism within international processes of social change. It challenged the assumption, within modernisation debates, that a ‘free’ flow of information is possible in the global context within existing relations of power. It also challenged the assumption that a Western liberal conceptualisation of journalism could serve as a universal ideal against which to measure international developments in journalistic practice.

The emergence of the media imperialism thesis should be understood in context of growing international recognition within the international political sphere, in the 1970’s, of the uneven nature of communication flows between ‘industrialised’ and ‘developing’ nations. This was prompted, in particular, by the growing presence, within international policy debates, of countries who had newly gained independence as a result of processes of decolonisation (Nordenstreng, 2008:7). The sudden

swell in the number of such countries led to a rebalance of power within the United Nations. States in Africa and Asia, in particular, formed a 'third force' which challenged the 'Cold War' assumption that international relations are best understood in terms of an opposition between the interests of advanced industrial nations of the West and the Soviet Union. Attention was drawn, instead, to campaigns for the self determination of countries based in the Third World. These campaigns rejected strategies for the 'modernisation' of developing countries, arguing that such processes fostered an exploitative system of global economic relations. This analysis was grounded in a 'dependency' model of development, which assumed that international socio-economic relations were structured according to the needs of the industrialised world, and operated to reproduce the subordinate and dependent position of developing nations. UNESCO became a primary forum for such discussions, and through their interventions, a United Nations declaration in 1974 set in place the foundational principles of arguments around the establishment of a 'New International Economic Order' (NIEO), a set of proposals regarding more equitable distribution of world economic resources (Pickard, 2007:122; Xiaoge, 2009:360, Pickard, 2007:122).

Debates around NIEO also fueled discussions around the normative assumptions of models of communication based in the 'development' and 'modernisation' paradigms. It was argued, in this respect, that the activities of imperialism are not confined to the political and economic spheres, but also operated in context of systems of communication. American communication-related aid policies and particularly the notion of a 'free flow of information' came under attack. Such arguments sparked ongoing debates about communication at the UN and UNESCO as well as in media professional associations and amongst communication scholars around the world. (Hanitzsch, 2009:415). In 1980, in context of landmark discussions such as that of the MacBride Commission, this led to the formulation of proposals around the establishment of a 'New World Information and Communication Order' or NWICO (Xiaoge, 2009:360). It has been argued that NWICO was the first time that the debates about journalism, media and communication more generally were argued in a relatively global fashion, representing a wide set of interest groups within the international community. The NWICO debates opened up a space for the critique of the dominance of Western news content, and the role played by Western technologies in the reinforcing international relationships of dependence (Pickard, 2007:22).

Herbert Schiller, whose work is closely associated with the media imperialism thesis, proposed (1976) that US international communication policies were designed to support the American media industry in its drive to achieve international dominance (cited in Curran & Park, 2000:5). In the context of journalism, the right to communicate as articulated within such policy operated instead as the penetration of the 'Third World' by multinational media corporations. A central tenet of such arguments was the assumption that media globalisation resulted in global cultural homogenisation. Schiller argued that the international 'flow' of information is largely in one direction, from the 'core' of industrialised countries to the 'periphery' represented by the Third World. The flow is,

furthermore, not purely informational but also ideological, in that it is designed to promote popular support for a global capitalist system (Strelitz, 2005: 29-42). Promotion of the concept of journalistic professionalism was also seen as implicated in this 'transfer' of ideology to media practitioners in the Third World. Their 'professionalisation', particularly by British and American trainers, was described as replicating socially specific values and attitudes encoded in dominant journalistic conventions (Golding, 1977:292).

It would seem, however, that the space for critical challenge narrowed down again during the course of the next decade. It has been argued that one important reason for this was the decision of the Reagan and Thatcher administrations to withdraw from UNESCO in the mid-1980's. America cited, among other reasons, its displeasure with NWICO, which it represented as an instrument of state control of the media (Nordenstreng, 2001:159). Commentators have suggested, however, that the withdrawal of America and the United Kingdom could be interpreted as a strategic message to UNESCO with regards to the position of power that these two countries lay claim to within the international domain. They were signalling, in particular, that as leading Western powers they would not countenance being outvoted by the majority of the world's nations, and that their interests would remain the priority (Nordenstreng, 2007:46). Certainly, their withdrawal deprived UNESCO of much of its political and financial power, weakening its ability to direct the terms of reference of global debate, and in particular its capacity to provide an environment in which the interests and perspectives of the developing world could be prioritised. In this context, UNESCO abandoned its backing for the NWICO, and debates around this concept has, since then, receded into obscurity (Freedman & Shafer, 2008:7). It has been argued that the failure of the NWICO debates signaled the beginning of an era in global communication, starting in the 1980's and stretching into the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, in which the interests of economic power have sidelined the prioritisation of the concerns not just of the developing world but of civil society in general. Discussion turned away, in particular, from arguments for knowledge in service of human rights and the strengthening of civic culture and came to focus, instead, on knowledge defined in terms of free-market imperatives (Pickard 2007:120-124).

Since the mid-1980's, the media imperialism thesis has also been the target of criticism from the perspective of postmodern study. One strand of such criticism has challenged the notion of a deliberate colonisation through Western media, resulting in the obliteration of local culture. The notion of a one-way flow of communication and influence from the West was, for example, challenged by the counter argument that global flows are 'multidirectional' (Curran & Park, 2000:6). It is also argued that local audiences reinterpret such media within their own social context, as part of their ongoing attempts to makes sense of their social experiences and identities (Thompson, 1995:172). One should not, in other words, underestimate local resistance to American cultural products, or the different ways in which local communities have of making sense of such products (Curran & Park, 2000:6). John Fiske (1987) argues, in similar terms, for empirical studies of socially



and historically specific contexts that can reveal the multiplicity of meanings that emerge from the interaction between media texts and situated audiences (Strelitz, 2005:40).

### 3.3.2 News workers, news organisations and the social construction of knowledge

The second critical response to positivist journalism scholarship is represented by a tradition of research that emerged in the 1970's within the Anglo-American context focusing on sociological studies of reporting and news management practices. This tradition concerned itself primarily with the role played by social processes in the construction of knowledge, a preoccupation that could be identified both in its choice of subject matter and its approach to research methodology. It was critical of the tendency in existing research to evaluate the relationship between journalism and the world it describes in terms of the extent to which the bias of reporters affect their ability to achieve objectivity. It rejected, in this context, the assumption that journalistic practice can exist as a process of objective reporting on a pre-existing social reality. Researchers began to see reporting practices as necessarily implicated in the construction of this reality, and aimed to uncover the ideological operation of such practice (Tuchman, 2002:86). Particular attention was paid to the role played in this respect by the social and organisational settings of news workers (Tuchman, 2002:80). This tradition also challenged the assumption, within positivist scholarship, that journalism could only be studied through quantitative measurement. It drew, in this respect, on broader debates that were taking place, within the discipline of sociology, about approaches to research about the social and responded, in particular, to the growing acknowledgement of the importance of a qualitative methodology.

A crucial term of reference for such studies can be found in work that was produced at this time by social historians who concerned themselves with the evolution of mainstream journalism. This work was critical of the celebratory emphasis that, as we have seen, characterised earlier scholarship on journalism history. It reacted, in particular, against the emphasis on 'great man' anecdotes and interest started to grow, instead, in the role played by ordinary people in the historical development of journalism as an institution. Robert Darnton, Michael Schudson and William Gilmore Lehne played important roles in this respect. In an early study of the history of newspapers Schudson argued, for example, that since at least the 19<sup>th</sup> century there have been ongoing conflict within the American press around the ideal of journalistic objectivity. Such conflict often manifests as a struggle between generations – with editors defending objectivity and young journalists attacking it. Schudson argues that at some points such conflict could be seen to form part of the normal dynamics of newsroom management, and of the struggles that surrounded the passage of young journalists into professionalism. At other points, particularly in the 1960's and 1970's, such resistance to the ideals of objectivity formed part of serious political challenges to the way that social events were portrayed in the mainstream press (Schudson, 1976:165). Such arguments provided valuable terms of reference for a more critical analysis of the role that the ideals of journalistic objectivity played in management of journalists, and in the political positioning of newspapers. In



*Discovering the News* (1976), for example, Schudson traced the historical origins of professional objectivity within journalistic practice. This work contributed to the development of an approach to empirical analysis that is sensitive to the socially constructed nature of journalism. As such it helped to facilitate the shift within journalism scholarship to more critical engagement with the conventions and values of mainstream journalism (Wahl-Jorgensen & Hanitzsch, 2009:6).

In a review (1991) of studies of journalism from the late 1960's onwards till the 1980's, Schudson identifies three 'perspectives' on the critical study of more contemporary journalistic practice. The first, which is primarily American in origin, concerned itself with organisational and occupational aspects of journalistic practice. Studies informed by this perspective dealt with the institutional setting of news workers, particularly with regards to the way journalistic practice was constrained by organisational and occupational routines (Schudson, 1991:143). Researchers explored methods of inquiry designed to increase their understanding of the occupational socialisation of journalists, and the patterns of interaction amongst journalists. This is in direct contrast to the previous tendency, as in the example of gatekeeper studies, to focus on journalists and their individual values without great consideration of their social context (Zelizer, 2004b:63). These studies were also no longer framed by the structural functionalist focus on professional 'traits', or questions about whether journalism qualifies as a profession. Rather, they concerned themselves with an analysis of the circumstances in which journalists attempt to gain a professional identity and the processes and rhetoric through which they claim the cultural authority that is associated with professional status (Schudson & Anderson, 2009:88-90).

This scholarship was informed by the more general shift in sociology at this time towards both interpretative and critical inquiry. The disciplinary identity of sociology was fragmenting, as agreements about the appropriate ways of defining and evaluating research became contested. There was, in particular, a growth in culturally oriented research, based in an interpretative methodological framework and drawing on qualitative methods of inquiry. In contrast to previous studies, such research was typically motivated by an interest in questions about social difference and conflict (Long, 1997:11-12). Of central importance to this period is the growth of studies of news production. Although such research tended to focus on the internal workings of journalistic practice, it did also acknowledge the broader social reality in which such practice is based. Studies include, for example, an emphasis on the role played in the construction of journalism by the relationships that news organisations developed with officially sanctioned sources of information. Within such research, journalism is typically described as being created through the interaction of two bureaucratic systems, represented by reporters and government officials (Schudson, 1991:148; Tuchman, 2002:86). The ethnographic news studies distinguished themselves from the established identity of Mass Communication Studies through an acknowledgement of the intellectual heritage, described in Chapter Two, of the early Chicago School [see pgs. 42-43]. They also drew on the methods and conceptual framework of ethnomethodology (Zelizer, 2004b:65). Like the Chicago urban

ethnographers, they explored the potential of participant observation as a systematic tool for the study of journalistic practice. Harvey Molotch and Marilyn Lester, Gaye Tuchman, Herbert Gans and Mark Fishman are often cited as key contributors to the establishment of the methodological and theoretical foundations of this tradition of journalism scholarship (Schudson, 1991:147-151). Molotch and Lester (1974) were critical of the 'objectivity assumption' in journalism scholarship – the notion that there is a 'real world' to be objective about, and that journalistic representations should be evaluated in terms of the extent to which they are influenced by 'bias'. Instead, they focused on the role played by the routines of news production in shaping social reality (Becker & Vlad, 2009:62-64). Tuchman added to this scholarship in *Making News* (1978) through an observational study of the activities of news staff both in and outside newsrooms. Based on her findings she argued that the routines and rules of professional reporting operate not as a representation of social reality but rather as the production of that reality (66). She is well known for her proposal that practices that are ostensibly designed to ensure journalistic objectivity in fact operate as 'strategic rituals' through which reporters accommodate the organisational constraints of their work (Tuchman, 1972). In this respect she introduced the concept of a 'news net', representing the routinised systems through which journalists acquire the material that become news (Becker & Vlad, 2009:62). Her studies have been highly influential in motivating scholars of journalism to look more critically at both the managerial and ideological foundations of journalistic norms and values (Tuchman, 1991:84). Gans also conducted studies of news workers that were grounded in participant observation, and combined this with content analysis of news reports (Tuchman, 1991:84; Gans, 2003). He formulated similar arguments to that of Tuchman, with particular emphasis on the role played by both corporate interest and ideology in the world view and professional identity of journalists (Zelizer, 2004b:67). He described the process of news production as that of packaging the daily flow of events in society into a marketable product for audiences (Shoemaker et al, 2009:77). Fishman focused, in particular, on the role played by bureaucratic systems such as that of beat reporting in the determining the selection of news sources. In *Manufacturing News* (1980), he presented a detailed analysis of the impact of such systems on crime reporting in New York (Zelizer, 2004b:67).

These studies have been described as representing a 'sociological turn' in journalism scholarship (Wahl-Jorgensen & Hanitzsch, 2009:3). It is also to this work that Zelizer refers when she speaks of sociology as having become the 'default setting' for thinking about journalism in an academic context (Zelizer, 2004b:36). The news ethnographies have, indeed, been of great value to journalism scholarship, particularly since they set in place a conceptual language for thinking about the role played by social influence, and ideology in particular, within journalistic practice. There have, at the same time, been some reservations among critics about their continued value as a central term of reference for sociological research about journalism. A key concern is the fact that this work has not been regularly updated through further empirical research since the early 1980's, and have consequently stagnated (Zelizer 2004b:68). It would seem that, once scholars involved in this

tradition had presented their arguments about the way news constructs reality, they assumed that the need to provide empirical evidence for such arguments had been met. Such a response presupposes that journalism has an essential nature, one which stays the same over time and in different social environments. Critics have suggested (Cottle, 2000; Becker & Vlad 2009:63) that because these studies did not see the routines of news work as variable, they set in place terms of reference for the study of news that did not remain relevant as journalism continued to evolve. Furthermore, even in their own time, the empirical lens through which they observed journalism was very narrowly defined, since they focused primarily on mainstream news, and almost exclusively on the American context. Their treatment of such journalism was also in itself selective. In their examination of the way news agendas are negotiated they tended, for example, to focus on the relationships between reporters and government officials and neglecting the interactions that take place between reporters and editorial staff (Schudson, 1991:149). It is also striking that although the internal workings of news production and the construction of journalistic texts are heavily researched in this work, accounts of the audiences of journalism are given scant attention (Madanou, 2009:325-6).

### 3.3.3 Social structure, textuality and the emancipatory power of social analysis

The third critical response to positivist journalism scholarship is represented by scholarship that was preoccupied with the articulation of alternative methodological and epistemological paradigms to that of Mass Communication Studies. Such scholarship responded, in particular, to the functionalism and instrumentalism of the positivist tradition and offered in its place an approach to research that was based in a commitment to emancipation. This emphasis can be identified in analyses of the political economy of journalism, and another by journalism scholarship as it was studied within Media Studies, within the broader domain of Cultural Studies. Both traditions drew on theoretical resources that had originated in European traditions of scholarship, particularly that of critical theory and postmodern philosophy.

Studies in the 'political economy' of journalistic practice identified themselves with the discipline of political science. Schudson identifies these studies as the second 'perspective' on the study of news production that emerged during the 1970's and 1980's in the critical study of news. This work became strongly represented in British media studies, through the work of writers such as Peter Golding, Graham Murdock, Jay Blumler and James Curran. In America, Robert McChesney and Michael Gurevitch are also associated with this tradition. A well-known contribution to the political economy perspective in the US is Edward S Herman and Naom Chomsky's *Manufacturing Consent* (1988), which discusses the ideological operation of media in terms of the 'propaganda model', in which media is seen to support the special interests that dominates state and market (Schudson, 1991:145). These studies interrogated the structural functionalist tradition for ignoring the broader relations of power within which news organisations are based. They focused, typically, on understanding the conservative, system-maintaining character of news (Schudson, 1991:144). The

ethnographic studies of news had been critical of Mass Communication Studies scholarship for similar reasons, but they dealt with the workings of ideology as this operated internally to journalistic practice. Studies of the political economy of news looked outward, tracing the relationship between news institutions on one hand and the state and economy on the other (Becker & Vlad, 2009:60). Their scrutiny of power was, in other words, located outside journalism itself, in an exploration of the role played by broad social structures such as those of media ownership and regulation in shaping communication processes (Ferguson & Golding, 1997:xi). Such studies included the analysis of media texts, drawing correlations between their ideological content and broader patterns of corporate and class interest (Strelitz, 2005:40). Although, as we have seen, these broader relationships were acknowledged in the ethnographic studies, they did so only peripherally. Within the political economy tradition, they become the central focus of inquiry (Zelizer, 2004b: 70-72).

Studies of the political economy of news have contributed greatly to expanding the theoretical reference points for the empirical study of journalism. However, as in the case of the news ethnographies, critics have argued that this literature is perhaps too selective in its focus and because of this provides a limited image of its object of study. It is argued in this respect that the political economist reading tends towards reductionism, viewing journalism primarily in terms of social structure, and passing over questions of agency, as this pertains to both journalists and audiences. This results in a “top-down” conceptualisation of power, in which journalism is seen primarily to reflect the established profit-oriented and ideological interests of the state and market. The suggestion is, in other words, that the political economy perspective does not engage adequately with the possibility of ideological contestation, or with contradictions of power that provide room for resistance and change. Viewed in isolation from other forms of journalistic research, such studies therefore also remain limited in their conceptualisation of journalism (Kellner, 1997:109).

The second ‘emancipatory’ response to the approach to journalism scholarship adopted within Mass Communication Studies is that of Cultural Studies. This tradition conceptualised of journalism, first and foremost, as a cultural practice. Cultural analyses of journalism have, of course, been present in journalism scholarship throughout its history (Zelizer, 2004a:101). Furthermore, an intensification of interest in the cultural dimensions of journalism is broadly characteristic of journalism scholarship from the late 1960’s onwards. Indeed, Schudson’s third research perspective on empirical studies of journalistic production of this time is that of ‘culturological’ work. This includes research based in sociology and in particular the ethnographic studies of news production that were centrally concerned with questions of culture. Schudson suggests, however, that the framing of these studies did not allow for the cultural dimensions of journalism to be understood in any great depth. Writers such as Molotch, Lester and Tuchman focused on the production of culture, but were unable to adequately interrogate cultural givens in themselves, since these could not be uncovered through the focus, in these studies, on the institutional organisation of news (Schudson 1991:153).

It would seem, furthermore, that there were broader trends at work within sociology in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century that worked against the potential of this discipline as a site for the study of the cultural dimensions of journalism. As noted in the introduction to Chapter Two, sociology was in fact, at this time, progressively abandoning the empirical study of journalism as a social practice, so that such work became decoupled from the identity of this discipline (Schudson, 1997:381; Klinenberg, 2005:48). This occurred, ironically, at the same moment as the emergence of important scholarship by sociological theorists such as Bourdieu, Habermas and Luhman, affirming the centrality of the media and journalism in particular to social relations. It also coincided with a time in the history of social science in which other fields began to embrace the study of the relationship between culture, media and society (Hardt, 1992:7; Dahlgren, 1998:52). Cultural Studies, in particular, became concerned with such scholarship. Like Mass Communication Studies, this body of scholarship has become recognised as a global field of inquiry, and in fact is said to challenge sociology internationally as a preferred site for the study of journalism (Zelizer 2004a:81-110; Zelizer, 2004b:106).

Zelizer proposes that there are two main traditions of Cultural Studies that can be identified globally, that of British and American scholarship. The American tradition, which she refers to as the 'Illinois strand' of Cultural Studies, is rooted in the Chicago school of sociology and draws on the philosophical heritage of pragmatism. Zelizer, 2004b:105). James Carey, whose work was fundamental in the establishment of this strand, responded critically to the dominant position of positivist social science in the academy in general, and in the study of journalism in particular. He argued that journalism should be understood primarily as a form of cultural expression rather than as a profession, and that there is a need for more critical studies of the systems through which it produces cultural meaning (Jones, 2009). Scholars such as G Stuart Adam, Kevin Barnhurst, Elisabeth Bird, James Ettema, Theodore Glasser, John Nerone and Barbie Zelizer have built on this tradition, establishing a substantial body of American scholarship dealing with the cultural dimensions of journalism (Zelizer, 2004b:106).

It is, however, mostly the British strand that has defined the disciplinary identity of Cultural Studies as this has circulated internationally. This tradition of scholarship is generally understood to have originated in the 1950's, and is closely associated with the emergence of the 'New Left' as a political grouping. Commentators explain that the New Left was involved in an interrogation of Marxism, attempting to draw from this intellectual tradition in order to establish a framework of social analysis for making sense of the contemporary moment in British society. This preoccupation also influenced the formation of Cultural Studies, which became strongly informed by an interest in the maintenance of a tradition of critical political practice (Hall, 1992; Dahlgren, 1998:50). It is also a period that is associated with work based in a literary cultural framework, such as that of Raymond Williams, Richard Hoggart and EP Thompson. It has been pointed out that these theorists were all strongly concerned with the conceptualisation of culture as everyday lived experience, and therefore a

legitimate object of social and political analysis (Blundell et al, 1993:1; Dahlgren, 1998:52). A related influence, from the 1960's onwards, was that of critical theory and the analysis of the nature and role of ideology, and culture more particularly, within industrial capitalism (Switzer, 1985: 58). The name 'Cultural Studies', however, only emerged much later, when the identity of the field was consolidated in the 1970's in context of work produced by the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) at the University of Birmingham under the leadership of Hoggart and then Stuart Hall (Blundell et al, 1993:1). Studies produced at this time were highly influential in contributing to the diversification of approaches to empirical research about media. A specific value of this work was its commitment to critical political involvement, expressed as the desire to understand and change structures of dominance in industrial societies (Blundell et al, 1993:3). There was an emphasis, in particular, on the investigation of British working class culture, with the aim of exploring opportunities offered within such culture for resistance and social change (Hartley, 2008:40). Through an exploration of the role played in this context by the media, British Cultural Studies succeeded in laying claim to the empirical study of audiences and texts. Such studies had traditionally been the domain of effects studies and content analysis, and as such had been framed by a structural functionalist approach to research. In context of Cultural Studies, empirical research of this kind was for the first time applied comprehensively to critical inquiry based in materialist analysis of the production of cultural meaning, guided by questions about power and ideology (Madanou, 2009:326-7). One important contribution to the articulation of a theoretical framework for such analysis is understood to be the incorporation, in the 1970's of elements of semiotics. This field of study provided Cultural Studies scholars with a conceptual 'toolbox', which explained the relationship between representation and reality in terms of the operation of structures of signs (Dahlgren, 1998:54). Another was the 'Gramscian turn' within Cultural Studies scholarship, in which stress was placed on the cultural dimension of politics, and on the consequent need for the critical analysis of the role that popular culture played in both reproducing and challenging relations of power (Morley, quoted in Jin, 2011:126 ).

From the 1980's onwards, Cultural Studies travelled to other parts of the world, particularly those in which English is the dominant language of the academy (Blundell et al, 1993:6). The 'Ferment in the Field' debate, referred to earlier in this chapter [see pg. 77], corresponded with the circulation of Cultural Studies scholarship not only within American universities but also in other Anglophone academic environments. American and Canadian appropriations of Cultural Studies represent particularly important examples of this process of expansion, as does the work of Australian authors (Van Staden, 1996:73). Cultural Studies approaches to journalism scholarship seemed, at this time, to be moving from the margins to the mainstream of respectability in these new academic environments (Switzer & Ryan, 2002:214). Within these contexts, however, the social and political milieu that informed the original studies was no longer the central locus of Cultural Studies as a field, and the political concerns of the field were renegotiated. It has been suggested that, as part of this



process, Cultural Studies of the late 20<sup>th</sup> century has tended to reorient itself away from the celebration of resistance implicit in the 1970's British scholarship (Blundell et al, 1993:10). Some critics argue that the appropriation and professionalisation of Cultural Studies in the United States, in particular, facilitated a loss of its original emancipatory commitments. In this context, questions about personal identity have replaced those about the implications of cultural practice for relations of power (Hardt, 1992; Van Staden, 1996:73; Dahlgren, 1998:52).

Some commentators have also argued that, despite the institutional acknowledgement of Cultural Studies, scholars based in this field have made little impact on dominant approaches to journalism within these environments. Teaching and research informed by the Cultural Studies tradition is seen, instead, to occur in isolated spaces within the academy. Such work has, it would seem, been assimilated within academic environments without making a substantial intervention into their approaches to scholarship (Switzer & Ryan 2002:214). It has been suggested that one reason for this may be that, in the American context, and in other Anglophone environments as well, the teaching and study of communication remained inextricably linked with the aim of providing future journalists and communication practitioners with competencies that would ensure that they would be employable within the mainstream media. Professional training, in other words, provided a rationale for research as well as teaching (Switzer, 1985:57).

There is no doubt, however, that in the early years of British Cultural Studies, when the field first defined itself, it contributed greatly to strengthening the intellectual resources of scholarship about journalism. The main reason for this was that scholars in this field 'took journalism seriously' (a much-cited phrase coined by Zelizer) as an object of study, working from the assumption that it represents a key term of reference for studies of the relationship between culture and power (Zelizer, 2004b:105; Zelizer, 2011:10). Indeed, much of the groundbreaking work produced at the CCCS was predominantly concerned with journalism, usually in the hard news form. Stuart Hall's seminal essay *Encoding/Decoding*, which was written as a critique of the linear model of communication typical of positivist media research, focused especially on the role played by audiences in the construction of the meaning of news (Madanou, 2009:326). David Morley's studies of the role of individual interpretation in establishing the meaning of media texts was framed by an interest in journalism – for example in context of his studies of the television news programme *Nationwide* (Kellner & Durham, 1997:176). This prioritisation of journalism was echoed at other British institutions that were producing seminal work in Cultural Studies scholarship. At the Polytechnic of Wales, John Fiske and John Hartley were for example recognised for advancing semiological studies, primarily through the analysis of journalistic texts (Zelizer, 2008: 183). The Glasgow University Media Group also produced important work, such as the *Bad News* studies, produced from the mid-1970's onwards, focusing on the use of critical discourse analysis in researching images and text in Television news (Van Dijk, 2009:196). One explanation of this interest in journalism is that the early Cultural Studies scholars recognised in mainstream news a shared interest in documenting social and political



processes (Hartley, 2008:137-8). An important benefit of this focus was that it helped to diversify the terms of reference of journalism scholarship, particularly with regards to the detailed and socially situated conceptualisation of texts and audiences. Up to this point, such consciousness had, in fact, been rare to empirical studies of journalistic practice, both within the Mass Communication Studies paradigm and even, as we have seen, in the ethnographic news studies (Schudson, 1991:152).

Whereas the 'Illinois' strand of Cultural Studies has produced a sustained body of scholarship about journalism, the same cannot, however, be said of the British tradition. From the 1980's onward, as this field began to gain international recognition, journalism as an object of study was deprioritised. There tended to be more interest in the radical possibilities of other forms of popular culture, such as that of entertainment media and music (Hartley, 2009:315). When journalism was studied, the focus shifted to unusual and oppositional examples of news coverage. It has been suggested that mainstream journalism was abandoned as a worthwhile target of analysis, labeled as uninteresting territory, as if all questions about its nature and its function in society had been adequately answered. One explanation that has been offered for this has been the dissipation of the original political impetus of Cultural Studies, which, as we saw above, characterised its assimilation within new institutional settings. The argument, here, is that as Cultural Studies disconnected itself from overt political concerns, its interest in overtly political media also waned. Another more compelling suggestion is that the way that Cultural Studies scholars conceptualised of journalism had been flawed from the beginning. One could argue that – as with the ethnographic studies of news - such scholarship made essentialist assumptions about journalism as a social practice. Zelizer proposes in this respect that Cultural Studies scholars took journalism "too much at face value", accepting its dominant self-presentation. Because of this, the potential for exploring new or diverse ways in which journalism could operate, or for drawing on instances in which it does function differently from the orthodox centre, becomes limited (Zelizer, 2004a:110-111).

### **3.4 The 1990's and beyond: Journalism Studies as a field in its own right**

It would seem, then, that each tradition of scholarship that set itself up as an alternative to the 'orthodoxy' of Mass Communication Studies in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century brought valuable perspectives to the study of journalism. In each case, however, such perspectives remained limited by their own terms of reference. Surprisingly, some of the limitations discussed, above, in the context of Mass Communication Studies find their appearance again in the ethnographic studies of news, studies of the political economy of journalism and in journalism scholarship based in Cultural Studies. Journalism scholarship still remained limited by the fact that theoretical concepts and methods in which they were not designed to be of specific relevance to journalism. As a related point, the study of journalism continued to enjoy only marginal recognition as an object of study within fields that were defined by a broader interest in media and culture. Also, as we have seen both in the case of

the news ethnographies and critical examinations of journalism within Cultural studies, there has been a failure to regularly update empirical research into particular aspects of journalistic practice, as if the need to provide empirical evidence about such practice had been met. Although there was a far greater consciousness of social contexts, journalism was therefore still equated with a limited set of empirical examples, particularly in relation to the dominant self-representation of such practice as this could be found in America.

It has been suggested, in literature dealing with these research histories, that one reason for this could be the high degree of conflict that has characterised journalism research. Tuchman suggests that, because of such conflict, traditions in journalism research have existed in separation from each other, defining themselves primarily in opposition to alternative approaches. They do so, firstly, through their critical reaction to the functionalist heritage of Mass Communication Studies, but also by competing with each other for academic recognition and authority (Tuchman, 2002:88). This may help to explain why journalism scholarship of the late 20<sup>th</sup> century fractured into a range of analytic foci, with researchers typically devoting themselves to limited aspects of one particular form of journalism, viewed through a single conceptual or methodological lens. Although this means that individual theories and areas of study have been thoroughly explored, there has been little synthesis between the different perspectives on journalism (Singer, 2008:154). It has also been suggested that these specialised approaches became compromised because of a tendency in each case to treat one 'moment' with the production of cultural meaning as if it represents the complete process (Johnson, 1983:48). Peter Dahlgren calls this the 'metonymic' bias of journalism scholarship, in which one aspect of journalism stands in for the whole. Because of this, there continues to be a gap between the official representation of news and the actual nature of journalistic practice (Dahlgren, 1992:1-23).

In reviews of scholarship in Cultural Studies and Political Economy (Kellner, 1997; Du Gay, 1997) it has been suggested that the study of culture would benefit from an approach in which these two traditions are brought together. There should, in other words, be an effort to cut across the boundaries of academic discipline to trace the relationship between text, audience, organisation and social context. This would enable researchers to engage with the full 'circuit of culture' – of the production, circulation, and reception of cultural meaning. Zelizer applies this argument to the study of journalism in context of the sociology of news studies, proposing that a key limitation of this research might lie in the method in which it is based. One can, she suggests, only generalise to a limited extent from ethnographic field work with regards to the nature of journalistic meaning in all its variability. Because of this, newsroom ethnographies need to be seen as only one part of empirical inquiry into journalism. The suggestion here seems to be that a more complete picture of journalism as a practice of cultural production could emerge if a varied set of perspectives are applied to journalistic settings and their larger socio-cultural surroundings (Zelizer, 2004b:69). Tuchman makes the same argument more broadly, proposing that the partial nature of the 'prisms' through which journalism has been viewed in the humanities and social sciences respectively should be

acknowledged, and the potential for complementarity between such perspectives should be explored (Tuchman, 2002:88). It may be that the limitations of journalism scholarship, such as its parochial focus on Anglo-American examples and its tendency towards assuming that such reference points are of universal significance can only be addressed once the need for claiming academic authority is met.

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, debates about journalism scholarship have become increasingly characterised by the assertion that the study of journalism deserved to be taken seriously, in its own right, rather than being subsumed within more generic fields of study (Allan, 2004; Zelizer, 2004b). Recent reviews of journalism scholarship (Weaver & Löffelholz, 2008; Wahl-Jorgensen & Hanitzsch, 2009) claim that, in the last decade, Journalism Studies has finally become an academic field in its own right. It is described, for example, as emerging on the international scene of communication research as a “vibrant new interdisciplinary field”. Indicators include the establishment of journals dedicated to the study of journalism and the publication of major books focusing on the current state of research about journalism (Craig, 2009:ix). Several authors in different parts of the world<sup>1</sup> have concerned themselves directly with contributing to the coherence in this field, offering overviews of different approaches to journalism scholarship. It is argued that these tendencies are of more significance than simply indicating the ongoing maturation of journalism research as a theme within broader disciplinary environments, such as that of Mass Communication Studies, Sociology and Cultural Studies. Instead, or so it is suggested, the study of journalism is now becoming framed by a disciplinary identity of its own (Deuze, 2004:275-6).

One reason for this development may be that scholarship that defines itself in this way is rewarded within the system of incentives that have come to characterise academic environments in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Funding within academic environments is also increasingly tied to research productivity, so that teaching staff in journalism programmes who may previously have involved themselves primarily in journalism education, are taking seriously the task of contributing to journalism scholarship. Certainly, there has been increased pressure on such environments for more rigorous approaches to journalism as a field of research (Nolan, 2008:738). It is nevertheless suggested that the emergence of Journalism Studies as a distinct domain of inquiry is of more than simply pragmatic benefit. It could, in fact, provide opportunities for journalism scholarship that transcends the limitations that have characterised the study of journalism during the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Glasser, 2006:46).

It may seem surprising that it is only now, after more than a century of academic work focusing on journalism, that we are seeing the emergence of Journalism Studies as a field in its own right. One reason for this could be that the study of journalism has, until quite recently, been implicated in broader disciplinary struggles that worked against the detailed empirical study of the subject in all its manifestations. Both Mass Communication Studies and Cultural Studies, as we have seen, laid claim to journalism as an object of study as part of a larger epistemic interest in

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<sup>1</sup> Such authors include Myles Breen in Australia, Martin Löffelholz in Germany, Barbie Zelizer in the United States, and Marc Deuze in the Netherlands.

communication and culture respectively. Mass Communication Studies established its disciplinary authority at the expense of the consideration of kinds of knowledge that are crucial to the understanding of journalism, particularly with regards to the social construction of meaning. It also defined itself in terms of norms that were dominant in the socio-political context of America of the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, and its conceptualisation of journalism was limited by this perspective. Some of these limitations are addressed by the various challenges to the Mass Communication Studies conceptualisation of journalism that emerged in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. As we have seen, however, even in these studies, empirical work on journalism remains highly selective and fractured. Generally, the image of journalism that is reproduced in this work largely remains that of the 'Anglo-American' professional ideal, defined mostly by the notion of journalistic objectivity and the assumption that journalism is necessarily grounded in an interest in democratisation. Within such a context, there continue to be limitations on the extent to which a field of knowledge can be developed that is directly informed by the detailed empirical study of journalism in all its variations.

Since the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, however, important steps have been taken that begin to address these limitations. Recent commentary on the development of journalism studies as a discrete academic discipline have argued that media studies, communications and sociology tend to offer an analytical perspective that remains distant from the daily pressures faced within journalism as an industry. Such studies, it is argued, leave important contextual and practical questions unanswered. In order to assist in the delineation of journalism as an emerging discipline in its own right, there is a need for detailed empirical reviews of practice, informed by the knowledge of the practitioners of journalism (Niblock, 2007:21; Harcup, 2012). Journalism Studies will succeed, then, if it can reconnect the study of journalism to the practice of journalism, and as part of this draw on the knowledge about journalism that exists amongst practitioners. It is noted, however, that such research projects would need to engage both with the 'realities' of current practices and arrangements, and with the normative ideals of journalistic practitioners (Glasser, 2006:148). It has been argued that such research becomes increasingly possible with the rise of the 'practitioner-academic'; that is, members of staff who have established themselves both as experienced journalists and as scholars. Tertiary institutions are, it is suggested, prioritising the recruitment of such faculty, who express a willingness to incorporate insights from the world of journalistic practice into the critical academic study of such practice (Niblock, 2007:21).

One example of such writing can perhaps be seen in Bill Kovach and Tom Rosenstiel's study, *The Elements of Journalism: What News People Should Know and the Public should Expect* (2001). This book was prompted by disquiet, within the American journalistic community, about a perceived drop in the standards of journalistic practice stemming from the influence of new technology, changes in corporate ownership, lack of consistent professional guidelines and the contamination of news judgement by marketing concerns. This gave rise to what has been termed the 'journalistic ethical reform movement', in which members of the American journalistic community

began to argue publically that journalism was not living up to its public service responsibilities. It was proposed, within such arguments, that shortcomings in journalism could be overcome if journalists applied their shared ideals to their everyday practices. In 1997, a statement was for example published by a group of prominent American journalists and editors, who called themselves the Committee of Concerned Journalists. This statement identified a need for codes of professional practice, to be voluntarily adopted by journalists in order to establish professional standards for themselves. *Elements of Journalism* responded to this call, setting out to establish a set of empirically grounded ideals for journalism as a field, drawing on interviews in which journalists were asked to define good journalistic practice. In this way, the authors identify what they claim to be the 'enduring' principles that define journalism, and advocated that media practitioners abide by these principles to thwart the perceived crisis of purpose that they perceived to have taken hold of journalism (Macdonald, 2006:751-4).

Commentators have, however, raised some reservations about the framework of analysis in which this book is based. It is suggested, for example, that in identifying strategies that need to be adopted to engage the social forces that are seen to threaten the integrity of journalism, Kovach and Rosenstiel depend too heavily on the articulation of the ethical ideals of journalists. In doing so, they do not pay adequate attention to the need for engaging with the structures and systems in which such journalists operate. It is argued that, in order to understand the forces that undermine journalists' capacity to practice journalism according to their own professional code, one should not only consider abstract issues of ethics but also engage with the politics of time, resources and profit (Macdonald, 2006:755). It seems that, as in the case of many earlier traditions of journalism scholarship, *Elements of Journalism* remains unable to engage adequately with the social context of journalism. One reason for this may be that the book continues to assume the necessity for the identification of a conceptualisation of journalism that is universally applicable. It does not, in other words, accept the importance, to the study of journalism, of empirical work that looks at journalism as a diverse and changing set of practices, informed at different moments in time and space by distinct social interests (Zelizer, 2004b:4).

It may be that such limitations can be transcended in context of comparative studies of journalism, based in a wide variety of social environments across the world. Significantly, such work has placed emphasis on an interrogation of the relationship between national identity and the definition of journalism, and challenges the Anglo-American model as the central term of reference for research. We saw the emergence of criticism of Western models of journalism in the 1970's, in context of the NWICO debates, in scholarship based in the cultural imperialism thesis, and later in arguments about the importance of localised interpretations of globally circulated media. As we have seen, such work replaced the binary opposition between 'the West' and 'the Rest' with a dualism which juxtaposed the industrialised North and the 'developed' South. Critics suggest, however, that it is only within recent comparative journalism studies that the hegemony of traditional assumptions

about the nature and function of journalism are finally dismantled. The argument is that this scholarship is assisting in the 'internationalisation' of the study of journalism, so that the perspectives from which journalism can now be observed from within the academy are progressively widening (Joseph, 2005:576). It is argued, in fact, that the internationalised study of journalism is at last becoming institutionalised, and that in this context it is possible to observe the emergence of an approach to a study of journalism that cannot be defined by national borders (Weaver & Löffelholz, 2008:3).

Such trends may be at least partly explained by the fact that, since the 1980's, debates about 'modernisation' in the social sciences have been taken over by those about globalisation. This change was stimulated by a growing awareness that the events taking place within individual countries are increasingly defined by processes that cut across national boundaries, relating to economic trends but also to other global factors such as threats of nuclear warfare, the growing instability of the environment, and the globalisation of media. Questions about the extent to which Western or American experience can be said to be of universal significance are now increasingly framed by these debates (Curran & Park, 2000:3).

In the *Global Journalist* (1998), David Weaver draws out the implications of such debates for journalism scholarship through a comparative study of journalists and their perception of their own practices. It has, however, been pointed out that this study still reproduces the Anglo-American paradigm as its central point of reference (Joseph, 2005:858). A more radical intervention into the process of internationalising journalism scholarship has been made by European scholars who introduced a theoretically and methodologically more advanced approach to the field of comparative scholarship about journalism. One publication that is often cited in this respect is James Curran and Myung-Jin Park's *Dewesternising Media Studies* (2000). Interestingly, the authors of this book resist the general trend within discussions of media globalisation by insisting that national identity is still central to understanding media, and in particular that the nation state is still an important marker of difference (Joseph, 2005:578). At the same time, they question the equation between journalism scholarship and a restricted set of social environments, and called for a greater diversity of national perspectives on the study of journalism. In doing so the authors refer, in particular, to the limitations of the models offered in *Four Theories of the Press*. In *Comparing Media Systems: Three Models of Media and Politics* (2004), Daniel C. Hallin and Paolo Mancini argue that such a widening of perspective is only possible through qualitative empirical research. Such research should be based on observation and interviewing, much like the American ethnographic studies of the 1970's, but focusing on different social environments. In this volume, they contribute to such research themselves, focusing on a wide range of media environments based in contrasting national settings and in this context developing a range of alternative models to those proposed by Siebert et al (Joseph, 2005:567). They illustrate, in this way, that notions of a coherent 'Western' identity for journalism obscured the wide variety of forms of journalism that can be found in different parts of



Europe and North America. Tomas Hanitzsch suggests that, within such work, the binary opposition of North and South gives way to a self-conscious and critical focus on the construction of the 'West'. He proposes, furthermore, that the next stage that is emerging in comparative journalism scholarship is one in which the distinction is no longer between particular geographical construction such as that of the West, South and North. Instead, there is an empirical interrogation of journalism in localised environments, and their relationship to broader global trends, including the rhetorical construction of a 'universal' set of ideals for journalism (Hanitzsch, 2009:416).

Such work is assisting in finally severing the assumption of a necessary link between journalism and the ideals of objectivity and universally relevant knowledge. Schudson, for example, now argues that the journalism that he originally described in his historical work as 'modern' is more appropriately judged 'American', and that this construction is not necessarily internationally applicable. In alternative social environments, other norms can stand in for that of objectivity and has done so elsewhere in the world (Schudson & Anderson, 2009:93). Other studies have successfully compared the rhetoric through which journalistic communities define their identity to their actual practices, and in doing so has identified that there is often a disjunction between these two spheres. Whereas journalists may, in many environments, describe their own works in terms of the Anglo-American model, the link between such description and their work practices remains weak (Weaver & Löffelholz, 2008:7).

Despite these advances, however, Journalism Studies across the world remains profoundly shaped by nationally grounded traditions of scholarship. The key English-language journals continue to dominate the international academic sphere, and still help to reproduce the general dominance of North American and European scholarship (De Burgh, 2005:xiii). Within such scholarship, the traditional assumptions about the nature and function of journalism still circulate, to the detriment of the empirical scrutiny of journalistic practice in all its variations. American research is still primarily defined by the Communication Studies paradigm, while British and Australian work unfolds mostly within the critical tradition of British Cultural Studies. French journalism studies, which tends to be framed by semiology and structuralism, has remained largely invisible within the international domain. German scholarship has also maintained its own trajectory, being primarily focused on macro scale analysis of journalistic institutions, influenced in particular by systems theory (Wahl-Jorgensen & Hanitzsch, 2009:7). Research in Asia, which has for a long time been strongly influenced by American scholarship, remains oriented towards Mass Communication Studies (Pan et al, 2008:196-209). There is, then, still a need to broaden the scope of the empirical study of journalism beyond the terms of reference of the dominant traditions that have been set in place in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Much of the scholarship that had dedicated itself to widening the lens of empirical inquiry has done so through an attempt to assimilate alternative conceptualisations of journalism into the existing paradigmatic identity of journalism scholarship. It has been pointed out in this respect that mass



communication as a field of study is remarkably absorbent and has now incorporated strains of qualitative and critical research. The suggestion, here, is that critique of the limitations of American mass communication research are increasingly out of date (Reese, 1999:82). It has also been noted, however, that a paradigm shift in the empirical study of journalism can only be achieved when scholarship commits itself to a process of self-scrutiny, in which the old disciplinary boundaries for such study are fundamentally disrupted. It is, in particular, important to question the assumption that Mass Communication Studies and Cultural Studies represent adequate disciplinary domains for framing the study of journalism. Instead, there is a need for an approach that cuts across the traditional disciplinary distinctions of journalism scholarship. Rather than assimilating new approaches to the study of journalism into the existing paradigms, researchers should interrogate the theoretical assumptions and normative frameworks of such paradigms. Alternative conceptualisations of journalism can assist in such a task, by creating dialogic disruptions in traditional approaches to research (Wasserman, 2004:428-433). It is possible that such work can only be achieved with the establishment of journalism studies as a disciplinary field in its own right.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter set out to demonstrate that the claims that have recurred within journalism scholarship with regards to the nature and purpose of authoritative knowledge form part of broader patterns characterising the history of the conceptualisation of such knowledge during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. With this purpose in mind, it has mapped out developments in the history of such claims as this has occurred since the institutionalisation of the study of journalism within universities. It has, more particularly, traced correlations between the knowledge claims that have shaped journalism scholarship and the two contrasting ‘moments’ in the disciplinary history of authoritative social knowledge discussed in Chapter Two. The first of these moments is represented by a period in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century in which the authority of social science was strongly associated with the positivist idealisation of science as objective and universally relevant knowledge. It is at this time that one can observe the initial institutionalisation of the academic study of journalism, in context of the establishment of the field of Mass Communication Studies. The approach to journalism scholarship that was articulated, within this moment, was therefore strongly framed by the positivist paradigm. Because of the partnership between Mass Communication Studies and journalism education programmes, journalism scholarship was also closely identified with the project of ‘professionalising’ journalism as a social practice. The second moment represents the global emergence, from the 1960’s onwards, of approaches to the study of society that questioned the privileging of science as the guarantor of authoritative knowledge. This phase in history is then also associated with the growth of approaches to journalism scholarship which defined themselves in reaction to the Mass

Communication Studies paradigm. Such scholarship can also be seen to challenge the 'professional' identity of journalism practice.

It is argued in this chapter that within both these moments, the construction of academic knowledge about journalism was closely linked to strategies of self-legitimation through which occupational groups were laying claim to their own authority as producers of knowledge. These strategies can then be seen to have placed limitations on the extent to which journalism scholarship could develop a coherent identity, and a relationship of sustained critical engagement with historically specific examples of journalism practice. Such strategies are noticeable, firstly, in context of the role that journalism scholarship played in legitimising the academic status of journalism education programmes. Secondly, it can be traced in relation to the role of such scholarship in the strategies employed by academic communities in order to legitimise their own disciplinary authority.

The chapter identifies repeated attempts, within the history of journalism scholarship in the Mass Communication Studies paradigm, to break away from the narrow confines of 'effects' research in order to open up spaces for the empirical and historically situated study of journalism. This included the 'gatekeeper' studies, studies of news values, agenda-setting studies, and studies focusing on the occupational identity of journalists, measured against 'traits' of professionalism. Within such research, it is possible to observe efforts to move beyond the positivist framework of Mass Communication Studies, to an acknowledgement of the historically situated nature of social knowledge. It has been argued in this chapter that each of these traditions of scholarship brought valuable perspectives to the study of the role played by social interest and historical circumstance within journalism practice.

At the same time, such value remained limited by a continued investment in the ideal of objective and universally relevant knowledge. The study of subjectivity tended, for example, to be framed by the concept of 'bias', in which authoritative social knowledge is understood to be tainted by the influence of social interest. As such, this research tradition did not question the assumption that journalistic practice can exist as a process of objective reporting on a pre-existing social reality. It was, furthermore, still assumed that journalism forms part of a balanced set of social structures which contribute to the stability of a social system that is not in itself questioned. Within the research traditions that emerged in this context, the concept of professional identity, as this relates to journalism as an occupation, also became closely linked to the ideal of objectivity. Professional journalism was understood, in other words, to be guided by a commitment to the pursuit of truth, untainted by the influence of social interest. This understanding of professionalism can be observed, for example, in the gatekeeper studies, studies of news values, and those dealing with the professional 'traits' of journalism as an occupation. It is suggested, in this chapter, that this approach to professional identity placed constraints on the extent to which research could engage critically with journalism as historically situated product and practice.

Approaches to the study of journalism that were defined in critical opposition to the Mass Communication Studies paradigm argued for alternative understandings of authoritative social knowledge to that of the positivist paradigm. Within such scholarship, particular emphasis is placed on culturally oriented research, based in interpretative and critical methodological frameworks and drawing on qualitative methods of inquiry. Whereas Mass Communication research measured journalism against an idealised conception of scientific knowledge, these traditions understood journalism to be a cultural practice. As we have seen, such work included scholarship based in the analysis of cultural imperialism as well as sociological research focusing on reporting and news management cultures. It also includes studies in the political economy of journalism, and research based within the field of Cultural Studies. Through these research traditions, it became possible to critically consider the ideological function of journalism, as a practice involved in the construction of social meaning.

One important theme, within such studies, was the critique of the ideological function of guidelines for the 'professional' in journalism. This can be observed, for example, in scholarship about cultural imperialism, which described the global circulation of guidelines for journalistic objectivity as the reproduction of Western liberal ideology. It can also be identified in Schudson's analysis of the history guidelines for journalistic objectivity within American print journalism. Schudson referred to contestation that took place in newsrooms around such guidelines, and argued that this was representative of power struggles around the ideological identity of such papers. Tuchman's suggestion that guidelines for journalistic objectivity are 'strategic rituals' is also a key example of such research.

It is argued in this chapter, however, that the 'cultural' approach to the study of journalism has not resulted in the establishment of a substantial tradition of empirical research into journalism as it is practiced in different social contexts, and at different moments in history. There has been, for example, a failure to regularly update research into journalistic practice, so that journalism remains equated with a limited set of empirical examples. Furthermore, the different traditions of scholarship have tended to be preoccupied with their own disciplinary identity, to the extent that they have operated in isolation from each other. The landscape of scholarship that emerged from these studies has, therefore, remained fragmented.

Although recent commentary has claimed that journalism studies is now emerging as a field in its own right, journalism scholars still struggle to establish agreed terms of reference for the critical study of journalism. It is proposed, in this chapter, that such scholarship still needs to articulate a comprehensive epistemological framework that can engage adequately with journalism as a form of knowledge, and that can serve as an alternative to the approach to knowledge that was articulated within American social science more than half a century ago.

## CONCLUSION PART ONE

The purpose of Part One of this dissertation was to map out the relationship between the history of the academic construction of journalism and broader trends in the history of conceptions of authoritative social knowledge. Chapter One established the broad frame for this task, drawing on the history of philosophical reflections about the conceptualisation of authoritative social knowledge. It did so by examining the history of scholarship about the dominant theorisations of social science, as well as the sociological study of scientific knowledge. It focused on the claims that have recurred in such scholarship with regards to the nature and purpose of authoritative social knowledge. Chapter Two then explored the recurrence of the terms established in this scholarship in the disciplinary environments in which Mass Communication Studies and Cultural Studies established themselves. It is explained in this chapter that these fields are closely associated with the history of the academic study of journalism. Against this backdrop, Chapter Three dealt with the sphere of journalism scholarship, demonstrating the relevance of the conceptualisations of authoritative knowledge identified in the previous chapters to the history of such scholarship. The aim of identifying these patterns was to tease out the consequences of these conceptualisations for the way in which journalism scholarship engages with journalism as a social practice at the level of World One.

It was possible to identify, across the histories of knowledge discussed in these chapters, shared patterns in the conceptualisation of authoritative knowledge about the social. As was argued such conceptualisations were informed by two principles for the legitimisation of scientific knowledge about the social that are closely associated with positivism. Authoritative social knowledge is, firstly, understood to be that which is objectively produced, free from the influence of social interest. Secondly, it is understood to have the status of universal, reproducible knowledge that is context independent. In the histories of knowledge discussed in each of the three chapters, it is possible to identify specific moments in which the ideals of objectivity and universally relevant knowledge held greater legitimacy, while at other points they became challenged. In each case, one could also trace ongoing attempts to reconcile acknowledgement of the inevitable uncertainty and subjectivity of knowledge about the social with commitment to the positivist idealisation of science. The recognition of the constructed nature of social knowledge therefore exists in tension with adherence to the ideals of objectivity and universal relevance.

It is, furthermore, possible to identify lines of influence between this tension as it exists in the World Three reflections about social knowledge described in Chapter One, the disciplinary histories described in Chapter Two and journalism scholarship as described in Chapter Three. Such influence becomes visible when one considers the role played first by Mass Communication Studies and then Cultural Studies, in claiming for themselves the status of 'default setting' for the construction of journalism as a subject of study. It was explained, in Chapter Three, that both of these fields have centrally informed the academic construction of journalism, and in doing so have brought their own

epistemological perspectives and orthodoxies to bear on journalism as an object of study. Mass Communication Studies, on one hand, defined its own authority in terms of the theoretical and methodological frameworks of positivist social science. It did so, in particular, by drawing on disciplines such as that of sociology and psychology. Journalism scholarship based in the field of Media Studies or Cultural Studies more generally drew, in turn, on the critical study of culture and history. The lines of disciplinary legitimisation within journalism scholarship can then be traced from these two fields to the broader disciplinary domains in which they are based.

Such claims to authority are also rooted in World Three, since academic knowledge draws for its legitimacy on conceptualisations of authoritative knowledge that find articulation in the meta-scientific world of the philosophy of science. The nature of legitimisation that exists between World Two and World Three can be observed in the invocation, within journalism scholarship, of contesting conceptualisations of credible social knowledge. In Mass Communication Studies, the reference is to a positivist conceptualisation of knowledge, measured against the idealisation of knowledge as science. Within Cultural Studies, social knowledge is understood to be a product of culture, and its authority derives from the relations of power within which it is based. The credibility of the study of society is located, furthermore, in its emancipatory potential.

In each case, the tension between these two epistemological positions was seen to have been informed by arguments about the social purpose of the study of society, particularly in context of the need either for progressive social change or the maintenance of social stability. Indeed, in each case, socio-political context (and therefore World One) can be said to form an important backdrop to contestations around the conceptualisation of authoritative knowledge about the social. It is also possible to identify points within each of these histories in which developments in the conceptualisation of social knowledge are significantly disrupted by shifts in social context. These shifts are associated with historical moments of extreme social instability, particularly those of war, revolution, and radical economic change. It would seem that in the wake of such events, approaches to the theorisation of science become implicated both in strategies for the facilitation of progressive social change, but also in the maintenance of social stability. In Chapter One we saw, for example, that the emergence of positivist philosophy in the 19<sup>th</sup> century must be interpreted as a response to the historical events of the previous century. In Chapter One and Two we also saw that the inter-war years of the 1920's to mid-thirties, as well as the decades of the 1960's and 1970's, can, again, be seen to represent important moments of disruption in the history of the authoritative social knowledge. Within both of these moments it is possible to identify the emergence of important shifts in the conceptualisation of the study of society. Within the first, there is a strong emphasis on the acknowledgement of the influence of historically specific institutions of power on the construction of scientific knowledge. It is, however, only in the second of these moments that one can identify the emergence of a more comprehensive commitment to the acknowledgement of the construction of social knowledge. Even in this context, such acknowledgement was slow to emerge, and did not

necessarily result in the establishment of sustained traditions of empirical social studies that countered the positivist tradition.

These histories of knowledge are also implicated in struggles to confirm the boundaries between and within disciplines. Such struggles have impacted on the ability of journalism scholarship to establish a coherent relationship of empirical inquiry with journalism as it exists in World One. Due to such contestation, no coherent body of knowledge about journalism has yet been established within the university context. Instead, journalism scholarship is characterised by profound fragmentation. In explaining these circumstances, commentators point out that journalism as an object of study has tended to receive only marginal recognition within fields that define themselves in terms of a much broader set of research interests. The theoretical concepts and methods in which Mass Communication Studies and Culture Studies are based have, it is argued, not been designed to be of specific relevance to the study of journalism. Furthermore, as noted above, these fields have defined themselves in opposition to each other, with the result that traditions of journalism research have also existed in an antagonistic relationship with each other. Synthesis between different perspectives on the study of journalism has therefore remained limited. It was pointed out that, in consequence, journalism scholarship has not established itself as a coherent body of knowledge in its own right, dedicated to the study of journalism. Chapter Three proposed that this fragmentation of journalism scholarship has placed limitations on the way in which academic knowledge and knowledge of journalistic practice have interacted with each other. As shown in Figure 2, these patterns in the legitimisation of knowledge have important implications for the history of critical engagement between university based journalism scholarship and journalism practice.

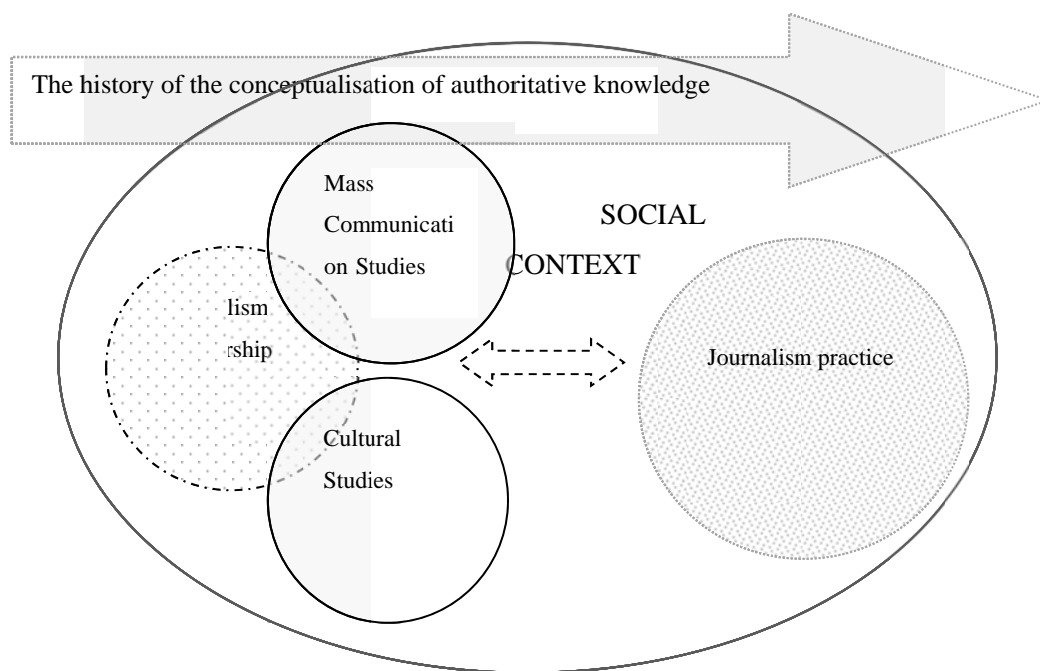


Figure 2: Journalism scholarship and its relationship to the contextualised study of journalism practice

## **PART TWO - JOURNALISM EDUCATION: GLOBAL AND LOCAL PATTERNS**



## CHAPTER FOUR: AMERICAN JOURNALISM EDUCATION

### Inventing journalism as the object of university education

#### Introduction

It has been explained that this study focuses on negotiations in the conceptualisation of authoritative knowledge, as this occurs in the interaction between the institutional spheres of journalism scholarship, journalism education, and journalism practice. It deals, in particular, with the impact of such interaction on developments within the sphere of journalism education. This sphere is understood to be situated between the sphere of journalism scholarship and the sphere of journalism practice, interacting with both. Because of this, the conceptualisations of authoritative knowledge generated within scholarship and practice co-exist within the sphere of journalism education. It is argued that such co-existence has resulted in ongoing tensions, within journalism education, with regards to appropriate ways to think and talk about journalism.

This next chapter teases out the implications of such conflict for the history of journalism education in the American context. It is argued, in this dissertation, that American journalism education and the debates that have surrounded it serve as a key term of reference for a discussion of international trends in the relationship between journalism education and the global history of authoritative social knowledge. One reason for this is that the global dominance of American literature about journalism education has meant that perspectives from this country contribute significantly to the terms of discussion of international debates about such education. Also, there is in fact no other example of journalism education that has been the object of as extensive and detailed a body of academic commentary. This should not be surprising, given that the American example represents the most sustained history of such education within the global landscape. As will be explained in this chapter, university-based journalism education was established in this country in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, long before its development elsewhere in the world (Johannsen et al, 2001:472).

It is also of importance to this study that educators in many countries have looked to America for guidance in establishing their own approaches to teaching journalism. Literature dealing with global trends in journalism education (Gaunt, 1992; Morrison, 1997; Okigbo & Pratt, 1997; Reese & Cohen, 2000; Froehlich & Holtz-Bacha, 2003; Zelizer, 2004b:47; Papoutsaki, 2007) often refers to the role played by an American 'model' of such teaching. This model is understood to have circulated internationally, impacting on the global development of journalism education. As part of this trend, as we will see in the discussion of global patterns in journalism education in Chapter Five, textbooks produced in the American context form the core of teaching resources in many institutions across the world. American journalism educators have also been particularly active in establishing programmes similar to their own in other parts of the world. For these reasons, this study pays

particular attention to the position of the American example of journalism education within the global landscape.

It is argued, in this chapter, that the history of American journalism education is characterised by a series of struggles around the conceptualisation of the 'professional'. Within debates about such education, this concept is invoked in at least two different ways, representing the agendas of different interest groups. Hallin and Mancini (2004) explain the different usages in terms of a distinction between what they term 'professionalism' and 'professionalisation'. A commitment to the professionalisation of journalism refers to the importance of ensuring that it becomes like other classic liberal professions, with medicine and law held up as the ideal examples. The articulation of professional norms, and in particular a public service orientation, is key to this understanding. An emphasis on 'professionalism', in contrast, forms part of arguments for the more effective functioning of journalism as an occupation and social institution (Hallin & Mancini, quoted in Josephi, 2010:256). Literature dealing with American journalism education identifies examples of the invocation of both arguments. Within some contexts, the reference is to the promotion of an approach to journalism based in professional principles of disinterested service to society, and more specifically in a commitment to the facilitation of democracy. In others, journalism education is seen as a vehicle for the delivery of a workforce to media organisations, and here professionalisation operates as the establishment of systems for the occupational control of journalists (Reese & Cohen, 2000:217). The chapter traces the influence of both conceptualisations of the professional on the history of journalism education in American universities.

Section One deals with the establishment of American journalism education in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, and then describes developments in such teaching up to the middle of the century. In doing so, it focuses on the negotiations that took place amongst educators around the purpose of such teaching, and around the way programmes should therefore be positioned within the academy. It is argued that these negotiations were centrally informed by a tension between the two approaches to the 'professional' identified above. Section Two focuses on developments from the 1950's onwards. It is suggested, in this discussion, that by mid-century agreements had been established between journalism educators and the broader academy that allowed for the accommodation of opposing conceptualisations of the role of the 'professional' within journalistic practice. The discussion proposes, further, that these agreements were increasingly tested, during the second half of the century, by changes in the broader social environment. It is argued that these changes are representative of fundamental shifts that were taking place, internationally, in the history of authoritative knowledge.

#### **4.1 The first fifty years: The founding of American journalism education**

Although, as we have seen, journalism education literature makes reference to the existence of an American ‘model’ for such teaching, the existence of such a model can be contested. Within this literature, the term ‘model’ is employed both descriptively and normatively, and in both usages, the picture that emerges is one of contradiction and conflict rather than coherence. Studies focusing on descriptive aspects of American journalism education (Reese, 1999:71; Johansen et al, 2001:471; Beasley & Mirando, 2005) do identify distinct trends within its institutional arrangements and conventions, but the suggestion is usually that these are representative of several, contradictory models. Literature that deals with the normative foundations of such education (Medsger, 1996; Adam, 2001; Skinner et al, 2001) suggests that debates around such norms have also been characterised by ongoing conflict. This next section explores the idea of an American model of journalism education in context of this history of contestation. As we will see, debate about the nature of the relationship between journalism and professional identity has been of central importance to this history.

In Chapter Three, it was argued that the history of journalism scholarship has been strongly informed by the invocation of the ideal of value-free knowledge, untainted by social bias and subjectivity. It is proposed, in this section, that this conceptualisation of credible knowledge can again be seen to operate in context of the establishment of American journalism education. References to the ideal of objectivity can be identified, in particular, in the role played within this history by the notion of professional expertise. The section demonstrates, in particular, that the early establishment of American journalism education and patterns in its consequent development should be understood in context of the professionalisation of knowledge, and the role that this has played in American society.

In Chapter Two it was explained that the assimilation of professional teaching into the university context was achieved, in the American instance, by integrating vocational courses into liberal arts programmes, particularly in the context of undergraduate study. The integration of academic and professional ideals within one educational system was made possible by the general structural formation of American higher education in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It was noted that, within this formation, liberal arts courses remained integral to undergraduate education – and that one reason for this was that it was understood to play an important role in facilitating the relationship between ‘academic’ and ‘vocational’ knowledge within the curriculum [see pg. 41]. The discussion in this section attempts to track such processes as they occurred in context of American journalism education, and to tease out the agreements on which they were based.

Sociological studies of professionalisation (Baber, 1963; Hughes, 1963; Wilensky, 1964) have typically explained that occupations become professions by creating canons of knowledge acquired through university education. Such education then typically operates as a way of regulating

entry into their practices and of establishing shared performance guidelines. An occupation which has successfully professionalised is understood, within this definition, to be based on an agreed-upon body of specialised knowledge, informed by systematic theory acquired by necessity through a university education. Interest in these aspects of professionalisation was to be an important term of reference in the history of American university-based journalism education. However, as we will see in the discussion below, the project of professionalisation has been at the centre of the ongoing conflict in the history of such education and was, in the end, imperfectly realised.

#### 4.1.1 The first decades: Emerging models

Until the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, formal journalism education was virtually unknown within American universities. When journalists were trained, this occurred in context of an apprenticeship system that was housed in newspapers and printing houses (Carey, 2000:19; Dickson, 2000:1-2). Support for professional education began, however, to increase during this time. Such support also came at a time when, as described in Chapter Two, there was increasing pressure on colleges to provide vocational training [see pgs. 40-42]. Because of such developments, journalism would enter universities in this country a full century before it would do so in other Anglophone countries. Nevertheless, even in America, the professional status of journalism continued to be a contentious topic. Both within journalistic communities and in the academy itself the belief that journalistic competence is based on innate ability and life experience rather than specialised education has remained prevalent to the current day (Aldridge & Evetts, 2003:558). As we will see, this ambivalence about professional education profoundly shaped the way that journalism would become positioned within the American academy.

By the 1870's, calls for university-based journalism education were on the increase, and were expressed as arguments for the professionalisation of the occupation of journalism (Carey, 2000:19). It was also late in this decade that the first university-based programmes began to appear, mainly in colleges in the mid-west (Dickson, 2000:5; Mirando, 2001:23). These courses could nevertheless not be described as examples of professional education (Carey, 2000:19-20). The American journalism programmes that emerged in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century did not develop in a context that was conducive to a professional understanding of knowledge. It is important to note, in this respect, that they were primarily based in 'Land-Grant' colleges in the mid-west. As such, these programmes define themselves in terms of the traditional identity of the American college, by contributing to the general preparation of the middle classes for moral and civic leadership (Dickson, 2000:2). As explained in Chapter Two, these colleges did not, however, at first define their approach to knowledge in terms of specialised, professional expertise. The journalism programmes which emerged in this context<sup>2</sup> were

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<sup>2</sup> Kansas State College set up a course in printing in 1873; the University of Missouri started a course in news writing in 1878 and another course called 'Materials of Journalism' in 1884. Other institutions included Iowa State University (1892), Indiana University and the University of Kansas (1894), the University of Michigan (1895) and the University of Nebraska in (1898). Ivy league colleges also incorporated early versions of such programmes, including Washington College in 1869, Yale University in 1871, the University of

mostly attached to English and Philology departments and because of this they were not based in an autonomous field of knowledge of their own. They did not emphasise the theorisation of any specific conceptualisation of journalism as a profession. Instead, they focused on a collection of disparate technical skills such as printing, writing and editing (Johansen, 2001:471).

In the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, this emphasis changed. University-based journalism education was expanding rapidly, and there was growing support for a more coherent approach to the conceptualisation, within such education, of journalistic practice. As with the first appearance of university-based journalism education in the 1870's, this change must again be understood in context of broader developments in journalism as an industry, particularly the expansion of the market for news at the turn of the century. Because of this development, from the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century onwards, there was an increase in the demand for journalists skilled in the practices of interview-based reporting. News gathering and writing were becoming increasingly important aspects of newspapers – rather than the previous emphasis on editorials and the printing of official documents. At this stage, then, American journalism entered the 'age of the reporter' (Carey, 2000:16). With the uninterrupted expansion of the newspaper industry until the 1940's, the demand for reporters would continue to grow. Advocates for journalism education could, in this context, draw on compelling evidence for the importance of teaching programmes in establishing professional guidelines for reporting practice (Asher, 1993:12). A related factor was the growing public concern about the extent to which newspapers were controlled by particular interest groups, and the implications of this for the role played by journalism in the shaping of public opinion. A critique of the press emerged at the start of the century in which it was argued that journalists needed to be guided in their practice by a professional standard of disinterested public service. Advocates of university-based journalism education proposed that it would be the task of institutions of higher learning to articulate such guidelines by applying the standard of disinterested service to reporting practices, and to transmit these to aspirant journalists. Within such reporting practice, the emphasis would be both on accuracy and sensitivity to context (Asher, 1993:9).

By the 1920's journalism educators had articulated a shared set of guidelines for reporting practice that could be transmitted from teacher to student (Kelly, 2005:153). These guidelines encouraged students to see their work as a professional calling, based on the objective pursuit of facts (Beasley & Mirando, 2005:181). They included standardised newsgathering and news writing techniques, and ways to 'cover' situations based on assumption of journalistic impartiality. The emphasis was on pursuing official sources for direct quotations, balancing reports by obtaining information about 'both sides' of an issue, presenting background information, packaging stories in the "inverted pyramid structure", and answering the "who, what, when, where and why" (Beasley &

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Pennsylvania in 1893 and Cornell University in 1875. Cornell was the first to offer a degree in journalism. They became known as a leader of the movement for providing a liberal education with practical training. Their journalism programme was claimed to be the 'first blueprint for a professional program', but was later abandoned. The University of Missouri started a course in the history of journalism in 1878, but this was also terminated three years later (Dickson, 2000:5; Johansen et al, 2001:471; Mirando, 2001:24).

Mirando, 2005:183). It has been suggested that the establishment of these guidelines, in the context of journalism education, played an important role in the explicit articulation of objectivity as a professional journalistic ideal. Before this, journalistic empiricism had been a loosely defined set of practices; this was now transformed into the careful, rule-bound and elaborate methods of journalistic objectivity in which strict, clear distinctions were drawn between news and opinion (Ward, 2004:214-219).

Two institutional groupings emerge within the development of the journalism education landscape over the first three decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. On one hand, there was the tradition of journalism education referred to above, already well established by the turn of the century, primarily based in lesser known state universities and often those of the 'Land Grant' colleges of the mid-west (Carey, 1978:848). On the other hand, we see the establishment of a new group of journalism schools, which would eventually position themselves as the 'elite' of the journalism education landscape (Asher, 1993:16). The first group would, in turn, become associated with the so-called 'trade school' approach to American journalism education, and represented the largest majority of journalism education institutions (Asher, 1993:16; Dickson, 2000:13). It can be argued that this identification with 'trade' may have resulted at least partly from the attempts by the elite schools to gain dominance within the landscape of journalism education, by establishing a clear distinction between themselves and other institutions. As we will see, the need for such distinction can be traced back to struggles around the appropriate interpretation of the project of developing a 'professional' identity for journalism.

Within what would become the 'trade school' strand, there was less emphasis on arguments for the professionalisation of journalism in order to ensure its operation in service of the public interest. Journalism education was already established in these colleges in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, often based in Humanities Departments. A decade into the 20<sup>th</sup> century these programmes were rapidly increasing in numbers, and also beginning to establish themselves outside their host departments, as autonomous entities. Some emulated the free-standing model that would become characteristic of schools within the elite strand such as Missouri and Columbia and became independent professional schools within a university setting. The majority, such as the programmes established at Indiana and Minnesota, followed the model of separate departments in liberal arts programmes (Johansen et al, 2001:471). This pattern must be understood in context of the fact that the departments in which they were originally based, most typically those of English literature, became resistant to the further development of journalism programmes within their structures. English departments at this time were more interested in the reading of literature than the production of writing, journalistic or otherwise. Partly as a result of this, journalism teachers established coalitions with state press associations, which were made up of small and medium sized daily newspapers. These newspapers were interested in enhancing their prestige through association with university education. Their support helped to establish many of these educational programmes as separate departments or schools (Carey,

1978:878). They now needed to reposition themselves within the university in a way that would elevate journalism to a status deserving of academic recognition. Educators in these programmes turned again for this purpose to the humanities, and in particular to ethics, history and law. The relationship between journalism education and these fields of knowledge was, however, an uneasy one, because the humanities continued to be resistant to the presence of journalism within the academy (Carey, 2000:19).

The first free-standing school of journalism opened its doors at the University of Missouri in 1908, under pressure from the state press association. Columbia University followed suit more reluctantly in 1912, twenty years after Pulitzer had first approached them to propose the funding of such a venture (Dickson, 2000:11-12). These schools can be seen as the first of the 'elite' strand of journalism institutions. Others were established as journalism departments attached to colleges of liberal arts and social science (Johansen, 2001:471). By the end of the 1930's, about thirty of these schools and departments had claimed the status of leading journalism programmes in the United States (Asher, 1993:6). These programmes were, from their inception, framed by arguments about the appropriate design of journalism education which responded to concerns about the role of journalism within the formation of public opinion, and the consequent need to professionalise journalistic practice.

Historical discussions of this strand of journalism education (Medsger, 1996; Beasley & Mirando, 2005; Adam, 2001; Skinner et al, 2001) make reference to three proposals for curricula which were influential in terms of the approaches to journalism education that would emerge within these programmes. The first was developed by Charles W. Eliot, president of Harvard University, who argued for a curriculum concerned primarily with the intelligent marketing of information, so that democratic government could be served. The focus was, in other words, on the role that journalism could play in the formation of public opinion (Medsger, 1996:54; Beasley & Mirando, 2005:183). Journalism was, however, also defined commercially within this conceptualisation, with a strong emphasis on the selling of news as a commodity. As such, the educational model that Eliot proposed included not just news writing and editorial work but also the management of finances and advertising (Dickson, 2000:11). Eliot's design became the foundation of the programme offered, under the leadership of Walter Williams, at the University of Missouri (Beasley & Mirando, 2005:183).<sup>3</sup>

The second proposal, adopted at Columbia University, was represented by Joseph Pulitzer's plans for the professional education of journalists. Like Eliot, Pulitzer believed in the role that journalists could play in democratic society as professional producers of knowledge and informers of public opinion. He disagreed, however, with Eliot's emphasis on marketing, insisting on a strict

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<sup>3</sup> It is, in fact, also at Missouri, in 1890, that advertising was for the first time taught in context of a journalism course (Dickson, 2000:36-38).



distinction between advertising and journalism (Dickson, 2000:11). He wanted a school that stressed the improvement of both the production practices of news and editorial leadership. Pulitzer believed that, in order to achieve these goals, students should be exposed to a broad liberal arts education. This should be combined, however, with an intensive grounding in what he referred to as the 'professional practices' of journalism, which, significantly, included reporting and as part of this the practices of journalistic interviewing and writing (Beasley & Mirando, 2005:181; Adam, 2001:318-322).<sup>4</sup> The focus was, therefore, no longer on purely technical competencies such as that of printing, but rather on the articulation of a professional occupational identity for journalism.

The third proposal was that of Willard Bleyer, who implemented his vision for journalism education at the University of Wisconsin. Bleyer envisioned a curriculum that could present itself as a systematic body of knowledge, including a strong research orientation (Zelizer, 2004b:13). He claimed to have based his curriculum on ideas drawn from both Pulitzer and Eliot, particularly with regards to the emphasis on liberal education (Dickson, 2000:18). Within his curriculum, as in Pulitzer's, the emphasis was on preparing students for editorial work. Students completed one programme in liberal arts and another in the practice of journalism. What distinguished Bleyer's approach, however, was his decision to prioritise social science within this arrangement rather than humanities subjects (Medsger, 1996:54; Skinner et al, 2001:341). His approach was, furthermore, informed by the belief that journalism schools should be research oriented (Asher, 1993:14). He resisted the notion of journalism as a vocational subject, and instead promoted the idea that it could be a legitimate university discipline, a 'social science' in its own right (Dickson, 2000:20). Students should, for example, be able to apply what they learned from social science research to "understanding and interpreting the news" (Bleyer, 1931:39). Through an exposure to the study of society, they could develop a well-grounded understanding of the context in which they would be operating as journalists. Bleyer's approach was to become a dominant point of reference within elite schools of journalism (Beasley & Mirando, 2005:184). Indeed, Wisconsin came to stand for the 'liberal' model of journalism education, juxtaposed with the 'practical' approach of programmes such as that of Missouri. Bleyer was, however, interested in providing students with a practical curriculum. His interest in the inclusion of social science knowledge within the journalism education curriculum was motivated by a belief that such knowledge would improve students' ability to produce good journalism. His focus on the relationship between social scientific knowledge and the practice of

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<sup>4</sup> Within journalism education scholarship, the 'Columbia model' tends to refer not to Pulitzer's proposal directly, but more loosely to postgraduate, university-based programmes with an intensive focus on the practice of journalism, attended by graduates who have already completed a liberal arts education. Such programmes supposedly model themselves on the approach developed by the Graduate School of Journalism at Columbia University. Within its current configuration, the Columbia programme has three components: news production practices, the media's historic place in social and political life, and liberal education across academic disciplines. It offers a range of Masters courses with a strong focus on reflective practice. A doctoral programme, which was launched in 2001, deals with study of communications. Reference to the 'Columbia model' tends to be accompanied by the suggestion that, although such programmes are practical in their emphasis, they are not 'mere' institutions of training, associating themselves with the prestige of postgraduate education (Johansen et al, 2001:473; Stevenson, 2002:132-133).

journalism should also be understood in context of the ideals of Progressivism. Teaching and research at Wisconsin was framed by these ideals and in particular by the notion that universities should provide a public service to the communities in which they were based. Bleyer believed that newspapers could contribute to such a service by disseminating information about new scientific knowledge (Dickson, 2000:18-19). These ideas can be seen to resonate with those of Robert Park, who also saw a role for journalism in the public dissemination of knowledge generated within social science [see pg. 66].

One important difference between the 'elite' and 'trade' strands of journalism education can be identified in the kind of newspaper with which each became associated. The trade strand related closely with the local community press, while the elite strand took as its template the large urban and national newspaper. Because of this the educational focus within the trade strand, in contrast to the elite schools, was not just on journalism but also on advertising, management and circulation. The small non-urban newspapers served by these programmes did not make a strict division between financial and journalistic interests, because they required multi-skilled staff who were knowledgeable in all of these areas (Carey, 2000b:848).

It is questionable, however, whether this distinction between journalism and business applied consistently even within the models that inform the elite strand. It is noticeable that only Pulitzer's proposal insisted on journalism being taught in exclusion of advertising and marketing. Indeed, the distinction between the journalism programmes offered by the trade colleges and those of the elite schools was, at first, not clear. Both traditions shared a commitment to an integration of university-based knowledge into the journalism curriculum. Both combined vocational content with elements of the liberal arts as a way of bolstering their status within the university (Carey, 2000:19). The tension in the relationship between journalism education and university-based disciplines can be identified within both traditions. In fact, because of the commitment within both to a close relationship with the newspaper industry, and the sometimes tense relationship with university administration, the emphasis in each case tended to swing away from a focus on university-based knowledge. Both veered, instead, towards a narrow vocationalism in which educators reproduced the competencies of the practicing journalist. This was the central concern of classes offered in both institutional traditions in reporting, editing, feature writing, editorial writing, criticism, history, comparative journalism and ethics (Johansen et al, 2001:473). Even the Columbia School of Journalism, which has an iconic status within the elite tradition, departed from Pulitzer's original vision of public service oriented professional education (Macdonald, 2006:747). The Missouri approach to journalism education is, also, strongly associated with an emphasis on practical training (Dickson, 2000:23). In fact, until the early 1920's, most journalism education programmes could be described as vocational, with a strong emphasis on experiential learning (Dickson, 2000:24). It is possible that the distinction between the two strands was at least to some extent traced in retrospect, as part of the process through which the

elite schools established their status within the journalism education landscape. The importance attached to proposals such as that of Pulitzer may have formed part of this reconstruction of history.

#### 4.1.2 From the 1930's to mid-century: Struggles for power

It was certainly only in the mid-1920's that what would become the elite group of schools embarked on a campaign to establish their own identity as the leaders of journalism education. These schools now referred to the 'professional' in a way that emphasised control of the occupation of journalism. They attempted, in particular, to establish a degree from their own programmes as a required credential for entrance into journalism as a professional practice (Asher, 1993:15). In order to achieve this goal, they now challenged the idea of training on the job, which up to this point had still been the prevalent approach to the preparation of journalists. They also questioned the status of the mid-western journalism programmes, and it is at this point that these institutions become described as 'trade schools'. The term carried derogatory associations, suggesting that these colleges offered purely practical training without any emphasis on critical reflection or understanding. The argument was that within such institutions, the background knowledge that students gained through their general liberal arts education became irrelevant, because it was not integrated into a 'professional' approach to journalistic practice and as such did not emphasise an understanding of social context (14). The elite schools set themselves apart from such an approach by prioritising a different kind of university-based knowledge within the liberal arts stream of their curricula. While the trade schools tended to place an emphasis on their traditional academic home, that of the humanities, the elite schools prioritised the social sciences (12).<sup>5</sup>

It was in this context that, by the 1930's, Bleyer's model of journalism education came to be strongly associated with the elite programmes (Beasley & Miranda, 2005:184). Interestingly, by this stage, his approach had incorporated ideas similar to those expressed in Eliot's original proposal. The social research that he advocated tended to focus on the study of public opinion. It is of significance to the present study that his approach to such research was strongly grounded in an emphasis on the objective measuring of observable human behaviour (Asher, 1993:12). This model, and its emphasis on positivist empirical research, was to have far-reaching impact on the American journalism education landscape. Founders of many major journalism schools came from the Wisconsin programme and carried its assumptions about empirical social science with them to their new schools (Medsger, 1996:55). One can identify within these developments the formulation of the terms that would come to define journalism as a subject of study in future years. It has been suggested that it was because of Bleyer's intervention that schools of journalism would later, at mid-century, be able to survive the rise of research universities. Bleyer had, effectively, trained a cadre of directors for these

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<sup>5</sup> It has been noted that Columbia School of Journalism adopted a different approach. Instead of an emphasis on social sciences, and on the generation of new knowledge about journalism, it became professionally oriented (Dickson, 2000:28).

schools – the ‘Bleyer children’ – who had PhD degrees in a social science and shared his vision of journalism as a social science (Rogers, quoted in Dickson, 2000:69)

During the 1930’s and 1940’s, the elite schools came to dominate the American Association of Schools and Departments of Journalism (AASDJ). This body became a strong advocate for a system of elite professional schools that would strictly regulate entry into journalism (Asher, 1993:6). The AASDJ in fact appointed itself as the accrediting authority for journalism education, and was recognised as such by institutions of higher education. Within its evaluative framework, the elite strand began to be referred to as the ‘Class A’ schools (19). During this period, the elite schools began to call for less reliance within journalism education on the practices of journalism and more on academic credentials (15). They instituted the ‘75% rule’, in which it was required that three quarters of students’ curriculum consisted of liberal arts subjects, and no more than one quarter of courses in journalism (12). There was, at the same time, a general move to transform the elite journalism institutions into graduate level professional schools. As part of this, the elite schools strategised around replacing the general BA degree in journalism with a postgraduate qualification. Up to this point, a number of schools had offered Master of Arts degrees, but these were mostly targeted at aspiring journalism teachers. The goal now became to establish the MA as an entry requirement into journalism as a profession (18).

By the 1950’s it was apparent, however, that the attempts of the elite schools to establish control of journalism as a profession would not succeed. One reason for this was that the universities in which they were hosted now recognised their drive for the integration of professional agendas within education as an institutional threat. Indeed, in the early 1950’s, college and university presidents established the National Commission of Accreditation in order to counter the power of the ‘elite’ schools. This body aligned itself with the trade school strand of journalism education. In this context, the trade schools gained confidence in the articulation of their own vision of journalism education and in particular reiterated a commitment to faculty with experience of journalistic practice, and rejected the prioritisation of advanced degrees (Asher, 1993:28). They also continued to place an emphasis on undergraduate education, and as a result such programmes continued to flourish. The idea of graduate schools as the standard model of journalism education did not materialise (18). The elite schools were also unsuccessful in building a strong alliance with the journalism industry. It is suggested that the journalistic community had become alienated from such schools because of their consistent disparagement of courses emphasising the technical aspects of journalism (19).

There was, at this time, some interest within elements of the journalistic community in the professionalisation of journalism, such as the American Society of Newspaper Editors (Asher, 1993:35). This did not, however, result in a coherent block of support for the elite schools. One reason for this was that journalistic communities had always had an uneasy relationship towards the project of the professionalisation of journalism (Carey, 2000). Newspaper publishers, for example, would observe the rhetoric associated with professionalisation, but in fact strict control of entrance

into the occupation of journalism worked against their interest in keeping wages low. Such conflict of interest caused tension between schools on the one hand and press associations on the other (Asher, 1993:27).

It has been suggested that one motivation for the call for professional journalism education, at this time, can be traced to the fact that, as noted earlier in this chapter, the changes in the newspaper industry had enhanced the importance of reporters within the news production process. Carey argues, in this context, that the kind of people who became reporters were also disruptive elements within news organisations, due to their social background, lack of education, and particularly their political interests. He suggests that any interest that the leadership of the journalistic community might have had in journalism education was strongly motivated by the role that universities might play to "... domesticate this unruly class, turn them into disciplined workers and end their flirtation with socialism and trade unions". Professional education more generally was, in Carey's view, at least partly a means of co-opting such social groupings, "... aligning them more closely with the aims of business enterprise", and ensuring the establishment of a workforce that is "... moral, orderly, habitual and conservative". Newspaper managers were interested in this potential of professional education, as a mechanism for asserting control over the newly emerging group (Carey, 2000:16). Support for university-based education thus becomes caught within internal struggles for dominance in the journalistic community itself.

It has been noted that another reason for the failure of the elite school's professionalisation project was the increasing fragmentation of journalism from the 1930's onwards. This resulted at least partly from the arrival first of radio and later television as powerful voices within the journalistic landscape. Journalism education institutions also found it difficult to adapt to this process of diversification, and were slow to transform their curricula in a way that acknowledged that newspapers were no longer the only term of reference. As a result, the schools could not establish themselves as the only legitimate route into journalism, nor were their philosophy of journalism education established as the only approach with credibility (Asher, 1993:3).

The elite schools nevertheless continued to be regarded as leaders within American journalism education, and their approach to curriculum design gained credibility. The 75% rule, for example, was increasingly applied across the board, within all journalism education programmes. By the 1950's, the Accreditation Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (ACEJMC) had become responsible for monitoring the quality of journalism education programmes, and the guidelines that they followed in doing so tended to echo the approach adopted within the elite schools. Their standards stipulated, for example, that at least 65% of a journalism student's programme needs to be in basic liberal arts and sciences. Although these guidelines did not go into further detail, the effect seemed to be the creation of a standardised approach to curriculum design that could be observed not only in the schools that hold accredited status but far more broadly throughout American university-based journalism education (Johansen et al, 2001:475)

It is generally acknowledged within the body of literature about American journalism education that the educational landscape that resulted from this history is characterised by contradictions which have persisted throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Reese and Cohen state, in this respect, that "... nowhere else in the university do so many fault lines converge, creating tensions based on professional outlook, as well as on teaching and research philosophy." (Reese & Cohen, 2000:218). The main point of tension is seen to centre on the relevance of the liberal arts to the education of journalists; the balance that needs to be struck between such knowledge and vocational competencies or, as it is then often expressed, the relationship between 'theory' and 'practice' (Skinner et al, 2001:341).

#### 4.1.3 Journalism education in the Mass Communication Studies paradigm

By the mid-1950's, then, the 'professionalisation project' in American journalism education had reached a position of stalemate. It has been suggested that, because of this, the professionalisation of journalism practice became less of a priority for the elite schools. They continued to invoke the rhetoric of the professional identity of journalism – and with this the idea that professional education is necessary for the aspiring journalist. Their interests were turning, however, to a different aspect of professional expertise, represented by academic research. Within these institutions, such research was becoming increasingly important for the justification of their existence in the academy (Asher, 1993: 31). Some of Bleyer's graduates who had established their own journalism education units experimented with the integration of a research mission into their programmes, and as part of this placed particular emphasis on the 75% rule, thus limiting the teaching of skills courses (Zelizer, 2004b:16). A journalism research division was established at the University of Minnesota in 1944, and during the 1950's, other universities established doctoral programmes, typically run by academics with degrees in sociology, psychology, political science, and sometimes history and law (Johansen et al, 2001:471).

Not coincidentally, it is also at this time that Mass Communication Studies established itself within American universities. Commentators suggest that it was the vision of the communication scientists that would, in the remainder of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, come to dominate American journalism education. Even within the practical modules of such programmes, the focus shifted in many cases to the teaching of communication skills, with journalism as a fairly peripheral concern. Programmes that emphasise teaching in the practice of journalism continued, both within the 'trade' and 'elite' programmes. Even in these instances, however, the scholarly domain that framed university-based journalism education remained that of Mass Communication Studies, and it is this relationship that was now understood to provide such programmes with academic status (Medsger, 1996:55-57).

Some critics have argued that journalism would have benefited more from linking itself to other domains within the university, in which a different conceptualisation of journalism becomes possible. Carey suggests, for example, that Mass Communication Studies "... marched into



journalism education with generally unfortunate results” (Carey, 2000:20). He states that, at this time, this field was primarily motivated by an interest in social administration:

This was not a science of enlightenment or citizenship, a science in society, designed to clarify our vision, enlarge our choices, stipulate our dilemmas, increase our exactitude, but a science of society, a science designed to rule over citizens, even if to rule over them benignly (Carey, 2000:21).

Carey argued that Mass Communication Studies described journalism only as a “signalling system”, and thus did not increase understanding of it as an imaginative and political construction of social meaning. In doing so, such scholarship did damage to journalism as a “democratic craft” (21). Stuart Adams makes a more general point about the domination of the social sciences rather than the humanities within journalism education, arguing that within such a framework, the “scholarly task” becomes too narrowly conceived, with too little attention given to the literary and philosophical aspects of journalism (Adam, 1988:77).

It has been suggested that the approach to epistemology associated with the Chicago School of the 1920’s and 1930’s may have presented a more favorable partnership for journalism education. This was, it is pointed out, a “... humanistic, multimethod, community-oriented science of communication, [which] would have provided a fertile background for journalism in ways that the narrow quantitative Columbia school did not” (Reese, 1999:82). Carey argues that the Chicago School, in its approach to the role of research in society, represented a “natural extension” of journalism, because of its interpretive commitment to understanding urban contexts (Carey, 2000:18). It could be argued that pragmatic approach to method, and the commitment to social reform, which makes the sociology of the Progressive Era particularly attractive as form of scholarship with which journalism education, of the kind envisioned by Carey, can associate itself. With the marginalisation, in the interwar years, of a critical paradigm of research in the social sciences, the benefits that a partnership with this discipline could offer to such journalism education were, however, disappearing. By the 1950’s, in context of the ascendancy of positivist social science based in functionalist theorisation of society meant that the opportunity for such a partnership was lost.

#### **4.2 The late 20<sup>th</sup> century and beyond: Contested terrain**

In the early years of American journalism education, public debate had centered on the general suitability of journalism as the subject of academic education (Dickson, 2000:4-5). By the 1930’s it was, however, generally accepted that journalism could legitimately be taught within universities. Although challenges to the existence of university-based education persisted, the emphasis shifted, from this point onwards, to a critique of the content and organisation of such education (Dickson, 2000:26-28). In Section One of this chapter it was explained that, during the 1930’s and 1940’s, some journalism educators attempted to gain full professional status for journalism education. By mid-



century, they no longer seriously expected to realise this goal, primarily because of the failure of universities and media corporations to concede to agreements that would make this possible.

It is nevertheless noticeable that, within debates about journalism education from the 1950's onwards, the concept of the professional continued to be foregrounded. Invocation of this principle would in fact remain central to the terms of agreement that would guide the institutional arrangements of journalism education for the next four decades. It is argued, in the discussion below, that such invocation was framed by commitment both to the concept of 'professionalisation' and that of 'professionalism'. A shared understanding had emerged around the terms for the discussion of journalism education which allowed the two opposing conceptualisations of the professional, and the curricular goals associated with each, to co-exist. Within this understanding it was assumed that, for journalism education to contribute to the goal of professionalisation (establishing journalism as a profession dedicated to public service), it needed to exist as an integrated component of a broad liberal education. This was taken seriously as a necessary prerequisite for the professional status of such education. At the same time, in deference to the goal of professionalism (producing graduates who can be delivered to newsrooms) the assumption was that journalism-specific components of such education should focus on the technical skills required of entry-level media work. The agreement to maintain a balance between these two components can be seen to operate as a contract designed to ensure the recognition both by universities and by corporate media of journalism as a subject of academic education. It can be argued that this contract consolidated a deep-seated tension within American university-based journalism education between these two very different understandings of the 'professional'.

To understand the nature of this contract as it existed in the American context, it is important to recognise that it represents an exclusive partnership between academia and corporate media. It is noted that this arrangement virtually excluded any involvement from other stakeholders such as, for example, government agencies and journalism unions (Gaunt, 1992:30). One way in which this exclusive prioritisation of academic and corporate influence has been institutionalised is through the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (ACEJMC), which is composed of industry and educational representatives (Weaver, 2003:53). Another is through the growing involvement of media and journalism foundations, often staffed by academics but sponsored by the media (Reese, 1999:77). The lack of involvement of other interest groups necessarily impacted on the nature of debates and negotiations that took place during the decades that followed.

The discussion in this next section traces further developments around the management of this contract, in context of the history of American journalism education in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the first decade of the new millennium. The aim is to identify broad patterns in the conceptualisation of such education, as this can be observed during these decades. It is acknowledged within this discussion that, by the 1960's, the 'orthodoxy' of functionalism and abstract empiricism within universities had become unstable, in context of the emergence of compelling alternative

conceptualisations of authoritative knowledge, and the rise of social movements that claimed universities as sites of political struggle. Journalism as a social practice has also, during the period discussed here, been characterised by dramatic change in context of the ongoing transformation of its social, cultural and economic environment. There was, for example, growing awareness of the limitations of the occupational codes of journalistic objectivity, particularly with regards to their role in facilitating the ‘management’ of news by government and corporate interests. This led to the articulation of alternative approaches to journalism, which could be traced in the 1950’s in the emergence of the concepts of ‘interpretive’ reporting and ‘investigative’ journalism, and continued in the establishment of ‘literary’ journalism in the 1960’s (Ettema & Glasser, 1985; Hallin, 1992; McNair, 2009).

These trends seem, nevertheless, to have had little impact on the institutional arrangements and curriculum content of journalism education over the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. American journalism education was not substantially influenced by the rise of critical intellectual movements in the 1960’s and 1970’s, nor by changes within journalism itself. Instead, the fundamental principles that defined such education in the 1950’s remained in place. Even though journalism education was characterised by struggles between different interest groups, the resulting conflict was played out within the terms of the original, narrowly conceived set of agreements. As a result, the period between the 1950’s and the mid-1980’s remained characterised by relative stability with regards to the institutional arrangement of journalism education. From the mid-1980’s onwards, however, these agreements began to unravel, resulting in a period of more fundamental contestation.

In illustrating these trends, the discussion responds to Deuze’s suggestion (2006, 24-28) that an important context in which struggles around the conceptualisation of journalism education find expression is in formal motivations for the establishment and innovation of journalism education programmes. With this in mind, the first subsection describes the relationship between American journalism education as a set of social practices and the discursive environment in which these have been based. The second part of the discussion then focuses more closely on patterns of contestation, as these have been articulated since the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century in formal inquiries into the state of American journalism education.

#### 4.2.1 American journalism education from the 1950’s onwards

By mid-century, journalism education had developed a shared set of guidelines for maintaining its position within the academy, and its relationship to journalistic practice. Central to this was the understanding that the balance between a liberal arts education and professional training in journalism should be regulated by means of the 75\25 rule. This rule was adopted in the early 1950’s by the ACEJMC and formed part of their assessment guidelines until 1989. The rule was supposedly based on a proposal made by Bleyer in 1906 that between two thirds and three fourths of a journalism student’s education should consist of liberal arts or sciences courses, outside the context of their

'professional' programme (Dickson, 2000:130). The argument was that, in order to ensure that a degree awarded to a student majoring in journalism met the necessary academic requirements, journalism-specific courses should not dominate their overall programme (Medsger, 1996:5). The 'professional' component of the degree was understood to include all media-specific courses, whether they are production-based or focus on the study of the social contexts of journalism (Dickson, 2000:130). Attempts to establish such a balance could be observed not only in programmes with accredited status, but also more broadly throughout American university-based journalism education (Johansen et al, 2001:475).

For the next four decades, journalism education courses mostly followed the undergraduate model, basing themselves in colleges as an integrated part of a general liberal arts education. The programmes based at the Universities of Wisconsin and Minnesota are regarded as leading examples of this tradition. It should nevertheless be noted that, as an alternative to this arrangement, journalism has also been taught exclusively at a postgraduate level in free-standing 'schools', associated with host universities but also existing as autonomous entities. In Section One of this chapter it was explained that the first of such schools were established at the University of Missouri in Columbia in 1908 and at Columbia University in New York in 1912. Later examples include the Berkeley Graduate School of Journalism at the University of California. Although for most of the century such free-standing institutions remained the exception to the rule, the postgraduate model was consistently held in high regard by journalism educators generally. One reason for this is that it was assumed that the postgraduate context provides more scope for focusing exclusively and intensively on the teaching of journalism. Indeed, because of their success in taking advantage of this potential, both Columbia and California achieved iconic status within the American journalism education landscape (Medsger, 1996:13). Another recognised advantage of this model was that the free-standing school is better placed to establish and maintain industry relations and alumni support. The Missouri programme, in particular, has become known for its success in this regard (Reese, 1999:72). The free-standing model was nevertheless also guided by the belief that professional courses need to be balanced with liberal arts subjects. Students could enroll in such schools only once they completed an undergraduate qualification in the social sciences or humanities. Also, even though such programmes were organised at postgraduate level, they were still based in the conceptualisation of journalism as a 'quasi-profession'. The journalism-specific component of students' education still focused on technical skills rather than the advanced domains of knowledge required in the professional education of doctors, lawyers and architects (Reese & Cohen, 2000:214; De Burgh, 2003).

A closer look at the status of journalism education at mid-century would suggest, however, that, by this time, the vocational component of journalism education was already facing serious challenges in terms of the establishment and maintenance of its identity. The conceptualisation of journalism within such education had always been embedded in the example of print journalism. By

the 1950's, the American media landscape was already transformed by the presence of the 'new' media, first of radio and then television. Journalism education had responded to the consequent diversification of journalism by broadening its overall identity beyond that of reporting for print, to include 'sequences' dealing with these newer forms of media. The first radio sequences had in fact been established as early as 1929, at the University of Southern California and Washington State University. Twenty-three more such courses were established at other institutions during the 1930's, and television sequences followed in the mid-1940's (Dickson, 2000:43).

The status of journalism itself as an overarching identity for such programmes was also put into question by the 1950's. The decade between 1941 and 1951 has been identified as a period of dramatic growth in the 'all media approach' within these programmes, in which their identity began to broaden not just beyond print journalism but beyond journalism itself. Areas of instruction that developed during this decade included broadcast news and news photography, but also public relations and advertising (Dickson, 2000:34). It has nevertheless been argued that even such dramatic changes to the overall character of these programmes did not impact severely on their fundamental identity. Dickson notes, in this respect, that journalism educators tended to accept such changes without protest. He suggests that this is because the new sequences were still informed by the central principle that defined the original print journalism courses, which was to prepare students for the job market (Dickson, 2000:59). Such an analysis would suggest that, even though the rhetoric that justified journalism's acceptance within universities drew on its status as a profession dedicated to the furtherance of democracy, the contract that defined such acceptance did not in fact depend on any unique status that journalism might claim amongst other modes of communication. At the same time, it should also be noted that surveys conducted during the 1980's and 1990's show that undergraduate degrees granted in journalism were staying constant, and still outpacing enrollments in advertising and public relations (Weaver, 2003:54). Despite the growth of other sequences in journalism and communications programmes, journalism therefore still remained at the core of such education.

The conflicts that characterise American journalism education seem always to have centered on the 'professional' component of programmes, and therefore by mid-century on the 25% of students' coursework that could legitimately deal with journalism- and media-specific matters (Parisi, 1992:4). It is noticeable that, within negotiations about such coursework, a firm distinction was drawn between courses focusing on the production of media and those dealing with its analytical study. From the 1950's onwards, tensions focused on the degree of importance attached within the curriculum to these two kinds of courses. It seems significant that there was, within this, little argument about the actual substance of either kind of course. This contrasts with the situation in the 1940's, when there had been a brief period of disagreement around the theoretical content of courses dealing with the academic study of media. Such disagreement resulted, as was explained earlier, from the rise of Mass Communication Studies within journalism education, since it defined itself in opposition to the emphasis on law and history that had till then represented the scholarly frame for

journalism courses. Communication scientists argued that such scholarship lacked in academic rigour, and as such did not represent an adequate intellectual resource for the education of journalists. Exposure to social science, in contrast, allowed students to develop a more rigorous understanding of the context of journalistic practice. By the 1950's, however, as functionalist social science became accepted as the key conceptual point of reference for legitimising the academic status of journalism within the American university, the disciplinary origin of contextual courses was no longer at the centre of debate. The assumption was, then, that the knowledge offered by Mass Communication Studies offered the 'default setting' for the theorisation of journalism practice. From the 1970's onwards, even the "chi-square and green eye shade" tension became progressively less severe as it was accepted that social science perspectives have a legitimate role to play within journalism education (Weaver & McCombs, 1980:481; Weaver, 2003:52).

Scholars have pointed out that the content of production-oriented courses were also not the focus of conflict. Indeed, from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century onwards there had been general agreement about what should be taught within such courses (Bolding, 1996:20). In Section One it was explained that a detailed set of guidelines for reporting practices were developed in journalism courses during the 1920's, and that these were grounded in the ideals of journalistic objectivity. The articulation of these guidelines, and their reproduction within journalism education over the next decades, was framed by both of the conceptualisations of the 'professional' referred to in this chapter. On one hand, they were understood to ensure the impartial and disinterested status of journalism, as a practice committed to truth-telling. On the other hand, their importance within the curriculum was linked to the fact that they represented guidelines for gathering facts and writing that were acceptable to news organisations. As long as the reproduction of guidelines for objective journalism within curricula could be seen to serve both goals, they did not pose a problem to the internal coherence of such education. As we have seen, however, the limitations of journalistic objectivity was already a point of public discussion by the late 1940's. It was, increasingly, argued that the stance of disinterest associated with these guidelines could be seen to operate as a denial of social responsibility, and therefore to stand in contradiction to ideals of democracy. By the 1950's, educators were acknowledging this analysis of the ideals of journalistic objectivity and incorporating reference to a more 'interpretive', socially responsible approach to journalism within their teaching. Such references did not extend, however, to a transformation of the core guidelines for news coverage, and therefore did not destabilise the foundations of the teaching of journalistic production. Critics have suggested that this is because it is the second conceptualisation of the professional – that of reproducing the practices of mainstream journalism – carried more weight within journalism education programmes (Sloan, 1990:29-30). As a result, the basic guidelines for reporting that had been developed in the interwar years continued to be reproduced in journalism courses for decades to come, and were also reproduced within the 'new' journalistic sequences. It is indicative that between 1938 and 1987, Curtis D MacDougall's *Interpretative Reporting* remained one of the central teaching resources within American journalism

education. This text circulated in almost every journalism education programme in the country, and although regularly updated, its treatment of reporting principles remained unchanged. This book presented itself as offering an alternative to the dominant ideals of journalistic objectivity, arguing instead for a more interpretive practice and a greater emphasis on the social responsibilities of the journalist. An ongoing criticism of the book, however, is that MacDougall never offered alternative guidelines for the practice of such journalism. Instead, the reporting guidelines presented in this book remain those that had been articulated in journalism education in the 1920's and 1930's (Stoval, 1990:30).

There were, however, other forces at play which would increasingly place more fundamental strain on the terms of the contract on which journalism education had based its position within American universities. As noted above, debates from the 1950's onwards became particularly concerned with the degree of importance that should be attached to production – specific courses as opposed to those focusing on the theoretically grounded study of journalism and the media, which was understood to be represented by Mass Communication Studies. There was, in particular, disagreement about the extent to which the 25% of students' coursework concerned with journalism education should be either 'practical' or 'academic' in its emphasis. While some educators assumed that university-based journalism education should be 'for' media, focusing on preparing students for employment in media, others assumed that courses should be primarily 'about' media, focusing on the academic study of media (Dickson, 2000:77). A review of trends within journalism education from the 1950's onwards would suggest that the 'academic' increasingly came to dominate the 'professional' within this struggle. Evidence of this can be identified in the growing expectation, within journalism and communications programmes, that teaching staff should produce academic research.

One context in which this shift in priorities created particular anxiety was in relation to the guidelines for the appointment of 'faculty'. It had been assumed, in previous decades, that the credentials of teaching staff depended on the extent to which they had worked as journalists. In 1935, the American Association of Teachers of Journalism agreed that five years of practical experience was the basic minimum acceptable for a journalism educator (Sloan, 1990:12). From the late 1940's onwards, however, this position became strongly contested, and the emphasis began to shift to academic qualifications. Commentators explain that this change must be understood in the more general context of the expansion of graduate education after World War II, which resulted in an increased pool of candidates for teaching positions with advanced degrees. By the late 1950's, it was generally accepted in higher education that, when academic staff was hired, their ability to conduct research should be prioritised and that a PhD was desirable. The rise of Mass Communication Studies led to a dramatic increase in the number of staff with qualifications relevant to the study of journalism and in this context, the administrators of journalism programmes lowered their expectations with regards to practical experience. There was strong resistance to this trend from many journalism



educators and also from journalists themselves, who predicted dire consequences for the quality of production-oriented teaching (Dickson, 2000:111-112).

Commentators have nevertheless suggested that the prioritisation of PhD's did not, in fact, affect the identity of such courses in real terms. Surveys (Weaver & Wilhoit, 1998; Fedler et al, 1998) show that the percentage of staff with doctorates remained low within journalism and communication programmes compared to other fields. In 1980, only half of such staff had doctorates, compared to 80% elsewhere within universities. Furthermore, it would seem that by this time the requirement of a PhD did not in fact result in a staff component without practical experience. On average, teaching staff within American journalism or communication schools had 12.5 years of professional experience. Staff with doctoral qualifications had an average of 6.5 years in comparison to the 12 years of faculty without a doctorate, and only 1.5% of media educators had no professional experience at all (Dickson, 2000:115). It has also been pointed out that the appointment of staff with expertise in Mass Communication Studies, and the prioritisation of research over teaching, primarily impacted on postgraduate teaching (Sloan, 1990:15). This would suggest that the shift towards an emphasis on academic qualifications was not, at least until the last years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, accompanied by a deprioritisation of experience of practice, and that both requirements remained of central importance to university-based journalism education.

It would seem, then, that the terms of the contract that framed journalism education during the decades of the 1950's to the 1980's were continually tested, both by changes in the environment of such education and as a result of the inherent tensions within this agreement. At the same time, the principles that informed this contract were not fundamentally challenged, and continued to guide educational practice. It may be that the stability of the contract resulted from the way in which those involved understood the spectrum of positions that could be adopted within debates about journalism. Recent reviews (Reese & Cohen 2000; Ryan & Sweitzer, 2001; Nolan, 2008) have pointed out that American journalism education debates have been defined by a series of dualistic oppositions, and that this in itself may have placed limitations on the terms of discussion. The 'academic' is placed in opposition with the 'professional'; the 'professional' in turn is contrasted with the 'vocational', the 'theoretical' with the 'practical', and 'education' with 'training'. Furthermore, the definition of each of these categories are often very narrowly conceived and not in themselves up for debate. It is, for example, regularly assumed that the 'academic' and 'theoretical' could be equated with Mass Communication Studies, without taking other critical perspectives on journalism into account. There was, within this, also an opposition between historical consciousness and empirical rigour. The early historical tradition of journalism scholarship, was, as we have seen, categorised as 'a-theoretical' by its critics. Scholars within this tradition responded by associating themselves with the 'vocational' camp within journalism education, and in opposition to theoretically focused scholarship (Zelizer, 2004b:111). It has been pointed out that, since proponents of the vocational camp already defined themselves in opposition to theory in itself, and saw this as represented by the so-called



'communicologists', they were unlikely to welcome more critical communications theory (Macdonald, 2006:759). From the perspective of those in the 'academic' camp, the 'practical', and 'vocational' was, in turn, equated with the instrumentalist interests of corporate media, so that the possibility of a critical approach to practice became difficult to conceive of.

David Nolan suggests that, as a consequence of these oppositions, debates have been characterised by two extreme and incommensurate perspectives on the evaluation of journalism education. From one position, journalism is seen to have failed in meeting the basic requirements of public service, and for this reason the university ends up being positioned as a site for its critical study. Within the other, journalism itself is placed beyond criticism, and the assumption is that universities should facilitate entry into journalism as an established and credible field of professional practice. Because these positions are based on fundamentally opposing conceptualisations the professional, of the nature and role of journalism and of the university, the same irresolvable arguments continue to circulate, without resulting in constructive resolutions (Nolan, 2008:747).

This does not mean that critical voices have been absent from American journalism education debates. The articulation of the principles of interpretative journalism in MacDougall's textbook can, for example, be seen to be representative of such critique. MacDougall's work was informed by his rejection of the role played by the media in contributing to an American culture of conservatism. He accused the media, in particular, of collaborating in the production of an 'antidemocratic hysteria' around the cold war. As explained above, however, his critique of journalistic objectivity did not extend to the development of an alternative and more critical approach to journalistic practice. He resisted the presence of Mass Communication Studies within journalism, but framed this only as a general objection to the dominance of academic 'theory', which, he said, should not replace 'professional experience' as the central point of reference for students' education (Stoval, 1990:32-33). As such, his contribution to the conceptualisation of journalism education remained caught within the traditional dualistic oppositions that excluded the possibility of a critical conceptualisation of journalistic practice. In contrast, Carey's critique of journalism education was designed as a direct challenge to the oppositions that defined these debates. As noted in Section One, Carey resisted journalism's adoption by the social sciences, and argued for a more broadly defined though humanistic curriculum. His critique of journalism education did not, however, become translated into examples of educational practice. Through Carey and other American scholars, critical perspectives became increasingly acknowledged, but remained marginalised within educational programmes (Zelizer, 2004b). As in the case of MacDougall's interpretive journalism, such critical analysis of the academic study of journalism did not facilitate the transformation of American journalism education.

The environment in which American journalism education was based nevertheless continued, from the 1950's onwards and into the 21<sup>st</sup> century, to be characterised by processes of transformation that were so dramatic that they should have signaled the need for in-depth review of the content of journalism courses. Such changes were certainly often referred to within the public discussion of

journalism education. One area of change that was prioritised within such discussion has been the media landscape itself, which is most often described in relation to growing commercialisation and the development of 'new' technology. References to technology are first made in context of broadcast media and then later with regards to computer and satellite technology, digitalisation and the formation of the internet. Commercialisation is most often discussed with regards to the tabloidisation of the press, the deregulation of broadcast media, the growing corporate power of the media, and the threat that all of this posed to public service commitments of journalism. By the 1980's, commentators were arguing that such change was leading to a blurring of the conventional distinctions between media generally and journalism more specifically. There was also growing awareness that the boundary between print and broadcast media, and between journalism and other content was dissolving. In more recent discussions, such change is typically discussed in context of media 'convergence' (Dennis, 1988:20; Hallin, 2009:33).

Another area of dramatic change that has drawn interest within journalism education debates in the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century relates to the composition and size of the student body of journalism and communication courses, and the career trajectories of graduates. Student enrolment steadily increased rapidly from the 1960's onwards, and news organisations obtained more and more of their staff from such programmes. It is suggested that, by the late 1980's, 85% of all new employees hired by daily newspapers in the US were journalism graduates. For a period, journalism remained the preferred career choice in media-related work, over advertising and public relations (Johansen et al, 2001:473). It is noted, for example, that in the 1990's the vast majority of newspapers were hiring journalism graduates and that journalists with degrees in journalism or communication represented the majority in newsrooms (Gaunt, 1992:33). From the last half of the 1990's, however, this changed, with fewer students opting for journalism and more choosing to work in public relations and advertising (Sloan, 1990:21). A survey conducted in 1987 by the National Association of Broadcasters targeting recipients of journalism and mass communication BA degrees states that among those who majored in news or broadcast sequences, fewer than half went into newspapers, wire services or broadcast journalism. One could no longer, in fact, even assume that students enrolled in communication or journalism programmes because they wished to pursue media-related work. Almost half of those students surveyed did not go on to work in media. Critics have pointed out that the courses that these students had been exposed to were designed to prepare them for work in media organisations, when they were increasingly not taking up positions within such environments (Hochheimer, 1992:5). One reason for this may be that the number of graduates from such courses were becoming far in excess of available work; another that students were simply choosing to pursue other careers. Consciousness of such change did not, however, appear to make much impact on approaches to journalism education.

Commentators nevertheless suggest that by the 1980's the arrangements that had defined such education for decades were under too much strain and internal transformation was becoming

inevitable (Dennis, 1988:20). It may be that the changes described above are symptomatic of more fundamental shifts in the formation of society, both in America and globally, which were now beginning to impact profoundly on the agreements that had for so long underpinned journalism education. One important area of such change can be seen in the central position that institutions of mass media now occupied in American society. The 1980's have been identified as a point in history in which this society had become inextricably organised around mass media. America was, in other words, experiencing what would become referred to as the 'mediatisation' of late modernity (Thompson, 1995), in which the media and cultural industry more broadly emerges as a key sector not only of the economy but of social interaction in general. It is argued that, because of this shift, the academic study of media became institutionalised in the last two decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century as an essential part of university education (Rowland, 1988:65). This is seen as an international phenomenon, which can be identified in the increased popularity of media courses amongst students, and their consequent prioritisation by even the most prestigious universities as they compete for student enrollments and research grants (Nolan, 2008:738).

Commentators also identify, as a second fundamental shift of the 1980's, the rise of a neoliberal paradigm of thought, not just within academia but more generally within society. Within this context, the foundational principles on which the identity of university education had been premised were increasingly in question, both in the American context but also internationally. It is argued that, in context of global economic change, governments were rationalising their approach to state education policy. Universities were now increasingly seen not as institutions that exist to serve the public good, but rather as resources to be strategically managed in accordance with dominant political and economic interests (Turner, 2000:357). Industries began, at the same time, to play a more proactive role in determining the direction of higher education. There was, as a result, an increased onus on universities to be 'market responsive', and to serve industry by providing skilled, job-ready graduates (Nolan, 2008:737). Within this paradigm the concept of the 'professional', which had been so fundamental to journalism education's status within the university was aggressively appropriated for the purposes of commercial interest (Nolan, 2008:745). It is also argued that in context of such shifts, the news industries in North America, at the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, have become commercialised and corporatised to the extent that they have completely forsaken public service as a guiding principle. In this context, it becomes problematic for university-based journalism education programmes to argue that they serve the interests of democratic society simply by preparing students to work in news journalism. Instead, journalism education needs to draw a distinction between the concepts of 'journalism' as a progressive social practice and that of a 'news industry' (Gasher, 2005:665). Because this distinction draws attention to the vast differences that exist between the normative ideals of journalism and the realities of its practice, the agreements that had for many decades ensured stability within the institutional arrangement of American journalism education were finally eroding (Nolan, 2008:745).

One possible indicator of the erosion of the contract that had defined journalism education can be seen in the formal acknowledgement of Mass Communication Studies within the institutions associated with such education. Although mass communication as a field of scholarship had been accepted within universities since mid-century, it is only in the 1980's and 1990's that its official acknowledgement was finally consolidated. In 1982, more than thirty years after Mass Communication Studies first entered the academy, the Association for Education in Journalism became the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication. In 1995, two of the ACEJMC's journals, *Journalism Quarterly* and *Journalism Educator*, added 'And Mass Communication' to their titles (Dickson, 2000:68). During the 1960's and 1970's, some departments of journalism had also added "mass communication" to their titles, but journalism was still regarded as the core of their educational programmes. This changed in the late 1970's and early 80's, as programmes on most campuses redefined themselves in terms of the study of media and communication more generally, rather than prioritising the study of journalism. Critics have argued that the central focus on mass communication as a field has seriously damaged the development of the study of journalism as a distinct mode of communication (Reese, 1999:72). It is possible that these changes are indicative of a fundamental shift in the identity of the American university, which now accommodated the centrality of the study of mass communication to the function of higher education. It may also be that, in context of the increasing importance of neoliberal conceptualisations of the university, the functionalist framework of thought that characterised Mass Communication Studies offered appropriate reference points for this process of accommodation.

A second indicator that the agreements on which journalism education was based were unraveling can be seen in the increasing attention paid within the debates to the 75% (liberal arts) component of students' programmes. Critics now threw doubt on the academic value of this component of students' courses, suggesting that subjects that have been categorised as falling within the liberal arts were no longer free of contamination by commercial interest. The impact of this shift can be seen in context of the renegotiation of the 75\25 rule, which the ACEJMC replaced in 1985 with the 90\65 rule. This new guideline stipulated that students needed to complete 90 hours out of the 120 allocated to them per semester (which still equates to 75%) to work falling outside journalism and mass communication programmes. The rule then requires that students dedicate a minimum of 65 of those 90 hours (54%) to 'basic liberal arts and sciences' (Dickson, 2000:133). In adjusting to this change, institutions confronted the task of defining more exactly which components of students' coursework could, in fact, be defined as 'liberal arts'. A survey of 87 accredited schools (Hoskins, 1988) suggests that educators experienced this as a complex and highly subjective undertaking. They indicated in their responses to surveys that they felt inadequately prepared for the task, and did not have access to ready-made procedures that enabled them to make the necessary distinctions.

Thirdly, undergraduate journalism education finally began to give way to the free-standing institution as the preferred model. More and more programmes have restructured themselves, moving

out from underneath the organisational umbrella of the liberal arts and sciences and instead creating independent schools, reporting directly to central campus leadership. This has made it easier for such institutions to enter into symbiotic relationships with the ‘professional community’, and in this way gain access to resources that were becoming increasingly scarce within university contexts (Reese, 1999:71). Commentators have expressed anxiety about this trend, pointing out that it places more pressure on such programmes to satisfy the expectations of professional constituencies; that it distracts from an integration of journalism with the liberal arts, and that it weakens the links among liberal arts and communication faculties (Reese, 1999:71; Reese & Cohen, 2000:218).

It would seem, then, that in the last decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, journalism education became characterised by an erosion of the terms that had, up to this point, framed its identity within the American academy. One can identify this in a final tipping of the scales in the balance that had existed between journalism and communications as components of professional programmes. Communication now became established as central to the organisation of such education, and journalism was subsumed as a sub-category. Also, at a more fundamental level, the distinction between ‘liberal arts’ and ‘professional’ programmes was no longer taken for granted, and as a result, the basic terms that had defined journalism’s admission to the university context was open for renegotiation. The section below explores the extent to which stakeholders in journalism education have been able to act on this potential in order to establish new approaches to the education of journalists.

#### 4.2.2 Formal inquiries into American journalism education: An illustrative discussion

In the last decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, critique of American programmes of journalism education became characterised by periodic calls for their reform, so that they may measure up to the requirements both of academic and journalistic practice. By the middle of the 1980’s, these calls were taking place in context of formally commissioned and substantive inquiries into the status of American journalism education. The emphases adopted within these inquiries are expressive of the shifts that have taken place within such education during the course of the late 20<sup>th</sup> century and the early years of the new millennium. A review of the content of these inquiries suggest that these trends form part of broader global patterns that have come to characterise approaches to the social function both of universities and of journalism.

It is significant to note, however, that a precursor to such inquiry occurred much earlier, in context of the 1947 Commission on Freedom of the Press, more commonly referred to as the Hutchins Commission after its chair, Robert Maynard Hutchins. Unlike the inquiries that emerged from the 1980’s onwards, this commission did not focus only on journalism- or media education. The Hutchins Commission, which was funded by *Time Magazine* and the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, responded more generally to public concern about the increasing concentration of ownership of the American newspaper industry during the 1940’s. It set out to conduct an inquiry into the implications

of such tendencies for freedom and responsibility of the press. The Commission produced a report which included a critical review of university-based journalism education programmes (Macdonald, 2006:487). Hutchins, who was the President of the University of Chicago, was well known by this time for his critical stance towards university-based journalism education. During the late 1930's, he had made repeated attacks on the growing emphasis on vocational teaching in higher education and cited journalism education as a key example of the problems associated with this tendency (Dickson, 2000:28). The Hutchins report reiterates these sentiments, claiming that most American journalism schools and departments were devoting themselves to 'vocational' training. Such training was understood within this document as an approach which prepares students for work environments by providing them with intensive technical training and knowledge of journalism as a craft. The Hutchins Commission argued that university-based journalism education needed to be far more independent and critical in terms of its relationship with journalism as an industry. Rather than focusing on reporting and production skills, such education should renew its commitment to emphasising a broad liberal education (Dickson, 2000:31). This argument was informed by the Commission's critique of the dominant occupational identity of journalism at this time, and in particular of the ideals of journalistic objectivity. Instead of defining the central task of journalism as that of providing a stenographic record of the day, the Commission saw journalism as being primarily responsible for the contextualisation of social events (Weaver & McCombs, 1980:487). Within this conceptualisation, the most important task of journalism education becomes that of preparing future journalists to be competent judges of public affairs. Courses in the liberal arts and sciences were seen to represent important resources for such education (Macdonald, 2006:750). Within public debate, the Commission's recommendations were generally rejected by the journalistic community, but enjoyed some support in academia. It gave added impetus to the trend towards 'interpretive' reporting that had by this stage been incorporated within the curriculum of some of the elite schools of journalism. It has been suggested, earlier in this chapter, that although such teaching engaged critically with the ideals of journalistic objectivity at a rhetorical level, this did not translate to any great extent into educational practice (Blanchard, 1977).

The formal and detailed discussion of journalism education by the Hutchins Commission was an unusual event in its time. It is, as noted above, only in the mid-1980's that one can identify the emergence of large scale research projects dedicated to the review of the state of American journalism education. From this point onwards, such inquiry becomes characteristic of the public discussion of journalism education and continues to be so today. It is nevertheless a striking feature of all of these studies that, in many respects, each one repeats the core arguments put forward by the Hutchins Commission in the late 1940's. They highlight public concern about the threat posed by commercialisation of the press to its ability to honour its commitment to public service. They argue that journalism education based in a university context has an obligation to engage with this concern. They are preoccupied with the phenomenon of 'vocationalism' in journalism programmes, which,



with one key exception, is seen to impact on the ability of such education to engage critically with journalistic practice. All, in one way or another, continue to invoke the importance of a broad liberal education, which is understood to contribute to the consolidation of the professional identity of journalists.

The first prominent example is the *Project on the Future of Journalism and Mass Communication Education*, more generally known as the 'Oregon report', which was published in 1984. The report was based on a two-year study funded by the Gannet Foundation<sup>6</sup> and organised by Everett Dennis, the dean of the School of Journalism at the University of Oregon. It was prompted, in particular, by the major expansion of student enrollment in journalism and other media-related subjects at American tertiary institutions during the 1970's. This forms a backdrop to the report's evaluation of the status and future of schools and departments of journalism and mass communications in the United States (Dickson, 2000:221). The Oregon report represented the first major inquiry focusing on such education, and remains as one of the most comprehensive examinations of trends in this field (266). As in the case of the Hutchins Commission, a central concern in this report was the emphasis on vocational training in university-based journalism education. It argues that the original rationale for teaching journalism in universities was that it could operate as an intervention into the practices of journalism, helping to ensure that these be based not only on profit motives but also a dedication to public service. The report suggests, however, that reference to these ideals had become mere lip service by the 1970's. Even the elite schools operated primarily in service of industry, to produce journalists with entry-level competencies, ready to be assimilated into newsrooms (Adam, 1988:71).

An important indicator of this industry orientation was noted to be the fact that journalism education focused so strongly on technical skills. Such training was prioritised, according to the report, because of its value in playing a subsidising role that media organisations would otherwise have had to assume themselves to create a productive entry-level workforce (Reese & Cohen, 2000:214). Another indicator was the structuring of such programmes around a series of 'sequences', focusing for example on television news or print journalism as separately taught subjects. Each sequence was understood to provide students with the skill and knowledge that they would need in order to be able to operate in industry-specific environments. A central thrust of the report was that programmes should instead be based in a more generic approach, providing students with fundamental knowledge of the principles that inform the practice of journalism and mass communication (Dickson, 2006:223). The report argued that such an approach could be better achieved in context of post graduate education, targeting students who had already completed a degree in liberal arts. Journalism education should, furthermore, ideally be based in freestanding professional schools, reporting directly to a university president rather than being housed as academic

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<sup>6</sup> Gannet is described as being the largest newspaper chain owner in the US (Reese, 1999:71).



departments within the structures of a college. Within this context, such education can have more freedom to enforce its own value system (Reese, 1999:73).

The Oregon report seems closely aligned in its approach to the arguments presented almost a decade later by Robert O. Blanchard and William G. Christ in *Media Education and the Liberal Arts; A Blueprint for the New Professionalism*. This book, published in 1993, also rejects the emphasis on basic skills in journalism programmes, which is again said to have dominated teaching programmes in the 1970's and 1980's. Such teaching operates to socialise students into the 'occupational culture' of particular journalism industries. Blanchard and Christ proposed that such 'occupational training' should no longer be central to the curriculum. They argued, furthermore, that the liberal arts have in themselves become compromised by vocationalism and as a result were becoming fractured and incoherent as a domain of knowledge. At the same time, mass communication was emerging as an academic field which synthesised the older disciplines, and it did so in a way that ensured their relevance to new developments in the history of knowledge, technology and social institutions generally. Because of this, the authors saw the study of mass communication as having the potential to revitalise liberal education generally in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. They therefore rejected the 75\25 rule which, as we have seen above, had long been regarded as the accepted strategy for ensuring that journalism students are provided with an acceptable standard of university-based education. Instead, they argued, the programmes that students take part in should deal primarily with the conceptual study of mass communication and media (Blanchard & Christ, 2010). They argued that this approach is of particular importance in context of the increasing complexity of the 'information age', in which it is more urgent for students to engage critically with concepts relating to media and mass communication than to learn the basic skills of journalistic production (Deuze, 2000:146). Similar proposals are presented in reports produced in 1994 and 1995 by task forces of the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications (AEJMC). These reports argued strongly for the disengagement of journalism and mass communication education from its 'industry orientation', and in this context supported arguments for an integrated communications curriculum and a decrease in skills provision (Medsker, 1996:13). The AEJMC Vision 2000 task force also stated that such a curriculum demands that a high percentage of faculty should have doctorates in the study of mass communication (Dickson, 2000:114).

Whereas the Hutchins Commission had responded to anxieties about the standards and values that guided American journalistic practice, these later reports were more strongly informed by a perception of crisis within the university as a social institution. Indeed, they can be seen to form part of a general review arising in the mid-1980's in America around the purpose, structure and quality of higher education. Many new books were published during the next decade on the subject of such education, written from a wide range of political perspectives. On one side of the spectrum, such publications included Ernest Boyer's *College: The Undergraduate Experience in America* and on the other Allan Bloom's *The Closing of the American Mind*. Many of these commentaries noted that the

college curriculum had become excessively vocational, as a result of the intrusion of professional curricula associated with subjects such as commerce, engineering, and journalism. These subjects were seen to undermine the traditional intellectual values of a broadly based liberal education. It was felt, in this context, that there was a need to restore liberal education to its central role in undergraduate education. The 1984 report of the Study Group on the conditions of Excellence in American higher education, known as the 'Mortimer report', noted for example that the proportion of bachelor's degrees awarded in the arts and sciences, as opposed to those in professional or vocational subjects, had fallen from 49% in 1971 to 36% in 1982 (Rowland, 1988:58-60).

It would seem, however, that arguments for generic communications as an alternative to 'occupational' training remained unsatisfactory to many stakeholders in American journalism education, both in and outside universities. An example of such dissatisfaction can be seen in *Winds of Change: Challenges Confronting Journalism Education* (Medsger, 1996). This study was commissioned by the Freedom Forum, noted to be the wealthiest journalistically based foundation in the United States at this time, with close ties to Gannett (Reese, 1999:71).<sup>7</sup> *Winds of Change* was written by Betty Medsger, who describes herself as an investigative journalist and former 'professor and chair' of the Department of Journalism at San Francisco State University. The report is based on large scale surveys conducted by the Roper Center in 1995 and additional interviews with hundreds of journalists and educators. It also examines accreditation team reports of the ACEJMC of the previous seven years. As such, it represents one of the most ambitious empirical studies of journalism education yet undertaken (Reese, 1999:78). The description of journalism education presented in this study suggests that many of the proposals put forward in the Oregon report a decade earlier were now well under way. *Winds of Change* describes American journalism education as turning away from an emphasis on preparing journalists for specific work environments, and towards the education of general 'communicators'. Medsger notes that this shift is accompanied by a growing focus on 'conceptual' knowledge as opposed to production-related competencies. She points out that, as a logical extension of this trend, the 75/25 rule was being challenged and arguments put forward for an 'integrated curriculum model', in which Mass Communication Studies became accepted as a liberal arts field in its own right. Because of this conceptualisation, the number of communication courses were increasing, while students were taking less courses outside their major (Medsger, 1996:5). Other trends included an intensification in the recruitment of teaching staff with doctoral degrees rather than those with expertise in either the study or production of journalism (41). She points, furthermore, to a proliferation of Masters programmes which consisted of mix of journalism skills and communication theory, but dealt inadequately with both domains of knowledge (62). Medsger suggests that it is not possible, within this context, for university-based education to adequately engage with journalism as a

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<sup>7</sup> The Freedom Forum was founded by Frank Gannett, but became officially autonomous from the newspaper chain. It has been suggested, however, that the board of trustees remained strongly affiliated with Gannett, with executives from the corporation occupying key roles. Since the mid 1980's, the Gannett Foundation / Freedom Forum has become intensively involved with interventions into journalism education (Reese, 1999:79).

social practice. At the centre of her argument is the claim that the nature and mission of journalism is inherently different to other fields of communication, because of its commitment to public service and democratisation (6). She argues that justifications for the ‘integrated communications curriculum’, and in particular the critique of production-based journalism education as ‘occupational’ or ‘vocational’ training, are based in far too narrow a conceptualisation of journalism. Her thesis is that journalism is a process of critical inquiry, and that, because of this, teaching students how to produce journalism can be seen as a practice worthy of a university context. Such teaching is concerned, after all, with the systematic gathering, analysis and presentation of knowledge, abilities that are core to the curricula of higher education (12). Rather than opting for the ‘integrated’ focus on communications, journalism should therefore be nurtured within academia as a distinct area of study and practice, recognised as an intellectual activity in its own right (67).

Critics have pointed out that the proposal for an alternative approach to journalism education put forward in *Winds of Change* can be said to suffer from its own limitations. This applies, crucially, to the way in which Medsger articulates her claim for journalism as an activity with intellectual integrity. It has been suggested that, in making this claim, she fails to make sense of the relationship between journalistic practice and the institutional contexts in which it operates. She does not, for example, acknowledge that much of American journalistic work is defined by a lack of intellectual autonomy, and that the structures in which such work is based discourages critical self-reflection (Reese, 1999:86). These aspects of the institutional environment of intellectual work are generally regarded as essential guarantees to its claim to authority. Medsger’s own assertion of the intellectual nature of journalistic practice also seems to operate to place journalism beyond criticism. This becomes apparent when one considers her treatment of public concern about the integrity of journalism as a profession. The report describes problems in journalistic practice quite narrowly as “sensationalist” or “sleazy” reporting. Medsger does not discuss this phenomenon in context of the social responsibilities of journalists, but rather in terms of the impact that “bad journalistic performance” may have on the reputation of journalism as a profession. Such performance is, in fact, primarily described as providing ammunition to those within the academy who wish to replace production-based journalism education with education focusing on generic communication (Medsger, 1996:24; Medsger, 2005). Within this analysis, journalism itself is positioned as essentially unproblematic, and any flaws in journalistic practice are seen as isolated deviations from the norm. It has been argued that this understanding of journalism has fundamental implications for the way in which Medsger makes sense of her claim that production-based journalism education teaches students how to engage in intellectual activity. In particular, it informs her assumption that the knowledge that students need to be exposed to about journalism can be gained through production-based assignments conducted in isolation of the consideration of journalism as an institution that is defined by its social context (Gasher, 2005:667). It has been suggested that Medsger’s treatment of journalism as a practice that is beyond criticism must be understood in context of the corporate interests that informs

her report. Since the mid-1980's, major philanthropic foundations associated with newspaper and other media conglomerates, such as the Knight Foundation, Hearst and also the Freedom Forum, have surfaced as an important constituency within American journalism. They have responded, in particular, to public concern about the legitimacy of journalism as a profession. *Winds of Change* can be seen as one such response, which lays claim to the university as a sphere in which this legitimacy can be repaired and preserved (Reese, 1999:77).

A very different argument for journalism-specific education is reflected in a proposal generated in context of a review of the Graduate School of Journalism at Columbia University. This review was launched in 2002 when Lee C. Bollinger, president of the university, halted a search for a new dean for the school and resolved only to approve such an appointment once the school had been given a chance to clarify its own educational mission. For this purpose, he appointed a task force consisting of members of the School of Journalism, academics from other faculties at Columbia and practicing journalists. The aim was to consider what a journalism curriculum for the 21<sup>st</sup> century should look like and, on this basis, to articulate guidelines for Columbia's journalism curriculum. Unlike the examples discussed so far, the purpose was not that of a formal review through in-depth empirical research. Instead, Bollinger chaired a series of reflective debates with the task force and then, based on this, produced a proposal that presented his own reading of the implications for university-based journalism education in general and the Columbia programme in particular. In contextualising this proposal he pointed to the original arguments that Pulitzer had presented at the start of the 20<sup>th</sup> century for a journalism programme based at Columbia. Pulitzer had described his own era as characterised by profound change and growing social instability; Bollinger argued that this was also an apt description of the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. He describes such change particularly in terms of processes of globalisation, and refers to the role played within this by enormous growth in the reach and power of systems of communication. Viewed against this backdrop, journalism can be understood to have an increasingly important role to play in determining the nature of social relations, particularly through the facilitation of public debate (Bollinger, 2003:8). Bollinger argues, at the same time, that the integrity of journalism as a social practice is threatened by factors such as dramatic technological change, the convergence of media and worsening economic conditions. The deregulation of electronic media is, he argues, of particular concern in this respect, since this means that the responsibility of the press to operate in the public interest is no longer supported by the formal administrative systems of government. Such integrity now depends largely on the professional identity of journalism itself, and, Bollinger states, it is an identity that is proving insufficient to the challenge. This can be seen, for example, in rising levels of audience distrust in journalism's capacity to contribute to the processes of democracy. Bollinger proposed that because of this context, university-based journalism education can no longer afford simply to teach journalism as a 'craft', honing students' ability to write and edit. Instead, it should engage with more fundamental principles of journalistic practice in order to enable students to develop a strong professional identity. This

would then enable them to produce journalism that is informed by public interest, despite rising commercial pressures (Bollinger, 2003:8). Bollinger proposed that a core educational strategy should be the critical discussion of examples of such journalism, so that students can develop the 'habits of mind' associated with them (Cunningham, 2002:22). Such strategies could, however, only succeed if journalism education established an independence from the agendas of industry. Students should, furthermore, be provided with a rounded education which allows them to develop substantial knowledge not only of journalism-specific production competencies but also of university-based knowledge more generally (Dates, 2006:144).

Bollinger's statements have been routinely cited in subsequent discussions of journalism education reform, both by opponents and advocates. Some commentators have interpreted his proposal as an attempt to inject extraneous subject matter into Columbia's Masters programme, thus threatening its iconic status as a model of intense and demanding training in the fundamentals of journalistic production. The incorporation of academic subjects at Columbia could mean that, like programmes elsewhere at American universities, it becomes subsumed into mass communications (Day, 2002). Other critics have pointed out, however, that an important distinction between Bollinger's conceptualisation of journalism education and that of the 'generic' model is that he does not privilege research-based mass communications studies as a field of university-based knowledge. Instead, he refers broadly to the role that academic disciplines and the intellectual culture of the university can play in shaping students' approach to journalism (Adam, 2006:153). These disciplines are seen to offer important intellectual resources to journalism education because, within Bollinger's analysis, the core body of knowledge on which journalistic practice should be based must include expertise about the world which journalism describes. According to Bollinger, one of the most significant needs for journalism in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century is to mediate between expert knowledge and the general public consciousness (Cunningham, 2002:22). Such mediation cannot be achieved by simply reporting on 'current events' without referring to the broader processes in which they are based. Because of this, journalists need to develop a high level of contextual knowledge about the subjects on which they are reporting. Journalism education should, therefore, be drawing on discipline-based knowledge of the environments on which journalists report (Bollinger, 2003:8). It is in light of such statements that Jay Rosen described the debate facilitated by Bollinger as the most significant event in the history of American journalism education in half a century. He explains that Bollinger's introduces a language which challenges the narrow conceptualisation of journalism that has defined journalism education in this country for many decades (Rosen, 2002). It has been suggested that this emphasis in Bollinger's analysis resonates broadly with a rising urgency at the start of the 21<sup>st</sup> century around the need for a 'scholarly turn' within American journalism education (Gasher, 2005:666; Dates, 2006:144). At the time of the Columbia controversy, other journalism-specific postgraduate programmes such as the Masters programme at Stanford were, in fact, also moving away from a focus on basic training to a more 'scholarly' focus on the social context of

journalism. By 2005, the Carnegie Corporation and Knight Foundation had also established projects dedicated to the promotion of such journalism education both at Columbia and at four other universities. This collaboration focused, in particular, on integrating these schools of journalism more closely with the campuses in which they are based, in order to draw more effectively on the intellectual resources represented by different disciplines (Macdonald, 2006:752; Tumber, 2005:552).

Commentators have, however, expressed doubt about the extent to which Bollinger has resolved key questions about journalism education in a way that completely escapes the limitations of previous proposals. On the contrary, his statement can be seen to reinforce traditional notions both of journalism and journalism education. It is argued, for example, that his proposals give legitimacy to liberal journalistic ideals that should, in themselves, be critically examined. Here it is noted that Bollinger's assessment draws heavily on the analysis of journalistic practice associated with the Committee of Concerned Journalists. Tom Rosenstiel, who chaired this committee, also participated in Bollinger's task force, and Bollinger's final arguments bear a strong resemblance to the analysis he put forward in *Elements of Journalism* (Macdonald, 2006:754 -257). As we saw in Chapter Three, this book and the journalism ethical reform movement with which it is associated has been criticised for focusing exclusively on the need to strengthen the professional identity of individual journalists, as if this is a sufficient response to the threat posed to journalism by commercial imperatives [see pgs. 92 -93]. It is noted that Bollinger's proposal can be seen to reiterate such analysis, describing journalism education as providing students with a professional identity which can operate as a 'bulwark' against the forces of commercialism in journalistic practice. Like *Winds of Change*, then, this approach does not provide a framework which allows for the critical and historically situated analysis of the structural organisation of American journalism as a social institution (Macdonald, 2006:754).

Journalism education critics (Hackett & Zhao, 1996; Gans, 2003; Macdonald, 2006) argue that this neglect of structural analysis is a key feature of American journalism education debate, and helps to explain some of its weaknesses. This is so despite the fact that educational reformists generally do acknowledge that the problems they identify in journalism must be understood in context of the political economy of the media. They recognise, in particular, the problems that commercial pressures place on journalistic practice. It is pointed out, in this context, that proposals for the reform of journalism education typically occur at moments when there is anxiety amongst the public about a perceived crisis in journalism. References to such crises surface, more particularly, when there is heightened concern about the extent to which private corporate power undermines public interest (Macdonald, 2006:747). The perception of crisis is said to result from a fundamental contradiction in the dominant occupational identity of journalism, as this is has been traditionally conceptualised of in Anglophone societies (Macdonald, 2006:746). Scholars point out that journalistic communities aspire to the status of a profession and in this context commit themselves to a mission of democratic public service. At the same time, however, journalism as business is driven by the imperatives of profit. These two principles are seen to operate side by side within the practices of journalism, and to be in



constant tension with each other (Reese, 1999:71; Royal Commission on Newspapers, 1981:163). It has been suggested that one begins to identify public references to a crisis in journalistic practice when the resulting contradictions become acute. It is also at such points that there is intensified public interest in university-based journalism education, and more specifically in the reform of such teaching (Macdonald, 2006:746). As noted in Section One of this chapter, the need to balance these two principles has also been fundamental to the conceptualisation of journalism education itself.

It is also argued that these proposals for reform in journalism education do not confront the need for structural change in journalism itself. Instead, the transformation of journalism is understood to be the individual responsibility of educators, students and journalists, who are expected to affect change through a personal commitment to the traditional public service mission of journalism. The focus remains on improving the professional ethics of individual journalists (Macdonald, 2006:755; Gans, 2003:36.) As such, the curriculum guidelines developed by educational 'reformists' tend to avoid a focus on the analysis of powerful media industries, or discussion of the significance of journalists' working conditions. Students are encouraged to think idealistically about journalism, rather than developing the capacity to think strategically about ways of engaging with the constraints represented by the institutionalised structures of journalism as an industry. Professionalism is understood, in this context, only in terms of normative identity, and not also in terms of the claims that workers need to make on the resources and time required by professional practice (Macdonald, 2006:755). Such education operates to reproduce a belief in the righteousness of journalistic ideals rather than engaging critically with the existing practices and institutions of journalism. Because the focus is on abstract ethical principles and excludes exploration of the organisational imperatives of the corporations that employ journalists, the basic contradictions in the identity of journalism remain unchallenged (Hackett & Zhao, 2006:45).

At the same time, as we have seen, these proposals also appear to have been triggered by perceptions of crises within the institutions of higher education. The treatment of such crisis differs in important ways from the way that it is approached in discussions of journalistic practice. Whereas the problems in journalism are seen to result from internal contradictions, they are generally understood to arise in academic environments as a result of external threats. It has been pointed out in literature that academic debates about journalism education are preoccupied with resisting the instrumentalist industry agendas of journalism, but do not approach academia itself as an arena that is inescapably defined by social influence. Because of this, such commentary does not adequately explore the institutional context and material forces that inform the role played by universities themselves in the establishment and development of journalism education. Instead, the academic sector, together with journalism research and teaching, is generally positioned as 'pure', in contrast to the 'compromised' sphere of journalistic practice. The suggestion, here, is that journalism education can only become adequately self-reflective if it rejects the position of idealism or critical moralism. Instead, it should consider the institutional environment and social influences through which journalism education itself



has been shaped, and acknowledge its own inevitable implication in social agendas (Gasher, 2005:667; Nolan, 2008:735). It has also been argued, in similar terms, that the invocation of dualistic opposition between theory and practice serves to reconfirm the schisms that have characterised the relationship between journalism and the university from its inception, and which work against the development of journalism as a reflective practice. According to this argument, it is in the interest of corporate media that such oppositions continue to frame debates about journalism education. Mass media as a profit-driven industry has an interest in the reproduction of such dichotomies, because while they remain in place, journalism education will not be able to engage in radical change, either of its own structures or that of journalism itself. Proposals for the reform of journalism education will, in other words, not be realised until these oppositions are transcended (Reese, 1999:70).

## **Conclusion**

It is argued, in this chapter, that the history of American journalism education has been fundamentally shaped by the need to accommodate conflicting requirements for legitimacy, each representing the agendas of different interest groups. On the one hand, educators needed to account to the academic community for the presence of journalism education within university environments, by establishing the status of journalism education as a legitimate academic enterprise. On the other hand, they had to engage with the expectations of the media in order to stake a claim for such teaching as a legitimate entry point into journalism as an occupation. As part of this process, journalism education was expected to incorporate conflicting conceptualisations of the 'professional', each representing different agendas. Firstly, there was the expectation, both from within the academy and from journalism as a community of practice that teaching should be designed to contribute to the 'professionalisation' of journalism, consolidating its status as a social practice with a public service orientation. Secondly, there was the assumption from media organisations that it should operate in service of 'professionalism', or the establishment of systems for the occupational control of a journalistic workforce.

By mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, agreements had been established between journalism educators, media organisations and the broader academy that allowed for the accommodation of these conflicting requirements. There was a degree of consensus with regards to the way journalism education should be approached, both in terms of methods of teaching and the categories of knowledge that should be included in teaching programmes. Within this approach, the two opposing conceptualisations of the 'professional' and the curricular goals associated with each could co-exist. At the same time, because this arrangement was informed by contradicting arguments about the objectives of university-based journalism education, there were ongoing tensions amongst the different interest groups involved. From one perspective, journalism was approached as a 'quasi-profession' that does not adequately meet the basic requirements of public service. The central value of university-based journalism

education is, then, that it enables the assimilation of academic knowledge with knowledge of practice, and in this way contributes to the 'professionalisation' of journalism as a social practice. From another perspective, journalism itself is placed beyond criticism, and the assumption is that universities should simply facilitate entry into journalism as an established field of professional practice. These positions are based on fundamentally opposing conceptualisations of the professional, and of the social purpose of both journalism and the university.

It is proposed, in this chapter, that the agreements that had been established could nevertheless be sustained, because they were grounded in a conceptualisation of authoritative social knowledge that had come to dominate both journalism and the academy by the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. Because of this shared conception, journalism educators and communities of journalistic practice had, by this time, established a common understanding of professional guidelines for reporting practice. These guidelines were designed to ensure the impartial and disinterested status of journalism, as a practice committed to truth-telling. At the same time, Mass Communication Studies had become the default setting for the academic study of journalism. Journalism education therefore established its own legitimacy within the academy through a partnership with a field in which knowledge about society was, again, measured against the ideal of objective truth-telling.

Within the history of journalism education in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the contradiction between the different approaches to the professional nevertheless remained unresolved. For this reason, such education was characterised by ongoing arguments between different interest groups. The classic schism between the Chi-squares and Green Eyeshades is one example of such conflict, in which claims about the rigour of scientific knowledge about journalism became juxtaposed with the assumption that such knowledge was obscure and irrelevant. Concerns about such ongoing tensions can also be observed in context of the formal inquiries into the state of journalism education, as discussed in the last part of the chapter. From the Hutchins Commission onwards, repeated reference is made to the 'vocationalism' of journalism programmes, which is seen to impact on their ability to engage critically with journalistic practice. Each inquiry also returns to the proposal that this problem can be addressed by ensuring that students are exposed to a broad liberal education. Such proposals did not, however, result in the emergence of an approach to journalism education in which the conflicts on which teaching was based could be dispelled.

The chapter proposes, further, that the terms of the agreement on which journalism education was based were increasingly tested by changes in the broader social environment. These changes were representative of fundamental shifts that were taking place, internationally, in approaches to the conceptualisation of authoritative social knowledge. Of particular importance is the emergence of compelling alternative approaches to the study of society, and the challenges that social movements posed to the established assumptions about such knowledge. Such challenges also occurred within journalism as a social practice, particularly in context of growing awareness of the limitations of the occupational codes of journalistic objectivity. Nevertheless, such challenges appeared to have very

little impact on approaches to teaching journalism in American universities. It would seem that there was continued investment from different interest groups in the agreements on which this approach was based. As in the histories of knowledge that are traced in previous chapters, it is again possible to observe a persistent commitment to the ideal of objective and universally relevant social knowledge.

By the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, shifts that were taking pace within the broader social environment around the conceptualisation of authoritative knowledge were undermining the foundations of this agreement. One important area of change can be seen in the central position that the mass media now came to occupy in American society as institutions involved in the production and circulation of social knowledge. Because of this shift, the academic study of media had become institutionalised as an essential part of university education. A second fundamental shift is identified in the rise of neoliberalism, and with this the increased pressure on both journalism and universities to respond to dominant political and economic interests rather than serving the public good. In context of such change, the arrangements that had for many decades ensured stability within American journalism education began to erode. One indication of this was the tipping of the scales in the balance that had existed between teaching about reporting practice and Mass Communication Studies as components of professional programmes. Another was the increasing perception that the distinction between ‘liberal arts’ and ‘professional’ components of university programmes were dissolving. It is proposed, in this chapter, that in context of such changes, the terms that had defined university based journalism education in the American context may now have become open to renegotiation.

In the next two chapters, it will be argued that such patterns in the relationship between journalism education and the history of authoritative knowledge can also be observed in other social contexts. Through this discussion, it becomes possible to identify ways in which approaches to education that originated from the American history have circulated internationally. It is also possible to observe how these approaches have been appropriated and assimilated within localised histories of authoritative social knowledge.

## CHAPTER FIVE: INTERNATIONAL TRENDS IN JOURNALISM EDUCATION

### Teaching journalism in universities

#### Introduction

Commentators have pointed out that the form and content of journalism education varies as a result of differences in political, social, cultural and economic environment (Chang, 1997:4; Donsbach, et al, 1992:2, cited in Froehlich & Holtz-Bacha, 2003:308). It has, however, also been argued that different examples establish themselves in context of shared global circumstances and that, for this reason, there is value in studying international patterns in the development of such education (Gaunt, 1992:2; Deuze, 2006:19). Phillip Gaunt, in his global study (1992) of journalism education, argued that the framework presented by Siebert et al in *Four Theories of the Press* provides a valuable entry point for the discussion of such patterns. As noted in Chapter Three, it is argued in *Four Theories* that the characteristics of any example of journalistic practice will depend on the ‘media system’ in which it is based, which is further determined by the political and social environment in which this system exists. Gaunt suggests that one could argue, similarly, that the nature of a given example of journalism education is largely determined by local perceptions regarding the social function of journalism, which is in turn reflective of the ‘media system’ that exists in that society. He cautions, however, that the categories offered in *Four Theories* for distinguishing between ‘types’ of societies and press systems are reflective of international circumstances in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. For the framework to be of relevance to contemporary journalism education, these distinctions would need to be adjusted to acknowledge political and social changes that have occurred during the last half century (Gaunt, 1992:12-16).

In Chapter Three it was noted, however, that journalism scholars have challenged *Four Theories* at a more fundamental level, arguing that it privileges a ‘liberal’ perspective, presented as an unproblematic universal standard against which all journalism is measured. There is, in other words, an assumption that journalism is by definition linked to the political and normative ideals associated with Western liberal democracies and free market economies [see pg. 76]. It has been suggested (Berger, 2007) that similar assumptions still frame much of contemporary literature about journalism education. It is often taken for granted that the concerns that inform journalism education as it exists in Anglophone environments of North America and Western Europe are of universal significance, representing the terms of reference for explaining such education globally. Such literature does acknowledge that journalism education based in other contexts face unique local challenges, particularly with regards to freedom from interference by the state, and access to resources. The supposition remains, nevertheless, that these problems are merely stumbling blocks in the process of ‘catching up’ with a global standard, represented by the ‘norm’ of journalism education that serves a commercial press and which, at the same time, acts as a ‘fourth estate’ in a liberal democratic system (Berger, 2007:147). It has also been noted that, although the *Four Theories* framework can be seen

to assist in demonstrating how particular examples of journalism education are bound up in the national contexts in which they are based, this does not adequately explain international patterns in the establishment of such teaching. The framework does not, in particular, help to explain the broad circulation of an approach to journalism education based in this 'Western liberal' paradigm. The adoption of this approach applies in a wide range of political and economic contexts, irrespective of the kind of journalistic practice that predominates, so that journalism education cannot be said to be solely indicative of either the media system or broader social environment in which it is based (Joseph, 2010:253-6). With this argument in mind it is proposed, in this chapter, that in order to better understand global trends in journalism education, it is important to recognise that the terms that define the formation of individual examples of such teaching are strongly influenced by the relationships that exist between different social environments.

The discussion also responds to the identification, in Chapter Three of the potential value of 'comparative' journalism scholarship. It was noted that the recent emergence of such work, particularly studies that juxtapose forms of journalism existing in different social contexts, have allowed researchers to confront the historically specific nature of journalism in a more nuanced way. Within such research it is no longer possible to take for granted the universal relevance of one tradition of journalism. What is made visible, instead, is the privileging of particular concepts and values within the circulation of ideas about journalism across social space and at different moments in history. By comparing journalism as it is practiced in different societies it is also possible to situate localised examples within a global context, so that one can identify an internationally shared set of circumstances for such practice. It is also noted that, within such comparison, the nation is often no longer the suitable unit of comparison, because it does not operate as self-contained, and instead is part of processes of migration and change that cut across national boundaries. Nations nevertheless form components of larger transnational systems, which remain of significance within comparative analyses of journalism (Bauer, 2010:236).

This next chapter argues that these principles also apply to the comparative study of journalism education. Such analysis is of particular importance for the evaluation of the international significance of the American history of such education. By placing this history within a global perspective, it becomes apparent that the nature of its development has depended on historically specific conditions. The chapter also proposes more generally that the terms that define the relationship between journalism and the academy in a given instance can benefit from being understood in context of global shifts in the conceptualisation of knowledge and the institutions and practices of knowledge production. With this in mind, it discusses the global history of journalism education in context of patterns in the relationship between social space and the production of knowledge.

The discussion of global developments in the establishment of university-based journalism education is organised around the identification of three phases in this history. During the first phase,

the growth of such education remained fragmented, with the American example standing out as unique in its authority and stability. In the second phase, consistent traditions of journalism education emerge across the world, but remain framed by the central position adopted by America within the international organisation of knowledge. In the third phase, journalism education becomes informed by patterns in relations of cultural and economic power that cut across national boundaries.

The chapter is informed by the fractured nature of the available body of work on journalism education. From the mid-1970's onwards, there have been attempts to generate scholarship that takes cognisance of a broader context, and to research regional trends (Gaunt, 1992:4-5). Scholarship has, however, primarily taken the form of scattered examples of individual national studies. It is only recently that it has become possible to trace a coherent and shared debate amongst scholars and educators about journalism education as an international phenomenon.<sup>8</sup> Scholarship dealing with the comparative study of journalism education has, for example, only gained momentum during the last two decades.<sup>9</sup> The attempt, in this chapter, to trace patterns in the global development of journalism education is therefore often based on a limited set of reference points, and remains tentative in nature.

## 5.1 The first phase: a fractured history

At the start of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, interest in the formal education or training of journalists was not widely spread. Where such interest had surfaced, it was mostly situated outside the academy, inside news organisations and in the context of apprenticeships. It was also not, as in the American instance, framed by an interest in the professionalisation of journalism as an occupation. This is for example true of the British context, where the training of journalists became a strong feature of work environments (Morrison, 1997:29). By the 1950's, work-based training had become fairly formalised within newspapers, and was acknowledged as a fit and proper way for employers to invest in their own staff and maintain standards (Greenberg, 2007:291). Recruits were typically required to start in small local papers in an apprenticeship system complemented by college-based courses accredited by the National Council for the Training of Journalists (NCTJ) (Gaunt, 1992:42). It is noted that although such training was strongly driven by the interests of industry, public service remained an important term of reference, particularly in context of the formal in-house training programmes of the BBC (Zelizer 2004b). The strengthening of commitment to public service is, as we have seen in Chapter Four, strongly associated with one way in which the concept of the 'professional' is seen to

<sup>8</sup> One indication of growing interest in such discussion is the establishment of the World Journalism Education Congress (WJEC) which organized its first meetings in 2007 and 2010.

<sup>9</sup> Early examples include a survey conducted by Stephenson and Mory, of the ideological framing of journalism education programmes within institutions based in European Union member states (1990); a study of journalism education in Europe by Froehlich and Holtz-Bacha (1992), and *Making the Newsmakers*, Phillip Gaunt's study (1992) of international developments in journalism education. Froehlich and Holtz-Bacha followed up their earlier work with a more substantial study in 2003, entitled *Journalism Education in Europe and North America – An International Comparison*. A further contribution to discussions of the European context followed in 2009 with *European Journalism Education*, a volume edited by Georgios Terzis. A further book published in 2010 is *Journalism Education in Challenging Environments*, by Beate Josephi, a study that focuses on journalism education in countries that have partial or no press freedom.

apply to journalism education – that is, the role that it can play in bolstering the professional identity of journalism [see pg. 104]. In the British context there was, however particular concern about the second conceptualisation – that is, that journalism should contribute to the establishment of systems of occupational control. Because of such concerns, the idea of professionalising journalism was generally met with resistance. Indeed, from the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century until the contemporary situation both journalists and scholars have typically rejected the idea that occupation of journalism should be framed by the concept of the professional. There has, in particular, been opposition to the idea of controlling entry to journalism as an occupation through educational qualification (Aldridge & Evetts, 2003:547). Instead, journalists have tended to present their practice as an ‘open profession’ with no artificial barriers to entry, in which ability and hard work alone should lead to success. It is assumed, within this conceptualisation, that journalism does not involve skills that can be taught, but rather talents that one either possesses or does not. It may be that this is one reason why even work-based training systems in this country would always remain piecemeal, with limited attempts at an overall strategic vision (Aldridge & Evetts, 2005:554). This assessment of the relevance of training or education to journalism was particularly strongly developed in the British context, but can in fact be said to have dominated the international landscape for most of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

As noted in Chapter Three, it is, nevertheless, possible to identify the establishment of significant instances of university-based journalism education from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century onwards. American journalism education is the obvious example, but programmes were also set up within universities elsewhere in the world. One example surfaced in context of the institutionalisation of *Zeitungswissenschaft*, which originated in Germany and also became well established in Austria (Gaunt, 1992:69). The first centre for the journalism education and research was, in fact, founded in the German context, at the University of Leipzig in 1916 under the leadership of Karl Bucher (Froehlich & Holtz-Bacha, 2003:190; Weischenberg & Malik, 2008:158). The establishment of the centre was indicative of support amongst German academics at this time for the public relevance of the press, and the consequent importance of the scholarly study of journalism. Many journalists and newspapers also supported the establishment of journalism education at universities, but only at a preparatory level, supplementing the training that took place within publishing houses (Froehlich & Holtz-Bacha, 2003:190). Another example of university-based journalism education established in the early 1920’s is represented by programmes that emerged in China, as part of efforts that were taking place at this time to bring about democratisation in this country (Hao & Xu, 1997:36; Chu & Zhongshi, 2002:63). It is suggested that these early programmes<sup>10</sup> were foundational to the development of Chinese journalism education (Gaunt, 1992:113). By 1949, when the Communist Party came into power, the ‘St John model’ had spread to 57 other major universities (Chu & Zhongshi, 2002:64). Unlike the early German initiatives, they were heavily influenced by the

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<sup>10</sup> These programmes were established at St John’s University in Shanghai (1920), Yenching University in Beijing (1924) and Fudan University in Shanghai (1929) (Gaunt, 1992:113; Chu & Zhongshi, 2002:63).



American example.<sup>11</sup> The United States was regarded by Chinese educators as a society with advanced knowledge about the development of both journalism and journalism education (Hume, 2004:23).

Other, less substantial examples of journalism education that emerged in the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in Cairo, where two American-style university-based programmes were established,<sup>12</sup> and the Australian context (Henningham, 1986:8; Bjornsen et al, 2007:386). In Australia, such education existed alongside an apprenticeship system, strongly influenced by the British model, in which ‘copy boys’ were taken on as ‘cadets’ and provided with up to three years’ in-house training in newspapers. Diploma courses were set up in the 1920’s at the Universities of Melbourne and Queensland as a complement to the apprenticeship system, and these lasted until the 1960’s. Judging from the number of students who graduated from such programmes, it would seem, however, that they did not play a highly significant role. Over a period of 47 years, Queensland only awarded 44 diplomas, while Melbourne awarded 40 over as many years (Gaunt, 1992:122). Also, while in the American approach production courses were framed within a liberal arts programme, these courses prioritised the vocational preparation of journalists, and concerned themselves only with teaching people ‘how to be journalists’. The emphasis remained, in this context, on the experiential and practical, with courses primarily taught by practitioners (Aldridge & Evett, 2003:560; Henningham, 1986:8). In this respect, they were similar to the British work-based programmes.

By the late 1930’s, the university-based education of journalists was, however, no longer restricted to programmes informed by values of liberalism. Approaches based in a totalitarian paradigm also emerged in a range of countries across the world. One example surfaced in Germany in 1935, when journalism programmes framed by *Zeitungswissenschaft* were discontinued and government-controlled ‘Reichspresseschule’ began to instruct journalists ideologically for work in newspapers (Ruhl, 2004:5). This occurred in context of the establishment of the National Socialist government and their approach to the exploitation of communications systems for ideological purposes. When the Nazi Party seized power in 1933, the German media system was restructured, with state control over access to journalism as a profession. As part of this system, professional education both within universities and on the job became a legal obligation, and was regulated by centralised standards (Froehlich & Holtz-Bacha, 2003:191; Gaunt, 1992:49). After World War II, in the German Democratic Republic, the Leipzig institute and other centres like it continued to play a role in state-controlled journalism education. Such education typically started with a one-year, in-house apprenticeship within a media organisation, known as a *Volontariat*. The apprenticeship served the purpose of an ideological ‘filter’ which was used to identify those individuals thought to be

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<sup>11</sup> The University of Missouri and the University of Columbia were, for example directly involved in these initiatives (Chu and Zhongsi, 2002; Xiaoming & Xiaoge, 1997:36-8)

<sup>12</sup> A programme was established in 1935 at the American University of Cairo, and in 1939 at Cairo University (Salawu, 2009). The American University of Cairo was a nongovernmental university, established in 1919. Cairo University was Egypt’s first national university, established in 1908 (Saleh, 2010:123).

desirable candidates for further education, who then were encouraged to complete tertiary programmes of between three and four years in duration. These programmes were closed down at the end of the 1980's in context of German unification and new programmes established that more closely mirrored the American approach to communication studies (Froehlich & Holtz-Bacha, 2003:198). In Spain, where no formal journalism training had existed before World War II, General Franco also set up a national school of journalism education in 1941, which remained in place until the early 1970's (Josephi, 2009:45).

A particularly wide-spread tradition of journalism education falling outside the liberal paradigm is that of the 'soviet' model, which was established in a range of communist societies in the 1950's and continued until the early 1990's (Josephi, 2009:45). In Russia<sup>13</sup> such education took place both within the university context and in work-based programmes. At universities, students typically completed a five-year degree focusing on subjects such as language, literature, the history of the Communist Party, philosophy and political economy. Journalism, which was offered as one major, was well attended, and it has been suggested that this was at least partly because working in newspapers was considered a good career choice for those who aspired to political office in the Communist Party. Similar arrangements were established in other communist states in Eastern and Central Europe (Josephi, 2009:45). In China, journalism educators also abandoned American approaches and turned to the soviet model (Gaunt, 1992:113; Chu & Zhongshi, 2002:64). Such programmes emphasised knowledge of communist history, and of the operation of the political institutions that served the communist state (Xiaoming & Xiaoge, 1997:35-7). Journalism was understood to represent one such institution, and defined as a tool of class struggle. Within this conceptualisation, it was assumed that journalists necessarily position themselves politically, and as 'consciously part of the party' (Hao & Xu, 1997). This was in direct contrast to the approach described in Chapter Four in context of American journalism education where the emphasis has always been on the ideals of freedom of the press and journalistic objectivity. Within the soviet model, students took part in practical classes dealing for example with language skills, but also modules in 'Political Ideology', as well as the 'History of the Party Press', 'History of Proletarian Journalism in the West' and 'Criticism of Bourgeois Journalism' (Morrison 1997:27; Hao & Xu, 1997).

Many of the institutional histories of journalism education in these countries are, however, characterised by discontinuity. In China, for example, educators quickly began to criticise Soviet press dogma because it did not reflect what was regarded as Chinese principles and values. As a result, teaching about journalism was soon marked as controversial and became a 'forbidden area' of study or discussion (Gaunt, 1992:113). In this context, the Cultural Revolution eventually stopped all tertiary education in journalism until 1972. When such education resumed in the 1980's, ties were

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<sup>13</sup> The first journalism school was established in Moscow in 1947 (Morrison, 1997:27).

reconfirmed with American schools, and education was again strongly based in the teaching of professional skills and broad based knowledge of the humanities and social sciences. It is argued that journalism education programmes nevertheless maintained elements of the soviet model, in their emphasis on accountability to political leaders as well as the importance attached to giving expression to the 'voice of the people' (Xiaoming & Xiaoge, 1997:36-8; Chu & Zhongshi, 2002:64).

It has also been proposed that, in some countries, the implementation of a 'soviet' framing of journalism was internally contested by both educators and journalists, who resisted the idea of slavishly following this model (Gaunt, 1992:80). Within such contexts, it is possible to identify a blurring of boundaries between education based in the totalitarian approach and that which is informed by a more 'liberal' set of values. It is explained, for example, that in Estonia in the late 1970's, journalism became characterised by the 'radish phenomenon', with the suggestion that although it appeared 'communist red' on the outside, it carried suggestions signalling an ambiguously white 'inside'. The strategies of ambiguity and subversion that journalists employed in order to signal such contestation was widely understood by their audiences. In universities, a similar set of strategies were employed as a response to the implementation of the soviet model of journalism education. Educators 'taught between the lines', by declaring an 'ideologically correct' course outline in the official curriculum and syllabus, but delivering different content in lectures. A course would, for example, be entitled 'Criticism of the Theory and Practice of Bourgeois Journalism' but what would be taught in class would be American mass communication theory (Lauk, 2009:397-8).

Chapter Four focused on the conflicts and internal differences that have characterised American journalism education. In comparison to the international history of fragmentation and contradiction, the American example nevertheless stands out as unique in sustaining a continuous history, framed by a shared set of values, from the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century onwards. It should also now be apparent that, in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the American example was influential in the establishment and development of such education in other parts of the world, even outside the context of liberal democracies. From the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century onwards, as will be shown in the next section, such influence began to strengthen.

## **5.2 The second phase: journalism education as a national export**

In the second phase, more consistent traditions of journalism education emerge in a range of countries across the world, but these still remain framed by the central position adopted by America within the international organisation of knowledge. Global developments in journalism education were strongly informed by a flow of ideas and practices from the American 'centre' to the 'periphery' represented by economically less powerful nations. Although this phase can be said to describe internationally shared historical patterns in journalism education, it does not occur simultaneously in all parts of the world. It is, rather, possible to identify moments in which particular groups of countries became

associated with this phase. These groups can be distinguished from each other in terms of their political identity, the strength of their economies, and their economic position within the broader international context. Certain industrial nations that also define themselves as liberal democracies can, for example, be said to have moved from the first to the second phase in the 1950's. A second group, many of them former colonies that are now typically described as 'developing' nations, entered the second phase when they gained independence in the 1960's. A third, consisting of countries that historically defined their political identity within a socialist paradigm, entered this phase as late as the 1990's, in context of the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe in 1989 and, in the early 1990's, the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the creation of a new 'commonwealth' of independent republics.

Internationally, university-based journalism education programmes have tended to be organised around a distinction between courses in which students learn how to produce journalism, and those in which they study the social context of journalism (Gaunt, 1992:12-13; Deuze, 2008:23). The global circulation of American approaches to journalism education occurred in context of both of these kinds of courses. Within production-oriented modules, it can be traced in the emphasis on the replication of guidelines for the vocational instruction of journalists. In courses dealing with the contextual study of journalism, it is evident in a preoccupation with studies of mass communication. Indeed, although a partnership with Mass Communication Studies did not occur in all cases, it has, as will be shown below, remained a dominant theoretical point of reference within the global history of journalism education until at least the last decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

In Chapter Four it was argued that the history of American university-based journalism education had been characterised by internal conflict around the relationship between course content dealing with the production of journalism and teaching that deals with its social context. Such conflict is then often understood to be expressive of a fundamental contradiction in the partnership that exists, within university-based journalism education, between the interests of the news industry and that of the academy. In literature dealing with the international landscape of teaching, it is suggested that these tensions are reproduced in context of the export of the two modes for the American study of journalism to other parts of the world. An exploration of the assimilation of these approaches into different social contexts nevertheless suggests that conflict between industry and academy does not represent the only tension that characterised the global history of such education. Of equal relevance is the disjunction between dominant Western approaches to journalism training and attempts to articulate alternatives to this.

It is possible to identify a series of surges in the establishment of what could be called 'US-style' journalism education in different parts of the world. The first of these waves begins just after World War II, and can be observed in Canada, as well as Western European, industrialised nations such as Germany, the Netherlands and Italy (Gaunt, 1992:60). In Scandinavia, the establishment of journalism education occurred later, in the mid-1960's (Bjornsen et al, 2007:386). In these countries,

the journalism education landscape that emerged was to some extent characterised by the arrangements associated with the American example, in which training in reporting practices exists in a relationship of tension with the academic study of communication (Gaunt, 1992:60).

During this period, the swift circulation in these countries of ideas and practices drawn from American journalism education can no doubt be explained in context of the generally authoritative status of American scholarship and education after the war. Most of these countries were, nevertheless, selective and strategic in what they chose to adopt from the American example, guided in each case by a historically specific set of interests. Although the institutional arrangements that emerged over subsequent decades were based on 'US style' approaches, they were also different from the American example in important ways. It has been argued that in Canada, for example, journalism education developed in a context that was more strongly influenced than in America by this country's ties with Britain and France. Because of such influence, training practices based on the apprenticeship system had become well established and highly valued (Gaunt, 1992:29). When tertiary education in journalism emerged here in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, it did not eliminate this system. It has been noted that this may be one reason why partnerships that formed between universities and the media industry did not become as well established as in the American instance, and did not marginalise the influence of unions and government agencies to the same extent (30). It is also claimed that university-based journalism education was strongly based on the Columbia 'model' which, as we have seen, represented the exception to the rule in America, despite its iconic status in journalism education debates. The Columbia model can be said to privilege a focus on experiential training in the production of journalism to a far greater extent than the American undergraduate system. Three programmes were established immediately after World War II, all of them in central Canada, at Carleton University, the University of Western Ontario and Ryerson Polytechnical Institute respectively (Edge, 2004:4). Each was established as an independent school that associated itself with a host university, and which focused on postgraduate study that combined production-oriented and academic study. This remained the dominant model for Canadian journalism education until the 1970's (Johansen & Dornan, 2003: 77). Also in direct contrast to the American tendency, and mirroring more closely what, as we will see later, occurred in other Anglophone environments such as Britain and Australia, teaching about journalism and communication were addressed in separate institutional contexts. Production-oriented courses were therefore understood to be independent from communication studies in terms of their academic status. Much later, in the mid-1990's, again in parallel to processes that were occurring in Britain and Australia, such programmes did merge. It has nevertheless been argued that such mergers were informed by administrative concerns rather than a need for academic legitimisation (Johansen et al, 2001:472). Significantly, in contrast to the tendency in the US, Canadian programmes did not opt for specialisations in marketing, advertising and public relations. The understanding was that it is the unique social function of journalism that justifies its position within university education. Common communication techniques

alone could not be legitimised in the same way (473). It has been proposed that this was because, in the Canadian context, the commercial emphasis of the partnership between universities and corporate media was tempered by the greater recognition of the state as a stakeholder in journalism education. The suggestion is further that the historical influence of Great Britain and France has ensured a greater recognition of the interests of the state as opposed to those of a 'free' press (Johansen & Dornan, 2003:66). It may be that, in contrast to the American example, the academic legitimacy of production oriented journalism education therefore also did not need to be 'bolstered' through a partnership with Mass Communication Studies. Journalism was already understood to function primarily in service of public rather than commercial interests.

Post-war developments in West Germany can also be said to form part of this first wave of influence of American-style journalism education. Soon after the war, two schools were for example established by the Allies in Munich and Aachen, drawing consciously on the American approach. A distinction was now drawn within the German system of journalism education between *Zeitungswissenschaft* offered in professional schools and *Publizistikwissenschaft* taught in universities (Gaunt, 1992:50). *Publizistik* was heavily influenced by American communications research, and would eventually, in the 1970's, become *Kommunikationswissenschaft*, which translates as communications studies (Hardt, 2001:110; Ruhl, 2004:4). The re-establishment of journalism education within this framework was, however, also shaped by a social context that was specific to Germany at this time. After the war, there was still strong resistance to the concept of systematic university-based journalism education, a response that should be understood in context of Germany's recent experience of state control of journalism as an occupation. Journalism education programmes nevertheless gained support, and was well established by the 1960's. In some respects, the journalism education landscape that emerged was defined in terms similar to the American instance, with a majority of undergraduate programmes and some postgraduate courses combining production training with the study of communication. As in America, this landscape also remained framed by a strong rejection of the idea that university-based education could control access to journalistic work (Froehlich & Holtz-Bacha, 2003:191). In contrast to the US, however, acceptance of the necessity of university-based journalism education for the preparation of journalists remained limited. The assumption persisted that such education could not replace work-based training and, as in the East German instance described earlier, the in-house *voluntariat* has consequently survived as a priority (Froehlich & Holtz-Bacha, 2003:195). As in Britain, the dominant understanding is therefore still that the first and foremost requirement for becoming a journalist is not in-depth tertiary education but rather innate talent supported by some technical training and exposure to work environments (Gaunt, 1992:49). Recent surveys show that only a small minority of German journalists hold degrees associated with such education. Only 3% of journalists have journalism studies-related degrees, and 20% have degrees in the study of communication (Froehlich & Holtz-Bacha, 2003:195). Today, the



largest majority of journalists in Germany continue to enter the profession through the *volontariat* programmes (Gaunt, 1992:52).

A second wave of American influence occurs soon afterwards, in countries defined as ‘Third World’ or ‘developing’ nations. This wave begins in Latin America in the 1950’s and can also be traced from the 1960’s onwards in the Middle East, Asia and Africa. America was not the only nation that was involved in journalism education projects targeting these regions, with other countries such as Britain, France, China and the Soviet Union also being contributors. Although such initiatives were often explicitly framed as contributing to international processes of liberalisation and economic development, commentators argue that they also formed part of strategies for expanding the global authority of the industrialised West. They included the attachment of experts to ‘Third World’ media organisations, the involvement of students from the developing world in courses and attachments based in host countries and the establishment of journalism education programmes in developing nations (Golding, 1977:296). This third strategy, which was most closely associated with American journalism education, was particularly influential. Throughout the developing world, university-based programmes began to emerge, based on the American model of liberal arts courses offered alongside a ‘professional’ component, dealing both with reporting practice and the academic study of journalism. This applied even in the former British colonies, even though on-the-job training was in some cases a well-established tradition (Gaunt, 1992:89; ref). There was, however, in many instances a disjunction between the conceptualisation of journalism within such programmes and the requirements of the social environments in which they were based. This impacted on the role played by the American model, over the next decades, within this second wave of influence. The responses by educators and scholars to this model, and particularly the extent to which they have been able to articulate alternative conceptualisations to it, can be seen to represent a central theme in the histories of journalism education in these countries. A fundamental distinction can be drawn between the different histories based on the degree of authority with which practitioners were able to assimilate American ideas into home-grown approaches to journalism education, designed to draw on local knowledge and to serve local interests.

Discussions of the history of journalism education tend to situate Latin America at one end of this spectrum, as an important example of the authoritative assimilation of academic constructions of journalism originating in the United States. A large number of journalism education programmes, including both production and research-oriented components, developed at this time throughout this region. They became particularly strongly established in more prosperous countries with vigorous newspaper industries, especially in Mexico, Brazil and Argentina. University-based journalism and communication programmes surfaced in these countries as early as the 1930’s, and at this stage was not defined to the same extent by American influence. They initially drew on theory and methodology from a range of social scientific disciplines, and included a strong emphasis on participatory communication, influenced by traditions of activist political engagement such as that of



Paulo Freire and Juan Diaz Bordenave (Zelizer, 2011:6). This changed in the 1960's and 1970's, however, when Mass Communication Studies made its way into these environments. At this point, the theoretical focus moved away from the diverse application of social science to journalism to a broad study of communication, and the goal of teaching shifted from the formation of journalists to that of social communicators. This shift should be understood in context of the growing recognition, within the Latin American context, of the role that journalism and communication more generally can play within the developmental strategies of the state. Significantly, UNESCO played a key role in negotiating the adoption of the Mass Communication Studies approach, and did so because they recognised a role for communication oriented education programmes within government strategies for economic development. This understanding of the role of communication studies was therefore differently framed from the American instance, where corporate interest played a far more significant role, and state interference was minimal. There was, furthermore, a strongly developed consciousness of the relationships of power that defined the flow of ideas and values from the United States to this region. Communication researchers who subscribed to the 'dependencia' theory articulated important debates around the role played by the American journalism education model in reproducing a Western cultural hegemony (Gaunt, 1992:6).

African examples of journalism education are often positioned at the other end of the scale, and described as having developed in context of a relationship of dependency on American and European resources. Commentators point out that journalism education programmes were first established in Anglophone countries in Africa in the late 1950's, while further developments followed in Francophone Africa in the 1960's (Nyamnjoh, 2005:98).<sup>14</sup> The emergence of such programmes coincided with the period in which these states first acquired independence from colonial powers. It is argued that the foundations of such educational systems were profoundly affected by the nature of this historical moment (Gaunt, 1992:135). In the post-independence era, many African countries became acutely aware of the need for growth in their journalism sectors so that such media could play a supportive role in the establishment of new democratic states (Salawu, 2009:81). At the same time, because news organisations had typically been controlled by colonial governments and staffed by so-called 'expatriates', these countries also experienced a vacuum of skill and knowledge about journalistic production and management (Giffard, 1971:26). There was, because of this, a dramatic increase of initiatives facilitated by Western industrial nations, offering African countries resources for journalism education. Although some countries, such as Ghana and Nigeria, responded to the skills and knowledge shortage by quickly establishing their own journalism education institutions, most remained dependent on these external training initiatives. During the 1960's, support in the form of training was supplied to many African countries both by UNESCO and by a range of international press organisations and journalistic foundations (Gaunt, 1992:27). In the early 1960's,

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<sup>14</sup> The first of these programme was established in 1961 in Senegal at the University of Dakar, a UNESCO-supported programme based on the model established at Cairo University (Salawu, 2009:83).

most support was offered in the form of short courses organised by externally based organisations.<sup>15</sup> There was, however, an acknowledgement of the need for locally-based, independent training institutions, and for this reason attention soon turned to the establishment of regional training centres (Gaunt, 1992:136).<sup>16</sup> From the early 1970's onwards, training programmes were also established in universities in a wide range of African countries, including Algeria, Cameroon, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Senegal and Zaire (Murphy & Scotton, 1987:15; Salawu, 2009:83).

In most Anglophone African environments, it is again the influence of American initiatives that have dominated, and it is also here that university-based journalism education became most strongly established. One explanation of the success of the 'US model' is that, in comparison to European approaches to media education, it appeared more attractive to African media educators because of the strong focus on occupational skills combined with an emphasis on the 'professional' (Okigbo & Pratt, 1997:9). It is argued that this is in fact expressive of a broader deprioritisation of the British university model in favour of the American approach to tertiary education, as represented by the land-grant colleges (Salawu, 2009:84). It has also been suggested that American institutions were particularly invested in the successful establishment of journalism education programmes in African universities. Critics have pointed out that the intensive surge of American contributions to higher education in African countries, at this time, was a deliberate response to the termination of the relations of dependence that had existed between such environments and the nations that had previously colonised them. American interventions into educational environments in Africa operated, in other words, to establish alternative relations of dependence, this time with the United States (Murphy & Scotton, 1987). It has been noted that, over the following decades, university-based journalism education programmes remained patterned on the original approaches drawn from America. The environments in which such programmes were based nevertheless lacked the economic resources required by these approaches and remained dependent on a supportive relationship with the West (Gaunt, 1992). There was, for example, little emphasis on locally produced empirical or theoretical research, so that the textbooks circulated in these contexts remained, for a long time, those developed in America and Europe. Mass communication 'effects' theory has remained at the core of African journalism education curricula, and more recently, theory deriving from media sociology (Domatob, 1987:17; Ramaprasad, 2010). Wilbur Schramm's *Mass Media and Development* remained, for example, one of the central resources of such programmes for many decades (Wimmer & Wolf, 2005:8).

This relationship of dependence may be one reason why the growth of journalism education has remained constantly under threat in many African countries. Indeed, only very few fully fledged

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<sup>15</sup> The International Press Institute (IPI) in 1963 started offering courses in Nairobi and Lagos. Successful programmes were also run by UNESCO in Dakar Senegal, Kampala Uganda, and by the IOJ in Guinea, Mali and Ghana (Gaunt, 1992:136-7).

<sup>16</sup> Such centres included the Ghana Institute of Journalism, the Nigerian Institute of Journalism, which acted as regional training centres for Anglophone Africa. French language institutes were established in Cameroon, Senegal, and Zaire, Burkina Faso (Gaunt, 1992:137).

journalism education institutions have been able to establish themselves on the continent as a whole (Okigbo & Pratt, 1987:12). It has been suggested that, within the African context, the circulation of Western models have worked against the development of approaches to journalism education grounded in local conceptualisations of journalistic practice. Such education is seen to operate, in fact, as a form of cultural imperialism, in which Western approaches to journalism are projected onto African environments. American journalism education, in particular, is seen to have operated not just to reproduce technical skills but also to replicate a particular occupational ideology, based in notions of individualism, professional objectivity and independence from the state (Golding, 1977:299-300). These ideas were often seen to clash with local understandings of role of journalism in the developing world (Gaunt, 1992:28).

A third wave of influence can be identified as beginning in the late 1980's and continuing throughout the 1990's, associated with the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, the emergence of a new 'commonwealth' of independent republics, and the privatisation of economic sectors in these regions (Chang, 1997:5). Within many of these emerging democracies, journalism education was not a new phenomenon, with the 'soviet' model existing as a long-standing tradition. Following independence, programmes associated with this model became stigmatised as bastions of communist ideology. There was a recognised need for new forms of journalism education that could produce 'untainted' journalists (Gaunt, 1992:82; Morrison, 1997:27). Western countries responded to this need, setting out to provide the newly independent countries with knowledge about journalism conceptualised from a liberal perspective. Media assistance projects were initiated by a range of foreign media companies, government agencies, professional associations and universities.<sup>17</sup> They offered expertise through the attachment of consultants to media organisations, the establishment of training programmes and training material. All of these projects understood their own purpose as that of assisting democratic development through the introduction of Western journalism practices (Papoutsaki, 2007:6). Each brought contrasting ideas about how to teach journalism, about the role of journalism within a democracy and about the kind of media system journalism should be designed to support. This led to inevitable competition between the different initiatives. In Russia, for example, enormous financial resources were made available both from the United States and European governments for the 'development' of journalism, resulting in what has been called a "war for the hearts and minds" of Russian journalists and journalism (Morrison, 1997:27).

Projects originating in the United States were nevertheless particularly well represented within this wave of influence. In 1990 alone, at least eighty American organisations launched aid projects that had the goal of sharing the 'US model' of journalism with newly democratic countries in

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<sup>17</sup> The list of organisations that had, by 1990, sent aid to media in Central and Eastern Europe included the U.S. Information Agency, the American Society of Newspaper Editors, the Voice of America, Charter 77, the German Marshall Fund, the International Federation of Newspaper Publishers, the Soros Foundation, Reuters, Internews, the Myers Foundation Australia, UNESCO, Trans-Atlantic Dialogue on European Broadcasting, the Center for War, Peace, and the News Media, the U.S. Agency for International Development, the BBC, the European Journalism Centre, and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (Napoli, 2002:261).

this region (Gaunt, 1992:82-4; King, 2008:175). Critics suggest that the central assumption informing these projects was that professional training in skills and knowledge about journalistic production would best serve American interests abroad. It would do so by contributing to the terms that would come to define the conceptualisation of an open and free society and by helping to lay the foundation for the kind of media systems that would emerge (Chang, 1997:5; Morrison, 1997:27). The dominant pattern within training programmes was therefore represented by content associated with an American conceptualisation of journalism. In descriptions of such training it is claimed that programmes operate to reproduce the strategic rituals of journalistic objectivity, presented as the pinnacle of professional journalism (Napoli, 2002:261; Papoutsaki, 2007:6). It is noted, however, that there was a particular emphasis on investigative reporting, and on the more specialised research techniques associated with such journalism (Morrison, 1997:27). In Chapter Four it was argued that the American conceptualisation of investigative journalism grew at least partly from consciousness of the limitations of the occupational codes of journalistic objectivity, particularly in context of the ease with which these codes had been assimilated into the 'management' of news by government and corporate interests [see pg. 118]. The assumption was nevertheless still that the approaches to journalism within such training was of universal relevance, and the liberal values that underpinned them were necessary and essential to journalism itself (Papoutsaki, 2007:6).

Such courses were, however, being taught to journalists whose practice had been shaped by very different traditions of journalism, in a different social environment (Morrison, 1997:33). It has been pointed out, in this respect, that the context out of which the conceptualisation of a journalism of 'objectivity' emerged was that of a democracy operating within strongly developed capitalist economy. This context differs sharply from those found in the emerging democracies in which American approaches to journalism education were now circulating. In such environments, the objectivity paradigm and the ideals of a free and independent press were greeted with some scepticism (Napoli, 2002:262). Because the emphasis of the training tended to be normative, focusing on what 'ought' to be rather than engaging with existing practice, there was, however, little room to negotiate around the adjustment of these ideas in ways that might be more relevant to local conditions (Morrison, 1997:33; Papoutsaki, 2007:6). Commentators nevertheless suggest that the impact of Western European conceptualisations of journalism may have the more lasting impact in these regions. It is pointed out, in this respect, that journalism as it was practiced before the institutionalisation of communism in Central and Eastern Europe had far more in common with Western European conceptualisations than it does with the Anglo-American model. Within such a conceptualisation, the idea that journalists are directly involved in the shaping of knowledge is far more acceptable than can be allowed for within the 'journalism of objectivity' (Hiebert & Gross, 2003:263-265). At the same time, as will become apparent in the discussion below, challenges of the notion of objective knowledge would soon also become more widely applicable to journalism education worldwide.

### 5.3 The third phase: journalism education in the age of globalisation

#### 5.3.1 *The global expansion of journalism education*

Literature dealing with patterns in journalism education suggest that, in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, rapid expansion of university-based programmes has become a worldwide trend (Froehlich & Holtz-Bacha, 2003; Hume, 2004; Foote, 2008; Deuze, 2008). It has been suggested that in some countries (such as Finland, Spain, the United States, Canada, South Korea, Egypt, Kenya, Argentina, the Gulf States, Britain and Australia), the emphasis is turning to university-level education only. In others (France, Germany, India, Indonesia, China, Brazil, Nigeria, Turkey and South Africa), a ‘mixed’ system is emerging, consisting both of university-based programmes and other tertiary-level arrangements, such as that of stand-alone ‘schools’ (Deuze, 2008:270).<sup>18</sup> A growing number of entry-level journalists are graduates of these tertiary initiatives, and are drawn, in particular, from university-based programmes (Deuze, 2000:138; Hume, 2004:4).

Within this changing landscape, journalism education based in Anglophone environments of North America and Western Europe is becoming less dominant, at least in terms of the number of programmes that they represent. The on-line database of the World Journalism Education Census (last updated in 2010) lists 2338 programmes worldwide, of which 691 are based in North America, (with 481 of these in the United States), 645 in Asia,<sup>19</sup> 530 in Europe, 214 in Africa 205 in South America, and 53 in Oceania (WJEC, 2010). Although American institutions as a national percentage within this overall profile is still the most substantial, they are becoming less significant in relation to the continued expansion of programmes elsewhere, particularly in China, India, Russia, and Brazil.<sup>20</sup> The number of courses in China, for example, is claimed to be growing by more than one hundred per year (Foote, 2008:132; Self, 2008). It may therefore be that it is becoming of less relevance to interpret patterns in the international landscape of journalism education only in terms of a flow of influence from a Western industrial ‘centre’ to a third world ‘periphery’. Of greater value may be the emergence of shared global circumstances for the formation of journalism education.

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<sup>18</sup> Within certain of these environments, such as UK, Australia and South Africa, journalism education established itself primarily within ‘polytechnics’ or ‘technikons’, but the distinction between these technically oriented institutions and universities appears to be eroding, particularly in context of their conversion to ‘Universities of technology’.

<sup>19</sup> The figures presented in the WJEC census are not a definitive representation of actual patterns in journalism education. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the number of programmes based in India and China, for example, are far higher than noted in the census. Guo Zhongshi estimates that, in 2006, there were more than 600 education programmes dealing with journalism or ‘related fields’ in China, counting undergraduate programmes alone. The WJEC census puts the number of Chinese journalism-specific programmes in 2010 at 104 (Zhongshi, 2010:18).

<sup>20</sup> It may be significant to these patterns that Brazil, Russia, India and China are referred to in economic jargon as the BRIC countries, and that it is estimated that, by 2050, their combined economic strength will outweigh that of the current richest countries of the world. Currently they account for more than 40 % of the world’s population. In 2009, the leaders of the BRIC countries held their first summit, and issued a declaration calling for the establishment of a ‘multipolar’ world view.’

It is often suggested in journalism education literature that the establishment of such shared circumstances is framed by the global emergence of an economic order embedded in a neo-liberal paradigm, in which market imperatives govern all sectors of society. The global expansion of journalism education is also understood, within such discussion, to be influenced by the shift from industrial to 'post-industrial' economies, in which the centrality of the production of material goods and services is replaced with that of the production of symbolic goods. It is linked, more particularly, to the emergence of an 'information society' or 'knowledge society' in which the production and distribution and exploitation of knowledge becomes a key economic activity. Commentators argue that, in context of these processes, corporate interest has come to play a far more significant role in shaping the identities of institutions that concern themselves with knowledge, including journalism and universities. Such influence is understood to have impacted on approaches to the definition of knowledge produced within these institutions, and in particular to have compromised the ideal of knowledge produced in service of the public good. As we have seen in Chapter Four, concerns about the impact of commercial interest on the identity of journalistic practice have been part of debates about journalism education from the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century onwards. Disquiet about such impact nevertheless intensifies at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, with a particular emphasis on the implications of economic trends such as that of privatisation, deregulation, liberalisation and the globalisation of markets. The general perception is that, in context of these trends, media across the world is striving more and more to address audiences as consumers rather than citizens, which inevitably impacts on the professional identity of journalistic practice and on journalism education itself (Mosco, 2009; Josephi, 2010:256).

It is, however, only recently that such discussions have identified academia itself as an arena that is inescapably defined by social influence. Universities have tended to be positioned within journalism education debates as untainted, in direct contrast to the compromised spaces of journalistic practice. One exception to this rule has been the acknowledgement of the role played by the 'professionalisation' of universities, which is understood to have replaced the ideal of knowledge in service of society with that of 'expertise' for the benefit of 'clients' (Carey, 1978). Professionalisation is nevertheless still viewed in terms of the influence of external forces on the 'pure' space of the university. More recently, however, concern has increased about the extent to which universities themselves operate as resources to be strategically managed in accordance with dominant political and economic interests (Turner, 2000:357). Within such discussions, the reorganisation of universities to accommodate corporate need is a point of particular concern. It is suggested that, by the 1990's, the partnership between universities and the state had weakened internationally, with substantial cutbacks in state funding as well as a general decline in public support for universities. There has, at the same time, been a growing presence of private investment within universities. Journalism education scholars point out that the responsibilities of universities have consequently become defined more in terms of principles of private enterprise than those of



public interest (Reese, 1999; Rush et al, 2004; McVicker, 2005; Frith & Meech, 2007; Jones, 2009; Adam, 2009). Scholars writing about journalism education also point out that the shifting role of knowledge within the global economic order has important implications for the function and status of the media, and that this has impacted on the way in which universities teach about media. The literature refers here to the concept of 'mediatisation', in which societies are understood to be fundamentally reshaped by changes taking place in the global media environment. The suggestion is that media have come to play a central role, both in industrialised and developing countries, within social and political institutions in general and that the mass media industry has, in this context, emerged as a key sector of the global economy and in fact of social interaction in general (Thompson, 1995). This trend is thought to explain why the study of media, and journalism as part of this, has now become an essential part of university education, and why even the most prestigious universities across the world are now prioritising such programmes in their effort to attract prospective students and financial investment (Nordenstreng, 2008:3; Nolan, 2008:738).

The way in which journalism education in different parts of the world have responded to these global processes is, however, necessarily dependent on more localised conditions. Of particular significance, as an indicator of difference, have been continued discrepancies in the political and economic conditions that exist in different regions of the world. Gaunt, writing in the early 1990's, suggested that a 'two tier' system might be emerging within the international journalism education landscape, characterised by an ever-widening gap between programmes based in economically advantaged environments and those that are poor. He understood the first tier to be based primarily within industrially advanced countries and the second in developing countries but also suggested that aspects of 'first tier' education can be traced in the more resourced environments of the Third World (Gaunt, 1992:161). Almost two decades later, Josephi also identifies a split between journalism education in economically advantaged environments and those that are resource poor. She points out, however, that it is important to keep in mind the changing relations of power that exist between these two environments, since this has implications for the shared terms that come to define the international landscape of journalism education. Because of such relations, media assistance programmes and curricular exchanges driven by institutions based in the industrial West are still currently positioned to make powerful interventions into the approaches that are adopted to journalism education in developing countries (Josephi, 2010:254).<sup>21</sup> Josephi points out, at the same time, that, within the contemporary global economic landscape, it is not only Western style democratic environments that are characterised by affluence and stability. Wealthier nations such as Singapore, China, Russia and Brazil do not exist to the same degree in relationships of financial dependence

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<sup>21</sup> Hume notes in 2007 that at that time U.S. government and private agencies had spent more than \$600 million on media development in Eastern Europe and former Soviet republics (Hume, 2007:9). It has also recently been estimated that more than a billion dollars is spent on media assistance each year by non-US organisations (Becker, 2003).



within the global economy, and are therefore better placed to define their own approaches to journalism education (Joseph, 2010:254-55).

With these arguments in mind the discussion, below, has been organised around the assumption that it is possible to trace three different historical strands of journalism education within the contemporary landscape of such teaching. Aspects of these strands may surface in different parts of the world, and more than one history can also exist within the same social context. Each strand is, nevertheless, primarily based in its own distinct economic and political context. The first strand is found in industrially advanced environments that define themselves strongly in terms of principles of liberal democracy, and is also strongly associated with Anglophone contexts. Aspects of this strand can also be traced in more resourced environments in some 'developing' countries. The second strand emerges primarily in 'developing' countries, and these environments are often also characterised by transitional political identities such as that of 'emerging democracies'. The third is based in affluent societies that are internationally regarded as environments characterised by limited media freedom. It is acknowledged, within the discussion, that the concept of 'media freedom' is in itself problematic and that accommodation of the concept of freedom has played an important role in all three strands of journalism education history. As will become apparent, each of these strands have been characterised by conflict around the teaching of theoretical knowledge about the social role of journalism education, particular with regards to its relationship to the concept of freedom. In each case, such conflict has been articulated in very different terms. At the same time, the three historical strands tend to share the same approach to the teaching of production-oriented knowledge about skills and craft competencies. They share, in particular, a commitment to the reproduction of a 'Western liberal' model of such journalism, irrespective of the approaches to journalistic practice that can be identified within the environments in which they are based.

In order to make sense of these patterns, the discussion will attempt to demonstrate that these three histories are embedded in the broader, shared narrative, described above, concerning the shifting conceptualisation of the social function of knowledge. It will be argued that, within all three strands, debates about journalism education are framed by struggles around the definition of authoritative knowledge, in which opposing conceptualisations of such knowledge stand in tension with each other. Furthermore, within all three histories, the role played by a critical interest within the negotiation of opposing conceptualisations of knowledge has become marginalised. Such marginalisation can be traced back to developments, during the mid and late 20<sup>th</sup> century, in the broader narrative of the conceptualisation of knowledge. In each case, however, these oppositions are constituted differently. In the first strand the emphasis is on an opposition between knowledge as the negotiated construction of meaning, and knowledge as objective and empirical certainty in which truth is guaranteed by freedom from social influence. In the second strand, the focus is on an opposition between knowledge as socially purposive, dedicated to principles of justice and peace, and knowledge in which truth is guaranteed by freedom from social influence, and becomes associated with the principle of a 'free

flow of information'. In the third, the emphasis is on an opposition between knowledge as a market commodity and knowledge as a guarantor of liberation from oppression. As the discussion will demonstrate, these distinctions must be understood in context of the different positions that the three strands occupy within the broader global narrative about knowledge.

### 5.3.2 *Journalism education in liberal democracies with advanced free market economies*

In Chapter Four, it was explained that in America, the establishment of journalism as a university-based subject has traditionally been justified by basing such teaching within liberal arts programmes. This was thought to provide teaching with the intellectual resources which would allow it to strengthen the professional identity of journalism, as a practice dedicated to public service, with a commitment to the facilitation of democratic process. It was, however, its partnership with Mass Communication Studies that provided such education with the intellectual domain from which to engage directly with the academic study of journalism. In Chapter Three it was explained that Mass Communication Studies was established in the 1950's, at a time when the dominant conceptualisation of social scientific knowledge was informed by the ideals of positivism, scientism and functionalism. The resulting tradition of research tended to marginalise the critical analysis of journalistic practice and the institutions in which it is based. Research about journalism was, instead, understood to be in service of institutions of power. It has been proposed within debates about journalism education that Mass Communication Studies was therefore not a suitable intellectual environment within which to pursue the professionalising role that American journalism education claimed for itself. The paradigm in which such scholarship was based did not, in particular, provide such education with resources for strengthening the identity of journalism as a "democratic craft" (Carey, 2000:21).

As we have seen earlier in this chapter, much of the journalism education that established itself between the 1950's and late 1980's, both in industrially advanced and 'developing' contexts, was strongly influenced by the American example. In these environments it is possible to distinguish a similar institutionalised relationship between instruction in the practices of journalism and the study of academic or scientific knowledge about journalism. In other Western countries with advanced industrial economies and liberal political identities, resistance to the introduction of university-based journalism education remained high until the 1990's. When such teaching finally emerged, it also became housed primarily in an undergraduate context, integrated with liberal arts programmes. The relationship of production oriented courses with scholarship about media tended, however, to be constituted differently to the American model. One reason for this was that the scholarship about media that became most strongly associated with teaching was that of Cultural Studies, a field that emerged at a very different moment to Mass Communication in the disciplinary history of universities. By the late 1960's, particularly in Europe, critical theorisations of academic knowledge had become well established within the academy, offering forceful alternatives to the ideal of positivist scientific thought. Because Cultural Studies was informed by such theory, it foregrounded

the importance of relativity and subjectivity and prioritised the critical analysis of relations of power (Goldman, 1990; Zelizer, 2004a; Thornham & Sullivan, 2004: 717). As such, it represented an important alternative to Mass Communication, as an intellectual domain from which educators could engage with the potential of journalism as a professional practice dedicated to public service and democracy.

The role that Cultural Studies could play in partnering with journalism education was not, however, to be explored for at least two decades. In contrast to Mass Communication, it developed independently from the production-oriented teaching of journalism, and instead became linked to more general academic courses in media education. The central premise of such education was the achievement of critical media literacy, accomplished through the analysis of media, and then predominantly through textual analysis (Waiting, 1998:139). In the United Kingdom, media education courses based in this premise developed from the 1970's onwards, particularly in further education (FE) colleges.<sup>22</sup> These courses expanded rapidly in the 1980's not just in context of tertiary education, but also in secondary schools (Thornham & Sullivan, 2004:717). In the 1980's, along with Cultural Studies as a scholarly field, such courses became an international phenomenon, and then often within institutions of higher education (Hirst, 2009:86). Media education courses based within the Cultural Studies paradigm strongly emphasised the critical analysis of media texts, but nevertheless did include instances of production-oriented teaching. This was true even in the case of the early British examples, at a time when a focus on practical instruction was still powerfully resisted within the context of academic study. The rationale for the inclusion of such elements was, however, not that of preparing students for work in newsrooms but rather that it helped to demystify the processes through which meaning is produced within media texts, and in this way generally encouraged critical media literacy. Such courses therefore defined themselves in opposition to the vocationally oriented teaching of journalism, which was understood to necessarily reproduce and naturalise the dominant institutions and practices of mainstream journalism (Waiting, 1998:139).

In many of the environments in which such media education courses became established, vocationally oriented journalism education also emerged in the early 1970's. It developed, however, on its own trajectory, separately from the reflective consideration of scholarship about media or journalism. An important factor for the growth of such teaching was the reform of higher education policy, at this time, which enabled vocationally based degrees to expand dramatically (Turner, 2000:360). Over the next 20 years, vocational journalism education became particularly strongly established in Anglophone environments, such as that of the United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa. In most of these countries, such education tended to be based not in universities but rather in 'community colleges' or 'polytechnics', which placed a strong emphasis on

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<sup>22</sup> Further education (FE), in the United Kingdom, refers to post-secondary programmes distinct from the education offered in universities. Such education mostly takes place in FE or 'community' colleges, and tend to be vocationally oriented. Within the current institutional context, they teach both diploma- and degree-level courses.

technical training (Henningham, 1986:9; Morrison, 1997:29; Greenberg, 2007:289; Thornham & Sullivan, 2004:720). There were a few attempts, during this period, to establish university-based undergraduate courses, but until the 1990's such projects had little long-term success (Hirst, 2009:86). Where journalism education was offered in higher education, it was as the exception to the rule, and tended to take place at postgraduate level only and then mostly in context of diplomas or certificate-based courses (Aldridge & Evetts, 2005:551). In the United Kingdom, a degree-level postgraduate programme in journalism education was launched at Cardiff University in 1970, the first of its kind to be offered in Europe. The Cardiff school was, however, primarily concerned with practical training and also remained the only higher education offering in journalism in the UK for a long time (Greenberg, 2007:291). In South Africa, as we will see in Chapter Six, an undergraduate programme was also established in 1969 at Rhodes University, and became closely associated with Cultural Studies as a scholarly domain. This arrangement was, again, an exception to the rule within the South African journalism education landscape for at least the next two decades.

This separation between academic 'education' and technical 'training' must be understood in context of ongoing resistance, from tertiary institutions, to the idea of teaching about the production of journalism in tandem with its scholarly study (Cushion, 2007:44). The rationale for combining such teaching, as this emerged in America and then circulated globally, has traditionally been that it enhances the professional status of journalism, with the 'professional' defined in terms of a dedication to public service. In the United Kingdom in particular, the notion that journalism could be regarded as a profession in this way continued to be greeted with scepticism. The Royal Commission on the Press was still arguing against professional qualifications in journalism in the late 1970's, on the basis that there existed no common core of knowledge or cognitive base on which such education could be founded (Aldridge & Evetts, 2005: 553). Jeremy Tunstall criticised the American approach in these terms, arguing that it had therefore been a mistake to establish a tradition that combined practical training and scholarly education (Henningham, 1986:9).

There was, similarly, a resistance to such arrangements within the institutions of journalism itself. Employers remained dismissive of the notion not just of qualifications in journalism, but more generally of the value of any university education for journalists (Hanna & Sanders, 2007:405; Frith & Meech, 2007:139). This response was particularly strongly articulated in the United Kingdom where, in the 1970's, editors still prioritised the recruitment of young people fresh out of secondary schooling. Recruits had either already received vocational training from Further Education colleges, or could be sponsored to do so (Boyd-Barrett, 1970:101). Until the late 1970's, the National Council for the Training of Journalists (NCTJ), which represented the regional and local press companies as well as the National Union of Journalists, remained officially opposed to professional qualifications in general, and first degrees in journalism in particular. Their policy was, instead, to award accreditation to vocationally oriented journalism education programmes based in Further Education colleges, and to limit the education of recruits to these programmes (Hanna & Sanders, 2007:405; Cushion,

2007:422). The expectation remained, furthermore, that even within such training the focus should not be on journalistic production itself, and certainly not on those aspects of such production that require advanced competencies. Teaching programmes should, rather, emphasise basic skills such as typing, shorthand and familiarity with aspects of media law that could be regarded of practical relevance to the daily business of reporting the news (Phillips, quoting Curran, 1985: 233). The assumption remained, in other words, that journalism is a craft, best taught on the job.

It is nevertheless possible to discern a gradual shift, between the 1960's and 1990's, in the relationship between journalism and the academy in these countries that, eventually, made it inevitable that journalism would become accepted as a graduate occupation. Of particular importance were changes in the social status of journalism as a prospective career path. Already in the 1960's, journalism was increasingly regarded as middle class and therefore as a desirable arena of employment for university graduates. In the United Kingdom, many students from prestigious universities who used to aspire to graduate professions such as law, finance, engineering and medicine were turning instead to journalism (Cole, 2003:54). It was, however, not just a change in the image of journalism that ensured its establishment as a graduate occupation, but also the economic expansion in the 1960's both of journalism and universities. Because of the massification of higher education, the sheer number of graduates available within the job market made their employment in journalism inevitable (Cole, 2003:54). Because of the positive economic climate within journalism, such graduates were also in a good position to persuade editors, who may previously have been biased against their employment, to give them opportunity for work. It would seem, then, that by the late 1960's, resistance amongst media managers to the employment of graduates was weakening (Delano, 2000:263; Frith, & Meech, 2007). By this time, some of the larger media companies were taking part in the annual 'milk round', looking for graduates to fill positions in newsrooms. The 'milk round' is the name popularly given in the UK to recruitment programmes that first started in the mid-1960's, in which employers from a range of industrial and commercial sectors visit universities once a year to give presentations and interview new graduates, and so deliver jobs to the university 'doorstep'. It has been suggested that such employers had come to recognise the value of the liberal arts degree in providing students with analytical skills and cultural capital that prepare them broadly for middle class work (Thornham & Sullivan, 2004:721). Within the media sector the focus remained, however, on students with a general background in the liberal arts rather than those with a specialised qualification in journalism (Cole, 2003:54). University-based courses of this kind were rejected, for example, on the grounds that the job market for journalists was not large enough to warrant their establishment (Aldridge & Evetts, 2005:553). Also, despite the increased readiness of media managers to employ graduates with a liberal arts background in newsrooms, they continued to publically express scepticism about the wisdom of doing so. It was routinely argued, for example, that university graduates of any kind would be out of touch with the interests of a less educated

readership, and were also more likely to reject mundane reporting tasks and demand higher salaries (Boyd-Barrett, 1977:105).

The establishment of journalism as a graduate occupation was further consolidated, in the 1980's, by changes taking place in higher education policy which gave vocational training colleges the status of institutions of Higher Learning. British and Australian 'polytechnics' became 'universities of technology'. Similar changes took place in New Zealand in the 1990's (Hirst, 2009:83-9). It is thought that this shift in identity placed vocationally oriented institutions in direct competition with traditional universities, both with regards to prospective students and financial support. The perception was now also that students looked for a vocational element in a degree that would improve their chances at employment (Greenberg, 2007:291). This situation prompted the expansion of vocationally oriented teaching in both of these institutional environments. The curricula developed in this context also became strongly influenced by perceived expectations of potential employers (Frith & Meech, 2007:143; Hanna & Sanders, 2007:406).

During the 1990's, it became apparent that specialised journalism education as a whole was being absorbed into higher education (Greenberg, 2007:291). The demand for university-based programmes in journalism, offered at degree-level, could no longer be resisted. Media companies were running down their in-house training systems, where these existed, and looked to tertiary education to fill the resulting gap. Employers now expected entry level journalists to come to their first job having a strong understanding of the fundamentals of journalistic production, based on such education (Greenberg, 2007:291; Phillips, 2005:234). This became true even in the United Kingdom, where, as we have seen, work-based training had previously been well established. In 1991, two polytechnics launched the first undergraduate single-subject programmes to be offered in journalism in this country (Hanna & Sanders, 2007:406). By the late 1990's, about 3000 students enrolled annually in such degrees, and this was only a small proportion of those who had applied (Delano, 2000:261-272). In 2007, a total of 633 undergraduate degrees related to journalism were listed in the United Kingdom. Admittedly, many of these only included a small component of instruction in journalism practice, but the 41 programmes that were members of the Association of Journalism Educators contained a substantial practical component (Greenberg, 2007:291). At the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, journalism as it is practiced in industrially advanced contexts was also experiencing changes that tended to consolidate the growing importance of university-based research and teaching. The impact of 'new' technologies has been of particular significance, especially in context of the growing importance of on-line media and the phenomenon of 'convergence'. Media managers now increasingly expected universities to produce knowledge that engages with the implications of such change (Hallin, 2009:33).

At the same time, despite this growing acceptance of university-based journalism education, such teaching still needed to find partners amongst existing disciplines in order to gain academic accreditation. Journalism education was still not thought to be informed by a core body of specialised



knowledge that could represent an adequate basis for the university-based study of journalism. Even outside the context of vocational teaching, the study of journalism was, in itself, not regarded as an established field in its own right. John Hartley (1995) explains that journalism as a field of study was underdeveloped as an academic discipline. He describes it as a “terra nullus” of epistemology, an “uninhabited territory of knowledge” which, as such, remained vulnerable to colonisation by other, more advanced fields and disciplines such as that of Cultural Studies (39). Within the new undergraduate degrees that emerged in the 1990’s, it is therefore not surprising that production oriented courses were offered in tandem with courses in Cultural Studies or Media Studies rather than courses in Journalism Studies. Because of this association with Cultural Studies, critical media literacy represented a key rationale for the absorption of journalism education into universities. It is noted to have been the dominant justification for the university-based teaching of journalism not just in the United Kingdom but also Australia, France, Germany, Netherlands, Scandinavia, Switzerland and Japan (Waiting, 1998:129). Within such arrangements, production-oriented courses in journalism existed alongside those in the critical study of media. The assumption was that the former modules provided vocational competencies, while Cultural Studies or Media Studies provided the ‘academic’ or ‘degree level’ content (Turner, 2000:360).

Within the institutions of journalism itself, distrust of specialised journalism education also persisted. Employers may have become more open to the idea of employing graduates, but remained suspicious of specialised education for journalists (Delano, 2000:268). Such courses were, firstly, regarded as vocationally inadequate, failing to provide students with the fundamentals of journalistic practice. The emphasis on critical media literacy was regarded with particular scepticism. On both counts, journalism education was thought to fail to prepare students for the hard realities of ‘life on the beat’ (Frith & Meech, 2007:137; Cushion, 2007:422). From the 1980’s onwards, both in the United Kingdom and Australia, such perspectives were often expressed in newspapers in context of attacks on the legitimacy of media education (Thornham & Sullivan, 2004:717). When university-based courses teaching the production of journalism became a reality in the 1990’s, it also became a target of such commentary, and was in fact often confused with more general media education courses (Phillips, 2008:228). Martin Barker, in a study (2001) of such reports in British newspapers, notes that media education is repeatedly criticised for luring students with false claims regarding the employability of media studies graduates, when in fact such teaching is lacking in practical and vocational relevance (213). The assumption, throughout, is that education of this kind could only legitimately exist if it prepared students for employment in journalism practice (Phillips, 2008:228).

Commentators (Zelizer, 2004a; Greenberg, 2007) have pointed out that the relationship between the vocational and academic components of such teaching programmes have also tended to be fraught with tension. This was, of course, similarly true of the American example, where the tension between Mass Communication Studies and the production-oriented teaching was understood to be one between a commitment to rigorous academic standards and the requirements of preparing



students adequately for the practical realities of employment in journalism. In context of the partnership with Cultural Studies, this tension has again been acknowledged, but it is argued that the critical stance of this field, and in particular its emphasis on subjectivity and relativity, introduced an additional element of conflict. It is pointed out, in particular, that the 'Anglo-American' model of journalism, which has tended to be the main point of reference for vocational courses, bases its legitimacy as a profession on a positivist ideal of knowledge. When the preparation of students for such journalistic practice was partnered with courses in Cultural Studies, two conflicting approaches to knowledge became juxtaposed with each other.

A much-cited instance of the resulting conflict is the so-called 'Media Wars', a dispute that took place amongst journalism educators and media scholars in Australia in the late 1990's. The catalyst for these debates was a series of articles written by Keith Windschuttle, a former journalist and academic known for his defence of traditional empirical approaches to the study of history against the influence of postmodernism. Windschuttle argued against Cultural Studies as an intellectual frame for the preparation of journalism graduates, calling it the "central disorganising principle in journalism education" (Windschuttle, 2000). He argued that the critical analysis of journalism, as it is conducted from a Cultural Studies perspective, undermines journalism's empirical commitment to serving its audiences through truthful reporting. A Cultural Studies analysis therefore challenges objectivity as one of the foundational principles on which journalism education is based (Windschuttle, 2000:157). Windschuttle's commentary sparked intense public debate both in and outside Australia, both from journalism educators who supported his position and Cultural Studies academics (Strelitz & Steenveld, 1998; Lumby, 1999; Hartley 1999; Tomaselli & Shepperson, 2000 ) reasserting the value of the field within the context of journalism education. It has been pointed out, however, that despite lengthy debate, this did not result in the identification of common ground. Instead, the discussion remained polarised between two incommensurable arguments about the importance of preparing students for the practical 'realities' of employment versus that of encouraging critical literacy (Turner, 2000; Nolan 2008).

It has been suggested that the tensions expressed within such public debates, both in academia and in the press, form part of deep-set struggles around the conceptualisation of knowledge. These struggles relate, in particular, to the implications of a critical paradigm for approaches to the construction of social meaning. The attacks on media education, in the British and Australian media, can in fact be seen to form part of general public anxiety about the influence within the humanities of theory based in a critical paradigm. This applies, in particular, to the challenges that such theory poses for the conceptualisation of knowledge about the 'real' (Turner, 2000:355). Barker points out that the newspaper reports that formed part of his study (see above) did not only find the production-specific components of media education programmes vocationally inadequate, but also claimed that academic components lacked the intellectual rigour of a 'real discipline'. He suggest that the skepticism in these reports about the 'employability' of media graduates operates as a subtext for a

deeper unease about the social and cultural change represented by the rise of this paradigm in tertiary education (216).

The literature suggests, however, that critical and vocational components of such teaching continue to exist in parallel, without impacting greatly on each other. Critical theory did not, in other words, substantially transform the conventional approach to the teaching of journalistic practice. It has been argued that, by the 1990's, when these components were finally combined in a single curriculum, the transformative potential of critical media theory had already become compromised by the processes of its institutionalisation within the academy. One proposal that has been made, in this respect, is that although arguments for 'critical' education and 'vocational' training may seem to oppose each other, they have both become subsumed within an overarching discourse of 'employability'. Media education has gained a new 'respectability', adding to the general value of the liberal arts degree in preparing students for middle class work (Thornham & Sullivan, 2004:721). Hartley suggests, in fact, that by the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, degrees in journalism and media studies had begun to replace the liberal arts in context of this educational purpose. The advantage of such a degree over the more traditional options within the liberal arts is that students could gain not only skills in critical analysis and cultural capital but also practical competencies that were applicable within a wide range of occupational contexts, both within and outside the media (Hartley, 2008:43).

It could be argued, then, that reference to a juxtaposition between the interests of industry and academia, within debates about the role of scholarship in this particular history of journalism education, may have outlived its usefulness. Rather than contrasting the reflective and critical potential of academic environments with the harsh (economic) 'reality' of journalistic practice, it may be more important to consider how both journalism and the university have become inescapably defined by social influence. Critics (Reese, 1999; Thornham & Sullivan, 2004; Nolan, 2008) propose, in this context, that journalism education debates need to adopt a framework in which the distinction between the critical and the vocational discourse collapse. In the discussion below, it will become apparent that this argument is of equal relevance within the other two histories of journalism education, even if the relationship between critical and instrumental approaches to knowledge plays itself out quite differently.

### *5.3.3 Journalism education in 'economically disadvantaged' environments*

It is often pointed out in journalism education literature that programmes based in economically vulnerable locations are characterised by struggles around access to teaching resources and by concerns about the need to develop 'self-reliance'. Reference is made, in particular, to a lack of qualified staff, teaching material and appropriate technology (Domatob, 1978:17; Bofo, 1991; Hume, 2004). We saw, however, that critics also explain such resource problems in terms of relationships of economic dependence between industrially 'advanced' nations and the 'developing' world. It is argued that an interest in the reproduction of such relations informed the export of American-style

education to developing countries from the late 1950's onwards, in context of the emergence of former colonies as independent nations. Such an interest is also understood as key to the circulation of Western-style approaches to journalism education in former communist countries in the 1990's. These arguments suggest that one should be cautious of assuming that problems with resources can be addressed, as noted in the introduction to this chapter, through a process of 'catching up' with journalism education as it exists in economically advantaged environments.

Commentators have argued that relations of economic dependence have been further consolidated in context of more recent processes of liberalisation and deregulation that have opened up poorer societies to the impact of global economic imperatives (Schiffrin, 2010:1). A relationship is traced, furthermore, between such processes and external interventions by Western industrial nations into the approach to governance that is adopted within such countries. It has been pointed out, for example, that the political identity of many poor societies is inevitably shaped by their dependence on funds from international financial institutions such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), as well as global development networks such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). As a condition of receiving funds, such countries become committed to programmes that aim to ensure participatory and accountable governance and media assistance often forms part of this arrangement (Josephi, 2010:255).<sup>23</sup> It is suggested that the emphasis within media assistance on the establishment of democratic governance can also be interpreted as an interest in the formation and maintenance of a political climate conducive to private enterprise (Kariithi, 2005). The interests that drive such educational ventures are, in other words, not wholly explained by a commitment to principles of democracy, social justice and a strong civil society.

Within many of these environments, the financial vulnerability of journalism education programmes has been exacerbated by the increased withdrawal of state support for public institutions, such as that of both media and tertiary education. It has been noted that the resulting intensification of funding problems often impact severely on the quality of journalism education (Wimmer & Wolf, 2005:7). In this context it should not be surprising that there has been a consolidation of unevenness in the regional distribution of journalism education in these environments, with a strong prioritisation of metropolitan areas. In Africa, for example, there continues to be massive gaps between the development of journalism education in urban and rural areas respectively (Wimmer & Wolf, 2005:7).

In Chapter Three it was explained that it is possible to trace a long history of critical consciousness within international debates regarding the implications of uneven global relations of power for the role played by the strengthening of journalistic practice in developing countries. Such consciousness surfaced most clearly in the 1970's as part of the international recognition of more general disparities in the relations of power that have framed global processes of 'modernisation'. We have seen that UNESCO played an important role in facilitating discussions about the implications of

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<sup>23</sup> Josephi cites Cambodia, Kenya and Tanzania as well as Romania and Croatia as countries in which journalism education has been strongly defined by such processes (Josephi, 2010:255).

such analysis for the field of communication, particularly in context of debates about the New World Information Order (NWICO). Arguments emerged, particularly from the Latin American context, which challenged the assumption that it was possible, within existing relations of power, to establish a 'free flow' of information or knowledge between 'industrialised' and 'developing' nations. Such arguments had especially important implications for the critical analysis of the kind of communication strategies that should be promoted in developing countries, and as part of this also for approaches to the advancement of journalism in these environments.

In context of the NWICO debates it was proposed that strategies to strengthen journalism in the developing world should not operate to reproduce reporting practices as they exist in advanced capitalist societies. The 'adversarial' approach of an independent, commercial press based on a commitment to critical and objective reporting was deemed particularly inappropriate. Journalism should, rather, define its identity in terms of its potential to play a socially purposive and supportive role in relation to social development (Tunstall, 1977:12). Inspired by such arguments, UNESCO assisted in the articulation of strategies designed to strengthen approaches to journalism informed by a philosophical commitment to social justice. They drew, in particular, on the concept of 'development journalism', which, as we saw in Chapter Three, emerged in the 1960's as an investigative approach to reporting, articulated by journalists working in newly independent nations. Such journalism is generally defined as a reporting tradition that focuses on local conditions in a way that could help to improve living standards, particularly in rural regions (Wimmer & Wolf, 2005:2). It has also been described as an approach to journalism that understands itself as contributing generally to overall socio-economic development by collaborating actively with other agents of development (Skjerdal, 2009:31). UNESCO's efforts in facilitating the establishment of such journalism included training initiatives, research ventures, and the establishment of alternative news agencies based in the Third World (Golding, 1977:302; Domatob, 1987; Murphy & Scotton, 1987: 26-27; Gaunt, 1992:148). The growth of such projects in the 1970's suggests that a space was opening up, at this time, in which a wider spectrum of conceptualisations of journalistic practice could be acknowledged.

It would seem, however, that this space narrowed down again during the course of the next decade. It has been argued that one important reason for this was the decision of the Reagan and Thatcher administrations to withdraw from UNESCO in the mid-1980's. America cited, among other reasons, its displeasure with NWICO, which it represented as an instrument of state control of the media (Nordenstreng, 2001:159). Commentators have suggested, however, that the withdrawal of America and the United Kingdom could be interpreted as a strategic message to UNESCO with regards to the position of power that these two countries lay claim to within the international domain. They were signalling, in particular, that as leading Western powers they would not countenance being outvoted by the majority of the world's nations, and that their interests would remain the priority (Nordenstreng, 2007:46). Certainly, their withdrawal deprived UNESCO of much of its political and financial power, weakening its ability to direct the terms of reference of global debate, and in

particular its capacity to provide an environment in which the interests and perspectives of the developing world could be prioritised. In this context, UNESCO abandoned its backing for the NWICO, and debates around this concept has, since then, receded into obscurity (Freedman & Shafer, 2008:7). It has been argued that the failure of the NWICO debates signalled the beginning of an era in global communication, starting in the 1980's and stretching into the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, in which the interests of economic power have side lined the prioritisation of the concerns not just of the developing world but of civil society in general. Discussion turned away, in particular, from arguments for knowledge in service of human rights and the strengthening of civic culture and came to focus, instead, on knowledge defined in terms of free-market imperatives (Pickard, 2007:120-124). One of the casualties of the failure of the NWICO was that it became more difficult, within international debate about the advancement of journalism, to challenge the dominant journalistic paradigm that had evolved in context of advanced capitalist economic systems. Debates continued to be framed by a simplistic opposition between advocates for a "free" press and those negotiating for government controlled media systems. Development journalism, which was now thought of as a key example of an alternative approach to journalism, became cast either as a tool of totalitarian regimes, or as generally ineffectual (Napoli, 2002:261).

Within current journalism education programmes in the developing world, development journalism nevertheless continues to maintain its status as an important alternative to the mainstream model of commercially driven news. Modules dealing with development journalism are included in the curricula of many colleges and university level programmes in these environments (Ramaprasad, 2010:3). Some institutions have even restructured their curricula in order to prioritise development journalism, and reference to such journalism has become prominent in their self-presentation (Ramaprasad, 2010:5; Wimmer & Wolf, 2005:9). In most cases, however, courses dealing with such journalism are taught as one focus amongst many, alongside modules dealing with topics such as business reporting and public relations. It has been suggested that such inclusion tends to operate as 'lip service' to the importance of establishing socially purposive approaches to journalism, operating in service of principles of social justice. The majority of such courses are also theory based, and do not impact directly on approaches to the teaching of journalistic practice, where the Western liberal model continues to be reproduced (Ramaprasad, 2010:4). It has also been pointed out that, besides the discussion of development journalism, very few other traditions of thought about socially purposive journalism, or communication more generally, have found purchase within journalism education curricula in developing countries. In scholarship about communication for social change, rich traditions have for example developed around both the theory and practice of peace journalism, and also the participatory production of media (Ramaprasad, 2010:3). Participatory communication draws, for example, on Paulo Freire's dialogical pedagogy, arguing for communication that operates as a process that actively involves audiences, and empowers communities to transform their social and political circumstances (Banda, 2006:4). Such approaches have impacted strongly on the

communication philosophies of non-governmental organisations committed to the advancement of social justice and development. Within tertiary contexts, however, a theoretical treatment of development journalism continues to ‘stand in for the rest’ (Ramaprasad, 2010:3-4).

In recent years, UNESCO has again contributed significantly to international debates around the role that should be played by tertiary education in the global advancement of journalism. Many of these contributions are intended as resources for the enhancement of journalism education in poorer countries. Of particular significance has been the publishing, in 2007, of UNESCO’s *Model Curricula for Journalism Education*. This document was promoted as a vehicle designed for the specific improvement of university-based journalism education in ‘developing countries’ and ‘emerging democracies’ (Freedman & Shafer, 2008:9). For this purpose, it presents a series of detailed syllabi, which includes degrees designed to be integrated within broader undergraduate programmes as well as Masters programmes and Diploma courses (UNESCO, 2007). Also of importance has been the publication in 2007 of a research report dealing with potential ‘centres of excellence’ for journalism education in Africa. This document dealt with the results of an audit of journalism education providers on the African continent, presented as a map that charts the capacity and potential of such institutions (Berger & Matras, 2007:3).<sup>24</sup>

Commentators have pointed out that the terms of reference that have framed the design of such resources contrast sharply with the approach that UNESCO adopted three decades earlier, steering away from a critique of relations of power within the international arena. The focus has remained, instead, on a general commitment to projects that undergird and strengthen processes both of democratisation and economic stability. The task of advancing the interests of journalism education in developing environments is defined, in this context, as capacitating the poor, rather than scrutinising institutions that privilege the rich (Berger, 2006:147). It has also been suggested that, in this more recent intervention into media assistance, UNESCO appears in fact to have departed from its original constitutional mandate. Its mission, as expressed in its constitution, places the emphasis on socially purposive communication, in service of the promotion of peace, security and mutual understanding amongst different social groupings. Within its more recent activities, the organisation instead simply supports the ideal of an unconditional free flow of information, dissociated from a critical engagement with the social purpose of such information. In this way, it has elevated the principle of freedom of information as an end in itself (Nordenstreng, 2007:21-22).

It has been argued, in this context, that consciousness of relevance of economic inequity and injustice is strikingly absent from the presentation of syllabi in the *New Model Curricula*. As such, the document appears to make an effort not to raise issues that resurrect the NWICO debates (Freedman & Shafer, 2008:11). Commentators also argue that the curricula presented in this document appear

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<sup>24</sup> At the time of the writing of this dissertation, UNESCO was in the process of facilitating a second round of research focusing on the identification of such ‘centres of excellence’ this time focusing on India. Currently, there is limited information available on the status of journalism education in this country.



uncritically to reproduce the traditional American conceptualisation of journalism as a practice that 'speaks truth to power', dedicated to the enhancement of democratic process through objective and critical 'reporting' on social events, free from state interference. These programmes are not, in other words, designed to introduce students to a wider spectrum of approaches to journalistic practice, and presents the 'free market' model of objective journalism as if it is of universal relevance. They fail, in this context, to prioritise the exploration of journalism that commits itself to advocacy and the facilitation of social justice, acting as a dedicated and purposeful tool for promoting radical social change. Reference to socially purposive philosophies of journalism such as that of peace journalism and advocacy journalism are generally absent, and even development journalism is not prioritised. This absence is regarded as significant, in context of the relevance of such traditions to developing countries and emerging democracies (12-13). It has been argued that the UNESCO curricula cannot, therefore, be said to position journalism as an agent of radical social change, committed to addressing issues of social justice (Ramaprasad, 2010: 1).

According to some critics, the UNESCO document also does not acknowledge the impediments that exist regarding the adoption of the curricula that it promotes in the environments that it claims to target. Instead, it defines its task as neutrally providing the 'nuts and bolts' of implementing what it presents as a universally adaptable guide for teaching about journalism. Its guidelines nevertheless place a strong emphasis on resources that are primarily available in much more affluent social environments. The curricula are, for example, predicated on the conviction that because access to sophisticated computer technology is becoming essential to journalism as it is practiced globally, it is a basic requirement of all journalism teaching, irrespective of the financial challenges involved (Hume, 2004:17). Some curricula also present student publications and radio stations as an essential training ground for journalists, and do not acknowledge that such ventures are often not a strong feature of educational institutions in many developing countries (Freedman & Shafer, 2008:18). The reading material required by the curricula are, furthermore, still mostly of North American and Western European origin (12). It is suggested that the UNESCO curricula also fail to acknowledge that education often takes place in political, religious and cultural contexts that would place severe constraints on the promotion of a journalism based in principles of democracy (Hume, 2004:3). Some educators have in fact suggested that the UNESCO curricula are irrelevant for countries that have not established independent media sectors (22).

It would seem, then, that a central theme within this second strand of journalism education concerns the complexity of adapting models for teaching that has emanated from a 'Western liberal' context to environments that are much poorer, and that often exist in context of limited media freedom. In making sense of this complexity, commentators have proposed that it is of particular importance to avoid positioning this model, and the journalistic tradition with which it is associated, as a universal ideal. The model tends to describe itself as being committed to the establishment of a



'free press' which operates as a 'fourth estate', speaking truth to power, and it presents such journalism as a universal ideal. This equation was, as we have seen, integral to the *Four Theories* framework, since it positioned approaches to journalism along a sliding scale between liberalism and authoritarianism, with the Western liberal tradition of journalism situated at the liberal end of the scale as a normative ideal. Some critics (Skjerdal, 2009; Bauer, 2010) have pointed out, however, that concepts such as that of 'media freedom' are not in fact the sole mandate of this journalistic tradition. It is suggested that they exist, rather, as universal principles that describe basic societal goods, outside the context of particular journalistic traditions. The principle of media freedom and aspects of 'fourth estate' values have, in fact, been invoked in different ways within a variety of such traditions. This is true, similarly, for other principles associated with the Western liberal model of journalism, such as that of the fostering of truth, the importance of critical investigation and the value of broad public participation in social processes. Such principles can form part of journalistic traditions across a wide spectrum of social environments, and within each tradition, they may be expressed differently, and change in its expression over time. For this reason, it is argued, journalism educators should avoid situating a particular journalistic tradition as a universal ideal. They should, instead, approach the process of developing locally grounded approaches to journalism education as one in which there is an ongoing interplay between universal principles and local contexts, of which particular journalistic traditions form part (Skjerdal, 2009:28-29). Normative ideals can, in other words, only establish themselves within a given journalistic environment through locally grounded social practices that draw on values and ideas that already form part of that context (Bauer, 2010:237). This understanding contrasts with the assumption that one can, or should, export an approach to journalism wholesale from one social context to another. When drawing on models that have been generated elsewhere it is important, rather, to identify ideas and principles that resonate within local contexts. The example of public journalism, as it has developed in the United States can, for example, be seen to share certain principles with a communitarian understanding of social processes existing in certain 'developing' countries. As such, communitarianism offers intellectual resources which allow an 'interplay' with ideas and concepts drawn from elsewhere (Skjerdal, 2009:29).

The concept of a locally grounded, or 'indigenised' approaches to journalism education has for long been a preoccupation within developing countries, and has been particularly strongly articulated within the African context. Within discussions of an African approach to journalism education, there is a particular preoccupation with the importance of developing an approach to the journalistic coverage of 'African specific' concerns (Wimmer & Wolf, 2005:9). It is a commitment to this ideal that has informed another recent UNESCO project, which addresses the lack of teaching and learning materials on reporting on Africa. UNESCO has commissioned, in this context, a syllabus on reporting on Africa for journalism students. This syllabus was developed in consultation with African media practitioners and educators, and places a strong emphasis on the indigenising of journalism

education. The four-course syllabus is, in fact, largely based on the UNESCO Model Curricula, drawing in particular on the core competencies that it emphasises – such as that of analysis, knowledge of social context, and knowledge of current affairs. At the same time, however, it draws attention approaches to journalism such as that of development- and peace journalism. It may be that it is in context of such projects, that lay claim to the importance of ‘indigenous’ knowledge, that journalism curricula will begin to teach about a wider spectrum of approaches to journalistic practice.

It would seem, then, as in the Western liberal ‘strand’ of journalism education described in the previous section of this chapter, journalism education based in economically vulnerable contexts are also characterised by struggles around the critical conceptualisation of journalistic practice. In the first strand, this struggle focuses on an opposition between ‘critical’ education and ‘vocational’ training. Vocational teaching was understood, within this opposition, to concern the reproduction of the ‘Western’ model of a ‘free’ commercial press, based on principles of objective reporting. In the second strand, the opposition between critical and vocational training is to some extent dissolved. Instead, conflict centres more directly on the introduction of alternative approaches to vocational training, including those that are embedded in critical theory. Critical theory is understood, within this historical strand, to acknowledge the inevitable role played by economic and political interests, and relations of power generally, within communication processes. As such, it challenges the claim to objectivity on which the ‘Western’ model of a ‘free’ press is based. It points, furthermore, to the importance of widening the spectrum of journalistic practices that are acknowledged within curricula to include socially purposive approaches, committed to the facilitation of social change. However, as in the case of the first strand, it would appear that such critical conceptualisation has generally been marginalised within the journalism education curricula of the ‘developing’ world. Here, too, as in the first strand, the ‘Western’ model of journalistic practice has continued to be reproduced within curricula, particularly as this exists within the production-oriented teaching of the practice of journalism.

It was argued, in relation to the first strand of journalism education, that in order to ensure that journalism education remains of social relevance, there is a need to collapse the distinction between critical and vocational teaching. It may be that the second strand of journalism education in fact offers more opportunities for the development of such a framework. As we have seen, scholars who have commented on this history identify the existence of intellectual resources within its environments for teaching practically about socially purposive journalism. This includes traditions of thought such as that of peace journalism and advocacy journalism, as well as resources that exist outside the context of journalism, such as communication for social change, and communitarianist philosophy. Even though such resources have as yet found limited purchase within journalism education, they could nevertheless be said to represent an important opportunity for the establishment of an approach to the teaching of journalism that responds to the needs of developing environments.

#### 5.3.4 *Journalism education in economically powerful countries with limited freedom*

In many regions of the world the nature of journalistic practice is powerfully determined by high levels of government control. According to statistics published by Freedom House<sup>25</sup> in 2012, out of 194 countries in the world, 87 were considered “free”, 60 “partly free”, and 48 as “not free” (Freedom House, 2012). In countries situated in Asia, the Arab world, the former Soviet Union, Latin America and Africa, freedom of speech and thought is often actively discouraged, and in some cases aggressively suppressed (Freedman & Shafer, 2008:15; Gross & Kenny, 2008:55). It is noted that such limitation in freedom is not only a characteristic of poor countries, but also associated with societies that have achieved economic affluence and stability. Prosperity has ensured a high degree of sovereignty for such countries, and they have therefore been less vulnerable to external interventions into their approach to governance. The history of journalism education in countries such as Singapore, China and Brazil should be understood against this backdrop (Josephi, 2010:255).

Within these more affluent environments, ideals such as that of freedom of speech and freedom of the press are often legally acknowledged, but they are also severely limited, conditional to the interests of the state. Such limitations are differently constituted in each case, with varying degrees of direct coercion. Singapore can be seen as positioned at one end of a scale of coercive rule, with high levels of media control but a substantial degree of willing collaboration from different sectors of society. Coercion is nevertheless present, since the right to freedom of speech is subject to severe legal restrictions, designed to ensure public order and protect national security. Because of the existence of such legislation, journalists routinely practice self-censorship out of fear of being sued under harsh criminal defamation laws, or breaking the countries criminal laws on permissible speech (Duffy, 2010:33). On the other hand, in practice, systems of control tend to take a more benevolent form, with both citizens and the press seeming to collaborate as willing partners in the interest of general economic prosperity and social stability (35). At the other extreme of the scale of coercive governance, in the Chinese context, relationships of control are more direct. The Chinese Communist Party own the media in whole or in part, and regulate them closely. The media is viewed explicitly as an instrument to articulate and support its policies, and as a vehicle for mobilising its citizens and managing the impressions it gives to them of the outside world (Zhongshi, 2010:15). Journalism, in this environment, often operates as a site of covert resistance, in which strategies develop for the careful expression of subversive and oppositional political views (20).

Josephi (2010) points out that, given the rapid growth of journalism education in these environments it is not possible to draw an equation between the international expansion of such teaching and rising levels of media freedom. This is true despite the fact that it is the ‘Western

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<sup>25</sup> There is some debate about the neutrality of Freedom House and the methodology used in its research processes. It has been claimed, for example, that the annual reports are biased towards countries with pro-U.S. positions, and that they are not critical enough of U.S. human rights violations. Freedom House receives most of its funds from the United States Government, and from foundations based primarily in the United States (Herman & Chomsky, 1994:28).

paradigm' of such education with its explicit identification with the normative ideal of an independent and critical press that has circulated most widely within the international arena. There appears, in this respect, to be a disconnect between the paradigm in which such education is based and the realities of media freedom (1-2). Josephi suggests that the ease with which this paradigm of journalism education has circulated in environments with limited media freedom should be understood in context of the emphasis on professional identity within such teaching. As we have seen in Chapter Four, the 'professional' refers to two separate concepts that co-exist within such education. On one hand, it refers to a project dedicated to the reconstruction of journalism as a social practice, so that it becomes centrally informed by a high level of autonomy, professional norms and a public service orientation. On the other, it concerns the establishment of systems of occupational control, including those which ensure that journalism becomes recognised as an occupation that requires a skilled workforce, and journalism education is positioned as a vehicle for the delivery of this workforce. Josephi suggests that it is this second conceptualisation that is most prominent in the co-option of such journalism education in environments of limited media freedom (256). Other critics (Yu, Chu & Guo, 2002; Zhongshi 2010) have argued in similar terms that the concept of the 'professional' has been borrowed from Western contexts, to be co-opted into journalistic traditions in such environments in order to replace direct state intervention with more indirect systems of control. It is suggested that such co-option should be understood in context of the rising influence of market forces in these countries. Even the Chinese media landscape has been characterised by fundamental market-based reforms and a consequent shift from totalitarian control of the media to a degree of self-determination and financial self-sufficiency (Zhongshi, 2010:28). Such processes of reform are geared towards the co-existence of political conservatism and commercial liberalism (Chu & Zhongshi, 2002:66-75). It would seem that the Western concept of professional identity is of particular value in achieving these goals.

A closer examination of the content of journalism education programmes in these environments illustrates the 'translatability' of the 'Western style' journalism education from one political context to another. In Singapore, in particular, where journalism education takes place in relative freedom, teaching at both universities and polytechnics is based in norms similar to those of programmes in more liberal environments. It is noted that these programmes are deliberately designed both with an international market in mind, and to prepare students to work within the Singaporean media. Coursework includes reference, for example, to all the 'news values' traditionally emphasised within the Western model of such teaching, such as accuracy, currency, relevance and balance. Educators nevertheless prepare students to work within the constraints of the Singaporean system, providing them with socialisation that allows them to negotiate unspoken rules regarding the subject matter that can or cannot be addressed in their journalism. Graduates seem able to apply their learning equally within the Singaporean system and more liberal environments, making the transition with ease (Duffy, 2010:41-49).

On the other end of the spectrum, in China, the co-option of Western ideas takes place in context of a much more autocratic system of decision-making. Here, journalism education remains administratively under the control of the Ministry of Education, even if in more commercialised institutions such control becomes indirect. It is explained, in literature, that such programmes are obliged to include course content that is strongly informed by communist ideology, with an emphasis on the role played by journalism as a vehicle of persuasive propaganda (Zhongshi, 2010:16). Both within teaching and research, concepts such as press freedom, or the relationship between journalism and democracy, remain taboo subjects (Chu & Zhongshi, 2006:67). Teaching is, nevertheless, structured to allow spaces in which ideas drawn from the Western paradigm can be explored. Within this structure, the 'soviet' model of such education remains prominent, but educators are able to draw, at the same time, on Western ideas. It is noted that these different kinds of content can co-exist because the Chinese curricula tend to consist of three 'layers' of teaching, each with its own self-contained terms of reference. The first layer of such teaching exposes students to Marxist analyses of the media as well as party and state policies on news and information dissemination. The second layer deals with 'production-oriented' teaching, and is characterised by a relaxation of external control of course content. Western approaches to journalism represent a substantial component of such teaching. In the third layer, students learn about the role and function of the mass media, and here, again, there is some room for the inclusion of Western ideas – although such discussion takes place more covertly, in 'private' conversations with students (Zhongshi, 2010:19-20).

A different context in which the co-option and translation of 'Western' knowledge can be identified is in the establishment of formal partnerships with journalism education programmes in countries with limited media freedom and those based in Western industrial societies. Such partnerships operate as a form of accreditation or validation, in which local journalism education ventures can be seen to purchase the 'trademark' associated with Western programmes. It is noted that such partnerships have increased dramatically in recent years, particularly in relation to journalism education programmes based in the United Kingdom, The United States, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. The involvement of these universities in such partnerships can be understood in context of changes in their financial circumstances, due in particular to the withdrawal of state funding. Such universities have been placed under pressure to find alternative sources of income, and making their expertise available internationally has therefore become a priority. It is suggested that it is for this reason that such universities have established international partnerships between their own journalism education programmes and institutions based in affluent environments in which such teaching is currently expanding, such as Egypt, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Singapore and China (Saleh, 2010:127; Knight, 2010:2). It would seem, furthermore, that knowledge associated with these universities represent a valuable 'currency' in the international domain, and this includes knowledge about journalism. The value associated with such knowledge contrasts sharply

with the status of the 'soviet' model of journalism education, which, as we saw earlier in this chapter, had become stigmatised (Gaunt 1992:82; Morrison, 1997:27; Gross & Kenny, 2008:58).

The adaptation of concepts and ideals that have emanated from a 'Western liberal' context is, then, of central importance to the strand of journalism education associated with 'developing' contexts and the one that is linked to affluent environments with limited media freedom. The complexities associated with such adaptation are, however, of a very different nature within these two strands, since the exchange of knowledge is defined by very different relations of power. Debates about the adaptation of Western journalism education within the second strand focused, as we have seen, on the disjunction between course content and the interests, needs and resources that characterise local contexts. The invocation of the concept of a 'free flow of information' tends to operate, in this strand, as a denial of the structured nature of economic inequity. In the third strand, the adaptation of knowledge seem instead to operate as a process of translation or bartering, in which the knowledge and norms associated with one paradigm of thought is co-opted and exploited for the purpose of another.

#### *5.3.5 The global picture: When the three histories converge*

As we saw in Chapter Three, there has been pressure, from the late 1990's onwards, for journalism as a scholarly field of study to become globally constituted. It may be that is at least partly because of this growing strength of journalism studies as an internationally constituted field that journalism education is now also able to lay claim to a global identity. Educators and scholars now routinely call for journalism education to break out of the 'national mould' and instead to build a transnational approach (Gaunt, 1992; Bierhoff & Schmit, 1997; Holm, 2002; Froehlich & Holtz-Bacha, 2003; Foote, 2008:132). It is generally suggested that the internationalisation of journalism education would strengthen the capacity of the field. One way in which educators have pursued this goal has been through collaborative international teaching and research projects (Deuze, 2006:20-21). Another strategy has been the articulation of shared standards for journalism education, and in particular shared approaches to pedagogy. One example is the so-called 'Tartu declaration', a set of eleven learning outcomes developed in 2006 by the European Journalism Training Association (EJTA), which has a membership from 23 countries. As we have seen, UNESCO has also facilitated the articulation of a set of criteria for 'centres of excellence' in journalism education, which could also be seen to contribute to the establishment of shared terms of reference for the field (Foote, 2008:135). The formation of the World Journalism Education Congress (WJEC) represents another important example of recent efforts to create an internationally constituted space in which to pursue the consolidation of journalism education as a field. The Congress began as a taskforce on internationalisation based within the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC) which aspired to interact with similar organisations around the world. Together with the UK-based Association for Journalism Education (AJE), they facilitated the



establishment of the WJEC, as a consortium of journalism education organisations from across the world. Since its inception, the WJEC has hosted two meetings of journalism educators, in Singapore in 2007 and in South Africa in 2010, and has facilitated the establishment of an on-line census of organisations involved in the teaching of journalism. The WJEC has also facilitated the articulation of a ‘declaration of principles’ for journalism education, which affirms its academic status, asserting that it is based on a distinctive body of knowledge and normative goals (Foote, 2008:136).

Even within these environments, however, educators continue to face difficulties in talking across paradigms. Critics have pointed out, for example, that the WJEC declaration of principles was only accepted by all delegates because it evaded the inclusion of words such as ‘freedom of speech’ and ‘truth’ and ‘democracy’ (Claussen, 2007). The criticism of the UNESCO model journalism education curricula points, similarly, to challenges involved in articulating terms of reference for journalism education that can accommodate the different paradigms of thought in which the field is based.

It may be, however, that changes in the global landscape of journalism itself may be creating incentives for the articulation of a shared language in which to construct the international identity for teaching about journalism. Journalism educators in a wide range of environments across the world are acutely conscious of the decline of journalism within the international media landscape. In each of the strands of journalism education, commentators speak of shifting economic conditions, a consequent neoliberal restructuring of media, and as a result of this, conditions for journalism characterised by corporate convergence, newsroom layoffs and funding cuts, journalists working under greater stress with fewer resources, in conditions of rapid technological change, with advertising and marketing priorities increasingly affecting employers goals and the mandates of journalists’ work. In context of these shared concerns, it may be that journalism educator and scholars are able to identify commonalities in their approach to the teaching of journalism.

## **Conclusion**

The discussion in this chapter suggests that the global study of university-based journalism education can contribute to understanding of the ways in which such teaching has been shaped by social context. By comparing different examples of such education, one can identify more clearly how the history of a particular instance has been shaped by unique circumstances within its immediate social environment. Furthermore, it becomes possible to gain insight into the ways in which such a localised example has been informed by the internationally shared circumstances of journalism education. The chapter has focused, in particular, on the benefit of a comparative approach for an examination of the relationship between journalism education and the history of authoritative social knowledge. It is proposed, in this context, that patterns in the global history of university-based journalism education



are framed in important ways by shifts in the conceptualisation of such knowledge, as identified in Section One of this dissertation.

It is demonstrated that from the mid to late 20<sup>th</sup> century, the international landscape of journalism education was shaped by the authoritative status of American scholarship and education within the global domain. The expansion of such education, during this time, was therefore characterised by a flow of ideas and practices from the American ‘centre’ to the global ‘periphery’. Because of this, Mass Communication Studies became the dominant point of reference within teaching for the academic study of journalism. Production-oriented teaching tended, in turn, to be framed by the guidelines for reporting practice that had become standard within American journalism education programmes. The way in which journalism education in different parts of the world has assimilated these concepts depended on localised conditions. The global landscape of journalism education programmes nevertheless remained patterned on the American example, and as such continued to reproduce the relationship between academic and vocational knowledge on which it was based. In this context, the potential for journalism education that engaged critically with its social environment remained limited.

In contrast, in the last two decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the history of such teaching became framed by the development of shared global circumstances for the formation of journalism education. This was represented, in particular, by the international emergence of an economic order in which market imperatives have impacted increasingly on the production of authoritative social knowledge. Within this context, patterns in the international landscape of journalism education could no longer be described only in terms of a flow of influence from ‘centre’ to ‘periphery’. Instead, the discussion identifies three different traditions in journalism education, each expressive of different responses to the shifts that were taking place in the global history of social knowledge. The first strand is associated with industrially advanced environments of liberal democracy; the second with ‘developing’ societies and ‘emerging democracies’; the third with affluent societies characterised by limited media freedom.

The chapter proposes that in the first two of these traditions, it is possible to observe the articulation of resources which represented alternatives to the conceptualisation of authoritative knowledge that underpinned the American approach to journalism education. As such, they had the potential to form the foundation of alternative approaches to teaching of journalistic practice, based in critical engagement with their social context. In both instances, however, the emphasis has remained, instead, on the reproduction of the journalism of objectivity associated with the original American tradition. Within the first strand, the potential for critical engagement is represented by a partnership with Cultural Studies, which has made possible approaches to teaching that foreground the role of media within the social construction of meaning. This tradition in journalism education nevertheless did not transform the conventional approach to the teaching of journalism practice; instead, it has remained caught in an opposition between critical and vocational knowledge. Within the second

strand, the critical potential is represented by an acknowledgement of a wide spectrum of approaches to the theory and practice of journalism and media more generally, which offer alternatives to the journalism of objectivity. Such approaches were, nevertheless, not fully integrated within the production oriented components of this tradition of teaching, which continued to foreground the ‘Western liberal’ model of objective journalistic practice.

It is possible, then, to observe within the global history of journalism education the same patterns of conflict that have been identified more generally within the histories of knowledge described in this study so far. On one hand, this history of teaching has been characterised by ongoing acknowledgement of the historically specific and socially constructed nature of journalism as a social practice, as it exists in different environments around the globe. On the other hand, different traditions of such teaching have continued to accommodate the reproduction of an approach to journalism that is based in the ideal of objective and universally relevant knowledge. Because of this, the potential for a tradition of journalism education that has the potential to play a critical and transformational role within journalism as a social practice has remained unfulfilled.

## CHAPTER SIX: SOUTH AFRICAN UNIVERSITY BASED JOURNALISM EDUCATION

### In search of critical engagement

#### Introduction

Chapter Five identified a tension, within the international history of university-based journalism education, between the recognition that knowledge about society is necessarily subjective and grounded in socio-political context, and an on-going commitment to the ideal of objective and universal truth. It proposed that this tension has, in different social contexts, placed limitations on the establishment of critically engaged traditions of teaching. This next chapter argues that these patterns in the conceptualisation of knowledge can also be identified within the South African example and that here, too, they have placed limitations on the critical potential of such education.

The chapter also sets out to demonstrate that university-based journalism education is shaped not only by the international history of authoritative social knowledge, but also by more localised developments in this history. It argues that the South African instance of such education has indeed been strongly informed by an interest in serving the institutions of power. At the same time, dominance of this interest within the teaching of journalism was never inevitable. It was, rather, an agreement that was continuously renegotiated within the local context in each of the institutional sites of journalism education, as different players became involved and as structural forces shifted.

Section One serves to contextualise this discussion by mapping out shifts in approach to the production of knowledge within South African academic and journalistic landscapes respectively. It draws, for this purpose, on literature about the development of journalism and universities, as institutions that have been involved in the production of knowledge about South African society. As such, the discussion expands on the argument presented in earlier chapters that the history of journalism scholarship and education is framed by negotiations, within their social environment, around the nature and purpose of systems of knowledge production. This argument has previously been explored primarily in context of the role that universities have played, in different social contexts, as institutions dedicated to the production of authoritative social knowledge. The discussion now moves to the relationship between journalism education and the institutional history of universities in the context of South Africa. It sets out to demonstrate, in addition, that the history of journalism as a system of knowledge production is of similar importance to the construction of journalism as a subject of university education.

Section Two describes the history of the study of journalism within South African universities. This discussion draws on literature about this history and also makes reference to interviews conducted with writers who have contributed to this literature. The section first presents a review of the account that is given, within the literature and interviews, of the South African history of scholarship about journalism, media and communication more generally. This review is included

on the assumption that the kind of academic knowledge produced in this country about these subjects represents an important term of reference for a discussion of the local example of journalism education. The review suggests that, in South Africa, approaches to such knowledge have been shaped in important ways by the institutional histories of the universities in which they were based. Against this backdrop, the section then pieces together a history of South African journalism education. The aim is, firstly, to clarify how developments in the establishment and growth of South African journalism education are represented in the literature and interview material. The discussion teases out, in particular, the different contributors' understanding of the relationship between the history of such teaching and that of journalism scholarship. Secondly, it draws a relationship between the patterns in the conceptualisation of knowledge identified in this way and the description, in Section One, of the broader histories of journalism and universities in South Africa.

It should be noted that Section Two is not understood to represent an accurate reconstruction of the South African history of journalism scholarship or education. It sets out, rather, to identify shared readings of this history in the literature and interviews, which point to questions about the way in which global and local circumstances have impacted on journalism education in this country. The chapter identifies these questions in order to prepare the foundations for Part Three of this dissertation, which presents a more detailed, empirical investigation of the way in which participants in the South African history of such education make sense of these circumstances.

It should also be noted that the chapter does not deal in detail with technikons, despite the fact that they played a far more prominent role than universities within production-oriented journalism education in South Africa. This, as noted in the previous chapter, is in fact typical of the history of journalism education that became established in the early 1970's in Anglophone environments around the world. Because the study deals with university-based knowledge, the focus nevertheless remains on developments within traditional universities. It is, however, of relevance that, within the post-apartheid restructuring of South African higher education, some aspects of the distinction between technikons and universities have fallen away. Technikons (now called Universities of Technology) are therefore important to an evaluation of the contemporary landscape of university-based journalism education, and remain a point of reference within the discussion.

## **6.1 South African institutions of knowledge production: a contextualisation**

### **6.1.1 Universities and the politics of knowledge production**

By the 1960's, when journalism education first became a reality in South Africa, three distinct university systems were in existence in this country. One was a liberal, English tradition which drew on the 'Oxbridge' model as well as aspects of the Scottish university tradition. It included four institutions: the University of Cape Town (UCT), the University of the Witwatersrand, The University

of Natal (Later KwaZulu-Natal) and Rhodes University.<sup>26</sup> These institutions were based in what is generally referred to, in literature, as a ‘Western liberal’ concept of the university, and as such understood their own purpose as that of serving society through enlightened reason and the independent pursuit of universal truth. They defined themselves, furthermore, according to the broadly conceived ideal of ‘South Africanism’ (Dubow, 2006). As part of their commitment to this identity, they embraced racial inclusiveness and stood in opposition to dominant apartheid ideology (Vale, 2008:121). Commentators suggest, however, that as the National Party government consolidated their authority during the 1950’s, this opposition had less and less influence on national policy. The marginalisation of English universities within the public domain was exacerbated by the fact that, even long after the establishment of South Africa as an independent nation, they saw their primary function as the transmission of ‘metropolitan’ knowledge and values. It has been argued that such self-definition encumbered them with a sense of inferiority. Because of this, they failed to challenge the predetermined paradigms of knowledge from the ‘metropole’ and reproduced, crucially, the discourses of modernity that informed much of this scholarship (Vale, 2008:121). On one hand, then, English liberal universities played a role in challenging the policies of the apartheid state. On the other hand, through their research and teaching, they supported the principles of the modern nation state, and with this much of the social relations on which South African society depended. The early history of South African sociology, for example, was designed to turn out graduates and research that would serve the state and industry, and did so within a conservative ideology dedicated to expert knowledge and social efficiency (Jubber, 1983: 52; Vale, 2008:119).

The second academic tradition was that of Afrikaans-language universities. These included, initially, the Universities of Stellenbosch; - Pretoria; - South Africa (UNISA);<sup>27</sup> - Potchefstroom (now North West University) and the Orange Free State or UOFS (now the University of the Free State).<sup>28</sup> These universities were at first also framed by a British intellectual tradition, but by the 1930’s they had become strongly associated with Afrikaner Nationalism and turned for their inspiration to other, European scholarly sources. With the establishment of the apartheid state, this university system became more central than its English counterpart to the South African public sphere. As its authority increased, the notion of universities as institutions serving universal ends was finally explicitly rejected. The intellectual project that resulted from this was that of a *Volksuniversiteit* which defines

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26 UCT, which is the oldest university in South Africa, started as a boy’s school (the South African College) in 1829 and gained university status in 1874; Wits started off as a technical school in 1896 and was given full university status in 1922; Natal was founded in 1910 as the Natal University College and granted independent university status in 1949; Rhodes was founded as Rhodes University College in 1904.

27 Although UNISA taught in both English and Afrikaans, one can argue that it was more firmly based within an Afrikaner Nationalist tradition.

28 Stellenbosch University started in 1874 as the Arts Department of a public school, then evolved into a college and was established as a university in 1922. The University of Pretoria grew out of the Transvaal University College, establishing itself as an Afrikaans institution in 1908 and gaining university status in 1930. UNISA started as an examining agency for Oxford and Cambridge universities in 1873 and became a dual-medium distance education university in 1946. Potchefstroom started as a theological school in 1869, became a college in 1919 and gained university status in 1951. The University of Orange Free State started as Grey University College in 1906 and gained independent university status in 1950.

itself primarily in relation to ethnic nationalism. Two institutions following this model were established in the 1960's with the express purpose of countering the liberal influences of the English-language universities (Dubow, 2006:265). These were the Rand Afrikaans University or RAU (now the University of Johannesburg) and the University of Port Elizabeth<sup>29</sup> (which would become the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University or NMMU). Within all eight of these universities, academic knowledge was increasingly associated with the strengthening of racial ideology, functioning as an instrument of the apartheid state (Jubber, 1983:58; Vale, 2008:122). An oft-cited instance of study that was dedicated to these goals is the anthropological discipline of *Volkekunde*, which became a centrepiece of Afrikaner-sanctioned scholarship (Gordon, 1988; Dubow, 2006:266-7; Vale, 2008:119).

The third academic tradition is that of black universities which, with the important exception of the University of Fort Hare, were established as part of the infrastructures of the apartheid state. Fort Hare was founded by Scottish missionaries in 1916, and was for a long time the only tertiary institution in sub-Saharan Africa where black people could get a university education (Nash, 2006:4). It played a crucial role in the establishment of a black intellectual leadership in South Africa. In 1959, this university was relegated by the South African government to the status of an ethnic college for Xhosa speakers. It then regained so-called independent status as a University in 1970, still within the administrative control of the state. In the early 1960's four more universities for 'non-whites' were established by the South African government: the Universities of Zululand, of the Western Cape (UWC), of Durban Westville (UDW) and of the North (now the University of Limpopo).<sup>30</sup> These campuses were given very limited opportunity to develop independent identities. They were primarily staffed by academics drawn from the Afrikaner Nationalist universities, and were placed under tight administrative control (Vale, 2008:123).

In the 1970's and 1980's, all three of these university systems experienced dramatic changes, articulated as struggles around their approach to the production of knowledge. An important factor was the erosion that was taking place at this time in the authority of the apartheid state, and the growing acknowledgement of the urgency of reform. The movement of popular resistance to apartheid was growing rapidly in strength, and claimed campuses as one of its sites of struggle. At the same time, there was an infusion of new intellectual ideas into universities, which helped to open up spaces for political contestation. These ideas included concepts drawn from the theories of historical materialism, which began to inform radical challenges to traditional liberal conceptualisations of society (Steenveld et al, 2012:2). The ideas fostered by the Black Consciousness movement also increased the rift between liberalism and radicalism (Vale, 2008:123). Student

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<sup>29</sup> Again, this was a dual-medium institution, but nevertheless was framed by Afrikaner Nationalism.

<sup>30</sup> Zululand was established in 1960 as the University College of Zululand, and was granted university status in 1970. UWC was also established in 1960, as a university for 'coloured' people. It also gained university status in 1970. UDW was established as a university for 'Indian' people in 1970. The University of the North was founded in 1959, and was supposed to serve as an educational institution for Sotho, Venda and Tsonga people.

resistance politics was intensifying within black universities. The focus of academic debate was, however, primarily on the development of a radical approach to social engagement in English-language universities (Dubow, 2006:269). On these campuses the humanities, in particular, became central to public discussions of the future of South African society. The historian Charles van Onselen describes this as the "... most exciting two decades in the social sciences" in South Africa (quoted in Vale, 2008:117).

One social science discipline that is cited in this context is that of sociology. It is noted that academics based in this discipline revised the accepted liberal interpretations of South African history and proposed new, more radical approaches to the study of South African social reality. Such scholarship undermined the legitimacy of both the traditional liberal scholarship and that of Afrikaner nationalism and eclipsed the importance of these traditions within public debate. The ideas that were articulated within materialist social science were of immediate relevance to the labour movement and to student politics, and became deeply connected to the rising anti-apartheid movement (Hendricks, 2006:86). Many Afrikaner intellectuals also rejected the ideology of apartheid, and contributed to such critical scholarship (Vale, 2008:124).

Discussions of the South African academic landscape in post-apartheid years (Hendricks 2006; Vale, 2008; Nash, 2006) suggest that, more recently, radical intellectual scholarship has declined in significance. It is proposed, indeed, that from the late 1990's onwards such scholarship has become relegated to the margins of public discourse and that the social sciences, in particular, are no longer at the centre of critical intellectual debate. We are told, furthermore, that the close engagement that existed in the 1970's and 1980's between universities and South African communities has dissipated. Similarly, it is argued that there is no longer a foundational commitment within the student movement to the role of higher education as a collective resource in the shaping of a new society (Naidoo, 2006). Two factors are repeatedly identified as playing a role in such marginalisation. It is noted, firstly, that 'nation building' has made a deep impact on South African public discourse since independence. University-based knowledge is understood, within this discourse, to be of value if it supports the developmental goals of the state (Vale, 2008:117). It is pointed out that the government has made repeated calls on the scientific community to mobilise their resources in the service of the reconstruction and development of South African society (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:535). Secondly, references are made to the rise of neo-liberalism within universities, both internationally and in South Africa (Vale, 2008:117). It is explained that, after the 1994 elections, economic changes overwhelmed South African universities "like a flood through a hole in the wall" (Cloete, 2004:15). There was, in particular, an increasing demand on higher education to be commercially viable, and for university education to serve the needs of 'industry'. The traditional knowledge responsibilities of universities (research, teaching and community service) were redefined in context of the need for economic competitiveness, and for the knowledge and skills that this requires (Singh, 2001:8). They were placed under particular pressure to providing students with



education that enabled them to be employable within their careers of choice. Under these pressures, liberal universities experienced increasing difficulties in defining themselves, as they had in earlier decades, as spaces for the autonomous production of authoritative social knowledge (De Beer & Tomaselli, 2000:18).

Commentators explain that, from the mid-1990's onwards, higher education became increasingly guided by policies that located them in a relation of instrumental support to the state and market (Du Plooy, 2006:63). Such policies included the South African Qualifications Authority Act of 1995 and the Skills Development and Employment Equity Acts of 1998. These acts aimed to establish institutional strategies that could improve the skills of the South African work force, and all operated to ensure the industry's dominance within such processes. The 1995 Act, for example, encouraged the participation of industry in training – both as training providers, and as members of the Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs) that set the requirements and standards of professional competency. Industrial training was thus integrated into a broad National Qualifications Framework (NQF). The Skills Development Act also operated as a mechanism by which the government could enlist the financial support of industry in upgrading industrial skills through training programmes. Companies are required to commit 0.5% of their turnover to a Skills Development Fund to which they can apply for a rebate for any training they offer that contributed to the NQF framework. The Employment Equity act encouraged companies to show their commitment to transformation through prioritising the employment of black South Africans, and this encouraged organisations to become involved in training ventures that would ensure the availability of a highly skilled black workforce (Steenveld, 2006:292). Because of this, there was increasing pressure on universities to provide professional education.

In this environment, many social science disciplines have redefined themselves in terms of professionalism. The argument put forward in the literature is that, in response to the environmental changes, the centrality of critical scholarship has been replaced by an 'instrumentalist' approach to knowledge (Hendricks, 2006:86). As will be discussed in Section Two of this chapter, these circumstances are understood to represent important terms of reference for developments in South African university-based journalism education.

### 6.1.2 Journalism as an institution of knowledge production

Literature dealing with the South African history of journalism suggests that the journalistic landscape that existed at the time of the first emergence of journalism education in the early 1960's shared many of the distinctions which characterised the university system. Amongst newspapers, this literature again identifies three separate traditions; that of a white English press, a white Afrikaans press, and newspapers that targeted black audiences. Like its counterpart within the academy, the white English-language journalistic tradition is understood to have associated itself with humanitarian and liberal ideology, and to have opposed the policies of apartheid. It is argued that these papers did so primarily

through an emphasis on the Anglo-American model of objective journalism, insisting for example on reporting 'both sides' of the social conflicts that characterised South African society (Pinnock, 1991:123). Commentators point out, however, that the journalism produced by these newspapers was inevitably framed by the fact that they were owned by a monopoly of mining-finance capital. It is suggested that, because of such relations of ownership, the opposition that they offered to the apartheid system did not extend as far as direct challenges to the underlying economic structuring of South African society. In this respect, too, the practices of this tradition of journalism are described in similar terms to those of the English-language university system. It is pointed out, at the same time, that the state took the challenges posed by the English press seriously, and responded to them with repression. Commentators also note that these responses correlated closely with intermittent efforts by the press to articulate views of the black majority, which were seen to challenge the maintenance of stability in South Africa (Tomaselli & Tomaselli, 1987:70).

Afrikaans newspapers of the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, again in parallel to developments within the academy, are described as operating primarily to promote Afrikaans and 'white' Afrikaner culture, often articulating this task explicitly as a struggle against British influence (Pollack, 1981:12). The suggestion is, furthermore, that the Afrikaans press understood its own social purpose as that of supporting political parties that represented the interests of white Afrikaans-speaking communities. It is pointed out that involvement in the practice of journalism often represented a stepping stone for Afrikaner Nationalists on their way to a career in politics. Furthermore, many Afrikaans newspapers were owned by party members and were launched explicitly as vehicles for the articulation of Afrikaner Nationalist ideology. The literature suggests, however, that by the 1960's, with the National Party government firmly in place, the Afrikaner press developed a greater sense of independence from the state. Journalists began to identify with a more professionalised identity, and became committed to journalism as a career in its own right. This sense of professionalism was also articulated in terms of an increasing emphasis on a journalism of objectivity, with newspapers adopting a critical stance to government. It is explained, however, that this stance did not mean that the Afrikaans press criticised apartheid policy in any great depth. The conceptualisation of independence within these newspapers was also not that of the Anglo-American tradition of journalism, with its emphasis on the freedom of the press. Afrikaans newspapers defined themselves, rather, in terms of a restricted freedom, with limitations imposed in the name of community and national security. Commentators explain, in particular, that editors did not insist on freedom from the National Party, but saw themselves instead as 'equal partners' with government (Hachten & Giffard, 1984:181).

It is explained, in the literature, that newspapers targeting black audiences formed part of the same ownership structures as those of the English liberal press. At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century there had existed a middle class black press, but between 1930's and 1950's, this tradition was eroded both because of economic challenges and state interference (Johnson, 1991:21). It was replaced by a

new generation of newspapers that employed black journalists and addressed black audiences, but were owned by white publishing companies. It is suggested that these papers adopted an anti-apartheid stance, and that through them, the black middle classes were able to articulate some of their views (Tomaselli & Tomaselli, 1987:46). The establishment of these papers were, nevertheless, informed primarily by the recognition, within publishing companies, of the economic benefits of targeting black markets. In general, editorial staff were careful to steer clear of controversial political issues, and it is proposed that they adopted this stance in order to avoid contributing to discontent amongst their audience (Switzer & Switzer, 1979:10).

The literature notes that the South African Broadcasting Company (SABC) also formed an important part of the journalistic landscape of the 1950's and 1960's. Under the National Party government, the broadcaster had moved away from the liberalism of its roots within the British public broadcasting model. Principles of objective journalism were increasingly abandoned, supposedly in the interest of national security (Hayman & Tomaselli, 1989: 63). Commentators note, indeed, that by the 1960's, SABC News and Current Affairs reflected the ruling ideology, and served primarily as propaganda (Tomaselli & Tomaselli, 1989:91).

Again, as in the case of universities, the landscape of journalism is described as experiencing significant changes from the mid-1970's into the 1980's. Within broadcasting, these changes involved the introduction of television services (Tomaselli & Tomaselli, 1987:109). It is argued that this expansion represented an intensification of the government's investment in communication systems that could be controlled by the state and which could operate as vehicles for propaganda. At the same time, from the 1970s onwards, the South African economy was slipping into a recession which impacted heavily on newspapers. Indeed, the period between 1976 and the early 80's is identified as the beginning of a rapid transformation of the South African press into an industry that could operate within a highly competitive market. Before this, newspapers had been somewhat protected from economic realities (Jackson, 1993:70). Commentators note, at the same time, spaces began to open up within mainstream English newspapers for the articulation of a more critical approach to the representation of South African society. In these environments, there was a growth in critical, investigative journalism, exemplified by the approach adopted by the *Rand Daily Mail*. The literature notes that labour reporters played a key role within the development of such journalism, introducing a more in-depth, process-oriented approach to reporting. It is pointed out however, that such journalism began to decline with the closure of many of these papers – including the *Rand Daily Mail* – in the mid-1980's (Tomaselli & Tomaselli, 1987:69).

The literature also notes that during the same period, in the black press, black editors were granted more and more editorial control. Furthermore, white English and Afrikaans papers increasingly sought to employ black journalists. Commentators propose that both of these tendencies were informed by an increasing awareness of the importance of accessing journalists who had experience and knowledge of communities who were directly involved in the resistance struggle. It is

suggested that, in many of these papers, such journalists were defined as ‘information gatherers’ rather than ‘journalistic professionals’. They provided, in other words, ‘raw’ knowledge that could then be transformed into news products by subeditors (Maughan, 2004). There was, however, growing dissatisfaction amongst such journalists with the position that they were expected to occupy within news production processes. They objected, in particular, to the conciliatory policies of editors, and the compromises that the newspapers’ management were prepared to make in their approach to critical journalism. The literature suggests, indeed, that black journalists were becoming radicalised, influenced in particular by ideas drawn from the Black Consciousness movement (Tomaselli & Tomaselli, 1987:52-53) Many joined the Media Workers Association of South Africa (MWASA), which became an important platform for the articulation of alternative approaches to journalism. MWASA pledged themselves to what they referred to as a commitment to journalism that “rejected ideological controls such as the principle of ‘objectivity’” (quoted in Tomaselli & Tomaselli, 1987:56). They criticised the rhetoric of neutrality of the mainstream press, which was seen as a smokescreen for the maintenance of news sanctioning an oppressive political order (Louw & Tomaselli, 1991:10).

Through the activist work of journalists attached to MWASA, a left-wing community press movement emerged. The newspaper *Grassroots*, established in 1980, is cited as a key example of such journalism. The content of this paper was put together in a participatory fashion in five- or six-week cycles, through the facilitation of intensive debates within communities (Louw & Tomaselli, 1991:7). The literature suggests, however, that such journalism was a 1980’s phenomenon, and that the participatory approaches in which it was based did not survive in the years that followed. It has been argued that the community press movement served primarily as vehicles for building popular support for the anti-apartheid struggle. When, at the beginning of the 1990’s, the political organisation of this struggle reached an advanced stage and reform became inevitable, the alternative press seemed to lose its purpose (Louw & Tomaselli, 1991:226). From the mid-1980’s onwards, critical journalism took place in context of independent left-wing commercial papers such as the *Weekly Mail* and the *Vrye Weekblad*. However, unlike the community press, these papers were no longer strongly connected to participative methods of production. Although they still formed part of the critical ferment of this period, they had reverted to the mainstream model of a journalism of objectivity (Tomaselli & Tomaselli, 1987:69).

Discussions of the contemporary media landscape (Barnett, 1999; Duncan, 2001; De Beer & Steyn, 2004) suggest that since the late 1980’s a critical approach to journalism has been in decline. Again, as in the case of the universities, these discussions refer to the impact of discourses of nation building and the rise of neo-liberal ideology. It is suggested that, within the current situation, journalism is losing much of its relevance within the public domain. One manifestation of this trend, within both print and broadcast organisations, has been the tendency to respond to economic pressures by ‘outsourcing’ content generation. By the beginning of the 1990’s an environment that enabled a

powerful critical journalism was under serious threat.<sup>31</sup> One can identify, within this, a crisis of credibility within South African journalism.

Another manifestation of the decline in a critical approach to journalism is identified in the decreasing authority of journalists within negotiations around the nature of South African journalism. One reason for this trend is traced to the dramatic reduction of journalistic staff that has been taking place in newsrooms since the 1980's. As a result, newsrooms have experienced a process of 'juniorisation'. The authority of journalists has also been affected by the restructuring of the organisational bodies through which journalism was previously represented. MWASA was replaced by the non-racial South African Union of Journalists (SAUJ) in 1990, and this organisation no longer positioned itself as key to the discussions that were taking place around the future of journalism. Instead, this debate was defined by editors, senior journalists and media academics within the forum offered by the South African Editor's Forum (SANEF) (Steenveld, 2006:290). We saw that, in the late 1970's, there was a close interconnection between critical journalism and the labour movement. It would seem that, from the 1990's onwards, this connection has effectively been severed.

It would seem, then, that the approach to knowledge production within South African universities and journalism are characterised by shared patterns of development. In each instance, it is possible to identify similar shifts in the way in which these institutions positioned themselves, as producers of knowledge, in relation to changes taking place in their social context. These shifts led to the formation of a deeply divided landscape, with different systems of knowledge production identifying with contrasting political agendas. Within the spectrum of approaches to knowledge that emerged, it is possible to identify the emergence of traditions that established a relationship of critical engagement with the social forces that surrounded them. The dominant relationship nevertheless remained one of instrumental service, first in relation to the apartheid state, and then to economic interest. The discussion, below, explores the way in which these developments are understood to have impacted on the history of the university-based study of journalism in this country.

## **6.2 The study of journalism in South African universities**

This section deals with the history of the study of journalism in South African universities. The first subsection focuses on scholarship about journalism, and also refers to the study of media and communication more generally. This discussion is included on the assumption that the production of knowledge on these subjects forms an important reference point for an examination of developments within journalism education. The second subsection describes the establishment and expansion of journalism education in this country. Both discussions draw on literature dealing with the South

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<sup>31</sup> An important exception to this pattern is the establishment in the 1990's of the community radio movement. The South African state has committed itself – at least in principle – to the development of this sector, and despite the challenges that stations have faced since their inception, they remain an important potential site for the production of critical journalism. Another exception may be represented by the rise of tabloid journalism in South Africa. Many of these papers have successfully targeted working class and black audiences, and illustrated that a vibrant journalism is still possible in South Africa. They may also represent an important potential site of critical production.

African history of research and teaching about journalism, as well as interviews conducted with scholars and educators who have contributed to this body of literature. Interviews were conducted, for this purpose, with Arnold De Beer, Anthony Giffard, Eric Louw, Pieter Fourie, Les Switzer and Anton Harber. These individuals were identified both because they have written about journalism research and education in South Africa, and because each of them had contributed in important ways to the development of the academic traditions that formed part of this history.

The discussion draws on the perspectives offered by these commentators in order to piece together a description of the history of South African journalism scholarship and education. As noted in the introduction to this chapter, the goal is not to achieve an accurate reconstruction of the South African history of such education. The discussion sets out, rather, to identify shared readings of this history in the literature and interviews, which point to questions about the way in which global and local circumstances have impacted on journalism education in this country. It also attempts to make sense of this description in context of the account that has been provided, in Section One of this chapter, of the broader history of systems of knowledge production in South Africa.

It is possible to detect a shared understanding, within the literature and interviews, of the periodisation of the South African history of journalism scholarship and education. Both subsections, below, have been organised around three historical phases that are identified within this understanding. The first is that of the 1960's and 1970's, which is portrayed by commentators as a period in which the study of journalism became institutionalised in a selective group of universities. It is noted that, within the first decade of this period, the only example of such institutionalisation occurred at the University of Potchefstroom. From the 1970's onward, however, such study expanded, and it is suggested that this was due to a growth of interest by the government in the role that communication strategies could play in the maintenance of the authority of the apartheid state. The second phase spans from the mid-1970's to the early 1990's and is identified as a time in which developments in the academic study of journalism became strongly informed by the South African history of resistance against the state. The final phase is that of the late 1990's and 2000's which is understood, again, to represent a period in the history of the study of journalism framed by processes of reconstruction within the broader environment of South African society. It is argued, in the discussion below, that each period was characterised by distinct shifts, in research and education about journalism, to the conceptualisation of the nature and purpose of authoritative social knowledge.

### 6.2.1 South African journalism scholarship

There is general agreement amongst commentators that South African scholarship about journalism, as it has developed since the 1960's, has been profoundly shaped by the political history of this country. Apartheid and its aftermath is, in particular, understood to have impacted in unique ways on the identity of scholarship. Such impact is observed, for example, in the subject matter of research, resulting in particular sections of scholarship in a strong focus on questions of social justice and



freedom (Steenveld, 2004:1; Fourie, 2010a). It is also argued that the socio-political environment that has existed in South Africa over this time differed in important ways from that of the contexts from which the most prominent traditions in the study of journalism, media and communication had emerged internationally. Reference is made, in particular, to the role that relations of power have played in the shaping of society. Commentators point out that South Africa had for long been a society in which a minority held power, achieved through violent dispossession and exploitation and maintained through high levels of social control. This society is also described as one in which extreme inequality and intense conflict continues to be a reality. It is suggested that, because of this, South African researchers have been faced with unique challenges in assimilating concepts drawn from the international traditions of research into the establishment of locally grounded approaches to the study of journalism (Shepperson, 1997:80; De Beer & Tomaselli, 2000:9; Tomaselli, 2012).

Many commentators also point out that scholarship about journalism in this country has itself for long been characterised by separation and conflict, with the existence of sharp fissures between different communities of research. The fractured nature of this research landscape is understood to be expressive of the structured divisions that have characterised the South African university system as a result of apartheid history, as discussed in Section One of this chapter. A polarisation is observed between research that emerged from those universities that defined themselves in support of the South African government, and those that understood themselves to be involved in a struggle against apartheid. It is noted that the schism between these research communities worked against the achievement, in this country, of a coherent research platform for journalism (Fourie, 2010a:149-150). The construction and maintenance of such divisions, and eventual attempts to dismantle them, is often presented as the defining characteristic of the history of research about journalism, media and communication in this country.

The discussion, below, demonstrates how these contextual factors are understood to have impacted on journalism research at each stage of its development. It is argued that each period is characterised by shifts in the conceptualisation of the nature and purpose of authoritative social knowledge. These shifts are expressive of a tension that existed, within this disciplinary history, between the recognition that knowledge about society is necessarily subjective and grounded in socio-political context, and commitment to the ideal of objective and universally relevant truth. The discussion suggests that, even despite these shifts in conceptualisation, the ideal of knowledge as objective and universal truth has remained dominant throughout this history.

#### *6.2.1.1 The 1960's and 1970's: From normative to administrative knowledge*

The history of South African journalism research in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century is described, in the literature and interviews, as sparse and fragmented. It is noted that, during this time, the main examples of academic research are represented by dissertations produced by postgraduate students in subjects such as political science and history. The first sustained tradition in the study of journalism



is, then, associated with the establishment of journalism education in 1959 at University of Potchefstroom, which forms part of the group of Afrikaans-language institutions referred to in Section One of this chapter (De Beer & Tomaselli, 2000:11). Commentators explain that this research was based in normative media theory and with this an interest in role that media should ideally play in society (Fourie, 2010b:174). Reference is made to Calvyn Snyman, who is described as making important contributions to the articulation of the foundations of such research, particularly in the context of work dealing with journalistic ethics and morality. It is explained that Snyman studied in Europe and was therefore knowledgeable about the field of ‘press science’ which at this time was already well developed in Belgium, the Netherlands and Germany. He drew attention, at Potchefstroom, to a European tradition in the theorisation of journalism which dealt with media history, law and ethics (De Beer, 1980; De Beer 1995; De Beer & Tomaselli, 2000:9). It is suggested, however, that this tradition of research did not achieve the “research rigour” that could be observed within the original Dutch and German traditions on which it drew (Botha & De Beer, 2006:2; Botha & De Beer, 2007).

At the beginning of the 1970’s, further impetus for journalism research was created when educational programmes were launched at three more Afrikaans universities – those of UNISA, RAU and UOFS (De Beer, 1978:32).<sup>32</sup> These programmes did not deal exclusively with journalism, focusing more generally on communication as a teaching subject. Commentators suggest that they were established at least partly in response to a growth of interest, by the South African government, in the role that communication strategies could play in the maintenance of the authority of the apartheid state. It is explained that, at this time, there was growing concern within the regime about the role that the English-language press was playing in reporting on South African politics. There was also unease about the way that the international press was portraying political events in South Africa. As a result, the government now began to encourage communication-related research and teaching that could support the agendas of the apartheid state (Interview: De Beer, 2008).

The literature and interviews suggest that, during the 1970’s, the heads of department of all three programmes played an important role in determining the kind of research that was produced on journalism and communication more generally. The programme at RAU was headed by Tom de Koning, while Hendrik (Bok) Marais was head of department at UOFS. At UNISA, the first two heads of department were F. W. Blyngaardt and then Hennie Fourie (De Beer & Tomaselli, 2000:15). Under the leadership of these individuals, the approach that emerged to the authoritative study of journalism and communication was strongly defined by the ideals of objective and universally relevant knowledge. The articulation of this approach was informed by concepts and methods drawn from positivist social science. De Koning, for example, is noted to have had a degree in social

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<sup>32</sup> It would seem that there was a deliberate decision, at this time, not to begin a programme at the Universities of Stellenbosch or Pretoria (Interview, Fourie: 2008). The exclusion of Stellenbosch may have had to do with differences that existed between Afrikaans Nationalist universities in the Western Cape and the more Northern universities, who were more closely aligned with government, and saw themselves more explicitly as contributing to industry.

psychology from the University of Michigan, and to have worked within the positivist epistemological paradigm that is typically associated with American social science of the post-war years. His approach included a strong emphasis on linguistics, psychological linguistics and cybernetics (Interview: De Beer, 2008). By the mid-1970's, a tradition of 'Communication Science' had begun to emerge in these universities, based in the American approach to mass communication scholarship, and particularly in 'effects' studies. The production of research was slow to gain momentum, so that it was only towards the end of the 1970's, and especially after the mid-1980's, that researchers began to publish sustained scholarship in South African journals such as *Communicatio*, *Communicare* and *Ecquid Novi* (Tomaselli, 2005:33). The foundations of the Communication Science tradition was, nevertheless, in place by the mid-1970's. In articulating these foundations, De Koning and his colleagues are seen to have broken with the normative approach to research that had been established at Potchefstroom in context of 'perswetenskap', relocating the study of journalism and communication firmly within the realm of positivist and empirical social science (De Beer & Tomaselli, 2000:15).

Within this first period of the South African history of the study of journalism it is possible, then, to observe an initial acceptance of the importance of values and norms to the conceptualisation of social research. This position is, then, deliberately rejected and replaced by an approach in which social interest is firmly separated from methods of empirical inquiry.

#### *6.2.1.2 The mid-1970's to early 1990's: A landscape of conflicting paradigms*

Section One of this chapter describes the mid-1970's as a period characterised by dramatic intensification in the contestation of the hegemony of apartheid ideology. On one hand, there was an increasingly confident and widespread public expression of resistance to the state. On the other hand, the South African government responded to expressions of dissent with growing intolerance, and with more and more elaborate strategies of social engineering. Commentators note that there was, within these strategies, recognition of the role that media played as a site in which the authority of the official representation of South African society was contested. The state's tactics therefore included a clampdown on freedom of the press and the establishment of extensive communication campaigns in support of the apartheid system. It is suggested that it was in context of these shifts within the broader political environment that one should, for example, understand the expansion of Communication Science to the University of Zululand and Fort Hare University (Interview: De Beer, 2008).

Commentators note that from this time onwards, a much wider spectrum of approaches to the study of journalism and communication can be identified within South African universities. It is generally argued that the polarisation of this landscape of research, and the depth of the distinctions between different approaches, were expressive of the intensification of conflict within the broader political context. Each of these approaches was based in a different research paradigm, and also positioned differently in relation to politics of resistance and to the strategies of control adopted by the

state. Each is also, then, informed by a different conceptualisation of the nature and purpose of authoritative knowledge about society. At one end of this spectrum, the study of communication, media and journalism is based in a positivist paradigm, and with this the ideal of objective and universally relevant knowledge. It is, furthermore, a tradition that establishes its own identity and credibility through an emphasis on rigorous empirical method rather than reference to theoretical concepts. The purpose of such study is understood in functionalist terms, as the production of knowledge that can assist in the effective functioning of social systems. At the other end, research is understood to be socially constructed, and necessarily framed by relations of power and ideological interest. This tradition, in contrast to that of communication science, is described as being theory-driven rather than method-driven. The purpose of the academic study of the South African media is understood, from this position, to be that of critical analysis, guided by commitment to progressive social change.

The positivist tradition of communication science, described above, can be located at one end of this spectrum. Descriptions of such research identify a number of responses within this tradition to the shifts that were taking place in the South African political context. One response was that of direct support of the state's communication strategies. Examples of such studies include content analysis of coverage of the South African political situation in the foreign press, produced by parastatal organisations (De Beer & Tomaselli, 2000:17). It is noted that a similar approach to research was also encouraged at UNISA, under the leadership of Hennie Fourie, who became Head of Department in the mid-1970's. The research produced in this context operated in direct support of the political agendas of the South African government, more so than earlier traditions of study at UNISA (Interview: Fourie, 2000). University-based research at RAU and UOFS are described, in contrast, as characterised by some degree of condemnation of the state's intolerance to criticism by the media, and particularly the infringement of freedom of the press. It is nevertheless suggested that the academic community involved in this tradition still stopped short of acknowledging the extreme inequalities and conflict that characterised South African society. They remained unable, in other words, of confronting the realities of the South African political context and retreated, instead, into "ivory tower idealism" (De Beer & Tomaselli, 2000:16-17).

Criticism of the Communication Science tradition often suggests that this failure to engage critically with social context can be related to the functionalist conceptualisation of society that framed such research. Within this conceptualisation, the fundamental systems on which society was based are placed beyond critique, on the unspoken assumption that they form part of an ordered system that necessarily operates in the best interest of public good. The role of research, within this conceptualisation, is a technician and administrative one, providing knowledge that will enhance the functioning of these social systems. Communication Science is understood to have inherited this conceptualisation from American Mass Communication Studies, along with the concepts and methods that it borrowed from this field. It is argued that this orientation placed severe limitations on the level

of analysis that was present within such research, and therefore on its ability to engage critically with forces operating in the surrounding social system. A central problem was understood to be the absence of critical self-reflection, particularly with regards to acknowledgement of the interests in which research is based. Because of such lack of reflection, researchers did not draw a distinction between studies designed to promote the interests of government or corporate business, and those that served a broader democratic purpose (Fourie, 1990b:281-3).

The mid-1970's is also described as the period in which the study of journalism first became established in English liberal academic environments. The approach to authoritative social knowledge within such research can be seen to be located at the opposite end of the spectrum to that of positivist communication science. In contrast to the research that had become typical of the Afrikaans programmes, such study was characterised by an emphasis on the critical analysis of the structures of the apartheid state (De Beer & Tomaselli, 2000:12). It is explained, in discussions of this scholarship, that it formed part of a more general growth in critical studies of the South African social environment at English liberal universities. As noted in Section One of this chapter, such study was stimulated by the circulation within these environments of conceptual frameworks, particularly those of historical materialism, which assisted with the articulation of critical analysis of South African society. Another reason that is identified for the growth of such study is that, at this time, the South African English-speaking community was marginalised from the political sphere. The institutions of Afrikanerdom were engaged in a power struggle with the black majority, and English liberals found themselves excluded from debate and looking on from the side lines. Because of this, academic environments gained particular significance to English liberals, as spaces in which to give expression to their resistance to the state (Interview: Giffard, 2008; Interview: Louw, 2008). English liberal universities nevertheless generally remained opposed to the idea of journalism or media more generally as an appropriate subject of study. One reason suggested for this is that such study was associated with the Afrikaans communication departments, and therefore with co-option by the apartheid state. The idea that the media could be appropriated by liberal academic institutions as a site of resistance to apartheid was not well established (Tomaselli, 2012:16). Critical studies of journalism and media more generally nevertheless began to emerge sporadically at departments of literature, sociology and education at the Universities of Cape Town, Witwatersrand, and Natal and Rhodes. There were, also, two important sites for the formation of a coherent tradition of critical media research. The first was the Department of Journalism at Rhodes, which had been established at the start of the 1970's and housed the only English journalism education programme in the country at this time.<sup>33</sup> In the mid-1980's, this tradition was further consolidated with the establishment of the Centre for Culture and Communication Studies (CCMS) at the University of Natal under the leadership of Keyan Tomaselli (De Beer & Tomaselli, 2000:12).

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<sup>33</sup> It is noted, for example, that the 'Survival of the Press Conference' hosted in 1979 by the Department of Journalism at Rhodes University helped to establish momentum around the establishment of a South African tradition in the critical study of media (Tomaselli, 2005:34).

In contrast to communication science, the tradition of critical scholarship that emerged from these environments defined itself as a response to the need for radical social change within the South African socio-political sphere. It also understood itself to operate in support of the mass movement of resistance to the apartheid state (Shepperson 1997:79; Muller & Tomaselli, 1989; Tomaselli & Louw 1993). Commentators nevertheless note that in the early stages of the development of this tradition, the focus tended to be on an analysis of the structures of power, rather than the possibility of social change. It is explained that the academics who produced this research struggled to articulate a conceptual language within the context of Marxist theory that could come to grips with the role that a politics of resistance was playing in the South African context. Conceptual resources for such analysis was eventually identified in the early 1980's in materialist analysis of history that acknowledged the role played by the construction of meaning within contestation of hegemony, through the work of Althusser and Gramsci. Media researchers also drew on intellectual resources that engaged with social contexts outside that of America and Europe, particularly the Latin American scholarship of academic activists such as Paulo Freire and Armand Mattelart (Tomaselli, 2012:15; Shepperson, 1997:79-80). Also of importance was the appropriation of critical theory within the field of British Cultural Studies, particularly in context of semiotic analysis. In such scholarship, South African academics identified concepts that allowed them to combine the analysis of political economy with that of the operation of ideology in the construction of social meaning. Through the use of such conceptual resources, they were able to explain the role played by the media as a site in which authoritative knowledge about society was negotiated by forces of oppression as well as those of resistance. (De Beer & Tomaselli, 2000:17). In this way, it became possible to produce research that operated as a critique of 'mainstream' media, as well as studies that explored the role that the alternative media could play in facilitating social change. The CCMS, in particular, defined its own purpose as working with the mass democratic movement in order to develop approaches to media that could challenge the hegemonic structures of the state. Such studies placed a strong emphasis on participatory research methods, and conceptualised of the research process as a form of social action (Shepperson, 1997:79-80; De Beer & Tomaselli, 2000:17; Tomaselli, 2012:23;).

Between these two points of extreme opposition, it is then possible to observe other traditions of research that aligned themselves to a greater or lesser extent with critical engagement. Each of these traditions can also be seen to have made attempts to negotiate a balance, in their approach to research, to acknowledgement of the socially constructed nature of knowledge and adherence to the ideal of objective and systematic scrutiny. It is noted, for example, that in the 1980's, a more 'analytical' approach to the positivist study of communication was established at RAU and Potchefstroom. This approach can be seen to be located further along the spectrum of available positions to that of the Communication Science tradition described above, associating itself with positivism but also adopting aspects of socially situated scholarship. The approach was established largely through the efforts of Prof A. S. De Beer, who was head of department at RAU between 1982

and 1989, and then took up the headship of the communications programme at Potchefstroom until 1998. De Beer's work, like that of the South African communication scientists before him, was framed by the American functionalist approach to the study of communication, but he drew attention to intellectual resources within this field that lent themselves to a greater acknowledgement of the importance of value systems to the study of media. He referred, in particular, to normative media theory such as that of Denis McQuail, and with this to the importance of debating the perceived and ideal roles that the media play in society. The emphasis, in his work, was on acknowledgement of the social responsibility of the press, the need to consider the intensions that motivate journalism as a social practice and the consequences that stem from such practice (De Beer & Tomaselli, 2000:13; Interview: De Beer, 2008). The assumption remained, however, that the normative study of media needed to base itself within the 'objective' methods of empirical social science. For such research to be "scientifically correct", it needed, in other words, to maintain a position of objectivity, and not embroil itself directly in socio-political issues (De Beer & Tomaselli, 2000:16). The historical materialist study of media was described, from this position, as a "subjective" approach, which did not meet all the requirements of "objective" science (Tomaselli, 2004:212).

A second position that can be identified within the 'middle range' of the spectrum of research traditions was also articulated in the 1980's and has been described both as existentialist and interpretative in its orientation. It is an approach that is strongly associated with scholarship at UNISA and particularly with contributions made first by M. B. Van Schoor and later Koos Roelofse and Pieter Fourie (De Beer & Tomaselli, 2000:14). This tradition is described as being in direct conflict with the approach to research that had been adopted by Hennie Fourie. It is noted, in this respect, that Van Schoor's approach to the study of communication was informed by hermeneutics. Whereas Hennie Fourie understood the study of communication to be in service of current social institutions, Van Schoor's emphasis was on independent research (Interview: Fourie, 2008). Van Schoor is described as an intellectual who did not identify with National Party politics, and who recognised the need for political change. It is nevertheless noted that he remained conservative in his practice as an academic, and was openly hostile to the idea of engagement that informed leftist university politics at this time. The form of criticism that Van Schoor stood for is described as that of the withdrawn philosopher, concerned with ethics in abstract. It is argued, further, that under Van Schoor's leadership this stance would come to permeate the UNISA school of communication; a sense of observing what was happening not through engagement, but by 'standing above' the world. Because of this deliberate disengagement, this approach did not challenge the conservative instrumentalism that informed research practices at UNISA (Interview: Louw, 2008). It is also suggested that this may explain why the interpretative tradition at UNISA did not find itself in direct conflict with the broader community of communication scientists at Afrikaans universities. This research tradition was, in other words, tolerated by the Communication Science establishment because of its "non-political" stance, and particularly the fact that it did not define itself in terms of direct



involvement with the mass democratic struggle. As such, it was seen to provide an acceptable alternative, as an example of critical research, to the neo-Marxist scholarship associated with English liberal universities (De Beer & Tomaselli, 2000:16).

It is explained, in descriptions of this spectrum of research, that there was very little possibility for communication or exchange of ideas between the different research communities. The critical tradition tended to define itself in opposition to positivist communication science. In doing so, it mostly responded to the more 'administrative' element within such research, describing this as an alliance between the apartheid government and sectors of the academic community, designed to legitimate apartheid (De Beer & Tomaselli, 2000:12-15). Academics working within the positivist and interpretivist paradigms tended, in turn, largely to ignore critical media studies. It is pointed out, for example, that although reviews of communication scholarship was articulated from within critical media studies, the communications science community tended not to engage with this, and did not comment on critical scholarship (Tomaselli & Shepperson, 1999:238; Tomaselli, 2004:211). When they did acknowledge the critical tradition, this was mostly to dismiss such scholarship as unscientific, and thus unable to produce reliable, objective data (De Beer, 2004:362-3).

Commentators note that from the 1980's onwards there have been attempts by members of the academic community to confront these divisions. It is noticeable that some of these attempts came from individuals who positioned themselves within the 'middle range' of the available spectrum of approaches to authoritative knowledge. One individual that is identified in this way is De Beer, who is described as making important contributions to reflection on the disciplinary history of the South African study of communication (Tomaselli, 2004:211). It is noted, for example, that De Beer regularly organised subject-related meetings to assist the Communication Science community in taking stock of its own disciplinary identity (Tomaselli, 2004:211). Furthermore, in 1980, De Beer established *Ecquid Novi*, a journal dedicated to developing journalism as an academic discipline. Although the majority of articles published in this journal fell within the communication science paradigm, De Beer also made an effort to include material from alternative sources, both locally and internationally. This material included examples of the critical study of media, and De Beer also involved academics who represented such scholarship on the editorial board of the journal. In this way, he contributed to the stimulation of cross-paradigm debate amongst South African academics involved in the study of journalism (Tomaselli & Shepperson, 2002; Wasserman, 2004:180; Tomaselli, 2004). It is noted, however, that *Ecquid Novi* did not include editorials commenting on this material in a way that could give direction to debate. The absence of such editorial comment is described as characteristic of South African journals dealing with the study of communication during



this period, and is seen to have limited the degree of critical reflection on the identity of the field (Tomaselli, 2004:220).<sup>34</sup>

Commentators also point to Pieter Fourie, who became head of department of communication at UNISA in the late 1980's. Like De Beer, Fourie is described as facilitating debate between different approaches to the study of media and communication in South Africa. It is noted that, at a conference hosted in 1987 by the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC)<sup>35</sup> dealing with knowledge and method in the human sciences, Fourie presented a critique of the HSRC's approach to research about communication. He pointed, in particular, to the administrative nature of such studies and the tendency to focus on effects studies, and proposed that such work was lacking in an explicit reflection on theory and therefore in analytical rigour (De Beer & Tomaselli, 2000:13). His intervention is described as one of the few examples of explicit acknowledgement from within the Afrikaans academic community of the need for more critical media scholarship (De Beer & Tomaselli, 2000:13). In a paper published in 1990, Fourie suggested that one reason for the lack of theoretical analysis within the Communication Science tradition was the emphasis, within the environments in which such research was generated, on service to dominant social forces, particularly through vocational training. He argued generally that there was a need for more critical media research, and pointed out that such scholarship was in fact being produced within English liberal universities. He also describes the lack of communication within different communities of media and communication scholars in South Africa, noting that the "... spirit of scholarly debate seems curiously muted". Fourie argued that this was restricting the possibility of a coherent disciplinary identity for the study of media and communication in this country (Fourie, 1990b:282-283).

This second period in the study of journalism in South Africa is characterised, then, by the articulation of a wide spectrum of approaches to the conceptualisation of the nature and purpose of authoritative social knowledge. The relationship between these approaches was defined, furthermore, by incommensurability, and an unwillingness to engage with each other.

### *6.2.1.3 The mid-1990's onward: New dialogue, shifting perspectives*

In descriptions of journalism scholarship in South Africa from the mid-1990's onwards, it is repeatedly pointed out that both journalism and universities were now operating within a legitimate democratic state. It is noted, at the same time, that this was also a social environment in which a neo-liberal economic direction was becoming the norm (Steenveld et al, 2012:3). These changes are understood to have led to adjustments in the approaches that are adopted to research about journalism, media and communication.

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<sup>34</sup> In the late 1990's, De Beer was also the only media academic from within the Afrikaans academic community who chose to testify at the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). He reflected, in his submission, on his own political location within the communication science paradigm (Tomaselli, 2004:227).

<sup>35</sup> The Human Sciences Research Council is a statutory body that conducts large-scale social scientific research projects. It was established in 1968.

Commentators argue, in particular, that although media and communication research produced in South African universities continued to be defined in terms of the spectrum of traditions described above, the differences between these approaches became less stark than they had been in the past. There emerged, for example, a greater tendency towards dialogue between members of different research communities, with particular emphasis on the conceptualisation of credible social knowledge in the research context (Wasserman, 2004:180). One instance of such debate is in fact identified as already occurring at the beginning of the 1990's in an interchange in the journal *Communicare* between De Beer and Tomaselli about the relationship between different paradigms of media research in South Africa (De Beer, 1989; Tomaselli & Louw, 1993). Tomaselli describes this as a debate in which he challenged the inherent 'scientism' of the Communication Science paradigm, while De Beer questioned the lack of methodological rigour in historical materialist and cultural studies of media (Tomaselli, 2004:212). Ten years later, De Beer and Tomaselli collaborated in the publication of an overview of the history of such paradigms in South African journalism and media scholarship (De Beer & Tomaselli, 2000). Tomaselli presents this study as an example of how academics located in different paradigms are able to "negotiate their differences" in order to establish coherence within their field of study (Tomaselli, 2004:228). Tomaselli himself has, since this time, continued to play an important role in facilitating the exchange of ideas between different factions within the South African community of media and communication scholars. He has done so, in particular, through his work as president of the South African Communication Association (Sacomm), which had previously been an association exclusive to Communication Science scholars (Wasserman, 2004:179; De Beer, 2004:363)

It would seem, furthermore, that there has been a greater tendency within the different research traditions to focus on a shared set of social issues and questions, relating to changes taking place within the South African media landscape. In discussions of these research themes, it is pointed out that the social processes examined in such scholarship are no longer only those that are specific to the South African context and the aftermath of apartheid. Research about localised processes of change have remained on the agenda, particularly in context of examination of the implications of changes in policy and ownership structures for the role that the South African media plays in processes of political transition (Tomaselli & Nothling, 2008:331). At the same time, a growing number of studies have dealt with the impact that global processes of social change have had on the local media environment. One such research theme is represented by studies dealing with the 'commercialisation' of South African media. A second theme is that of the technological transformation of South African media and the related processes of digitalisation and convergence. A third can be seen in research dealing with the perceived 'crisis' in the South African community of journalistic practice, and as part of this increasing concerns about the future of print media and 'quality' journalism (Tomaselli, & Nothling, 2008:337; Fourie, 2010a:164).

It is also noted that political positioning has become of lesser importance in distinguishing between the different research traditions. In previous decades, the stance that each research community adopted with regards to either support or critique of the established social system was a defining indicator of difference. From the mid-1990's onwards, however, examples of studies produced in support of strategies of the state are observed to be located across the different research traditions. Even the critical tradition in media studies no longer positioned itself purely in terms of oppositional critique to the oppressive structures and strategies of the state. The CCMS, for example, responded to requests from the new government to produce research that could assist in processes of democratisation and development (Tomaselli, 2012). Such research was, at the same time, also produced by researchers who formed part of the Afrikaans university community of communication scientists (Fourie, 2010a).

Commentators also note that, from the mid-1990's onwards, the conceptual frameworks of critical media studies were assimilated within a much broader range of academic environments. Whereas research informed by these frameworks had previously only been produced within English-language environments, they were now becoming a standard reference point within the community of communication scholars (Tomaselli & Shepperson, 1998:89; Tomaselli & Shepperson 1999:238). It is suggested that one reason for the broadening circulation of such concepts is that researchers were attempting to find new conceptual languages in which to make sense of the ways in which global processes of social change were now impacting on South African society (Tomaselli & Shepperson, 1999:241). It is also pointed out, however, that critical concepts tended to be adopted within these environments in 'instrumentalist' terms. They could, in other words, circulate in academic environments that were previously hostile to them because they have been separated from their original political purpose (Tomaselli, & Shepperson, 1999:238-9). It is also suggested that, within environments with a strong focus on journalism education rather than communication, there was still strong resistance to critical media theory (De Beer, 1998, cited in Tomaselli & Shepperson, 1998:90).

Commentators suggest, however, that division between different conceptualisations of authoritative knowledge about the social remains a concern within the South African academic community. Whereas this division had, up to this point, been framed as an opposition between different research communities, the distinction was now between teachers of journalism and those involved in the academic study of media. Reference is made, in this context, to the 'Windschuttle debate' of the late 1990's which, as we saw in Chapter Five, refers to a dispute that took place amongst journalism teachers and media scholars in Australia [see pg. 166]. This debate was followed with interest by South African media and communication scholars, and some of their responses were presented in an issue of *Ecquid Novi* (Strelitz & Steenveld, 1998; Shepperson & Tomaselli, 1998). These responses suggest that the Windschuttle debate resonated with problems that the writers continued to identify within the local scholarly community with regards to status of the critical study of media. Their comments suggest, in particular, that the unacceptability of such study now no longer

derived from the role that it played in a critique of the state and that the debate was no longer couched in terms of an opposition between different approaches to academic research about journalism or media. Instead, commentators refer to a tendency, amongst journalism educators who specialised in teaching students about the production of media, to reject the role that critical media studies plays in preparing students for a career in journalism. The suggestion is, furthermore, that such hostility can be seen to derive at least partly from anxiety about the extent to which theory drawn from cultural studies and media studies has become generally integrated within the academic study of media (Tomaselli & Shepperson, 1999:238; Tomaselli, 2004:225; Wasserman, 2004:181; Tomaselli, 2012:16).

It would seem at the same time that the approach adopted within critical media studies to the conceptualisation of social knowledge continued to be viewed with caution by the Communication Science community. De Beer, for example, despite his willingness to engage with such scholarship, remained critical of its conceptual foundations. He pointed out that while critical studies provide tools for analysing the role that media plays within relations of power, such work tends to stop short of offering solutions to the problems that it identifies in this way. He describes such studies as being “rich in words” but unable to present “realistic and pragmatic pointers” (De Beer & Tomaselli, 2000:19). Even if the distinctions between different traditions of research has become less acute within this period, it remains possible, then, to still identify an opposition between a perspective based in the reification of objective social knowledge and one which is fundamentally critical of this position, and understands knowledge as the construction of meaning.

Indeed, in literature dealing with the most recent period in the history of South African journalism and media scholarship, reference is still made to two strands of scholarship, each existing within its own paradigm. On the one hand, there is the more dominant strand of scholarship based within a quantitative approach to empirical inquiry and an administrative identity. Such scholarship includes a focus on studies in content analysis, audience surveys and also surveys of media practitioners dealing, for example, with their perceptions of their own professional identity. The theoretical foundation of such work continues to be based in systems theory and, in context of journalism-specific research, on concepts such as gatekeeping, news values, and framing (Fourie, 2010b:158). On the other hand, there are those studies that approach journalism and media as the social construction of meaning. Within such scholarship, it is still possible to identify a strong emphasis on the political economy of the media and the operation of culture and ideology in the production of media texts (Fourie, 2010a:151-2).

It is noted, at the same time, that within this second strand of scholarship, there is an increasing focus on semiotic analysis and discourse analysis, as methods of study. Researchers are, furthermore, beginning to produce comparative studies, including examinations of the relationship between journalism and democracy in different social environments. It is pointed out that there is also increasing emphasis within such research on the need for a locally grounded approach to questions of

media ethics and normative theory about the role of media in society. This includes an examination of the value of communitarianism as an alternative world view to that of liberal humanism, from which to approach journalism as a social practice. Another research theme is represented by the study of journalism for development and the role that this approach can play as a model of practice in the South African context (Fourie, 2010a:151-2). It is possible to identify, within these developments, a growing emphasis on theorisations of knowledge as a social practice that have the potential to guide practitioners in their daily production of journalism and media more generally. In this way, such research can be seen to have the potential of transcending the limitations of critical media scholarship, as identified in the Windschuttle debate.

### 6.2.2 South African journalism education

It is noticeable from the above discussion that the emergence of scholarship about journalism and communication occurred, in most instances, with the establishment of teaching programmes targeted at the preparation of media and communication practitioners. The history of South African journalism education as it developed within these programmes was, therefore, shaped by similar contextual issues. This next section serves as an examination of the way in which commentators describe this educational history. It will be demonstrated, in the discussion, that the shifts in the conceptualisation of authoritative social knowledge that have been noted above, in traditions of scholarship, can again be identified in the context of such education.

#### 6.2.2.1 *The 1960's and early 1970's: The beginnings of journalism education*

Commentators note that, until the 1990's, South African university-based journalism education existed almost exclusively within Afrikaans-language institutions. It is proposed, in this chapter, that this pattern of development can be better understood in context of the broader history of South African universities and journalism. We saw, in Section One, that at the time in which journalism education first began in the 1960's, English-language universities still identified with the Scottish university model. It may be that this adherence to traditionalist academic models was one reason why, until quite recently, English universities expressed very little interest in the idea of journalism education. In contrast, as we also saw, Afrikaans-language universities became less concerned from the mid-century onward with the traditional values of the Western university. These universities became central to the intellectual infrastructure of the South African state, and understood their role explicitly in instrumental terms, as serving the interests of dominant social institutions. The emergence of journalism education in Afrikaans universities can perhaps be better understood in context of this tendency.

It is also possible that the early emergence of journalism education in Afrikaans universities can be related to the way in which the Afrikaans press approached the recruitment of their reporting

staff. The literature notes, in this respect, that from the 1960's onwards, these newspapers increasingly prioritised the employment of university graduates. It is explained that, in doing so, they looked for candidates with a general liberal arts background rather than those with degrees in journalism or communication. As such, the growing interest in university graduates cannot be interpreted as an acknowledgement, within the Afrikaans press, of the value of academic knowledge about journalism (De Beer, 1978:31). The suggestion is, nevertheless, that this interest in university education cannot be identified to the same extent in the English-language press (Hachten & Giffard, 1984:181). It would seem that English newspapers did take seriously the need for knowledge acquisition for journalists, but rather than a university education they favoured the idea of 'on-the-job' mentoring and apprenticeship (Prinsloo, 2010:191). The most formalised approach to such training is said to be represented by the cadet programmes organised by the Argus Group, SAAN and later the *Weekly Mail* (Giffard, 1971; Addison, 1997).<sup>36</sup> (Such tendencies may, again, help to explain why journalism education was first initiated within Afrikaans universities.

An examination of the initial history of South African journalism education suggests, however, that interest in the establishment of such education was not widespread, even within Afrikaans institutions. As noted in the previous section, the earliest example of such a programme was launched in 1959 at the University of Potchefstroom (now North-West University).<sup>37</sup> In 1962, there had also been an attempt to introduce journalism education at UNISA, which can, similarly, be regarded as an institution with an Afrikaans identity. It is noted, however, that this initiative did not survive for long, seemingly because there were serious challenges involved in sustaining, in context of distance education, the teaching of a subject that required such a strong emphasis on practical skills. By the end of the decade, UNISA had therefore phased out its diploma in Journalism (Fourie, 1990a:3).<sup>38</sup> As we saw above, a journalism-related programme was then later re-introduced at UNISA in very different terms. It would seem, then, that in this early period the example of journalism

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36 The Argus Group started their cadet school in 1956 and it remained in existence until the 1980's. The programme was well resourced and planned, with cadets drawn from Argus papers across the country. The SAAN programme was more short-lived, existing only for a short period during the 1970's (Giffard, 1971). A cadet school was also run by the Afrikaans group Perskor (Pakendorf 1979). The *Weekly Mail* programme was established soon after the newspaper was established in the mid-1980's (Interview: Harber, 2008). The first three of these programmes prioritised university graduates. These cadets were, however, put through the same basic training programme as candidates with a matric certificate, even if they were students of journalism and mass communications. The suggestion is, therefore, that these cadet schools did not place great store in the kind of knowledge that was imparted to students within journalism and communication programmes. It has been proposed that they operated, in fact, as a 'bridge' or 'filter' between universities and newspapers, to assimilate cadets into the journalistic culture of the papers (Addison, 1997). University knowledge may have been valued, but only at a very generalised level, and needed to be complemented with journalistic knowledge. It is interesting to note that the *Weekly Mail* school, in contrast to the other three cadet programmes, did not target university graduates. They very deliberately sought to draw people into South African journalism who had, until that point, been excluded from channels of access. Harber argues that this programme operated, in fact, as part of the paper's attempts to transform English liberal journalism (Interview, Harber: 2008; Hall, 1979).

37 The Potchefstroom programme was, at first, hosted within the Department of History, but the vision was, from the start, for the establishment of an independent department (Interview: De Beer, 2008).

38 As previously argued, UNISA was a bilingual institution but was nevertheless based in Afrikaner Nationalism. The Department of Journalism, and later the Department of Communication, was staffed primarily by Afrikaans-speaking academics. Some of these academics were more closely aligned with the interests of the Apartheid state than others, but one can assume the dominance of a conservative organisational identity.



education at Potchefstroom existed as an exception to the rule even in the context of Afrikaans institutions.

The early occurrence of university-based journalism education in South Africa was not, furthermore, wholly restricted to Afrikaans institutions. As noted in the previous section, a second programme was launched at Rhodes University in 1969, a decade after the establishment of the Potchefstroom programme (De Beer & Tomaselli, 2000:11). By the early 1970's, the programmes at Potchefstroom and Rhodes still represented the only examples of the successful establishment of journalism education in South Africa. The descriptions that commentators offer of the early histories of these two programmes suggest that they were in some respects informed by very similar interests. It would seem that both programmes were established not because of an institutional initiative from their host universities or the relevant journalistic communities with which they were associated<sup>39</sup>, but rather through the agency of key individuals. The early history of both departments is also described as characterised by an instrumental approach to the teaching of journalism. It is suggested that this approach was informed, in both cases, by a commitment amongst educators to producing graduates who could be assimilated into the existing practices of particular journalistic communities.

In interviews conducted for this research, it is explained that at Potchefstroom, Gert Pienaar and H. L. Swanepoel were central in motivating for the establishment of a journalism education programme. It is further explained that they came from a background in journalism as well as the academy. Pienaar previously worked as a journalist for *Die Transvaler* and *Die Volksblad*, where he had been deputy editor and had a Masters degree in history. Swanepoel had been deputy editor of *Die Transvaler* and had an academic background in law. It would seem that Potchefstroom University was very resistant to the idea of university-based journalism education and that it is likely that it was only because of the substance that Swanepoel brought to the proposal that it was eventually accepted. The thrust of the proposal was that South African journalism was generally shallow, and that in order to raise its standards it ought to be taught within the rigorous theoretical framework offered by a university. It is suggested that this promise of theoretical grounding was an important factor in the university's approval and that the appeal to moral values resonated with the Calvinistic identity of Potchefstroom University. This may be why the proposal was eventually accepted (Interview: De Beer, 2008; Interview: Fourie, 2008).

It is also noted that under the leadership of Pienaar in the years that followed, there was little attempt to by the Journalism Department at Potchefstroom to implement the commitment in this proposal to the transformation of accepted journalistic practices. The teaching programme was designed, rather, to deliver students to the Afrikaans-language press. The Potchefstroom curriculum

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<sup>39</sup> It would seem that there was, nevertheless, general support from the English language press for the idea of a journalism education at Rhodes. As part of the process of developing a curriculum for the Department of Journalism, staff surveyed editors to find out how they believed such a programme should be run. The responses noted in the resulting report indicate widespread approval of the idea (Interview: Giffard, 2008). One would assume the same is true of the Afrikaans press's response to teaching at Potchefstroom.



is described as heavily based on texts that were standard in American journalism education, and which reproduced, in uncritical terms, a mainstream understanding of journalism. It is noted that Pienaar brought into circulation three textbooks which were often used in American journalism education schools. These texts included, for example, F. Fraser Bond's *An Introduction to Journalism* and Wolseley & Campbell's *Exploring Journalism* and then later MacDougall's *Interpretative Reporting*. The first two were not very practical in nature, focusing on the broader context of journalistic practice. MacDougall's book, in contrast, dealt far more directly with the craft of writing and editing (Interview: De Beer, 2008). As we have seen in Chapter Four, it is noted in criticism of MacDougall's text that it did in some ways challenge aspects of accepted journalistic practice, particularly the adherence to principles of objectivity. It did not, however, take this criticism as far as to challenge the codes and routines of mainstream journalism. Even though it might have a slightly different emphasis, it still reproduced the standard approach to journalistic practice [see pg. 121-124].

It is further explained that journalism students at Potchefstroom were in fact not provided with detailed instruction in journalistic practice. They focused, instead, on technical skills such as typing and the translation of news copy from the South African Press Association (Sapa) (Interview: De Beer, 2008). It would seem, from this description of the Potchefstroom curriculum, that it was framed by assumptions about the purpose of university-based journalism education that mirror those identified, above, in the context of the Afrikaans journalistic community itself. The aim was not for students to engage in any significant way with knowledge about journalism, but rather to gain basic technical skills such as typing and translation. Acculturation into a particular approach to journalism must then take place in the context of the newspaper itself.

Both the literature and interviews suggest that later, with the arrival of Calvyn Snyman at Potchefstroom, a more rigorous theoretical framework was introduced. Snyman's work is also understood to have played a more general role within the early stages of journalism education at Afrikaans universities, providing such teaching with a theoretical identity. It is explained that he wrote a textbook, *Pers en Leser*, which would become standard at Potchefstroom in the 1970's. Through this work, Snyman did much to articulate the foundations of the tradition of *perswetenskap* so strongly associated with early Afrikaans-language journalism education (Interview: De Beer, 2008). It would seem, however, that this contribution did not result in a coherent curriculum at Potchefstroom. The journalism programme is described, rather, as being framed by two spheres of knowledge: that of the *perswetenskap* tradition and that of vocational training in the conventions of mainstream print journalism (Interview: Fourie, 2008). These two spheres of knowledge are seen, furthermore, to have conflicted with each other. It is suggested that one reason for this was that Pienaar did not believe in the importance of the study of such theory for the development of journalists. The conceptual framework of *perswetenskap* did not, in particular, complement his vision of delivering students to the Afrikaans press (Interview: De Beer, 2008). It is possible to observe, within these descriptions, aspects of the classic schism experienced in much of journalism education,

across the world, between knowledge of practice and knowledge grounded in the academic study of journalism. This dichotomy can be identified in the disjunction between Pienaar's teaching about the practice of journalism, which remained grounded within a model based on American journalism education texts, and the theoretical components for which Snyman took responsibility, which drew on very different conceptual resources.

In literature dealing with journalism education at Rhodes University it is noted that motivation for the establishment of such teaching came from Guy Butler, who first made a proposal for this at the 1964 congress of the South African Society of Journalists (SASJ) (Giffard, 1971:29). Interviews dealing with the founding of this programme generally suggest that Butler's investment in the idea of university-based journalism education was informed by his interest in finding ways for Rhodes to break out of the rigid traditionalism of English-language universities. Butler's proposal for such teaching is understood to have formed part of a broader struggle that was playing itself out within these universities between 'traditionalist' academics and a more liberal group who did not want to be defined by conservatism (Interview: Louw, 2008). It is explained that the plan was, from the beginning, for the journalism programme to become a department in its own right. It operated only for a short time from within the Department of English where Guy Butler was based, but had gained the status of a department by the early 1970's. It is also noted that although English-language universities were by this stage prepared to integrate the study of journalism within departments of literature, Butler very deliberately did not want to take this route. Teaching journalism as a subject in its own right meant that journalism studies could not simply be assimilated into the traditional structures of an English department, leaving intact its approach to a canon of accepted cultural texts (Interview: Switzer, 2008). Butler's idea was, furthermore, to establish a programme that offered a balance between the academic study of journalism and training in the production of journalism, and this was best achieved within the context of independent department (Interview: Giffard, 2008).

The literature and interviews describe a strong opposition from many of the more traditionalist Rhodes academics to the idea of a subject that required so much practical teaching. Because of Butler's powerful personality and his standing within the university, the idea was nevertheless approved (Giffard, 1971:29; Interview: Giffard, 2008). It is noted that, in the years that followed, the university establishment nevertheless remained suspicious of the role played by journalism education at Rhodes. The general attitude was that the Journalism Department was a 'problem' that needed to be 'managed' or 'controlled'. It is also suggested, however, that this was not only because of resistance to the inclusion of journalism education as a 'vocational' subject within the academy. Of equal importance was the University administration's concerns about the confrontational political identity that the Journalism Department would come to represent (Interview: Switzer, 2008).

It would seem that, once the concept of journalism education had been approved by the university, Butler expressed little interest in shaping the approach that would be adopted within the

Department to such teaching, leaving this to the programme's teaching staff. Giffard was the first Head of Department, and then in 1972 Switzer was employed as a lecturer. Both Giffard and Switzer explain, in their contributions to the interviews conducted for this research, that they brought knowledge to their teaching both of the practices of journalism and the academy. Giffard explains that, by this time, he had completed a PhD in Anglo-Saxon poetry, but was also an experienced journalist, both in broadcast and print. He had worked for the SABC in the late 1950's, and then as journalist and copy editor at various South African newspapers (Interview: Giffard, 2008). Switzer notes that he had a PhD in African History, and had also worked as a journalist for about eight years, both in South Africa at the *Natal Witness* and the *World* and in the United States, at the *Herald Examiner* in Los Angeles (Interview: Switzer, 2008). He suggests that both Giffard and he started off within an approach to the teaching of journalism that was concerned primarily with the teaching of practical skills (Interview: Switzer, 2008). Giffard notes, similarly, that the core curriculum at Rhodes focused, in these early days, on journalistic reporting skills, first those of print and later broadcast journalism, and that it also dealt with 'press management'. Students also attended more theoretical modules housed in other Departments, such as a course in media law (Interview: Giffard, 2008). Switzer proposes that such teaching was influenced by an American model of journalism education. He explains that, as part of this emphasis, American guest lecturers were regularly hosted within the Rhodes programme (Interview: Switzer, 2008).<sup>40</sup> Giffard also explains that he saw the role of the journalism programme as one of supporting independent media in South Africa, particularly the English-language press. It would seem, however, that his approach to such support was different from Pienaar's commitment to delivery of students to Afrikaans newsrooms. According to Giffard, he wanted to produce journalists who recognised the vital role played by the liberal English press in challenging apartheid policies in South Africa, and saw themselves as contributing to social change through their journalism (Interview: Giffard, 2008).

One could say, then, that at this early stage the English and Afrikaans histories of journalism education had much in common. The programmes at Rhodes and Potchefstroom both operated in an academic context that tended to be either indifferent or openly hostile to their existence. They were also informed by similar approaches to journalistic knowledge, and to the role of universities in engaging with such knowledge. There were, however, two important factors that distinguished these programmes. The first was the fact that they associated themselves with very different journalistic communities of practice. The second was that the Rhodes programme was established almost a decade after Potchefstroom. We saw, above, that the Potchefstroom programme expanded the initial focus on practical skills to include the scholarly tradition of *perswetenskap*. The Rhodes programme experienced a similar process of maturation, but did so at a very different moment in South African

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<sup>40</sup> By this time, as was explained in Chapter Five, American-style journalism departments had been established in many parts of the world. Switzer notes that the state department was prepared to fund well-known American media academics and journalists to speak and conduct workshops in South Africa, and that he was able to draw on such resources while he was working at Rhodes (Interview: Switzer, 2008).

history. It will be argued, in the next section, that this was to have profound implications for the conceptualisation of journalism education that came to dominate this department.

#### 6.2.2.2 *The 1970's: The expansion of journalism and communication programmes*

In the section of this chapter dealing with journalism scholarship it was explained that three more educational programmes were established at the beginning of the next decade at UNISA, RAU and UOFS respectively. We saw that, although these programmes included some journalism education, their focus was far more broadly on the teaching of communication. They were strongly influenced by the Communication Science tradition that was establishing itself within these institutions, and along with this the American approaches to communication scholarship, such as the positivist tradition of 'effects' studies. The literature and interviews suggest, as we have seen, that these programmes were established partly in response to a broad government campaign to convince educational institutions to integrate teaching and research about communication into their curricula. Because of the shift in the government's approach to communication as a political domain, there was growing support within universities that aligned themselves ideologically with the state for the need to educate students about the media. It is explained that the agenda was to produce graduates who were able to distinguish between 'truth' and 'lie' – who had, in other words, the ability to resist any so-called 'propaganda' about the South African socio-political environment. The aim of the new communication programmes was, then, firstly to produce a generation of professionals who could resist the influence of anti-apartheid media. Secondly, the intention was to turn out graduates who could work in communications designed to counter such media, offering more positive images of South Africa to those which were coming out of the English and international press (Interview: De Beer, 2008).

At the same time, it would seem that there remained a vast difference between ideas about what Communication Science departments should be set up to achieve, and how they operated in practice. The literature suggests, for example, that the orientation of UNISA's Communication Department was never that of the practical preparation of media practitioners. It was felt that newspapers and media organisations were much better suited to imparting such knowledge than a University-based distance education programme. Instead, the aim was to provide graduates who intended to pursue careers in communication with discipline and knowledge that would allow them to analyse and interpret their own practice (Fourie, 1990a:7). It is also noted, however, that the emphasis was not on a critical interrogation of such practice, but rather on turning out people who could 'work within the system' (Interview: Louw, 2008). Blignaudt, as the first head of department, is described in similar terms to the founding staff of the Potchefstroom and Rhodes programmes. He, too, had knowledge of both journalism and the academy, having worked for *Die Volkstem* and studied psychology. His main academic interest is described as that of the "study of the human being communicating". His courses included, for example, a module on the mechanical processes (the

movement of lips, tongue etc.) through which the human being articulates words. The emphasis was, then, one that did not engage much with social context, but focused more on the individual's ability to communicate. It is suggested that this approach was disconnected from any critical application to media production generally. It was, furthermore, of very little relevance to the specific applications to the agendas of the South African government (Interview: De Beer, 2008). It would seem, from these descriptions, that at UNISA there was a disjunction between academic practice and the political interests that might have influenced the establishment of university-based communication programmes at this time. It is noted, in this respect, that an advisory council had been established at UNISA, to provide the Department of Communications with guidance, and its membership would suggest a close relationship with government. The council included Piet Meyer and Jan Swanepoel, who were key members of the SABC and associated with the Broederbond, also Connie Mulder and Eschel Rhodie as representatives of the Department of Information, and H J Van Dalsen from Foreign Affairs. It is suggested that it is, nevertheless, difficult to find evidence that this group made any real impact on the directions that were taken within the approach to teaching and research in the UNISA programme (Fourie, 1990a:5).

In description of the programme that was established at RAU, one can identify a similar disinterest in the critical interrogation of media practice. It is explained that this programme, under the leadership of Tom de Koning, represented the most explicit example of a classically 'functionalist' approach to the teaching of Communication Science in South Africa. Here, too, there was little connection between such teaching and the knowledge required for the production of either journalism or communication campaigns (Interview, De Beer: 2008).

It is, in fact, only in UOFS that a more direct application of theoretical knowledge to the agendas of the state is identified. D. Herbst, as Head of Department, is understood to have maintained strong relationships with government stakeholders – with a strong connection to military intelligence. It is pointed out that Herbst was, in fact, later appointed as a communications expert for the state, working as a consultant for the military and developing a communications strategy for the Department of Defense. Under his headship, the courses at UOFS came to include components designed to prepare students to work in propaganda-related communications. Some students reportedly went on to work for the military's public relations arm, and were involved in the production of propaganda films (Interview: De Beer, 2008).

These descriptions suggest, then, that although the new communication departments may have been established as part of a deliberate government strategy to counter the impact of anti-apartheid media, the majority of teaching programmes that resulted did not explicitly concern themselves with such goals.

### 6.2.2.3 *The mid-1970's to early 1990's: Conflicting forces*

Commentators generally explain that, from the mid-1970's onwards, journalism education in South African began to expand, so that Potchefstroom and Rhodes were no longer the only programmes centrally concerned with such teaching. The suggestion is also that the traditions of education that emerged operated primarily in service of the interests of industry. The literature explains that this was the period that saw the beginnings of a technikon-based tradition in journalism and communication training (Stewart, 1979).<sup>41</sup> A National Diploma of Journalism was approved and implemented at Natal and Pretoria Technikon by 1976 (De Beer, 1978:31). Then, during the 1980's, programmes were also started at the Peninsula Technikon, ML Sultan, Cape Technikon, Port Elizabeth Technikon, Border Technikon and the Vaal Triangle Technikon. One can see, within these developments, the dramatic expansion of tertiary education aimed at the practical preparation of journalists and communications practitioners. One explanation that has been offered for the increased popularity of these programmes is that it is informed by a growing demand, amongst the journalistic community, that graduates should be 'job ready' when they walk into newsrooms (Addison, 1995; Rhodie, 1995). It may be that this demand related to the increasing economic pressures experienced within newspapers during this time, as described in Section One of this chapter.

It is also in such terms that commentators explain the establishment of a Department of Journalism at Stellenbosch University in 1978. It is noted that the Stellenbosch programme was, from its inception, closely associated with the Afrikaans-language publishing group Naspers. De Beer explains that Naspers carried great influence with the academic community of Stellenbosch, and had a well-established relationship with the university (Interview: De Beer, 2008). He also points out that Piet Cillie, who had just retired as editor of the Naspers newspaper *Die Burger*, was appointed as the first head of department of Journalism (Cillie, 1979:31). Cillie, in his own writing about this period, explains that the university had originally approached *Die Burger* for advice about whether it would be feasible to offer a degree in Journalism, and that it was in context of this consultation that guidelines for the programme was established. Cillie explains that it had been proposed that the university could model such a degree on the programme offered at the University of Columbia. He comments, further, that the programme that was subsequently developed at Stellenbosch resembled the 'Columbia model' only to the extent that it was offered at postgraduate level (Cillie, 1979:2). The coursework that was offered was not, however, that of postgraduate study, given that the focus was primarily on reporting skills, on typing, short-hand and the translation of Sapa copy (Cillie, 1979).

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<sup>41</sup> Like the universities, the technikons that offered communication programmes were divided along lines of racial identity. The Technikons of Natal and Pretoria were white institutions, established just after the promulgation of the Technikons Act in 1976. Most other institutions were already in existence but gained the status Technikons in 1979, which meant that they could offer courses at a tertiary level. This included four white institutions: Cape Technikon, which started in the 1920's as the Cape Technical College; Port Elizabeth Technikon which started as the PE Art School in 1882, and later became the College for Advanced Technical Education; Border Technikon; and Vaal Tech, which started as the College of Advanced Technical Education in 1966. Others were Peninsula Technikon, which began as the Peninsula Technical College, targeting the coloured community, in 1962; and ML Sultan, which started as the ML Sultan Technical College in 1956 and was established to serve the Indian community. Note that, with the exception of Vaal Tech, which was an Afrikaans-language institution, all of these Technikons were English.



One can conclude that, as in the case of the very early days of Potchefstroom, teaching operated to enable the rapid assimilation of graduates into one particular newsroom culture.

At the same time, it would seem that developments in journalism education also became more strongly influenced, during this period, by critical challenges and clampdowns to the apartheid state. In the previous section, we saw reference to a range of responses within journalism and communication scholarship to these changes in context, each positioned differently in relation to authoritative social knowledge. Commentators' descriptions of teaching traditions suggest that these responses can also be observed in this context, resulting in a similar spectrum of approaches to the nature and purpose of knowledge about media and communication. At one extreme of this spectrum, one can again observe the approach adopted by Hennie Fourie at UNISA, which, as we saw, operated in direct support of the political agendas of the apartheid state. It is noted that Fourie produced a textbook, *Communication by Objectives*, which dealt centrally with communication campaigns, and as such could be said to teach the principles that are essential to propaganda. This book became a standard within many of the Communication Science courses taught at Afrikaans Universities at this time (Interview: Fourie, 2008).

In the 'middle range' of the spectrum is, again, the interpretative school of thought, established at UNISA when Van Schoor became head of department. It is explained that Van Schoor taught his students to question, but it was a 'disengaged' form of criticism that denied the possibility of agency and social change. As noted in the previous section, this stance did not challenge the instrumentalism of the UNISA approach. As a result, the practice of assimilating graduates into the prevailing social system remained unchanged (Interview: Louw, 2008). This tradition of teaching became widely entrenched within Afrikaans communication programmes during the 1980's, through the circulation of Unisa textbooks. Furthermore, graduates from UNISA took up teaching positions within these programmes, and because of this, the existentialist / interpretative paradigm dominated these environments in the 1980's (De Beer & Tomaselli, 2000:13).

Another 'middle range' response is associated with De Beer's arrival at RAU in the mid-1970's onwards, and is also closely associated with the increased importance of practical teaching in this programme. De Beer himself explains that by this time, the curriculum included public relations, advertising, and print-, television- and radio journalism. Within his own teaching at RAU, he also introduced the approach to functionalist theory that, as we have seen in the previous section, more generally informed his understanding of the study of communication. De Beer notes that this approach offered a valuable theoretical frame for the more production-oriented components of the curriculum. The theory that formed part of this approach illustrated that what students do as media practitioners has consequences for society, and that they needed to take responsibility for this impact. He also notes, however, that, as in the case of Potchefstroom, such teaching did not result in a balanced and coherent curriculum. He explains that De Koning was altogether opposed to the idea of the teaching of practical skills, and resisted attempts to establish a programme in which the study and



production of media formed part of an integrated whole. According to De Beer, this was to remain the status quo within the programme at RAU throughout the 1970's (Interview: De Beer, 2008).

At the far end of the spectrum of responses is the approach to journalism education that emerged at the Department of Journalism at Rhodes in the late 1970's and 1980's. Commentators generally explain that dramatic changes took place within the curriculum during this time, and that these shifts must, again, be understood in context of the broader political processes that were taking place outside universities (Prinsloo, 2010:190; Steenveld et al, 2012:2). One important influence is thought to be the involvement of English liberal students and academics in the teaching of journalism production skills to people involved in the progressive movement, as a form of activism. White English liberal university students and staff, and the student press through the South African Students' Press Union (SASPU) helped to organise and produce community papers (Tomaselli, 1991:167). It is argued that such individuals gravitated towards the Journalism Department at Rhodes University (Interview: Louw, 2008; Interview: Giffard, 2008).

Switzer, who was head of Department at Rhodes during this time, explains that this was a period in which he experienced a dramatic transformation as an intellectual, resulting from the learning that his own students were engaged in. He notes that he became increasingly convinced of the importance of melding the practical teaching of the fundamental competencies of journalism with a critical mind-set, guided by critical theory. He explains that he began to read extensively, including literature within a more critical paradigm than the approach that had characterised the Rhodes curriculum up to this point. He became interested, for example, in the potential of literary journalism (or 'new journalism') as a vehicle for communicating the broader realities of popular culture, and created a course on this topic. He also began to reason that, if journalism educators were to think critically, then the practical skills that they teach students should include the ability to work strategically with research methods, and the ability to analyse the media. Out of this argument came the idea of a course in research methods and also one in critical theory. Switzer also notes that when he took over as head of Department of Journalism in 1979, he took the opportunity to add the words "media studies" to the name of the department. He explains that in doing so, he intended to make the statement that the department did not have a 'trade school' mind-set in the teaching of journalism. He avoided the term "communication" because he saw in it a code word for the conservatism which, at that time, was dominant within American journalism education. According to Switzer, students responded positively to these developments in the department and curriculum, but were equally affected by new ideas being explored in other departments at Rhodes. Their thinking was also more broadly informed by their involvement in the student movement on campus, and in political activities off campus. Switzer notes that as a result of such influences, both in and outside its own teaching programme, the Department of Journalism produced many students during this time who went on to make major contributions to critical journalism both overseas and in South Africa (Interview: Switzer, 2008).

The account that contributors give of Rhodes in the 1980's suggest that, during this decade, the commitment to the critical study of journalism continued to become consolidated. It is noted, for example, that a staff reading group was established to make sense of the implications of Cultural Studies for the study of journalism and media more generally in South Africa. The understandings that were generated from such reading became the foundation for such staff members' approaches to their own teaching. It is noted that courses began to draw, in particular, on Marxist concepts such as those of Althusser, Poulantzas and Gramsci (De Beer & Tomaselli, 2000:15). In descriptions of such teaching, it is possible to identify reference, firstly, to courses focusing on the historical development of the press in South Africa, with a particular focus on relationships of ownership, ideological framing and the implications for the kind of journalism that was produced. Secondly, there were courses in which staff and students articulated an approach to forms of media production which could serve as alternatives to mainstream journalism within the South African context (Steenveld et al, 2012:2). Commentators suggest that this 'critical' approach to journalism education was sustained at Rhodes throughout the 1980's. It is also suggested that this tradition of teaching tended to be based within the courses that dealt with television and film, and not in those focusing on print journalism. Steenveld, who started teaching in the Department in 1985, argues that this may have related to monolithic status of the SABC as a vehicle of propaganda for the apartheid state. It was, in her view, therefore "politically easy" to reject its practices within a journalism education programme. In this context, the application of critique to practice seemed straightforward. She also explains that students quickly recognised the relevance of concepts drawn from critical media studies and cultural studies for the production of film and video. Furthermore, the role they saw themselves adopting after graduating was not that of becoming journalists in the mainstream press but rather that of the producers of alternative media which could be used by people engaged in the struggle against the apartheid state. Because of this, film and video courses did not prioritise knowledge of the conventions and norms of orthodox broadcast journalism. The emphasis was, rather, by definition on experimentation with alternative media production. Within print journalism courses, a very different dynamic existed, with teaching engaging directly with mainstream practices, and with the need to prepare students to work within them (Steenveld, 2006:281).

The literature and interviews generally explain that by 1985 the more 'critical' approach to teaching that had developed at Rhodes migrated to the CCMS at the University of Natal, and found purchase there. Tomaselli's appointment as head of the programme meant, in particular, that the critical approach that had been articulated at Rhodes now migrated to the University of Natal. Louw explains, at the same time, that the CCMS nevertheless represented a very different educational space to that of Rhodes, because of its postgraduate status. It housed smaller groups of students, which meant that there was less pressure on staff, and this allowed for the possibility of research. He suggests that this is one reason why the CCMS was for long more central than Rhodes in generating critical scholarship (Interview: Louw, 2008). There was, nevertheless, a strong emphasis within the

CCMS programme on the preparation of media practitioners. The focus was, however, not on preparing students to work in the environments of mainstream journalism, but rather in alternative media environments. The emphasis, within teaching, was on the application of concepts drawn from critical media scholarship to the articulation of strategies geared towards social change (De Beer & Tomaselli, 2000:17).

#### *6.2.2.4 The mid-1990's onwards: A new landscape emerges*

Journalism education from the mid-1990's onwards is described, by commentators, as an era in which renewed emphasis was placed on the development of practical skills (Wasserman, 2004:181). The literature and interviews indicate that, during this period, corporate interest began to play a far greater role in the development of South African journalism education. It is suggested that, whereas in the 'critical' moment of the late 1970's and 1980's it was journalists themselves who became involved in discussions of the future of journalism, the management of media companies now stepped forward. SANEF<sup>42</sup>, in particular, is understood to have played a key role in setting the new terms of debate. One reason for this involvement of media managers is thought to be that the requirements of transformation had created anxiety, amongst media managers, around the availability of skilled black journalists. Another was a rising concern, amongst the editorial leadership of newspapers, about the 'crisis of credibility' that had come to characterise South African journalism. It is then generally assumed that what is 'wrong' with journalism can be solved by attending to reporters' competencies through training (Steenveld, 2006:290). An important example of this stance can be identified within the national skills audit of journalists that SANEF commissioned in 2001 (De Beer & Steyn, 2004). The audit focused on reporters with up to five years of experience, and consisted of an assessment of their skills levels. It concluded that these are, indeed, poorly developed and proposed that there is a need for improved education and training around these skills areas – both at tertiary institutions and within newsrooms themselves (De Beer & Steyn, 2004:62-63).

The literature suggests (Jordaan, 2004; Steenveld, 2006; Fourie, 2005:143-144; Banda et al, 2007:164-5) that, in context of these changes, teaching programmes have become increasingly informed by market imperatives. The dominant aim has become that of turning out graduates who are 'job ready', with the necessary competencies to be absorbed into the current practices of media organisations. Most teaching programmes are said to adopt a 'career-based', 'technical' or 'vocational' approach, in which the emphasis is on preparing students for 'industry' (Megwa, 2001; Jordaan, 2004; Berger, 2007; Wasserman, 2005). These terms are not employed neutrally; the suggestion is that such education operates in service of a conservative political agenda. It is noted

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<sup>42</sup> The South African Editors' Forum (Sanef) describes itself on its website as a "... non-profit organisation whose members are editors, senior journalists and journalism trainers from all areas of the South African media". The website explains that the organisation was launched in 1996, and represents a merging of the Black Editors Forum and the Conference of Editors, which before this had respectively presented the interests of 'black' and 'white' editors in South Africa.

that this approach also impacted on the environments most closely associated with critical traditions of teaching. Reference is for example made to a growing emphasis, at Rhodes University, on production teaching, in order to prepare students for work in mainstream media environments (Steenveld, 2006).

It is also suggested that in the period before this, from the 1980's onwards, the study of journalism and media studies had already begun to expand into new sections of the university community. By the mid-1980's, there was a growing openness in department of language and literature to the introduction of the study of journalism and media, in context of growing economic pressure and declining student numbers. Examples of such incorporation occurred, for example, at the universities of Natal, Pretoria and Port Elisabeth, as well as the University of the North (De Beer & Tomaselli, 2000:18).<sup>43</sup> Commentators propose that such courses tended to detach the study of journalism from the teaching of practice. The suggestion is that, because of this tendency, their contribution to the critical engagement with the practices of journalism remain limited. It is suggested, further, that this appropriation and 'hollowing out' of critical approaches to the study of journalism can also be observed within many of the communication departments at Afrikaans-language universities. Such departments incorporated cultural- and media studies into their curricula, but did so in a way that assimilated these traditions without confronting their political implications (Tomaselli & Teer-Tomaselli, 2007:180). It is suggested that the integration of critical concepts within such programmes tended to be influenced by the need for a politically correct curriculum, rather than an investment in the concept of critically engaged journalism education (Wasserman, 2004:181). A similar process is identified in the 1980's context of UNISA course readers, in which ideas drawn from cultural studies textbooks were disarticulated from their original political intent (Tomaselli & Shepperson, 1999:242). It is also pointed out that a vast number of students that passed through the UNISA communications programme. Because of this, the UNISA 'approach' to the study of communication spilled across to most of the Afrikaans institutions that had established communication programmes (Interview: Louw, 2008).

An important example of such assimilation is thought to be the incorporation, within communication programmes, of contributions to South African communication studies made by Pieter Fourie, who became head of department at UNISA in 1987. As we have seen in the previous section, Fourie contributed in valuable ways throughout his career to the widening of debate around communication scholarship, pointing repeatedly to the importance of critical studies of media. He played a similar role, as head of department at UNISA, by facilitating a reworking of the UNISA syllabuses, ensuring a media and cultural studies became a component of all years of study (Tomaselli & Shepperson, 1999:241). It is explained that this approach, as captured in Fourie's study guides, was

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<sup>43</sup> It is suggested that the establishment of the CCMS (which was hosted in the Department of English Studies) was, in fact, initially also motivated by this trend. It is argued that it was an accident of circumstance that the staff who were employed to teach in this programme saw a different purpose to university-based media education.

highly inclusive; the aim was to look dispassionately at all paradigms of such study. Fourie's description of the different paradigms did not, however, deal deliberately with their social history and significance. It is argued that, as a result, this material could be incorporated into curricula without confronting any disjunction between the political interests of critical scholarship and that of the research and teaching practices that characterised the communications studies departments (Interview: Louw, 2008).

## **Conclusion**

In a discussion of the history of the Department of Communication Science at UNISA, Fourie (1990b) argues that university-based education about journalism or media more generally typically starts off as occupational training and then transforms into the analytical or critical study of the subject (2). The suggestion seems to be that the teaching of journalism production on its own does not entail engagement with theoretical knowledge, and that it is when educational programmes mature that they become grounded in theory. The descriptions that contributors offer, in this chapter, of the South African history of journalism education does not, however, suggest a transition from practical skill to theoretical knowledge. Instead, the process of transition can be described as a series of shifts from one kind of theorisation of social knowledge to another. In the case of the early days of the Potchefstroom programme, for example, commentators identify a transition from Pienaar's functionalist approach, framed by American journalism education scholarship, to Snyman's adoption of concepts drawn from European literature and then to De Beer's 'normative' reinterpretation of the Communication Science paradigm. The Rhodes programme, too, moved from an initial functionalism, grounded in an American model of journalism education, to the framing of the curriculum with ideas drawn from European social science. It is proposed, in this chapter, that these shifts in the theorisation of knowledge are expressive of broader social changes that were impacting on the university systems in which they were based. The fractured nature of communities of scholarship, and in particular the distinctions in approaches to the nature and purpose of academic knowledge about media, are framed by the ideological divisions that existed more generally within higher education in this country.

The discussions further suggest that the shifts from one theoretical framework to another was not the only or even the most important factor in determining whether different examples of study would function critically in relation to their social context. The factors that are necessary for a critical approach to journalism education cannot, in other words, be traced solely to the influence of any particular disciplinary approach. The UNISA programme is, for example, described as beginning from an approach that was grounded in an American positivism, and then moving through a series of shift to alternative paradigms. Nevertheless, according to various contributors, none of these changes

eradicated the foundational conservative instrumentalism of this programme. The emphasis remained, throughout, on turning out people who, as Louw notes, could ‘work within the system’.

The chapter points to a persistent tension, in the articulation of the distinction between different approaches to teaching and scholarship, between acknowledgement of the socially constructed nature of such knowledge, and commitment to the ideal of objective and universally relevant knowledge. In the transition from one period of history to the next, this tension is renegotiated, and the lines of allegiance become articulated in new ways. In the history of scholarship, the opposition in approaches to knowledge is initially understood as a division between research communities. At the turn of the millenium, it becomes described as a clash of interest between media scholars and teachers of practice. The persistence of this dichotomy suggests that the South African community of media scholars and teachers continue to face challenges in achieving a shared conceptual language that enables critical engagement with journalism as a social practice.

It would seem, furthermore, that despite differences in theoretical approach, it is an instrumentalist relationship, either to the state or communication industries, that is the constant that runs through the history of South African journalism education. Approaches to the conceptualisation of authoritative knowledge, within such teaching have repeatedly been defined by the requirements of oppressive forces. During apartheid, the institutions of journalism and of the academy were expected to serve the needs of an authoritarian government. In the post-apartheid era, the pressure to conform remains, this time framed by the hegemony of neo-liberal economic context.

The literature and interviews also suggest that one important difference between the history of scholarship and teaching relates to the role played by the broad assimilation within academic environments of conceptual resources based in a constructivist understanding of knowledge. Within the history of research, such concepts eventually became widely integrated in university environments, even if they had become delinked from their original political purpose of critical engagement. Within the history of teaching, however, a disjunction seems to have remained between the integration of such concepts with the teaching of production skills. Indeed, this disjunction seems to form part of a more general failure to integrate concepts drawn from the academic study of media with teaching about practice. Commentators speak, indeed, about the existence of divisions between the ‘theoretical’ and ‘practical’ components of coursework in a wide range of programmes, both those of the Communication Science schools and critical media studies.

At the same time, the period of the late 1970’s and 1980’s is identified as a ‘moment’ within the history of South African journalism education in which a more critical approach to teaching surfaced within particular environments. The emergence of such teaching is understood, furthermore, to have been significantly informed by the circulation, within these environments, of knowledge that enabled the articulation of critical frameworks of social analysis. Within this tradition of teaching, the disjunction between the academic study of media and production teaching seems to dissolve. It is proposed, at the same time, that the establishment of this approach to journalism education was



dependent on shifts in the immediate political and economic environment. Both within literature and interviews, reference is made to the role played, in this respect, by the emergence of broad popular resistance to the authority of the apartheid state. Contributors suggest that this made possible the temporary emergence within particular academic and journalistic traditions in South Africa of alternative approaches to the conceptualisation of authoritative social knowledge. It would seem that, due to the unique characteristics of the socio-political history of this country at this time, it is possible to observe significant disruptions in the conceptualisation of such knowledge within these institutional environments. These circumstances played a crucial role in the emergence of a critical teaching tradition in South African journalism and media education.

It should be noted, however, that the only sustained examples of critical journalism- or media education that emerged from this moment in history appears to have been those of Rhodes University and CCMS. Furthermore, the literature and interviews suggest that even within these institutional environments, a critical approach to journalism as a social practice was never fully realised. The focus within both these environments appear to have been on critical engagement with alternative approaches to media production, rather than attempts to transform mainstream journalism as a social practice. The social disruption of the 1970's and 1980's, and the contestations around the conceptualisation of authoritative social knowledge that result from this, can nevertheless be seen to offer a valuable opportunity for investigating how social context may either limit or enable the establishment of a critical approach to journalism education. This investigation represents a primary focus of the chapters included in Part Three of this study.

It is, at the same time, possible to discuss the marginalisation of critically engaged journalism education in South Africa in context of the 'strands' of journalism education identified in Chapter Five, and the struggles around the conceptualisation of authoritative social knowledge associated with each. The most obvious connection, within the contemporary journalistic landscape in South Africa, is to the strand of journalism education associated with Anglophone contexts, and industrially advanced environments that define themselves in terms of principles of liberal democracy. This approach to journalism education is, as we have seen, characterised by an opposition between knowledge as the negotiated construction of meaning, and knowledge as objective and empirical certainty. It has been argued, in previous chapters, that this opposition has constrained the possibility of critical engagement between journalism education and practice. It can be argued, at the same time, that journalism education in South Africa would benefit from identifying with the second strand, which is associated with 'developing' countries, and 'emerging democracies'. It was explained, in Chapter Five, that debates within this strand of education have pointed to the importance of locally grounded approaches to the study of journalism, and the acknowledgement of journalistic practices that represent alternatives to that of the journalism of objectivity. In Part Three, the relevance of these debates to the South African example of education will be further explored.



## CONCLUSION PART TWO

Part Two explored the relationship between the history of authoritative social knowledge and developments within the sphere of university-based journalism education. Chapter Four established the frame of reference for this discussion through an examination of the history of American journalism education. The chapter notes that the approach to journalism education that was articulated in the American context was framed by the positivist ‘moment’ in the history of knowledge, as described in Part One. The formation of this approach was characterised by attempts to accommodate two different understandings of the ‘professional’, each representative of opposing perspectives within struggles around the social purpose of knowledge. The chapter identifies, as one important aspect of such accommodation, the reification within journalism education of guidelines for reporting at the level of World One. These guidelines located the objective pursuit of facts as central to the professional identity of journalism. It is argued that they came to form part of a shared understanding between the spheres of journalism education and journalism practice with regards to the proper management of news production. Of equal importance was the partnership that journalism education achieved within the academy, which located Mass Communication Studies as the ‘default setting’ for the academic (World Two) study of journalism. Within this partnership, journalism practice becomes measured against the ideal of objective scientific knowledge and of universal ‘laws’ of communication. It is proposed that these arrangements marginalised the possibility of critical engagement between academic knowledge and journalism as historically situated practice. Furthermore, they constrained the impact of the second moment in the history of knowledge on American journalism education. In particular, the potential of such education for critical engagement with journalistic practice and with social context more generally remained limited.

In Chapter Five it was demonstrated that the worldwide expansion of such education, in the mid- to late 20th century, was strongly characterised by the global circulation of the approach that had been articulated within the American context. Because of this, Mass Communication Studies remained the default setting for the academic study of journalism. Production oriented teaching, in turn, reproduced the guidelines for reporting practice that had first been articulated within American journalism education programmes. In the last years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, however, journalism education could be seen to diversify, and it then becomes possible to identify approaches to teaching that acknowledged the historically specific and socially constructed nature of journalism as a social practice. Such teaching represented important alternatives to American approach, and to the conceptualisation of authoritative knowledge in which it was based. This included, within one strand of such education, the establishment of a partnership with Cultural Studies as an alternative ‘setting’ to that of Communication Studies for the academic study of journalism. Within another strand, it involved the acknowledgement of socially purposive approaches to journalism and communication more generally, that were framed by a commitment to social justice rather than the objective pursuit

of facts. The chapter proposes, however, that despite the availability of such intellectual resources, the different traditions of teaching have continued to reproduce the World One guidelines for reporting practice, and journalistic production more generally and with this the ideal of objective and universally relevant knowledge. Because of this, the potential for journalism education that has the potential to play a critical and transformational role within journalism as a social practice has remained limited.

Both chapters suggest that the absence of a sustained tradition of critical engagement between the spheres of journalism education and journalism practice can be seen to relate to decisions that have been made around the content and structure of journalism education curricula. It was argued, firstly, that decisions around the categories of academic knowledge that should be included have implicated such education in the marginalisation of journalism scholarship, as described in Part One. The partnership of such education with Cultural Studies and Mass Communication Studies, in particular, meant that journalism scholarship is addressed only as a sub-category of the curriculum. The role that journalism education can play in mediating a relationship of critical engagement between academic knowledge and journalistic practice is weakened, then, by the fact that it does not primarily refer to journalism scholarship in its engagement with World Two (See Figure 3).

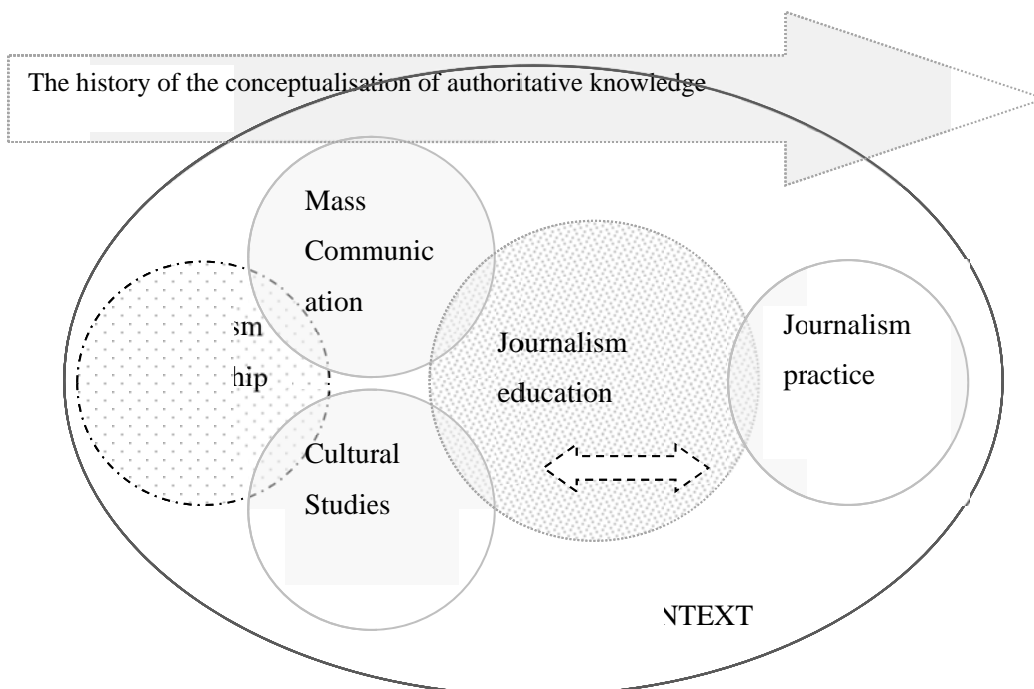


Figure 3: Journalism education and its role in mediating between scholarship and practice

Secondly, the way in which the relationship between different categories of knowledge is understood within the design of curricula has set up an opposition between World Two (academic) knowledge about journalism on one hand, and World One (vocational) knowledge on the other. Such World Two knowledge is, as noted above, represented by scholarship drawn either from Mass

Communication Studies or Cultural Studies, while World One knowledge is represented by guidelines for journalistic practice. This division has resulted in a structured tension within curricula, which in turn has led to ongoing conflict between different interest groups involved in such education. Within the partnership with Mass Communication Studies, claims about the ‘rigour’ of scientific knowledge had traditionally been juxtaposed with the charge that such knowledge is obscure and irrelevant as a guideline for journalistic practice. Within journalism education in partnership with Cultural Studies, there has been anxiety about the stance of critical distance that this field adopts to journalism practice, and the extent to which its approach to the conceptualisation of knowledge undermines the legitimacy of guidelines for practice. In both traditions of education, teaching about the academic analysis of journalism exists in a relationship of conflict with teaching about the production of journalism. The relationship between scholarship and journalism practice is, furthermore, one of disengagement (See Figure 4).

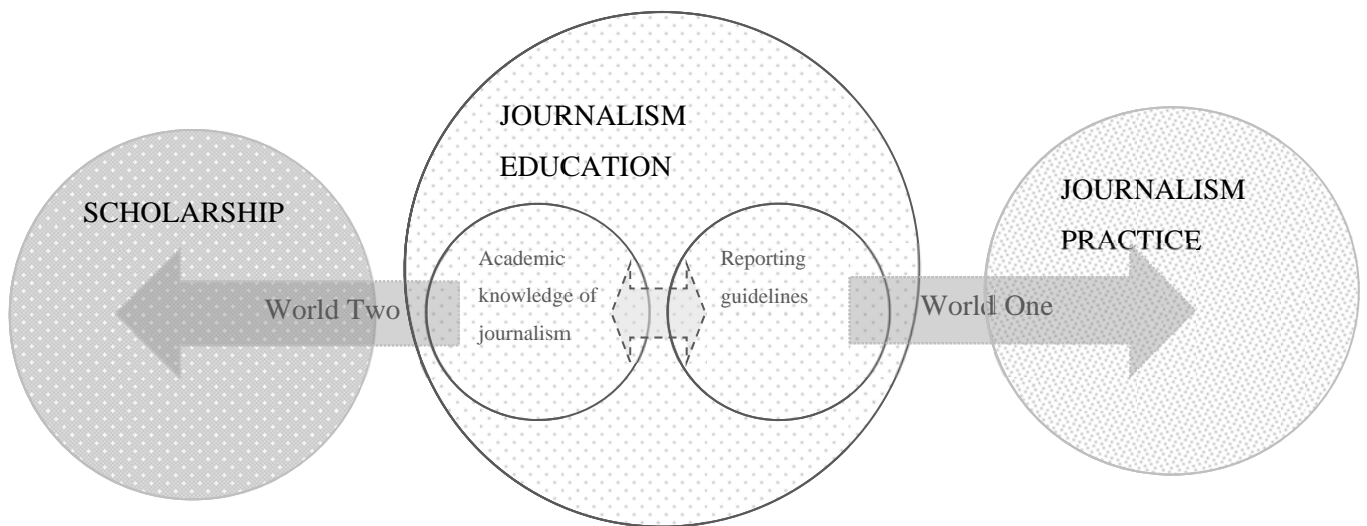


Figure 4: The relationship between academic and vocational knowledge in journalism education

As a related point, it is noted that a second strategy for the legitimisation of journalism education at the level of World Two takes place altogether outside the context of the study of journalism or communication. Academic knowledge about journalism, as represented by the partnership with Mass Communication Studies and Cultural Studies, is not deemed on its own to provide journalism education with the status of a legitimate academic enterprise. The curriculum guidelines that were articulated in America and then globally circulated stipulated that teaching about journalism should form part of more general undergraduate curricula. Students should be exposed, outside the context of their ‘professional’ education in journalism, to the liberal arts components of such curricula. This stipulation was based on the assumption that the liberal arts are fundamental to the purpose of the university, as a social institution dedicated to preparing graduates for intellectual leadership in society. By exposing students to the liberal arts components of undergraduate programmes, the academic

status of their educational experience can be ensured, so that it is protected from being purely ‘technical’. At the same time, such exposure is understood to contribute to the ‘professional’ status of journalism, as an occupation that can lay claim to a commitment to public service. This arrangement is understood to mediate the presence of vocational aspects of journalism education within the university environment, ensuring the acceptability of such teaching to the academy. An exposure of students to the liberal arts is, furthermore, also the one aspect of university-based journalism education that has been most consistently supported within the sphere of journalism practice. It is, however, an arrangement in which the relationship between vocational and academic knowledge is again one of disengagement.

It can be argued that these aspects of curriculum design have led to an approach to journalism education in which the lines of influence between World Three debates about the conceptualisation of knowledge and World One discussions of journalism as a form of knowledge are constrained. One reason for this is that such influence is mediated primarily through Mass Communication Studies and Cultural Studies as World Two fields that do not relate directly to the study of journalistic practice. Secondly, the role that liberal arts subjects play in mediating the relationship between World Three and World One is, again, limited by the fact that such teaching takes place in separation from that of teaching about journalism. Thirdly, the category of knowledge most closely associated with journalism practice is that of vocational guidelines for reporting practice, situated in separation of ‘academic’ teaching at the level of World One (see Figure 5).

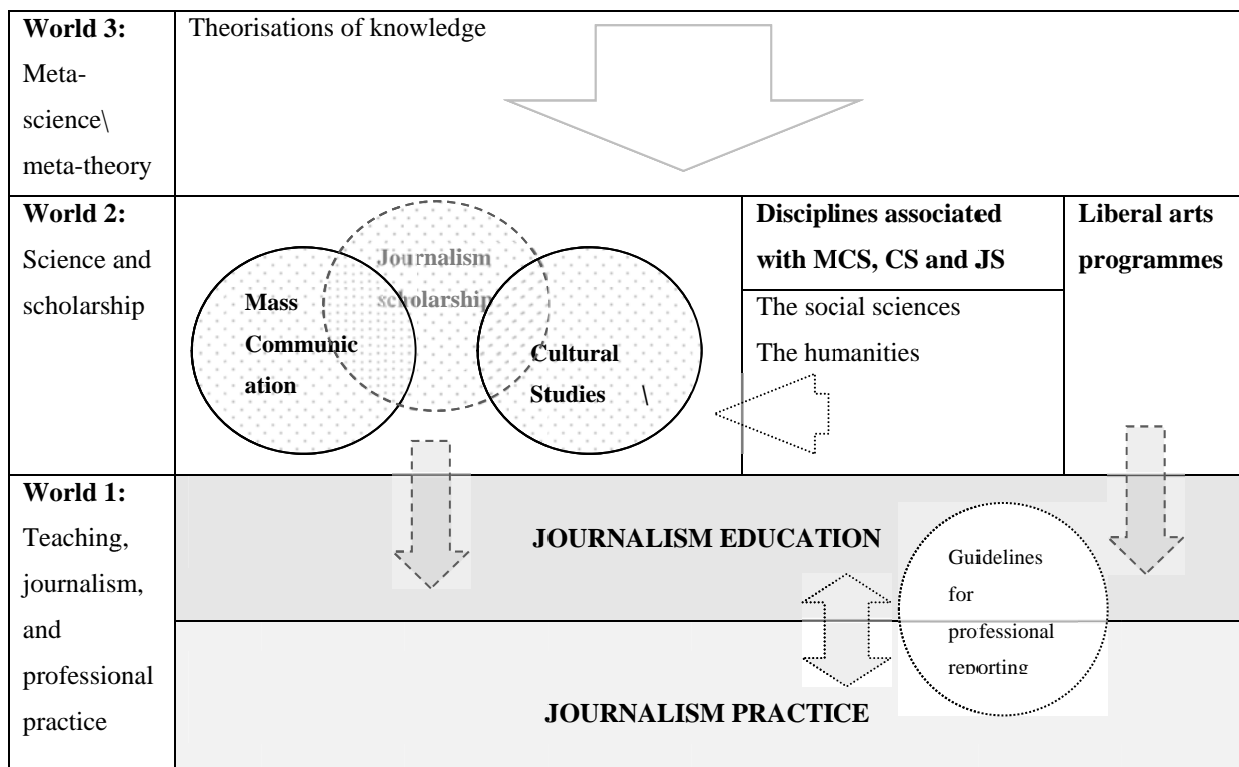


Figure 5: The relationship between knowledge worlds in the standard journalism education guidelines

The discussion in Chapter Six demonstrates that these guidelines for the content and structure of journalism education can also be observed in South Africa. Here, too, it is possible to observe the distinction, within the approach to teaching, between ‘vocational’ and ‘academic’ categories of knowledge. The World One guidelines for objective reporting are, again, reproduced within the sphere of journalism education. World Two knowledge about journalism is again represented by the partnership with a field closely related to Mass Communication Studies and with Cultural Studies. Grounding in liberal arts (both in the context of undergraduate and postgraduate journalism programmes) is again understood to mediate the presence of knowledge about journalism within the university. Within this arrangement, the relationship between knowledge of World Three and World One is, again, limited. It is proposed, in this study, that this approach to the categories of knowledge included in curricula and the relationship between such categories helps to explain the way South African university-based journalism education has engaged with its social context.

Chapter Six demonstrated that it is possible to identify potential, within the South African history of journalism education, for critical engagement between journalism education and its social context. It was proposed that this potential was made possible by the unique characteristics of the socio-political history of this country, which led to significant disruptions in the conceptualisation of authoritative social knowledge. This occurs during the late 1970’s and 1980’s, when accepted approaches to the credibility of social knowledge in South Africa became widely questioned, in context of broad resistance to apartheid and the erosion of authority of the state. Because of this, spaces opened up both within journalism and the academy for the construction of alternatives to established approaches to the production of social knowledge. It was nevertheless also proposed, that South African journalism education had chiefly operated in service of dominant social interests, even after the historical events of the 1970’s and 1980’s. We saw that, during the years of apartheid, both universities and journalism as systems of knowledge production functioned primarily to support the interests of the state and market. In the post-apartheid era the pressure to conform remained, this time framed by the internationally constituted hegemony of a neo-liberal economic environment. Even with the transition to democracy, then, the potential for the establishment of a broadly accepted and sustained tradition in critical education has remained unfulfilled.

Part Three again deals with the South African history of journalism education, in order to explore the reasons why the potential for a critically engaged tradition in such education was not realised in this country. This section is informed by the proposal that an important contributing factor has been the reproduction, within this example of journalism education, of the guidelines for the content and structure of curricula described in Figure 5. The discussion in this section explores the role that these guidelines have played in shaping the relationship between journalism education and journalism practice at different moments in time within the South African context. It is argued that the ideas about social knowledge articulated within the localised history of both journalism and the academy offer important resources for resolving the opposition and conflicts that have characterised

the more global narrative of journalism education. In particular, the disruptions that have characterised the South African history of authoritative knowledge represent valuable opportunities for investigating how approaches to knowledge may either limit or enable the establishment of a critical approach to journalism education. They may, furthermore, represent opportunities for considering how journalism education can strengthen the extent to which it draws on the intellectual resources associated with the second strand of such education: that of teaching about journalism as it exists in economically disadvantaged environments.

**PART THREE - CONSTRUCTING A SOUTH AFRICAN HISTORY: JOURNALISM,  
THE UNIVERSITY AND AUTHORITATIVE SOCIAL KNOWLEDGE**



## Introduction

### 1. The research goals

Part Three of this dissertation explores the reasons why the potential for a critically engaged tradition in university-based journalism education was not realised in South Africa. As part of this exploration, it considers the role played within such engagement by the guidelines for content and structure of curricula described in Figure 5. It does so, firstly, by examining the implications of these guidelines for the relationship that has come to exist between the spheres of journalism education, -scholarship and -practice. Secondly, it considers the role played by these guidelines for the extent to which such education facilitates an engagement between the three 'knowledge worlds' identified in this study: that of the meta-scientific study, that of science and scholarship and that of everyday life. The study considers how, within the context of the South African history of university-based journalism education, conceptualisations of journalistic knowledge have translated from the working world of journalism to that of the university and back again. In this way the study assists in the attempt, in this thesis, to evaluate the potential of university-based disciplinary knowledge to contribute to the adaptation of journalism to the challenges of contemporary society. These questions are considered from the perspective of educators who have participated in the construction of journalism education in this country.

In order to achieve these goals, this section of the study draws on interviews with South African journalism educators. It examines the descriptions that they provide of their encounters with concepts that framed the production of authoritative social knowledge at different moments in South African history, and in different social spaces. It then considers the explanations they offer of how such experience has influenced their understanding of the requirements for the facilitation of a critical engagement, in journalism education, between academic knowledge and knowledge of practice.

It should be noted that the purpose is not to present a comprehensive or accurate history of South African journalism education. The discussion attempts, rather, to make sense of the way in which individual educators have responded to developments in the conceptualisations of authoritative knowledge that formed part of this history. One aim is, then, to explore the implications of such responses for the role that the participants have played in defining the nature and purpose of journalism education at given moments in time. It is also understood that the descriptions of their involvement in journalism and the academy can be seen to operate as reconstructions of history. A second aim of the discussion is, therefore, to consider how their accounts of the past can be seen to form part of arguments about the role that journalism education can play in the current context.

### 2. The research design and choice of method

The research is conceptualised as a discussion of multiple case studies, with the individual research participants representing the different cases. It is explained, in literature dealing with the case study

design, that the central goal of such research is not to generalise, but rather to “get closer to the why and the how” (Thomas, 2011:4) or to gain insight into the topic of research (Gerring, 2007:7). This goal is of relevance to this research, given that it aims to explore the way in which members of a particular community of epistemic practice make sense of the way the authority of social knowledge has come to be understood within their environment.

The main research method employed is that of the semi-structured biographical interview. This method is described in literature dealing with research methodology as one in which a participant is asked to describe particular aspects of their own history, as a coherent reconstruction of relevant events. The aim of this reconstruction is understood to be that of explaining how their experience of such events has shaped their current understanding of given issues (Flick, 1998:99). This approach is clearly of relevance to a study concerned with the way members of a particular community of epistemic practice conceptualise of their own involvement in the history of authoritative knowledge and how they understand the implications for their current practice as knowledge producers.

The decision to make use of biographical interviews is, at the same time, prompted by debates about the history of social science research practices, as this was discussed in the first two sections of this study. It was pointed out, in Chapter Two, that the tendency towards scientism and specialisation within American social science in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century led, at this time, to a marginalisation of subjective, qualitative and case-based approaches to research. One research method that became deprioritised as a result of this trend was the ‘life history’ method that played such an important role in the early development of the Chicago School. It was argued that these developments weakened the relationship between universities and their social environments, and the role that disciplines could play in putting into practice the traditional university mission of service to society and community [see pgs 43-45]. Chapter Four referred, furthermore, to the proposal put forward by journalism education scholars that the early Chicago School tradition of research represented a ‘lost opportunity’ for the teaching and study of journalism. The suggestion was that by linking itself to this tradition, journalism education could have conceptualised of journalism more widely and richly. Journalism education could, then, have included a focus not just on journalism as the communication of objective information, but also as a cultural practice and as a ‘democratic craft’ [see pgs 115 -116]. By turning, in this last section, to the use of biographic interviews as a research method, this study explores the validity of these arguments.

### 3. Selecting the interview candidates

In selecting interview candidates, the aim was not to enable statistical generalisation, but rather to consider who should be interviewed in order to achieve a sound understanding of the research subject. As such, the study made use of theoretical or purposive sampling – in which the emphasis is on the selection of individuals who are able to contribute to the development of emerging theory (Seale, 2004:241). It is explained, in literature about qualitative research methodology, that in order to make

appropriate decisions for the purpose of such sampling, researchers should firstly identify the wider population from which the participants should be selected. Based on the definition of this population, it is then of value to identify criteria that can guide the selection of research participants (Byrne, 2004:186-188; Deacon et al, 1999:38). For this study, the focus was on individuals who have established themselves as experienced and accomplished members of two communities of epistemic practice – that of university-based journalism education and that of journalism. Secondly, the focus was on individuals who have been members of one or another of these communities of practice from the 1960's onward, when university-based journalism education first became established in South Africa. Thirdly, an effort was made to include both individuals who gained experience of journalism and education in Afrikaans environments and those who have done so in English settings. Finally, some space was allowed for the inclusion of individuals who have engaged with journalism practice primarily from within the academy, without extensive experience of the sphere of journalism practice. This was done in the case of candidates who were uniquely positioned to provide insights into aspects of the history of South African journalism education.

The focus on candidates who have experience of journalism both within journalism practice and the academy is motivated by the identification, in recent literature, of the role that 'practitioner-academics' can play within teaching and research about journalism. In Chapter Three [see pg. 92] it was explained that the reference, within such commentary, is to individuals who have established an authoritative identity for themselves both as practitioners within a World One domain of practice such as journalism, and in World Two, as academics. Commentators argue that, internationally, such individuals are becoming more common in journalism education, and that they have the potential to play a role in bridging the fault-line between the academy and journalism practice. The suggestion is that they are in a unique position to facilitate the interaction between 'academic' knowledge about journalism (produced at the level of World Two), and 'vocational' knowledge (embedded in World One, in the practice of journalism). The selection of participants was informed by the suggestion that, by drawing on the observations of such individuals, it becomes possible to trace the interaction of concepts between the spheres of journalism education, -scholarship and -practice.

In order to find research participants that matched this description, the researcher made use of 'snowballing', which is described in social science research literature as a process of asking people who form part of the target population group to recommend appropriate interview candidates from their own network of contacts (Byrne, 2004:188). The selection was guided, more particularly, by a process of consultation with South African journalism educators. These individuals were asked to identify candidates who met the criteria outlined above. This led to the generation of a list of candidates in which the same names were repeatedly put forward by different people. The consensus from the consultation was that the list was generally representative of the available candidates for this study. The original list of candidates consisted of 42 names; of this group, 33 individuals agreed to

participate in the study. All of these individuals were interviewed, and of these interviews were included in the final study.

#### 4. The research participants

The task of identifying individuals who can be described as ‘practitioner-academics’ nevertheless proved challenging. In the end, not all of the individuals who participated could be said to have established an authoritative identity both within the domain of the academy and that of journalism. An evaluation of the extent to which each participant could be defined as a ‘practitioner-academic’ positions them, rather, along a sliding scale, in which some claim more authority as academics, while others are more confident about their own status as journalists. Many of the participants can, nevertheless, be said to have significant experience of working both in journalism practice and the academy, and all have accomplished an authoritative standing for themselves within one or another of these domains. In some instances, the list includes members who have established significant authority within both spheres. As such, the selection of participants does allow for an exploration of the contribution that ‘practitioner-academics’ can make to research about journalism education.

A review of the list of individuals who took part in the research process indicates that they share certain characteristics, both with regards to their social identity and the social experiences that they brought to their engagement with journalism education. Firstly, when one employs the terms articulated in South Africa to describe categories of racial identity, almost all of the participants would be defined as ‘white’. It is argued in this study that this racial profile is inevitable, given that until the late 20th century, it was primarily ‘white’ South Africans who had the privilege of access to universities, both as students and academics. The research participants are, as such, representative of the racial identity of most of the individuals who have participated in the history of university-based journalism education in this country.

Secondly, many of the participants hold (or have held) leadership positions both in journalism practice and within the academic fields of journalism education and the study of media and communication in South Africa. Some have published extensively in these fields, and many have at some point been in charge of media organisations or academic institutions. As a result they also represent familiar voices within these fields, whose views on journalism and journalism education are well known. This is understood to be an inevitable result of the selection criteria for the identification of interview candidates, as described above. It is, furthermore, appropriate for this study to focus on participants who are located in this way within the communities of practice that are under investigation in this study. As explained above, the study examines the way in which members of such groups make sense of their past observation of developments within localised histories of knowledge, and considers how this informs their current facilitation of engagement between journalism and the academy. It is therefore of relevance to focus on individuals who are well placed to play a leadership role within such processes of facilitation.

Thirdly, almost all of the participants who took part in the interview process gained their experience of journalism within print media, and more particularly in newspapers. It is of relevance here that television journalism only became a reality in this country in the late 1970's, and that broadcast media continued to be tightly controlled until the mid-1990's by the SABC, as an institution of the state. For the majority of the participants, whether they have experience of 'English liberal' or 'Afrikaner Nationalist' institutional contexts, this historical reality impacted heavily on the credibility of broadcast journalism. It may be that such processes of evaluation played an important role in ensuring that the relationship between South African journalism education and journalism practice has historically been conceptualised primarily as a relationship with the press.

Fourthly, all of the participants completed university degrees, first as undergraduate students and then at postgraduate level. This was to be anticipated, given that an important criterion for the inclusion of candidates in the interview process was that they should have extensive experience of being employed as journalism educators in university settings. An academic qualification is a basic requirement for employment in such environments. For this reason, each of the participants' description of their involvement with the two systems of knowledge production that form the focus of this study includes reference to an initial experience of university education, that they then often extend later in their careers.

It is, at the same time, possible to identify differences between the participants so that they can be organised into distinct groups, each with its own location within the South African history of journalism education. The first distinction becomes visible in context of the observation, above, that the participants' involvement with the systems of knowledge production discussed in this study began in almost all instances with an undergraduate education. It is possible, then, to distinguish between three different 'generations' of participants, who enter such education at different points in history. The first generation are represented by individuals whose first experience of tertiary education occurred during the late 1960's to mid-1970's; the second group enter university environments between the mid-1970's and the end of the 1980's and the third complete their initial tertiary education during the 1990's. It is also noticeable, particularly in context of the first two generations that some participants' experience of journalism and the academy occurred in Afrikaans-language environments while others have primarily been based in English settings. It is possible, then, to organise a review of the participants around the time they enter the conversation, presented in this study, about the conceptualisation of knowledge in the academy. In doing so, it is also important to keep in mind their location within either Afrikaans – or English language environments.

It should be noted, at the same time, that of the 31 participants, only twelve individuals had experience of working in Afrikaans-language university environments. Even within this group, it is possible to observe individuals who spent some time working in such environments, and then migrated to institutions with an English-language identity. As a result, description within this study

of Afrikaans-language institutions are less detailed, and some aspects of important historical developments within these spaces have not been included.

#### *4.1 The first generation*

Within the first generation, the earliest voices that emerge in Afrikaans-language environments include that of Johannes De Jager and Pedro Diederichs, who completed their undergraduate education in the mid to late 1960's. De Jager graduated from the University of Potchefstroom in 1968 with a major in Journalism, while Diederichs studied at the University of the Orange Free State, completing a general liberal arts degree. Pieter Fourie, Johannes Froneman, George Claassen and Gideon De Wet then join the conversation in the early to mid-1970's, when they studied, respectively, at the Universities of Potchefstroom, Stellenbosch, Pretoria and Orange Free State. Of this group, only Fourie and De Wet completed Communication-related degrees. Both achieved Honours degrees in Communication, Fourie at the University of Potchefstroom, and De Wet at the University of the Orange Free State.

The earliest voices to emerge within English liberal environments are Gavin Stewart and Graeme Addison, who graduated with BA degrees in 1962 and 1968, respectively, from the Universities of Natal and Witwatersrand. Both then worked as journalists in the English liberal press, where they remained until the mid-1970's. Don Pinnock, on the other hand, falls into a unique category, as the only individual who started out in journalism and then moved into the academy. He began his journalistic career in the late 1960's, and then enrolled as a student at the University of Cape Town (UCT) in 1977. Later voices are those of Keyan Tomaselli and Reg Rumney, who complete their undergraduate studies in the first years of the 1970's at Witwatersrand. Rumney then began working as a journalist, and Tomaselli as a film producer.

By the late 1970's, this first generation of participants had all gained some experience of journalism or communication practice. From this time onwards, the majority of those who were based in Afrikaans environments moved into tertiary institutions and also started to work as communications practitioners. De Jager was, in fact, already teaching communications at Potchefstroom by 1973. Diederichs, on the other hand, worked as a journalist and editor until the mid-1980's, when he took up a post in Communications at Pretoria Technikon. He was appointed as head of the Department of Journalism in 1996, and stayed on after the institution became the Tshwane University of Technology in 2004. Fourie, who lectured in Communications at Potchefstroom University in the late 1970's and also studied during this time in Belgium, took up a position at UNISA in 1980. He remained based at UNISA, holding the position of Head of the Department of Communication between 1987 and 2004, and Head of Media Studies from 2005 onwards. Froneman, as an exception, remained in journalism from the late 1970's onwards and then worked for the government in media relations until the end of the 1980's. From the early 1990's onwards, he taught at the Department of Communication Studies at the University of Potchefstroom, which later became part of the University of the North West.



Claassen took up a post in communications at Pretoria Technikon in 1983, first as lecturer and later as head of the Department of Journalism. He then served at Stellenbosch between 1993 and 2001 as head of the Department of Journalism. Gideon De Wet, who started teaching in the Communication Department at Fort Hare in 1983, was Head of Department in this institution until 1994 and then for the remainder of the 1990's became involved in the university's leadership structures. Between 2002 and 2003, he was based at North West University as Director of its School of Communications Studies. He was then appointed as Chairperson of the Department of Communication at the University of Johannesburg (UJ) – previously the Rand Afrikaans University (RAU) – where he worked for the next six years.

The first generation of participants based in English liberal environments also rapidly moved into tertiary institutions from the mid-1970's onwards, to teach journalism or communications. Rumney was the one exception, remaining in journalism throughout the 1980's and 1990's. It is noticeable that for all of these participants, this included a period of teaching at Rhodes, in the Department of Journalism (later the School of Journalism and Media Studies). Stewart worked at the Technikon Natal from 1976 to 1980, where he was instrumental in the establishment of their journalism programme. He was then based as Head of Department of Journalism at Rhodes University during the 1980's. Addison lectured in the same department between 1977 and 1981. He then started teaching in the Department of Journalism and Public Relations at Technikon Natal in 1991, and was Head of Department by 1993. Between 1994 and 1997 he was also Professor of Communication at the University of North West. Pinnock, who completed his undergraduate degree in the late 1970's, worked at the Institute of Criminology at the UCT before joining the Journalism Department at Rhodes in 1983. Tomaselli was lecturing at the Journalism Department at Rhodes by 1981. In 1985, he was appointed as Director of the newly established Centre for Cultural and Media Studies (CCMS) at the University of Natal, which later became the University of KwaZulu Natal. Tomaselli has remained at the CCMS since this time.

Of this generation, two participants returned to journalism practice after their involvement with universities. The first was Stewart, who became editor of *The Daily Dispatch* in 1993, where he stayed until 2005. Claassen, in turn, was deputy editor of *Die Burger* between 2001 and 2008.

#### 4.2 *The second generation*

The second generation completed their university degrees from the late 1970's onward. This group, for the first time, included women. It is also noticeable that many of the participants in this group from Afrikaans language environment complete a postgraduate degree at Stellenbosch, and also spend time working at *Die Burger*. The first voices in this group were represented by Lizette Rabe and Johan De Wet, who studied in the mid- to late 1970's at UCT and Stellenbosch respectively. Although both of these participants ended up completing a postgraduate degree in journalism at Stellenbosch University, their career trajectories are very different. Rabe was awarded her journalism



degree in 1979, and then worked at *Die Burger*. She had left newspaper journalism by the early 1980's to work for the women's magazine *Sarie*, where she became assistant editor in the late 1980's and then editor in the mid-1990's. In 2001, she was appointed as head of the Department of Journalism at Stellenbosch. De Wet, after graduating from UCT, worked in public relations for the South African government for a number of years. He then returned to university to complete the Stellenbosch Honours degree in 1982 and, on graduation, briefly took up employment in the SABC. By 1983 he had moved into academia to teach communication, first at UNISA where he was based for ten years, and then at the University of the Free State. During the late 1990's, he again worked in communications for the South African government, but then returned to the University of the Free State, where he eventually became Chairperson of the Department of Communication Science in 2004.

Bun Booyens, Gabriel Botma and Robert Brand fall into a later group, completing their undergraduate studies in the early to middle 1980's - Booyens and Botma at Stellenbosch University, and Brand at the University of Pretoria. All three of these participants went on to complete Honours degrees in journalism at the University of Stellenbosch, with Booyens and Brand enrolling in this programme in 1987 and Botma in 1988. In the years that followed, these participants worked primarily in newspaper journalism and communication. Booyens was based briefly at the SABC, and then at *Die Burger* in the late 1980's and early 1990's. For most of the 1990's, he worked in communications for the South African branch of the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF). In 1997, he took up a teaching position at the Department of Journalism at Stellenbosch, where he remained for three years. He became assistant editor of *Die Burger* between 2000 and 2004 and then established and edited a travel magazine. Since 2009, he has worked at *Die Burger* as editor. Botma joined *Die Burger* at the end of 1988 as a general reporter, and remained based at this newspaper until 2007. Brand worked in print journalism until 2004, and was then based as Senior Lecturer and Pearson Chair of Economic Journalism at Rhodes, where he remained until 2011.

In English environments, the first voices to emerge within the second generation are those of Guy Berger, Lynette Steenveld, Pippa Green, Jo-Anne Richards, Franz Kruger and Anton Harber. Berger and Richards both studied journalism at Rhodes University in the mid- to late 1970's. During this same period, Green and Kruger completed their undergraduate education at UCT, and Harber at Witwatersrand. Steenveld stands out, in this group, as the one individual who did not become involved in journalism practice. She completed an Honours degree in literature at Cambridgeshire College of Arts and Technology in England in the late 1970's and then spent three years teaching English in a high school in Cape Town. After this, in 1985, she completed a Higher Diploma in Journalism at Rhodes, and then took up an academic post in this institution. She has remained at Rhodes since this time, moving to the position of senior lecturer and then associate professor. Berger's career trajectory is also unusual, because he spent the early years of the 1980's in detention as a political prisoner and was in political exile by the mid-1980's. On his return to South Africa in

1992, he worked first at the magazine *New Era* and was then appointed as the editor of *South*, where he stayed until 1994. He then took up a post as the head of Journalism and Media Studies at Rhodes, where he remained until 2011. Since then, he has taken up a post at UNESCO as Director for Freedom of Expression and Media Development.

The other members of this group all worked in South African journalism in the 1980's and 1990's. Green was employed as a labour reporter for *The Argus* until 1986, and then spent some years in exile, during which time she completed a Masters degree in journalism at Columbia University. On her return to South Africa in the early 1990's, she worked in editorial positions both in magazine journalism and newspapers. She also worked for SABC radio, first as Political Editor for Radio News between 1995 and 1997 and then as head of SABC Radio News between 2002 and 2005. Over the next years she became involved in teaching, and eventually took up a post as Head of Journalism in the University of Pretoria, where she has been since 2009. Kruger worked for the *Daily Dispatch* in the mid-1980's, and then founded the East London News Agency, where he worked as editor. He then studied in the UK for two years, but returned to South Africa in 1990 to establish the East Cape News Agency (ECNA). He worked as editor at ECNA during the first half of the 1990's and then as National Editor of SABC Radio News between 1994 and 2000. During the 2000's, he became involved in teaching at Witwatersrand, where he eventually became appointed as Director of the Wits Radio Academy in 2009. Harber, who started working in newspaper journalism after he left university, was based at the *Rand Daily Mail* by 1982. He stayed there until the newspaper closed in 1985 and then became involved in the founding of the *Weekly Mail*. Harber remained at the *Weekly Mail*, (later the *Mail and Guardian*) until the late 1990's. Then, after working as CEO for Kagiso broadcasting for a number of years, he was appointed in 2001 as Caxton Professor of Journalism and Media Studies at Wits. Richards worked in newspaper journalism throughout the 1980's. In the 1990's, she became established as an accomplished novelist, and also remained involved in freelance journalism. She was contracted to teach in the Honours-level 'career entry' programme at Witwatersrand from 2002 onwards, and was co-ordinating the programme by 2005.

Within this second generation of English participants, Anthea Garman and Leslie Cowling graduate slightly later, in the early 1980's. Garman completed a cadet course at the *Rand Daily Mail* in 1981 and then worked as a reporter and sub-editor for various newspapers between 1981 and 1983. She then worked for five years as the publications editor for *African Enterprise*, an NGO based in Pietermaritzburg, before taking up an editorial position at *The Natal Witness* in 1989. She was based at the *Witness* until the mid-1990's and then started working at Rhodes in 1996, as a lecturer and editor of the *Rhodes Journalism Review*. Cowling started as a reporter at *The Star* in 1984, where she stayed until 1988. She left the country in 1989, to work in journalism in the U.S. When she returned to South Africa, she was employed as a training officer at the *Weekly Mail* between 1992 and 1995 and then worked in an editorial capacity at a number of newspapers. She has worked as lecturer and then co-ordinator of the Journalism and Media Studies programme, at Wits University, since 2001.

### 4.3 *The third generation*

In the 1990's, a third generation of participants arrive at university. Rod Amner completed his undergraduate studies in the late 1980's at Rhodes, majoring in journalism, and then worked at ECNA in the early 1990's, before leaving the country to live in the United Kingdom for a few years. On his return to South Africa in 1994, he worked as sub-editor and journalist for a marketing magazine, and then established the Development Media Agency (DMA), based on the ECNA model. He worked as editor of the DMA in the late 1990's, and then began lecturing at Rhodes in 2000.

Cornia Pretorius was an undergraduate student at Potchefstroom between 1989 and 1991, graduating with a BA degree in Communications and Political Science. She also completed an Honours degree in Political Science in 1992. Over the next ten years, she worked first at *Beeld* and then the *Sunday Times*. Between 2004 and 2008, she worked as a freelance writer and consultant, and was also based as a journalist at the *Mail and Guardian*. During this period she also presented a discussion show on Radio Sonder Grense (RSG) and taught radio journalism at UJ. She then took up a teaching position in communications at the University of the North West in 2010.

Herman Wasserman completed a BA degree at Stellenbosch University in 1992, and an Honours in Afrikaans Literature in 1993. In 1994, he received an Honours in Journalism from the same university, and then worked at *Die Burger* until 2001. Between 2002 and 2007, he lectured at the Department of Journalism in Stellenbosch. He was then based in the United Kingdom, where he lectured in Media, Communication and Cultural Studies, first at Newcastle University and then the University of Sheffield. Since 2010, he has taught at Rhodes, where he holds the position of Deputy Head of the School of Journalism and Media Studies.

Tanja Bosch completed a BA in English and History at UCT between 1993 and 1995, and an Honours in History at the same institution in 1996. During 1998 and 1999, she worked as a 'trainee programmer' at Bush Radio, a community radio station based in Cape Town. For the next four years, she studied at Ohio University, where she completed an MA in Communication for Development and then a Doctorate in Mass Communication. On her return to South Africa in 2004, she worked for a year as the station manager of Bush Radio. Between 2005 and 2006, she was based at the Department of Journalism in Stellenbosch, where she was a doctoral fellow. Since 2007, she has taught at the Centre for Film and Media Studies of the University of Cape Town.

Gilbert Motsaathebe completed a BA in Communications at the University of Botswana in Mafeking between 1993 and 1996 and an Honours in Communications in 1997. For the next six years, he worked as a television journalist, first at Bop TV and then E-TV. From 2003 onward, he lectured in journalism and communications at the Cape Peninsula University Of Technology.

Like Steenveld, Natalie Hyde-Clarke represents one of the research participants who does not have a background in journalism practice. She completed her undergraduate degree at Wits between 1993 and 1995, and then went on, between 1996 and 2002, to complete an Honours, Masters and

Doctorate in International Relations at the same institution. Between 2001 and 2002, she lectured in International Relations. She then lectured in Media Studies between 2004 and 2008, during which time she was appointed as Head of Department. Since 2009, she has lectured in Communication at the University of Johannesburg, where she has held the post of Head of Department since 2010.

Within this group, for the first time, it is possible to identify candidates who might describe themselves, in the South African context, as 'black'. These include Bosch and Motsaathebe, but of these two participants, Motsaathebe is the only individual who would be defined, in South Africa, not only as 'black', but also a mother-tongue speaker of a 'black' African language, and as having grown up within a 'black', working class community.

##### 5. The interview guide

The design of the interview guide was informed by the recognition that the aim of the fieldwork process was not to generate complete biographies. Instead, the focus would be on moments in time that the subjects experienced as being particularly significant to the central research question. Denzin describes such moments as those that alter the way a person interprets their 'life projects' (1989:14-15). The aim was, then, to conduct what Flick refers to as an 'episodic interview'. Flick explains that such interviews represent a sub-genre of the biographical interview, consisting of a discussion of a series of situations or events of relevance to the research question (Flick, 1998:110). The interview questions were also formulated so that the participants' discussion of their own life experiences could be considered against the backdrop of broader historical circumstances (Flick, 1998:105). The questions were, furthermore, designed to be open-ended and flexible, given that such an approach is understood, within social science methodology, to enable an exploration of the participants' interpretation of events and issues (Byrne, 2004:182). Such an approach was regarded to be of particular relevance to this study, given that the aim was to gain insight into the way in which individuals made sense of the nature of knowledge production within the spheres in which they were located.

With these guidelines in mind, an interview guide was developed, consisting of a series of topics to be covered in a loosely planned order (see appendix, pg 452). The first part of the guide was structured chronologically, so that the discussion could deal methodically with different periods in the participants' lives and explore the relationship of these periods to historical events. This part of the guide included three clusters of questions. The participants were asked, firstly, to talk about their experience of being students in tertiary education, and to explain the impact that this had on their conceptualisation of credible social knowledge. Secondly, they were prompted to talk about their experience of journalism practice as a space in which to produce authoritative social knowledge. Here the participants were asked to comment on the extent to which they drew, in their practice as journalists, on ideas about knowledge that they had developed during their tertiary education.

Thirdly, the guide focused on their experience of adopting the identity of academic and teacher in university environments. In this section, the emphasis was on encouraging participants to evaluate their experience of the university as a space in which to articulate an understanding of journalistic practice. The aim was to prompt them to describe the categories of knowledge that they encountered within this space and to comment on the extent to which this enabled them to reflect on the legitimacy of journalism as a practice of knowledge production. They were also asked to describe their experience of sharing such insights with journalism practitioners.

The second part of the guide then dealt with the participants' current conceptualisation of credible journalistic practice and their understanding of how new generations of journalists can best learn about such practice. Here, they were prompted to reflect on the significance of the experiences and observations they had so far described for their current conceptualisation of journalism practice and journalism education respectively.

#### 6. Guidelines for the analysis of the interview material

The examination of the interview material was guided by the research goal of the study, as set out at the beginning of this section. The aim was therefore to work with categories that would enable the researcher to consider how the participants' observations and interpretation of the histories in which they participated can be seen to offer explanations as to why the potential for a critically engaged tradition in university-based journalism education has not as yet been realised in South Africa. In responding to this broad goal, the first objective was to explore the research participants' observations with regards to developments in the conceptualisation of authoritative social knowledge within the academic and journalistic environments in which they have been based. The aim of this exploration was to gain insight into their understanding of the relationship between these developments and broader shifts in approaches to knowledge within the socio-political environment. The second objective was to capture the participants' description of the traditions of journalism education in which they have been involved, either as students or educators. Particular attention was paid to their account of the approaches adopted, in these traditions, to the categories of knowledge included in teaching programmes, and the relationships that came to exist between these categories. The aim was to consider the extent to which these approaches could be seen as representative of the guidelines for the content and structure captured in Figure 5. The third objective was to gain insight into the participants' understanding of the way in which such teaching engages with the academic and journalistic conceptualisations of authoritative social knowledge that they identified in context of the first objective, above. The aim was, more particularly, to consider the implications, as understood by the participants, for the role that such education could be seen to play in its engagement with journalism as social practice.

In order to achieve these goals, software for the analysis of qualitative research material was utilised<sup>44</sup>. The researcher identified three main categories or broad topics around which substantive statements within the interview material could be organised. The first of these categories was concerned with the participants' descriptions of developments within histories of authoritative academic and journalistic knowledge. These descriptions could be further subdivided into four distinct periods in time, in many cases indicating a shared understanding, amongst the participants, of phases in the histories of such knowledge.

The second category consisted of statements that the participants made about their personal responses to journalistic and academic environments. The focus, here, was on statements that demonstrated how participants located themselves in relation to particular knowledge paradigms, as part of the processes through which they engaged with the histories of knowledge that unfolded within these spaces. Three sub-categories emerged, dealing respectively with the participants' description of their personal relationships to academic and journalistic environments; the criteria that they employed in their assessment of the legitimacy of these spaces; and comments that they made about their experience of the boundaries between such spaces.

The third category was concerned with the participants' reflections on principles that inform the construction of the relationship between journalism and the academy. Here it was again possible to identify three subcategories, dealing respectively with knowledge as it exists in the academy; knowledge as it exists within journalism practice; and the way in which these two categories of knowledge can be seen to interact with each other.

In making sense of the resulting set of statements drawn from the research material, it was kept in mind that, according to guidelines for qualitative social research, the analysis of interview material should be 'theory-led' or 'category-led', with the research material is thematised according to a series of extrinsic categories (Kelly, 2009: 264). Such categories may be inferred from research literature dealing with similar topics to that of one's own study (Rubin & Rubin, 2005:235). In response to this principle, repeated attempts were made to link the analysis to the arguments and conclusions that had been articulated in the first two sections of the dissertation. Particular attention was paid, in this context, to the relevance to the participants' discussions of the curriculum guidelines outlined in Figure 5. In Section Two of this study it was argued that these guidelines have played a significant role in the marginalisation of critical journalism education within the global history of such teaching; the goal was, now, to consider the extent to which this argument applied in the South African instance.

At the same time, analysis was guided by the recognition that, apart from looking at 'external' categories, there is a need to consider organising principles that 'naturally' underlie the research

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<sup>44</sup> The researcher made use of NVivo 8, a computer software package produced by QSR International. NVivo contains tools for detailed analysis and qualitative modeling.



material. A key organising principle that was identified, in this context, was the tendency towards narrative structure, which resulted from the emphasis within the interview guide on history and biography. The analysis of the research material therefore involved an attempt to capture the ways in which participants 'made sense' of events and issues by presenting them in narrative form. It is noted in literature that because the telling of stories represents one of the primary ways in which human beings explain their own experiences, narrative analysis can assist in the capturing these processes of explanation (Mishler, 1991:68). It is also noted that, in exploring such processes of 'meaning making', it is important to draw not only on theoretical language but also the language of the research participants (Terre Blanche et al, 2009:323; Rubin & Rubin, 2005:211-213). This realisation played a role, for example, in the identification of categories that were used to describe and characterise the different historical periods referred to above (i.e. 'eroding hegemony'; 'struggle and resistance'; 'freedom coming' etc). Similarly, the analyses drew on phrases used in describing the authority of journalistic knowledge (i.e. 'fairness and balance'; 'courage and truth' etc).

The process of analysis was also informed by a recognition of the importance not just of summarising the individual contributions made by participants, but also to identify relationships and tensions between the statements made by different participants (Terre Blanche et al, 2009:323). An effort was made, in particular, to identify the way in which the different research participants could be seen to locate themselves within an overall spectrum of positions within debates about the authority of knowledge. This spectrum of positions was understood to be representative of those that had been identified in the first two sections of this dissertation, pertaining to broader debates about authoritative social knowledge. As such, this process enabled the researcher to locate the participants' comments within the analysis of broader histories of knowledge presented in the first part of the dissertation.

#### 7. The writing up of the interview material

The first three chapters present a chronologically arranged discussion of the participants' involvement in histories of social knowledge in the institutional environments of South African journalism education. Chapter Seven deals with the participants' general experience of such knowledge within universities and communities of journalistic practice. Against this backdrop, Chapters Eight and Nine describe the explanations that they offer of the history of their engagement, from their location in the sphere of journalism education, with these conceptualisations of knowledge.

All three chapters piece together the participants' commentary into an historical account of developments in the conceptualisation of authoritative social knowledge within and between the spheres of journalism scholarship, -education and -practice. Each deals with the participants' description of contestations that took place, within these spheres, around the credibility of social knowledge. They consider how the participants have drawn on such observation to articulate their understanding of credible journalistic knowledge and their approach to journalism education. They also consider how the participants have reviewed such understanding over time, as they encounter



new environments and different approaches to knowledge. In this way, the chapters identify a spectrum of positions adopted by the participants with regards to the appropriate function of journalism and the role that journalism education should play in supporting such practice.

The final two chapters in this section examine the participants' location within debates about the nature and purpose of journalistic and the role that journalism education should play in teaching about journalism. This discussion is arranged around the issues and concepts addressed within such debate. The aim is to make sense of the proposals that the participants are able to articulate for critically engaged approaches to journalism education. Chapter Ten examines the participants' evaluation of journalism practice as it exists in South Africa today. Chapter Eleven outlines their understanding of the approach that should therefore be adopted to South African university-based journalism education.

A large part of the analysis has been presented, then, in the final writing up of the dissertation, as a series of chronologies, mapping out the way in which participants describe developments in history. It should be noted that methodological guidelines for social research indicate that this approach to the the presentation of research, in which discussions are structured as well-told stories, can lead to misrepresentation of the research material. It has been pointed out, in this respect, that such writing can result in an "... overly easy narrative rendering", suggesting more order and coherence in the aspects of social experience that is being described than can actually be claimed to exist. One may be persuaded to accept such accounts as truthful simply because the coherence of a narrative account is compelling and aesthetically appealing (Spence, 1983:461-462). It is important, therefore, to note that the 'narrative rendering' of research material, in the writing up of this study, is not intended to indicate the unambiguous existence of coherent histories of social knowledge production.

The approach to the writing up of the research findings was also guided by the recognition that qualitative interviewing does not provide unambiguous evidence of the events that research participants describe, or even of the way in which they experienced particular contexts, events or situations. What they are offering the researcher is, rather, a particular account, as they have chosen to represent it. As such, each interview was treated, as described in research methodology literature as a "social event in its own right" (Byrne, 2004:182). It was the researcher's perception that the way that the participants in this study described their own experience of histories of knowledge production was, necessarily informed by personal interests. Some participants seemed, for example, preoccupied with the need to provide justification for the way in which they contributed to these histories, and focused on aspects of that history that helped to legitimise the role that they played. An exploration of such processes of justification are, in fact, of interest to the study, since this helps to explain how journalism educators may draw on their own memory of historical events to make sense of their current working context and their practice as teachers and academics. For this reason, an ongoing effort was made to capture the way participants themselves gave account of historical events and of

their own actions and thoughts. The assumption remains, nevertheless, that what each interview provides is one possible version of the social world. The way that the participant gives account of moments in history helps the researcher, then, to make sense of how members of particular communities of practice makes sense both of the past and the present.

## CHAPTER SEVEN: SOCIAL KNOWLEDGE IN JOURNALISM AND THE ACADEMY

### A contextualisation

#### Introduction

This chapter serves as a contextualisation for the examination, in Part Three, of the relationship that has existed in South African journalism education at different moments in time between journalism education and journalism as historically situated traditions of practice. It is proposed, in this study, that this relationship has been shaped by contestations that have taken place, in this country, around the conceptualisation of authoritative social knowledge. The chapter deals with the participants' observation of such contestation as part of their experience of academic and journalistic environments. The purpose is to provide a context for the exploration, in subsequent chapters, of ways in which South African journalism education has engaged with the approaches to knowledge that formed part of such contestation. Section One deals with the history of approaches to authoritative social knowledge in university environments and focuses on participants' experience of undergraduate study. Section Two then focuses on their comments about approaches to such knowledge within the journalistic communities in which they have participated.

The chapter pays particular attention to two categories of knowledge that are included in the standard requirements for university-based journalism education, as described in Part Two of this dissertation (See Figure 5). The first category is represented by the World Three and World Two knowledge that is generally included in liberal arts programmes. The second, which is located at the level of World One, consists of the guidelines for 'professional' reporting that have circulated internationally both within journalism education and journalism practice. It was proposed, in Part Two, that these categories of knowledge have been accorded special status within debates about university-based journalism education. They are significant, in particular, because they represent knowledge that is recognised both within academic and journalistic environments to be of relevance to journalism practice. It may therefore be that, in context of these categories, it is possible to trace a relationship of engagement between journalism education and journalism practice. Subsequent chapters will examine the extent to which the participants' commentary indicates that such engagement has occurred in South Africa. The aim is also to evaluate the nature of such engagement, and particularly the extent to which it can be seen to operate either as instrumental service or critical intervention.

Also as part of this contextualisation, the chapter maps out the participants' understanding of the relationship between their observation about such knowledge and broader processes of change within their social environment. In their discussion of such change, the participants distinguish between three phases in South African socio-political history, which echo those referred to in Chapter Six. The discussion in both sections of the chapter has been organised around these phases in history.

## 7.1 Social knowledge in the academy

In Part Two, it was proposed that, both within academic and journalistic communities, liberal arts programmes are accorded special status in assessments of the value of academic knowledge for the education of journalists. It was noted firstly, that amongst journalists worldwide, exposure to the liberal arts represents the one aspect of university education that may be acknowledged to be of relevance to the practice of journalism. Equally, within universities, exposure to the liberal arts is traditionally understood to be a condition for the presence of journalism education in the academy. For these reasons, the inclusion of liberal arts subjects represents a key stipulation in the guidelines for structuring journalism education into university curricula, as set out in Figure 5. The review of participants' comments about their experience of universities, in this section, contributes to the exploration of the relevance of this proposal to the South African context. It therefore places particular emphasis on the participants' description of the role that their involvement in liberal arts education played in the development of their understanding of authoritative social knowledge.

### 7.1.1 Eroding hegemony: The 1960's and early 1970's

The period in history that spans from the early 1960's to the mid-1970's is described by the participants as a time in which the hegemonic relationships of the apartheid state became unsettled, both in 'Afrikaner Nationalist' and 'English liberal' environments. They generally agree that, from the 1960's onwards, universities became characterised by critique of official representations of the South African socio-political context. It is explained, firstly, that voices were emerging amongst the Afrikaner political leadership questioning the principles on which justification for the apartheid state was based. Participants note, for example, that the National Party was "breaking up" into factions, with "right wingers" resisting the strategies that were now promoted by more "liberal" thinkers in the party. Such critique was also reflected within Afrikaans academic environments (Claassen, 2010; Diederichs, 2010). Participants point, secondly, to the emergence of challenges to the analysis of South African society that had gained hegemony within English universities. They describe the standard position as a mildly liberal 'anti-apartheid' stance which, although critical, was not invested in change that would impact on established relations of privilege. They point out a tendency within these environments, from the early 1970's onwards, towards more fundamental questioning of the apartheid state (Stewart, 2010; Tomaselli, 2011). This growing instability of established social analyses is described as being of significance to the evolution of the participants' understanding, at this time, of what it means to produce credible knowledge about society within the academy.

Many of the first generation of participants, who were students in Afrikaans Nationalist institutions during this period, indicate that they were not conscious at this time of their own separation from a broader social reality. They understand this to be in contrast to the experiences of

people who studied at English liberal institutions. Claassen, for example, describes the University of Pretoria in the early 1970's as "... a typical Afrikaner university, with apartheid very much in place":

We didn't have any contact with black students ... it was one of those peaceful campuses. Not like the university of Cape Town, or Wits, or even Rhodes, you know, where student protests, NUSAS<sup>45</sup> and those people were very active ... we were very naïve, if you think about it, if you look back forty years ... (Claassen 2010).

He suggests that this disconnect was not innocent, but rather an assumed passivity, based on shared acceptance of an ideological framework on which privilege depended:

...we never exposed ourselves to [the realities of apartheid]... you had all the advantages that apartheid brought you but you never challenged it as such ... you know the Afrikaans universities were very docile (Claassen, 2010).

Some of the participants note, at the same time, that there were established spaces within Afrikaans universities characterised by open debate and critical social analysis. One of these spaces was located at Potchefstroom University in the early 1970's, in context of the teaching of philosophy. Fourie explains that undergraduate students at this university were expected to complete an inter-faculty course introducing them to this subject. It was designed to be taught from a Calvinist perspective with the aim of contributing to the normative foundations on which teaching at this university was based. While Fourie was a student, however, Willem De Klerk<sup>46</sup> was involved in teaching this course and he offered his students more than an exposure to Calvinist norms. Unlike many other lecturers at Potchefstroom, he did not "take a specific stance" in relation to ideas about society, choosing instead to provide students with an overview of frameworks of thought concerned with social analysis. These included not just the paradigm of Christian Nationalism but also that of Marxism and Neo-Marxism. Fourie explains that, at this time, this learning did not impact directly on his own understanding of his social environment. He did not, in his words, succeed in "making that link" to "what is happening around us". De Klerk's approach was nevertheless of profound significance to the approach that Fourie was to adopt, in later life, to the study of journalism and media more generally:

The reason why I say he made a very big impression is he wasn't dogmatic at all, he provided you with a wonderful overview, and he left it to you to decide [what to think]... I still gain from it today ... Even in my own ... work in the field of Media Studies, I did it from a ... philosophical perspective, mainly (Fourie, 2010).

Johannes Froneman speaks in similar terms of his own learning at Stellenbosch University in the mid-70's and again it is an exposure to teachers of philosophy that represents the term of reference. He explains that it was the political and intellectual culture established within the Philosophy Department by progressive academics that made this such a profound experience:

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<sup>45</sup> The National Union of South African Students (NUSAS) was made up mostly of students from English-language 'white' South African universities. From the late 1940's onward, the organisation became involved in anti-apartheid campaigns. In the early 1990s, NUSAS was merged with other student movements into the South African Student Congress.

<sup>46</sup> Willem de Klerk, who was the elder brother of South African ex president FW de Klerk, was a political analyst, a former editor of the *Rapport*, and a founding member of the Democratic Party. He is known for coining the term *verlig* (enlightened) and *verkramp* (narrowminded) to describe ideological positions adopted within different wings of the National Party.

... it was very much a politically charged environment ... intellectually speaking it was a very broad and open sort of environment in which I studied ... I came from a very conservative Afrikaner Nationalist background and I think all of them sort of tempered that ... and I certainly didn't go out of university the same person that went in .... (Froneman, 2010).

Froneman highlights his own exposure, in this environment, to the ideal of the *Oop Gesprek*, or open and reflective intellectual dialogue, which attempts to transcend the dogmatic assumption of an ideological position:

I always believe what I left behind was an ideological mindset ... in my own journalistic life I always ... tried to put that into practice, so it certainly had a huge influence on me (Froneman, 2010).

It is noticeable that, in evaluating their experience of learning in both these settings, these participants pay particular attention to the kind of knowledge they were exposed to about the society in which they lived. They point out, furthermore, that an exposure to liberal arts coursework had been of particular value in their development of an ability to engage critically with social knowledge. Both Fourie and Froneman refer to the important role that approaches to the teaching of philosophy played in this respect, and point, in particular, to their exposure to knowledge of World Three. They explain that such teaching provided them with a deep regard for the importance of open debate and freedom of thought, in which different representations of society may contend with each other. They contrast this with a tendency, in their social environment, to present social knowledge as unquestionable truth.

The research participants based in English universities describe their experience of learning about social knowledge in very different terms. They explain that, within these environments, a growth in critical social consciousness was accepted as fundamental to the purpose of university education. Furthermore, growth in understanding of social knowledge was understood to occur not just in context of academic learning, but also through exposure to campus-based political debate and student activism. When Rumney talks about universities in the early 70's, he explains that the education that one received in English liberal institutions was a "dual process":

...there was the formal learning process, and then there was the informal learning process of ... what one would call the acculturation and politicisation that goes with being at a university ... (Rumney, 2010).

Many of the participants experienced such learning as a process of gaining literacy in critical assessment of the "truth-value" of knowledge offered to them about South African society. This was already the case for Stewart in the early 1960's, at the University of Natal:

... it was a very rich experience ... there was huge debate on campus. And one believed in that as a way of arriving at ... the truth, if you want to call it that (Stewart, 2010).

The participants note, however, that from the early 1970's onwards, students and academics on English campuses became increasingly convinced that in order to 'arrive at truth' there was a need for more critical economic analysis of South African social conditions. Rumney notes that debate

amongst students at Wits was preoccupied with a wide spectrum of analytical concepts that would allow them to critique "... what was happening in the country":

Ideas about ... everything from ... Marxism to Liberalism. Basically anti-apartheid [arguments] of various shades. But mainly ... at that stage the most ... vigorous set of ideas was Marxist, actually. Althusserian and so forth (Rumney, 2010).

The suggestion is, then, that the influence of Marxist ideas could, by this time, be felt very strongly within the political debates that took place in such universities.

It is possible to identify similarities in the descriptions that this generation of participants provide with regards to education about social knowledge that they received, respectively, in Afrikaans and English universities. In both contexts, they speak about being introduced to concepts drawn from a liberal arts education that introduced them to World Three debate, and allowed them to establish a critical conceptualisation of social knowledge. They explain, in each case, that such learning prompted them to develop a regard for the importance of autonomous thought, and for debate in which different representations of society may contend with each other. This, then, points to a shared understanding of the criteria for the production of credible social knowledge, based in the recognition that such knowledge is always constructed, and necessarily informed by social perspective.

There are, at the same time, important differences between the participants' experience of education about social knowledge in Afrikaans and English universities. Within Fourie and Froneman's descriptions, the establishment of their understanding of the authority of social knowledge seems to have occurred despite the core aims of the institutions in which they were based. The development of their ideas depended, rather, on access to isolated pockets of 'enlightened' thought within institutional environments that were closed off from critical engagement with social context. Possibly for this reason, Fourie describes his own growth of consciousness as one in which he did not immediately consider the implications for a critical confrontation with the political processes that were taking place in South Africa at this time. The critical literacy that he developed at the level of World Three was not applied, at this stage, then, to an examination of World One.

In contrast to this, the participants who studied in English universities all explain that a growth in critical consciousness was accepted as a core function of liberal arts education. Furthermore, this purpose was understood to apply not only to coursework, but also to the more informal processes of acculturation in university communities, in which confrontation with the broader social context was increasingly regarded as a priority. Within this example, then, there seemed to have been more opportunity for an application of World Three concepts to the analysis of World One environments. It is acknowledged by the participants that the role of such critical engagement was limited by a general institutional investment in a liberal framework of thought, which did not confront the need for fundamental social change in South Africa. It would nevertheless seem that the liberal analysis of South African society that dominated these universities, both in and outside



classrooms, was becoming unstable. Differences in institutional culture of English and Afrikaans universities played an important role, then, in the extent to which participants found themselves able to apply the learning they gained from liberal arts programmes to an engagement with their social context. In the next section, it will be argued that these differences help to explain the way in which the second generation of participants were able to respond to the contestation of authoritative social knowledge that characterised South Africa in the late 1970's and 1980's.

### 7.1.2 Struggle and resistance: The mid-1970's to 1980's

The participants present this period as a time in which the South African political context was characterised by open confrontation between the state and civil society. Green notes that the “narrative in the 1980's” was one of “struggle and resistance”. Other participants also describe this as a time of increased state oppression, growing popular resistance and escalating political violence. The 1980's were, Booyens notes, the “most bitter years” of apartheid history, a time of ‘necklacing’ and the declaration of states of emergency (Booyens, 2010). Green explains that the contradictions that resulted from this would “... eventually collapse the system” and Addison comments, similarly, that “... we all knew the system was crumbling” (Green, 2010; Addison, 2010). There is also a suggestion that it was at this time that a heightened political consciousness impacted most powerfully on approaches to social knowledge. Pinnock proposes that the 1980's “sharpened young people's political focus”, making them “want to know” in a way that one can no longer observe in the current context (Pinnock, 2010). Garman also describes the 1980's as a “moment of activism” in which “... everyone was trying to figure out what is going on in the world” (Garman, 2010). Descriptions of this period serve, then, as an account of the beginnings of more reflective thinking about the production of knowledge of the social. Such reflection came about, it would seem, because certainty about appropriate evaluation of social knowledge was now up for debate.

During this time, Stellenbosch University stands out as a central term of reference in the second generation of participants' descriptions of liberal arts programmes based in Afrikaans institutions. Rabe, Booyens and Botma all describe this as an environment characterised by a general culture of conservatism. For all of them, there were nevertheless spaces within formal education in which possibilities opened up for the articulation of critical social analysis. Rabe completed her undergraduate studies in 1978 and, like Froneman, speaks about the role that the Department of Philosophy played in her exposure to critical modes of thought. Again, she emphasises the importance of exposure to World Three debates. She notes that philosophy allowed her to reflect critically on ‘accepted truths’ about South African society. It offered a perspective from which to challenge such truth “... even if it is dished out to you ... as the word of God ... and it is the only truth – what does it mean?” (Rabe, 2010). Rabe explains that the emphasis was not purely on exposing students to ideas but also on the shaping of their political identity, and she represents this as playing an important role in her understanding of what it means to be a journalist.

Booyens and Botma, who graduated in the mid-1980's, also speak about being exposed to coursework that provided terms of reference for a critical analysis of their social context. They note, however, that their experiences of formal education remained of limited significance in shaping their perspectives either on South African politics or on the nature and purpose of social knowledge. What was more important was exposure to political culture within the broader campus environment. Botma explains that although this culture may have operated to suppress critique, Stellenbosch University was characterised by intense political consciousness, so that "... everything was political ... every speaker on campus was from somewhere, even when they were in the end banned it was an issue" (Botma, 2010). There was, furthermore, continued resistance amongst more progressive students to the dominant political identity of the university. Botma, who identified with this group, argues that it represented a new generation of South Africans who rejected the position of extreme conservatism that they were expected to adopt as Afrikaans speaking whites:

...there was a general irritation with ultra conservatism and with ... people making you ashamed to be Afrikaans ... it was just getting rid of our irritation with what we considered small mindedness or plain stupidity ... we saw ourselves differently from that, [and] even small scale confrontations with the management and the rector was seen as something huge and part of a political thing (Botma, 2010).

According to Botma, this rejection was not driven by well-informed social analysis or sound knowledge of the "broader political agenda" of resistance politics in South Africa:

It was ... a wish to get to a more liberal, open minded space and have society opening up and not be part of this *Broederbond* thing<sup>47</sup> with people wearing soviet style hats making speeches on behalf us ... it was a combination of ... youthful rebelliousness but also with the idea that we ... envisaged something a bit more open and ... different (Botma, 2010).

He observes that such rebellion could become more politically informed, once students did become aware of events taking place outside the walls of the university that revealed the injustices that structured South African society and the brutality with which this was being maintained:

...obviously once you realised that there were ridiculous contradictions in the system and then also the inhumanity and all the things that came through about death squads and things ... you had to be uncomfortable ... especially when the perception was that these people were speaking on behalf of you (Botma, 2010).

Booyens, however, describes this growth of consciousness as based in more than youthful rebellion. It was, rather, indicative of a formal breach that took place, in the mid-1980's, between the "... white Afrikaans youth and the traditional National Party and the grasp that it has on the youth". Because of these changes, spaces opened up for the expression of political dissent from within:

...it was the first time where you could publically admit to the fact that you weren't voting for the National Party and live to tell the tale, as it were. Before that, there was very little scope ... for anybody to ... remain mainstream and differ from what the dogma of the day was. And a lot of the political conversations at the time was about the fact that

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<sup>47</sup> The Afrikaner Broederbond (or 'brotherhood') a secret organisation, with an exclusively male, white and 'Afrikaner' membership. From the early 1920's to the early 1990's, its members played a highly influential role in the establishment and maintenance of apartheid systems.

people discovered that they weren't alone in their ... consciousness that something fundamentally was wrong ... and ... that this thing could not work ... so a lot of the 1980's ... [was about] a slow termination of the hush of consensus (Booyens, 2010).

The institutional environment that Botma and Booyens describe is very different from that of the first generation of participants based in Afrikaans universities. They suggest that, in Stellenbosch in the mid-1980's, as in the example of English universities, the official analysis of South African society was up for debate. Their commentary also indicates, however, that within the Afrikaans example, such debate was more strongly linked to generational conflict. The description, here, is of a process of contestation between a younger generation of students and academics and the university 'establishment'. Botma describes this as a natural aspect of the assimilation of generations of students into an established paradigm, in which conflict is reflective of a youthful rebellion that can easily be contained. Booyens, in contrast, argues that this rebellion took place in context of a historical moment within the broader South African environment in which established frameworks for the representation of society had become unstable. For this reason, generational challenges had the potential to impact more fundamentally on established approaches to authoritative social knowledge.

In describing their experience of English universities during this time, the second generation of participants also speak about shifts that were taking place in understandings of authoritative social knowledge. They refer, firstly, to a transformation of their own approach to such knowledge, noting that their years as undergraduate students served as a time in which their analysis of the South African political context underwent a fundamental transformation. They explain that they generally arrived on campus with a liberal understanding of South African society, but that this world view soon began to change. Most refer to the role played, in this respect, by their exposure to critical theory which, as we saw in the previous section, had begun to circulate in academic contexts during the early 1970's. Harber explains that by the late 1970's, English universities operated as spaces in which the generally accepted 'liberal' paradigm was juxtaposed with critical frameworks of analysis:

I was introduced for the first time to ... Marxism and the debate around it, the debates between the liberals and the left – as one did when one came to Wits and joined NUSAS and that sort of thing at that period ... (Harber, 2010).

Richards explains that critical theory shocked her into the realisation that the white and middle class construction of reality that she had brought with her from home was only one of many world views:

I always thought of myself as within ... a little picture frame ... that ... blew apart. That ... Marxist sense of looking at things was big, then ... I had never come across anything like that ... It ... turned my whole life experience around; made me ... see that there were any number of ways of looking at the world ... I'd come from a very ... middle class family, I had no idea, you know, that anyone thought any differently (Richards, 2010).

For Harber, Richards and others, arriving at university was first and foremost a political education which radicalised their understanding of the South African context and prompted them to adopt a more active role with regards to changing this context. It was, furthermore, an educational experience specific to the white and English middle class, confronted with their own position of privilege:

I guess I came to university like any ... young person brought up at home thinking that apartheid was not really nice and that one should vote against it. So it certainly shifted my thinking about ... what the roots of apartheid were, and what one could or needed to do to get rid of it (Harber, 2010).

Some of the participants suggest that their exposure to student politics contributed more to such education than academic programmes. Kruger remembers his participation in seminars organised informally on campus as being of much greater importance to his understanding of social analysis:

... not very much of that ... came across in the classroom ... there were one or two ... courses ... other than that ... it was student politics, where one learnt a hell of a lot ... I ... remember [attending] those first ... [extracurricular] seminars at UCT ... and ... just drinking it in ... and thinking this is really interesting, amazing new stuff (Kruger, 2010).

Pinnock also comments that most of his education at university "...took place ...outside the lecture rooms". He found that, through organised student politics and its relationship to the broader political movement, he could access social knowledge that had not been available to him as a journalist:

I joined the wages commissions, which were the beginnings of COSATU<sup>48</sup> ... and ... I was involved in SSD<sup>49</sup> ... reading ... documents which were not allowed to be seen in South Africa – Martin Legassick and Colin Bundy<sup>50</sup> and people like that and it was terribly exciting. It was a whole new world and it just blew my head (Pinnock, 2010).

Green speaks, similarly, of ways in which she became able, through her involvement in organised politics outside the world of campus, to gain more direct access to her social environment:

...there was so much happening at that time ... I was involved in things like supporting the meat workers' strike in 1980 ... I was on the street workers' committee ... when the street workers went on strike in East London ... it was an attempt, I suppose, to try and understand the world that you lived in, but also to be a part of it (Green, 2010).

Not all of the participants agree, however, that coursework was of lesser significance to their political education. Many suggest that there were synergies between certain courses and the education they received through participation in student politics and community-based activism. For Pinnock at UCT in the late 1970's, the boundary between formal education and resistance politics dissolved:

...the synergy between the two was just that each was reinforcing the other. One was the solid academic grounding, the other was the political activism. I mean we were ... taking on the government ... we were marching, we were in the streets ... so it was taking the theory into practice of political opposition ... (Pinnock, 2010).

Harber notes that at Wits, certain courses provided conceptual frameworks which found application within the political debates that occurred in seminars organised by political activists:

I think they very much worked together ... what one was learning in ... Political Science ... fed quite clearly into the debates one heard ... and what one learned in NUSAS type seminars ... obviously if you are studying politics you are exposed to quite a wide range

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<sup>48</sup> Congress of South African Trade Unions

<sup>49</sup> Students for Social Democracy

<sup>50</sup> Martin Legassick and Colin Bundy are historians, who made important contributions to the revision of South African economic history.

of ideas ... I suppose one got a more focused and directed learning within a ... NUSAS seminar situation (Harber, 2010).

The academic environment that Amner describes at Rhodes, a decade later, is one in which such synergies had become well established. Student organisations operated as an efficient filter for identifying students who had the potential to be drawn into a struggle for social change, and directing them towards academic choices that complemented this purpose:

On the first day of arriving ... I was recruited into a political organisation ... I was pulled in ... through ... contact with other activists into particular courses ... one chose ... courses ... because one knew that's where the ... leftists ... in academia were, and ... those were the courses that were 'right on', and ... that would ... support the 'project' (Amner, 2010).

Knowledge of social theory was equally important both in and outside the classroom, and ideas explored in coursework translated with ease into the spectrum of political discussions that were taking place within the student activist community:

...there were different factions ... who had different political analyses, and had a whole lot of theory which buttressed those different political positions ... it was actually quite a ... hair raising experience to be part of that ... process of induction not only into ... academic discourse, but in fact into political discourse. So for me, almost immediately, there wasn't really a separation between those things ... it was all in some ways ... intertwined, made sense together ... all of it was grist to the mill (Amner, 2010).

Richards talks, similarly, about a flow of ideas between her formal education, where she was introduced to "styles of analysis", and political debate on campus, where she came into contact with ... the thinking of ... Biko, and [Black Consciousness], and where our place was as the ... white ... left" (Richards, 2010). Berger also notes that ideas drawn from Politics "... fused a lot with what was happening in reality ... that gave it substance, so it wasn't sort of in an isolated bubble" (Berger, 2010).

It is possible to identify both similarities and differences between this experience of university education and the one described by the participants based at Stellenbosch. Within both contexts, a wider campus culture played an important role in shaping the participants' world views. At Stellenbosch, however, struggles that took place around the conceptualisation of social knowledge are still described as an internal process, occurring between different generations in the academic community and contained by this community. Conflict centered on attempts to secure recognition of world views exterior to that of Afrikaner Nationalism, and allowance for an acknowledgement of these perspectives within the domain of the university. It may be, then, that Stellenbosch, and perhaps other Afrikaans universities as well, remained closed off from their broader social context, even if they acknowledged its presence. In the English context, participants describe a stronger relationship between the ideas they were exposed to within universities and learning that took place in the broader social environment. It would seem that, for these participants, universities operated as institutions through which they were able to gain access to an experience of society outside the walls of campus, and that allowed them to escape the 'whiteness' of their own upbringing. At Stellenbosch,

generational contestation may have put into question the established approaches to authoritative social knowledge, but its impact remained limited because of a general disengagement with the broader social context. As such, the opportunity to draw relationships between World Three and World Two knowledge on one hand and the context of World One on the other remained limited. In contrast, in English universities, a relationship of social engagement meant that participants were able to draw links between the knowledge they gained through their coursework, their more informal political education on campus, and their broader involvement in political culture outside the university. In context of this flow of ideas between the academy and its broader context, a fundamental transformation of approaches to authoritative social knowledge seemed possible.

### 7.1.3 Transition: From the 1990's onwards

From the 1990's onwards, it is the third generation of participants who describe their experience of academic study. They only speak of the first few years of this decade given that, from the mid-1990's onwards, all of the participants had completed their undergraduate education. It is noticeable that, in commenting on the early 1990's, they do not speak with the same degree of coherence as previous groups about their engagement with knowledge of society. It is, firstly, no longer possible to identify, within their accounts, such clear and predictable distinctions between the experience of different institutional spaces. The boundary between the spaces of Afrikaner Nationalism and English Liberalism begins, in particular, to dissolve. Secondly, it is possible to identify reference to a greater diversity of experience in the explanations that these individuals offer of their relationships to social reality. One reason for this is that the group itself consists of a more diverse set of individuals, from different social backgrounds and with a wider trajectory of interests about their own futures. The presence of 'black' participants, in particular, introduces new elements into the conversation.

Two participants provide accounts of their university education which demonstrates this diversity of experience. The first is Pretorius, who stands out as one person whose experience still connects closely to that of the previous generations of speakers. The "whiteness" of the world view that she had grown up in is still, for example, a central term of reference. It is, at the same time, possible to identify shifts within her environment that sets her experiences apart from earlier histories. The University of Potchefstroom that she describes seems different from the one that previous participants speak about, with less emphasis on its existence as a sheltered and controlled social space. Pretorius explains that in 1989, when she came to university as an undergraduate student, she and her fellow class members were aware that the South Africa political context was about to transform (Pretorius, 2010). At the same time many of them, including Pretorius, had still "... come from fairly protected ... white privileged backgrounds". She explains that she had for long felt a sense of discomfort with the view of South African society that was presented to her within this environment. She notes, for example, that "... things in History at school level didn't gel for me"; and even in the late 1980's, when she was aware of changes taking place around her, "... the exposure wasn't there for



me.” Neither she nor her peers had, by the time they came to university, begun to reflect in any great detail on the role that they would play in relation to the changes around them. At Potchefstroom, they found themselves challenged to do so in the context of the Political Science programme. Pretorius explains that there were lecturers in this programme who “stirred”, engaging students in discussions about political events taking place in South Africa and “... asking provocative questions”:

...[They] steered our thinking in terms of politics ... and ... the broad principles of democracy, and an open society ... ideas around change, and how that could be brought about, and why that was important (Pretorius, 2010).

The Political Science programme also encouraged students to read a wider spectrum of newspapers, with emphasis on the importance of the alternative press. Such journalism was presented to students as a crucial source of knowledge about their social environment:

...people were saying, read *Vrye Weekblad*, read ... *Weekly Mail* ... in addition to other papers because you'll get a ... more rounded view of what was happening. So there was definitely that encouragement ... If you were not reading ... You have to read it ... there was a very ... clear cut message: “pick it up” (Pretorius, 2010).

The discussions in her Political Science classes, complemented by her reading of alternative journalism, transformed the way in which she understood her own relationship to her social context:

...it moved [me from a position of] ... being uninformed and don't care, to one of being let's get involved, let's become active, let's do something, and let's move this forward. So kind of a much more engaging ... active ... position (Pretorius, 2010).

Her four years at university had, in her words, “radicalised” her.

The second participant whose commentary demonstrates the diversity of experiences of the academy during this period is Gilbert Motsaathebe. Unlike Pretorius, his experience of university contrasts sharply with that of previous generations of participants. For Motsaathebe, “connectedness” to his social environment was not something that only occurred when he became a student. He explains that his experience of growing up in the 1980's was of being part of a community that was involved, as part of daily life, in the political events that were shaping the neighbouring South Africa:

...it was just staring us in the eyes, so it was not even a question of choice ... it was during those years of ... political boycotts and ... all those things ... we were part of the community, so we had to join this, you know – and also that shaped our knowledge ... most of what I knew then about politics I learnt in the streets (Motsaathebe, 2010).

Motsaathebe explains that what he learned in this way carried far greater authority, in his world, than what one could glean about society from exposure to the media:

...the type of media I think we were exposed ... we could immediately see ... when you looked at the reporting ... that it was ... censored. So the issues that were reported for example in ... government media, was ...very different to what we experienced on the ground ... (Motsaathebe, 2010).

For Motsaathebe and his peers, however, political involvement represented personal risk – the threat of violence, but also threat to the completion of formal education:



...our parents ... were not very vocal but they ... encouraged us to stay as far away as possible from politics ... because ... lots of people were killed ... And also people who ... spend lots of their time ... on the struggle ... they didn't have time to [pursue] their career in terms of education (Motsaathebe, 2010).

He explains, however, that for him there was no clear distinction between political involvement and education. On one hand "... we learnt ... in the streets, because we were very involved ... in the struggle", while on the other hand, school became a site of political activism. There was, furthermore, a continuation between secondary education and the University of Bophutatswana:

...even at school ... you were very vocal about certain issues which we saw as, you know unconstitutional ... and it was even ... worse when we ... went to university ... (Motsaathebe, 2010).

Motsaathebe and his peers were intensely conscious of the political events that were "shaping up" in South Africa at this time, and saw this as having implications for their own social context:

...all roads went into the new South Africa, so people had ... expectations that at some stage they will go to the polls and vote for the first time, you know. Because in the former homelands ... it was very oppressive. And lots of people wanted to become part of the new South Africa (Motsaathebe, 2010).

The government of Bophuthatswana responded repressively to expectations of social change, and "... didn't encourage people ... to get involved in any political meetings, political demonstrations or anything such as that". Motsaathebe's description of the campus in Mafeking suggests that this space was under far more intensive surveillance than the university environments described thus far:

There were police on campus ... to make sure that there is nothing political going on. And that instigated us even further you know to take arms against the police ... there was always a struggle of some sort on campus (Motsaathebe, 2010).

Mootsaathebe explains that his exposure to a liberal arts education allowed him to expand on this understanding of social analysis:

I benefited from philosophical theories ... [and from] schools of thought ... so I could ... refine my thinking about certain things and understand them ... a little bit differently ... from what ... I thought before ... (Motsaathebe, 2010).

The theoretical frameworks that he explored at university provided him, in other words, with a conceptual language in which to scrutinise and deepen the understanding that he had already established of his social world. This education did expose him, however, to new ways of thinking about the nature of reality, and the ways in which one evaluates the production of knowledge about that reality. He remembers, in this respect, being introduced to debates in his Psychology programme that brought important insights to his understanding of the principle of objectivity:

I understand ... from a psychological point of view that ... to say that something is objective you need to have some form of framework ... where you can say now ... if you move beyond this pole, then it is not objective ... So objectivity itself it is something that is ... a contested terrain ... (Motsaathebe, 2010).

This account of learning about social knowledge is profoundly different from the history shared by Pretorius and other participants, and it is a difference defined by racial identity.

In this section, we have seen that all three generations of the participants evaluate their experience of being university students in terms of the kind of knowledge they were exposed to about the society in which they lived. They speak about such knowledge, firstly, in terms of their socialisation before coming to university, and secondly in context of the ideas they were introduced to in university environments. In doing so, they make repeated reference to the significance of racial identity within the social perspectives that were offered to them as positions from which to observe South African society. They generally describe the university as an institution which operated to assimilate new generations of 'white' South Africans into a 'white' world view, either that of Afrikaner Nationalism or English liberalism. For each generation of participants, however, exposure to World Three concepts drawn from liberal arts education triggered an awareness of the socially constructed nature of this world view, and of the legitimacy of other social perspectives. Indeed, most of the participants note that their exposure to university education enabled them to become conscious of their own alienation, as white South Africans, from knowledge about society that were shared by the majority of people in this country. Both within Afrikaans and English environments, their exploration of such knowledge involved a preoccupation with the need to acknowledge the "truth" of what was happening outside the walls of the academy. In contrast, by the time Motsaathebe arrived at university, he had participated in an education process both in and outside the classroom that allowed him to articulate an understanding of society that was richly informed by knowledge of the South African social context. His exposure to academic knowledge allowed him to expand on this understanding, rather than transforming his view of society.

The participants generally explain that an involvement in liberal arts education played an important role in enabling them to transcend the limitations of the world views that they had brought with them to university. Those who studied in Afrikaans universities refer to the role that exposure to World Three knowledge from disciplines such as that of philosophy and political science played in this respect. Participants who studied at English universities make reference to the more specific example of critical theory. Both groups explain that such knowledge provided them with conceptual tools that enabled them to become conscious of the extent to which the dominant representations of South African society that surrounded them were ideologically informed. They note, at the same time, that academic knowledge was not the only factor that facilitated their ability to engage more critically with authoritative social knowledge. Of equal importance was the extent to which they were able to gain access to social experiences that were not defined by the 'whiteness' of Afrikaner Nationalism and English liberalism. The participants who studied in universities from the late 1970's onwards seem to have been able to engage more directly with such experience than those who were at universities in the 1960's and early 1970's. This was made possible, it would seem, because of an increased acknowledgement within the institutional culture of both Afrikaans and English universities

of social perspectives other than that of a 'white' world view. The most dramatic example of such acknowledgement can be identified in the commentary of participants who studied in English universities in the late 1970's and 1980's. They describe an environment of heightened political consciousness, in which acknowledgement of social context involved direct participation in the mass liberation movement. This group, in particular, speak of a synthesis between the knowledge they gained from academic learning and the knowledge they gained from their involvement in broader social movements. This, then, can be seen to represent a moment in South African history in which a flow of ideas occurred between the World Three and World Two environments of the academy and the World One settings of the political resistance movement.

It would seem, then, that experience of liberal arts education has been of fundamental importance to the participants in terms of the development of their approach to authoritative social knowledge. The role that such education played in their ability to engage critically with their social environment was dependent, however, on broader developments within the socio-historical context, and on the way in which the universities in which they were based responded to such change. Section Two will consider the extent to which the approaches to authoritative knowledge that they were able to establish, in context of this relationship between academia and its social context, can be seen to be of relevance to their practice as journalists.

## **7.2 Social knowledge in journalism**

This chapter deals with two of the categories of knowledge that journalism education programmes are required to include, as stipulated within internationally shared guidelines for teaching (See Figure 5). The first category is represented by liberal arts education, and the second by prescriptive guidelines for reporting practice. In previous chapters it was argued that these are categories of knowledge that are generally agreed, both within academic and journalistic communities, to be of relevance to journalism practice. The first part of this chapter has dealt with the participants' experience of liberal arts education, as the first of these categories of knowledge. As we have seen, the participants refer to the role that World Three concepts drawn from such education played in their conceptualisation of the authority of social knowledge. This next section deals with their comments on the extent to which they were able to draw on these conceptualisations within their practice as journalists. The discussion then also deals with guidelines for reporting practice, as the second category of knowledge stipulated within the standard guidelines for teaching. It deals with the extent to which the participants' experience of approaches to journalism as a form of knowledge can be seen to have been shaped by encounters with such reporting guidelines.

### 7.2.1 Eroding hegemony: The 1960's and early 1970's

The participants explain that South African newspaper journalism in the years of eroding hegemony consisted of two main camps – that of the English and Afrikaans press. When they speak of the distinction between these camps, they express this as a difference in the social function of journalism, and in the conceptualisation of the credibility of journalism as a form of knowledge.

The Afrikaans press is depicted as being openly biased in its style of reporting. Rumney proposes that this bias points to a different conceptualisation of “responsible journalism” to that of the English press. Within the Afrikaans conceptualisation, a position of bias needed no rationalisation:

They believed in ... pro-government journalism, justified or defined however they wanted it. In fact they didn't really make much of a thing of defending their stance ... They were ... in varying degrees either propagandists or ... supporters of the government, and made no bones about it (Rumney, 2010).

Froneman talks about reading “*Die Burger* of Piet Cillie of the 1970's” when he was a student, and seeing the journalistic style of this newspaper as being in contradiction to the learning he was exposed to in the Philosophy Department at Stellenbosch. His response was informed, by the general critique encouraged within this context of a dogmatically assumed “ideological mindset”:

I think that [my education] ...already at that stage influenced me quite a lot to be critical of that type of journalism.... the typical ... *juigkommando* ... it was always this *dawerende applous*<sup>51</sup> ... this putting it over the top and really skewing ... I don't believe in objectivity, certainly, but it was pro-Vorster, pro-Nat,<sup>52</sup> you know ... the style was ... unintellectual. It wasn't appealing because it was biased (Froneman, 2010).

Diederichs, who started his career in journalism in the late 1960's, explains that he was introduced to this understanding of journalistic knowledge through his interaction as a “rookie” reporter with sub-editors and seniors”. He notes that he was instructed, on one hand, in standard guidelines for reporting practice, based on principles of accuracy, fairness, and balance. It would seem, curiously, that adherence to these principles could exist seamlessly within a culture of partisan journalism. Any constraint placed on journalists' ability to apply such principles only made itself felt when they dealt with stories that challenged the ‘official version’ of political events promoted by the newspaper:

...you could basically do what you want to, you know, I mean you could communicate with whom you want to ... except if there were political undertones ... that were not ... in line ... with the general trend of the newspaper at that time ... (Diederichs, 2010).

Even here, the rules that journalists needed to follow in order to avoid overstepping this mark included reference to the conventions of ‘fair and balanced’ reporting:

...if ... you decide as a journalist I'm just going to do the progressive parties ... beat, ... and have all my contacts there ... you would have been limited ... you would have been

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<sup>51</sup> The English translation of ‘juigkommando’ would be ‘cheering commando’. ‘Dawerende applous’ would translate as ‘thundering applause’.

<sup>52</sup> B. J. Vorster was Prime Minister in South Africa between 1966 and 1978. The National Party was the governing party at this time, and continued to be so until 1994.

[told] no, but this doesn't work, you've got to do all, with the emphasis on the National Party because the newspaper is National Party oriented (Diederichs, 2010).

The suggestion seems to be that two separate approaches to journalistic knowledge operated within this environment; one that framed journalism as it was practiced, and the other represented by rhetorical reference to guidelines for 'professional' practice. Within journalism as it was practiced, there was an acceptance of the legitimacy of a position of 'open bias'. In contrast, reporting guidelines were associated with the ideal of objectivity, as represented by the principles of accuracy, fairness and balance. Within this journalistic community we see, then, an acknowledgement of subjectivity, but at the same time a continued invocation of the ideal of objectivity. Diederichs' description suggests, furthermore, that identification with the ideal of objectivity and adherence to party position could exist alongside each other, with no attempt to reconcile the two positions.

The participants' commentary suggests, however, that by the end of the 1960's, the combination of these two approaches was becoming more difficult to sustain. They explain that, by this time, it was possible to identify a growing discomfort within Afrikaner Nationalist circles with the standard justifications of apartheid. It is suggested that such discomfort was also present within Afrikaans journalism, where a consideration of the politics of race was making it more difficult to maintain established assumptions about what it meant to produce credible social knowledge (De Jager, 2010). Fourie observes that, by the early 1970's, when he was working at the *Rapport*, he was able to observe an approach to journalistic practice that represented an alternative to the established journalistic culture of open bias in the Afrikaans press. He explains that he found employment in this newspaper because it was, at that stage, "... the most liberal Afrikaans newspaper", and "...beginning to be very critical of South African society". It was also through his exposure to this environment that Fourie first found himself able to "make the link" between the more critical elements of his own educational background and reflection on his social context:

I started thinking critically about society – also reflecting on my own studies ... what I've learned from Willem de Klerk in terms of different world and life views – and that there exists something beyond Christian Nationalism ... something beyond apartheid. And then I started ... asking critical questions ... about ... the acceptability of something such as apartheid – that only actually I started at that stage (Fourie, 2010).

Both Froneman and Fourie, then, drew on their own exposure to World Three concepts from their university education, and in particular the idea of 'open debate' and the critique of ideology, in their engagement with the approaches adopted within the Afrikaans press to the production knowledge. It would seem, at the same time that the articulation of a more critical approach to journalism, within such spaces, was not dependent on a university education. There was, rather, a growing recognition amongst journalists that social conditions in South Africa could not be justified and because of this, they were engaging critically with accepted conventions of journalistic practice. De Jager argues that such change took place because the contradiction between journalists' observation of social events and the 'official' representations of society that they were required to reproduce became more

difficult to smooth over. In this context, the disjunction between guidelines for ‘objective’ reporting and investment in party position created discomfort:

It was ... quite difficult to stick to the old formula of good journalism – fairness, factualness etc. etc. – and you have to think about these type of things (De Jager, 2010).

The participants suggest, then, that a more ‘critical’ approach to journalistic reporting emerged in Afrikaans journalism of the late 1960’s and early 1970’s, representing an alternative to the approach to reporting practice based in ‘open bias’. There is, however, no indication that journalists were questioning guidelines for journalistic objectivity. Instead, these guidelines still appear to exist as an ideal against which the credibility of journalistic knowledge should be measured.

The description that participants provide of English newspapers of this time suggests that there were both similarities and differences between the approaches to journalistic knowledge that they adopted and that of the Afrikaans press. It is also explained that, by the early 1970’s, English papers owned by the Argus Company and those belonging to SAAN were differently positioned in relation to the conceptualisation of credible journalistic knowledge. Rumney notes that Argus newspapers were regarded as being less “journalistic”, which was understood to mean that they were less “courageous” in their pursuit of the “truth”. Although these newspapers routinely adopted an ‘anti-apartheid’ stance, reporting was guided by the “bureaucratic” needs of a commercial enterprise that targeted a white market. This meant that they tended not to look “... beyond the frame of white readers”. Such journalism also defined itself, similarly to the Afrikaans press, in terms of a rhetorical commitment to guidelines for objective reporting. This was not, however, accompanied, as in the case of Afrikaans journalism, by an open acknowledgement of bias (Rumney, 2010).

SAAN papers, on the other hand, were regarded as more ‘left wing’, based in a stronger critique of the apartheid system, and therefore a greater emphasis on challenging the confines of a ‘white’ South African reality. Stewart’s description of such papers suggests that they defined their own practice as a struggle to critique the apartheid system, in a context in which such journalism was becoming beleaguered due to repressive regulations of the state. Credible journalism was therefore understood to operate as an intervention into a public domain defined by restrictive relations of power (Stewart, 2010). This approach acknowledges the role that contesting agendas play in the construction of social knowledge.

It could be concluded that, within such journalism, as in the case of the Afrikaans press, there would be acceptance that social interest necessarily played a role within the production of journalism. Rumney’s and Stewart’s descriptions suggest, however, that the SAAN papers attempted instead to reconcile an ‘anti-apartheid’ stance with a commitment to the ideal of objectivity. Rumney explains that this could be achieved because exposure of injustice was defined as a process of “truth-seeking”:

... the [more progressive] English speaking press were ... pro-liberal, pro-democratic ... neutral with bias against apartheid ... but [in contrast to the bias of the Afrikaans press]



there was more of ... an idea of truth seeking ... the idea was to get to truth ... rather than to ... serve any social goal (Rumney, 2010).

Stewart, similarly, explains that critique of the apartheid system, within such journalism, was defined as a process of “truth-telling”, or an exposure of the ‘realities’ of life under apartheid which involved “... digging up facts which were very often hidden” (Stewart, 2010). The credibility of journalism becomes closely associated, within this description, both with rigorous empirical research and with the courage to publish the resulting evidence.

The participants identify the *Rand Daily Mail* as a model representative of such “truth-seeking” journalism. Stewart notes that by the early 1960’s, it was already generally regarded within liberal circles as the newspaper with highest credibility. This, he explains, was because of its “big fighting liberal reputation” – the fact that it was the “... only totally outspoken newspaper” within the English liberal press. In particular, it adopted a stance of outright opposition to the philosophies of apartheid, while other papers had “no ideas”, and were “really a big muddle” (Stewart, 2010). Rumney notes that, a decade later, this reputation was still firmly in place:

...there was a feeling ... that the *Rand Daily Mail* was more ... trustworthy than the *Star*, in the sense that it took on more social issues and was more ... left wing ... the *Rand Daily Mail* and the SAAN newspapers ... were seen as much more progressive in the sense of looking outside the white racial group ... more connected to the political debates, and more ... crusading against apartheid (Rumney, 2010).

Like Fourie, in his relationship with *Rapport*, Stewart found himself drawn to this paper as a space in which more critical engagement with his social environment was possible:

Aw! Well the *Rand Daily Mail* ... was regarded as the cutting edge – any young, vaguely liberal journalist ... wanted to get onto the *Rand Daily Mail* ... That was regarded as the newspaper to be on ... I don’t think I could have worked for a newspaper that didn’t stand for that ... I would have found it extremely difficult (Stewart, 2010).

Stewart explains that other papers that he worked for were also to some extent “enlightened” environments, but none were as “brave” as the *Mail* in their exposure of the truth, despite constant attempts by conservative elements in society to discredit the paper:

...one was very proud. I mean you would go to parties and everyone would say oh you work for the *Rand Daily Liar*, hey? And it didn't matter – they could call us the *Rand Daily Liar*, they could call us anything... (Stewart, 2010).

Rumney also notes that he and his contemporaries, who were at university in the early 1970’s and then went into journalism, were “... looking for a more active confrontation with apartheid”, which made newspapers such as the *Rand Daily Mail* an attractive option (Rumney, 2010).

The participants’ commentary about the era of ‘eroding hegemony’ points to the existence, within the journalistic practice that they were exposed to, of a spectrum of approaches to credible journalistic knowledge. One end of this spectrum is represented by the journalism of ‘open bias’ of the conservative Afrikaans press. At the opposite end one can identify the journalism of ‘courage and truth’ of the *Rand Daily Mail*. Between these two extremes, one can locate approaches to journalism



that were to some degree associated with critique of social context such as the Afrikaans example of the *Rapport*, and the mildly ‘anti-apartheid’ stance of the mainstream English press.

It is possible to identify an affinity between the approaches to knowledge that the participants established during their university education and the more ‘critical’ traditions of journalism within this spectrum. Both in context of their learning in universities and in their work within these newspapers, they speak about a growing discomfort with the restriction of a ‘white’ world view, and attempts to transcend the limitations of this framework. At the same time, in contrast to the categories of academic knowledge that they refer to, the approaches to journalism that they describe are not informed by an acceptance of the social construction of knowledge. Each approach within the spectrum, described above, can be seen to include some acknowledgement of the subjectivity of social knowledge. At the same time, each can be seen to invoke, in different ways, the standard conventions of ‘professional’ reporting and the ideal of objectivity on which this was based. The discussion, in the next section, will consider the extent to which this commitment to objectivity became destabilised in context of the social disruptions that characterised the era of ‘struggle and resistance’.

### 7.2.2 Struggle and resistance: The mid-1970’s and 1980’s

In their discussion of their experience of journalistic practice from the mid-1970’s onwards, participants again make a distinction between the approaches to reporting that defined Afrikaans and English newspapers. In addition, some participants refer to brief periods of work in SABC newsrooms. These spaces are described in similar terms to those of the Afrikaans press, but are regarded as environments in which the tradition of ‘open bias’ was even more strongly established.

#### 7.2.2.1 *Afrikaans journalism: The SABC and the mainstream press*

Johan De Wet explains that he was employed at the SABC’s radio newsroom in Cape Town between 1982 and 1983 as a sub-editor and reporter. He notes that newsroom processes were designed to marginalise the coverage of the escalating social conflict that characterised South Africa at this time. This was achieved, for example, by relegating stories that related to such conflict to specialised ‘beats’. De Wet notes that these beats tended to be assigned to black journalists, which meant that he remained disconnected from such journalism:

It didn’t impact at all ... essentially the SABC was Broederbond ... God, I mean – it was a conservative place, hey? ... We ... had non-white journalists in the team. On the desk. A guy like Moegsien Williams, I worked with him ... They had those beats. It was the apartheid beats, you know what I mean? (J De Wet, 2010).

Froneman notes that he, too, worked for SABC radio for six weeks in 1984. He describes going out to conduct interviews with Piet Meiring<sup>53</sup> and Carel Boshoff,<sup>54</sup> and then being told by the head of News that this material could not be used for broadcast purposes:

They said Carel Boshoff is too rightwing and Piet was too leftwing. And I immediately typed my resignation ... I thought, whether I agreed with either of the two was irrelevant; I just thought that was part of being a journalist (Froneman, 2010).

Booyens worked for SABC TV in Johannesburg 1987, and then also resigned after nine months:

The SABC was a disappointing experience ... you could just see that it was a government agency, it wasn't a public broadcaster in the true sense of the word. It was oppressive in the sense that you just ... knew that people watched you (Booyens, 2010).

Like Froneman, he speaks of an incident that made him decide to leave. This took place in context of an interview that the SABC conducted with Wynand Malan<sup>55</sup> in 1987, after he broke away from the National Party. Booyens explains that what was broadcast was a “scathing hatchet job” on Malan:

I came in the next morning, and mentioned [this] to somebody ... And this guy with a measure of pride then said – yes, and it was edited ... that interview, even after the hatchet job was done on him, was edited afterwards to make it look even worse ... I am not a political person but I just thought ... this is not what I signed up for. And that's when I left there (Booyens, 2010).

It would seem, then, that for these participants, the newsrooms of the SABC lacked integrity, and could therefore not be considered seriously as spaces in which to pursue credible journalistic practice.

During this period of struggle and resistance, participants' experience of Afrikaans journalism repeatedly include reference to regional offices and newspapers owned by Naspers, and particularly *Beeld* (for the first generation of participants) and *Die Burger* (for the second generation). They describe these newspapers as environments in which the accepted approach to the coverage of political context was giving way to more 'liberal' views. Diederichs suggests that Naspers newspapers came to represent, in the mid-1980's, the domain of the *verligtes*<sup>56</sup>, with editors who “... started to ... ask questions more, and ... they had their supporters from the National Party insiders” (Diederichs, 2010). This shift, as it took place during the 1980's, was expressive of increasing

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<sup>53</sup> Professor Piet Meiring is an academic and theologian. He has a long history of involvement in the church's struggle against apartheid, and later worked with the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

<sup>54</sup> Carel Boshoff was the leader of the Voortrekker movement from 1981-89, and chairman of the Broederbond from 1980-83. He later chaired the Freedom Front and founded the Afrikaner Vryheidstiging. He is also known as the founder in 1990 of Orania, an Afrikaner settlement intended as the beginning of a new *volkstaat*.

<sup>55</sup> Wynand Malan entered South African politics in the late 1970's as a member of the National Party. In the 1980's, as a member of the NP's reform wing, he became openly critical of the state of emergency and campaigned for more radical constitutional reforms. In the 1987 general election he left the NP and was elected as a representative of the new Independent Party which he co-founded with Denis Worrall. Later, he was vice chairperson of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

<sup>56</sup> 'Verligtes' was an Afrikaans term used during the apartheid era to refer to white South Africans, particularly Afrikaans speaking, who were progressive in their approach to politics and therefore critical of the apartheid system.

criticism from inside the National Party with regards to the policies of the apartheid government. Diederichs describes change as impacting incrementally on conservative news culture:

...it is a culture that you're in that feels normal. There is nothing untoward ... because ... there's no wheeling and dealing that you are aware of as a foot soldier ... or middle management even ... But you are aware of a broad support of the ruling party ... And then ... that ... started to change into more critical support –and eventually an open criticism of anything that was not acceptable or ... wrong (Diederichs, 2010).

Claassen explains that *Beeld* stood out, within the landscape of Afrikaans newspapers distributed in the Northern provinces of South Africa, as unusually progressive:

*Beeld* was established as a new newspaper, in 1974, and it came into the Transvaal at that stage where you had the so-called *verkrampste*<sup>57</sup> Afrikaans press and it brought a ... Cape liberal type of view to the North. So we were part of that mechanism ... [it] was ... very enlightened for those days in the Afrikaner press (Claassen, 2010).

Participants indicate, however, that there was a younger, more progressive generation of journalists working both at *Beeld* and *Die Burger* who still experienced editorial processes as being guided by a conservative agenda, and as working in support of the National Party. There was, as a result, tension between this group and the editorial leadership around the coverage of political issues. The participants who worked at *Die Burger* talk about similar dynamics in this environment. Both Rabe and Botma explain that, in earlier years, journalists were expected to sign a letter of agreement, as part of their employment contract, stating their loyalty to the National Party. This was no longer the practice when Rabe arrived in 1979, but the assumption was still that journalists would 'toe the party line'. She explains that this was a matter of unspoken rules, of which journalists need not be conscious unless they ventured into territory that challenged the 'official version' of events. This description can be seen to resonate with Diederich's description, in the previous section, of Afrikaans newsrooms in the early 1970's. Rabe argues, however, that at *Die Burger* in the years of struggle and resistance, journalists were able to maintain a degree of freedom to produce critical journalism, through careful negotiation of the rules and by staying within the boundaries of the acceptable:

You had to be within a certain undefined border. So if you wanted to venture beyond it ... you had to think very carefully how you are going to state this, and how you are going to approach it (Rabe, 2010).

As in the case of *Beeld*, the younger generation of journalists at this paper increasingly resisted the expectation that their reporting of political events should reproduce the official version, as prescribed by the National Party. Claassen notes that when he conducted training at *Die Burger* in 1981 during the general elections, he observed similar dynamics to those that existed at *Beeld*:

...the editor of *Die Burger*, Wiets Beukes ... one morning, while we were sitting there in the tearoom, he said, he is afraid go ... into the general editorial office and to ask the young reporters what political parties they were supporting because he knew that most of

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<sup>57</sup> 'Verkrampstes' referred to Afrikaans South Africans who opposed progressive change.

them were PFP supporters.<sup>58</sup> And it was the same with us in Pretoria. Most of the young reporters there were not supporting the National Party, but their bosses supported it (Claassen, 2010).

When Botma joined this paper in the late 1980's, he was conscious that the critical conception of society that he had developed at Stellenbosch could not translate easily to this environment. He found, at the same time, that there was room for contestation of the official position, and that this manifested as a confrontation between the paper's editorial leadership and the younger generation of reporters in the newsroom. The resulting struggles centred on the coverage of party politics, since it was such journalism that was vigilantly guarded at the paper:

...the controlled area [was] the political desk ... We were always putting ourselves up against the political desk for supporting the National Party so directly. For making conservative noises against the ANC (Botma, 2010).

The journalistic environments described here can again be located within the spectrum of approaches to journalistic knowledge identified in the previous section. The SABC can be located in the position of 'open bias', while Naspers papers, at least according to the description provided by Diederichs, are positioned as more 'liberal'. The participants' commentary on these papers suggest, however, that they still provided limited space for critical social analysis.<sup>59</sup> The adoption of a liberal identity by editorial leadership could be interpreted, in this context, as 'paradigm repair', in response to the disjunction between official representations of apartheid and their observation of social conditions.

The participants' commentary also generally suggests that a generational distinction was emerging within these journalistic environments between junior members of staff who were not, as yet, deeply invested in the journalistic culture of these papers, and a conservative leadership. The first group is typically portrayed as challenging accepted approaches to reporting, arguing for alternative approaches to journalistic knowledge. Newsroom management, in turn, is described as being invested in the reproduction of an existing paradigm of journalism, which is, at least at the level of rhetoric, associated with the ideal of objectivity.

It is also noticeable that, in the critique that the participants provide of the journalistic culture both of the SABC and Naspers papers, repeated reference is made to 'professional' guidelines for objective reporting. Froneman, Booyens and Claassen all refer to moments in which the disjunction between such principles and the 'bias' of journalism within these environments became extreme. In such instances, it becomes clear that these participants understand 'fairness' and 'balance' as essential normative requirements of all journalism irrespective of context. These were, then, requirements which the working environments in which they were based did not measure up to. It would seem that

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<sup>58</sup> The Progressive Federal Party (PFP), which was launched in 1977, lobbied for a federal constitution to replace the apartheid system. They played an important role, in parliament, in speaking out against apartheid policies

<sup>59</sup> Such spaces did exist, for example in the context of the *Vrye Weekblad*, which was a national weekly newspaper that formed part of the alternative press, and was published between 1988 and 1994. None of the participants who took part in this study had first hand experience of such environments within the Afrikaans press.

within generational conflict around the conceptualisation of journalistic knowledge, the ‘professional’ guidelines of objective reporting were not, as yet, up for debate.

### 7.2.2.2 *The English mainstream press*

The participants’ accounts suggest that the period of ‘struggle and resistance’ was characterised by two distinct phases with regards to the role that English newspapers played in the production of social knowledge. Berger notes that, in his observation, there was still some “openness” to mainstream journalism in the late 1970’s and early 1980’s that allowed “progressive people” to find spaces in which to contribute to the project of resistance against apartheid (Berger, 2010). The participants’ commentary about mainstream newspapers, at this time, also suggests that they were able to contribute to progressive journalism in these environments.

As in the commentary on Naspers papers, it is possible to identify references, in the description of the editorial identity of the more progressive English mainstream newspapers, to processes of adjustment to social context. In contrast to the Afrikaans press, such adjustment seems to have involved the articulation of a more critical approach to conventions of objective reporting. Rumney notes that in the late 1970’s, while working at the *Financial Mail* and the *Rand Daily Mail*, he became conscious that journalists and editors were reflecting more critically on the ideological implications of conventions of news production. A key reference, within such discussions, was a critique of the approach to the quoting of sources in the news copy produced by the South African Press Association (sapa), in its coverage of political events. The journalists who produced this copy would, for instance, refer to incidence of violence on mines as “faction fights”, because “that’s what the police said ... and to their mind this was objective reporting”:

It was a quote, there was a faction fight – never mind it framed the whole narrative ... instead of saying, no but hold on a second, what you need to do is ... question that very idea of ‘faction fight’. Who says it’s a ‘faction fight’. You know? And go back and say well what actually happened, what do you mean by ‘faction fights’? (Rumney 2010).

There was a growing consciousness, then, that by following the accepted practices of quoting official sources journalists would “... almost collaborate with the apartheid framework ... by repeating the language, saying – well it’s not me who said this, I’m just a conduit for it”. Within the journalistic communities associated with these papers, it “... became obvious ... that it ... wasn’t the way to go” (Rumney, 2010). Rumney remembers that when Allister Sparks became editor of the *Rand Daily Mail*, he encouraged such reflection, particularly in relation to the notion of journalistic objectivity:

He wrote a piece questioning the objective journalistic stance ... I remember being very impressed ... that there was somebody actually thinking about journalism in a ... more intelligent ... way, not just using the old paradigms. And Alistair did question the idea of objectivity ... he said that it is an old idea and that we should look at something else (Rumney, 2010).

The approach to quoting sources cultivated at the *Rand Daily Mail* during these years did not, however, stand in contradiction to the principle of journalistic objectivity. Rumney notes that there was, rather, an increasing emphasis on rigorous research, and on being as inclusive and balanced as possible in the representation of multiple points of view:

Benjamin Pogrund, the assistant editor would ... insist we try to get as much comment from as wide a variety of political groups as possible. So if we ran, say, a statement from the government – now we obviously couldn't run the ANC's comment or the PAC's – but we would go to all the ... legal groups that there were ... (Rumney, 2010)

Harber explains that he joined the *Rand Daily Mail* in 1982 because he recognised that it was “probably the best place to work at that time” as far as ‘white’ newspapers were concerned. It had a more “open atmosphere”, and was “doing more than most places”. Even so, the approach was still that of a “...traditional, liberal objective journalism” (Harber, 2010). It would seem that during these years, the conceptualisation of credible journalistic knowledge at the *Rand Daily Mail* began to involve some direct critique of guidelines for ‘objectivity’ in journalism. This did not, however, lead to a dramatic shift from the approach which participants describe in previous years. As in the case of the Afrikaans press, editorial adjustments within approaches to journalism could again be described as a process of ‘paradigm repair’ rather than a transformation of approaches to the credibility of social knowledge. As in the period of ‘eroding hegemony’, there continued to be an attempt to reconcile acknowledgement of social interest with an invocation of the principle of objectivity.

Richards’ description of working in the *Evening Post* and the *Herald* in the early 1980’s suggests that such reconciliation between the realities of journalistic practice and accepted reporting guidelines still involved the invocation of a journalism of ‘courage and truth’. She, like Rumney, found herself working in a newsroom culture that allowed for critical reflection on the conventions of ‘objective’ journalism, while at the same time holding on to these conventions. This balance was, again, achieved through a commitment to “truth”:

... we were ... very closely bound in those days, and ... there was an idealism there. And there was a sense of producing ... that kind of journalism ... trying to get to the truth through your research and through ... the news you are gathering (Richards, 2010).

She explains that the traditional, “discredited” notion of journalistic objectivity (of “neutral” reporting in which quotes are balanced against each other) was replaced with that of “truth-seeking” (through “good research”, and still guarding against bias). This was also a community of journalists who held onto the ideal of exposing the truth about apartheid even though there were attempts to stop them:

... we did some ... brave stories ... there were dirty tricks against journalists ... I had death threats ... But at the same time there was the belief in approaching it from that ... point of view that I had learnt and believed in (Richards, 2010).

The newsroom culture that Richards describes seems to come, then, out of the same tradition of “courageous” and beleaguered journalism that Rumney and Stewart describe in relation to the *Rand Daily Mail* as it existed in the early 1970’s. Here, too, the dramatic events of the mid-1970’s may



have intensified journalists' commitment to rigorous reporting practices, but it seems that they did not transform journalists' approach to the production of credible social knowledge.

As in the commentary on the Afrikaans press, however, some of the participants again describe themselves as confronting the limitations of this approach to journalism. They explain, in particular, that their perception was that the commitment to 'courage and truth' did not extend far enough, and that editorial guidelines continued to reproduce the world view of a 'white' target audience. Green, for example, describes the *Argus* as an environment in which editors were often unwilling to make space for stories that exposed the "truth" about the systems of apartheid. The stories she wanted to "get on the diary" focused on the experiences of South African black communities, which editorial staff often saw as falling outside the interests of their white readership. The "unspoken but clearly understood" assumption was that writing and reporting was aimed at a "suburban white bunch of people" (Green, 2010). It was, then, up to journalists to negotiate with editors for the stories that broke through the limitations of a white South African world view:

...you had to push things ... there were so many times ... when a news editor says we've got a nice fete that we need you to go to ... and you'd say no but I've got an appointment with ... such and such a person in Cross Roads, and they'd say ja but it's not so interesting to our readers. And ... that was always the battle. They'd let you go – if there was ... quote "nothing else to do"(Green, 2010).

Harber's description of the negotiation of stories that took place at the *Rand Daily Mail* in the early 1980's suggests that despite its "big fighting liberal reputation", a similar set of dynamics existed at this paper. He notes that here, too, "... the battle was around the coverage of black politics". During this time, he found himself repeatedly at loggerheads with editors about "what one defined as politics". He explains that in context of the upsurge in popular resistance to the apartheid state, journalists were becoming conscious that a focus on parliamentary politics was no longer sufficient:

...it was a pull between parliamentary and extra parliamentary politics. And you know interestingly the *Rand Daily Mail* probably did more extra parliamentary than most. But it was a constant battle (Harber, 2010).

Cowling makes similar comments about her observations of news reporting at the *Star*, in the mid-1980's. Within certain limitations, the paper did produce journalism that was critical of the apartheid state and was able to challenge "cruder forms" of racism and social control. It was not, however, prepared to engage with such stories in context of an economic analysis of the apartheid system, in which the link the fundamental exploitative nature of a capitalist society was exposed. The emphasis was, rather, on the "stupidity of that apartheid system" (Cowling, 2010):

So the media, the English language media that I was aware of – *The Star* ... to some extent even the *Rand Daily Mail*, the *Sunday Express*, the *Sunday Times*, we would have considered them to be liberal media. So wanting changes in the society, but not necessarily wanting to give up privileges and have a complete switch to a majority society, a majority democracy (Cowling, 2010).



In Cowling's assessment, as well as that of other journalists, such papers may have been oppositional to the government's policies on race, "... but not to the sort of class privileges that were brought about by apartheid". Commitment to 'courage and truth' was limited then, by a resistance to class analysis.

According to Green, however, the dynamics that characterised editorial negotiations around choice of stories began to change in the mid-1980's. She explains that, at the start of this decade the "big fights" in the newsroom were not about "... how you covered a story, but about what you could cover". A second preoccupation was surfacing, however, which had exactly to do with the "how" of news coverage – and with a question of the journalist's epistemological stance (Green, 2010). Richards talks about observing this approach at the *Cape Times* where she was based in the early to mid-1980's. She describes this as a rejection of the belief that, within context of the apartheid system, one could continue to hold on to objectivity. Instead, the assumption was that journalists should "... start with a slanted viewpoint, because apartheid was wrong, and therefore one could not hope to be in any way neutral, and put aside prejudices, or anything like that" (Richards, 2010). Berger also speaks of the "crystallising" of a new "paradigm" – one which, he explains, was a "function of the times":

...for all some of the pretensions of liberal journalism to be neutral, there weren't such a thing ... your journalism was inevitably going to be favouring resistance or supporting ... some kind of domination and exploitation. So ... you couldn't have value free journalism at that point in time... (Berger, 2010).

Cowling observes that this approach to journalistic knowledge was also present at the *Star*, amongst a subgroup of journalists. Cowling, who identified with this group, explains that they felt a sense of conviction about the importance of rejecting the conventions of journalistic objectivity:

...we were in an environment where balance was being used to purvey lies ... we were told that we always had to quote the police's side, but ... they were actively lying about certain things ... so that ... problematised ... the relationship of ... these ... ideas to what we were doing ... the idea of objectivity is ... supposed to serve truth, it's not supposed to serve blatant lying. And ... we had that sorted out in our heads (Cowling, 2010).

This perspective clashed with the traditional assumptions around balanced reporting. Cowling notes that there was intensive discussion amongst journalists about the two approaches:

...the newsroom ... was ... conflicted between people who were ... feeling that we should take a more engaged position ... in showing some of those things that were happening in society that the government didn't want us to show. And people who wanted to stick to a very ... impartial version of journalism (Cowling, 2010).

She explains that these dynamics manifested as a generational distinction, between more progressive junior staff, and more experienced, established journalists and editors. The process of 'paradigm repair' that had characterised journalism within these environments was, then, becoming destabilised.

The participants refer, then, to the emergence, in this period, of generational conflict around official editorial approaches to reporting practice within progressive English journalism. Such conflict is described, firstly, as a confrontation of the disjunction between the normative ideals of 'courage and truth' and the representations of South African society that were actually generated in

English newsrooms. Participants note that, despite the progressive stance adopted within such papers, editorial decision-making processes continued to be guided by the interests of advertisers and owners, designed to complement the world view of a white middle class readership. This is, for example, the analysis that seems to underpin Green's explanation of her struggles to cover social issues at the *Argus* and Harber's description of similar battles at the *Rand Daily Mail*. The participants point, secondly, to the emergence of an alternative critique of these environments, in which the journalism was no longer measured against the professional ideal of "courage and truth". More fundamental challenges of reporting conventions were now articulated in these environments, in which, as Green explains, conflict centered not only on the "what" of journalism, but also the "how". Within such contestation, the principle of journalistic objectivity was now up for debate.

### 7.2.2.3 *The alternative press*

The participants note that, in the mid-1980's, with the declaration of the State of Emergency, spaces for the articulation of progressive journalism began to close down. This was the time when the alternative press rose up, both in opposition to the apartheid state and as a challenge to mainstream media. Such papers included, on the progressive side, the *Mail and Guardian*, the Afrikaans *Vrye Weekblad*, *Grassroots*, community papers and the student press (De Jager, 2010; Steenveld, 2010; Pinnock, 2010; Berger, 2010). Berger comments that, at this point, many progressive journalists abandoned the mainstream press and moved into alternative journalism (Berger, 2010).

Only three participants have direct experience of working within the alternative press during this time. The first is Berger, through his involvement in the late 1970's in the establishment and management of *Izwi LaseRhini* at Rhodes University and then later, after he was released from jail in the early 1980's, his involvement with *SASPU National*. Through this work, Berger crystallised some of his thinking about the kind of social knowledge that needed to be produced within a journalistic environment as beleaguered as that of South Africa. He describes the journalism he produced for SASPU as "propaganda", which he understood as representing an alternative to the "realist" discourse of journalism. He notes that he drew on his UNISA study material from his time in prison to reflect on the distinction between these practices. He had, for example, come across analyses of propaganda based on Roland Barthes theorisation of communication:

And they said how realist communication works is that it positions you ... in a way that is very familiar to you, and therefore it looks transparent, and ... reassures you that this is the world as you know it and as you expect it ... [it's about] reinforcing what you already thought (Berger, 2010).

Berger explains that the stories that he produced were crafted to serve the function of mobilisation. They drew, for this purpose, on the professional conventions of a journalism of objectivity:

...so you ... used direct quotes [around certain statements] because you knew that that is signaling veracity... because that's part of the conventions of objectivity, you know – so you could sort of exploit that technique (Berger, 2010).

Again, as with previous participants, Berger's attempts to establish alternative approaches to journalistic knowledge centered on an engagement with the concept of journalistic objectivity. It is noticeable, however, that Berger's approach to alternative practice is concerned with the way journalism is presented rather than with fieldwork processes. As such, this does not suggest a transformation of journalism as an empirical research process.

The second participant was Kruger, who as a student at UCT became involved in *Grassroots*, which he says, "... was about telling untold stories, it was about affecting social change". Later, between 1983 and 1986, when he worked as a sub-editor and reporter for the *Daily Dispatch*, he found that he had much less opportunity to pursue such journalism. He talks, for example, about the frustrations of covering union politics in East London:

...there was a stay away ... where the city was ... swept bare and the *Dispatch* ran a blocked par ... saying buses had been rerouted because people wanted to go home. You know, completely ... suppressing the political significance (Kruger, 2010).

Because he was working as a night sub, he nevertheless had the freedom to pursue his interest in alternative journalism:

...I was able to do a huge amount of freelancing for the alternative press that was starting at that time ... the subbing thing was ... sort of bread and butter. But what was really interesting was the reporting I was able to do in the daytime (Kruger, 2010).

Between 1986 and 1988, he founded and ran the East London News Agency which filed stories both to alternative newspapers and the mainstream press. In this context, he developed an approach to journalism that differed from that which existed in the mainstream press. In contrast to Berger, however, his intervention into conventional practice centred on the fieldwork 'moment' of news coverage rather than the way news is presented. The agency focused on identifying and pursuing stories that would otherwise not be covered by mainstream newspapers. Kruger explains that to place these stories within the public domain was in itself of value to the struggle for democratisation, without having to openly adopt a political stance:

... we were able to do that partly because of the nature of the Eastern Cape where really there wasn't much else going on, so there were acres of stories that were just languishing, you know. And you didn't have to be explicitly partisan ... you didn't have to fly an ANC flag while doing valid and useful work (Kruger, 2010).

These were stories "... that the *Argus* could run in Cape Town, without too much pain to themselves" but which, at the same time, "... had political import". The agency therefore enabled Kruger to report on issues that would not have made it onto the news diaries of such papers. It would seem that once stories had been produced by an external source, it became possible to negotiate for their inclusion in the content of these papers. In this way, Kruger was positioned between the world of professional journalism and that of alternative reporting practices, mediating between these two spheres:

I suppose I was always concerned to try and find the space where ... professional approaches can meet a political imperative. So ... I was ... comfortable that what I was

doing in East London in particular was both ... valid from a ... mainstream professional point of view as well as valid from a political point of view (Kruger, 2010).

Within this approach, we can again see an attempt to strike a balance between commitment to a progressive social agenda and the acknowledgement of the 'professional' conventions of objective reporting practice:

I mean the logic was very simple. These were stories that were clearly of value and importance but wouldn't otherwise be told, and so, you know, their writing made some kind of contribution ... and I suppose what we were trying to do was create a space where ... you could make both arguments in a sense ... (Kruger, 2010).

Kruger's approach to alternative journalism focused, then, on an intervention into the 'moment' of reporting practice that is involved with the identification of stories, and the gathering of evidence around those stories. Furthermore, he located this intervention outside the context of the power relations that framed newsgathering practices in mainstream newspapers. In this way, he circumvented the negotiations around the prioritisation of stories that take place inside newsrooms. As we have seen in the descriptions provided by Rumney, Harber and Green, such negotiations are often concerned with struggles around the maintenance of the 'white' world view of newspapers' primary target audiences. Because Kruger situated the production of journalism outside the limitations of this process, he was able to draw more effectively on a knowledge of South African social environments that escaped the limitations of a 'white' world view. In the 1990's, Kruger would again reproduce this model in his approach to the founding and management of the East Cape News Agency.

The third participant who speaks from direct experience about the alternative press is Harber, who after the closing down of the *Rand Daily Mail* went on to play a key role in founding and managing the *Weekly Mail*. Harber explains that the group of journalists who established this paper were "... of a different generation and ideological position from the *Rand Daily Mail* core" because they "... had come up through the student movement of the late 70's, early 80's". In conceptualising the *Weekly Mail*, they were consciously "positioning it ... to the left of the *Rand Daily Mail*. So we were taking that leap journalistically". Harber describes this "leap" as the adoption of a different paradigm of journalism, one that described itself in terms of political position:

...we clearly stated the things it stood for. And it was different from the *Rand Daily Mail*... there was a move from that kind of objective liberal tradition (Harber, 2010).

In terms of its public identity, the paper borrowed, at the same time, from the approach to journalism that the *Rand Daily Mail* had established, particularly in terms of its role as a "... newspaper that made space around it for wider views":

...we drew quite a lot on the *Rand Daily Mail* tradition in the way that we presented ourselves. We tried to say to ... readers – if you were a *Rand Daily Mail* reader, this is your paper. This is a continuation of that tradition. I think the doyens of the *Rand Daily Mail* - Raymond Louw and Allister [Sparks] and all those guys – thought we were stealing their tradition. And we probably were (Harber, 2010).

The paper differed from its predecessor, firstly, in terms of its approach to the “what” of journalism, because the aim was to deal with stories that were not being covered in the mainstream press. The focus was on extra parliamentary politics and then, in the late 1980’s, the “ANC in exile”:

Our ... line at the time was that ... politics was happening in the street and on the factory floor, not in parliament. So ... everyone's covering parliament, there is nothing we can add to that. Let's try and cover those areas we feel are not covered (Harber, 2010)

It was, however, not just choice of content that distinguished the approach to journalism that the *Weekly Mail* adopted, but also how these stories were covered. According to Rumney, this paper and the alternative press generally stood for the “ditching of objectivity”. He argues that this provided such papers with an opportunity to “... critically examine what government was doing in a ... much more aggressive way” (Rumney, 2010). This, then, was the emergence of journalism that deliberately positioned itself as an alternative approach to knowledge production to that of the mainstream press. As in the case of Kruger’s news agency, the credibility of such journalism was located in knowledge of South African communities that escaped the limitations of a ‘white’ perspective. In addition, the authority of such knowledge was based in a commitment to the social interests of these communities, rather than the standard invocation of the principle of objective journalism.

Descriptions of journalism in the period of ‘struggle and resistance’ suggest, then, that this was a time in which established approaches to authoritative social knowledge had become more fundamentally contested. In the spaces within the Afrikaans press, such contestation was generally muted, and did not directly challenge editorial conventions. Within the mainstream English press, journalists were able to negotiate more directly with editorial staff in order to open up spaces for different categories of content, or the “what” of journalism. The rise of the alternative press, on the other hand, can be seen to represent a diversification of the spectrum of available approaches to the “how” of journalistic practice, and with this the emergence of direct challenges to the hegemony of a journalism of objectivity in South Africa. Within this approach, the credibility of journalism is no longer situated in a relationship of professional distance from society. Instead, the role of journalism is understood to include the task of providing a platform for people who have been marginalised within the public sphere, and to demand a community-based, in-depth approach to reporting practice.

### 7.2.3 Transition: From the 1990’s onwards

In their discussion of conceptualisations of journalistic knowledge from the 1990’s onwards, the participants identify three phases, closely connected to political events of this time. The first is represented by the early to mid-1990’s, and represents the period of ‘freedom coming’, leading up to the first South African democratic elections. The second falls between the mid-1990’s and the turn of the century, and is described as a period during which the foundations of democracy were being established in South Africa. The participants also make reference to the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and describe this as a third phase in which new relations of power became established within

South African society. By the start of this last period, however, most of the participants were no longer based in communities of journalistic practice. Since the focus of this section is on the participants' first-hand experience of working in journalistic environments, this period does not form part of the discussion, below. It will, rather, be dealt with in Chapter Ten, as part of the examination of the participants' perspectives, from within university environments, on current developments within South African journalistic practice.

The participants' description of the period of 'freedom coming' suggests that in this time, as in the 1980's, agreements within journalistic practice about the nature and purpose of journalism were in flux. Because of such uncertainty, these years still offered opportunities for the articulation of multiple approaches to journalistic practice. By the late 1990's, however, the space for diversity was beginning to close down. The discussion in both subsections, below, focuses on the participants' experience of contexts in which there were attempts to sustain the approaches to journalism that had been articulated in the 1980's – including that of 'in-depth and community-based' reporting.

#### *7.2.3.1 Freedom Coming: The early to mid-1990's*

One of the participants who was able to observe attempts to sustain such approaches to journalistic practice in the period of 'freedom coming' is Berger, who returned to South Africa in 1992. He explains that by this time, his conceptualisation of journalism was very different from the approach he had articulated for himself in the mid-1980's. At that time, as we saw earlier, he understood the central purpose of his own journalism to be that of convincing audiences of a political point of view, through the way stories were presented. In the United Kingdom, where Berger lived during his years in exile, he found himself reviewing this approach. He explains that, growing up in South Africa, he had come to the conclusion that when the government made statements in the media, one could assume that they were lies, manufactured in support of the apartheid system. In the United Kingdom, however, Berger found himself in a social context which "...wasn't an arena of such untruths", and in which one was exposed to "more independent information". His response was to become more accepting of the traditional conception of credible journalistic knowledge that kept political affiliation at arm's length, and thus defined itself as "independent":

...that ... began to open me up to saying well you know you've got to make a judgement in yourself, and you can't just go with ... your rule of thumb stuff ... you ... realise actually, you need to be independently critical, so you could become more of a journalist I suppose than being part of a political formation ... (Berger, 2010).

The "rule of thumb" that Berger rejected seems to be one in which a journalist responds to statements circulated by official spokespeople by adopting another, opposing set of such statements. To be "independently critical", on the other hand, would entail gathering first hand evidence about social events in order to make one's own judgements about them. His approach to journalism had, up to this point, been based in what he refers to as the "instrumentalist" adoption of an ideological "line". The



model that he turned to now may have been based on the credibility of empiricism, but it still acknowledged the inevitability of political positioning:

...one then came ... back to a ... concept of journalism as not being value free, but also being more respectful of realities out there ... you can't run away from ideology, but you could try and get a less water tight ideology (Berger, 2010).

This can be seen as a version of an 'in-depth and community-based' approach to journalistic practice. Berger notes that the landscape of South African journalism that he returned to was very different to the one that he had left behind in the mid-1980's. He was conscious, in particular, that the alternative press had established itself as a "formidable presence". He explains that, during the latter part of the 1980's, papers such as the *Weekly Mail* and *South* had fought hard to become established and recognised, and had done so despite the repressive environment in which they were operating. Berger took up posts first at *New Era* and then *South* because of his respect for these achievements, and because, unlike the mainstream press, alternative journalism was committed to a political goal:

I suppose I just saw that as the sort of press that really ... cared about things ... reaching ... people with an agenda ... that the mainstream press wasn't (Berger, 2010).

Berger found it difficult to reconcile his newfound commitment to critical and empirically grounded journalism with the editorial culture at *New Era*, which he describes as "... quite a hard line magazine". He notes that he was expected to produce journalism that was guided by a narrowly defined political programme, in support of the new government. He then took up a post at *South*, which, in contrast, saw itself as adopting an "independent" and "professional" identity. This meant, for example, that the paper was prepared to "... report on problems in the liberation":

...sometimes also we talked about the ... problems in the ANC and Tony Yengeni would lead a delegation to come and complain to us ... you know, that indicated that ... we weren't a political mouthpiece (Berger, 2010).

Berger found, however, that sustaining the authority that *South* had established as a producer of 'in-depth and community-based' journalistic knowledge proved to be a complex task. One reason for this, as he explains it, was that the transition from the struggle era into democracy was far more painful and slow than people had hoped for:

That whole period of 1991 to '94 was ... politically traumatic because there was so much violence in South Africa. And one had come back hoping that ... After the ANC was unbanned, and so on, and you thought that OK we'll have elections quite soon, and it took four years, you know, to have elections (Berger, 2010).

Berger notes that, during this period, there was a growing realisation within South African communities that a new government would soon be in power, and that the liberation struggle was coming to an end. Such consciousness was accompanied by a decline in the "non-racialism" that had characterised earlier years. Within communities who associated themselves with the resistance movement, relationships of conflict now became more visible, often defined along racial lines. Berger's perception, while working at *South*, was that because of these shifts in the politics of race,



“coloured” audience members in particular were responding with fear to the idea of a ‘black’ (ANC-led) government. When confronted by the strong focus on stories about ‘black’ people in *South*, such readers felt that “this was not their paper any more”:

...that also created this challenge to one's understanding of the role of media, because you are trying to reach people who are becoming more reactionary by the day. I mean this is a community that was a major force in the 1980's, and then became a major reactionary force (Berger, 2010).

It may be that these complexities can, again, be understood in context of the challenges of reporting on a world in which accepted certainties about the future had fallen away.

Berger points out, however, that *South* faced challenges in producing in-depth, situated journalism also related to growing limitations in available resources. A key reason for this was that, as South Africa moved closer to its first democratic elections, foreign funding for the alternative press started to run out. The financial problem that this represented was exacerbated by the difficulties that *South* was experiencing in sustaining its readership and therefore in generating advertising:

...so we had to stand on our own in the market place for the advertising and ... sales. And ... the sales were going down, so it became very difficult to get advertising when you got declining sales (Berger, 2010).

Problems in funding necessarily impacted on the kind of journalism that *South* could embark on. The paper was not able, in particular, to produce the in-depth journalism that had become associated with the *Weekly Mail*:

...it would have been nice to have done more investigative stuff like the [*Weekly Mail*] but we just didn't have the capacity to do that, we didn't have staff who were skilled enough to do that (Berger, 2010).

What Berger describes here seems, then, to be the closing down of the opportunity represented for *South* by the ‘moment’ of alternative journalism in the history of South African newspapers.

Harber explains that the *Weekly Mail* also faced severe challenges in the first half of the 1990's, both because of financial pressures and because it needed to redefine its journalistic identity:

...we went through a very difficult and very traumatic change to try and define how we could survive and ... with what sort of role in the period thereafter (Harber, 2010).

Unlike *South*, however, the *Weekly Mail* succeeded in “carving out a survival strategy” for itself. Key to this strategy was the relationship that it established with the *Guardian*, which began as a publishing agreement in which the *Guardian Weekly* was circulated with the *Weekly Mail*, and ended with the *Guardian* buying shares in the *Weekly Mail* until it controlled the paper (Harber 2010). Harber explains that the paper was determined to maintain its original identity despite its assimilation into a foreign-owned media company:

...we said our role will be to remain a critically independent voice that would seek to stand by an original core set of values (Harber, 2010).

For Harber, these “original values” appeared to relate, in particular, to maintaining an independent and critical voice within the landscape of South African journalism. Like Berger at *South*, he understands the position that the paper adopted in relation to the ANC as a crucial component of such independence. He explains that there was a “strong element” in the paper at this time, “... arguing that we should basically be the ANC voice”, and that the paper did respond to this argument, in that it “... called on people to vote for the ANC in the first election”. Like *South*, however, it also reported on “problems in the liberation” (Harber, 2010).

Cowling, who worked as a training officer at the *Weekly Mail* between 1992 and 1995 explains that the debates that took place at the paper about its approach to “reinventing” itself focused on “...what this newspaper should be doing in a transitioning society, and what it should be offering” (Cowling, 2010). A key strategy in this regard was to recruit journalists “... from different cultures and backgrounds, getting their perspectives on what was going on and getting their vision”:

...there was a sense almost that ... people's cultures and backgrounds and genders and all that fed into the kinds of stories they would come up with, the ways in which they would report (Cowling, 2010).

The paper’s training programme formed an important part of this recruitment strategy, and it targeted black candidates. Cowling explains that the aim was to teach these recruits “how to approach stories and how to write ... .and what news was”, but also “helping them develop the ... *Mail and Guardian* approach to things”. Within this approach “... it was always part of the deal that people took some sort of position”. Such positioning had, however, to be “fairly explicit”, and the analysis “... had to be based on something that was really going on”:

It was always ... about – let's look at the complexity of our society ... let's shine a light into [these] places ... I think the newspaper ... articulated a mission for itself ... it was about spotting social trends (Cowling, 2010).

The emphasis was, then, on making sense of changes that were happening within the contemporary social environment. Cowling points out that this approach was made possible by the paper’s status as a weekly publication, which meant that “... analysis was always part of the deal”. This, then, is again an example of journalism that bases its credibility in in-depth and situated knowledge of South African communities and their social experiences.

Garman, who worked at the *Natal Witness* between 1989 and 1995, argues that it was nevertheless possible to establish an approach to journalistic coverage within the context of a daily paper that was reflective and responsive to the requirements of its social context. She notes that it was really only in these years at the *Witness* that she came into contact with the more situated, reflective approach to journalism that other participants describe as characteristic of the 1980’s. It contrasted, in this respect, with the approach to journalism that she had experienced at the *Rand Daily Mail* in the early 1980’s, which she describes as still based in the conventions of ‘objective’ reporting. Garman

proposes that the *Witness* was obliged to interrogate these conventions because of the high degree of conflict that characterised its immediate environment:

...whereas the *Rand Daily Mail* was based in a big city, and the bigness of the city ... protected you from some things, the *Natal Witness* wasn't protected ... Pietermaritzburg was right in the centre of that ... civil war going on between the ANC and Inkatha in KwaZulu Natal (Garman, 2010).

Like Berger, then, Garman notes that this period in South African history was characterised by politically and racially motivated violence. Berger described such violence as a distressing backdrop to the challenges that *South* experienced in coming to terms with the realities of transition. Garman explains, rather, that exposure to violence compelled journalists at the *Witness* to articulate a politically situated and reflective approach to their own practice. Social context created a 'pressure cooker' that made it impossible to ignore the diversity of political perspectives within the newsroom:

I knew journalists on both sides ... journalists who were politically aligned both ways, and... our newsroom was full of ...constant debate about how you positioned yourself ... the questioning [of accepted conventions of journalism] for me became very pointed, and very much strengthened in the *Natal Witness* newsroom (Garman, 2010).

The newsroom culture that resulted from this confrontation was intellectually stimulating, because it was framed by on-going and open debate about political difference:

...two 'o clock in the afternoon, the tea trolley would arrive and everybody would come back from lunch and sit in the tearoom and have ... powerful, heated debates, of being at each other's throats politically, but terribly ... exciting conversations (Garman, 2010).

The debates about journalism that took place in this context was, however, not purely the result of "the external politics pushing in"; but also about "something on the inside". Garman notes that there was a consciousness, at the *Witness*, about the diversity of perspectives that existed amongst the staff with regards to the nature and purpose of journalism. The approach to reporting that was articulated in this context was "... a journalism of multiple bits and pieces, it wasn't just all one thing". The suggestion seems to be, here, that it was this acknowledgement of the existence of a diversity of perspectives, both on politics and journalism that opened up the possibility of a reflective practice.

Berger, Harber and Garman all describe news environments in which attempts were made to sustain the 'in-depth and community-based' approach to journalistic practice that, as we have seen, had emerged in the 1980's. These descriptions can be seen to suggest that, in the period of 'freedom coming', progressive newspapers faced complex demands in the articulation and maintenance of this approach to journalistic practice. These demands were represented, firstly, by the complexity and volatility of social relationships in a society in transition from apartheid to democracy. Such papers were also confronting the realities of economic survival, and the threats that this posed to future of in-depth and community-based journalism. The suggestion nevertheless seems to be that, even in context of these limitations, there was still space for the maintenance of 'alternative' approaches to journalistic knowledge.

### 7.2.3.2 *Reconstruction: The mid-1990's to the turn of the century*

The participants refer, in their comments about the years after the first democratic elections, to an openness within the South African media to the possibility of progressive change. They suggest, at the same time, that this sense of openness was fleeting in nature. Such statements are made not only by participants who were working as journalists and editors, but also by those based within university environments. Fourie, for example, talks about this time as being characterised by commitment, both by the state and from inside the media itself, to a transformation of the institutions of media. He points out that a key term of reference for this commitment was the state's adoption of legislation designed to ensure change in the media, such as a new broadcast act, the establishment of a broadcast regulator and stipulations around the limitation of media ownership. He pinpoints one important environment in which such change took place as that of the SABC, which was involved in attempts to shift its identity from that of a state broadcaster to a public broadcaster. He also suggests that the inquest about racism in South African media that was conducted by the Human Rights Commission in 1998 signalled an important moment within these attempts to transform the media:

I think there was for a short period a very extreme sensitivity about ... human rights throughout the media. A sensitivity about that (Fourie, 2010).

Fourie notes that the media opened themselves up to this investigation, and seemed willing to take on the responsibility of reflecting on their own practices and identifying ways in which these need to be re-imagined in order contribute to progressive social change in South Africa (Fourie, 2010).

Steenveld comments, in turn, that the period of 'reconstruction' was characterised by the closing down of spaces in which progressive print journalists had been able to articulate alternative approaches to journalistic practice. This could be seen in the decline of the alternative press and the demise of unionisation amongst journalists and other media practitioners. She notes that many progressive editors and journalists assumed that the mainstream press could, now, be a space in which they could practice the approach to journalism that they had articulated for themselves elsewhere. The assumption was, in other words, that the alternative media could be "mainstreamed".

...those people said well we are going to ...take that up in a different space ... And then the question is – have they? Have they been able to (Steenveld, 2010).

Steenveld proposes, then, that it is important to ask whether such journalists succeeded in re-establishing the practices associated with alternative media and progressive journalism more generally, in the mainstream press.

One member of the third generation of participants who entered journalism practice for the first time during this period was Wasserman, who describes an environment in which the potential for progressive practice remained severely limited. Wasserman completed his Honours studies in Afrikaans literature at Stellenbosch University in 1993. Like other participants, he explains that his

time at university had been “an eye opener”, making him sceptical of the world view that he had grown up with:

I was ... cognisant of coming from a ... conservative Afrikaner background ... and having realised in the ... mid-1990's that everything I knew, and that everything that counted ... as ... objective knowledge about the world was a lie, really ... I was disillusioned on many fronts (Wasserman, 2010).

When he joined *Die Burger* as a junior reporter he saw, in journalism, a vehicle that could be used to “... portray a more truthful picture of the world”. When he started working as a journalist, however, he began to realise that this goal was in itself unrealistic:

I was quite naive in going into journalism, thinking that I would have ... a free hand [in] writing what I want (Wasserman, 2010).

Wasserman, like participants before him, discovered that journalism at *Die Burger* was a highly restrictive practice, not only in terms of the kind of content that could be included, but also “... in terms of style and writing”:

I was ... quite disillusioned when I... realised that there's a formula that you have to write to. Within that you are basically a cog in this machine (Wasserman, 2010).

This news writing formula impacted, in particular, on the extent to which the views and experiences of junior reporters could be regarded to be of relevance in the stories that they produced:

...you're just sort of foot soldier ... you are being sent into the field to do as you're told ... So I think that – that for me was also ... quite frustrating ... (Wasserman, 2010).

Wasserman points out that he joined the staff of *Die Burger* at the end of 1994, just after the first democratic elections had taken place, and that this was therefore “... already formally after the transition”. *Die Burger* was, nevertheless, “... still a very conservative political space”. He refers to tension in the *Burger*'s newsroom between a younger, more progressive generation of journalists and the editorial leadership of the paper. He describes this as a struggle around the conceptualisation of journalism as “truth”:

...my colleagues and friends that I've worked with – they were ... junior journalists at the time ... were engaging in a ... struggle ... around what type of truths journalists should produce. So you would often have ... direct stand-offs with management (Wasserman, 2010).

Like Rabe before him, Wasserman found that journalists were nevertheless able to contest the official editorial position of the paper in more subtle ways, in order to achieve journalism that represented the kind of “truth” that they believed in. Wasserman explains that when he worked on the “political beat” with his colleague Sean Jacobs, they found ways of negotiating the organisational systems of the paper in order to create opportunities for more progressive coverage:

...we would have to think about how do we write a report in a way so that it would pass through the subs and get into the newspaper ... and sometimes there was some collusion between the subs and us ... to get something in the paper, and then sometimes it got thrown out by the ... chief editor (Wasserman, 2010).

There were, however, limitations to the extent that such contestations could result in the progressive coverage of political events:

...everybody realised that there were certain boundaries that ... you can test, and you can push up against, but ... that there ... is a clear editorial line (Wasserman, 2010).

Wasserman notes that this experience illustrated to him the relevance of some of the theories that he had explored, as an Honours student, with regards to “discourses and their relation to power”, and “... the fact that production of texts are always contested and negotiated”. He was conscious that this was a very different view of the production of journalistic knowledge to the conventional ideal of a journalism of objectivity:

...you cannot use the mirror metaphor for what goes into a newspaper. It is certainly not an ... objective or neutral reflection of what goes on in the world. It is always a result of a ... contestation (Wasserman, 2010).

This realisation was, according to Wasserman, one that was generally shared amongst the younger generation of reporters at *Die Burger* who were involved in these processes of negotiation around the production of journalistic “truth”. Such consciousness did not, in other words, depend on an exposure to critical literary theory:

...if ... you were to ask them about neutrality and objectivity, they would probably be very skeptical about it because ... [on] a day to day basis they were involved in this process of struggle and contestation (Wasserman, 2010).

On the other hand, the editorial leadership at *Die Burger* were more likely to identify with the rhetoric of objective reporting:

...if you talked to the editors and the assistant editors of the newspaper they would probably draw on that discourse of neutrality and objectivity. And they would probably have said ...that we are reflecting what we see in the world accurately, we are trying to be fair and balanced etcetera (Wasserman, 2010).

From 1996 onwards, Wasserman worked in arts journalism, and explains that such journalism was given more license than was possible in the context of political reporting. This, he proposes, was generally true for coverage of the arts in the Afrikaans press:

Arts journalism was ... always seen as this ... safe haven where some sort of limited critique against the system was allowed, especially at conservative newspapers like *Die Burger* (Wasserman, 2010)

Wasserman notes that this should be understood in context of the fact that the South African art world was, at this time, a highly politicised space, which “... wasn't sheltered away from politics at all”.

It was in the context of a specialised journalistic beat, then, that Wasserman found an opportunity to pursue the kind of journalism that he wanted to practice.

Pretorius also started working as a journalist for the first time in 1993, and remained involved in such work for the next ten years. In contrast to Wasserman's account, the description that she offers of her induction into print journalism suggests that there was, indeed, space in the mainstream

media for the articulation of a progressive approach to reporting practice. As we saw in Section One of this chapter, she had reflected, during her studies, on the role that she wanted to play after university in making contributions to progressive social change. She found, at *Beeld*, an environment that allowed her to articulate these ideas further:

I think moving from that into the environment at the newspaper which at that point ... had a ... let's use the terms back then, a fairly enlightened editorial staff – it wasn't a big jump; it was more like a homecoming, I would say (Pretorius, 2010).

Pretorius explains that *Beeld* saw itself, at this time, as "... playing the role of somebody that was trying to prepare its readership for change". Furthermore, when she moved to work at the *Sunday Times*, she did not experience any great change in the organisational culture of the newsroom:

OK ... I had to work quite hard on my English writing skills. But in terms of ... environment, I didn't feel that there was a major difference really (Pretorius, 2010).

There was, Pretorius explains, some division with regards to the conceptualisation of journalistic knowledge within these newsrooms, with two groups of journalists who positioned themselves very differently in relation to the social purpose of their work. On one hand, there was a group that adopted what Pretorius describes as a "developmental" stance and who "... felt that they had to be more supportive, and lenient, and give things a chance". On the other hand, there were those journalists who adopted a more adversarial stance, "... who said, no ... we're not critical enough". Pretorius found that she identified most closely with the "developmental" camp. This, she explains, should be understood in context of the nature of her work, and particularly her growing involvement in specialised journalism dealing with education. She proposes that by being involved in journalism that focuses on one issue such as that of education a reporter develops a depth of subject-specific knowledge that is not otherwise possible. In the South African context, this also means that one became aware of the complexities of dealing with issues in the context of a society in transition:

I think when you work on a beat ... in a specific field ...you start realising ... the difficulties that are really there ... you ... really begin to understand ... how systems work (Pretorius, 2011).

Such knowledge points to the need for a journalistic approach that is not purely critical of the government's attempt to facilitate social development, and which plays a more supportive role:

You develop an understanding of the hugeness of the challenge faced by ... any government, for that matter, who has to deal with education ... how difficult it is ... and then perhaps ... one tends to maybe become ... less critical, I think (Pretorius, 2011).

Pretorius explains that she moved away from the assumption that progressive journalism necessarily had to define itself in terms of the ideal of objectivity. She felt, instead, that at least in context of specialised journalistic beats, there is an important opportunity for a more situated, subjective reporting practice:

I started to believe more and more ... that there is a space for that, and that ... when you are a well-informed journalist in your field ... you have a voice that could rise above ...



the journalism of objectivity ... You can take a position ... and you should take a position, because we need people who can do that ... (Pretorius, 2010).

Pretorius found, then, both within Afrikaans and English print journalism that it was possible to put into practice the commitment she had made as a student towards contributing to the shaping of democratic society in South Africa. She did so, furthermore, in context of an approach to journalism that can be seen to be located within the 'in-depth and community based' tradition of reporting practice, rather than that of objective journalism.

It was also during this period that Amner attempted, through the establishment of the Development Media Agency (DMA), to sustain alternatives to the kind of journalism that was produced in the mainstream press. He drew, for this purpose, on the journalistic strategies to which he had been introduced when he worked in the early 1990's at the Eastern Cape News Agency (ECNA). ECNA, which was based in Grahamstown, had been founded and managed by Kruger during the first half of the 1990's on a model similar to that of the East London News Agency, described earlier in this chapter. The focus was, again, on identifying stories that "wouldn't otherwise be told" and on filing these both to the mainstream press and alternative media. Later in Part Three, we will see that Amner had been drawn, while he was a student of journalism at Rhodes, to reporting practices that serve as alternatives to that of the mainstream press. He describes ECNA as an environment in which he was able to put such journalism into practice:

...there was in fact a universe for me to go and play in ... and ... to this day, I lament the demise of East Cape News Agency – to me that was a sacred space, it was an incredibly powerful little institution (Amner, 2010).

Amner attempted to recreate this model of journalism in the context of the DMA. He notes, however, that because there was now a legitimate government, the promotion of 'alternative journalism' was differently situated than it had been in the early 1990's. The emphasis was on working with government on the achievement of developmental goals, and therefore on the production of "development journalism":

...that was supposedly a new form of journalism that was emerging in the post-apartheid era. So we were no longer oppositional. We were now in some ways collaborating in the process of transformation (Amner, 2010).

Again, as with Kruger's initiatives, a central purpose of the DMA was to facilitate a flow of community-based knowledge into professional journalism:

...a lot of my clients, as a development journalist, were ... mainstream ... newspapers and magazines ... it was ... advocacy by the back door, really (Amner, 2010).

Like Kruger before him, Amner explains that this aspect of the model on which the DMA was based was financially viable, given that there was in fact a strong interest in mainstream media outlets in the content that could be generated through a developmental model of journalism:

...the markets were there. We certainly never had any trouble selling what we had to sell ... a lot of people appreciated ... the stuff that we were producing ... if we had

simply been there to try and influence the mainstream press, we would have had a model that [was] ... sustainable ... we might have been able to expand (Amner, 2010).

What constrained this work, however, was the DMA's second objective, which was to support the community media sector. The organisation "... felt an obligation to community media outlets first and foremost", and therefore prioritised them over and above its own production and distribution of alternative journalism. In the late 1990's, funders were also prioritising the development of the community media sector, and saw in the DMA one of the few organisations with the capacity to do this work. For these reasons, the DMA's own production of alternative journalism came second:

...we had this dual mandate of on the one hand ... infiltrating the mainstream press with this stuff, but on the other hand developing community media – and eventually the community media needs .... overtook the agenda of trying to get development news into the mainstream. Because there was just so much more of a need there (Amner, 2010).

The "need" within the community media sector, as Amner describes it, was for capacity building, through organisational development and training. It may be that in context of the 'decline' of alternative media, the supportive role played by organisations such as DMA was becoming increasingly important to the continued survival of this sector.

All three participants speak, then, about spaces in South African journalism in which it was possible to put into practice approaches to authoritative social knowledge that they had articulated while at university. Within their descriptions, it is possible to identify attempts to sustain in-depth and politically situated forms of journalism. For both Wasserman and Pretorius, the articulation of such journalism was made possible in context of specialised 'spaces' within the mainstream, represented, respectively, by arts journalism and educational journalism. Amner, in contrast, established a platform for news production outside the mainstream, according to the model Kruger describes in context of the East London News Agency. For Pretorius and Amner, it was also possible to pursue such journalism in context of a 'developmental' paradigm of reporting practice, which defined itself as an alternative to the 'professional' journalism of objectivity, and in support of the establishment of a new democracy. The suggestion seems to be, however, that such examples of journalism existed as exceptions to the rule, and alternatives to the mainstream. It would seem, then, that the fundamental challenges of the mainstream conventions of journalism that had characterised the 1980's did not result in the transformation of the South African journalistic landscape.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter deals with the research participants' experience of being university students and of working as journalists. Because the discussion draws on interviews with all three generations of participants, it is able to trace such experience from the 1960's to the turn of the century. It focuses on description of encounters, in both academic and journalistic environments, with conceptualisations of authoritative social knowledge. It deals with the participants' explanation of the relationship between such conceptualisations and struggles that took place in the public domain around the

legitimacy of knowledge about society. The social environment that the participants describe, in this context, is characterised by profound renegotiations of relations of power. This is represented, firstly, by the dismantling of the apartheid state and then the first years of the reconstruction of society in post-apartheid South Africa. Such change is understood by the participants to have impacted fundamentally on approaches to credible social knowledge, both in society in general and within the specific context of the newsrooms and universities in which they worked and studied.

Section One focused on the participants' experience of such processes in the context of undergraduate study in liberal arts programmes. It is pointed out that meta-theoretical knowledge drawn from such programmes often played a role in the development of the participants' ability to engage critically with knowledge of the social. They explain that their participation in such education enabled them to become conscious of the extent to which social knowledge was ideologically informed. They also explain that such consciousness included a growing awareness of the 'whiteness' of the world views that had been dominant within their environments. At the same time, the institutional culture of the universities in which they studied continued to place limitations on the extent to which they were able to transcend the limitations of these world views. They were constrained, in particular, by the fact that universities were closed off from their social environment, and therefore offered limited opportunities for an exploration of the relationship between meta-theoretical and ordinary knowledge. The one context in which the participants speak of overcoming such limitations is in reference to English universities in the late 1970's and 1980's. They suggest that, at this time, a relationship of in-depth engagement was established between these universities and their social context. Participants found that this enabled them to synthesize knowledge that they gained through their coursework and their involvement in campus politics and in-depth knowledge of their social environment that they gained through participation in the resistance movement. The suggestion seems to be that this enabled them to draw relationships between all three knowledge 'worlds'.

Section Two dealt with the participants' experience of journalistic environments and, as part of this, examined the extent to which the approach to knowledge that they established during their university education was of relevance to their practice of journalists. The section paid particular attention to the participants' observations about guidelines for reporting practice that operated within these contexts. It is argued that these observations point to the existence, in the different newsrooms that the participants observed, of a spectrum of approaches to authoritative social knowledge. In the period of 'eroding hegemony', the journalism of 'open bias' typical of the conservative Afrikaans press represented one end of this spectrum, while the journalism of 'courage and truth' of the progressive English press was located at the other extreme. The participants note that they were drawn to the more 'critical' approaches to journalism because these resonated with the conceptualisations of knowledge that they developed at university. At the same time, all of these approaches still stopped short of a fundamental critique of the standard conventions of 'professional'

reporting, and the ideal of objectivity on which this was based. Furthermore, they remained limited by a 'white' perspective on the South African social environment, distanced from the social experiences of the majority of people within the world on which they reported.

The participants point out, however, that there has been ongoing conflict, in news organisations, around the credibility of these conceptualisations of journalistic knowledge, both in context of the journalism of 'open bias', and that of 'truth and courage'. They describe such conflict as occurring between new generations of journalists and more senior members of staff. They also suggest that such contestation escalated between the late 1970's and early 1980's, in context of broader challenges of established relations of power that characterised South African society at this time. It is at this time that it becomes possible to observe the emergence, both in the mainstream press and alternative journalism, of more politically situated approaches to journalistic practice which questioned the professional ideal of journalistic objectivity. Such journalism drew its authority from in-depth and politically situated knowledge of South African communities, escaping the limitations of the 'white' perspective that had traditionally defined newsroom practice. The example of 'developmental journalism' of the early 1990's can be seen as a continuation of this tradition.

In reviewing the historical accounts, presented in this chapter, of struggles around the authority of social knowledge in South African newsrooms, it is possible to identify a correlation with Schudson's analysis of the American history of journalistic objectivity discussed in Chapter Three. Schudson comments, within this analysis, on the recurrence of internal conflict in American newspapers around the ideal of journalistic objectivity. He notes that such conflict manifested as a struggle between generations of journalists, with younger staff challenging accepted approaches to journalism, while the editorial leadership defend it. He also suggests that these challenges were usually absorbed within the established practices of news organisations. Such tension was, in his view, representative of the normal dynamics of newsroom management, forming part of struggles around the assimilation of new generations of journalists into the professional culture of newspapers. In the 1960's and 1970's, however, resistance to journalistic objectivity escalated as part of a broad questioning, in American society, of the political establishment. During this period, critique of the accepted conventions of news production became more destabilising to accepted approaches to news production. The participants' description of the contestation that took place in South African histories of journalistic practice can be seen to resonate with this description. Here, too, we see reference to generational conflict and to the escalation of such conflict during a period in history when established relations of power became broadly questioned. It could be argued, then, that Schudson's analysis of conflict in American newsrooms is of relevance to the South African instance.

It is, furthermore, of value to consider the participants' description of generational conflict in light of the discussion, in Chapter Five, of processes of contestation around the concept of the 'professional' in communities of journalistic practice. This discussion referred to a distinction that Hallin and Mancini draw between two conceptualisations of the 'professional' in journalism, which

often exist in a relationship of conflict with each other. On one hand, there are the processes through which different interest groups, including journalists themselves, attempt to reconstruct journalism so that it may gain the status of a professional practice. Within these processes, journalistic practice is understood to gain a professional status when it operates in service of public interest, guided by a commitment to the values of democratic society. On the other hand, there are the organisational systems through which editors and media owners ensure the management of reporting staff. Within such systems, the 'professional' status of journalistic practice is understood to be achieved through the effective maintenance of control over production processes. The generational struggles around approaches to journalism referred to in this chapter can usefully be described in relation to processes of contestation around these two meanings of the 'professional'. We see, repeatedly, attempts by editorial leadership to maintain systems of control through the invocation of guidelines for professional practice. At the same time, resistance to such systems of control is often framed by an interest in the 'professional' status of journalism, as a practice committed to public service and democracy.

It will be argued, in the remainder of Part Three, that the approaches to knowledge described in this chapter represent important terms of reference for an examination of the role that South African university-based journalism education has played in the facilitation of reflective and critical approaches to journalistic practice. As will be demonstrated, examples of such education can be evaluated in terms of the emphasis placed on particular positions within the overall spectrum of approaches to journalism that has been described in this chapter. Such education can also be assessed in terms of the extent to which it responds to the contestation and generational conflict that characterised journalism practice at different moments in time.

## CHAPTER EIGHT: JOURNALISM EDUCATION FROM THE 1960'S TO 1980'S

### Introduction

This chapter focuses on the participants' experience of South African university-based journalism education in the period between the early 1960's and the end of the 1980's. The discussion deals, firstly, with the location of this experience within international history of such teaching. It was pointed out, in Chapter Six, that South African journalism education was shaped at this time by the authoritative status of American scholarship and education within the global domain. It was also noted, however, that reference to European approaches to scholarship and teaching about journalism and media also played an important role in the South African context. The discussion explores the participants' observation of the influence of these global traditions within the journalism education programmes in which they were involved.

The chapter focuses, secondly, on the way in which local developments in the history of authoritative social knowledge has impacted on the role that such influence has played in South African journalism education. It was explained in the previous chapter that, between the 1960's and the 1980's, the research participants witnessed fundamental disruptions in the status of such knowledge within their immediate environment. In particular, they were able to observe the articulation of a wider spectrum of approaches to authoritative social knowledge, both within journalism and universities. The discussion, below, examines the participants' observations with regard to the role that these shifts in the status of knowledge played within approaches to journalism education that became established, during this time, in the academic environments in which they were based. It also considers the accounts that they give of their own contribution to the articulation of these approaches. The aim is then to tease out the implications of these approaches for the relationship that has existed, at different moments in time, between the spheres of journalism education, -scholarship and -practice, and also between the different 'knowledge worlds'.

The previous chapter identifies, within the participants' description of their exposure to journalistic practice, a spectrum of approaches to the conceptualisation of authoritative social knowledge. It was argued that, until the 1980's, this spectrum was framed, at its two extremes, by opposing approaches to the credibility of social knowledge, which was described by the participants as a stance of 'open bias' versus a commitment to 'truth and courage'. During the 1980's, it is then possible to observe a fundamental contestation of the terms that defined this spectrum of approaches to knowledge. In context of such contestation, alternative approaches to knowledge were articulated, and in particular a conception of journalism based in commitment to principles of in-depth, socially situated reporting practice. The discussion, below, considers the extent to which the traditions of journalism education described by the participants can be seen to engage with this spectrum of approaches to journalism, and the contestations that surrounded it. It takes note of the role played, in

this respect, by the different categories of knowledge that are included in the standard requirements for university-based journalism education, as described in Part Two of this dissertation (see Figure 5). Whereas the previous chapter dealt with the liberal arts component of such requirements, which is located outside journalism education programmes, the focus is now on categories of knowledge that form part of ‘professional’ components. As such, the discussion refers, firstly, to the role played by guidelines for reporting, and with this the reification of the ideal of ‘objectivity’ within reporting practice. The chapter examines the participants’ understanding of the relationship that existed, within journalism education, between these ideals and evaluation of the spectrum of approaches to journalistic knowledge described above. Secondly, the chapter considers the role played in this respect by academic fields concerned with the study of journalism – such as that of press science, mass communication studies and media studies. It focuses, as part of this, on the extent to which the inclusion of such knowledge enabled an engagement between knowledge drawn from World Three and knowledge of journalism practice, at the level of World One.

### **8.1 Journalism education under eroding hegemony**

Although the Journalism Department at Rhodes University had opened its doors by the early 1970’s, none of the first generation of research participants chose to study there. Instead, those who were based in English environments learnt about journalism exclusively within the workplace. Addison proposes that, for English speakers in the 1960’s, university-based journalism education was not an option, and that, to his knowledge, the Argus Cadet School represented the only formal example of training. He also notes that even if an English university-based journalism programme had existed at this time, he would not have chosen to study there since, in his view, such teaching would not have been framed by what he understood to be the core purpose of an academic education. He describes this purpose as that of encouraging the development of critical consciousness. Addison sees exposure to a liberal arts education as key to this role, and explains that it was this understanding that informed his disinterest in a subject such as journalism. He assumes that such a programme would necessarily have been ‘un-academic’ in its approach:

I would have never considered doing a journalism degree in any case because I had a low opinion of what you might learn. I wasn't interested in technical subjects, I wanted theoretical subjects ... I think what university prepares you for is critical thinking, and that was for me the most important thing (Addison, 2011).

It was, rather, in the work place that Addison developed his understanding of journalistic practice. He explains that a fundamental realisation that he came to in this context was that journalism operated differently from academic knowledge production. In illustration, he refers to an incident that occurred during his time at the *Financial Mail*, where he worked as trainee journalist while still a student. He was asked to look at company reports and balance sheets, and “write them up”:



I said to [my colleague] – what do I do with these [reports] after I am finished with them; do I file them somewhere? ... he grabbed them and he hurled them into the rubbish bin. He said that's what you do with them. And I learned a big lesson about journalism that day. It's instant, it covers what has happened, it's not academic – and I kind of liked the idea (Addison, 2011).

For Addison, then, the notion of journalism as a university-based subject with academic merit was an anomaly. As we have seen in Part Two of this dissertation, this response is expressive of an understanding of such teaching that was broadly shared in different parts of the world at this time.

Diederichs suggests that this understanding was also typical of the stance towards journalism education adopted within the Afrikaans press. He explains that, although he had always intended to pursue a career as a reporter, he had opted for a general liberal arts degree because his perception was that there was little interest from future employers in a qualification in journalism:

I got a bursary from Naspers ... I asked the editor what should I study ... where should I study ... There were only Potchefstroom and Rhodes at that stage that had journalism.<sup>60</sup> He said well – we don't care what you study, we teach you in any case what you should know ... so just go and study, whatever you would like. So I went to Freestate University and studied languages there ... and then worked in holidays at the newspaper (Diederichs, 2010).

The only example of university-based education that is discussed from first hand experience by the participants during the period of 'eroding hegemony' is, then, that of the Department of Journalism at the University of Potchefstroom. De Jager describes this programme as it existed in the mid-1960's, when he studied there, as consisting mostly of teaching based on literature about journalism and communication, with little focus on practical competence. Learning about production was still limited by the university's reluctance to provide space for more skills-based teaching:

What we did need was writing experience because at that point in time in the humanities it was quite a foreign thing to think even about doing practical work for a BA degree. ... Professor Pienaar, he had us translate Sapa copy and we wrote stories for the student newspaper ... the senate was quite negative about [this] ... although they agreed for pharmacy and those others, [they did] not for the humanities (De Jager, 2010).

Fourie, who studied at Potchefstroom in the early 1970's, explains that at this time practical components of the course still focused on learning how to type, interviewing techniques and writing skills. Both Fourie and De Jager explain that, in its approach to such teaching, the programme drew heavily on American journalism education textbooks. They note that, within these texts, there was a strong emphasis on guidelines for ensuring a level of objectivity within reporting practice. According to Fourie, such resources included Bond's *Introduction to Journalism* which, he notes, had an introductory chapter dealing with journalistic objectivity (Fourie 2010). De Jager explains that it was acknowledged in such texts, and within the general teaching process, that journalists could not hope to succeed in achieving perfect objectivity. The emphasis nevertheless remained on striving to do so:

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<sup>60</sup> As we have seen in Chapter Six, teaching of journalism at Rhodes University was in fact only launched in 1969, after Diederichs achieved his undergraduate degree. Potchefstroom, and possibly the journalism programme that UNISA offered for a few years during the 1960's, would in fact have been the only options for journalism specific university education at this time.

We were ... told and ... we fully understood that a human being cannot be objective. That is why we saw it as, we must be balanced, we must be factual as far as possible, we must be fair. We must give both sides of the story. The journalist must not be seen in the story. The facts must speak for itself (De Jager, 2010).

De Jager notes such teaching complemented the focus on objectivity that characterised guidelines for reporting practice in the newspapers served by the Potchefstroom programme. We have already seen, in the previous chapter, that the participants understood this emphasis to be fundamental to the principles of reporting practice in these newsrooms. Diederichs points out the similarity between the learning about journalism that he experienced within such an environment, and the typical content of journalism education programmes:

[I was taught] all the old kind of things that you would learn [in journalism schools]... I would say the basic traits there that one would get was – get the news first, and get it accurately. It was a very big focus on not having anything wrong, you know, and having your sources correct ...the whole thing about fairness of reporting in the sense of – did you get more than two sources ... and unreliable sources or rumours ... were not allowed (Diederichs, 2010).

De Jager suggests that for students at Potchefstroom, the experience of moving from education to journalism practice was therefore a seamless transition:

These values came from [newspapers such as] ... *Die Burger* ... and *Volksblad* and at that stage *Oosterlig*. So it was very much interwoven. When we started working that was still the criteria ... Pienaar and ... Snyman, our lecturers, came from the two big press companies, Perskor and Nasionale Pers. The sub-editors and the news editors we had grew up with that as well, so ... there was no real adjustment necessary (De Jager, 2011).

The suggestion seems to be, then, that it was possible to assimilate the guidelines for objective reporting practice articulated within American journalism textbooks into an approach to the teaching of journalism that translated with ease from the Potchefstroom programme to the newsrooms of the Afrikaans press.

Fourie and De Jager's description of the 'academic' component of the Potchefstroom journalism programme suggests that here, too, there was a strong emphasis on principles relating to objectivity. Fourie explains that this component of the programme, which focused on literature about "press science", contained a strong emphasis on the history of South African media and was taught from a "normative theoretical perspective" (Fourie, 2010). De Jager notes that this normative emphasis found expression in a preoccupation with "... the whole issue of truth ... what is truthfull". He notes that in articulating an approach to truth, the programme drew on reformist theology and on Dutch and German philosophy of the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, such as that of Kirkegaard. Such teaching was also informed by what De Jager calls a "Victorian British" outlook, in which a commitment to truth was understood to be a moral requirement:

Is it honourable, is it truthful, that type of approach. You do not tamper with facts. And that stayed with us – I think with my generation – forever (De Jager, 2010).

The suggestion seems to be, however, that there was very little emphasis on the application of such principles to a critical analysis of journalism as it was practiced in South Africa. Fourie, who returned to Potchefstroom in the mid-1970's as a lecturer in communication, notes that even at this time there was still "... nothing that I can remember that was remarkable" in the teaching programming in terms of debates of relevance to journalism, its nature or its purpose in the South African context. The emphasis was on teaching students generic competencies relating to the practice of journalism, without great concern for their immediate social implications. Fourie notes, at the same time, that in coursework that dealt with the history of the Afrikaans press there was a "... tendency to ask critical questions about media regulation", but this "... wasn't dealt with very seriously". Such consciousness can for example be identified in Calvyn Snyman's writings about press ethics, which Fourie describes as a major contribution to the development of conceptual tools for the study of journalism at Potchefstroom. Snyman's work was presented "strictly from a Calvinist perspective", within the accepted normative framework that had become established at this university. It was, however, highly abstract in its formulation:

Now that is a magnum opus ... a very philosophical work, that no one understood. It did not speak in concrete terms about what was going on in the South African media, about the problems being experienced in terms of freedom of expression in the country – that was never addressed in a concrete way. It was very [high falluting] ... and it didn't come up with anything concrete (Fourie, 2010).

The suggestion seems to be, then, that the relevance of this component of 'academic' teaching at Potchefstroom to journalistic practice as it existed in South Africa at this time remained unclear.

It should be remembered that Afrikaans journalism of this period, as described by participants in the previous chapter, included reference to an approach to journalism defined by the position of 'open bias'. It would seem, from De Jager and Fourie's descriptions above, that the role that Potchefstroom played in introducing students to the newsroom culture of such papers included no direct critique of this aspect of reporting practice. It could be argued that, within the 'practical' component of the programme, students were taught guidelines that did not, in fact, describe journalism as it was actually practiced in such papers. Instead, they were introduced to the prescriptive statements through which newspapers maintained control in newsrooms, and asserted the credibility of their own practice. It is possible to describe this approach to journalism education in terms of Hallin and Mancini's distinction between two conceptualisations of the 'professional'. In terms of its treatment of how journalism should ideally be practiced, the Potchefstroom programme defined the 'professional' as a normative commitment to principles of truth-telling. The relationship between such education and journalism as it was actually practiced was, however, one of instrumental service, contributing to the maintenance of 'professional' systems of newsroom management that, in fact, operated in opposition to this commitment to truth-telling.

## 8.2 Journalism Education under struggle and resistance

From the late 1970's onwards, the university-based study of journalism becomes more central to participants' account of the history of the conceptualisation of journalism. More frequent mention is made, in their commentary, to the emergence of coherent bodies of academic knowledge about journalism. One reason for this is that a growing number of the research participants were moving out of media practice and, instead, beginning to teach and study journalism and related fields within tertiary institutions. Another could be that, at this time, academic knowledge about journalism and media more generally was becoming more established within such institutions.

In Chapter Six it is indeed argued that during this period a widening spectrum of approaches to the study of journalism and communication was being articulated within South African universities. It was noted that the resulting landscape of scholarship was characterised by deep schisms, in which different approaches to social knowledge existed in opposition to each other. At one end of the spectrum of approaches, the study of journalism was based in a positivist paradigm, and informed by a functionalist analysis of South African society. At the other end, research was located within a constructivist paradigm, and as such by an emphasis on the critique of relations of power and ideological interest. Between these two extreme points in the spectrum of approaches, it is then possible to observe traditions of research that can be seen, to a greater or lesser extent, to balance acknowledgement of the socially constructed nature of knowledge and adherence to the ideal of objective and systematic scrutiny.

The discussion, below, of the participants' experience of journalism and communication programmes in the 1970's and 1980's suggests that their location within such paradigms of knowledge played an important role in the way they engaged with journalism practice. It is possible to identify references to three traditions of journalism education, each associated with one of these paradigmatic positions, and each articulating a different set of ideas about the nature and purpose of authoritative knowledge of society. The discussion is, accordingly, organised around the discussion of these traditions: that of functionalism, that of existentialism and that of critical theory.

### 8.2.1 Studying journalism in a functionalist paradigm

During the era of 'struggle and resistance', Potchefstroom was no longer the only Afrikaans university involved in the study of journalism. As noted in Chapter Six, Mass Communications courses were launched at a number of such universities at the start of the 1970's. Johan De Wet, speaking about his own experience of such coursework in context of the University of the Free State, states that the conceptual framework for teaching about journalism in these universities remained restricted to a perspective that he describes as "functionalist". He notes that journalism was defined within this framework according to the set categories of accepted "news values" that, as we have seen in the previous section, had also for long informed teaching at Potchefstroom (J De Wet, 2010). The

suggestion seems to be that, like Potchefstroom, these universities generally reproduced the established conceptualisation of journalism that existed within the Afrikaans press, with little emphasis on critical consciousness.

By the late 1970's, reference to the Honours programme in Journalism at Stellenbosch University becomes foregrounded in the participants' discussion, through the accounts of people who were students there. All of these participants assert that this degree was of central importance in facilitating their placement in Afrikaans newsrooms. Rabe describes her enrolment in the programme in 1978, in the very first year of its existence, as a "lucky break" that ensured her future as a journalist in Afrikaans print journalism:

I was ... interested in journalism, that was always my focus and the area in which I saw my career would take me ... at the time there was no real course for the beginner journalist; you did a ... degree in social sciences and languages or whatever might be the case and then if you were lucky you got a position at a newspaper. So I ... thank my stars when in my final year the Department of Journalism was established and I could apply for ... my fourth year. And ... luckily I was accepted (Rabe, 2010).

The programme is also repeatedly described as a compelling learning environment that successfully acculturated students into journalism as it was practiced in the Afrikaans press. Brand, who took the degree in 1987, speaks of the authority with which a particular approach to journalism was presented at Stellenbosch:

It was ... taught by a former journalist-editor of a ... daily newspaper and ... the way that he thought and spoke about journalism obviously influenced us very strongly, and put as very firmly into a kind of a mainstream journalism ... paradigm ... I think his whole point of departure was ... trying to teach people to be able to ... go and work in industry without necessarily questioning the central paradigm (Brand, 2010).

He suggests that what made journalism as it was taught at Stellenbosch compelling was the fact that teaching was based on one cohesive and shared understanding of journalistic practice (Brand, 2010). Johan De Wet, who completed the degree in 1982, also speaks of the forceful nature of such teaching. Initially, he was drawn to the degree because it represented a stepping stone into the university-based study of mass communication, which he prioritised as part of establishing his credentials within the diplomatic corps:

I wanted to gain a higher education at Honours level, to then progress to Masters and Doctoral level. That was my motivation. And the easiest route for me at the time was to go to Stellenbosch simply because it was relevant to the position which I was in at Foreign Affairs (J De Wet, 2010).

During his year at Stellenbosch, however, these plans changed radically because "... what happened was that ... I was ... *begeistered* by the idea of doing journalism, you know, for ever and ever" (J De Wet, 2011).

Rabe argues that, from the start, acculturation into the Afrikaner Nationalist paradigm of newsroom practice was not a completely seamless process at Stellenbosch. She notes in this context that Cillie, who was the first Department Head of Journalism at this university, was also chair of

Naspers, and under his direction the newsroom culture of Afrikaner Nationalism could indeed be strongly felt in the classroom. This was, however, Afrikaner Nationalism “as he understood it”; presented with a degree of self-consciousness about the moral unacceptability of some of its philosophical foundations. Rabe suggests that these inconsistencies prompted her to begin to think beyond the limitations of the approach to journalism that Cillie offered:

...there were ...these dualities in him. So I think getting to know him ... also opened up the other side to me of – if this is Afrikaner Nationalism and this is Naspers, then what does the rest of South Africa look like? What are we not reporting on, and what are the silences? (Rabe, 2010).

Most of the participants nevertheless suggest that the approach adopted at Stellenbosch focused on the reproduction of the approach to journalism that was characteristic of Afrikaans newsrooms. The reference seems to be, in particular, to the reproduction of the guidelines for objective reporting practice that operated in these newsrooms. The participants explain that teaching around such guidelines was centrally concerned with the development of journalistic writing skills. It is to such teaching that Brand refers when he speaks about the “unquestioning” reproduction that took place, at Stellenbosch, of a “central paradigm”. Johan De Wet, who took the degree in 1982, also describes the approach to writing as an ‘uncritical’ introduction both to accepted ‘news values’, and to the need to write quickly, under the pressure of deadlines:

...it taught me to write. And it taught me to do things quite hastily. And it taught me to identify news – you know news values. But in terms of critiquing that which I was doing – no, no. Not at that institution (J De Wet, 2011).

Booyens, who completed the programme in 1987, notes that the purpose at this time was to ensure that, after a year of study, a graduate would be able to function as “beginner journalist”. He, too, describes a foundation in technical aspects of writing as being core to this task:

It was a year of assignments, it was a year of deadlines, it was a year of handing things in, it was a year of spelling Franschhoek with two h's, it was a year of spelling ‘onmiddellik’ with two ‘elle’ (Booyens, 2010).<sup>61</sup>

Like De Wet, he points out that practical training about the rules of writing was not accompanied by reflection, which he defines as the conscious application of theory:

So it was not a course about the theory of journalism, or ... media and society, or press ethics. I don't even think we had ... for instance any ethics element in the course ... to tell you the truth, it was a year for doing ... I don't remember it as a thinking year (Booyens, 2010).

Many of the participants suggest that the Stellenbosch programme nevertheless did provide a space for reflective thinking, even if it did not do so in strongly theoretical terms. Brand speaks of an absence of the deliberate application of theory, again in context of teaching about writing, but his description suggests that there was still a measure of reflective analysis involved:

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<sup>61</sup> Franschhoek is a South African town, close to Stellenbosch. The word ‘onmiddellik’ translates as ‘immediately’, a word that is, unusually within Afrikaans spelling rules, written with two ‘els’.



[The lecturer] would talk ... all day about ... the newspapers, and ... what he liked about them and [what] not, but... without the theoretical framework, really, to inform that. ... and the criticism was kind of practice-based criticism, OK so you know, this is a bad headline, or maybe this story should have been done that way... so there wasn't really a theoretical foundation at all (Brand, 2010).

Rabe notes that what she took away with her from her Honours year was “the discipline of writing, the practical writing skills” but also “...the conceptual skill of questioning” (Rabe, 2010). She also refers to a preoccupation within the programme, as it existed in 1978, with the nature of ‘truth-telling’ through journalism. Many class discussions dealt with the impossibility of fully realising the ideal of “true objectivity” in journalism, “... and you know – aren't we all just subjective and dreaming of objectivity” (Rabe 2010).

Booyens notes that, by the late 1980's, such discussions were far more consciously informed by an awareness of political context:

The year that I did my Honours degree in journalism, was the year when [there was] the severe clampdown on the press by the PW Botha government ... it was an incredibly restrictive environment in which one was exposed academically to journalism ... (Booyens, 2010).

There was, as a result, much discussion of the degree to which political reporting was restricted in the social contexts in which students would be working, once they graduate:

Certainly in our class there was a sense of despondency. [We believed in] freedom of the press, and *‘die roeping’*, you know, the calling that one has for journalism – and then poof, overnight, by a pen stroke this gets taken away. [There] were regulations for instance that you could not be present at any place where military action takes place. You are not allowed physically to be there. ‘B’, if you do glean some information, you could not write anything about the military unless approved. Which you basically think, *jislaaik* ... this wasn't in the script, you know, this is not how it is supposed to work (Booyens, 2010).<sup>62</sup>

Booyens points out, however, that the emphasis was not on providing students with analytical tools that would allow them to critique either social context or the practice of journalism itself, as it occurred in such a context. Instead, students were provided with practical guidelines for negotiating legal restrictions in a way that still allowed newspapers the freedom to publish what they regarded to be the truth (Booyens, 2010). Botma, who completed the programme a year later, also refers to a preoccupation with the restrictions that graduates would face, as South African journalists, under the State of Emergency. He, like Booyens, explains that this did not mean that the programme positioned itself as critical either of journalism or of the South African government. It was, at the same time, “... also not pro the government and definitely not pro all the media regulations”:

So we were discussing it as journalists who had to go into industry the next year and probably facing these things, to learn what they were, in a sense... in general we thought that the media should be a free space ... I can't speak for all the people in the class, but

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<sup>62</sup> ‘Jislaaik’ is an Afrikaans expression of surprise or indignation.



...my feeling was that people were sceptical or critical about all these things that you can't do as a journalist (Botma, 2010).

Unlike Potchefstroom, then, teaching at Stellenbosch did not include a dedicated component of coursework focusing on academic knowledge. Instead, the focus of the programme was primarily on the first category of knowledge discussed in this chapter, relating to World One prescriptive guidelines for reporting practice. Accounts of teaching nevertheless suggest that there were similarities between this programme and that of Potchefstroom, as described in the previous section, at least as this applies to the more 'practical' component of coursework. Students were, again, encouraged to adopt a normative position towards journalistic practice, defined by a commitment to objective reporting. As in the case of Potchefstroom, critical reflection on social context focused on the extent to which political events were impacting on the existence of an independent press in the South African context. Like other examples of teaching within the functionalist paradigm, the Stellenbosch programme did not, however, prioritise critical engagement with the way journalism was actually practiced. Instead, it continued to define itself in terms of a commitment to delivering graduates to Afrikaans newsrooms.

As a second example of functionalist teaching, Claassen's description of the teaching programme at Pretoria Technikon in the 1980's suggests that this environment was also strongly informed by the political events of these times:

...you must remember I started there in 1983 – that was when the new constitution was adopted – and it brought all those 1980 riots, and the state of emergency, so we were very much part of that (Claassen, 2010).

Although escalating political conflict was still experienced as external to the tertiary environment, it was becoming increasingly visible within the immediate physical surroundings. There were, at the same time, also signs of change that impacted directly on the classroom environment. Claassen notes that, during the 1980's, the political climate changed to the extent that Pretoria Technikon could start "...taking in black students ... because the government made those concessions":

...we were exposed as lecturers ... to the other side of South Africa. You know, suddenly you had a black student in your class. Or two or three, you know. And you had to take cognisance of that, and ... it changed your own views also (Claassen, 2010).

These changes impacted on Claassen's approach to the teaching of journalism at Pretoria Technikon. He explains that he saw, firstly, a need to engage with the inherent tensions that characterised the ideal of journalistic objectivity, particularly in a political environment in which individual perspectives on events were necessarily coloured by social positioning:

I've always felt ... there is no such thing as objective journalism, really – you try to be as objective as possible but you grow up in a certain environment and you are influenced by certain factors in your life ... you will see [events] through your own glasses, the filters you've built up through years. So no two reporters will report it in the same way. That is part of the strength of journalism but it is also part of its Achilles heel, you know (Claassen, 2010).

Claassen's response to this problem was not to suggest an abandonment of the ideal of objectivity, but rather to impress on students that "... you have to get rid of your own prejudices and ideas and just report the facts as closely and accurately as possible". Secondly, he identified a need to confront the contradiction between the ideal of an independent press, grounded in a commitment to investigative reporting, and the degree to which the South African political environment was placing constraints on such journalism. Claassen turned to academic scholarship in order to conceptualise both normative and methodological guidelines that would allow journalists to be equal to the task of negotiating these tensions. He notes that although this was challenging given that "... the books that were available at that stage were limited", he was nevertheless able to establish an approach to teaching that was based on a range of valuable intellectual resources. He saw, firstly, a foundation in ethics as central to striking the balance between a commitment to objectivity and an acknowledgement of social difference. The ethical principle of fairness was, he explained, of key importance to the achievement of such balance, "... and that is the very important thing in ethical journalism ... are you fair in the way you are reporting in reflecting society as it is, or are you only reflecting one side it" (Claassen, 2010). Secondly, he drew on histories of American journalism and their discussion of key examples of investigative reporting, in order to demonstrate that South African journalism has played an equally important role within the local context:

The info scandal and Watergate ... and the Pentagon papers ... to show how journalism is functioning overseas and why it was so important that the *Rand Daily Mail* and the *Sun Express* ... and those people opened up the information scandal (Claassen, 2010).

Thirdly, he acknowledged the increasing importance both of the study of communication as it had developed in America and how it has been reconstituted in the South African context:

...there was Professor Fourie at UNISA's Communication Department and he wrote a book on Communication Science ... and then also the Americans brought out every year, you know ... the *Four Theories of the Press* ... and those people. So you had to study yourself into the field of communication science (Claassen, 2010).

Claassen notes that these resources, alongside that of media sociology, provided a "... theoretical basis of why the press should be free, how the press functions in society, what is its role in society" (Claassen, 2010).

It would seem from Claassen's account that he was able, even in the context of a technikon programme, to teach journalism in a way that placed emphasis on the adoption of academic resources that allowed for an acknowledgement of social context. The teaching programme that he designed seems, nevertheless, to have been guided by similar themes to those that have been identified both in the context of Potchefstroom and Stellenbosch. Here, too, there is a strong focus on normative principles, particularly in context of a reiteration of guidelines for objective reporting. As in the case of Potchefstroom, such teaching is again supported by means of resources drawn from American journalism education. Critique of social context focuses, again, on the matter of freedom of the press, and the extent which this allowed for the practice of objective journalism. There is, once more, an

acknowledgement that objectivity cannot be ‘perfectly achieved’. At the same time, there is little evidence of a critical engagement with guidelines for objective reporting, or with journalism as it was practiced in Afrikaans newsrooms at this time.

### 8.2.2 Studying journalism in an existentialist paradigm

Another programme that is mentioned repeatedly by participants in context of this period of history is the The Department of Communication at UNISA.<sup>63</sup> This is generally regarded by the participants as an academic environment which offered more possibilities for theoretically grounded critical reflection than was possible within many of the other universities. In Chapter Six, this programme was identified as belonging to the ‘middle range’ of the spectrum of traditions in the study of media in South Africa. It was proposed, further, that, in the 1980’s, this programme located itself within an ‘existentialist’ and ‘interpretative’ approach to social knowledge. The participants who taught at UNISA during this period describe the programme in similar terms.

Fourie also took part in the interviews conducted for Chapter Six, and expands on the statements that he made in that context. He reiterates that, in the late 1970’s, the Head of Department at UNISA was Hendrik Fourie, who “... worked from a behaviourist, positivist perspective”. By the early 1980’s, however, the leadership of the school passed to Marthinus van Schoor, who introduced a very different paradigm to the Department:

Van Schoor [was] far more into the philosophical approaches to communication, asking ... critical questions about what is communication; focusing on the need for communication as dialogue, the essence of communication being dialogue (Fourie, 2010).

Johan De Wet, who taught at UNISA between 1983 and 1993, describes the Department of Communication as “... existentialist ... and that is where I get most of my philosophical ideas from”. He explains that the framework for the analysis of journalism was conducted primarily from a “phenomenological” perspective, drawing particularly on the contributions of scholars such as Gaye Tuchman (J De Wet, 2010).

It would seem, then, that in the 1980’s UNISA began to operate as an academic environment that was more open to the introduction of the adoption of different paradigms for the study of media. Fourie suggests that one reason for this was the fact that UNISA as a distance – education university was characterised by what was, in the South African context, a high degree of ideological diversity, with staff and students from different religious and political backgrounds. There was, therefore, “room for different perspectives” and scholars who based themselves here were able to articulate a widening range of positions with regards to the study of media (Fourie, 2010). Fourie himself was able to articulate an approach to the study of visual media based on semiotic analysis:

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<sup>63</sup> As noted in the previous chapter, the University of South Africa operated as a dual medium (Afrikaans and English) distance education university.

I was allowed to do it from my perspective, and my perspective was semiotics, in other words with the emphasis on meaning ... and – does communication contribute to meaning, and asking usually then also critical questions about what is the meaning that visual media in South Africa conveys about our society, and the nature of our society (Fourie, 2010).

He notes that he was able to encourage his students to “... look critically at the visual world around them ... what does it say ... how can it be changed, and why should it be changed”. He also found an opportunity for the development of study guides and text books which provided a more general platform from which to map a broad and diverse terrain for the study of media. He explains that, because of the philosophical influences that he brought with him from Potchefstroom, the approach that he developed in this context was based on openness to different social science paradigms. He was thus able to widen the terms of reference that were available at UNISA and within South African academic environments more generally for thinking about the media:

...what I started in the Department was the tradition ... never to push something down people's throat ... and I think that is what I kept over from ... Willem De Klerk is – expose your students to as many views as possible ... as many paradigms as possible (Fourie, 2010).

Indeed, participants who were students at UNISA all speak of it as a space in which they were given access to theoretic traditions that were of value to their engagement with journalism as a social practice. Stewart, who completed the Honours degree in Communication in 1979, notes that “... it did give one a much more analytic slant”. He confirms that the course provided him with theoretical resources for thinking about his own role as a communicator:

...it ... was a huge eye opener. Here were these models of communication. And this whole theory of all the things that one had always been doing. And – one came to a much closer understanding of what one had been up to (Stewart 2010).

For Stewart, the value of theory related particularly to its role in articulating an approach to role played by journalism in relating to social meaning:

...you always think that meanings are in words ... but you know – meanings are in people, and what ...your message does is to ... draw on those meanings from people. You've got to find people where they are. Now one had been kind of groping in that direction. But this began to give all of that a clear theoretical structure (Stewart 2010).

Berger completed the Honours degree in Communication at UNISA in 1982, during his time in jail. He states that the degree was not centrally concerned with the study of journalism, nor did it place any particular emphasis on a critical engagement with the South African political context. As such, it was not directly suited to his interests:

...it was pretty kind of weird stuff sometimes, we were doing ... theories of communication ... and not really [readings] on journalism and ... some of the stuff was very much sort of ... mainstream, quantitative versus qualitative research methodology and so on (Berger, 2010).

Berger was nevertheless able to make strategic use of his involvement in this programme to gain access to the kinds of theory that he found of value for the critical study of journalism as it existed in South Africa at this time. Like Fourie, he recognised the value of semiotics as an analytical framework for making sense of the “language of newspapers, and how form conveys content”:

I'd ... read into it because I was very interested in signs and signification ... from a political point of view ... not that the UNISA curriculum really ... was leaning in that direction, but ... it gave me a ruse to get the resources, put it that way (Berger, 2010).

Ironically, because of his imprisonment and his consequent involvement in UNISA's distance education programme, Berger was able to develop a more well-grounded understanding of the relevance of media theory to the study of South African journalism than had been possible for him, as we will see below, when he was an undergraduate student in the Department of Journalism at Rhodes University:

...it was useful from that point of view ... I hadn't taken ... a huge amount of stock, I suppose, of communications and media theory, previously, and then I did have more opportunity in this period to read into it (Berger, 2010).

Berger's and Stewart's descriptions of their experience of studying at UNISA suggest that they were able to apply the learning that they gained through coursework to their own reflection on journalistic practice. Both refer to the role that such coursework played in enabling them to articulate a conceptual language in which to talk about the construction of meaning. The programme at UNISA was, however, not centrally concerned with the study of journalism, focusing instead on media more generally, and also the wider study of communication. Teaching was clearly not designed around the critical analysis of journalistic practice in South Africa. Such analysis depended, instead, on the individual agency of students who participated in the UNISA curriculum.

### 8.2.3 Studying journalism in a critical paradigm

During the late 1970's and the 1980's, the Department of Journalism at Rhodes University stands out within participants' descriptions as a space characterised by critical engagement with the South African political context. Addison, who started lecturing in the Department in 1977, notes that it was known at this time as a “bit of a hot bed of agitation”. This was because many journalism staff and students were involved in left-wing politics both on campus and in the local community. He refers to the existence of a cabal of journalism academics who were all involved in such activity, and in this context mentions Clive Emden, Graeme Watts, Graham Hayman, Les Switzer and also Guy Berger, who had started lecturing in the Department in 1980 before he was arrested. The fact that this group was in agreement about politics did not mean, however, that they shared a cohesive approach to the teaching of journalism. This was at least partly because staff were given an “open agenda”, in which “... we could virtually do anything we wanted to do”:

I think there was a certain amount of mutual respect between all of us, but we were all going in different directions. It is quite wrong to think that there was one consolidated culture in that Department. It wasn't. We were all strongly individualist, and we all went our ways. We would agree on politics, but that is about all. And each of these individuals had his own show going ... To put it mildly, the Department was anarchic ... we didn't believe in actually following anybody's rules (Addison, 2011).

Addison notes that while some of his colleagues became involved in teaching about media theory, he was more interested in the “nitty gritty of the journalism itself”. Indeed, in participants' accounts of the Department during the years that follow there is repeated reference to academic staff involving themselves in this way in either one or another of two categories of academic work, both through teaching and research. In particular, some individuals were preoccupied with the reflective study of journalism practice, while others concerned themselves with the application of critical social theory to the study of media.

### 8.2.3.1 *Studying journalism*

The first category of work involved both teaching about the social contexts of journalism, and courses in which students were taught how to produce journalism. In both instances, such teaching was defined by its object of study – that of journalism practice – and drew eclectically on a range of sources, academic and otherwise, for frameworks of analysis or approaches to methodology. With regards to the contextual courses that formed part of such work, it is possible to identify an ongoing interest amongst staff in the study of histories of journalism, and that of traditions of journalism other than that of the American mainstream press. Addison notes, for example, that teaching about journalism as he found it at Rhodes at this time tended to draw on American textbooks, which he did not regard as reflective enough in their approach. He was not himself interested in “... down the line, straight teaching of journalism techniques” and chose instead to establish a course which traced a historical relationship between journalism and other forms of social commentary. The course made an argument for the existence of long-standing traditions both of what he called ‘crusading’ journalism, which was socially situated and politically engaged, and of journalism as a form of literary expression:

...we studied way back ... into medieval times ... we looked at media in Victorian England in particular. At Dickens, and Cobbett<sup>64</sup> ... and I related those to the Drum school of journalism in the 1950's, to the muckrakers of the American turn of the century. And that came right through to ... some of the exposes written about the Vietnam war (Addison, 2011).

Addison explains that the idea was “... to put across this notion that journalists could not stand aside and be mere observers”, and that this was a response to the exploitation by the apartheid government of rhetoric about the principle of objective journalism:

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<sup>64</sup> William Cobbett was an English journalist and writer who lived in the late 18<sup>th</sup> \ early 19<sup>th</sup> century. He is known for his critical social commentary.



The Nat government was trying to persuade [us] that the true role of a journalist was to be a stenographer that just wrote things down. Especially if they were official statements. And that under the prisons act the only statement that could be ... true... would be a statement from the prisons themselves. And anything else was a lie, and an attempt to destabilise the prisons and the state. And – you know, that was objectivity being misused to such an extent that it was certainly not objectivity. What it was was a big cover up for the sins of apartheid. So – I set myself against that (Addison, 2011).

Richards, who started her undergraduate degree at Rhodes in 1977, suggests that from a student's perspective there seemed in fact to be a general preoccupation amongst staff with the challenges of adhering to the ideals of objective journalism when reporting on the apartheid system. According to her, this was evident not so much in specific aspects of course content, but more generally "... just through the way that lecturers spoke about journalism, and its meaning, and why it was important". What Richards describes here seems similar to the process of acculturation into a paradigm of journalism that participants refer to in relation to the Honours degree at Stellenbosch University and, indeed, Potchefstroom. It may be that staff who taught journalism at Rhodes shared an investment into such a paradigm of journalism even though, as Addison had said, there was no "one consolidated culture" with regards to academic interests. Richards' comments suggest that, within the Rhodes paradigm of journalism, the social purpose of journalism was understood in normative terms:

I was very idealistic about journalism, and actually have remained so. And ...that was [something] that I got from my university, was that journalism is a kind of calling. It's like – you have to believe in it – and believe in the purity of it. And to retain that purity so that you can seek truth (Richards, 2010).

As we saw in Chapter Seven, Rumney, Stewart, Addison and Richards herself identified this notion of "truth seeking" as being central to the conceptualisation of journalism that had become established within the English liberal press in the 1970's and 1980's, particularly in context of SAAN papers [see pg 262]. Richards explains that this emphasis on "truth-seeking" was specific to that moment in the South African history, originating from a concern within the English liberal press with the implications of putting into practice, in the local context, the accepted professional guidelines of objective reporting. She distinguishes between what she refers to as an older, discredited definition of objectivity, in which it was assumed that journalists could occupy a "neutral position" from which to be "...quoting this person, quoting that person". This was recognised at Rhodes as an inadequate practice for journalism as it existed in an 'abnormal' society such as that of South Africa:

... in those days people were ... grappling with how one shows the evils of apartheid ... and you know ... whether one can do that through traditional objectivity or not, ... and that is why we were grappling [at Rhodes] with definitions of objectivity and whether we should just toss objectivity altogether ... that was a product of its time. It was a product of apartheid (Richards, 2010).

This did not mean, however, that objectivity as an ideal was in itself up for debate at Rhodes, since it was still understood as fundamental to the occupational identity of journalism, distinguishing it from public relations:



...we didn't come up with that sense of having to toss objectivity altogether but just .... define it differently in terms of 'truth seeking' ... what I took from my university was that if you toss objectivity and the government changes, what are you – you're PR (Richards, 2010).

The concept of “truth-seeking” allowed for a critique of the standard guidelines for objective reporting, while at the same time stopping short of acceptance that reporting practice is necessarily informed by political interest. Instead, the suggestion is that the question of political interest should only apply once the process of gathering evidence has been completed. The credibility of the newsgathering process still depends on the extent to which it is guided by methodological principles of ‘objective’ empirical research. One can, within such a framework, adopt a politically situated point of view in relation to a given story, as long as this perspective emerges out of this process of rigorous and objective research. This still means “putting aside your prejudices” in order to produce credible knowledge:

We looked at the fact that ... although objectivity is not possible, there are different kinds of truths. And ... the most important thing is [not to] be ... neutral ... but to try and get as close to, in inverted commas, the ‘truth’ as I could, ... through my research ... one should always try to rather find ... a way to deal with apartheid ... through good research, and ... allowing the balance of your research to lead you (Richards, 2010).

Such accounts suggest that staff at Rhodes involved in this first category of work, that of the study of journalistic practice, understood themselves as working in partnership with progressive elements in the English liberal press in order to strengthen critically engaged journalism. Stewart notes that it was because such an understanding was supported both within the Department and by Rhodes University’s leadership that his own application for a post could be successful. He explains that, at the time of his job interview in 1979, his academic qualifications were “flimsy”, which would under normal circumstances have made his employment at Rhodes unlikely. Because of his experience of progressive journalism, and because his application was endorsed by representatives of such journalism, he was nevertheless offered the position:

...’79 was the year in which the *Rand Daily Mail* and the *Sunday Express* had exposed the whole information debacle. And the two editors there – Allister Sparks and Rex Gibson ... I said to them ... would you support me ... Which was hugely powerful backing (Stewart, 2010).

In participants’ accounts of both teaching and research in this first category of work as it occurred in the 1980’s, a preoccupation with encouraging students to think critically about journalistic practice remains a constant. Pinnock notes, for example, that when he joined the Department in 1983, he became involved in research about the history of the black South African press and also established a course on this topic. He explains that this focus allowed him to expose students to approaches to journalistic practice that represented alternatives terms of reference to that of the English liberal press:

I was looking at [journalism associated with] the Communist Party and the ANC and the PAC and the old mission press ... And that followed Les Switzer's interest in [the history of the black press] ... I was trying to ... get students to understand that they had to get

beyond the commercial press ... I was trying to open up new narrative directions (Pinnock, 2010).

It would seem, however, that most staff still understood their role as that of contributing to the strengthening of a progressive mainstream press. Furthermore, even though such teaching was progressive in its intent, it tended to largely reproduce the paradigm in which mainstream journalism was based. Participants suggest that this was particularly true for the courses in which students learned how to produce journalism – which, in the mid-1980's, had expanded from an exclusive focus on print journalism to include radio and television. They point out, at the same time, that the staff involved in such teaching were also those responsible for the contextual courses, where critical engagement with mainstream practice was a defining feature. Steenveld makes this point about John Grogan, who was responsible for teaching about print journalism when she first arrived there in the mid-1980's. On one hand, Grogan presented a course that dealt with "... literary new journalism and different kinds of journalism", and as such offered students alternatives to the ideal of a journalism of objectivity. On the other hand, in his teaching of writing and editing, he adopted an implicitly positivist approach, focusing on "... the facts, and accuracy, and all the kind of .... ethics that go with that" (Steenveld, 2010). Amner, who completed the undergraduate programme between 1987 and 1989, makes a similar statement about Charles Riddle, who, he explains, was responsible both for a course in the Sociology of News and for teaching about writing and editing. Amner notes that the Sociology of News course allowed him to reconsider his own assumptions about the nature of journalism and to look more critically at examples of South African journalism:

I remember being very discomfited by [that course and its focus on] ... texts like *Deciding What's News* by Herbert Gans, I remember reading that, and ... feeling very excited by it, because I ... found it challenging and interesting and I remember ... watching ... SABC broadcasts through the lens of texts like that (Amner, 2010).

In his approach to the writing and editing modules, Riddle nevertheless reverted to the language of fairness and balance associated with 'professional' journalism:

...it was very much the kind of journalism you would produce in ... the United States, or the UK ... There was the ... hegemonic ideas around professional practice, of balance [and so on]... (Amner, 2010).

Amner explains that his own education about the production of print journalism occurred in context of the student press rather than in the journalism courses that he took part in. Students based at campus newspapers affiliated to SASPU (the South African Student Press Union) benefited from the role that this organisation played in teaching their members basic journalism skills. They were also, in context of such teaching, drawn into the journalistic culture that SASPU promoted, which was strongly defined by political purpose. Amner notes that *Rodeo*, the student newspaper at Rhodes, was left-wing in its orientation, on a campus on which the majority of students were conservative. Working for this paper, Amner became versed in the subtleties of engaging with such audiences around political issues without actively alienating them (Amner, 2010):

There was real strategic thinking about the kind of journalism that was being produced; how it would be produced, but also more importantly, how it would be presented to what we understood to be a relatively hostile audience of middleclass white students ... And we therefore needed to think in very strategic ... ways about how that material would ... slowly change people's minds, and pull them kicking and screaming ... into ... profound social-political transformation (Amner 2010).

Amner does not, however, suggest that the approach adopted in writing and editing courses in the Department of Journalism and Media Studies was an unquestioning reproduction of the rhetoric of objective reporting. He proposes that the treatment of objectivity was “more post-positivist than positivist” in nature, so that “... there wasn't a naivety around ... representing reality in [an] indexical relationship”. At the same time, such coursework did not allow for transformation of the existing paradigm of mainstream news, but focused rather on a form of ‘paradigm repair’, making adjustments to it. Like Richards a decade earlier, Amner explains that this was a historically specific response to the conditions under which journalism operated in South Africa. This was true not only of teaching about writing and editing, but also for the Sociology of News course:

Because we were in a situation of obvious inequality and oppression, the critique of the mainstream press was allowable to a certain extent ... we needed to transcend ... that current moment, so ... Sociology of News was obviously needed, we needed to transcend the strictures and the limitations of that moment... (Amner, 2010).

From the late 1970's onward, then, there seems to have been a sustained interest within the first category of academic work (that of studying journalism) in preparing students to play a role in strengthening critical tendencies within the South African journalistic landscape. Amner argues, however, that such interest did not amount to a commitment to a transformation of this landscape:

We needed to be reflexive, ... but I think there were limits ... the Sociology of News thing was ... taught ... with an idea in mind that mainstream media practice needed to be reformed rather than radically overhauled ... (Amner, 2010).

Objectivity could, in other words, be “played with a little bit”, but only insofar as it enabled the mainstream paradigm to accommodate a critique of the South African political context:

It was really ... about political position – you are allowed to be anti-apartheid, but you are not allowed to let go of fairness, balance, multiperspectivalism – the methodology of mainstream professional practice (Amner, 2010).

Amner also argues that, in order to make sense of these limitations it should be understood that the analysis of South African society that informed teaching about journalism in the department was that of a fairly conservative form of liberalism:

I think there was a ... dominant position that needed to be opposed, and I think that was the liberal ... press position ... as well ... but I mean there is a big difference between the PFP opposition to apartheid, and ... a ... national democratic revolution ... opposition (Amner, 2010).

Significantly, the assumption then also remained that the department existed to prepare graduates for employment in the English liberal press rather than for work in alternative traditions of journalism.

This despite the fact that, by the late 1980's, such journalism had become a crucial feature of the South African media landscape:

...we weren't being taught Sociology of News so that we could go and join *Grassroots* in Cape Town or ... for that matter ... Radio Freedom ... *New Nation* ... we were being primed for ... a mainstream press that took pride in its anti-apartheid stance, but nevertheless held onto some of those hegemonic ideas about professional practice (Amner, 2010).

It may be that the university leadership's support of strategies that strengthened the Department's alliance with the more progressive elements within the mainstream press was informed by the fact that this still represented an association with a fairly containable form of political critique. Steenveld notes, in this respect, that although Stewart had been employed by the University because of the "kudos" he brought with him due to his association with the *Rand Daily Mail*, he was also seen as "safe" Head of Department. His employment was, in her estimation, an attempt to "... stop the damaging things that happened in Les [Switzer]'s time" (Steenveld, 2010).

From these descriptions, it is clear that teaching about journalism included a focus on academic knowledge which allowed for a critical analysis of journalistic practice. Such courses existed, however, in separation from those that focused on teaching students how to produce journalism. The suggestion is, furthermore, that their existence was motivated not by the need for a fundamental questioning of mainstream conventions of journalism. Instead, critical analysis was necessitated by the 'abnormal' conditions in which such practice existed within the South African context. Within production-driven courses, in turn, the treatment of guidelines for journalistic practice did include a degree of critical reflection on the standard guidelines for objective reporting. As such, they can be seen to echo a similar process of questioning that was taking place in context of progressive newspapers. The focus within these newspapers and at Rhodes was not, however, on a fundamental questioning of these guidelines, but rather on strategies of adjustment, that would ensure their continued credibility. It could be argued, then, that, like the functionalist tradition in journalism education, this approach operated in service of existing approaches to journalism, rather than being geared towards their transformation.

#### 8.2.3.2 *Studying media*

Whereas the first category of research and teaching was defined by journalism as its object of study, the second was driven by an interest in traditions of theory that allowed staff within the department to lay claim to a disciplinary identity. This interest operated not only on an individual level, but also as part of the department's claim to a status of academic legitimacy within the university environment. Participants suggest that it was particularly through an association with critical theory that the department attempted to achieve this goal. Berger, who was an undergraduate student in the journalism programme between 1975 and 1977, notes that an exposure to critical theory was already central to students' experience of the department at this time:

...the stuff we were exposed to in Journalism ... was those particular brands of Marxism that at that point were relevant to understanding media issues and in particular looking at stuff like Ralph Miliband and Gramsci ... (Berger, 2010).

Through such theory, the programme offered students a reflective language in which to make sense of South African political context – and as part of this to offer explanations of “... how the ruling class rules and hegemony and so on”. Reference to Althusser, particularly his discussion of ideological state apparatuses, allowed for an examination of the role played by media in reproducing relations of power (Berger, 2010). Berger also refers to a growing interest in the concept of “relative autonomy”, which allows one to recognise that relations of domination are not purely about a “conspiracy of the owners” (Berger, 2010). The implication of this was that journalism, and media more generally, could become an important site of resistance to the forces of the state:

...then you began to recognise, well actually, it's not a conspiracy of the owners, because media has got its own dynamics ... this was not just a tool of the ruling class ... you could actually do something. And then Stuart Hall ... in about 1980 started writing about the media as a site of struggle. So that ... crystallised some of this thinking, that you could actually... go and contest things within there (Berger, 2010).

Journalistic practice can, in other words, be seen to be characterised by its own internal preoccupations, which cannot be wholly explained by the interests of the ruling class. These relate, for example, to the maintenance of professional identity, and with this a commitment both to the normative ideals of journalism and to the fashioning of news into a saleable product (Berger, 2010). It is, as we have seen earlier in this chapter, exactly this set of concerns that characterises the journalistic paradigm that students in Afrikaans journalism education programmes were traditionally introduced to. It is also what Diederichs described as the tenets that were taught ‘on the job’ to new journalists; “... all the old kind of things that you would learn ... the basic traits [of] get the news first, and get it accurately”. A recognition of the ‘relative autonomy’ of this paradigm would, presumably, allow for a more reflective and critical approach to teaching about such practice.

In Berger's estimation, however, the approach to critical theory in the Department of Journalism at Rhodes could not compare to that which was offered to him in context of Political Studies, his other major subject. It was this coursework that provided him with the more thorough grounding in the broad philosophical underpinnings of social theory, and the application of Marxist theory to the critical analysis of society:

...I got exposed to the real ideas – and those were big ideas about society as a whole – which was, you know, various debates in Marxism. [Of] which ... the superstructure, ideology and so on is just one part (Berger, 2010).

This was in contrast to the approach within the Journalism Department, which remained limited in scope by its focus on concepts that were of direct relevance to the study of media:

...that was like a smaller part within the whole ... it just seemed that [it was] quite light weight, compared to the big picture of Political Studies, you know? ... With the big picture one was reading political philosophy ... in a broad sense ... models of base and

superstructure and all that sort of thing – in Journalism ... it was narrower, it wasn't as challenging (Berger, 2010).

This was one reason why Berger, once he had completed his undergraduate degree in 1977, opted for an Honours degree in Political Studies rather than continuing as a postgraduate student in the Department of Journalism.

The participants suggest, nevertheless, that in the years that followed the Department of Journalism became increasingly invested in critical theory as a reflective language for the study of media. In Chapter Six, we saw that one indicator of this was the adoption, in 1979, of the expanded title of 'Journalism *and Media Studies*', which had been facilitated by Switzer as Head of Department. Stewart notes that, by the time he took up his post at Rhodes in 1980, a focus on critical theory had come to define the Department's official identity. It was, Stewart explains, an identity that contrasted sharply with that of the Department of Communication at UNISA, where he had just completed his Honours degree. As he explains, at Rhodes "... one then jumped into a much ... deeper theoretical pond", in which there was a particular emphasis on critical theory:

I suppose the thing about Rhodes is that the ... influence of the more radical thinkers ... was suddenly there. Suddenly we were talking about Gramsci and a whole lot of other ... theorists ... who were ... way to the left of some of the people we were dealing with at UNISA ... so that introduced a whole new dimension into the debate – the whole notion of ideology, and what that is ... Now we touched on that at UNISA – but at Rhodes it was the central thing (Stewart, 2010).

Tomaselli argues that the administrative leadership of Rhodes University encouraged such attempts at strengthening disciplinary identity because they hoped that this would "bring stability back" into a department that had become "chaotic" and "fractured" because of the political activities of its staff. He suggests that this informed his own appointment in 1981 as a replacement for Berger. The university authorities saw in him someone who would be serious about the establishment of a coherent academic identity within the department, one that would serve the interests of the academy:

I think one of the reasons why I got the job was because ... I didn't present myself as ... a subverter of everything that the university took seriously. I ... had already begun to develop a research output ... there was an academic project behind my practice (Tomaselli, 2011).

There seems, at the same time, to be some questions about the extent to which critical theory offered the department an opportunity to achieve academic legitimacy in the eyes of the University's leadership. Steenveld suggests that it was the mainstream sociological background of someone like John Grogan that appealed more to this constituency:

I think that in some ways that gave a sense of ... academic solidity and rigour to the department, whereas the Marxist criticism and critique ... was seen as woolly social theory ... by the powers that be within the University (Steenveld, 2010).

By the time Pinnock joined the department in 1983, the staff component had changed dramatically. He notes that although many journalism students were politically involved, he found "remarkably



few” journalism academics who were “... remotely interested in political stuff at that time”. Pinnock explains that this did not mean that staff were disinterested in South African politics, but rather that they avoided direct engagement with their immediate social context. According to him, his own interest in such social engagement was not encouraged, either by his colleagues in the department or by the university authorities. This, he says, was because of an association with the political activities of previous members of staff:

They left before I came. So there was this legacy of these dangerous people who had now left. And then I came along and then there was another dangerous person ... there was a ... sense in the department that that was a bit much ... and we must get back to the business of being, you know, lecturers ... I can't really say that I was getting much support in the department for an attempt to understand what was going on outside (Pinnock, 2010).

Pinnock identifies a shift amongst staff away from attempts to “understand what was going on outside”, and towards the articulation of disciplinary identity for the study of media in South Africa. A key theoretical term of reference, as he remembers it, was scholarship drawn from the “Birmingham” school of Cultural Studies. Pinnock explains that he had read into this tradition of scholarship himself, and that he “... really appreciated [the] stuff and ... loved the intellectual rigour that was going on”. He nevertheless questioned whether such scholarship was of significance to the South African political situation:

Everybody was getting their information from overseas ... and it had [no] relevance at the end of the day, in my estimation ... it ... didn't really connect with what I saw was going on outside the door of the office, in the streets. It was useful [academically] but kind of rarified (Pinnock, 2010).

In fact, in Pinnock’s estimation, the ‘critical turn’ in the Department signalled a reaction against the difficulties of social engagement, and with this a withdrawal into the sanctuary offered by the academic work:

...my impression of the people in the department was that they were retreating into an academic space which was non-controversial and comfortable and then they could kind of become the experts in that field but I wasn't quite sure the relevance it had to what I saw was an unfolding revolution (Pinnock, 2010).

Amner, in contrast, notes that as a student in the late 1980’s it was exactly the courses dealing with Cultural Studies that seemed politically relevant to him. He also suggests that it was such political relevance that distinguished these courses from those dealing with the production of journalism:

I didn't do terribly well in my Journ class – well, in my prac classes .... the Cultural Studies dimension of the curriculum appealed to me and spoke to me in terms of my political agenda, I guess ... more powerfully than some of the production courses I was taking (Amner, 2010).

Other participants also speak more positively than Pinnock about the growing emphasis in the department on academic rigour and investment in disciplinary identity. It is suggested that, because of this shift, the department had become uniquely positioned as a space in which it was possible to



establish the foundations for a vigorous South African tradition of media studies. Tomaselli notes that it was this that had convinced him to take up a post in the department when he was “head hunted” by Switzer. At this time, he and his wife, Ruth Teer-Tomaselli, were “...working up a political economy analysis of the South African media, and we were looking for places in which to interact with other like minded scholars”. The department offered a space in which he could find such colleagues (Tomaselli, 2010). Steenveld also speaks of the department as a space in which she found unique opportunities for establishing her own expertise in the field of media studies. She explains that she came to Rhodes in 1984 to complete a Higher Diploma in Journalism, in the “first or second year that they offered it”. Her original motivation for doing so had been as a “... career move into journalism ... that was going to be my trajectory”. The aspects of the diploma that captured her interest had, however, less to do with the study of journalism than with an induction into a critical language for the general study of media. Of central importance was Steenveld’s exposure to semiotics, in context of a course on film studies taught by Tomaselli, which she describes as a “major lightbulb moment”. She recognised in semiotics a formal mode of critique which enabled her to operationalise the theoretical concepts to which she had been exposed at Cambridgeshire, so that she was now able to articulate an “... approach to critique as a practice”:

I had never encountered semiotics before. [It] made perfect and absolute sense to me. Because it gave me a framework for all the kinds of critiques that I'd had of texts before ... my analysis had always been in the abstract, and in a general sense ... whereas semiotics gives you access to a much more detailed textual critique (Steenveld, 2010).

When Tomaselli left Rhodes in 1985, Steenveld was offered his post, and in this capacity took over his teaching in film studies. This came to represent her “main work” during her first years in the Department, when she expanded film studies from a single first year course to modules offered in each year of the undergraduate degree and also at a postgraduate level (Steenveld, 2010).

It would seem from this that media studies as it existed within the journalism education curriculum at Rhodes came to focus on the study of visual media texts. In addition, with regards to the establishment of synergies between such teaching and the production courses, there seemed to be almost an exclusive focus on partnerships with television. Steenveld notes that she contributed to a course on video production, collaborating on this with Larry Strelitz who had been appointed to teach in the department at the same time as her as a television lecturer. She explains that the course did not deal with the television journalism, and was, instead, conceptualised around “community production”:

So it was very much about alternative media ... we were very conscious at that time that we had resources here, which community organisations didn't have, and ... we would make our resources available to [them] ... and ... the students were paired with community organisations, and they would find out what their issues and needs were, and they would make programmes for [and] with them (Steenveld, 2010).

Amner refers to his own participation in this course as an undergraduate student as one of the most valuable learning experiences of his degree. He and fellow students were partnered with the Border

Rural Committee, a “... group of elders in Kwelera, outside East London” with whom they collaborated to produce a documentary. The end result was not technically impressive:

It was ... an appalling television production ... I mean it was incredibly lacking in ... professionalism in inverted commas. Aesthetically it was very dull. It was badly shot, it was – well, we tried, you know. But it was a disaster, from a mainstream documentary ... point of view (Amner, 2010).

Amner explains, however, that the documentary nevertheless was of value to the Kwelera community, “... as a record of the knowledge that those elders had, of their political history”. He suggests that Strelitz “... really didn’t care about the fact that the production was awful”. For both Strelitz and Amner, the importance of the assignment had more to do with the way in which the process of production impacted on those involved. Viewed in this way, the production was, to Amner, profoundly significant:

It was an ... important piece, ... from the point of view of developing the consciousness of the people there ... It was ... important for us to actually be party to all of this stuff ... to translate [it] and to realise what we were dealing with ... it was an incredibly powerful political experience, ... even for someone like me who was politically knowledgeable, relatively speaking ... really the process was more important than the product. And I think I always carried that with me (Amner, 2010).

Steenveld talks of such teaching as being of particular significance both to staff and students, because of the high degree of investment in the processes of learning that were taking place:

There was a point to it all, and ... they grew enormously, in terms of maturity and all of that stuff. You know – because of their relationship [to the course], and the seriousness, because the stakes were high. You know? (Steenveld, 2010).

Although neither Steenveld nor Amner note that such courses were directly informed by scholarship drawn from Cultural Studies, it is nevertheless of interest that both Steenveld and Strelitz were strongly invested in this field. This can, perhaps, be seen to throw some doubt on Pinnock’s argument that such staff were involved in a wholesale retreat from social engagement.

It may be, however, that the strong investment of staff in Cultural Studies as a field made engagement with certain sectors of society more difficult. Stewart proposes, in this respect, that the ‘centrality’ of this field to the identity of the department impacted negatively on its relationship with the mainstream South African press. He speaks, in particular, about the English liberal press, as the community of journalistic practice with which the teaching programme was most closely associated. According to Stewart, the Department “... had got a little overwhelmed by the Cultural Studies debates – it was always on the platforms ... shouting the odds politically”. This he suggests, tended to alienate mainstream English newspapers, who were in fact a “rather conservative bunch”, with very little in the way of a track record of “[putting up] information which did damage to the Nationalist cause”. Papers such as the *Rand Daily Mail* were the exception to this rule, but even to them, the critical language adopted within the department held very little relevance. Stewart argues that these

papers were “engaged in a different kind of fight” to that of the media studies academics. The English liberal press defined this fight in terms of an analysis of race rather than that of class:

The *Rand Daily Mail*, the kind of enlightened journalists if you want to call them that – ... at that stage it was primarily a racial issue. It wasn't so much an ideological issue, at the level of what sort of economic system sometimes (Stewart, 2010).

It may be, then, that the department's investment in critical theory limited its ability to work with journalistic communities to develop a shared language of critical reflection.

It would also seem that this second category of academic work did not concern itself any more than the first with a radical reconceptualisation of journalistic practice. Steenveld suggests that one reason for this was that South African journalism was equated, in the department, with news reporting as it existed in the mainstream press and the SABC. Staff involved in media studies rejected the assumption that their responsibility was that of preparing students for work in these spaces because they regarded them as irredeemably compromised by collusion with the apartheid state. Steenveld speaks, at the same time, of a disconnect between the study of media in the department and traditions of newspaper journalism that represented alternatives to that of the mainstream press. One reason for this appeared to have been the growing tendency, referred to above, for media studies to be identified with the study of film and television. Steenveld's comments about this are made in context her own research interests, but they seem of general relevance to trends in the department as a whole. She explains that it was because, at this time, her theoretical interests had “... veered ... towards visual media” that she did not engage with the alternative press:

Obviously concurrently there was the alternative press. That was ... the moment of the alternative press movement, but my engagement wasn't with them, but with the alternative visual media (Steenveld, 2010).

It would seem that both Steenveld and other staff who concerned themselves with the application of critical theory to the study of media were strongly invested, due to their disciplinary interests, in teaching and research about non-journalistic visual media. For this reason, their teaching and research did not involve a sustained empirical investigation of journalistic practice.

The participants' description of teaching concerned with critical theory and its relevance to the study of media suggests that this coursework defined its relationship with journalism practice as one of critical distance. This relationship was informed by the argument that the South African mainstream press of this time was fundamentally compromised by its approach to the production of social knowledge. The relationship of critique was not, then, understood to be one of close engagement, in order to articulate an alternative purpose for reporting practice within such journalism. Such processes of engagement did form part of this tradition of teaching, particularly in the context of 'alternative' media production. These courses did not, however, focus on alternative approaches to newspapers, despite the fact that they were, at this stage, the primary domain of alternative

journalism. At Rhodes, then, the application of critical theory to the study of media did not result in a sustained tradition of critical engagement with either alternative or mainstream journalistic practice.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter examined the participants' observations with regards to the relationship that existed, in the period between the 1960's and the 1980's, between South African university-based journalism education and different traditions of journalistic practice. The examination paid particular attention to the two approaches to journalism that the participants described in Chapter Seven as being typical of the 1960's and 1970's – the journalism of 'open bias', and of 'truth and courage'. It also took into consideration the references in that chapter to the articulation in the 1980's of a third approach, that defined itself in terms of in-depth and socially situated research. It was proposed that although the first two approaches defined their own purpose in terms of political interest, this co-existed, in each case, with a strong identification with guidelines for objective reporting. The third approach, in contrast, did not define its own credibility in relation to the ideal of objectivity, but rather that of commitment to particular social agendas. The chapter considered the extent to which South African journalism education can be seen to have engaged with these traditions, and to have acknowledged the processes of internal contestation that characterised them.

It would seem, from the account that emerges, that the production-driven or 'vocational' components of such programmes understood their own purpose primarily as that of preparing students to work within either of the first two of these traditions of practice. Within Afrikaans programmes, the teaching of such modules were defined in relation to the Afrikaans press, and therefore by implication with the journalism of 'open bias'. At Rhodes, as the one example of an English journalism education programme, production-based teaching involved a partnership with newspapers that were based in the tradition of 'truth and courage'. In both cases, practical teaching focused on introducing students to principles of objective reporting, which were understood to represent prescriptive guidelines for how journalism should ideally be practiced. This was not accompanied, however, by critical engagement with journalism as it was actually practiced in the South African mainstream press. There is, firstly, no indication that Afrikaans programmes included a critique of the journalism of 'open bias'. At Rhodes, there was acknowledgement and support of the journalism of 'truth and courage', but again, little attempt to critique its foundational assumptions. Such teaching also continued to understand its own purpose as preparation for work within the mainstream press, rather than operating in support of alternative journalism. As such, the Rhodes programme did not result in an acknowledgement of the third approach to journalistic practice that emerged in these spaces: that of in-depth and socially situated research that enabled journalists to transcend the limitations of a 'white' world view.

A limited approach to critical engagement can also be identified within the academic components of students' professional coursework. Within Afrikaans programmes, the academic study

of journalism, like the teaching of practice, did not serve as a process of critical engagement with journalism practice. Instead, the focus was on a critique of external context, focusing on the way this could be seen to restrict journalism practice, particularly with regards to regulatory systems around press freedom. At Rhodes, academic courses did include a focus on the critique of journalistic practice, but such teaching existed in separation from the practical preparation of students for newsroom environments. Critical analysis was, therefore, not geared towards the transformation of mainstream journalism practice. All of these examples of journalism education tended to exist, then, in a relationship of instrumental service with the mainstream press. Their engagement with the generational conflict that characterised these environments can, furthermore, be seen to have served the interests of management, in the maintenance of the role that journalism played in reproducing a 'white' perspective on South African society.

In reflecting on the significance of this assessment, it is of value to consider James Carey's comments about the relationship between journalism education and –practice that has existed in the American instance. In Chapter Four, we saw that Carey argues that the history of such education has been at least partly motivated by an interest in the "domestication" or "disciplining" of reporters who challenged a conservative newsroom culture. American journalism education is understood, in this analysis, to have operated as a mechanism for asserting control over new generations of reporters, assimilating them into existing paradigms of journalism. Such education formed part, then, of the systems of control that Schudson refers to, through which the American press managed processes of internal conflict around guidelines for objectivity that characterised the acculturation of new generations of journalists. Its core purpose can also be described in terms of the conceptualisation of the 'professional' that Hallin and Mancini describe, which is informed by an interest in the effective operation of systems of newsroom management rather than a commitment to public service and democratisation.

The participants' comments, in this chapter, suggest that South African journalism education can be described in similar terms. This is true even in the case of Rhodes University, where such education became closely associated with Cultural Studies and the critical study of media more generally. The partnership within this programme between journalism education and critical theory was motivated by a politics of resistance, and a commitment to social transformation. The participants' account of journalism education at Rhodes during this period nevertheless suggest that the role that Cultural Studies or critical theory could have played in the transformation of journalistic practice in this country was not realised. Instead, the history of teaching within this programme, as it existed in the 1980's, can be seen to represent a missed opportunity for the articulation of a critically engaged tradition in university-based journalism education.

## CHAPTER NINE: JOURNALISM EDUCATION FROM THE 1990'S AND 2000'S

### Introduction

This chapter focuses on university-based journalism education in South Africa from the 1990's onwards. It deals, as part of this, with the participants' observation about the ways in which different examples of journalism education adjusted to changes that were taking place in their social context during this time. As in the previous chapter, the discussion focusses on the participants' comments about relationships that came to exist between historically situated examples of journalism education and traditions of journalistic practice. It deals, again, with the role played in the articulation of these relationships by the interaction between the categories of knowledge that were included in the 'professional' components of curricula. The focus is therefore, once more, on such interaction as it applies to prescriptive guidelines for journalistic practice, and academic knowledge concerned with the study of journalism. There is, as part of this, an emphasis on the way such interaction was framed by the approach adopted within each of these categories of knowledge to the ideal of objectivity versus acknowledgement of the social construction of meaning.

This discussion deals, firstly with the location of South African university-based journalism education within the international history of such teaching during this period in history. It was noted, in Chapter Five, that from the 1990's onwards the global expansion of journalism education was no longer patterned to the same extent on the American example. Instead, this history was framed by global circumstances in the conceptualisation of authoritative knowledge. This next chapter traces the location of the South African history of journalism education within these broader patterns. The chapter focuses, at the same time, on the impact of more local developments in the history of authoritative social knowledge on South African journalism education. It pays close attention, as part of this, to the participants' understanding of the way different examples of journalism education adapted to the implications of teaching in a post-apartheid context. It also deals with the participants' own understanding of these implications, and the contributions that they made through their own work to ensure the adjustment of journalism education to a changing social context.

The discussion is structured around three phases that the participants identify, in Chapter Seven, within the process of transition from apartheid to democracy. As such, Section One deals with the years leading up to the first democratic elections in 1994 and the period immediately afterwards, which the participants describe as a time of 'freedom coming'. Section Two, which is referred to by the participants as a period of 'reconstruction', is represented by the years of the 1990's and the turn of the century. This is generally understood by the participants to be a time in which the foundations of democratic society were articulated in South Africa. Section Three focuses on the first decade of the new millennium and is described as a period of 'new hegemony' in which new relationships of power were established in South African society.



## 9.1 Freedom Coming: The early to mid-1990's

Addison explains that his return to tertiary education, in the early 1990's, was directly related to political events at this time. He notes that he had chosen during the 1980's to distance himself both from journalism practice and journalism education, because of what he experienced as a conservative political culture in newspapers and universities. Now, however, he was encouraged by signs that South Africa would soon become a democratic society:

February the second I think it was 1990 ... De Klerk stood up in parliament and freed Mandela. That was a big change for me, I thought oh boy, great, now this is the chance, I'm going to go back into journalism (Addison, 2010).

He had, by this stage, become involved in some "freelance training" at the Department of Journalism of Technikon Natal. Now he accepted an offer of fulltime employment in this programme, seeing this as an opportunity to contribute to South Africa's future through the preparation of young journalists. Addison explains that he was particularly attracted to this institution because it provided him with the opportunity to work with black students:

The big draw card for Technikon Natal was it was the only technikon that right through the eighties ... had allowed black students. They had a majority of black student journalists. That was really attractive. Because I'd realised long ago, that ... the country really needed black journalists ... that was a wonderful opportunity (Addison, 2010).

He saw his own knowledge of politically situated journalism (which he referred to in the previous chapter as 'crusading' journalism) and his exposure to 'black' political perspectives as being of relevance to the task of preparing these students to work as journalists in a new South Africa:

... with all the background I now had, with all the understanding of the *Drum* school of journalism, and of activist journalism ... and having been [a journalist covering the Soweto Uprisings] ...and having researched Black Consciousness ... I put it all together and I said to myself this is a moment in the country's history where my skills are needed, and I'll go out there and I'll do what I can (Addison, 2011).

Over the next few years, Addison "... trained a generation of first rate journalists", many of whom would become "top journalists". It would seem, however, that he did not draw extensively on the areas of knowledge that he refers to above. He claims that he was now, in fact, interested in a form of teaching that stood in opposition to the approach that he had adopted while at Rhodes University in the 1980's. We saw, in the previous chapter, that at Rhodes he had avoided teaching "down the line, straight ... journalism techniques" in favour of a more reflective, historicised study of journalism. Now, at Technikon Natal, his interest was purely in technical competence:

...for the first time in my life I found myself actually enjoying teaching straight reporting. Straight journalism. Just the techniques of going out there and getting a story and writing it quickly for the media (Addison, 2010).

It would seem that Addison had returned to his original position that he held when he first came to university, that the teaching of journalism was by its very nature contrary to the core purpose of higher education [see pg 291]. He did so, it would seem, on the assumption that he was now teaching



journalism in a social context that was no longer defined by the ‘abnormality’ of the apartheid system and existed, instead, as a democracy. As we have seen, his assumption as an undergraduate student was that an academic education is necessarily concerned with the development of critical consciousness, while journalism was essentially a “technical subject”. While at Rhodes University, he did in fact commit himself to an ‘academic’ and self-reflective approach to journalism education. Then, at Natal Technikon, as he explains, he was “... very keen to see journalism training really focused on the technikons because I thought that's where it belonged”. Addison’s supposition, in arguing for technikon-based training seems to be that in such environments the focus is not on the teaching of academic knowledge. He suggests that he was, by this stage, also convinced of the general irrelevance of traditions of critical scholarship to which he had become exposed at Rhodes, as a conceptual framework for thinking about journalism. The one exception, in his view, was the study of “political economy”, which allows journalists to understand the “structure of the media”, and also “how newsrooms operate” (Addison, 2011).

It may be that Addison’s rejection of academic knowledge about media, and his argument for focusing only on technical competence, was related to the fact that journalism was now supposedly no longer being taught to students who were being prepared for work in an “abnormal” society. As we have seen in the previous chapter, some participants suggest that a more “critical” consideration of guidelines for reporting practice became possible at Rhodes exactly because journalism was seen to be operating in an abnormal social context. The promise of “freedom coming” may have meant, for Addison, that these guidelines could again apply, without needing to be subjected to the scrutiny of critical analysis. Addison explains, in fact, that it only made sense to him to be involved in technical teaching such as this as long as he was working with a majority of ‘black’ students. By 1993, however, Natal Technikon was cutting back on resources, including student stipends, which Addison explains was “... going to hurt our black training in particular”. He saw little point in teaching under these conditions. It would seem that, for him, the “down the line” teaching of “straight technique” could only contribute to the broad project of preparing journalists for work in the new South Africa if the students that he was preparing were black South Africans.

Motsaathebe and Pretorius are the only research participants who were involved as students in undergraduate journalism education during the early and mid-1990’s. They, like Addison, also focus strongly on a critique of the role played by academic knowledge in the preparation of journalists. They experienced journalism education as it was taught at Potchefstroom and the University of Bophutatswana respectively. Their assessments of the role played by academic knowledge within the teaching of journalism in these programmes are in some ways similar, but also differ in important ways. As explained in the previous chapter, both of these participants found great value in the ideas to which they were exposed in the liberal arts component of the BA degrees that they completed, respectively, in Potchefstroom between 1989 and 1991 and at the University of Bophutatswana between 1993 and 1996 [see pg 255 - 258]. Because of such exposure, Pretorius grew preoccupied

with conceptualising the role that she would play, as a journalist, within a newly democratic South Africa. She drew for such reflection on the theoretical traditions to which she had been introduced in her Political Science classes. At the same time, she referred to the ideal of “objective” journalism which, she explains, was “pervasive” to the professional component of her studies. She explains that, although later she would start thinking more critically about this ideal, she was able at that stage to incorporate an idealisation of objectivity into a critical response to the Afrikaans press and its explicit support of the apartheid government. In this way, prompted by the critical consciousness that she developed in context of the liberal arts component of her studies, she applied the principles that she gained from journalism education to a critique of the journalism of ‘open bias’:

...you're not attached ... you're not the spokesperson for the Nats like, you know, *Die Burger* was. That ... removes journalism from that ... framework into something new (Pretorius, 2010).

For Pretorius, then, journalistic objectivity represented an important guideline for reporting practice that contribute to democracy in the ‘new’ South Africa, in contrast to what she thought of as the “lapdog” journalism of Afrikaans Nationalism.

She explains, however, that there was very little that was memorable about the knowledge to which she was introduced in communications-related teaching offered at Potchefstroom. All three years of the undergraduate programme were focused on Mass Communications, while training in guidelines for journalism practice, and particularly writing, only became a strong focus in the final year. The problem was, she explains, that the academic content of this course seemed of very little relevance to “... somebody who was interested in politics and journalism”:

I experienced it to be very ... theoretical, you know ... but not related in any way to ... what was happening in the country and what the media was doing at that point ... I think ... the way it was presented then ... in particular up to your third year – it was ... dead theorists, you know, that you were exposed to (Pretorius, 2010).

Pretorius explains that although she can now see the value of the academic study of communication, at that point the general perception in her class was that “... you had to study for three years before you get to interesting stuff” – that is, training in the art of journalistic writing (Pretorius, 2010).

Motsaathebe is much more positive in his evaluation of the role that media-related academic knowledge played in his learning about journalism at university. He explains that the undergraduate communications programme at the University of Bophutatswana contained a broad spectrum of traditions of academic study drawn both from Mass Communications scholarship and Media Studies, and including critical theory:

Marxism, and ... the theory of hegemony in particular ... that talks about issues of ownership and control ... But also feminist theory ... theories of representation, agenda setting – and of course a range of methodologies ... such as discourse analysis, and quantitative analysis that deals with content in the media, and ... issues of representation (Motsaathebe, 2010).

Also in contrast to Pretorius, he describes the learning gained in context of his Communications course as continuous with that which took place in the liberal arts component of his undergraduate degree. The traditions of thought on which the professional component of his coursework was based were also present within his other majors, so that ideas and debates translated with ease between the different components of his degree:

It ... [gave] me a certain ... view of ... the same issues ... that ... we had been grappling with [elsewhere]. But when I move over to attend another class ... I would be able to see this very same issue... [I could] ... make a connection in that, and realise that actually ... this issue is multi-dimensional ... (Motsaathebe, 2010).

It is possible that Pretorius's disaffection with the academic component of the communications programme at Potchefstroom had to do with the absence of critical traditions of scholarship within the curriculum at this time.

Motsaathebe's experience of the Honours Degree that he completed on the Potchefstroom campus of the University of the North West in 1997 was also a continuation of the learning that he gained in his undergraduate studies:

...it was very useful because they exposed me to ... theories of mass communication ... which are very important ... and also ... it gave me a thorough grounding in research, and I did ... several courses which were also very useful, such as semiotics, discourse analysis, and all those I deem ... as very critical to deepening one's understanding of issues in the world around you (Motsaathebe, 2010).

It was nevertheless, Motsaathebe explains, in this Honours year that he began to reflect more critically on his own understanding of journalism as a form of knowledge. Long before university, while still at high school, he had determined that he would become a journalist. He explains that, at this time, he was critical of mainstream journalism and, like Pretorius, he expressed this critique in terms of the ideal of journalistic objectivity. He came to understand the appropriate role of media "... as giving people ... facts ... objective information ... that was my understanding of journalism". This was, however, not the journalism that he observed in the mainstream press and "government media":

I realised that at the time ... it was not really ... about objective information ... I [understood] that... journalism ... is not ... about taking ... sides ... it is about ... laying bare the facts, as they were, you know (Mootshatebe, 2010).

It was through this "laying bare of facts" that Mootshatebe saw his journalism contributing to society. In his Honours year, however, he found that he "... started to look at issues a little bit ... differently" because he was able to engage at a deeper level with the application of academic knowledge to social analysis than had been possible before. Marxist theory was, to him, of particular significance to placing social analysis within a historical frame:

...why I say so is for me at the time it resonated with my immediate environment – with the situation in South Africa at the time. Because Marx seemed to articulate more clearly ideas about class, race, and to a certain extent gender as well ... it helped me to understand issues of transition, like for example from colonialism to apartheid, from

apartheid to post apartheid South Africa, and why certain issues were the way they were ... (Motsaathebe, 2010).

Motsaathebe explains, however, that the importance of the critical analysis of history applied at an even deeper level, to the historically specific nature of social analysis itself. His discussion of this process can be seen to operate at the level of a ‘World Three’ analysis of the history of academic knowledge:

...the feeling when you get exposed to some of these ... theories for the first time as a student, you know; the excitement when you begin [to grasp] – so oh, ... this was actually the idea, this was the thinking ... but also ... you always get the sense that even theories themselves ... they were also exposed to some sort of theories before them, and the theories in their work were shaped, obviously by the circumstances, the experiences, the context at the time (Motsaathebe, 2010).

The experience, described above, of moving between different courses and thus being exposed to multiple theoretical frameworks helped to shape this ‘historicised’ understanding of knowledge. Motsaathebe identifies two concepts in particular that he came to recognise, through this process of learning, as historical constructions. The first was that of democracy as a necessary social good, which he came to understand as a historically specific assumption:

Because I understand from my own readings ... of history, that even with the issue of democracy, not every philosopher was in favour of democracy. There were those philosophers such as Voltaire who were against ... democracy; at the same time ... Jacques Rossouw for example wanted ... democracy...(Motsaathebe, 2010).

The second was that of objectivity, which Motsaathebe now also came to recognise as a social construct and a concept that can be differently interpreted, depending on its location within particular frameworks of thought:

...to say that something is objective you need to have some form of framework ... where you can say now ... if you move beyond this pole, then it is not objective ... So objectivity itself ... it is a contested terrain, in other words (Motsaathebe, 2010).

These realisations impacted on Motsaathebe’s conceptualisation of the historically specific nature of journalism as social practice, which he now understood to be inseparable from that of constructions of democracy and objectivity.

Like Addison, Motsaathebe highlights the importance of frameworks of analysis that allowed him to make sense of the “structures” of the media. In this respect, he describes Gramsci’s “theory of hegemony” as being particularly important to him as a tool of social analysis for making sense of the dramatic changes taking place in the South African media environment – and again the emphasis is on historical analysis:

...especially, because at the time ... when I was at school, it was during apartheid, but when I started working in the media it was just immediately after apartheid ... so that I thought was very important to help me understand ... the issue of ownership and how this issues of ownership ... shaped journalism practice (Motsaathebe, 2010).

Curiously, it is in the context of coursework taught by Addison in his undergraduate years that he came to these realisations. Motsaathebe explains that Addison helped him, in particular, to develop a conceptual approach to thinking about the role that technological development was likely to play in the shaping the future of the South African media landscape:

...the readings that he gave us helped me to get a thorough grounding in those issues of computer technology – because as you know – computer and the internet were only introduced in South Africa round about the early, mid-1990's – so that was the time when we began to engage with these issues – so it was a relatively new scholarship I would say (Motsaathebe, 2010).

It is exactly in context of the social implications of technological change that Addison describes his involvement in what became the Mafeking campus of the University of the North West. The University of Bophutatswana had been, he notes, a “good university”, with reputable academics, recruited from a range of Southern African countries. There is, within his comments about this institution, an echo of his earlier observations about Natal Technikon. Here, too, was a tertiary institution that strongly associated itself with the education of black students, and in this case also grounded its academic credibility in the recruitment of black academics. It may be that Addison saw, in this space, the potential for an alternative to the ‘white’ traditions of journalism education that dominated the South African tertiary landscape. He was committed to establishing an approach to teaching that took cognisance of the vast technological changes that were beginning to impact on the South African media landscape in context of the rise of the internet:

That was quite successful. There I managed to introduce a computer lab in journalism, which was unheard of. Most of the council couldn't understand why journalists needed computers. I said they need computers and they need the internet (Addison, 2010).

The university was, however “...going through very chaotic times” and was, as such, “... a laboratory of the changes that were going on in South Africa”. According to Addison, the merger with Potchefstroom meant that the academic tradition that he could observe at this university became marginalised:

When it lost its independence and became part of the National Department of Education it crashed ... it ceased to have any real standards, it became a kind of a hand maiden to Potchefstroom university ... it was under funded, it had a series of bad vice chancellors and by 1996 ... I just thought to myself I've got better things to do than hang around here (Addison, 2010).

It may then be that for Addison, the prioritisation of technical training was not in itself a virtue; it was, rather, of interest if it could contribute to preparing a new generation of black journalists to imagine the South African media landscape of the future.

Within the above comments, Addison, Pretorius and Motsaathebe all evaluate journalism education in the years of ‘freedom coming’ in terms of the role that it could be seen to play in preparing students for practicing journalism in a new democracy. As part of this evaluation, they pay particular attention to the function, within teaching, of ‘academic’ knowledge on one hand, and

guidelines for journalistic practice on the other. It is possible to identify, at least in Pretorius and Addison's comments, a stronger preoccupation than in the commentary of previous participants with the tension that often exists between these two categories of knowledge in journalism education curricula. This can be seen in Pretorius's assessment of the relevance of the academic versus the skills-based component of her communications degree, in preparing her to work as a journalist in the new South Africa. It can also be identified in Addison's assertion that he believes in purely skills-based teaching, divorced from a "critical education", when teaching journalism in a 'normal' social context. This claim should, however, perhaps be viewed with caution, when one considers the role that Addison played in providing Motsaathebe with a sophisticated and historicised understanding of shifts taking place in the contemporary South African media landscape.

It is also noticeable that questions around racial identity play an important role in these participants' understanding of the relationship between academic knowledge and the more 'technical' knowledge of journalism practice. This can be seen, for example, when one compares Pretorius and Motsaathebe's comments about this relationship. It was pointed out in the previous chapter that Motsaathebe had come to university with a strong understanding of his social context, because of his experience of growing up as a 'black' Southern African. He seems, furthermore, to have been exposed at the University of Bophutatswana to a far wider set of intellectual traditions in the study of media, drawn from different disciplinary and methodological traditions, than Pretorius could benefit from at Potchefstroom. These factors may have played a role in Pretorius' alienation from the academic study of journalism, and conversely in the ease with which Motsaathebe was able to assimilate knowledge drawn from his communications degree into his approach to journalistic practice.

Addison also refers repeatedly to the value of social knowledge grounded in 'black' South African experience. Both in the context of Natal Technikon and the merger between Potchefstroom and the University of Bophutatswana, he points to instances in which support for the development of such knowledge became marginalised. His assumption also seems to be that, because of the value of such knowledge, South African journalism education should be centrally concerned with addressing the need for black journalists in this country. His argument is then also that in context of such education the relevance of academic knowledge falls away, because the legitimacy of guidelines for reporting practice are no longer in question. As we have seen, however, Motsaathebe's assessment of the value of academic knowledge was quite different and related particularly to its relevance to a critical analysis of the traditional conceptualisation of objective reporting practice.

It would seem, then, that in the period of 'freedom coming', consciousness of the complexity of the relationship between technical and academic knowledge was becoming central to the experience of journalism education. In the discussion, below, it will be demonstrated that this relationship continues to be foregrounded in the participants' observation of processes through which journalism education was adapting to changes in its social context.



## 9.2 Reconstruction: The mid-1990's to the turn of the century

The participants' comments on journalism education in the period of 'reconstruction' focus on the programmes based at Stellenbosch University and Rhodes University. Discussions deal, in both instances, with the processes through which these two institutions adapted in these years to changes taking place in their social context.

### 9.2.1 The Department of Journalism at Stellenbosch University

In the previous chapter, the programme at Stellenbosch was described as one which focused on a paradigm of print journalism based in the professional ideal of objectivity, which seemed to translate effortlessly into the newsrooms of Afrikaans Nationalist papers. Staff were understood to have a shared approach to journalistic practice, which was passed on to students without problematising its basic precepts, beyond the usual acknowledgement that objectivity cannot be 'perfectly achieved'. The focus of teaching remained on professional guidelines for reporting practice, with an emphasis on the development of journalistic writing skills. Participants speak of a degree of reflective discussion in classrooms, which in the 1980's came to focus on a growing consciousness of the mismatch between the ideals of professional practice and the realities of work under the State of Emergency. Such reflection was not accompanied, however, by consistent reference to academic knowledge nor by a fundamental critique of the professional guidelines for reporting practice.

The image that emerges of the department in the mid-1990's is, in contrast, of an institution at odds with its environment, both within the university itself and more broadly. When Booyens returns to teach at Stellenbosch in 1997, ten years after he had been there as a postgraduate student, his sense was that the department's status had changed:

At that stage [it] was very much viewed as a slightly alien little department. And in many respects it was, because it was housed in a little building, you know, apart from everyone else ... and rightfully, I think, the university ... felt that it wasn't really in its heart a post grad course. It was more a practical diploma. Which wasn't wrong at the time when I was a student (Booyens, 2010).

The suggestion, here, seems to be that a different set of expectations were now impacting on the department, with particular emphasis on the need to adopt a more 'academic' identity. Booyens suggests that, in context of these pressures, the department was in the process of redefining itself and that, by the time he arrived, these processes were in fact well under way. He explains that when Claassen became Head of Department in 1993, he "... put much more academic substance into the course". The original programme had been built around the idea of having a mentor such as Cillie, with all the experience of having worked for decades as editor of *Die Burger*, and "... you could just sit at [his] feet and listen to his experience":

But that is not in the long term what you need for something which is a postgraduate academic course. And that was changed by George Claassen in the couple of years before I joined him (Booyens, 2010).



Claassen proposes that, at this time, the “best training schools in journalism you could get” in South Africa was represented by “technikon journalism training”, and then also by Rhodes and Potchefstroom. The Department of Journalism at Stellenbosch, as he saw it, was also important, but no longer because of the content of its programme, which had become “stagnant”. The problem, as Claassen describes it, was not so much that the course content had changed, but rather that it had not been able to adapt to a swiftly changing context. Its credibility had become dependent, rather, on the calibre of its students. The department had, from the start, adopted a highly intensive approach to the recruitment and selection of candidates and this was still the practice:

Stellenbosch ... produced very good journalists and they created a core of editors in South Africa. But it was not because the course was so good. It was because the student material was so good. They were excellent ... [they would] only take the best students. And they only took twenty or twenty-five students every year (Claassen, 2010).

Claassen recognised that this strategy was no longer enough to sustain the credibility of journalism education at Stellenbosch. There was, firstly, the need for a far stronger focus on academic knowledge within the programme. Despite Booyens’ comments about increased expectations for academic performance, it would seem, however, that there was little pressure for such change from the university’s leadership. It may be that, as far as Stellenbosch was concerned, the “alien little department” could continue as it was, at a remove from the rest of the campus. This was, nevertheless, not how Claassen understood its potential:

I had to totally revamp the course there ... and I changed the whole syllabus, I had to fight all the way through the Senate and all those places to change many of the subjects we had to present (Claassen, 2010).

By the time Booyens arrived, then, it was a “vastly different course ... it had ethics in it, it had science journalism ... with a stronger academic component in it” (Booyens, 2010).

In Claassen’s view, however, the transformation of the Stellenbosch curriculum did not just depend on the strengthening of its academic foundation. There was also a need to respond in other ways to changes that had taken place within the media landscape and broader social context. Even in the department’s approach to the recruitment of students, which Claassen saw as one of its strengths, there was a mismatch to the requirements of social context, particularly with regards to the need to increase the number of black students. Furthermore, like Addison at Natal Technikon, Claassen understood that the department would only be accessible to black students if the necessary financial resources were put in place. To achieve this, it needed to establish relationships with a broader diversity of partners within the journalism landscape, moving beyond the limitations of Afrikaans Nationalist newspapers. It was clear, from his work in this regard, that both from within the Afrikaans and English press, the expressed need was indeed for black students:

I immediately went to the big media houses ... I went to Aggrey Claassen at the *Sowetan* and said give me a *Sowetan* bursary for Stellenbosch. So they want a black student every year. And ... every year we went to the *Sowetan* ... we advertised it and then we sat in

the selection process and chose the candidates for the year ... I went to Naspers for example, to *City Press* ... and said give us bursaries – and they gave us four bursaries every year for black students (Claassen, 2010).

Claassen also recognised that the teaching programme was out of step with technological changes that had been taking place within the South African media landscape, particularly with regards to the increasing importance of computers to the production and circulation of journalism. Again like Addison, he understood that if journalism education at university was to be taken seriously, institutions would need to revise their understanding of the resources that were needed for teaching:

...when I came there, there were only typewriters ... it was ten years after the PC came about and they still didn't have that – so I threw out the typewriters, I went to the vice principal and asked him, listen, give me money to get twenty five computers ... because that was what the newspapers all over the country were published on and these students were working on typewriters (Claassen, 2010).

Another important change was the introduction of a broadcast journalism course, which was complemented by the University's establishment of a campus-based community radio station:

That was part of the new South Africa, with the new community radio stations. At Stellenbosch we were part of a whole process to get *Matie FM* a radio license. And the students produced the news for that station (Claassen 2010).

In this way, Claassen reshaped the coursework programme in order to connect into changes taking place within the contemporary media landscape.

In their discussion, in the previous section, of journalism education in the years of 'freedom coming', both Pretorius and Addison question the extent to which the academic knowledge included in journalism education programmes was of relevance to journalism practice. Claassen and Booyens' description of journalism education at Stellenbosch in the period of 'reconstruction' suggests, however, that the credibility of such teaching now increasingly depended on the inclusion of both academic knowledge and more 'technical' knowledge. The Stellenbosch programme was compelled to respond, firstly, to the intensified need to justify its presence within the university environment through an assertion of its academic identity. It needed, at the same time, to assert its own relevance to stakeholders in journalism by responding to changes taking place within the South African media. These processes of adaptation can be understood to relate to shifts that were taking place, at a global level, in the social circumstances of journalism education which necessitated that programmes strengthened their status both within the university and in relation to media industries.

### 9.2.2 The Department of Journalism and Media Studies at Rhodes University

The previous chapter suggested that during the 1980's, the journalism programme at Rhodes, like that of Stellenbosch, defined its engagement with journalism practice in terms of a relationship with one group of South African newspapers, this time that of the English press. Its approach to this relationship was, however, characterised by a more complex set of dynamics than those that existed at Stellenbosch. We saw that staff involved themselves in either one or another of two categories of

teaching and research; the reflective study of journalism practice, and application of critical social theory to the study of media. The first category was informed by an interest in working in partnership with the more progressive newspapers within the English liberal press, by preparing students to work in these environments. Staff shared with these newspapers a commitment to what is referred to in Chapter Seven as a journalism of ‘truth and courage’ that was based on a partial reconceptualisation of the paradigm of ‘objective’ journalism, necessitated by the imperatives of reporting on an ‘abnormal’ society. It was argued that the aim was not to break from this paradigm, either by transforming mainstream practice or by connecting teaching to other traditions of journalism, but rather to engage in a process of ‘paradigm repair’. The second category of work was informed by an interest in academic scholarship, and contribution to a South African tradition of media studies. Staff involved in such work drew on critical theory as a reflective language for the study of media, and prioritised the analysis of visual media texts. In contrast to the first tradition of work, the relationship to mainstream journalism practice was one of distant critique rather than collaborative support. Staff also saw themselves as working in partnership with alternative visual media rather than the alternative press. As such, this category of work did not concern itself any more than the first with a radical reconceptualisation of journalistic practice.

In the mid to late 1990’s, the relationships that defined these categories of work necessarily had to change, in context of the dramatic shifts taking place within the broader South African context. Berger, Steenveld and Garman all speak of such processes of adjustment, but their comments suggest that these did not take place in context of a shared set of agreements amongst staff about the principles that were at stake. One reason for this may be that each of these participants were positioned very differently within the traditions of teaching and research described above, and therefore experienced the Department’s redefinition of its relationship to its social context in very different ways. Within their discussion of such difference, comments about the relationship between ‘academic’ knowledge about journalism and knowledge of journalistic practice play a central role.

Berger explains that he did not take up his post as Head of Department of Rhodes because he was “hankering after ... becoming and academic”:

I had good memories of Rhodes as a place that had been very intellectually stimulating. And so ... I thought it would be really nice to just pause here ... I had learnt so much that I hadn’t learnt at Rhodes. And I thought well I’m in a position to contribute to the next generation ... (Berger, 2010).

Like Claassen at Stellenbosch, Berger saw a need for the department to reconnect itself in new ways to its social context and in particular to become more “... plugged into ... what was happening outside ... in the mainstream and in the alternative press”. Also like Claassen, Berger felt that responding to this context meant that the department needed, firstly, to develop strategies that would address the “whiteness” of its student body. He attempted to articulate such a strategy, for example, through the establishment of *Grab*, which he describes as a “training project with the local community”. The aim

was to work with youth from local black schools on the production of a newspaper, and in this way to spark their interest in journalism as a career and draw them into the teaching programme.

Berger also recognised an urgent need to harness the intellectual resources within the department in order to “become useful to the new authorities”. This could happen, for example, through contribution to “policy work” that was taking place as part of the construction of the post-apartheid media landscape. Berger and other staff members became involved, for example, in making representations to government with regards to content of green papers on media regulation, and doing research for the Independent Broadcasting Authority. There was, furthermore, the opportunity to train government communicators, through external courses. Berger’s perception was, however, that for some staff in the department, becoming involved in this kind of work meant that they needed to “get on a different footing” with their social environment, moving from “critiquing power” to “working with power”:

It is one thing to criticise the state when the state is controlled by the apartheid regime. When the new state is there, and they are saying please can you train our government communicators, then you need to respond (Berger, 2010).

Berger came to interpret his colleagues’ reluctance to involve themselves in such work as a pattern that repeated itself more broadly in South African universities during the mid to late 1990’s, for example in context of the field of Sociology:

I read an article ... by Eddie Webster ... he spoke about being ... a socialist, you know, in this transition. And how Sociology prior to transition had always been ... critical, in the sense of ... building the resistance and attacking the power. Suddenly you have a legitimate power. And now how do you engage with it, without becoming administrative. But you can't just carry on critiquing power, that was his argument, and I agreed with that completely. And I think we came from a tradition, this journalism school, of critique, and it seems ... that one needed to get beyond critique (Berger, 2010).

Berger argues that, at this time, there was no shared position within the department with regards to the relationship that it should foster with its external environment. Some staff, such as Strelitz and Steenveld, positioned themselves within the “critical” mode, which Berger describes as “... that traditional paradigm continuing”:

Whereas I think the work that I was doing was to say ja, that's fine, I don't have a problem with critiquing journalism, but I'd rather train journalists, not just critique them. You know I'd like to see us having more direct interventions (Berger, 2010).

It is noticeable that within Berger’s comments about such interventions, he tends not to focus on the transformation of the content of either undergraduate or postgraduate teaching. He is, instead, preoccupied with the demographics of the student body, the role played by contributions to policy development, and external training projects focusing on practicing communicators and journalists. The adjustment of journalism education to its social context does not appear, within this analysis, to involve a transformation of the core content of curricula.

Steenveld's comments about the department in the mid to late 1990's suggest that her analysis of the situation was, at least at a broad level, similar to that of Berger. In her case, she speaks not so much about the relationship to the state, but rather to journalism practice, which was in a process of transformation and as such becoming more "legitimate":

I think it was about ... a change in politics ... you know you are moving out of the eighties, which was a time of critique, and fighting against, and then 1994 a working with, whereas you know in the 1980's the industry were demons (Steenveld, 2010).

At this time, according to Steenveld, there was a growing emphasis on the teaching of "production" at Rhodes, and with this an increase in the appointment of "people from the industry". This, she suggests, was indicative of a trend that now shapes the programme as a whole, as it exists in the 2000's. The shift had to do with changes in funding patterns, with more money being available in the form of corporate sponsorships, and a greater willingness on the part of the Department's leadership to accept such funding. This was in contrast with the 1980's, when there had been a "whole thing about where you took money from":

So the naming of the various things in this building today, [and] I mean like an SAB Chair of Media and Democracy<sup>65</sup> would have been anathema – it would have been ... incomprehensible in the 1980's (Steenveld, 2010).

It would, seem, however, that even in context of a compromising relationship with corporate money, critical engagement was possible. Steenveld, like Berger, comments on such engagement not in the context of the department's core teaching programme but rather with regards to externally based processes of interaction with communities of journalistic practice. In 1999, she became involved in a project that was exactly about "working with" power rather than "just critiquing". In this case "power" was represented by the "journalism industry". Steenveld was appointed, at this time, as the Independent Chair of Media Transformation, a new post in the department that had been created largely through Berger's initiative. In this capacity she began to work closely with leadership both within the print industry and the SABC:

...what was very good for me personally from that engagement was that actually I got to know people in the print media industry very well ... And because of the position ... I was ... accepted into ... a high level of meetings and discussion with owners, managers, editors. That ... sort of leadership level ... rather than just journalists (Steenveld, 2010).

She was asked, in context of the Human Rights Commission hearings on racism in the media to run workshops for journalists both in the print and broadcast sector. She explains that one aim of these workshops was to tease out ways in which journalists could reflect on their own practice, and to consider the implications of such practice for either reproducing or countering a culture of racism. Through such interactions, and through participating in SANEF, Steenveld was able to become "very connected" to different communities of editors and journalists, and her knowledge of South African journalistic practice was deepened:

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<sup>65</sup> South African Breweries

I grew a lot in that time ... into knowing about the print media industry, which I had not known before ... I used to go into newsrooms, I knew most of the newsrooms ... I had a sense of how the organisations worked ... So even though I hadn't been a journalist, I had a sense that I had a practical knowledge of the industry (Steenveld, 2010).

Steenveld explains that she began to search within the academic context for frameworks of analysis that would enable her to engage with the issues and concerns that were surfacing as part of these interactions. She describes herself as involved in a circular process of reflection that started from within journalism practice, then moved into the sphere of academic scholarship, and was then reintroduced to the sphere of practice:

...it was [because of] my engagement ... with people in the industry that I had to do the reading. So ... my engagement starts off ... practically, and then that necessitates research and reading, which I then feed back into that space (Steenveld, 2010).

We see, here, a very different set of dynamics to those that, according to Steenveld, informed her earlier interest in film studies. In that instance, her interest in a particular method of social analysis – that of semiotics – led her to prioritise an object of study that was suited to its purpose, so that the process of reflection moves from the sphere of academic scholarship to an application to media texts. Now, it was her knowledge of the concerns that were surfacing in the context of her interaction with South African journalists and editors that led her towards the identification of particular bodies of academic work. Through this process she established, for the first time, an expertise in the academic study of journalism:

Whereas before I would have read about media in general, and then about visual media and so on, now I was seeking out stuff ... that called itself journalism – ‘cause I was being involved with journalists now ... (Steenveld, 2010).

There was, nevertheless, a strong continuity between Steenveld's previous academic work and the studies that she pursued now, given that the academic resources that she identified were still framed by critical theory:

I needed to know about ownership ... so that led me to the whole ... understanding of political economy ... in relation to the South African media world. [And] ... Sociology of News, [helped me to understand] how newsrooms work ... which I then bring into what I am asked to do for media practitioners (Steenveld, 2010).

It is interesting to note that such reconceptualisation became possible in context of frameworks of analysis which, previously, had been understood to be alienating to the mainstream press. According to Stewart, as noted in the previous chapter, this was because the progressive English press defined itself in terms of a preoccupation with race rather than class. It may be that the fact that Steenveld's work was strongly framed by debates about race allowed for shared points of reference.

Steenveld suggests that the circular flow of ideas from practice to theory and back again was made possible not only by her own willingness to “work with” industry, but also by the fact that this industry was itself invested in the process of reflection. More than this, the motivation for this work



often came from editors, rather than being initiated from inside the academy. Steenveld explains that “... what was great for me [about] that time was that ... the practitioners were asking for it”:

I actually loved that time ... I used to do a lot of workshops with journalists ... and it was them asking me, you know? In the Chair, I would get these requests, to run [workshops]... (Steenveld, 2010).

Steenveld understands this mutual commitment as being specific to a moment in South African media history; one in which there was a shared understanding both within the university and the media industry that South African journalism needed to transform, particularly with regards to issues of race. There was, because of this, an openness to self-critique, and to drawing on the resources of the university in order to achieve such critique:

...they had an agenda ... and in a sense they needed the university in a way that they hadn't ... before; before they just needed them to run practical courses, or they'd needed journalists to be trained. Now they were asking about ideas. How does this work (Steenveld, 2010).

This was a situation, then, in which a university was not being asked only to supply journalists with a liberal arts foundation complemented by technical competence, but rather to play a role in establishment of a shared, reflective process in which to reconceptualise journalistic practice. Steenveld describes this as an affirmation of the core social purpose of the university, which was “... given ... validity, justification, by the industry itself”:

So it was a very wonderful space for the legitimisation, actually, of ... the role of a university as a thinking, ideational space in relation to the industry, because now the industry was asking not for practical courses, but to say, how do we think about race in relation to our practice (Steenveld, 2010).

There may, certainly be validity in Berger's argument that academics found it difficult to move from a relationship of “critique” of power to one of “working with” power. Steenveld's experiences and observations suggests, however, that “working with” a journalism industry necessarily depended on the extent to which it was open to self critique, and as part of this committed to a fundamental reconceptualisation of its own practices.

Garman describes her decision to work for Rhodes as being the culmination of her own longstanding interest in this same issue, of the need for the articulation, from within communities of journalistic practice, of a more reflective approach to journalism. She speaks of her own growing awareness of the insularity of journalistic practice:

I think there was ... an accumulating feeling from being in a newsroom that, in fact, this was a ... self referential system. It is terribly easy to stay in a newsroom and have your ... mode of operation in the world ... reconfirmed ... despite all the criticism from outside ...the system would bolster and reinforce ... and it started to feel to me like a kind of ... echo chamber (Garman, 2010).

By the early 1990's, Garman's dissatisfaction with the limitations of her own environment prompted her to look for a different kind of intellectual space in context of postgraduate study:



So I'd quite deliberately enrolled for an Honours degree. Because I felt that I needed some external reference point ... I landed up doing a gender studies degree. Which was absolutely fantastically ... enlightening and awakening ... (Garman, 2010)

Garman's postgraduate work made her realise, in particular, that "... there are extraordinary resources out there to draw on":

So once I had done that gender studies degree ... I suppose that was it ... for me ... I had done a Masters degree, I was thinking about a PhD, so I wanted to be in a space that enabled that ... further thinking (Garman, 2010).

Garman explains that she was not, as yet, thinking about the new space that she was entering as one in which she would be "... taking all that knowledge I'd been exposed to and then actually bringing it to bear directly on how journalism was practiced":

I think I still thought at that point that you could modify practice rather than undo thinking, you know, or rearrange the intellectual underpinnings of an entire ... practice... (Garman, 2010).

Like Berger, Garman describes her decision to work at Rhodes as being based, rather, in a belief that the knowledge that she had established as a working journalist would be of value to the university. Indeed, her description of her transition from journalism practice to the academy is framed in terms similar to those used by Stewart in his account of making this move twenty years earlier. She, like Stewart, understood her own employment at Rhodes as being an attempt, by the department and the University leadership, to respond to the general perception within the journalism community that "... Rhodes has an irrelevance in terms of being able to produce students who can actually work in newsrooms". Garman explains that she assumed that because the University prized the kind of knowledge that she brought with her from the world of journalism practice, she would be able to "... make a pathway for that kind of knowledge" within the department. She imagined her own trajectory within the university as that of establishing herself as a "professor of practice". She soon became aware, however, that there was direct conflict, within the department, between the prioritisation of knowledge from the world of journalism practice versus that of academic knowledge:

...there was this kind of war over these knowledges. I think that definitely was the case, you know, in the early part of my entry ... I didn't understand how those two sets of knowledge were going to ... rub up against each other and ... battle each other (Garman, 2010).

To her dismay, she also found that the environment that she was entering was not, in fact, as stimulating or challenging as she had expected it to be. In the newsroom of the *Natal Witness*, she had come to expect vibrant intellectual debate as part of her working life. The department of Journalism and Media studies at Rhodes was very different from this:

It just seemed to be by contrast non-intellectual and quite sort of pedantic – about who taught what and who couldn't make a meeting ... (Garman, 2010).

Garman came to understand this that what she was encountering was the traditional individualism of a Humanities department which was "... all about one's personal research trajectory", rather than a

shared academic project. This contrasted with the collaborative working culture of the newsrooms in which she had gained her experience of journalism.

At this stage, for Garman, then, the sphere of journalism practice and that of the university were both limited in terms of the extent to which they allowed for intellectual engagement with the conceptualisation of journalism. There seemed, in particular, to be constraints on the extent to which the cultures of knowledge production within each of these spheres could allow for an interactive flow of ideas between them. This experience contrasts with that of Steenveld, who, as we saw, found herself operating in conditions in which such circulation of ideas seemed completely possible. It may be that this difference had to do with the fact that the project that Steenveld was involved in positioned her outside the university, in the world of journalistic practice which was, at least at this moment in history, open to reflective debate. Garman, on the other hand, was for the first time making her way, as a journalist, into the isolating centre of the university itself.

### **9.3 New Hegemony: The first decade of the new millennium**

The participants' commentaries, above, on the late 1990's suggest that their practice as journalism educators was strongly defined at this time by a preoccupation with the relationship between knowledge of journalism drawn, respectively, from academic study and from journalism practice. They speak of becoming involved in critical interventions into this relationship, so that a more constructive engagement with the South African political environment could be established. In the comments made about the first decade of the new millennium, attention shifts to the impact of patterns of social change on the internal functioning of university-based teaching about journalism. It is noticeable that although these patterns still relate to the political transformation of South African society they are also informed by more global trends that impacted, at this time, on the nature of knowledge production in tertiary environments.

Participants make reference, in discussions of this period, to a greater diversity of tertiary institutions involved in teaching journalism and media more generally. On one hand, many are still based at the established programmes discussed in previous periods – particularly that of the University of the North West (previously Potchefstroom), Stellenbosch, Rhodes, the University of the Free State and Peninsula Technikon. Others speak from experience of the new programmes that began to emerge from the late 1990's onwards, and here reference is made to UCT, Wits University, the University of Johannesburg (UJ) – previously Rand Afrikaans University- and Pretoria University.

The participants describe approaches to the teaching and studying of journalism that they observed in these institutions, and comment on the extent to which these were both constrained and enabled by the contexts in which they were based. The first subsection below deals with comments made, in this respect, about the role played by the continued tendency within universities to marginalise the teaching and study of journalism. The second deals with spaces in which journalism

education was a central concern; here the emphasis is, in particular, on the extent to which programmes have been able to establish workable models for university-based journalism education.

### 9.3.1 Teaching about journalism on the margins of the university

Between 2002 and 2003, Gideon De Wet was recruited by the University of the North West as Director of its School of Communications Studies. De Wet explains that it was understood that he was being appointed because he could “assist with the transformation” of the school. He notes that the University of the North West was administered according to “strict managerial lines and principles”, and had in fact “... won various awards ... for being one of the most well run universities in South Africa”. His experience of the academic environment that existed in context of this administrative culture was, however, “disillusioning”; it did not, in his view, contribute to a project of transformation. He notes that the school offered an undergraduate degree in Business Communication Studies which was made up of “... a bit of journalism and a bit of everything else”:

There was an attempt to focus it ... in terms of giving it a ... journalistic slant ... but they couldn't really succeed in getting that going at all, because it was a mixed bag of a whole lot of other stuff that was thrown into that particular pot, you know, and presented then as a four year qualification in Communication Studies (G De Wet, 2010).

Froneman, who has been based in the school since the early 1990's, also talks about the way in which the curriculum of the school is framed, noting that the “construct called a School of Communication Studies” places limitations on the teaching of journalism. The problem appears, in part, to be the size of the institution within which journalism education becomes subsumed:

... I just hate it. Because that is not the way to go with journalism ... you just become part of a larger whole. We're three lecturers in journalism, but there is nine or ten others in our subject group alone, and that's only half of the school, you know... (Froneman, 2010).

From De Wet's perspective, in his time at North West in the early 2000's, the programme also remained framed by a “structural functional approach to things” which meant that “... you could hardly move beyond the ... let's call it traditional stuff”. There was, in particular, very little consciousness of “critical issues”, such as those that relate to ideology and power. De Wet suggests that a key reason for this was the very efficiency of the university administration which was “... not at all ... conducive for a very open and liberating kind of education environment”. The problem was, it would seem, that this system was designed to reproduce the ideological framework in which the university had for long been based:

I'm talking about the senate ... the faculty systems ... the rule book ... about admission policy ... about the language policies ... about a group of leadership ... they had very ... strong links with the church and with the old political system (G De Wet, 2010).

This leadership was still invested in reproducing what De Wet refers to as the “principles of Christian national education”:

What was in your face at Potch is this ...hegemony ... this ... socio-political Afrikaner hegemony that is getting constantly set ... and that should be kept alive at all cost ... where you are in [a]... Christian, Afrikaans-speaking university, and you got to push that line (G De Wet, 2010).

Froneman also argues that the university's administrative culture is highly restrictive, and that this has led to a "... lack of ... ongoing intellectual debate”:

I don't see it here, you know ... we're all just running and running ... to satisfy Pretoria's latest demand, new forms to be filled out ... they claim to be the best managed university in the country because they have received some or other prize ... yes, they are getting all the ducks in a row, but that is not an intellectual discussion, that's not an intellectual environment, and I think that is something which is a problem (Froneman, 2010).

Pretorius, who started her academic career at the School in 2010, also speaks of the efficiency of this system, which, she explains, has meant that she has strong guidelines for her own teaching. She has been provided with study guides, and "...pretty much your structure for the year ... what the outcomes are, that should be achieved at the end of the year”:

...you have to find a little bit of your own resources [but] I must say ... I've pretty much relied on what I got handed down ... here and there I ...would order a book ... just to kind of move out of the mold ... set by a previous person, maybe its your own way of ... putting your own stamp on things ... (Pretorius, 2010)

It may then be that the administrative culture of this university tends to reproduce knowledge as it has always been framed, rather than encouraging change.

After leaving the University of the North West, De Wet was appointed in 2003 as Chairperson of the Department of Communication at the University of Johannesburg (UJ) – previously the Rand Afrikaans University (RAU). He explains that, in contrast to the university at Potchefstroom, this institution was visibly going through a process of “massive transformation”. This related, in particular, to the way language defined its identity. De Wet describes a dramatic shift that took place, during his six years at UJ, in the language demographics of the student body in the Department of Communication:

...when I left there ...we had about five or six percent Afrikaans speaking students in the Department. You know – from ten years back... where you had only six percent English speaking guys, now all of a sudden it was the reverse of that (G De Wet 2010).

It would seem, however, that the university environment did not lend itself to a “transformation agenda” any more than had been possible at the University of the North West. This was, according to De Wet, because of “... the whole issue of moving into a corporate environment”:

In this particular instance corporatism was the main thing, you know, we need to become a corporate entity now, we need to follow bussiness practices and principles ... And the whole speak, you know – when you look at announcemens and brochures and stuff... its just corporate speak all the time (G De Wet, 2010).

The institution that emerged in context of the rise of corporatism was “... unfortunately ... a copy of the old system, just with new players”. De Wet's suggestion seems to be that even if the Afrikaans

Nationalist identity of the university had been dismantled, the culture of corporatism that replaced it was equally restrictive to the achievement of open intellectual debate and critical thought. A closely connected trend was that of the massive increase in student numbers which, according to De Wet, impacted strongly on the potential for innovative approaches to teaching:

...I'm not lying to you – we had to service in a Department consisting of 22 staff members, 12 000 students ... Almost two thousand first year students (G De Wet, 2010).

There were five different streams of students within the undergraduate programme, specialising respectively in subjects such as marketing, corporate communication and journalism. The curriculum included generic modules, where all students in one year were lectured together:

And you can imagine ... the numbers that you had to deal with ... I had a second year class of over six hundred students doing my methodology class. I had 110 Honours students ... doing methodology with me. I mean it's absolutely madness (G De Wet, 2010).

The challenge of teaching large groups of students is something that a number of the participants refer to in their comments about this period. Johan De Wet, who has been employed at the University of the Free State as Chairperson of the Department of Communication Science since 2004, describes it as an academic environment that seems more conducive to the teaching of journalism than that of North West. He notes that the department has a “strong journalism and media studies section” in which journalism “features quite widely” and lecturers have “... a hell of a lot of experience in journalism practice”. The question of student numbers is, however, an ongoing problem:

...the thing is you know there's a lot of pressure ... we deal with eight thousand students. Did you hear what I said, eight thousand. Nee, *jissus*. That's heads, huh? (J De Wet, 2010).

Green, who took up a post as Head of the journalism programme at the University of Pretoria in 2009, also speaks of strategies for the recruitment of students as being a central concern in approaches to teaching journalism at this institution. She explains that the journalism programme was established in the early 2000's, based in the Department of English. Until Green's appointment, the staff who taught in this programme did not have substantial experience in journalism practice. Her impression was, in fact, that the programme was not initiated because of an interest in journalism, but rather in order to draw a higher calibre of student – and more students – to the department:

...it was started, I think, for entirely the wrong reasons ... they felt that the BA Languages degree programme was losing good students, and if they could offer them something that looked like a ... professional qualification, they would attract better students. And that qualification was journalism ... so you ended up with these really big classes (Green, 2010).

In Green's first year of teaching, there were four hundred and fifty students involved in the first semester of the first year programme, and a total of about one hundred and twenty in second and third year. Green, who at the time of this interview had one other full-time journalism lecturer on her staff, feels that it is a mistake to “run a journalism programme to attract students to a faculty”:

I just read something ... by Lizette Rabe – who said that the absolute wrong reason to start [a] journalism programme was to use it as a magnet to attract students to BA Languages programmes. Which apparently has been done in other universities. But ... I didn't know a university from nothing when I came. So I ... had absolutely no idea what I was walking into ... I was very naive and kind of blinded, you know? (Green, 2010).

Green's assessment is also that many of the students who are attracted to the journalism education programme in this way have expectations that clash with the principles that, in her own estimation, should define the teaching of journalism. Journalism education, as Green sees it, should deal with journalism as a 'calling'. As part of this it should develop students' ability to operate as "conduits" for the voices of the public and facilitators of the relationship between different groups in society. As she understands it, students at the University of Pretoria have a very different view of what it is they are there to learn:

...a lot of them... have ... this quite distorted view of journalism. They think that ... they'll be television presenters, or they want to travel around the world, or ... something like that (Green, 2010).

Green suggests that these expectations are informed by the kind of journalism to which these students have been exposed in the contemporary South African media landscape, which differs greatly from that of previous decades. This applies, in particular, to journalism that emanates from broadcast platforms, rather than newspapers:

I think it is a reflection of a lot of the more superficial journalism today, particularly that we see in broadcasting media, that people ... have the wrong view of what it really is about, what the kind of vocational discipline is about (Green, 2010).

Hyde-Clarke was based in the Department of Media Studies at Wits between 2004 and 2008, first as lecturer and then Head of Department. She explains that the Wits Media Studies programme, as she knew it, did not prioritise the study of journalism, and excluded teaching about media production. It was started in 2002 under the leadership of Tawana Kupe, and she herself joined the programme when it had been running for three years. The curriculum consisted of an undergraduate programme in Media Studies, which was then also continued at a postgraduate level, as a separate course to the postgraduate programme in journalism. Hyde Clarke notes that many students who came through the undergraduate programme were, at first, not interested in Media Studies, expecting rather to be taught to work as media practitioners. This, according to Hyde Clarke, was typical of students in such courses around the world:

...we had to do a massive sales job at the start ... they all think coming into first year that we are going to teach them to be the next CNN anchor ... and its not going to happen ... we really have to explain to them they are going to do three years of theory and then they are only going to start the practical (Hyde-Clarke, 2011).

It would seem, however, that during the course of their exposure to the Media Studies curriculum, students became invested in the course content – so that "...certainly by second year you had



committed students. And in fact we saw very little drop-off between second and third year students...” (Hyde Clarke, 2010).

Bosch, who has been employed since 2007 at the Centre for Film and Media Studies of the University of Cape Town, also describes this as an environment in which most students and staff are not invested in studying the fundamentals of journalistic practice. She points out, however, that the Centre does not claim to foreground the teaching of journalism. There is, in fact, little reference to any shared academic project or set of debates, either in the context of teaching or research:

I think if you asked each of my colleagues what are we producing, ... where does our graduate go, and what are we equipping them for, I think you'd get very very different answers, ... depending on ... where in the department [people are] located ... we're kind of ... all over the show – you know its not quite media studies, its not quite journalism, its sort of bits and pieces of everything (Bosch, 2010).

Bosch explains that when she first joined the Centre, she had expected an environment that was invested in intellectual debates about academic knowledge, similar to that which she had experienced in her own postgraduate studies. She had completed an MA in International Affairs at Ohio University between 2000 and 2001, and had been placed in a programme dealing with Communication for Development. This had been somewhat against her own will, because at that stage her main interest had been to prepare for a career in journalism by becoming involved in a “mainstream journalism programme”. To her surprise, she found that the field she was learning about was directly relevant to her interests:

I realised that this was actually what I was ... most interested in ... that it was actually a very exciting field ... there was some kind of linkage between Communication for Development and my broader interest in ... politics, and society ... (Bosch, 2010).

She had been drawn, in her undergraduate years, to coursework that exposed her to histories of political struggle for transformation. The field she was now learning about seemed centrally concerned with the role that media could play within struggles for social change:

I started to realise ... the potential impact of media on audience. The fact that you could potentially use certain kinds of media to change the way people thought about certain issues, to change attitudes, to change behaviour, and so on (Bosch, 2010).

When she came to UCT, she had imagined that she would again be working with academics who were excited about talking about academic knowledge of media and its social implications:

I thought that being an academic would be a little bit like that ... where you'd talk about stuff you'd read, and ... shared material ... that we'd all have coffee in the coffee room and someone would say ...well I really don't agree with ...the fact that you used – I don't know – Bourdieu in such and such an article ... I thought that there'd be that sort of conversation, ...that sort of intellectual engagement with material (Bosch, 2010).

The organisational culture to which Bosch was introduced to at UCT taught her that this was “...perhaps a bit of a naive understanding of what life as an academic would be like”. Like Garman at



Rhodes in the late 1990's, she found herself instead within a community of academics whom she perceived to be "... going about their daily business – the daily grind, almost”:

...I didn't feel as though I was joining a collective conversation ... people were ... all over the show, and I felt a bit isolated ... I felt as though I had to create my own little private conversation ... So at first it was a bit of a disappointment (Bosch, 2010).

Over time Bosch discovered that intellectual engagement did in fact take place in this environment – not so much within the collective space of interaction amongst staff, but rather “...at a microlevel, ...within specific courses”. She came to recognise that this arrangement gave staff a great amount of individual freedom to pursue their academic interests:

...so a very flexible ... environment, where you ... do your own research, without any broader vision of the kind of research that you do as a department ... and being able to teach to that as well, which is a luxury ... creating your own little space ... building up a core of grad students that work in your field ... So in some ways I like being not forced to be part of a conversation (Bosch, 2010).

It would seem, however, that students' expectations of the teaching programme do not always match the interests of staff in the Centre. When Bosch offered courses dealing with the role played by media in facilitating social change, they have been undersubscribed:

Those issues haven't been popular with students ... there is a strong interest in marketing and advertising, in PR, which we don't teach at all ... but lots of people ... want to go in that direction ... and in film studies, and film and video production (Bosch, 2010).

Bosch notes that the staff in the Centre often experience a tension between what they believe students need to know, and responding to the expectations with which students come into their courses:

Do we give them the spoonfull of medicine with a bit of sugar, or do we just give them the candy. And ... the candy is the stuff that... they want to learn, so the stuff about advertising and marketing ... So for example ... in my radio class ... you get to ... do creative projects of your own choosing, but then I also ...force you to do the more serious journalistic stuff (Bosch, 2010).

Within these descriptions of journalism teaching on the margins of academic programmes, there is some reference to the way in which such teaching was situated within broader strategies around the transformation of tertiary institutions. This applies, in particular, to the descriptions of traditionally Afrikaans institutions, such as the University of the North West and UJ. It would seem, however, that both within the controlled environment of a university such as North West and in the culture of flexibility represented by the Centre of Film Studies, an investment in a project of transformation remained of marginal importance. This applied, also, to the degree to which such spaces were invested in establishing a relationship of transformative engagement with journalism as a social practice.

### 9.3.2 Teaching about journalism in supportive environments

Some of the participants speak about being based in tertiary institutions offering programmes that were centrally concerned with teaching about journalism. The three academic environments discussed in detail, in this respect, are that of the UJ, Wits University and Rhodes University. In their comments about these spaces, participants make mention of similar concerns to those that framed the discussion, above, about teaching journalism under more marginalised circumstances. It is evident however that they are able to speak in far greater detail about the role that teaching could play in the transformation of journalism as a social practice. In doing so, they refer, in particular, to challenges involved in the articulating a theoretical framework within which to teach about journalism, and doing so in a way that students can relate to. Attention also turns more strongly to the relationship between academic knowledge about journalism, and knowledge of journalistic practice. There is, as part of this, a focus on the way this relationship was shaped by the approach adopted within each category to the ideal of objectivity versus acknowledgement of the social construction of meaning.

#### 9.3.2.1 *The University of Johannesburg*

In 2009, Hyde-Clarke moved from Wits to UJ, where she became Head of the Communications and Media Studies Department. She notes that her time at Wits prepared her for this work because it allowed her to address the fact that her own academic background in International Relations provided her with limited knowledge of the study of media. As we have seen in the previous section, Media Studies at Wits was taught at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels, and Hyde-Clarke's five years of teaching in this programme enabled her to establish a strong foundation in this field. UJ was, however, a "very different kettle of fish, where they have journalism all the way through", which meant that Hyde-Clarke now had to engage with this field in a new way. Although she did not herself teach in the journalism programme, she became concerned with the way in which academic components of such coursework relate to a reflective approach to teaching about journalism practice. Hyde-Clarke explains that this gave her new insights into the value of the academic study of media:

I never realised how useful the theories were until I came here and I am now engaged ... with a journalism programme ... for me it's been very illuminating ... because ... you can really see how the theories play out (Hyde-Clarke, 2010).

Hyde-Clarke notes that, in the "Communications Studies" courses at UJ, staff place a strong emphasis on the importance of sensitising students to the social implications of the work that they do as media practitioners. She became conscious, however, that there was a tension at UJ between the academic study of media and teaching about journalism practice, which takes place in separate components of the curriculum. In her observation, students often "don't see the connection":

...which is why I become so worried about what is coming out at the end. And I mean what do they take back to the newsroom. How have they been sensitised through the theoretical aspects of it (Hyde-Clarke, 2010).

In Hyde-Clarke's experience, some kinds of scholarship about media are more accessible to students because the principles discussed make intuitive sense to them, resonating with their world views. This is for example true of the Sociology of News, particularly its treatment of the way in which the production of journalism is informed by ideology. Students are able to recognise that this occurs both because of the external influence of corporate and political interests, and because of the ideological frameworks built into the internal organisation of newsrooms:

People are ... sensitive to the fact that advertisers influence, politicians influence ... And often even if they don't realise they are talking about Sociology of News production theory, they are still very aware of it (Hyde-Clarke, 2011).

Hyde-Clarke proposes that "... where the split starts to come in is around the social construction theories." Her reference, here, appears to be to theory that is applied to the analysis of media texts, in order to demonstrate that they necessarily reproduce ideologically coded constructions of reality. She argues that because students experience difficulties with the application of such principles, they do not fully appreciate the impact of their own work, as media practitioners, on their social context. Her perception is also that the conceptual tools that such theory offers to students are of more use to a critique of texts than the articulation of reflective approaches to media production. She argues that the theory is important, because it draws attention to the ideological implications of conventional modes of representation in journalism. Within a journalism education curriculum it is, however, not enough to "... sit on the sidelines, as always, to be a couch coach". There is, also, the need to work with students on the articulation of an alternative "narrative" that they can adopt in their own approach to journalism. In Hyde-Clarke's experience, conceptual frameworks concerned with the construction of meaning in media texts tend to be unequal to this purpose (Hyde-Clarke, 2011).

### 9.3.2.2 *Wits University*

Gideon De Wet describes the Wits Media Studies programme that Hyde-Clarke had come from as "Wits proper ... [where] I think they tried to push for a cultural media studies kind of line there". In his observation, the postgraduate journalism programme at Wits, under the leadership of Harber, was informed by a different agenda with both production-based teaching and engagement with scholarship being organised around the reconceptualisation of the practice of journalism:

It was a ... strong hands-on kind of a thing with a relatively good ... theoretical underpinning, but it was very much ... the applied context ... and it was ... driven ... by a new agenda for a new ... way of practice, of the profession, you see (G De Wet, 2010).

Harber had remained at the *Mail and Guardian* until the late 1990's and then, after working as CEO for Kagiso broadcasting for a number of years, was appointed in 2001 as Caxton Professor of Journalism and Media Studies at Wits. He explains that at Kagiso he had been involved primarily in media management rather than journalism. He was attracted to the position at Wits because it provided him, again, with a space from which to access journalism practice:

I think you have to understand that ... It is quite difficult to know where to go as an ex editor if one wants to remain engaged in journalism. So by going from Kagiso back to Wits I saw myself re-engaging with journalism ... as opposed to media management. So it enabled me to get back into journalism in a situation where ... there weren't many other opportunities for me to get in (Harber, 2010).

By the time of his appointment, there was already an established journalism education course at Wits, but Harber did not agree with its approach:

I really didn't like what I saw. Because it was too classroom based, and the balance between the kind of practice and theory I did not believe was there (Harber, 2010).

For Harber, an appropriate “balance” between “practice and theory” appeared to relate not only to the amount of time dedicated to each of these elements in students’ coursework, but also to the way in which the relationship between these components are facilitated within the teaching process. Because of his involvement in the *Weekly Mail* training programme, he had by this time developed strong views on how to achieve a reflective approach to the teaching of journalism practice, and hoped to introduce these at Wits. The key, to his mind, was to immerse students immediately in a production process, while at the same time providing them with close supervision, framed by critical discussion:

One did it in a very hands-on ‘throw them into the newsroom with support’ way. So how do I bring those ideas into a university atmosphere (Harber, 2010).

Harber debated with his colleagues how “professional training” should be approached within the “humanities environment”. He was, in particular, conscious that the “hands-on” approach that he advocated could not be achieved in context of what he understood to be the typical “Honours structure” at Wits, “... where you have one seminar a week”. What he envisioned was a programme in which mentoring would be provided at regular intervals throughout the week, in the context of small classes, so that students were able to move between producing media “... and then think critically about what they were doing”. The proposal that he put forward for the reconceptualisation of journalism teaching at Wits was quickly accepted:

I suppose I had the freedom to say it in the Chair ... that there was a certain kind of journalism we were teaching. And there was an ethos that I saw myself bringing to that. And there was no debate around that, my colleagues were very comfortable with that. It was just a statement that we made, and everyone nodded affirmatively (Harber, 2010).

Harber’s suggestion, here, seems to be that his ideas won acceptance because of the authority attached to his new post. One would imagine that his track record in contributing to the strengthening of a progressive tradition of journalism in South Africa also carried weight with his colleagues.

Harber notes that the general consensus at Wits was that journalism education should occur at a postgraduate level. He supported this view, arguing that before students were taught “how to make media”, they should already have established a grounding in the liberal arts through a “strong undergraduate degree”:

You wanted them to be thinking more broadly and study politics or sociology or economics, whatever ... you wanted people trained as critical thinkers ... and you wanted to build on top of that (Harber, 2010).

This required not only immersion in practice, but “alongside that”, exposure to “the stuff we call journalism studies”. Harber understood this to include “... aspects of Media Studies that we felt appropriate to their professional training”. This material needed to assist students in establishing a “critical understanding of the role media plays”, and against this backdrop to gain knowledge of different approaches to journalism. Like Addison, Motsaathebe and Steenveld, he mentions studies that deal with an analysis of the political economy of journalism as being of particular value in this respect (Harber, 2010).

Participants involved in teaching within the journalism programme at Wits during these years explain that it included two separate postgraduate streams, one focusing on the preparation of students for a career in journalism, and the other aimed at experienced journalists. Richards was contracted to teach in the Honours-level “career entry” programme from 2002 onwards, and was co-ordinating the programme by 2005. She explains that students take part in a combination of course modules, some focusing on “journalism practice” and others around “journalism studies”. She teaches in the journalism practice courses, in which students learn how to conduct interviews, how to write for journalism, and they also acquire a working knowledge of media law. Richards notes that the students who have a background in the Wits undergraduate Media Studies programme often find it difficult to relate well to this course content. Her perception is that this is because there is a disjuncture between what they learn from their undergraduate studies and the approach to journalism adopted in the Honours programme. Their exposure to critical media theory seems to encourage them to distance themselves from journalism, so that they position themselves as media critics rather than media producers:

...when [they] come to us, they have a completely cynical view of journalism. Because they have looked at all the wrongs ... and they can almost not see credibility in journalism (Richards, 2010).

This statement resonates with Hyde-Clarke’s comment about categories of media scholarship that offer students only the position of “sitting on the sidelines”. According to Richards, the Honours programme in journalism then has the task of reorienting such students, so that they can regain confidence in the potential of journalism to operate as a credible social practice:

You ... have to reintroduce a kind of idealism – [to persuade students] that you can try [to produce credible journalism] ... even within restrictions that exist. You can still be as good a journalist as you can be ... (Richards, 2010).

Richards’ perception is that, in contrast to the alienation from journalistic practice that characterises the undergraduate Media Studies programme, the Journalism Studies component of her own Honours programme is taught from the perspective of the practicing journalist:

Anton [Harber] teaches it, and he has been a working journalist. So he has ... a different sense – and within the Media Studies department ... those are all academics. They haven't been journalists, so they are looking at it from a different angle (Richards, 2010).

This course complements the teaching of practice, because it “... brings up the kind of issues that the students ... want to talk about and grapple with” (Richards, 2010).

As Richards describes it, the kind of issues addressed by the course, in this context, relate to principles that journalists need to keep in mind in their attempts to ensure the credibility of their own practice as producers of knowledge about society. We have seen, in Chapter Seven, that her perception of the 1970's conceptualisation of progressive journalism in the English press was that it did not view the support of the state as crucial to its own credibility. Now, in the context of a 'democratic' South Africa, with a government that can be regarded as legitimate, it becomes important that all stakeholders in society take journalism seriously:

The debate is all around our position in society, our relationship with ... powers within a democratic society. So how do you ... relate to a political power that is democratic, that is not ... a dictatorship ... that has been a big debate since the 90's ... how do we maintain that within a new society (Richards, 2010).

Richards points out that the approach that the course takes to this issue is very different from the one that framed her own experience of journalism education at Rhodes in the 1970's. She understands this difference as relating to the social changes that have taken place in South Africa since this time:

In those days people ... were ... grappling with how one shows the evils of apartheid ... and ... whether one can do that through traditional objectivity ... But that ... is no longer a debate (Richards, 2010).

Her suggestion is not, however, that the Wits programme is returning to what she described in Chapter Eight as the discredited 'traditional' conceptualisation of journalistic objectivity that had been left behind by progressive journalists in the English press in the 1970's. The aim is, instead, to build on the notion of the empirically-based, situated journalistic practice that, in her view, had been articulated by journalists at this time. What was “no longer a debate”, rather, is the idea that she associates with journalism in the 1980's, of rejecting guidelines for objective journalism altogether. Like Addison, then, her understanding seems to be that within 'normal' democratic society, the teaching of journalism need no longer involve an academic critique of these guidelines.

Cowling explains that the second stream of journalism courses at Wits, aimed at working journalists, is represented by a “mid career” Honours programme, which she co-ordinates, and then also a Masters-level programme. Like the “career-entry” programme, these courses are framed by a commitment to teach about media theory from the perspective of the practicing journalist. Cowling explains that the mid-career programme contains modules that focus on “professional skilling” as well as those concerned with the academic study of media. In designing the Media Studies courses, staff consciously attempt to “connect with [the journalists'] experience of working in newsrooms ... we use that as a way into theory”. Like Hyde-Clarke, Cowling's experience is that particular kinds of

media theory are more accessible to her students than others. “Normative media theory” seems to her of particular value, “... because that aligns so strongly with journalistic normative ideas”. The students also respond well to media analysis from the perspective of political economy and theories of professional practice because these provide them with a language in which to speak about their experiences of the way newsrooms are organised:

...all of those things people are very ... interested in. And that's our way of ... connecting them into the theory... there is a very conscious effort to integrate industry debates with broader theory ... And they're very receptive (Cowling, 2010).

It would seem, then, that in this course as well as the Masters programme, there has been some success in establishing a constructive relationship between teaching about the practice of journalism and teaching about journalism and media as academic fields. Cowling's perception is that students in these courses are better able to engage with the academic material than those involved in the career-entry programme, because of their experience of journalism practice:

Well you see with the Masters and the Mid Careers they come in and they already have worked in the industry. So ... when we start talking about theories of newsroom organisation ... they can see it. They can see which theories make sense to them and which don't and they can start to reflect on their own practice (Cowling, 2010).

According to Cowling, this becomes possible when these components are “being taught in tandem”, with students applying their knowledge of the practice of journalism to their interpretation of the academic material:

Because then it allows for a reflexive aspect ... I mean, if you come in here with five years of being in a newsroom, and then we start to talk about, you know, professional ideologies ... they know. They can reflect. The other way round ... they haven't been socialised yet so they don't understand what socialisation is in quite the same way and they can't reflect on it (Cowling, 2010).

Judging from Richards' comments, it may nevertheless be that the “careers entry” course achieves such “teaching in tandem” in a different way, by immersing students in the practice of journalism alongside their exposure to journalism studies.

One could conclude, then, that in contrast to the situation participants describe as existing at Rhodes in the 1970's and 1980's, Harber and his colleagues have been able to establish an approach to journalism education at Wits in which academic knowledge about journalism and guidelines for journalistic practice do not exist in a relationship of disjunction with each other. Students are able, in this context, to draw on academic knowledge in order to make sense of operation of journalism as a practice informed by social interest and relations of power. They are, furthermore, able to consider the implications that this has for the reconceptualisation of mainstream practice. It may be that such learning becomes possible in the context of teaching that is organised centrally around the study of journalism rather than that of media, culture or communication. Reference to both academic knowledge and knowledge of practice is guided, within this approach, by the shared project of ‘taking journalism seriously’.



### 9.3.2.3 *Rhodes University*

Participants' descriptions of Journalism education at Rhodes University during the 2000's suggest that this environment has, similarly, become characterised by a concern with the way in which teaching about the production of journalism and its academic study can be combined. Steenveld notes that, from the mid-1990's onward, important shifts have taken place within the department that impacted on its overall identity. A "key major change", in her view, was the "...growing of the production side of the department" and with this the "appointment of people from industry". She understood this change as being informed by the "politics of money, and the politics of funding", with the department setting up "different kinds of associations and affiliations" from those that were possible in the 1980's:

There is a different politics, and so there is a different political relationship between the department as an academic institution and the media industries as institutions (Steenveld: 2010).

Steenveld explains that by 2002 she had completed her work as the Chair of Media Transformation, and returned to teaching in the core curriculum of the department – or, as it became known during this period – the School of Journalism and Media Studies. By the early 2000's, the greater focus on production could, in her view, be strongly felt within classrooms, not just because of the orientation of staff in the school but because of the interests that students brought with them. Steenveld was conscious that the students who now registered for the undergraduate degree in Journalism and Media Studies at Rhodes had different expectations of their coursework to the classes she worked with in the 1980's, and the journalists and editors she engaged with in the mid-1990's. One difference was – and continues to be in the current context – that students need a great deal of persuasion to take an interest in the academic study of media. Steenveld suggests that such disinterest must be understood in context of the conceptualisation of journalism that these students bring with them into the classroom. Her perception is that, unlike previous generations of students, they do not view journalism to be first and foremost about the production of social knowledge. Instead, they are primarily concerned with its 'technical' aspects:

It is the expectation that they come in with ... its not a concept of a journalist as a producer of ideas, or a producer of knowledge, but somebody who works with technology (Steenveld, 2010).

This applies, she explains, to students who come up through the undergraduate programme rather than the experienced media practitioners who join the Masters programme. She describes these postgraduate students in similar terms to Cowling, saying that they are able recognise the value of the academic study of media because "they are better placed to know" (Steenveld, 2010).

Amner, Brand and Rumney are four other participants who started teaching at Rhodes in the 2000's, and who bring different perspectives to the discussion of the relationship between teaching

about the production of journalism and its academic study. It of interest to note that these participants are all representative of the ‘production’ teachers that, as Steenveld explains, had been prioritised for recruitment since the mid-1990’s. Amner, in particular, explains students’ resistance to the media studies components of the degree in different terms to that of Steenveld. He had been employed as editor of the Development Media Agency in the late 1990’s, and then moved into a lecturing post at Rhodes in 2000. He notes that the journalism curriculum that he observed at Rhodes offered students two different positions from which to engage with journalism. They were asked, within Media Studies courses, to recognise journalism as a fundamentally compromised institution:

So what they see is on the one hand a very watertight ... critique of mainstream journalism from every possible conceivable front ... sociological ... political economy, semiotics ... cultural studies ... all of this stuff is thrown at them (Amner, 2010).

On the other hand, in production modules, they are taught how to practice such journalism. The understanding is then that, as critical practitioners, they might find small ways of transforming such journalism, or transcending its limitations. There is, however, very little in such coursework that provides students with a sense of agency with regards to achieving this task:

It is kind of – here is this utterly compromised institution, folks, and then come over here and we’ll teach you how to ...operate in that utterly compromised institution. And what you have is a progressive closing down of their spirits (Amner, 2010).

Amner also argues that “the people who teach practice” are not understood, within this curriculum, to play a role in the project of critique. The programme is, in fact, structured so that teaching about practice and about critical analysis are presented as if they take place separately:

Well, I mean the curriculum is very clear, in the course handbook ... there are different streams, in every year. So there are air tight compartments (Amner, 2010).

This disconnect exists even though some members of staff teach within both “compartments” of the curriculum. Depending on which classroom they walk into, they “... wear different hats while they are in that space”. Because of this, there is very little emphasis on the reconceptualisation of mainstream journalistic practice:

When I am teaching a semiotics course ...it is not my responsibility to transform this knowledge into alternative [journalistic] practice. It is not the ... mission of that course ... it’s there ... for different reasons (Amner, 2010).

This analysis of the teaching context at Rhodes is in some respects similar to Richards’ comments about the disjuncture between postgraduate teaching about journalism practice and the undergraduate study of media at Wits. Richards speaks, however, as someone who has practiced in the mainstream press, whereas Amner’s interpretation is informed by his experience of working in environments concerned with the articulation of alternative approaches to journalism. It is, he explains, this experience that he brought to bear on the challenges of teaching journalism in a university:

I’d just come from an organisation that was punting development journalism ... So some of my ideas came from the outside – I brought them into the academy, having tried to

practice myself. So I felt that I was in a position to say something about these ideas inside the academy (Amner, 2010).

Amner recognised that, as in the late 1980's when he first studied at Rhodes, the conceptualisation of journalism that was reproduced on both 'sides' of the curriculum still tended to be that of mainstream journalism. This practice was represented to students as unchangeable, and as if it is the only possible object of study for the aspiring journalist or scholar of media. In Amner's view, there was a need, rather, to acknowledge the broad diversity of approaches to journalism as it has existed in different social contexts and historical moments in time. Students should, as part of this, be exposed to traditions of practice such as that of development journalism, advocacy journalism, alternative journalism and public journalism. In this way they would be provided with a more enabling language in which to talk about the role that they can play, as future journalists, media managers and academics, in identifying spaces in South African media in which it is possible to "build a nucleus of alternative practice"(Amner, 2010).

Participants' comments suggest that, from 2000 onwards, there were staff at the school who shared Amner's concerns, both about the compartmentalisation of the curriculum and its unquestioning reproduction of a mainstream conceptualisation of journalism. There is general agreement that such staff took seriously the task of talking critically about the Rhodes curriculum and working collaboratively on its redesign. Garman notes for example that, during these years, the establishment of "intellectual alliances" amongst such staff provided her with key opportunities for contributing in meaningful ways to the school's work. Indeed, as she describes it, more than any other issue, debates about appropriate curriculum design "... has been the thing that has opened up ... collaborativeness and a richer intellectual environment" in the school. She was able, in this context, to engage with colleagues who taught the production courses as well as those who were involved in the media studies components of the degree, looking for ways of working together on shared teaching projects (Garman, 2010). Other staff also speak of this preoccupation with curriculum design, and make particular mention of a third year course dealing with the role played by journalism in processes of democratisation and development. Amner explains that the Journalism, Democracy and Development (JDD) course was "... explicitly set up as a praxis course", with "... a whole lot of theory taught with the purpose of ... transformative practice". Students learn about a wide range of traditions of journalism, and tease out the normative frameworks and the social practices in which each of these are based. They are then given the opportunity of working on production projects which draw on these frameworks and strategies of practice. In this way, they are able to articulate and put into practice their own approaches to reflective and critical journalism production (Amner, 2010). Steenveld also refers to this course, noting that it offers a framework in which it became possible to recreate the critical engagement with journalism that she had previously experienced in her teaching:

One gets a taste of that again, with those students. And it is again about connectedness. Students struggle with theory, but experience the usefulness of that combination. Then

when they look back, they ... glowingly ...talk about the connectedness, and the importance of theory ... (Steenveld, 2010).

It would seem from these comments, however, that such “connectedness” occurs only when staff make concerted efforts to establish courses that break through the established conventions of teaching, and this only became possible at certain moments within the curriculum. Amner also explains that the assumptions that inform the more conventional approaches to journalism education are built into broadly accepted perceptions of knowledge about the social, and about journalism more specifically. Students bring such perceptions with them into the classroom, and this impacts on their experience of teaching:

To this day, students ... are saying that they feel boxed in by our ... curriculum. For two and a half years they are stuck in what they imagine to be, somehow, I don't know how ... but they do – a kind of objective box. They talk about upside down pyramids. I mean I trash the upside down pyramid in my first year course and yet they throw it back at me. Because they are immersed in a universe – a broader world – where those are the hegemonic ideas (Amner, 2010).

Teaching that questions a journalism of objectivity therefore works against the grain not only of the standard curriculum, but also against the ‘common sense’ of students’ everyday realities.

Brand worked in print journalism until 2004, and was then based as Senior Lecturer and Pearson Chair of Economic Journalism at the school, where he remained until 2011. He suggests that the effort put into “praxis”-based courses at Rhodes might be misplaced:

We try very hard with ... labyrinthine schemes ... to make [academic theory] part of the media production ... but ... I don't think we should be trying too overly hard to make the connection by ... trying to merge ...production and theory courses (Brand, 2010).

His argument is that the difficulties that students experience in making the connection between the production and academic study of journalism has to do with a failure, in the curriculum, to provide them with an understanding of the full spectrum of available scholarship about journalism and media. He suggests that the energy expended on achieving ‘praxis’ should, instead, be directed towards ensuring that the curriculum provides students with a more inclusive overview of the historical development of the study of media. When students are better able to see the whole landscape of such scholarship, they become empowered to make autonomous decisions about how to draw on academic knowledge in ways that are appropriate to their practice:

I think if theory is taught ... as ... the history of thought about media, parallel to how to produce media, inevitably ... students will start thinking and making the connections (Brand, 2010).

Brand’s perception is that the curriculum as it currently exists does not provide students with such a broad overview. Instead, staff tend to teach about the kinds of scholarship in which they are personally interested:

We are not teaching actually in this department the mainstream of media and communication studies. We're not. It's bits and pieces, and ... it doesn't seem to me to be coherent (Brand, 2010).

Brand notes that when he started reading towards his doctorate, he looked at the "... Communication Studies tradition in America", which is "... basically a media effects tradition". It became clear to him that this represented an important branch of media-related scholarship that was given little or no attention within the Rhodes curriculum:

...and then you start reading about this stuff and wondering ... where is this in our curriculum? ... if you take for example ... how thought about media effects has changed over decades ... from silver bullet to agenda setting and beyond; where is that stuff in our curriculum; its not there (Brand, 2010).

Brand's suggestion seems to be that there is an overemphasis, at Rhodes, on certain traditions of scholarship – possibly that which is associated with critical theory – and that the Mass Communication tradition is often ignored without comment. It may be, then, that just as "mainstream journalism" is presented as the only possible object of study, certain traditions in media studies are offered to students as if they are the only legitimate lenses to apply to the study of journalism.

Rumney has, since 2007, been Director of the Centre for Economics Journalism in Africa at Rhodes. Like Brand, he also suggests that students' discomfort with an engagement with theory may have to do with the fact that the school's approach to media studies is not comprehensive enough. For him, however, the area of omission does not relate to particular traditions of the study of media being left out of the curriculum. He is, instead, concerned about the fact that students are not provided with a comprehensive map of the full spectrum of epistemological positions that make up the university-based landscape of academic study. To his mind, such a map is crucial if students are to understand how a given tradition in the study of media positions itself within debates about the nature and purpose of knowledge about society. Rumney explains that, when he first arrived at Rhodes he was conscious of the need to orient himself within the academic environment, as someone returning to the university for the first time since his undergraduate education. What he felt most in need of, at this time, was a conceptual map of the full spectrum of paradigms available for thinking about academic knowledge within the university. He did not, however, find access to such an orientation in the context of the study of media. Instead, it was his participation in a post graduate diploma in higher education (PGDHE) that gave him access to such resources:

It provided me with a ... theoretical background, which I think is either implicit, or not taught [in media studies courses] ... about epistemology. Particularly about epistemological approaches. That provided me with a framework which I am still using (Rumney, 2010).

He found that, in thinking through the different ways in which social researchers engaged with the production of knowledge he was also able to reflect in greater depth on the nature and purpose of journalism as a form of knowledge:

[It] was enormously valuable ... for somebody transitioning back into a university environment ... [it] was really defining for me in the sense that I actually started to think about what journalism means ... the obvious debate – it's always there – is what journalism actually is (Rumney, 2010).

Rumney explains that he co-ordinates a postgraduate diploma in economics journalism, targeting practicing journalists, and that this programme includes a module dealing with the field of media studies, which is taught by staff in the school. His observation has been that the course content is presented to students without explaining the “... philosophical paradigms in which you actually ... come to these issues” (Rumney, 2010).

Steenveld points out, at the same time, that production courses also often do not make explicit their own philosophical or theoretical underpinnings, and that this adds to the difficulties of establishing synergies between the teaching about the academic study of media and about its production. To illustrate this point, she refers to the course outlines that teaching staff produce for the modules that they take responsibility for. She points out that although Media Studies courses will have detailed lists of the readings that students will be introduced to, the production course outlines often do not include information about their theoretical terms of reference:

It is implicit rather than explicit, and one doesn't know how different lecturers then articulate it. Whereas one looks at a theory course outline – I have to be very clear about the positions, what is offered – and it is clear to everybody what's on the table ... so ... we might be using the same word, [but] ... we may be talking at cross purposes. We don't know (Steenveld, 2010).

In her view, it is imperative that the principles that inform the production courses need to be articulated in more explicit terms, and “... it then gets understood that it isn't [a distinction between] theory and practice, but there are different kinds of theory”. The theory that production staff prioritise in their courses would be specific to their particular areas of specialisation, applying to the production of photography, television, print journalism and so on. What media studies staff could then offer would be the more generic “social theory”, that is applicable to all media production (Steenveld, 2010). It may be that, if teaching about ‘theory’ was in this way shared jointly amongst all staff, there would be more space within the “media studies” modules to expose students to a complete landscape of media scholarship, as well as providing them with a more thorough understanding of the position occupied by each within the available spectrum of paradigms.

Berger suggests, at the same time, that there is a different divide within the school that, as yet, has not received enough attention. Participants' comments, as outlined above, tend to focus on the perceived divide between ‘media practitioners’ and ‘academics’. What Berger points to, instead, is a relationship of distance between staff involved in ‘outreach’ projects, and staff who are responsible for teaching students inside the school and engaging in individual academic research. He suggests that the ‘outreach’ projects are generally regarded as external to the core academic purpose of the school. In Berger's view, this points to an imbalance in the school's approach to the three main functions of a university-based institution – that of teaching, research and community service. The

last of these roles does not, in his view, receive enough attention within approaches to teaching and research about journalism at Rhodes:

You know people like to say – the ‘academic project’ ... if by academic project people include community service, cool. But when people talk about the academic project, it is often assumed to refer to the teaching plus maybe some research ... so it is a question of how important are the outreach activities to the general thing here (Berger, 2010).

Berger suggests that it may be a problem that teaching staff in the school continue to put so much of their energy into the refining of the curriculum. In his view, this aspect of the department’s activities has been well developed:

How much better can our teaching get, I don’t know – I think we’re probably almost at optimum ... we can keep on investing in teaching for donkeys years and I think it is important to [venture into] new areas of teaching like ... convergence. But on the whole, you know – our teaching; man, we’ve got it taped! (Berger, 2010)

## **Conclusion**

In their description of journalism education in South Africa from the 1990’s onwards, the participants refer to shifts that were taking place in the broader social domain which impacted on practices of knowledge production, both in universities and journalism. This chapter has examined the participants’ observation of the ways in which journalism education programmes were shaped by these developments. The focus is, as in Chapter Eight, on the implications for the relationship that came to exist between journalism education and journalistic practice.

Reference is made, firstly, to developments in the global circumstances of knowledge production. Participants comment, in particular, on the impact of corporatisation and managerial culture on university environments. They also speak of shifts that have taken place in the South African journalism landscape, for example the growing importance of digital technology and on-line media. These developments are understood to have placed intensified pressure on journalism programmes to establish their own authority as examples of academic practice and, at the same time, to prove their own relevance to market agendas. In context of these demands, programmes are required to place emphasis both on the inclusion of academic knowledge and knowledge that is of relevance to practice. These categories of knowledge are described as existing in a relationship of tension with each other.

Secondly, participants refer to localised circumstances in the production of social knowledge, represented by the transition of South Africa from a society defined by apartheid to that of an emerging democracy. It is generally suggested that, in adapting to such change, journalism educators have adjusted their understanding of the role they should play in a society in which social institutions such as that of journalism and government could now claim a status of legitimacy. One example of such adjustment relates to the conceptualisation of the role that teaching should play in processes of



critical engagement with journalism practice. Participants identify attempts to reconceptualise this role, so that it is no longer understood in terms of a relationship of distant criticism, but rather of supportive critique. It would seem that, through such attempts, educators come to confront the tension that exists, in curricula, between academic and 'technical' categories of knowledge, and to find ways of resolving them. There are suggestions that, particularly in examples of teaching that focused centrally on the teaching of journalism, educators were able to articulate strategies that could assist in this process.

The participant's comments on journalism education at Rhodes suggest that in this environment, reflective debate amongst teaching staff about curriculum design has played a central role in the articulation of such strategies. One principle that the participants identify, in explaining the importance of such reflection, relates to the value of consciously acknowledging the theoretical underpinnings of teaching. Steenveld applies this argument to production-driven teaching, which she argues should include an explicit articulation of the traditions of thought, principles and theories on which it draws. Rumney, in turn, argues that this is equally the case for 'media studies' courses, which should explain their own location within the overall map of available paradigms and methodological approaches to the study of media. He refers, here, to the importance of knowledge drawn from 'World Three' for reflecting on the position of different traditions of scholarship within the available 'map' of conceptualisations of social knowledge in the academy.

In context of such reflection, it may, indeed, become possible for the omission of particular traditions of scholarship within journalism education programmes to become more visible. The participants identify such omissions both in the context of programmes that foreground the importance of Mass Communication Studies, and those that tend to emphasise Cultural Studies. Brand, as we have seen, suggests that such omission may help to explain the difficulty that students experience in drawing relationships between academic knowledge and knowledge of practice. This argument may, indeed, help to explain Pretorius's alienation from the academic component of her communications degree, and also Addison's disaffection with the focus on critical theory at Rhodes. It may also be, as Rumney suggests, that students would be better placed to evaluate the relevance of academic knowledge to journalism practice if they are provided with a 'World Three' orientation around the available spectrum of approaches to social knowledge, and the location of traditions in the study of media within this.

## CHAPTER TEN: EVALUATING JOURNALISM AS A FORM OF KNOWLEDGE

### Perspectives of South African journalist– academics

#### Introduction

The first three chapters of Part Three of this dissertation presented a chronologically arranged discussion of the participants' account of their involvement in histories of South African journalism practice and journalism education. The final two chapters will deal with their current understanding of the nature and purpose of each of these spheres and of the role that communities of practice within them can play in the conceptualisation of credible journalistic knowledge. As the first part of this discussion, this next chapter considers the participants' evaluation of journalism as a social practice in South Africa today. The final chapter of the dissertation will then deal with their understanding of the role that university-based journalism education should play in engaging with such practice.

The chapter responds to recent discussion in journalism education literature with regards to the role that 'practitioner-academics' can play in facilitating the relationship between the spheres of scholarship, journalism education and journalism practice. It was explained in Chapter Five that, in these discussions, 'practitioner-academics' are described as individuals who have established themselves both as journalists and as academics involved in the study of journalism. The suggestion is that such individuals are well placed to articulate an approach to teaching and research which synthesises academic knowledge and the knowledge about journalism that exists amongst practitioners. As noted in the introduction to Part Three, the selection of research participants for this study was informed by these arguments. Although not all of the participants could be described as 'practitioner-academics', most have significant experience of working both in journalism practice and the academy. An aim of this chapter is, then, to consider the extent to which their evaluation of journalism practice involves an assimilation of academic knowledge and knowledge of practice.

The discussion also responds to the proposal in this study that familiarity with 'World Three' concepts and debates would be of particular significance within such processes of assimilation. The argument is that metascientific debates can offer valuable conceptual frameworks not only for making sense of approaches to World Two knowledge, but also for the examination of journalism as a form of knowledge that exists at the level of World One. With this argument in mind, the chapter deals with the extent to which the participants can be seen to refer, in their evaluation of South African journalistic practice, to World Three debates about the authority of social knowledge.

In examining the participants' evaluation of South African journalistic practice, the discussion pays attention to their understanding of the normative ideals that guide journalists in their work. The focus is also on their account of the 'realities' of practice that either constrain or enable journalists in their attempts to put these guidelines into practice. This discussion deals, in particular, with the guidelines for reporting practice that the participants have described, in Chapter Seven, in relation to their own experience of South African journalism practice in the 1970's and 1980's. The first set is

defined by the principles of ‘fairness’ and ‘balance’ which can be seen to represent the classic guidelines for ‘professional’ reporting practice that are generally reproduced in journalism education textbooks and journalism practice in different parts of the world. The second represents a reformulation of these guidelines in order to incorporate the notion of moral courage and a ‘search for truth’. Both sets of guidelines are, as we have seen, identified with more conservative examples of mainstream South African newspaper journalism. Both are, furthermore, characterised by an acknowledgement of the inevitable role that social interest plays in the production of journalism, balanced with a commitment to the ideal of journalistic objectivity. In contrast, the third set of guidelines questions the validity of the professional ideal of journalistic objectivity, and instead calls for in-depth and community-based reporting practices, based in an acknowledgement of social interest. These guidelines are understood to have been articulated in context of contestations around the authority of journalistic knowledge that occurred in journalism in the 1980’s, and is strongly associated with the rise of the alternative press.

Section One of the chapter focuses on the participants’ understanding of all three guidelines for reporting practice. The discussion includes an examination of the extent to which the participants can be seen to make reference to World Three concepts and debates in their explanation and assessment of these guidelines. Section Two deals with the participants’ understanding of journalism as it is actually practiced in South Africa. Here, the discussion considers the extent to which World Three knowledge might be of value in addressing some of the issues that the participants raise in their evaluation of such practice.

### **10.1 Evaluating journalism at the level of prescription: guidelines for reporting practice**

A review of the participants’ commentary on guidelines for reporting practice indicates that they understand them to represent different responses to the problem of balancing the ideal of objective social knowledge with an acknowledgement of the inevitable influence of social interest. They present these responses as existing along a spectrum of approaches to credible social knowledge. Their discussion indicates, furthermore, that they understand each set of guidelines to be based in a distinct methodological framework, associated with particular methods of research and criteria for the evaluation of such methods. The discussion demonstrates, then, that the participants identify similar dimensions within the discussion of journalism as a practice of knowledge production to those that apply to the examination of scientific research. This would suggest that it would be of value to apply concepts and frameworks drawn from metascientific debate to an evaluation of journalistic practice.

The discussion of the participants’ experience of universities, in Chapter Seven, also indicates that their exposure to academic knowledge has provided them with the necessary terms of reference to achieve this objective. Many speak of the role that education has played in providing them with a conceptual language with which to make sense of the relationship between knowledge and social

interest. They speak of such learning in context of their involvement as undergraduate students in liberal arts programmes. Here they refer, for example, to the role played by subjects such as philosophy and political science, and more generally their exposure, both in and outside classrooms, to critical theory. The descriptions of their approach to credible journalistic knowledge can be seen to involve attempts to make sense of the normative implications of such acknowledgement. Froneman describes this as a preoccupation that has absorbed him for much of his career:

I think because I had to reject objectivity – then you are going to be subjective, but ... how to handle that subjectivity – doing it in an ethical manner ... I think that is something that ... I have been struggling with for the past twenty years ... (Froneman, 2010).

For many, the acknowledgement of the constructed nature of social knowledge is also accompanied by an equally strong assertion of the existence of verifiable external reality. It may be that this assertion is informed by a concern about the implications of an acceptance of the ‘relativity’ of truth for the authority that journalism can claim in struggles around the kind of knowledge that is produced about society. Cowling articulates this concern clearly in her own approach to such knowledge:

I agree that ... the perspective of the ... journalist always has an impact ... and there's always a form of construction going on. But I can't go to the point where there's no truth, and there's no fact, because ... then you're ... in a space of ... anything can be up for grabs, and I think that in the way we all live, we know the difference between a truth and a lie ... So I think I would ... position myself in the objectivity – subjectivity debate in journalism in a space of – we are all coming from a certain position ... But we also know the difference between ... something that is a fact and not a fact (Cowling, 2010).

The understanding of social reality that Cowling articulates here can be seen to represent a clear epistemological position with regards to the tension between the idealisation of objective knowledge and the acknowledgement of the validity of knowledge that is socially situated. It is argued, in the discussion below, that the negotiation of this tension is of central importance to many of the participants in their approach to the conceptualisation of credible journalistic knowledge.

It is noticeable in the examination of the participants’ comments that follows below that they do not all prioritise reference to the term ‘objectivity’ in their approach to journalistic knowledge. Some argue that this concept is of relevance to academic debates about knowledge rather than those that take place in context of journalistic practice. Certain of the participants, in fact, express direct resistance to the relevance of the term to the lexicon of the practicing journalist. These participants argue that ‘objectivity’ is an unhelpful concept for the evaluation of reporting practice, because it invokes the unattainable ideal of perfect impartiality. They also present their own discussion of guidelines for journalistic practice as the articulation of more ‘pragmatic’ alternatives to such concepts. There is, within this, an insistence on the irrelevance of academic debates, and of ‘World Three’ concepts more particularly, to discussions of journalistic practice.

This argument seems curious, given that World Three debate about knowledge, even in context of positivism, does in fact start from an acknowledgement that objectivity exists as an ideal

that cannot be perfectly achieved. It may be that such commentary is expressive of the general rejection, referred to elsewhere in this study, with regards to the relevance of academic knowledge to the practice of journalism. As we have seen in previous chapters, unlike many other occupations that aspire to a professional identity, journalism has not legitimised itself through an association with university-based knowledge, either in South Africa or elsewhere. It has, instead, established its credibility internally, through the routines and conventions of its own practices of knowledge production. Guidelines for reporting practice are typically understood to provide safeguards against the influence of political and economic interest, ensuring that journalistic practice can operate in service of the public good. These guidelines gain much of their authority from being embedded in the material relations that have come to characterise journalism as a practice of knowledge production. They are understood to be informed both by journalism's role as an institution that serves the public and, at the same time, its position as an industry that delivers products to consumers. Within the self-descriptions of journalism as an occupation, it is then often explained that journalistic practice is fundamentally shaped by the daily demands of producing fresh news and doing so rapidly in order to meet publication and broadcast deadlines. The participants' response to the concept of objectivity may, then, be seen to form part of this assertion of the self-sufficiency of journalistic communities in evaluating their own practices.

An examination of the significance of this statement of self-sufficiency forms an important backdrop to the discussion, below, of the participants' comments on reporting guidelines. The first subsection explores the role that such guidelines should ideally play in enabling journalists to reflect critically on their own approach to journalism. The remaining three subsections focus, respectively, on the extent to which each set of guidelines could be regarded as being equal to this task.

#### 10.1.1 The role of reporting guidelines within a reflective approach to journalistic practice

In their approach to guidelines for credible journalistic knowledge as this can be traced back through time, the participants' supposition is generally that the main point of reference is a 'professional' model, in which journalism operates as a system of expertise, dedicated to public service. Within this model, journalism is understood to serve the purpose of producing social knowledge that can assist in the facilitation of democratic process. There seems, indeed, to be general agreement that even disregarding historical specificity, journalism can by definition be understood as a social practice associated with democracy. Motsaathebe explains, for example, that in a society "where there is no democracy", the functioning of the press becomes compromised:

You find that in that type of society ... there will be no things such as press freedom, and then journalists will of course be harassed ... so ... from that perspective ... democracy ... is crucial... for the functioning of a healthy press ... (Motsaathebe, 2010).

He also argues, conversely, that journalism is necessary to the functioning of democratic society. The suggestion seems to be, then, that journalism and democracy are essential to each other, forming a symbiotic partnership:

They need each other because ... journalists ... make sure that you [have] democracy, but you also need democracy to protect ... the functioning of a healthy press (Motsaathebe, 2010).

This equation between journalism and democratic context is reproduced throughout the participants' discussion of South African histories of journalistic practice. It is, furthermore, generally taken for granted that journalism in South Africa under apartheid was defined by the same model, but diverged from its normative commitments in important ways. With the advent of democracy, journalism can then be seen to return to an adherence to these commitments.

The participants also tend to assume that there is a broadly established agreement within democratic societies about the role that journalism plays within democratic process, based on what they then often call a 'liberal' model of journalism. According to this model, the professional purpose of journalism is that of reporting "truthfully" on the circumstances that exist within a given social context in order to ensure that processes of public deliberation concerning these circumstances take place in an informed manner. Journalism then enables members of civil society to become conscious of social events and issues that are of relevance to such deliberation and to consider their long-term implications for the decisions that they need to make about the shaping of society. This is also a social function that the participants reconfirm in their personal conceptualisation of credible journalism. Motsaathebe, for example, explains that he became interested in journalism because of the role that it plays in creating a public record of history as it unfolds, in this way enabling broad engagement in society with the future implications of social events:

For me, journalism and history are closely related, because journalism is about relaying the information ... to the public ... And my understanding was that what is happening now will ... influence the future ... it is like a tell-tale sign of what will happen ... So that is more or less what motivated my passion for journalism (Motsaathebe, 2010).

For journalism to be 'close to history' in this way seems to require that journalists are able to 'correctly' identify events and issues that are of historical significance. Addison, for example, notes that "... journalism is the first draft of history and that means that you have to be where history is made". He explains that a key requirement of journalism is therefore that of direct involvement in 'real world' events, observing history in the making (Addison, 2010).

Within the 'liberal' model of journalism, as it is described by the participants, the credibility of journalistic knowledge depends both on such historical relevance, and on the accuracy with which it records the 'real world'. In order to meet the requirements of relevance, journalists are expected to report on social events that are 'newsworthy', measured against a set of socially accepted 'news values'. Accuracy, in turn, depends on the extent to which journalists are able to report objectively on news events. The model is, at the same time, one in which journalism is understood to exist as an

economic enterprise, and in which reporting practices are therefore guided by the pragmatic requirements of generating profit. News organisations need, in particular, to capture audiences and to deliver these audiences to advertisers. Because of this, the ‘relevance’ of news events, and the associated ‘news values’ that guide reporting practice are not only determined by their significance to democratic process, but also by the extent to which they would attract the interest of potential audiences. The commercial identity of journalism may therefore, at times, exist in tension with the role that it is expected to play within democratic process.

The participants explain that within conventions of reporting associated with this model, it is routinely acknowledged that journalism cannot fully achieve an accurate representation of the ‘real’. Journalism is, in other words, never completely objective, because news coverage is necessarily informed by social interest. Indeed, the reporting guidelines associated with this model are not designed to achieve complete objectivity but rather to ensure that journalists can limit the impact of social interest on their coverage of news events as much as this is possible.

The discussion, in the next three subsections, examines the participants’ evaluation of the role that all three sets of guidelines referred to in this chapter can play in providing critical terms of reference for making sense of the ‘liberal’ model of journalism, as described here. The discussion deals, particularly, with the extent to which these guidelines can be seen to enable journalists to consider the assumptions and normative beliefs on which the model is based. The focus is, in particular, on the role that each can play in enabling journalists to reflect critically on the nature of journalistic knowledge, its relationship to society, and its location within processes of social change. Reference is made, throughout, to the extent to which the participants acknowledge the role that World Three knowledge could potentially play in complementing such guidelines within journalists’ reflection on their own practice.

#### 10.1.2 A journalism of fairness and balance

The participants generally explain that within the first set of guidelines for reporting practice, the influence of social interest on journalism is understood as ‘bias’ – and, as such, to intrude on the search for objective truth, based on valid evidence. Bias is, furthermore, primarily discussed in context of the impact of the social conditioning of individual journalists on their own reporting practices. Motsaathebe, for example, talks about the acknowledgement, within journalistic practice, of the impossibility of achieving human knowledge that is impartial:

We understand journalism to be a profession where journalists must report accurately, and ... fairly ... without any bias, but we also take into [consideration] that as human beings ... there will always be that element of ... [fallability] (Motsaathebe, 2010).

The argument is then that journalists should nevertheless do their utmost to achieve impartiality:

I think most of the lecturers in my department agree with me that there is no such thing as objectivity, because of various aspects of backgrounds of the persons, where they



come from and so on. But it doesn't mean you cannot strive for objectivity... (Diederichs, 2010).

The task of 'striving for objectivity' is understood, within such comments, as the responsibility of the individual journalist. Kruger speaks, for example, of the need for journalists to acknowledge the inevitable role played by their own social conditioning in their approach to reporting, and then to do their utmost to limit the impact of such conditioning:

... you can strive to manage your own perceptions and backgrounds and prejudices ... I don't think you can do it perfectly, we are all children of our times and of our backgrounds ... and we do better to acknowledge that (Kruger, 2010).

Some of the participants nevertheless assert that the term 'objectivity' is, as Stewart also argues above, not central to the language that journalists adopt in their articulation of such acknowledgement. Brand notes, for example, that as a journalist his own approach to reporting was framed by terms that signalled the need for more realistic goals than that of the achievement of objectivity:

I don't think about it as objectivity or objective knowledge, but I think more about it as fairness, and balance, because those are much more attainable ideals ... So I didn't really ever think about it in terms of objectivity as such (Brand, 2010).

Such commentary reasserts the irrelevance of academic debate about knowledge and the processes of reflection through which journalists examine their legitimacy of their own practice.

There is repeated reference within the participants' discussion of credible reporting practices to the concepts of 'fairness' and 'balance'. A closer examination of these concepts suggest that they can be seen to form part of an acknowledgement of the subjectivity of the reporting process, while at the same time reasserting the ideal of objectivity. 'Fairness' is understood to describe an even-handed approach to reporting, in which the journalist strives to investigate a story thoroughly, and then to present it in a way that acknowledges the interests of all involved. The task of reporting is concerned, within this understanding, not with the establishment of truth, based on primary evidence, but rather with the fair presentation of different claims about what is true. 'Fairness' then relates both to the decisions that journalists make as part of their review of such claims to truth, firstly with regards to their choice of sources, and secondly in terms of the way the truth-claims that they gather are presented in the story. The credibility of journalism then depends on the extent to which a reporter is able to give evidence that a story is not simply the product of their own point of view. Instead, they have attempted to fairly record the way in which an event or issue is understood by relevant interest groups. Diederichs suggests that the requirement of 'fairness' is representative of the way in which the principle of objectivity 'translates' to the context of journalism:

You must understand the concept of objectivity, which we then translate into fairness. Where it comes out in your ... reporting ... there you have the whole story again of different sources to show that fairness, and ... your decision on the angle that you are going to take ... it is very difficult to have that as fair, but in the whole product that you deliver, there must be an element ... that you can identify – that this was not just my idea (Diederichs 2010).

The concept of ‘fairness’ can, then, be seen to allow for an approach to impartiality that is grounded in an acknowledgement, within the reporting process, of the validity of value systems and social interests. Instead of requiring an approach to ‘fact’ that excludes the consideration of value or interest, this approach requires of the journalist to give equal weight to the presentation of different social perspectives. Such validity does not apply, however, to the perspectives that the reporter might have on the story that they are covering; it relates, rather, to the views and perspectives of key sources. ‘Accuracy’ is understood to concern the extent to which journalists report correctly on what key ‘sources’ have to say about news events. The focus is, then, not so much on the gathering of primary evidence, but rather on the correct quoting of these sources.

‘Balance’, in turn, is understood within the participants’ explanations to be a particular aspect of fair reporting, referring to the extent to which different observations and perspectives can be said to have been given appropriate weight within a story. A ‘balanced’ approach to reporting does not necessarily mean, however, that the journalist has represented all information and all points of view. They have, rather, been as fair as is possible within the constraints of time and space:

... you need to start to think what does that mean, to be balanced ... does it mean to ... reflect every single voice, or what ... (Brand, 2010)

This approach to the production of journalistic knowledge does not point, though, to a complete acceptance of the validity of subjectivity. Instead, guidelines for fairness and balance tend to be presented as ‘attainable’ goals, given the impossibility of achieving perfect objectivity. The need for these more realistic goals is understood, within this approach to journalism, to be necessitated by the limitations placed on the journalist by the accepted conventions and routines of news production:

...you know what the constraints are, and you need to work within them ... to find ways of doing the story within those constraints ... so the two are kind of complementary in a way – you need to think about how to be fair and balanced and truthful, but within the constraints of your medium ... I think that's what it's about (Brand, 2010).

The ‘constraints’ of news production appear to relate, here, to limitations in the time and resources available for researching and preparing a story within the commercial context of media organisations, and also to limitations in space, in commercial publications, for the presentation of stories. As we have seen above, this usage of the term is, according to a number of the participants, typical of the way journalists tend to talk about the evaluation of journalism as a form of knowledge.

In Chapter Seven, the participants refer to the role that these guidelines for reporting practice have played in their own assessment of journalism practice, at given moments in South African history. They point, in particular, to moments in which the disjunction between such principles and journalism as it was actually practiced became extreme. In such instances, it becomes clear that they understand fairness and balance as essential professional requirements of all journalism irrespective of context. They are described as principles recognised by many South African journalists in the apartheid era, but ones which the working environments in which they were based did not measure up

to. The suggestion is then that journalists increasingly questioned their own news organisations' claim to professional status, measured against these principles. They note, in this context, that the editorial decision-making processes were guided by the interests of advertisers, owners and political parties, and designed to complement the world view of a white middle class readership.

There is, within these accounts, an emphasis on the responsibility of individual members of the journalistic community for the maintenance of the professional credibility of journalistic knowledge in apartheid South Africa. Editors are seen to have been responsible for the reproduction of approaches to journalism that compromised such credibility. These approaches are, furthermore, described as clashing with the commitment of individual journalists to the 'liberal' model of journalism. The failure of credibility in journalism is understood, nevertheless, to have operated at a systemic level, in the management of news production. The argument is, indeed, that news organisations had become fundamentally implicated in the economic and ideological systems on which the apartheid regime depended. It is understood, at the same time, that the implication of broader social systems in the failure of credibility of journalism can be explained in terms of the divergence of apartheid society from the requirements of liberal democracy. The assumption seems to be that, in a post apartheid society, once these requirements are met, it becomes possible again to put into practice journalism based in principles of professionalism. It would seem, then, that the guidelines for 'fairness and balance' remain of limited value for a critical engagement with journalism practice. They are, in particular, unable to deal critically with the relationship between journalistic knowledge and the liberal model of democratic society. It is in context of such limitations that one should, perhaps, reconsider an insistence that guidelines internal to reporting practice are sufficient for the evaluation of journalistic practice. It may be that conceptual frameworks drawn from World Three debate represent an opportunity for a more critical approach to the assessment of practice.

#### 10.1.3 A journalism of courage and truth

The foregrounding of principles of fairness and balance, in the reporting guidelines discussed above, points to the assumption that the individual journalist's background and social positioning represents the primary term of reference for a discussion of the impact of social interest on reporting practices. It is possible, however, to identify a reformulation of these guidelines for reporting within the participants' discussions which places the emphasis on the management of external social forces. Within this conceptualisation, the production of journalism is understood to take place in a social arena characterised by struggles around the the kind of knowledge about society that enters the public realm. News organisations have to negotiate with powerful stakeholders in this struggle, particularly as represented by government and corporate business, for access to sources and also for the right to publish the versions of social events that they would regard as accurate. Because of this, the credibility of journalistic knowledge cannot be ensured purely through a commitment by individual journalists to minimizing the impact of their own interests and background on their approach to

reporting. This is understood to be true of journalism not only as it is practiced in non-democratic contexts such as that of apartheid South Africa, but also within liberal democratic society.

The first approach to credible reporting practice, outlined above, recognises that social interest will inevitably influence the production of knowledge about society, and it concerns itself with the articulation of strategies for limiting such influence. By doing so, journalistic practice can serve its purpose as a knowledge system that facilitates democratic process. The second approach is similarly preoccupied with the limitation of social influence but, at the same time, it understands the championing of certain values as being central to the purpose of journalism. Such values can be seen to have a legitimate role to play within selective aspects of journalistic practice, while within other aspects of such practice the ideal of objectivity is still maintained.

Richards' comments on her own approach to reporting practice represent the most comprehensive discussion of this conceptualisation of journalistic knowledge. She reiterates the argument, referred to in guidelines for 'fairness and balance', that although the ideal of objectivity is not attainable, it is nevertheless something the individual journalist should strive towards:

True objectivity, in a situation, is not possible – we know that ... but [I attempt] to approach it, being aware of my prejudices, and ... almost bending over the other way to avoid my prejudices ... (Richards, 2010).

Within the second conceptualisation of credible journalistic knowledge, the need for individual impartiality is therefore still seen to be crucial to the reporting process. Richards suggests, however, that the process of managing one's own prejudices only represents one part of the struggle to limit the influence of social interest on reporting practices. Journalists need to recognise, in addition, that the statements that their sources make form part of attempts by interest groups to interpret social events according to their own agendas. Such statements therefore need to be carefully evaluated, in light of the journalist's own observation of primary empirical evidence. Richards notes that accepted conventions of reporting fail to meet these requirements when it is assumed that journalists have met the obligation to impartiality through the formalistic inclusion of a number of quotes from different sources in a story. In Chapter Eight, she described this as a 'discredited' approach to journalistic objectivity, in which it is assumed that journalists occupy a "neutral position" from which to be "...quoting this person, quoting that person" [see pg 305]. She explains that the maintenance of impartiality is still important within the approach to journalism that she advocates, but it applies specifically to the process of gathering evidence. Here, in the context of fieldwork, impartiality is again understood as a process in which journalists guard against the influence of their own social background and political interests. Once they have gathered enough evidence, however, they may draw politically situated conclusions about the events on which they are reporting:

When I talk about objectivity, I define it ... [in terms of] being aware of my prejudices and then I am led by my research. I don't try and end up neutral. I try and end up where that research leads me ... (Richards, 2010).

Within this approach, the journalist offers an argument about what “truth” might be, based on rigorous fieldwork. Truth, then, becomes socially situated, but its credibility still depends on the extent to which the journalist’s argument is supported by the accumulation of impartial evidence:

Although objectivity is not possible, there are different kinds of truths ... the most important thing is ... to try and get as close to in inverted commas the truth as I could ... through my research ... deducing ... that definition of truth-seeking, of the evidence mounting up ... That's what I'd always learnt, that's what I believed in (Richards, 2010).

There is an underlying assumption, within this conceptualisation, that journalism situates itself critically in relation to the society on which it is reporting, concerning itself with confronting instances of wrongdoing. The suggestion remains, however, that journalists do not bring their own opinions into their coverage of such issues. Instead, it is the accumulation of evidence that points to the truth. This still suggests, then, a commitment to the ideal of journalistic objectivity:

Just being led by your research is going to ... show ...the inequities of society more credibly because you are starting from a position where you are being led by your research rather than by your beliefs ... and if the balance of evidence is on the one side, that is the way you show it ... (Richards, 2010).

Journalism should, then, serve as an argument about the truth rather than concerning itself purely with the presentation of a neutral collection of facts. The need for such argument should be understood in context of the recognition, referred to above, that reporting practices operate in context of power struggles around the kind of knowledge about society that gains public status. When journalists expose social inequities through the gathering and presentation of evidence, they are entering into this struggle. In doing so, they need to contend with ongoing attempts, from powerful stakeholders within this struggle, to undermine the authority of the version of reality that they are arguing for:

You ... need to be absolutely sure that you can ... back up what you are saying ...and not get your details wrong, so that there is nothing that somebody can point at ... It is about good research, and backing it up, and backing it up ... (Richards, 2010).

It is, then, because of the contested nature of social knowledge that the process of research needs to be impartial, providing the journalist with the evidence to be able to argue for the validity of a particular version of social reality. Richards also explains that, because of the contested nature of social knowledge, this process of argument is one that demands moral courage:

You need to seek the truth and be incredibly brave, standing against ... people who will say ...you are not correct in what you are saying ... you have to be able to ... cope emotionally ... Being able to ... [defend the credibility of your work] ... That is important (Richards, 2010).

Journalists need, then, in particular, to be personally invested in the epistemic goal of establishing what is true, and prepared to defend the importance of exposing such truth.

Addison and Booyens refer to a similar conceptualisation of journalism when they draw a distinction between political reporting and the approach to environmental journalism to which they were exposed, respectively, at *The Star* in the 1970’s and *Die Burger* in the 1980’s. Addison

describes standard political coverage and environmental journalism as being based in different “archetypes”; on one side, that of the reporter as objective commentator, and on the other the “... [equally old] archetype ... of crusading, mobilising, advocating”. He is quick to point out that, within this latter tradition, there is still a strong focus on rigorous empirical research:

You know – you had to do your job properly, you had to do your legwork, you had to go there, do that, see that, talk to the people, and get the real story (Addison, 2011).

Booyens describes environmental journalism at *Die Burger* as a space in which it became possible to “take on people”, and to expose wrongdoing, and doing so through gathering of empirical evidence rather than quoting officials. He, like Richards, presents the power of such journalism as deriving from the accumulation of evidence, which allows journalists to challenge the ‘official’ versions of the truth circulated by government officials:

[The goal] is to eat the elephant one bite at a time ... it’s very seldom that you will unearth a cache of information that would immediately topple the minister the next day (Booyens, 2010).

In this way, it becomes possible to incrementally challenge the authority of the ‘official’ versions of reality.

The suggestion is not, however, that the inadequacy of the neutral quoting of sources applied only to journalism during the apartheid era. A number of the participants identify this approach to quoting sources as one of the key weaknesses of accepted reporting practices within the contemporary context. Motsaathebe argues that a neutral stance generally means that the journalist does not take responsibility for the impact of their own reporting practices on the social environments in which they are working. The acceptance of such responsibility is, he suggests, of particular importance in any society characterised by a high degree of conflict:

When you are doing a story but you find ... actually it’s a story that could ... lead to violence ... so think about that critically, you know ... [one cannot] just say no, my duty is just to report, and then you report this story, and then you stand away, and then the violence comes, and then you come back and cover ... the violence. Think about that (Motsaathebe, 2010).

Booyens also describes the practice of ‘neutral’ quoting as a tendency that is of particular significance to political reporting, where much of a journalist’s work consists of citing spokespeople and balancing one set of views against another. In this context, journalism becomes a process of balancing ‘words against words’, and do not include the evaluation of such statements through a consideration of empirical evidence (Booyens, 2010).

Richards suggests that, within the contemporary environment, the ‘management’ of journalists by public relations systems has become of even greater concern than it had been in the past. Because of such news management systems, it has become more difficult for journalists to speak to people directly involved in the events that they are covering:



When I started in journalism, we went straight to a person. To a policeman, to a managing director, to a somebody or other. Now ... we have that ... filtering mechanism which is designed ... to ... give you palatable truths and keep you [away from] often a lot of the most important things that you need to know (Richards, 2010).

Rumney also points out that, in contemporary society, struggles that take place around the production of social knowledge have become the domain of the public relations strategies of government and business. He suggests that the role that journalism plays in determining the truth becomes even more crucial in this context:

A lot of what transpires in the corporate world and in government is verbiage that has no concern for truth. Journalism is at least supposed to be concerned with the truth (Rumney, 2010).

The suggestion, here, is that a commitment to truth that goes beyond the neutral quoting of sources is as important in the contemporary context as it has been during apartheid. The approach to truth-seeking developed in those years may, indeed, offer guidelines to journalists in society today:

...to actually ... look at the evidence, and do what basic research does, and to say what does it actually tell you, rather than just putting it all down ... that is something I ... learned from some very ... good journalists who taught me to ask the right questions ... and to ... try to get under the skin of what was happening. To ... make that extra effort (Rumney, 2010).

In contrast to the first understanding of credible journalistic knowledge, this approach acknowledges that even within democratic societies, principles such as those of a commitment to justice and the protection of human rights can become compromised. Here, then, the 'liberal' model of journalism, and the liberal model of democratic society in which it is based, is no longer placed beyond criticism.

Amongst the participants who align themselves with such guidelines to reporting practice it is, however, again possible to identify a rejection of the relevance of academic knowledge to the evaluation of journalistic practice. Stewart, in particular, asserts that the term 'objectivity' tends to be used by academics rather than journalists, when discussing the problem of achieving impartiality in the production of social knowledge. He also notes that, in academic debates about journalism, the term tends to be invoked primarily in context of the critique of journalistic knowledge:

I've never heard objectivity as a debate in newsrooms. It's a debate in universities and people are ... accused of trying to be objective. We never thought of it as objectivity, we simply thought of it as getting the facts (Stewart, 2010).

Stewart implies, in this explanation, that his own university background had made little impact on the approach he adopted as a journalist to the conceptualisation of journalistic knowledge. He also suggests that academic debates about knowledge such as those that deal with objectivity tend to exist in a relationship of antagonism with approaches to knowledge that form part of journalistic practice.

It is nevertheless arguable that a "World Three" perspective would be of value within a critique of the journalism of 'truth and courage'. Within guidelines for such journalism, the emphasis remains on strategies for survival within existing social systems, rather than a commitment either to



the fundamental transformation of society or of journalism as a social practice. These guidelines can, then, still be seen to be characterised by assumptions that place limitations on their own potential for the critical evaluation of journalism. This may, again, suggest that internal guidelines of reporting practice are, in fact, not sufficient for ensuring a reflective approach to journalism practice. Here, as in the case of the journalism of fairness and balance, an argument can be made that World Three knowledge could play a role in facilitating a more fundamental process of self-criticism.

#### 10.1.4 In-depth and socially situated journalism

The first two approaches to credible journalism are based, then, in similar understandings of the relationship between journalism and the 'liberal' model of democratic society. The journalism of fairness and balance does not problematise this model, while the journalism of courage and truth acknowledges the need to critique the systems on which society is based. Both approaches can, however, still be seen to imagine journalism only as it exists within these systems. Within both, the authority of journalism also still originates from its status as a 'professional' knowledge system. It is assumed that, in order to maintain this status, journalists need to draw firm boundaries between their own practices and the activities of other groups who have a stake in the production of social knowledge. The journalism of fairness and balance does so by positioning itself as a 'neutral' recorder of the statements made by what it identifies as key interest groups. The journalism of courage and truth, in turn, understands itself as entering into an adversarial relationship with powerful social groupings, particularly that of government and corporate business. Journalists are understood, in both instances, to be involved in the production of social knowledge in order to promote the welfare of the general public. This is understood to include the responsibility of representing the interests of people who have been marginalised by society, and who cannot speak for themselves. The public is nevertheless imagined, within both, primarily as an audience for news rather than as actively participating in the production of social knowledge. In this respect both approaches to journalism again draw boundaries, this time between themselves and the public that they serve.

The third approach, in contrast, describes reporting practices as an integrated part of broader processes of knowledge production, which actively includes the general public. The role of the journalist is then understood to be that of engaging with a wide variety of stakeholders in civil society, in order to ensure that their social experiences and the knowledge that they generate about this is acknowledged within the public domain. These stakeholders include representatives of power, such as government officials and corporate business, but the diversity of interest groups that make up the general public are also understood to be partners in the production of knowledge. The argument seems to be, in fact, that through the acknowledgement of the social experiences and perspectives of such people, journalism can contribute to radical social change. Within this conceptualisation, then, the assumption is no longer that a 'liberal' model of democratic society is the only possible frame of

reference. Instead, within this account, it is possible to identify an equation between community-based, in-depth approach to reporting practice and a commitment to fundamental social change.

The most detailed conceptualisation of this approach to journalism can be identified in Amner and Green's explanations of their understanding of credible journalistic knowledge. Both participants indicate that their approach to reporting practice represents a departure from guidelines foregrounded in the 'liberal' model of journalism. It requires of journalists, firstly, to prioritise different kinds of sources to those that are conventionally referred to within the 'liberal' model, and also to enter into different relationships with such sources. Journalists need, in particular, to provide a platform for people who have been marginalised within the public sphere. In order to achieve this task, they need to build close relationships with different communities, and to establish partnerships with institutions of civil society that have organised themselves to represent the interests of such communities. Green explains that such an approach to reporting practice would enable journalists to make sense not only of isolated news events, but also of the broad social processes in which these are based. This, she argues, is of great importance to journalism that commits itself to fundamental social change:

...you've got to listen to what people say to understand actually what's going on and how to change things ... and the ability to form contacts that are ... constant and ongoing, and that will ... [provide you with the knowledge that you need] (Green, 2010).

Both Amner and Green suggest that specialist reporting represents an important domain in which journalism of this kind can be practiced. Amner, in particular, argues that there is limited opportunity for in-depth reporting within the liberal model of journalism, because it prioritises the need for 'generalist' reporters, who are able to report quickly on a wide spectrum of topics. The competence of such reporters lies in their ability to rapidly familiarise themselves with a given issue or event, so that they are able to produce meaningful journalism about this, and then move on to the next news item. They are expected to have the ability to do so, firstly, because they have a broad understanding of the way social processes tend to operate, and secondly because they have the necessary knowledge both of their social context and of research to rapidly identify the relevant sources for a story:

Being a general reporter who has quite a good grip on ... the nature of the world, and how it works ... and being able to ... have a set of methodologies, ways of working, that would quickly bring you up to speed, and quickly get you into a zone where you could produce something useful ... (Amner, 2010).

Amner proposes that it is implausible to expect journalists to be able to produce in-depth and nuanced coverage through this 'generalist' approach to reporting. News organisations should, rather, place more emphasis on journalists who gain an in-depth knowledge of particular content areas:

What makes more sense is to have specialised journalists who really dig and delve ... in an area of knowledge ... in a ... division of labour ... oriented way, where you are able to really conquer some small parts of reality ... (Amner, 2010).

Within this approach, the coverage of news events becomes framed by the journalists' ability to access in-depth knowledge that exists within interest groups in society with regards to long-term social processes. Here, too, journalists need to ground themselves within the reality of such groups:

...it's about building deep relationships with the people in that sector in the world who would be able to ... really ... help you build that picture over time (Amner, 2010).

In this way journalists develop in-depth understanding of particular topics, and also establish a network of relationships with people who have knowledge that enable them to do justice to the coverage of related issues and events. The credibility of such journalism is not only understood to derive from the knowledge developed by journalists but also, crucially, from the relationships that they establish with civil society 'partners'.

It is possible to find examples of reporting practice within the participants' accounts of South African histories of journalistic practice that resonate with this third set of guidelines for reporting practice. One example is the approach adopted within the East London News Agency and ECNA as described by Kruger, and Amner's description of reporting practice at the DMA. A further example might be represented by the approach that Harber describes in context of the *Weekly Mail*, in which it shifted away from conventional political reporting to the coverage of extra-parliamentary politics. It is also possible to recognise a similar approach in the various descriptions that the participants offer of 'specialist' journalism. Green's account of working as a labour reporter during the 1980's is, for example, presented as an example of such journalism. Fourie and Wasserman's references to art journalism can also be seen to describe a specialist form of journalism that allowed them, as Amner describes it, to "dig and delve ... in an area of knowledge". Adisson and Booyens' accounts of 'environmental' journalism are also descriptive of specialised journalism in which the participants were able to gain in-depth knowledge of a particular subject area. Pretorius's description of the 'educational' journalism that she was involved in during the mid-1990's is, again, an example such journalism. In each case, these participants draw a relationship between specialist journalism and the adoption of a 'collaborative' approach to news production. The journalist is understood to develop close relationships with interest groups in society who are based in the specialised world on which they are reporting, and to work in partnership with these groups in order to report on that world.

Such examples of reporting practice are, however, described as occurring on the margins of mainstream journalism, and as an alternative to the core business of political reporting. Adherence to the ideal of in-depth and community-based journalism is understood to depend on the convictions of individual journalists, rather than being an essential requirement of the working environments of journalism. Amner also argues that such reporting depends on the existence of a vibrant civil society, in which journalists are able to identify formidable partners in the production of social knowledge:

Ultimately what you are looking for ... is ... a set of universities, civil society organisations ... watchdogs at every level of society ... [who are there to] to find out stuff, to find information. Journalists' task actually ... they should just be mediating that

information, and putting it in a form that publics can understand and can deliberate on and so on ... (Amner, 2010).

Within a context in which civil society has become dysfunctional, journalists may feel compelled to fulfil the role that these institutions would ideally serve. Amner notes, however, that given the economic constraints now faced by news organisations this becomes an unrealistic expectation:

...you see that's the problem ... I actually think I am ... wrong headed ... in the way that I approach journalism. Because I see journalism as a way of stepping into the breach, where there is a vacuum. When in fact journalism cannot possibly do that, under the current political economy of journalism (Amner, 2010).

Within this understanding, journalism is again described as a social practice that is necessarily associated with democratic society. It is not, however, assumed that the achievement of democracy, in South Africa, has guaranteed the existence of such a context. Amner's suggestion is that within contemporary South Africa, civic culture has in fact eroded, so that members of the public have become alienated from democratic process. The suggestion seems to be that in context of the mass resistance movements of the 1980's, there was far more potential for in-depth and community-based reporting of the kind that Green and Amner argue for.

It is only in context of this third approach that participants speak of the value of academic knowledge within journalists' reflection on their own practice. Indeed, both Green and Amner's commentary suggest that approaches to knowledge articulated within the academy represent a key conceptual resource for the articulation of guidelines for reporting practice. Green's approach to journalistic knowledge can in fact be seen as an example of the conscious adoption of qualitative social research guidelines in the context of journalism. Her first exposure to fieldwork had been that of working as a social researcher in context of her postgraduate studies at UCT. She describes her subsequent decision to pursue a career in journalism as motivated by the recognition that reporting practices share some of the characteristics of qualitative social research. In practice, she found that the working environments of journalism did not lend themselves to the production of such knowledge. This, as we saw, was primarily due to the limitations placed on reporting practices by the conservative editorial vision of the newspapers in which she was based (Green, 2010). Amner, in turn, argues explicitly for the value of social research methodology to journalism practice. He proposes that journalists should refer to such guidelines in order to evaluate their own approaches to reporting practice. From such a perspective, they would be better able to recognise the complexities involved in the task of producing social knowledge. Amner suggests that such acknowledgement is not characteristic of the liberal model of journalism:

If you really thought about [journalism]... from a ... social researcher point of view ... journalists ... would ... be ... more ... concerned ... about ... their practices ... how they do things ... I'm talking about a deeper ... understanding of the nature of social reality (Amner, 2010).

This third set of guidelines for reporting practice seems, then, to lend itself to the synthesis of conceptualisations of knowledge drawn from the practice of journalism itself and those articulated within the academy, including World Three. This may be because it does not define itself in terms of the 'liberal' model of journalism, and therefore transcends the limitations of this model. It does not, firstly, claim a position for itself as a 'professional' knowledge system, with 'professionalism' understood to signal a relationship of distance from the society that it serves. Secondly, it does not position itself as a self-sufficient system of knowledge production, legitimising the credibility of the knowledge it produces internally. Instead, it understands the legitimacy of its own processes of knowledge production to depend on the extent to which it is able to establish collaborative partnerships with interest groups in civil society.

## **10.2 From prescription to description: Evaluating journalism as it is practiced**

The discussion in this section deals with the participants' evaluation of journalism as it is practiced in South Africa today. It is proposed, in this discussion, that the participants point to three dimensions of such practice, each of which can be described in terms similar to those applied in metascientific debate about science and scholarship. These three dimensions can, in fact, be seen to resemble aspects of Kuhn's conceptualisation of historically situated research, as described in Chapter One. They represent distinct aspects of a shared approach to knowledge production that operates in similar terms to research 'paradigms', as described by Kuhn. It is, in other words, possible to identify a similarity between the participants' discussion of these dimensions of journalistic practice and World Three theorisations of knowledge production.

The first dimension concerns a set of agreements that have come to dominate journalistic communities in South Africa with regards to the nature and purpose of journalistic practice. This dimension can be seen to resemble the prescriptive 'group commitments' that Kuhn describes as existing within a research community with regards to methodology, appropriate research problems, appropriate objects of study, and methods of research. The second dimension refers to the actual practices or methods of knowledge production that operate within journalistic communities of practice. Within Kuhn's framework of analysis, this dimension is represented by the empirical description of the ways in which knowledge production is actually conducted within a historical example of a research community. The third dimension of journalistic practice is represented by the processes through which knowledge of the first two dimensions are transmitted from one generation of journalists to the next. This dimension is referred to, within Kuhn's framework, as the socialising process through which both prescriptive group commitments and 'actual' approaches to the practice of research are internalised, and reproduced, within a given research community.

The subsections in the discussion, below, deals with the participants' discussion of each of these elements of journalistic practice. It is proposed that their identification of these dimensions of

knowledge production within journalism practice points, again, to the value that World Three knowledge may have for a process of critical engagement with historical examples of such practice.

### 10.2.1 The dominant paradigm

The participants generally explain that, since the mid-1990's, the distinctions in approaches to knowledge production that had traditionally existed between the Afrikaans and English press have increasingly dissolved. The suggestion is, in particular, that Afrikaans journalism has, since this time, moved closer to the 'liberal' position that had traditionally been associated with the English press. Froneman notes for example that the Afrikaans press is not "ideologically bound" anymore (Froneman, 2010). Diederichs also speaks about the dissolving of differences between the leadership of English and Afrikaans newspapers. He notes that, during the apartheid era, these differences seemed irreconcilable:

I mean I can remember years ago ... the editors and those type of guys they didn't speak to each other, the management, and so on – they were really hating each other (Diederichs, 2010).

Within the contemporary journalism environment, conflict still exists, but no longer concerns ideological or cultural identity. Instead, the emphasis is on commercial competitiveness:

... that sort of 'you and us' thing ... has become much less ... mostly I think because of the [ending] by the Afrikaans press of its political marriage to the ruling party ... as the new South Africa took shape after 1994, and it is only economically that the fierce competition and adversary continues (Diederichs 2010).

As Diederichs describes it, these tendencies should be understood in context of the adaptation of South African journalism to global trends, both in terms of the transformation of information technology and shifts within the commercial climate:

... the maturity of the global information system, the ... exposure to the world ... and the guys really adapted very smartly to that, I must say, you know the Afrikaans newspapers are really not standing back ... (Diederichs 2010).

Wasserman also describes one of the most important changes in South African journalism in terms of a shift from a prioritising the support of party politics to a concern with economic imperatives:

So that commercialisation I would think is the biggest shift that occurred ... when I entered ... I think politics and ideology was still the main aim of the newspaper, and today I think ... it's about making money, or surviving (Wasserman, 2010).

Participants suggest, furthermore, that the adoption of this shared liberal identity has been deliberately fostered by leadership within news organisations. A number of the participants speak of the role that SANEF has played in establishing such an approach, working across the divisions that had traditionally existed in South African journalism. According to Berger, SANEF's contribution in this regard has meant that "... you've got a hegemonic position in journalism that is ... fairly liberal"

(Berger, 2010). Diederichs describes this as breaking through traditional divisions that existed, within the journalistic community, between different race groups:

The role of SANEF there, for instance, I think the fact that there was one forum developed, you know, for everybody to be in ... that is definitely a major development for me, in the post ... apartheid environment (Diederichs, 2010).

Berger also speaks of the work that SANEF has done to establish an identity for South African journalism that transcends historical divisions, particularly those of race:

If I think back how divided the media landscape used to be, between the alternative press and the mainstream press ... then what happened was that the two editors' organisations fused; the sort of alternative black editors ... and the mainstream editors, so that you had SANEF being formed. SANEF has been really significant in terms of trying to keep a certain vision and a certain network going – for the better, you know? ... I think it has been very ... profound (Berger, 2010).

Some of the participants suggest that it is because of a conscious recognition of the need to ensure its own survival that the South African community of journalistic practice has come to share this 'liberal' understanding of the nature and purpose of journalism. This is explained not only in terms of economic survival, but also as a response to the government's attempts to place limitations on journalists' claim to freedom of expression. Diederichs describes this as a shared commitment to the democratic purpose of journalism and the right to freedom of the press:

I think there is ... greater harmony ... [with] the media groups and smaller newspapers as well of everybody claiming to support the constitution – you know, all that it stands for. And ... it also goes onto ... freedom of the press and so on ... from a journalistic point of view there is a lot of ... [collaboration] (Diederichs, 2010).

Berger also speaks of the adoption of a liberal identity as appropriate, given the need, within the South African context, to respond to the government's attempts to restrict press freedom:

I think ... liberalism can be very positive when you have authoritarianism. You know – liberalism to say – listen, you know, you can't close down the space for free expression (Berger, 2010).

According to Berger, SANEF has not only played a role in defending freedom of the press, but also articulated editorial codes to ensure that journalists produce stories that make use of such freedom for progressive purposes:

The other side of the challenge is well how do you actually use that space, for progressive change – and through SANEF, there'd been a few things where people had tried to do that (Berger, 2010).

He explains that such guidelines focus on the ideal of empirically grounded journalism, to ensure that the press's critique of government is not politically motivated:

They tried to say OK let's really try and improve sourcing ... you know let's try and be more objective in a sense of not playing political games ... (Berger, 2010).

Claassen also proposes that there is now far greater consciousness amongst the South African editorial leadership about the need for guidelines for good practice and systems for the regulation of such



practice than had been the case in apartheid years. Over the past fifteen years, editors have consistently participated in the articulation of such guidelines and systems:

This whole process of rewriting the ethical code of conduct of the South African ombudsman, the South African press council, the Broadcasting and Complaints Commission (Claassen, 2010).

Claassen notes that in print journalism, the appointment of ombudsmen has been an important feature, indicating an interest in more rigorous self-regulation. This is a recent development in the South African context, prompted by the growing realisation, within print journalism, that increased freedom requires social accountability:

When we were working as young journalists we didn't even know anything about ombudsmen – you know the first ombudsman in America was in 1968 when the *Washington Post* established an ombudsman. And it only came twenty five years later in South Africa ... and that type of awareness has been a vast change to when I started practicing journalism (Claassen, 2010).

As a result of such practices, newspapers now routinely publish corrections, or "... clarifications on page two". Claassen proposes that the debates that have taken place around the establishment of a media tribunal has also contributed to a consciousness that internal regulation by individual newspapers is not enough, since "... for the first time the penny dropped with journalists that you can't be your own judge". There is, because of this, a greater recognition of the need for systems that represent the journalistic community as a whole and also civil society, such as that of the press council, "... where there is ... an independent judge, and then your media representatives, and you societal representatives" (Claassen, 2010).

These descriptions suggest that the shared approach to the conceptualisation of journalistic knowledge that has now emerged within the South African journalism landscape is one that reconfirms the status of the 'liberal' model of journalism, referred to in Section One of this chapter. The adoption of this shared model appears to signal a rearticulation of South African traditions of journalistic practice, so that they no longer define themselves in terms of either racial identity or political affiliation. Instead, the identity of journalism is defined in terms of its status, firstly, as a commercial enterprise, and secondly as a professional occupation that operates in service of democracy. This rearticulation is understood as a process through which South African journalism locates itself within globally accepted understandings of journalism as a professional system of knowledge production. The participants explain at the same time that, within this model as it exists in South Africa, in context of ongoing threats to freedom of expression, the credibility of journalism depends particularly on its independence from political interest. There is, within this conceptualisation of journalism, a strong focus on the need to ensure the continued existence of freedom of the press, and to balance this with the maintenance of standards of professional practice.

There is, however, little reference within this set of agreements to the approaches to journalistic practice that emerged, in the 1980's in South Africa, as alternatives to a professional

model of journalism. It has been proposed, earlier in this chapter, that in context of these alternative approaches, it is possible to identify guidelines for reporting practice that question the status of the professional identity of journalism, and with this the ideal of journalistic objectivity. Such guidelines argue, instead, for the importance of socially situated or community based approach to journalistic practice. Also, within such approaches, journalists themselves are understood to play a role in the conceptualisation of journalism, and to do so in context of ongoing reflection and debate about the social implications of their own practice. The participants' description of South African journalism is, however, of an environment in which there seems limited space for such processes of reflection. Negotiations around the nature and purpose of journalism are not described as occurring within newsrooms, or to any great degree in context of an interaction with civil society. Instead such negotiation is the domain of editorial leadership, and is maintained through the articulation of professional codes of conduct and systems of administrative control.

Participants also argue that South African journalism has, within the current context, become far more constrained in terms of the role that it can play in contributing to democratic process. This relates, firstly, to the role that journalism plays in ensuring that there is a diversity of perspectives on social issues within the public domain. Harber proposes that there is in fact far less debate of political issues in journalism today than had been the case even at the worst moments of the apartheid regime. He sees this as reflective of the general conservatism of South African political culture, outside the context of journalism:

Look, ironically, when I first got involved in journalism in the '80's there was a wider set of political debates ... at the moment the debate is all sort of in the centre ... I think that not just of our media but of our country that the debate is all ... in the centre, we do not have a media of the left or the right. And certainly in 1985 there was a far right media and various bits of left wing media, there was the trade union media ... you know ... there was much greater diversity of debate (Harber, 2010).

The suggestion seems to be that South African society in general, and journalism more particularly, does not concern itself to the extent that it did in the 1980's with the contestation of constructions of society that become dominant within the public domain. An important reason for this seems to be the disappearance of a diversity of contesting representations of the South African social environment. Rumney suggests that the emergence of a hegemonic conceptualisation of journalistic knowledge operates similarly:

There is ... more of a convergence in journalism about ... the values of journalism. I think that was one of the interesting things about the 70's and 80's ... those decades. Is that ... newspapers for instance had widely contrasting views of what ... journalism was ... [now] I think there is a more homogenous [understanding] but I think there ... isn't as much of a debate about what journalism should be (Rumney, 2010).

These descriptions suggest that South African journalism has generally become more narrowly defined, both in terms of approaches to content and in relation to the extent that journalistic communities are characterised by critical reflection on the nature and purpose of journalism. It may

be that the shared commitment, in South Africa, to a 'liberal' model of journalism has contributed to this situation.

### 10.2.2 What journalists actually do: The practices of knowledge production

The participants' description of reporting practices in South Africa today generally suggest that there is a disjunction between journalism as it is practiced and the values and ideals articulated in the editorial guidelines and regulatory policies referred to above. Brand points out that such policies are grounded in a conventional understanding of the criteria for assessing the credibility of journalistic knowledge and argues that, in practice, South African journalism does not live up to these criteria:

You can go and look at the press code of conduct or the BCCSA code, and they're all in there. It's about accuracy, it's about not publishing rumours as fact, it's about getting ... comment from the other side, if you are going to say something negative. It's about thinking about how you use sources, especially anonymous sources, and that kind of stuff. So ...it's basically the guidelines that have existed for the profession for decades, and are common journalistic conventions throughout the world (Brand, 2010).

Other participants also speak of a general 'decline' in the maintenance of journalistic 'standards' in South African reporting practice. They argue that this cannot be explained simply in terms of the failure of individual journalists to meet the expected guidelines of practice. It should, rather, be understood in context of shifts that have taken place at a structural level within news organisations. These structural changes are understood to have resulted from the impact of contextual changes, particularly the heightened pressure of surviving in a competitive commercial environment.

A closely related issue that the participants return to is the attempt of news organisations to remain competitive by adapting to the potential offered by developments in information technology. Brand notes that a key advantage of new technology is that it allows news to be produced and circulated far more rapidly. As a result, news organisations compete with each other even more intensively around the speed of production:

...obviously the most significant change is ... the news cycle ... and the speed ... of news production – so there's a lot more competition now ... to get news out there as soon as possible (Brand, 2010).

This pressure to publish, along with the fact that organisations increasingly provide news on multiple platforms, impacts on the time allocated to systems of quality control:

There are a lot more media but far fewer journalists to produce news for them. And I think that's a huge change ... The only people that benefit from convergence are the publishers of news media. Journalists and I think the public don't really, because journalists now generally ... are in a much more competitive environment, and have a lot more work to do (Brand, 2010).

The participants speak, firstly, of the impact of these contextual factors on processes of editorial control at the final stage of news production:

[There is] less time to check facts, and less kind of luxury to say let's hold the story till we're sure of it because you know of the competition it has to get there (Brand, 2010).

Brand suggests that, in this context, the organisational culture of news organisations have shifted, so that the truthfulness of news content becomes a secondary concern:

...in terms of the kind of basic ... journalistic foundations of truthfulness and accuracy and so on I think we've ... gone backwards ... [there is] almost a kind of a lackadaisical view of ... you know just get it out there, it's OK, if we get it out there, we can just fix it tomorrow... (Brand, 2010).

Participants also speak of the impact of the contextual changes on approaches to fieldwork. It is suggested, in particular, that there are now far fewer examples of journalism that is based in substantial research. Wasserman points out that it is possible to identify examples such journalism, but these tend to exist as the exception to the rule, and as special 'projects':

Well obviously there are pockets of excellence, the amaBhungane of the *Mail and Guardian*, the *Sunday Times* ... one can point to those excellent projects (Wasserman, 2010).

More generally, however, changes in conditions of work have worn away journalists' ability to produce journalism that is based on in-depth research:

I think it's become much more superficial ... there is certainly a lack of investigative journalism ... the cutting of budgets, the commercial pressures, the increased workload on journalists – also the convergence of platforms where journalists have to work across different platforms – all of that I think have added to pressure on journalists – and have eroded... investigative and contextualised journalism (Wasserman, 2010).

Green suggests that an important shift that has taken place within contemporary reporting practices relates to the extent to which journalists establish relationships with different South African communities. Such relationships have deteriorated, despite the fact that access to many social environments in South Africa should now be far simpler than it had been in the years of apartheid:

Things have become easier to cover but also more difficult. You don't have restrictions, or the same level of violence, but we move in small circles. There is very little reporting in a community anymore, getting to know a community very well. We used to just go out and cover, network, so we knew well beforehand when something was going to happen. Now, papers have no presence in communities (Green, 2010).

Green understands this shift to relate, at least in part, to the diminishing of newsroom resources, and particularly the cutting back of staff. In the 1980's, it was, she explains, the availability of time that had allowed her to ground her own reporting practices in close relationships with particular communities:

... even though I had a ... fairly conservative news editor at the *Argus*... unless there was something that they really wanted me to do, on the diary, if I said to them, look, I'm just going to take a drive around Cross Roads, or I'm going out to the townships to see what's happening, that would be ... OK ... Now I think reporters very rarely go out of the office at all (Green, 2010).

Green's explanation suggests that she could articulate her own response to the 'official' journalistic paradigm at *The Argus* and negotiate for the kind of journalism that she believed in because of the availability of time. She was able, in this context, to establish relationships with communities that provided her with the authority to argue for stories that she felt should form part of the news agenda of the newspaper. In contrast, within the pressured environment of contemporary South African news organisations, journalists are not provided with such opportunities. Changes in the conditions of work have worn away the time journalists would have had, in the past, for critical reflection or for in-depth journalistic research that can inform such reflection. As Green describes it, because there are far fewer journalists in news teams, they have to be deployed in ways that do not allow for the substantial time in the field:

There are certain things you have to go out of the office for, the key things are ... court stories, or press conferences ... and you've got to have people cover those. So ... whatever scant staff remains can only do ... [phone interviews]. I think it's a pity ... I don't believe in a huge, bloated staff, and I think that you've got to have people who are productive all the time, but I also think that it's a pity ... that ... the media is not developing those kind of relationships with the communities [where they operate] (Green, 2010).

Participants also speak of a deterioration of journalists' ability to present credible analyses of the events on which they are reporting. One problem that they identify with such analyses is the tendency towards what Rumney refers to as 'opinionated' journalism. Rumney explains that, when he was working at the *Rand Daily Mail* in the 1970's, journalists were far more concerned with the need for to strive for a balanced approach to reporting:

... there was much more ... attempt at neutrality ... there was an attempt in the language and the approach ... And ... interestingly ... at least on the *Rand Daily Mail* there was a much greater ... attempt to ... be inclusive ... (Rumney, 2010)

He suggests that, within the current context, reporters do not guard to the same extent against the influence of their own values and assumptions on their reporting practices. This applies both to the way in which stories are researched and the language that is employed in news writing:

The problem is that [the injection of opinion] is unconscious very often ... more a lack of discipline, than people saying look I'm going to ... investigate from this point of view... and it is in the use of language ... and it's a lack of discipline – I don't find they make that extra effort (Rumney, 2010).

Participants also suggest that journalists have become less able to contextualise the events on which they report. Gideon De Wet points out that it is only by becoming familiar with the broader contextual issues that form a backdrop to events that journalists are able to report adequately on social issues. His suggestion is that journalists no longer have the necessary understanding of these broader issues:

When you look at level of reporting ... I would say sometimes you know it's a very flimsy job. In order to give context ... that word context is maybe one of the most difficult things to deal with. Because ... you don't always know what is going on, because you don't understand the context. How systems operate, and how systems work in the

country ... journalists need to report on these things, and yet they have not been exposed to these things (G De Wet, 2010).

One argument that is made, in relation to this, is that journalists are no longer provided with adequate opportunities to develop expertise in particular areas of content. As such, they are not encouraged to develop authoritative approaches to news production. Richards suggests a key reason for this is that many newsrooms no longer prioritise the allocation of specialised beats:

When I was there, there were a lot of ... journalists who had specific beats, and people could become expert in their field. And now ... its cut and cut and cut and nobody has a chance to develop an expertise – and I find that terribly sad (Richards, 2010).

Cowling also notes that reporting is “much more simplistic” than it had been in the 1980’s, with a tendency to respond to events in a “reactive” way. Like Richards, she argues that a key reason for this is the absence of beat reporting which during her own time as a journalist had played an important role in ensuring the substantial coverage of social processes:

If you were a ‘paper of record’, like *The Star* saw itself as a ‘paper of record’ – then there was this idea that you covered the bases. You covered what was going on in the courts, ... what was going in labour, ...in mining ... in the military ... because if you didn't cover them you weren't giving the news ... And it meant covering in quite a lot of detail these various parts of the society. That I see as gone. I doubt you'd have a mining reporter, nowadays, or ... a military reporter ... all those sorts of things (Cowling, 2010).

Cowling adds that these news ‘beats’ have been replaced by an interest in “... celebrity stuff, political scandal and infighting” (Cowling, 2010). The suggestion seems to be, here, that the editorial vision of news organisations is no longer informed by an interest in the exploration of social issues that provide insight into processes of development and democratisation. Kruger also suggests that journalism does not report adequately on the social experiences of people who live in poverty. Instead, the “... overwhelming majority of coverage ... is in the more affluent areas” (Kruger, 2010).

The participants account of the current state of play in South African journalism is one in which it is possible to observe a breakdown in the fundamental systems of news production, which leads to a general failure to maintain guidelines for reporting practice. This breakdown is understood by the participants to have occurred because of shifts within the broader economic context, which are placing far greater pressure on newsroom systems and resources than has previously been the case. In this context, any guidelines for reporting practice become difficult to implement, whether they are those of ‘fairness and balance’, ‘truth and courage’ or community-based, socially situated journalism. It is, then, becoming increasingly difficult for the South African journalistic community to maintain its own credibility through the routines and conventions of its own internal practices of knowledge production. The ‘self sufficiency’ of South African journalism as a system of knowledge production is then, perhaps, put into question.



### 10.2.3. Reproducing the paradigm: The transmission of knowledge about journalism

Many of the participants explain that the problem with staffing in news organisations is not only that the number of journalists has been reduced, but that more experienced people are moving out of journalism. Positions that would previously have been achieved only after years of work are now often occupied by much younger staff with relatively limited experience. This problem of ‘juniorisation’ is generally understood to contribute to the decline in the standards of journalistic practice. Claassen describes this as a trend that is affecting journalism across the media landscape:

They have laid off so many people in journalism at the moment. And the problem is that many senior people have gone. And that has changed the landscape with regard to journalism, and the juniorisation that is happening at journalism institutions, and that is all across the board from the SABC to Cape Talk to 702 to all the newspapers. And it affects the quality of the news that is being reported on (Claassen, 2010).

Participants comment on the impact that this trend has had on the extent to which established approaches to the practice of journalism are handed down from one generation of journalists to the next. Richards suggests that there are “... fewer older people who can lead and mentor the younger people coming in”. She notes that, as a journalism educator, she teaches students to expect senior staff to set exacting standards with regards to the way they practice journalism. This, she explains, was the way she had been inducted into journalism, first through her own journalism education and then when she first started working:

What I learned at university was ... the tiniest details count. You never get a thing wrong ... and that remained when I went into my first job, where I got called up before the news editor cause I got a name wrong ... I was ... yelled at for that (Richards, 2010).

She has come to the realisation, however, that newsroom culture has changed since she left journalism practice to work within the university environment. This was brought home to her when she took her students on a field visit to a local paper:

A while ago I took my students ... to [a] news conference ... they'd found a mistake [in the paper] and I'd taught them that, that every detail counts. And – the editor said to them, "oh I know, there are mistakes every day". And I found that quite shocking, and I wanted them to close their ears and not listen, you know? (Richards, 2010)

Richards’ interaction with students who have made the transition from her classroom to working in newspapers also leaves her with the impression that senior staff no longer provide reporters with rigorous mentoring:

I mean my students say they go into journalism and ... there are few people to guide them in the newsroom. You know ... you've learned stuff, but then, on specific stories you come up against problems, and you ... want to approach someone and ... discuss ... what that means and how it should be approached – and there's ... less of that. And ... less training within the work environment, less caring about ... the little details (Richards, 2010).

Brand suggests that it is the guidelines for the production of credible journalistic knowledge that becomes lost in this process:



When I started working as young reporter, there were experienced people in the newsrooms that could help me with stuff, and had good ideas about how to do stories and so on and there was also I think more of an emphasis on the basic kind of journalistic virtues of getting things right ... and ... getting ... the other side (Brand, 2010).

Green speaks, again, of the commitment to connecting oneself to communities as key to the approach to journalism that was passed down to her by senior journalists. This tradition of journalism is not being transferred to a new generation of reporters, because the people with such an orientation to journalism are no longer in newsrooms:

I think it's a form of journalism. I think a lot of the old people have ... gone, the people who kind of grew up on ... news [coverage] in the 80's ... they've left for one reason or another (Green, 2010).

Rabe proposes that the disappearance of experienced journalists from newsrooms is directly due to cost cutting, and that this trend is impacting on the traditional mentoring systems that have previously operated in such environments:

The biggest problem in our newsrooms today is that beginners are let loose ... they've got to jump into the deep end of the pool and they have to ... *versuip-slag swem*<sup>66</sup> there ... without proper mentoring. And that is why we have so many mistakes in our mainstream media ... and that is because media companies are rightsizing or downscaling ... to cut overheads, and where ... those journalists with experience were given packages, and ... that gravitas isn't there to take the beginners by the hand ... they don't have to be babysat, but they need mentoring – just someone to ask, you know (Rabe, 2010).

Wasserman also proposes that inexperienced journalists are not given the time to establish the necessary foundations on which good journalistic practice should be based:

The junior journalists that are pushed into the field don't have the same opportunities to develop their expertise, and their contacts, because they are constantly under pressure to produce ... across various platforms and produce stories that are commercially viable etcetera. So for me that led to a sort of poverty of journalism (Wasserman, 2010).

Claassen describes this as an erosion of the systems through which young journalists were traditionally taught the necessary expertise relating to the practice of journalism. He refers, as an example, to the conventions that helped to ensure that reporters learned incrementally how to report on political processes:

... in the old days, a political reporter for example had to work at the newspaper for five, six, seven, eight years – maybe ten years – before they went ... to report from parliament. They were senior people or middle senior people. Nowadays within one year, quite often you find the person reporting from parliament (Claassen, 2010).

A second example is the role that court reporting played in the general preparation of journalists:

Young journalists don't learn the trade of being accurate by going to courts of law. I personally feel every ... young journalist starting to work at the *Cape Times* or *Die Burger* or whatever should go for a year at least to sit in the supreme court or magistrate's

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<sup>66</sup> 'Versuip-slag swem' translates from Afrikaans as the 'to swim with a drowning stroke'. The reference is to someone who has been thrown into deep water without knowing how to swim.

court, just to get those basic things right, that if you don't get the facts right the magistrate will call you in (Claassen, 2010).

Participants suggest, furthermore, that journalism has now become undervalued as a profession, and because of this, the younger generation of reporters tend to move on to other occupations. Motsaathebe argues that because of this, even if journalists establish a sound approach to the practice of reporting, such knowledge becomes lost:

I have seen some journalists really growing – it is just a pity that in South Africa we have a situation where we don't have journalists maturing into the profession. You have a situation whereby as soon as someone has begun to learn the skills, begin to become a better journalist, they are head hunted or they move over to another profession (Motsaathebe, 2010)

Amner suggests that the problem relates to a deterioration of the financial prospects associated with journalism as an occupation:

There were people who used to go through their lives being journalists ... and then retiring at the end ... somewhere near the top of the ladder. They would stick it out for that length of time and it was a vaguely respectable thing to do. But it was also a thing that could sustain a family ... I don't think it's really that kind of job anymore. Unless you get into management very quickly. The idea of being a writer for fifty years is an anathema in South African journalism ... which is a really, really problematic development, actually (Amner, 2010).

Booyens describes this as a problem that is more acutely felt by newspapers, and one that relates to the extent to which journalists see a future for themselves in a profession in which the prospect of a respectable income and financial security remains low:

Print journalism – especially ... newspapers – can't hold onto journalists in the age group twenty eight to thirty two – when they get married, or they move to suburbia, or they get a kid, or when... material progress becomes important – that's where we lose the highly talented staff members now these days. So that's a huge challenge (Booyens, 2010).

In Motsaathebe's view, the problem of 'juniorisation' should also be understood in context of a failure on the part of management to take journalists seriously as contributors to the production of news. He notes that news organisations do not provide journalists with appropriate support systems:

...you find that in most newsrooms – and I am speaking from experience because I come from the field – we are just interested in getting the story from the journalist ... we are not interested in their welfare (Motsaathebe, 2010).

As an important example of this problem, Motsaathebe notes that news organisations do not take responsibility for the fact that journalists deal on a daily basis with issues that are highly distressing:

...some journalists are exposed to trauma ... but you will find in many newsrooms that they don't have ... some sort of support ... They go to cover that story, and from that story they are simply assigned to the next assignment. Other professionals, like the rescuers, they get briefed and prepared for the situation before they go there, and afterwards they are also evaluated to see if they are not affected, and if they are affected the situation is attended to immediately – they would get counselling. But I have not heard of any newsroom that do that – and that is a big problem (Motsaathebe, 2010).

The participants generally argue, then, that the problem of ‘juniorisation’, and particularly the departure of experienced journalists from newsrooms, has eroded the systems through which approaches to reporting are reproduced over time. This has, firstly, impacted on the extent to which new generations of journalists are assimilated into established journalistic paradigms. At the same time, it has restricted the potential for the articulation and consolidation of new paradigms of journalism. Green notes, in this respect, that the journalists who have left news organisations includes those who, in the 1980’s, articulated approaches to reporting that were grounded in the third set of guidelines referred to in this chapter – that of in-depth, socially situated journalism. Motsaathebe speaks, in similar terms, about journalists who were able, in the early 1990’s, to transcend the limitations of journalism as it existed within state broadcasting, to become more critical in their approach to reporting. With the departure of such journalists from newsrooms, alternative approaches to the established paradigm of journalism are not developed further, and become lost to new generations of reporters.

Within these descriptions, the suggestion is again that the systems through which journalism has traditionally sustained its own claim to credibility have, in recent years, begun to break down. As noted in the previous section, this process of erosion is understood to have impacted on the extent to which journalistic communities are able to maintain their own standards and guidelines for the production of credible journalistic knowledge. It would seem, from the descriptions above, that it is also becoming increasingly difficult to transmit knowledge of these conventions of practice from one generation of journalists to the next.

## **Conclusion**

The discussion in this chapter demonstrates that the participants generally describe South African journalistic practice in terms that are reminiscent of those adopted in meta-theoretical debates, such as the theorisation of social science and the social study of science. They identify a similar set of problems to those referred to in such debates with regards to the legitimacy of authoritative knowledge, and as part of this the relationship between knowledge and society. They speak of a spectrum of approaches to such problems that reproduce the distinctions made, within World Three debates, between the idealisation of objective and universally relevant knowledge and the acknowledgement of social construction. Their discussion of journalism as a form of knowledge production is also organised around a similar set of analytical distinctions between different dimensions of practice. This would suggest that it would be of value to apply concepts and frameworks drawn from metascientific debate to an evaluation of journalistic practice.

The participants do not, however, make detailed reference to the conceptual language of World Three in their reflections on journalistic practice. Indeed, as we have seen, some of the participants draw a sharp distinction between the discussion of journalism and the conceptual

language of metascience – particularly in context of debates that centre on the term ‘objectivity’. It has been proposed, in this chapter, that this response is representative of a position that is generally adopted within journalistic practice with regards to the irrelevance of academic study to the evaluation of journalistic knowledge. It forms part of an assertion that journalism can establish its own credibility internally, without reference to academic knowledge, through the routines and conventions of its own practices of knowledge production. This assertion applies, in particular, to what is referred to in this chapter as the ‘liberal’ model of journalism, which is understood to define mainstream journalistic practice internationally. The participants’ discussion also indicates, however, that the routines and conventions through which journalism maintains its own credibility are becoming difficult to maintain. This would suggest that journalism’s claim of self sufficiency is also increasingly in question.

It has been pointed out in this study that statements about the existence of a crisis of credibility within journalistic practice has formed part of the history of journalism since at least the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, both in South Africa and globally. The history of such criticism has focused, in particular, on the tension that exists in journalism between commercial and political interests and a commitment to public service. The participants’ evaluation of South African journalism can, however, be seen to represent more than a critique of this tension. The suggestion seems to be, rather, that the status of journalism as a viable commercial enterprise, as defined within the liberal model of journalism, is now in itself put into question. The pressure that is placed on mainstream journalism by the requirements of commercial survival has become so acute that its own internal systems of news management are in danger of becoming dysfunctional. The self-sufficiency of mainstream journalism as a practice of knowledge production is, within this analysis, up for debate.

This description of the state of play in South African journalism can be seen to resemble discussions referred to in previous chapters with regards to the international landscape of journalism. Such commentary is characterised by repeated reference to the impact of shifts within the global economic climate on the nature and purpose of journalistic practice. In context of such change, journalism is described as operating in environments characterised by dwindling resources and in conditions of rapid technological change, with advertising and marketing priorities increasingly affecting employers’ goals and the mandates of journalists’ work. The participants have suggested that, since the late 1990’s, South African journalism has located its own identity, as a system of knowledge production, within global approaches to the conceptualisation of journalism. It would seem that, at the same time, changes in the global circumstances of journalism are impacting in important ways on journalism as it exists in this country.

It is proposed in this study that the standard guidelines for the content and structure of university-based journalism education, as described in Figure 5, are designed to inform an approach to education that reproduces the liberal model of journalism, as described in this chapter. It is also argued that, in context of the shifts identified in the circumstances of contemporary journalistic

practice, both in South Africa and elsewhere, these guidelines may be in need of review. There is, in particular, a need to establish an approach to journalism that transcends the limitations of this model. If journalism education is to play a role in securing the survival of journalism as a social institution that operates in service of public interest, it should, instead, be geared towards the reconceptualisation of mainstream conventions of journalistic production.

The participants' evaluation of South African journalism, in this chapter, can be seen to suggest valuable terms of reference for such a process of review. Their comments are, firstly, of relevance to an evaluation of the role played, within the standard guidelines for journal education, by the requirement for integrating journalism education within liberal arts programmes. Many of the participants note that their own experience of such programmes has, indeed, played an important role in shaping their understanding of journalism. They speak, in particular, about the value of knowledge of World Three in enabling them to developing a conceptual framework for making sense of the social construction of journalistic knowledge. At the same time, their discussion of guidelines for reporting practice suggest that it is not this aspect of liberal arts courses that motivates their inclusion within the standard approach to journalism education. The suggestion is that, viewed from the perspective of the liberal model of journalism, such knowledge is not only irrelevant to the conceptualisation of reporting practice but exists in a relationship of antagonistic critique to such practice. It does so, in particular, because acknowledgement of the social construction of knowledge can be seen to put into question the commitment, within mainstream journalistic practice, to the ideal of objectivity. The value of liberal arts education within this model can, rather, be seen to relate to the role that it may play in aculturating students within a liberal conceptualisation of society. Within an alternative approach to journalism education that does not define itself only in terms of the liberal model of journalism it may be possible, then, to acknowledge the importance of meta-theoretical debates about the social construction of knowledge to the conceptualisation of journalistic practice.

The participants' discussion also have important implications for the role that guidelines for reporting practice can play within journalism education that no longer defines itself purely in terms of the liberal model of journalism. In Chapter Eight and Nine we have seen that it is primarily reporting guidelines defined by the principles of 'fairness and balance' and 'truth and courage' that have been prioritised within South African journalism education curricula. The participants' discussions of journalism as it exists in South Africa demonstrate that these guidelines do not lend themselves to an engagement with debates about the social construction of knowledge. It is only in context of the third set of guidelines, with its emphasis on in-depth research and socially situated knowledge production, that an acknowledgement of the value of World Three knowledge becomes possible. It may be, then, that reference to the third set of guidelines for reporting practice represents an important aspect of an approach to journalism education that can provide alternatives to the liberal model of journalism.

## CHAPTER ELEVEN: APPROACHES TO JOURNALISM EDUCATION

### Proposals for South Africa

#### Introduction

This final chapter examines proposals made by the participants with regards to the approach that should be adopted to journalism education within South African universities. The chapter focuses on the participants' understanding of the role that university-based journalism education can play in the interaction between academic knowledge to knowledge about journalism produced within the sphere of journalism practice. It expands on the proposal, in this study, that familiarity with World Three concepts have the potential to play an important role in facilitating such interaction. It also takes note of the argument, put forward in previous chapters, that an exploration of the relevance of World Three to the sphere of journalism practice tends to be constrained within the standard configurations of journalism education, as set out in Figure 5. The aim is, then, to consider the extent to which the participants' discussion of approaches to journalism education can be seen to point to strategies that can be adopted in order to address this problem.

Chapter Seven pursued this question in context of an examination of the role that World Three knowledge can be seen to play within the more general liberal arts component of students' education. In this next chapter, the focus is on the relevance of World Three to the 'professional' component of their education, in which academic study is directly concerned with journalism. It has been pointed out in this study that, within the standard guidelines for journalism education, the fields of Communication Science and Cultural Studies have come to represent 'default settings' for such teaching. It was further proposed that the disciplinary identity of these fields have tended to place limits on the relationship that exists, within journalism education, between knowledge of World Three and knowledge of journalistic practice. It is argued in this next chapter that, in order to address this problem, it would be of value to integrate a stronger focus within this professional component of journalism education on knowledge drawn from World Three. Such knowledge would assist students in reflecting on the position of different traditions of media scholarship within the available 'map' of conceptualisations of social knowledge in the academy. It would also enable students to reflect on the distinctions between social knowledge as it is conceptualised in the academic study of media, on one hand, and in journalism practice on the other. In this way, students would be better able to establish an autonomous approach to their own learning, in which they are able to navigate the World Two landscape of media scholarship and develop an understanding of the relevance of such knowledge to journalism practice.

Section One deals with the participants' understanding of the relationships that can potentially exist between journalism practice and the university, as two spheres in which to engage critically with journalism as a form of knowledge. The aim is to tease out the implications of this

comparison for the way in which the participants understand knowledge about journalism produced within these two spheres to interact with each other. The remainder of the chapter then deals with the participants' conceptualisation of the role that journalism education should therefore play in facilitating a relationship of critical engagement between these two spheres. Section Two considers this question in general terms, in context of the participants' understanding of the relationship that should be facilitated, through journalism education, between academic knowledge and knowledge of journalistic practice. Section Three focuses in more detail on their understanding of the different categories of knowledge that should be included in such an approach to journalism education. Throughout this discussion, reference is made to the implications for a reconceptualisation of the standard guidelines for journalism education, as outlined in Figure 5.

### **11.1 Journalism practice and its relationship to the university**

It has been argued in this study that the processes of contestation and generational conflict that characterise journalism practice can usefully be explained with reference to Schudson's description of the 'normal' dynamics that occur around the assimilation of journalists into the professional culture of news organisations. Such contestation can also be related to Hallin and Mancini's distinction between opposing definitions of the 'professional', in which an interest in the economic management of journalism comes into conflict with an interest in the role that journalism plays in service of the public good. The conflict that takes place in news environments can, then, be understood to play an important role both in the reproduction of accepted approaches to journalistic practice and, conversely, in their potential reconceptualisation. The study proposes that, for these reasons, an evaluation of the relationship between journalism education and journalism practice should include a consideration of the way that it engages with such processes of contestation. It is, in particular, important to consider whether such education can be seen to contribute primarily to the 'domestication' of newsroom staff, as argued by Carey, or whether it operates as a critical intervention into the conceptualisation of journalism practice.

The discussion, in this next section, examines the participants' assessment of the role that journalism education can potentially play in this respect. It is proposed that the contestation that takes place around journalism as of a form of knowledge is made possible, both within journalism and the academy, by processes of critical reflection on the nature of authoritative social knowledge. The discussion therefore deals with the participants' understanding of the extent to which such reflection can be said to take place within either of these spheres. It also asks whether, according to the participants, it is possible for such processes of reflection to influence each other.



### 11.1.1 Journalistic practice as a space for critical reflection

A number of the participants describe news organisations as environments characterised by a culture of critical reflection, and talk about such reflection as taking place in context of intellectual debate. Journalists are described as being engaged in discussions about the content of the news they are producing, the normative purpose of journalism, and the implications for their reporting practices. One instance of such description can be seen in Garman's comments about working at the *Natal Witness* in the early 1990's, as referred to in Chapter Seven. Garman notes that interaction amongst journalists in this environment was characterised by "... powerful, heated debates, of being at each others throats politically, but terribly ... exciting conversations" [see pg. 280]. Similar descriptions can be identified in other participants' comments on their own involvement in journalism practice. Pretorius explains, for example, that in her experience, reflective debate is an essential component of newsroom culture (Pretorius, 2010). Cowling, in turn, states that she has "... never been in a newsroom where there were not ongoing debates about these kinds of issues" (Cowling, 2010). In these participants' understanding, then, the distinction between journalistic and academic environments is not one in which the university has a monopoly on critical, reflective culture.

Participants generally note, however, that the critical debate that occurs amongst journalists takes place in a different way to similar discussions that they have observed in university environments. Pretorius explains that, in her experience of journalism, debate happens 'on the run', in between work commitments. Here, then, space is not formally put aside for intellectual discussion in the way that it would typically occur, based on her observation, in a university:

You reflect in a pressurised environment ... with a deadline hanging over your head ... your debates are in passing, in the corridor, in the kitchen, in the toilet. They're more often than not – not in an environment where it's ... a bit more ... [conducive] (Pretorius, 2010).

Garman's description of discussions in the *Natal Witness* newsroom suggests that here, too, the emphasis is on informal, spontaneous interactions. On one hand, then, intellectual debate and critical reflection is, in all three participants' view, an integral component of the daily activities of journalistic practice. On the other hand, it forms part of an organic newsroom culture, sparked by the mindset of particular journalists rather than being formally acknowledged or encouraged within the managerial systems of news organisations.

Participants speak, at the same time, about the extent to which the need for critical debate in newsrooms is rejected within the 'official' culture of news organisations. Pretorius explains, for example, that her own experience of newsrooms is one in which such debate is actively discouraged by management. Rather than being required to work reflectively, journalists are typically expected by their superiors to perform tasks without question or critique:

I think sometimes maybe work based [environments] won't tolerate debate ... you do it ... because you're told to do it. It's actually very ... dictatorial in the newsroom ... you don't have the space to negotiate (Pretorius, 2010).

The participants also comment on encountering this rejection of reflective practice in their capacity as journalism educators, as part of their interaction with news organisations. They note that they are told, by representatives of such organisations, that critical competencies are not what they look for in an entry-level journalist, and that students should rather spend their time learning the ‘basics’ of reporting and writing. Botma notes, for example, that news organisations routinely argue that a weakness in teaching programmes is the focus on reflective tools and normative concerns at the expense of the ‘practical’:

...that's where we get blamed from industry often is that they say that we teach students things that they won't be needing once they go and work ... they are too ethical once they leave us ... and they are too critical ... (Botma, 2010).

Brand also notes that, in his experience, news organisations do not expect the journalists that they employ to participate in critical debates about the nature and purpose of journalism:

They're not concerned with debates about ... alternative journalisms ... they want people that they can shovel into a system that can ... fill up their news hole ... (Brand, 2010).

It is noticeable that Brand, like Botma, describes critical engagement as it is perceived from the perspective of journalism as an ‘industry’, rather than journalism as a social practice dedicated to public service.

The participants’ comments can be seen to offer valuable perspectives on the way critical reflection has traditionally been approached within South African journalistic environments. Their comments suggest that such reflection has formed an important part of journalistic practice, in the particular context of informal – and often subversive – newsroom culture. At the same time, the formal systems of newsroom management tend to place limitations on such processes of reflection.

#### 11.1.2 Universities as a space for learning about journalism

The participants generally argue that universities offer an appropriate environment in which to prepare journalists for critical engagement with their social context. It is, certainly, in such terms that Stewart describes university-based education in general:

The wonderful thing about learning in the sense of going to university ... is that what you learn is that ... the more questions you answer, the more questions you have left to ask. Its the stirring of curiosity, its the understanding that things aren't just as they appear to be. That we live in an incredibly complex world, that we don't really understand all that well ... (Stewart, 2010).

Stewart argues that a commitment to the critical and reflective examination of one’s social context is of essential importance to the practice of journalism, and that universities are ideal environments in which to develop such a mindset. His argument is, in particular, that the university presents an opportunity to develop this orientation not by chance, but formally and systematically, in a space dedicated to critical reflection:

You can learn it on the streets, but it's far more efficient to learn it from people with enormous knowledge, and by reading lots of books. You can alternatively go out there and bang your head around, and all you might learn are a whole lot of prejudices without even knowing that that is what you are learning (Stewart 2010).

The suggestion, here, is that in the presence of dedicated mentors, and in an environment in which learning and reflection are formally acknowledged as essential activities, one would have a better chance to develop a rigorously conceived approach to critical reflection.

A number of the participants point out that the value of a university education, for journalists, can also be traced to the fact that, in contrast to journalistic practice, academic environments are relatively free from the constraints of 'industry'. The constraints that participants refer to here are, presumably, the relations of power that might exist within a news organisation, as well as the pressures of producing news under the competitive conditions of the market. Within an environment that is, supposedly, free of such constraints, it becomes possible, firstly, to consider the fundamental principles that inform journalistic practice. Secondly, it becomes possible to assess the credibility of such practice, even though critique might threaten its conceptual foundations. The opportunity to become involved in this critical examination of the underpinnings of journalistic practice is understood to be one of the unique benefits of journalism education:

[The university] sits in a space away. So that it can determine its own rationale – and that gives [us] the possibility to say we value the intellectual ... no matter how destabilising that is to a project ... we ... value it enough to open ourselves up to it ... and then I suppose the wish is that you can ... show students that there is value here ... in being away from that logic into another logic (Garman, 2010).

Richards suggests that this "space away" is of particular value to journalism because it allows students to articulate the normative foundations of their own approach to journalistic practice. This, she suggests, is something that they would not have the opportunity to do to the same degree once they are working in news organisations. The suggestion, here, seems to be that the preparation that students receive in context of journalism education can bolster them against the impact of the agendas of news as 'industry', allowing them to hold onto commitment to journalism as public service:

I think the best place to learn that is at a university. Because its slightly removed from the ... everyday realities of journalism. Because if you are imprinted with an ideological sense of the importance of journalism and the ethics of it... [you have a ] chance to stand back from it and look at what it should be ... what it has been ... and look at those ... aspects of journalism that ... imprint a certain kind of ideal on you. So that when you go into journalism... [those ideals are] then... upheld (Richards, 2010).

The participants also suggest that this "space away" allows for a slower, more considered approach to the production of social knowledge than is possible within the "everyday realities of journalism":

The fact that there's some space and time ... it's not quite the same as generating commodities that come out instantly, on a daily basis, or weekly or monthly basis – we've got commodities here that are coming out on a yearly basis ... There's a slower turnaround time, and so I think it enables you to begin to reflect more ... (Berger, 2010)

Pretorius notes that this slower process of knowledge production also opens up possibilities for a more participatory approach to the conceptualisation of journalism. In contrast to the newsroom that she describes in her comments, above, on her own experience of journalism practice, the expectation is not simply that students do as they are told. They are required, rather, to slow down, and to become involved in debate about the assignments that are given to them:

...in my short space ... in the academic environment I've learnt maybe ... you can achieve more if you ... also allow ... a project to become a topic for debate. OK – so you don't want to do this, why don't you want to do it ... this is what you could gain from it ... consider your options ... (Pretorius, 2010).

Pretorius suggests that, through such processes, students are able to establish a more consciously articulated understanding of their own practice, as journalists, than they would be able to develop in context of newsrooms.

Berger cautions, however, that the status of the university as a “space away”, and the deliberate slowness of its approach to knowledge production, can work against the ability of journalism education to engage with journalistic practice. He understands the “separateness” of academic environments as being both beneficial and detrimental to such engagement:

...it's a strength in the sense that it's like childhood, you know ... you can enjoy it and you [can retreat into it] but it's also a weakness because you are ... not engaging with a lot of stuff out there. It becomes a bastion ... an ivory tower, with you defending something against the outside instead of wanting to engage (Berger, 2010).

Berger proposes that it is, possibly, because of the protected nature of university environments that there has been a tendency, within journalism programmes, to reproduce established ways of thinking about journalism, even when these become outdated. He refers, here, to the example of *Four Theories of the Press*, which, as we have seen in Chapter Five, is representative of a conceptual framework that has been reproduced within journalism education across the world:

...some of those people are using ... Siebert, Peterson and Schramm, which is a 1956 perspective on the world, you know ... its kind of distressing ... we are all very ... slow to change, I suppose, and some are worse than others (Berger, 2010).

Berger also warns that there is a need for journalism educators to recognise that, within contemporary contexts, universities can no longer assume that their claim as authoritative centres of knowledge production remains unopposed. Because of such challenges, university-based journalism education could become increasingly marginalised:

If you wanted to learn [about] journalism ... you used to have to come to Rhodes University ... or Stellenbosch. Or Potch ... Now you can go to ... all kinds of private colleges ... you can follow bloggers ... and you can learn a hell of a lot ... if universities don't realise their ...monopoly on learning has gone, and ... start figuring out how to deal with this, I think some universities will really ... die ... (Berger, 2010)

There is, then, a need to reconsider the principles on which the standard approach to university-based journalism education has been based. Berger suggests, in this regard, that the accepted model of an undergraduate programme cannot be assumed to be the only legitimate approach to education:

It's one thing to have people here for three years, and of course that's a fantastic luxury for them, it's a fantastic educational opportunity from the educators' point of view. But ... more and more people can't do that – and ... more and more people need to still get ongoing education, and they'll do it ... remotely. And I think if ... schools don't take cognisance of that, then ... we're losing (Berger 2010).

The suggestion here seems to be that, as much as the accepted 'paradigm' of journalistic practice has become fundamentally challenged, the core agreements on which approaches to journalism within the university have been based are also up for debate.

It would seem, from the above, that many of the participants agree that universities operate as spaces characterised by a commitment to critical reflection because they are relatively 'free' from the constraints of industry. Such comments are based on their own experience of universities and the extent to which these spaces have provided them with the opportunity to engage critically with journalism in a way that was not possible for them within journalistic environments. It may nevertheless be that their description of the university as a "space away" serves to reconfirm a division between journalism education and journalism practice that can limit the possibility of engagement between these spheres. As the next section demonstrates, the participants themselves are conscious of the implications of this division for their own practice as academics and journalism educators.

### 11.1.3 The boundary in between

Johan De Wet proposes that journalistic practice is "technical" in its orientation, while academic practice is "scientific". The distinction that he draws, here, is that of knowledge as it exists in World One and World Two respectively. He understands this to mean that the production of journalism as a form of knowledge is approached as the performance of routinised tasks, while the production of academic knowledge is concerned with the uncovering of the fundamental principles that underpin social reality:

Look, in the end, it's a total different world, being a journalist as such, journalism also being a technique ... whereas in academe you are trying to get closer to truth. In other words you work with various theories. So ... a more scientific approach [rather] than a technical approach ... So there is a helluva difference (J. De Wet, 2010).

Many of the other participants do not agree with the assumption of a dualistic opposition between journalistic practice as routinised, and academic practice as reflective. They do, however, also describe journalism and the academy as being different worlds, and note that there are challenges involved in travelling between these worlds. The descriptions that they offer of their own attempts to bridge this divide suggest that the two worlds are framed by fundamentally different paradigms, and to exist in a relationship of incommensurability.

The participants speak, firstly, of the difficulties involved in making the transition from journalism practice to the academy. They note that the experience of doing so has made them aware that ideas about knowledge that have authority within the world of journalism are often untranslatable to the world of the university. Stewart notes, for example, that the compelling power that “courageous truth-telling” held for him at the *Rand Daily Mail* no longer made sense within an academic context:

...once you've crossed the line into academe then truth disappears like the morning mist and now all you have are the facts and even those can be in dispute (Stewart, 2010).

Wasserman describes his own introduction to the academic study of journalism in similar language, as an exposure to ideas which impacted on his ability to look back, and see clearly what had been obvious to him, as a journalist:

I suppose my experience clouded, in a way maybe, my view of journalism – in the sense that ... it's made me very critical of journalists, and journalism (Wasserman, 2010).

The suggestion, here, seems to be that it is the critical orientation of academic perspectives on journalistic practice that can ‘obscure’ the perspective of the practicing journalist. Stewart’s description implies, furthermore, that it is specifically a difference in the conceptualisation of authoritative knowledge, within these two spaces, that leads to this problem.

Garman talks about her transition into academia as being motivated by an interest in bringing the experience and knowledge of the practicing journalist into a university environment. In Chapter Eight, she explained that her impression had been that it was for this purpose that Rhodes had employed her, and she therefore assumed that she would be able to “... make a pathway for that kind of knowledge” within the university. She soon became aware, however, that knowledge from the world of journalistic practice and academic knowledge could not exist easily within one space:

...there was this ...war over these knowledges ... I didn't understand how those two sets of knowledge were going to ... battle each other [see pg 334].

Many of the participants agree that to move to the academy, as a journalist, means that one enters an essentially alien environment. Richards explains, for example, that she started working at Wits on a contract basis and then became progressively more involved in teaching, so that her transition to academia was an incremental process. She describes her experience of this transition, in jest, as being “sort of like a frog being boiled”. The image she invokes, here, is that of being immersed in slowly heating water, so that one does not at first realise that one has entered a space that is unfavourable to survival (Richards 2010). Indeed it would seem from the participants’ description of their own migration from journalism to academia that the university required of them to reconstruct their identity as practitioners so that, for all intents and purposes, they cease to exist as journalists. They are expected, as part of this process, to review their own value systems, interests and loyalties, to reject aspects of their world views that had been essential to their work as journalists, and to take on new priorities. Some participants note that they were not prepared to make this transition completely,

and as a result, ended up – at least in their own estimation – not meeting the requirements of their new work environments. Kruger explains, for example, that he found himself unable to commit to ‘academic’ pursuits to the extent that the university seemed to require. To do so would, in his view, have impacted on his ability to remain connected to the world of journalistic practice:

I'm not sure that I'm really an academic, at times ... I've kind of slipped into this role, and there are some aspects that I think are very ... useful and others that are quite difficult. The classic academic has got a long list of academic publications and I don't ... I suppose I continue to [prioritise the world of practice] ... I think professional practice and real newsrooms and people writing stories matter a great deal. So ... I am interested in what happens outside (Kruger, 2010).

Garman notes that, having made the transition to the academy, she had to relinquish her membership to the community of journalistic practice. This was, she explains, not only because she was no longer a working journalist, but also because she had to change her own identity:

I can't really be an insider anymore, because I'm just not. You know – I'm not there. But also, the kind of practitioner I am is not the practitioner I was when I left [journalism practice] ... I've become a very different kind of ... writer, thinker... (Garman, 2010).

The participants comment, secondly, on the challenges involved in journeying back from the academy to journalism practice. Here it is suggested that, as much as ideas from journalism practice do not translate with ease into academia, those that are generated within universities do not easily find acceptance in the sphere of journalism practice. One context in which this issue is discussed is in relation to their attempts to introduce the insights that they have gained in academia to journalists, either through publishing their work, or in direct conversation. Johan de Wet argues that such knowledge is not always recognisable, within the world of journalism, as relevant to practice:

Much of what I preach ... would probably be too esoteric, maybe too unpractical for the on-job situation ... so it is a total different world being a journalist and being an academic. Totally different (J De Wet, 2010).

Brand regards the difficulties associated with ‘connecting back’ to journalistic practice as a necessary outcome of the transformation of journalists into academics. It is, in his view, the ‘theoretical’ nature of academic work that creates the disjunction:

I think it's inevitable because ... you start working in academia, and even if you come from a journalistic background, the longer you are here, the further you move away from that ... and you lose touch ... the more you ... start ... theorising about things ...(Brand, 2010).

In Brand's view, journalists clearly benefit from entering academic environments to study journalism, and, in this way, gain important insights into journalism. There is, however, little point in attempting to introduce such insights into journalistic contexts:

You see I don't think they do [translate]. Look, I mean it's a highly stimulating arena to be in, as an academic. But ... that kind of discussion isn't taking place in industry ... (Brand, 2010).



Botma also notes that the journey into academia can be of benefit to journalists, because they become uniquely placed to synthesise knowledge of practice and academic knowledge. Like Brand, he believes that such learning is a "...personal discovery type of thing to understand practice better, and that's obviously very valuable". He, too, argues that the insights that 'journalist academics' gain in this way are nevertheless of little relevance to the world of journalists:

...in my experience, ... it's basically two different worlds ... because ... we as academics at university, we've got our own agendas ... I can do the research that I can do, because I have been in practice, but how much of that will be taken up, or valuable to or even interesting to practice ... is debatable (Botma, 2010).

Garman also explains that, when she now speaks to practicing journalists, she often finds that she censors herself because her experience has shown that they would not regard the perspectives that she has developed as an academic as having credibility:

I'm conscious of the fact that ... if you are totally honest with people that sit in the industry you are going to be dismissed as somebody who has lost it ... (Garman, 2010).

According to a number of the participants, journalists respond, in such situations, by pointing to the challenges that they face in being able to implement the idealised conceptualisations of journalism with which academics concern themselves. The suggestion is then often that, from the sheltered perspective of the academy, it is not possible to understand the 'realities' of journalistic practice. Such comments are directed not only at 'pure' academics, but also individuals such as Garman, who have experience of these realities:

Look, it makes for often a very frustrating place inside my own head ... Because I often sit in situations where I am being told ... but you don't understand the constraints of daily journalism – actually I do understand them incredibly well, and I've got a very different approach to it now. But those are very difficult conversations (Garman, 2010).

The worlds of journalistic and academic practice are described, by many of the participants, then, as if they are environments that are incompatible with each other. Their experience of such incompatibility also suggests that it originates from a difference in approach to the conceptualisation of authoritative social knowledge within the two spheres.

Garman suggests that it is, in particular, the critical orientation of academic study that leads to such breakdown in communication. Her comments suggest, again, that it is specifically a difference in approach to the conceptualisation of authoritative social knowledge that leads to this problem. Her impression is that members of journalistic communities tend to be resistant to critical evaluation of their practices because such critique is destabilising to their work:

...to have the kind of conversation of ... what underlies this entire enterprise ... the kind of conversation we would easily have [inside the university], about – what's this knowledge system all about, and what underpins this ... is not a possible conversation with somebody in the industry (Garman, 2010).

In Garman's view, then, journalistic environments do not lend themselves to an examination of the fundamental assumptions on which conceptualisations of knowledge is based – and here she includes

the example of the intellectual debate that she experienced at the *Natal Witness*. Even though these debates involved an interrogation of established approaches to journalism, in the end, they stopped short from an interrogation of the conceptual principles that inform journalistic practice. Indeed, as we saw in Chapter Eight, this was why Garman had initially chosen to make the transition to academia. In her view, the established conventions through which the journalistic community described itself worked against the emergence of a more reflective tradition of journalism:

I mean one would have thought having gone through the political revolution ... that [an] ... opening up of positionality and self reflection would have happened, but I don't think it's happened. I think that thing, whatever that ideology of journalism is, is very ... resistant to ... external unwinding (Garman, 2010).

Garman also notes, in Chapter Eight, that once she entered the university she came to understand that critical engagement with journalism as a form of knowledge can in fact go much further than she had imagined possible. While her original understanding was that you could “modify practice” through such engagement, she now recognised that you could “... undo thinking ... or rearrange the intellectual underpinnings of an entire ... practice ...” [see pg 334]. Within this analysis, resistance to critical engagement in the sphere of journalism practice is not purely rooted in what De Wet calls the “esoteric” nature of academic knowledge, and what Brand and Botma refer to as the irrelevance of “theory”. It originates, rather, from the fact that such engagement is fundamentally destabilising to existing paradigms of journalism.

In Chapter Ten, it was proposed that resistance to World Three debates within journalism practice originates from the strategies through which the liberal model of journalistic practice defines its own authority. It was pointed out that within this model the authority of social knowledge is understood to be determined by the requirements of objectivity. Resistance to World Three knowledge can, then, be seen to centre on debates that operate as a critique of this understanding of authoritative knowledge. It was proposed, furthermore, that such resistance does not apply equally to alternative approaches to journalistic practice, in which the primary reference is to a socially situated approach to authoritative knowledge. It may then be that the relationship of incommensurability that the participants describe, above, is specific to journalism as it exists within the liberal model. This points, again, to the importance of establishing an approach to journalism education that does not define itself purely in relation to the liberal model of journalism. Such education should, in other words, include a focus on a wider variety of approaches to journalistic practice.

As we have seen, the participant’s description of journalistic practice also suggests that, within the liberal model of journalism, approaches to journalistic knowledge is not monolithic. Journalism practice is, rather, characterised by ongoing contestation between different approaches to journalistic knowledge. This would imply that, in order to facilitate a relationship of engagement between journalism and the academy, it is of value for journalism education to identify those spaces within journalism practice in which openness to critical engagement can in fact be seen to exist.

## 11.2. Conceptualising critical engagement: A position of supportive critique

In their discussion of the way in which journalism education should relate to the sphere of journalism practice, the participants make reference to the importance of a conceptualisation of journalism that draws on different categories of knowledge about journalism. They speak, in particular, of the need to recognise both the value of knowledge of journalism that is generated through its practice and the knowledge that is gained through its academic study. The argument is, then, for an assimilation of 'World One' knowledge of journalism practice with the 'World Two' knowledge of journalism scholarship. This approach can be read as an attempt to develop a language of 'praxis' for journalism.

Many of the participants refer, in their discussion of the relationship that can be drawn between these categories of knowledge, to their own 'dual membership' to journalism and the academy as spheres of practice. They suggest that their experience of working both as journalists and academics has shaped their understanding of the relationships that can be drawn between these spheres in context of journalism education. One of the proposals that the participants make in this regard is that, from this position, they are able to articulate a more 'supportive' form of critical engagement with journalism to that which is typically foregrounded in university settings.

The first subsection, below, deals with the participants' descriptions of what such supportive critique would involve. The second subsection focuses on their general evaluation of the role that journalism education can play in contributing to supportive critique. The third subsection deals in more detail with the specific proposals that the participants make about ways in which journalism education can operate as supportive critique.

### 11.2.1 Critical engagement as supportive critique

The participants explain that there is a tendency, within academic environments, to view journalism 'from the outside', as an object of study to be clinically deconstructed. Within such critique, journalism then also tends to be represented as a social practice that is fundamentally flawed, when measured against normative principles. Wasserman notes that this approach to the study of journalism often sets itself up in a relationship of antagonism with its object of study. He explains that he does not identify with this approach:

I know that there's ... something we refer to in Media Studies as the 'I Hate Media' School of media [study] ... I wouldn't see myself as [belonging in that camp] ... (Wasserman, 2010).

Within the alternative approach, critical engagement with journalism becomes concerned with the articulation of guidelines for improving journalism as a social practice. Wasserman describes his own position in relation to the study of journalism in this way:

I suppose my overall approach to journalism would firstly always be a critical and sceptical one, but at the same time ... supportive, if that is not a contradiction. (Wasserman, 2010).

Wasserman's suggestion also seems to be that the 'I Hate Media School' tends to reproduce a wholesale disapproval of journalism that exists more generally within public debate. He proposes that his own experience of working as a journalist allows him, instead, to understand journalism 'from the inside'. Because of this experience he is, in particular, sympathetic to the challenges that journalists face in dealing with the constraints of everyday practice:

I know that ... some of the criticism that the public often level against them ... for dumbing down, or whatever the case may be ... is also rooted in the fact that they work under ... time pressures and increasingly also under economic pressures. So it gave me ... an appreciation for the conditions under which journalists work ... Many of them are trying their level best to deal with their job ... (Wasserman, 2010).

Wasserman approach to the academic study of journalism appears to include an acknowledgement of the validity of World One knowledge of journalism, based in experience of practice. He explains, however, that this does not stop him from adopting a critical stance towards journalism. He describes this as supportive critique:

I still see myself as a type of insider ... with one foot in that world. I would never see myself as completely outside of it. But at the same time I also see my responsibility and my role as an educator and as a scholar to remain critical. And I would say ultimately that the role of that sort of criticism is to improve journalism. So I am still loyal to journalism at the same time as being critical of it (Wasserman, 2010).

The conception of supportive critique can also be identified in other participants' description of the role they see themselves playing, as academics, in relation to journalism and they, too, make repeated reference to the need to acknowledge the constraints that journalists face in their daily practice. In the previous chapter, we have seen that it is possible to identify references to two categories of such constraint in the participants' understanding of journalism practice. On one hand, they refer to the restrictions of working within a commercially defined environment, within which journalists have to contend with the limitations that are placed on resources such as time, staff, money and space for content. Scarcity of resources is then also understood to have become an acute problem within the contemporary context, due to escalating economic pressures and the 'decline' of news media. On the other, they speak of constraints represented by ideological frameworks and editorial agendas and the relations of power through which these are maintained in news organisations. Wasserman refers, above, to the first category, but both within his own discussion of the purpose of journalism education and that of other participants, acknowledgement of the second category also comes into play.

In discussing how journalism education can contribute to such supportive criticism, the participants often point to the need for engagement between the knowledge of journalism that is produced, respectively, through its practice in news organisations and its study in academic contexts. This can be understood to involve an assimilation of knowledge about journalism as it exists in World One and World Two into one coherent approach to the 'improvement' of journalism. One important requirement for the achievement of such improvement is then understood to be the adoption of an

‘insider perspective’. Garman notes that her background in journalism provides her with the necessary terms of reference for this task:

...that's always informed for me by my own experience. So I've always got this kind of rich store of stuff that I can go back into, and I can unpick that ... and then I bring this knowledge to bear on [my thinking], you know? (Garman, 2010)

As such, the emphasis is not on the ‘outsider’ approach described above, in which critical engagement operates primarily as the deconstruction of journalism. Instead, knowledge drawn from World Two and from World One can be seen to inform each other, as part of a process that could be called the ‘reconstruction’ of journalism.

### 11.2.2 Journalism education: The potential for supportive critique

One context in which the participants talk about assimilating academic knowledge and knowledge of practice is within their own teaching. Journalism education is recognised to have this potential because students can, in context of teaching programmes, articulate an approach to journalism that can then guide them in their practice once they are employed in news organisations. Many of the participants suggest, however, that journalism educators often run into severe challenges in facilitating a flow of ideas from the university to journalism practice through their teaching. One such challenge is the perception, amongst students, of a disjunction between academic knowledge of journalism and the knowledge of journalism that is generated in practice. Brand proposes that educators should, in fact, accept that this is a necessary disjunction, originating from fundamental differences in the nature and purpose of the two categories of knowledge:

I think that disconnect becomes inevitable ... I'm not sure if it's necessarily ... a bad thing, but it does ... have implications in terms of what we want to do with our students (Brand, 2010).

The participants’ description of their experiences of teaching as captured in in Chapter Eight and Nine nevertheless suggests that educators’ ability to relate academic knowledge to the practice of journalism very much depends on the specifics of context. In many instances, participants did, indeed, experience a disjunction within their teaching between academic knowledge and knowledge of practice. At the same time, however, they describe moments in history of journalism education when the relevance of academic knowledge to media practice seemed both obvious and important. It would seem, then, that the extent to which students become invested in an engagement with the more academic components of coursework is often dependent on historical context. One important manifestation of this difference in context is, as the participants describe it, the contrasting ways in which different generations of university students have responded to their coursework. A number of the participants note, in this respect, that the generation of students that they taught during the 1980’s were more open to an engagement with academic knowledge than the students that they are now responsible for. In Chapter Nine, Steenveld, for example, describes a disinterest amongst students in

the academic study of media that contrasts strongly with their response such teaching in earlier years. Tomaselli also talks about this difference in the orientation of particular generations of students, and, like Steenveld, he argues that this can be explained in relation to a shift in political and social context. He suggests that, in contrast to the contemporary generation, students in the 1980's were invested in the need to engage critically with their political environment:

...because nobody could escape it ... [whether] you were for or against it, didn't matter – the fact is you had to make sense of it (Tomaselli, 2010).

The primary identification of the current generation, in contrast, is with commercial culture:

Now the students are just into consumption. So they might actually have lost the analytical ... motivation (Tomaselli, 2010).

Pinnock, similarly, identifies a disinterest, amongst the students that he observes today, in a critical engagement with knowledge, either of journalism itself or its social contexts. Like Tomaselli, he suggests that such students have not been confronted, in the same way as the 1980's generation, with political context. Instead, they are primarily interested in ensuring their own marketability:

...the kids ... are very disoriented. Often they are quite undermotivated – increasingly, I fear ... the '80's sharpened some people's political focus and made them want to know. In the present environment the earning of money seems to be the prime motivator ... they will ask you how much can you earn if you take this course. But that is not a great motivation for endeavour, actually (Pinnock, 2010).

The suggestion seems to be, then, that an engagement between academic knowledge and knowledge of practice only becomes possible with the acknowledgement, by students, of social and political context to the practice of journalism.

It is possible to detect, in these participants' comments, not just a perception of generational difference between groups of students, but also an identification of a 'generation gap' between the participants, as journalism educators, and their own students. It may then be that, as much as the environments of journalism practice are characterised by generational conflict around the conceptualisation of journalistic knowledge, the same can be said of university-based journalism education. Botma argues that it is important that journalism educators remind themselves that the concerns that new generations of students bring with them into the classroom may very well be legitimate, and should be acknowledged as such:

...is it not in a sense inevitable that younger generations will find that some of the things they learn are valuable and some of the things that they learn aren't really preparing them – because how can we as people coming from a previous generation know what will await them in future? (Botma, 2010)

He argues, at the same time, that this does not mean that journalism educators should be guided, in their approach to teaching, purely by the standards and priorities of their students. In Botma's view, "... you have to try and teach them what you think, what you have learnt is valuable (Botma 2010)". Indeed, in his experience, journalists who become academics are well placed to convince students of

the relevance that academic knowledge might have to journalism, and in this way to "... get students to think about the theoretical things". Garman, too, proposes that her task, as journalism educator, involves an attempt to pass on to students what she has learned from her own experience of being both a journalist and an academic. She notes that such "generational" knowledge may be difficult to communicate exactly because it takes a lifetime to establish and articulate:

I have a sort of quandary in my head, if it took me this long to learn this stuff, are we going to package it and give it to other people in three years ... Cos some of the stuff doesn't come to you without the hard struggle of your own learning ... And you cannot minimise that ... I am talking about, you know, my adult life ... And ... just because I see things in a particular kind of way doesn't mean I can get other people to see them like this ... (Garman, 2010).

It is noticeable that both Garman and Botma's comments point to an understanding of journalism education as a process of negotiation, in which different ideas and orientations can be seen to contend with each other. Furthermore, in both instances, the emphasis is not purely on the transmission of 'technical' skills that may ensure the 'employability' of students, but also on a far broader shaping of students' identity. Indeed, Garman states this emphasis explicitly, in her explanation of her approach to teaching:

I want them to understand that journalism ... it's not just a subject that you walk in the door to come and acquire so that you can go and [pursue] a career ... what you are learning is about who you are in the world, and not just about ... what kind of job you are going to go and do (Garman, 2010).

Within this understanding, university-based journalism education involves not only the shaping of students' identity as journalistic practitioners, but more generally their identity as members of society.

A problem that remains, according to many of the participants, is the resistance within journalistic environments to the validity of exposing students to such insights. As noted in the previous section, Botma and Brand both suggest that news organisations tend to dismiss the importance of such insights to the preparation of future employees. This means, again, that journalism education cannot function effectively as a conduit through which concepts can flow from academic environments into news organisations:

The thing is I can't really see ... how you relate that academic ... part past teaching into practice ... there is a sense that some people ... are not really interested if we get too theoretical ... so the connection between theory and practice ... I am not sure (Botma, 2010).

As we have seen, however, the participants' comments also suggest that the incommensurability of academic and journalistic approaches to knowledge relates not to the irrelevance of journalism education, but rather to the 'destabilising' impact of critical engagement on established paradigms of journalism. The implication is, furthermore, that this is true even if such engagement involves, as Botma describes it, a synthesis of academic knowledge and insights from practice.



### 11.2.3 Supportive critique: Putting it into practice

A number of the participants suggest that journalism education needs to be centrally concerned with spelling out the principles and assumptions on which particular, historically situated approaches to journalistic practice are based. The suggestion seems to be that within communities of journalistic practice, the conscious articulation of such principles is often neglected or even avoided. A critical approach to journalism education requires, however, that such articulation takes place. Pinnock describes his own experience of teaching at Rhodes in the 1980's as the discovery of a space in which such articulation became possible:

The only way to really understand journalism in my estimation is to ... teach it. You ... are it until you teach it, and then you have to get a perspective – to step back and say what is this thing. So it was a terrifying, wonderful, exciting process...(Pinnock, 2010).

Garman also explains that her understanding of guidelines for good teaching prompted her to spell out the “intellectual underpinnings” of her understanding of knowledge:

I don't think it was until I started teaching [that I started to reflect on the nature of journalism as a form of knowledge]. Because teaching then forces you ... to articulate a position ... Whereas, when you live day to day, you can just draw on ... whatever sort of resources of ingenuity you have to deal with the situation that arises. But ... I soon realised that you can't just walk into a classroom and start spouting something, you know. You've actually got to do the ... working out where your own head is... (Garman 2010).

Within this approach, World Two knowledge of journalism is not framed as the application of academic ‘theory’ to journalistic ‘practice’. Instead, reflection on the principles on which knowledge is based can be seen to operate as a way of making visible the theoretical foundations of journalistic practice. The assumption seems to be that, in such a context, it becomes possible to establish a more interactive flow of ideas between World One knowledge of practice and knowledge generated through the academic study of journalism. It would seem, however, that the task of articulating a ‘theory of practice’ may pose some challenges. It is in such terms that Pretorius describes her own experience of teaching journalism:

...look it's quite hard, I've discovered, to transfer skills, knowing how to do things, into theory. Whereas ... we often get confronted with theory that you have to transfer into practice. So that's quite hard actually (Pretorius, 2010).

One reason for the ‘difficulty’ that Pretorius describes here may be the tendency within academic communities to define the study of journalism as the application of World Three or World Two knowledge to the critical deconstruction of journalism. The focus within such analysis is not on the articulation of a constructive and enabling approach that journalists can adopt to their own practice. The incommensurability of academic knowledge and knowledge of practice does not, therefore, only result from a resistance within journalism itself to open reflection on the theoretical foundations of its own practice. It originates, equally, from established approaches to the conceptualisation of journalism within the academy.

The participants also propose that engagement between knowledge of practice and academic knowledge needs to involve more than the processes of study and education that takes place inside the university. Garman, for example, notes that there is a need for ongoing dialogue between members of the communities of practice situated, respectively, within journalism and the academy:

I think it's very important to keep the conversation [going], you know, so that you don't ... break the conversation (Garman, 2010).

She suggests that such communication becomes possible when one recognises that journalism, both as a community of practice and as a social institution, is not monolithic. The point, here, is that in 'keeping the conversation going', educators need to remain sensitive to the fact that members of journalistic communities are differently positioned in relation to their practice. There are, also, certain aspects of that practice that journalists would be more willing to expose to critique than others:

Look, there are ... people all over the spectrum, so there are some things you can talk about. And there are some things people are very open to modifying and thinking about ... (Garman, 2010).

It is noticeable, within the above, that Garman assumes that the 'conversation' that needs to take place between journalists and academics is necessarily concerned with the transformation of journalism, or at least with the process of imagining different ways of practicing journalism. She then seems to suggest that, within the current South African context, discussion between journalists and academics about such transformation remains restricted by the degree of openness that exists, within the sphere of journalism, to the critique of practice.

Such analyses seem to suggest that dialogue between journalism practice and university-based journalism education can remain limited by a set of assumptions about the terms of debate. One such term, which the participants understand as strongly expressed by members of journalistic communities, concerns the role that each of these two spheres are supposed to play in reproducing journalism as a social practice. A number of the participants refer, in this context, to the supposition within journalistic communities of practice that the 'education' of journalists begins and ends within journalism education programmes. They suggest that journalism educators and media managers should, instead, accept such education as a mutual responsibility. Motsaathebe notes, for example, that both news managers and educators need to take responsibility for problems that they identify in the way that journalism is currently practiced. In his observation, the tendency within both journalism practice and journalism education is, instead, to adopt a position of disengagement, and to place responsibility on the shoulders of the 'opposition':

...editors ... when there is something wrong ... with the journalists, they will point fingers at journalism educators ... and ... we are having educators pointing fingers at the newsrooms ... which is not an ideal situation where we are having people coming in as critical spectators (Motsaathebe, 2010).

In Motsaathebe's view, any 'problems' that exist in journalism practice can only be addressed if both news managers and educators are to relinquish the position of the 'critical spectator', and instead take shared responsibility for the education of journalists:

Both of them, if they work together ... towards this shared project, they will be able to come up with something that will ... take journalism – South African journalism especially - to a new level... (Motsaathebe, 2010).

Kruger also describes learning about journalism as a continuum that may start in the academy, but should continue throughout a journalist's experience of practice:

...it does impose a kind of requirement on workplaces to maintain [learning about journalism] as a sort of culture. But ongoing, 'cos you know I don't think it is something you kind of absorb and then it's done (Kruger, 2010).

Richards suggests that a key category of knowledge to which students are exposed to within the academy is that of normative guidelines for the practice of journalism. She argues that without an acknowledgement by editorial leadership of the validity of such knowledge, much of the learning that graduates gain from educational programmes cannot become fundamental to their practice as journalists. She describes this as a conscious commitment by news managers to the mentoring of journalists in the implementation of normative principles, so that the learning that takes place in tertiary education and work environments 'balance' each other:

It ... needs to be upheld within the work place, and underlined by mentors in your everyday [work] – because otherwise it is rather easy for that to be lost ... it's in the balance between those two (Richards, 2010).

Within this analysis, the assumption seems to be that the extent to which students are able to draw on academic knowledge in their approach to their own practice as journalists depends on the acknowledgement of the validity accorded to such knowledge in work spheres. Kruger, who also argues for such continuity between journalism education and the work sphere, proposes that the establishment of a reflective approach to the production of journalism must form part of this continuum. For this to become possible, news managers must encourage a culture of 'openness', in which critical self consciousness becomes an accepted part of practice:

A lot depends on what happens in the work place ... I think that people in leadership positions need to establish and maintain that kind of tone ... [one] that is ... self critical – which allows for people to admit when they have made mistakes (Kruger, 2010).

Earlier in this chapter, we saw that some of the participants argue that critical reflection is, in fact, integral to the daily activities of journalistic practice. The suggestion was, however, that such reflection is maintained by individual journalists rather than forming part of the managerial systems of news organisations. The adoption of deliberately 'reflective' approach to editorial leadership would, presumably, require that this culture be replaced by a more democratic, participatory approach to the conceptualisation of journalistic practice. As such, the proposals that the research participants make

in this respect can be seen to engage with the second category of constraint referred to above; that of the power relations through which editorial agendas are reproduced in news organisations.

A number of the participants speak, in this context, of the need to conceptualise of journalism education as continuing within the workplace, through a deliberate process of mentorship and supervision facilitated by the editorial leadership of news organisations. Motsaathebe talks about this process as it applies to the induction of graduates into news organisations:

...when the student first [arrives] from a university or from any institution, [managers] must be prepared to invest something in the form of orientating that particular student, you know – training, basically ... hence I talk about journalism education and practice as a symbiotic relationship ... it is very important for that type of relationship, so that the ideas fit into each other [better] ... (Motsaathebe, 2010).

Booyens, in turn, argues that the ‘educational’ approach to management should not only apply to the induction of journalists but also to later stages in the development of a journalist’s approach to their own practice. He proposes that it is possible to conceptualise of moments in the work history of journalists as different phases in the development of their practice, and that each phase is concerned with distinct categories of knowledge about journalism. In the early stages, when journalists establish themselves as reporters, the focus is on the attainment of a simple knowledge of journalism that can be easily absorbed, if the individual involved is willing to do so. Booyens’ description of such learning suggests that the emphasis, here, is on the basics of reporting practice:

I think, what happens in journalism, is the initial learning curve ... is very quick. If that person doesn't grasp the fundamentals within a year, then chances are they won't be a very good journalist ... the fundamentals of ... writing, and ... news gathering and ... presentation (Booyens, 2010).

Booyens suggests that, once this initial stage is completed, journalists can proceed to a more complex level of learning about journalism. He explains that this may involve a deepening of the journalist’s approach to their own reporting practice, through learning about in-depth, investigative journalism. At the same time, journalists may develop the capacity to take up leadership positions within the news management processes. In both instances, this can be seen as a process through which journalists establish a deeper grounding in contextual and conceptual knowledge, both as this relates to the environments on which they report, and to the organisation of the production of journalism. Many journalists do not, however, move on to these more advanced levels of practice:

It is a quick and steep learning curve, after which most journalists tread water for three, four five years before either going into specialist fields or going into management or bailing out (Booyens, 2010).

The suggestion, here, seems to be that, although some journalists may become more ‘specialised’ in their practice, or take up leadership positions, this happens by chance, and not as frequently as it could. Booyens proposes that that the fact that many journalists choose to ‘bail out’ could be addressed through the adoption of a different approach to leadership in news organisations. There is, in particular, a need for managers to develop deliberate strategies through which to motivate

journalists to continue in the development of their approach to their own practice. In this way, then, news managers also need to take responsibility for the education of journalists:

I think if anything, the onus [is] on the newspaper, or the media company, to put down let's say ten ... beacons that says – if you want to progress, these are the ten things that you have ... to have mastered ... and it means on the one hand you have to be able to do feature writing ... but on the other hand, if you want to move ahead in the newsroom, you have to be able to chair a disciplinary hearing ... you are going to have to do things like that if you want ... to establish yourself as a newsroom leader (Booyens, 2010).

It may also be that journalists who have been exposed to an educational programme in which knowledge of practice is related to academic knowledge would be more able to make the shift from the first to the second phase in the development of their approach to their own practice. The implication of the participants' comments is also, however, that journalism education cannot achieve this goal by focusing purely on the education of individual journalists. There is, also, a need to engage with the formal systems of news organisations and the approaches to journalism that they are designed to reproduce.

### **11.3 Supportive critique and the importance of contextual knowledge**

Section Two of this chapter dealt with the participants understanding of the relationship that should be facilitated, through journalism education, between academic knowledge and knowledge of journalistic practice. The participants can generally be seen to argue that this relationship should be that of 'supportive critique', in which teaching provides students with knowledge that enables them to articulate a critically reflective approach to their own practice as producers of journalism. This final section of the chapter deals with their understanding of the role that different categories of knowledge should play within such a process of supportive critique.

The discussion also responds to the participants' proposal that a relationship of critical engagement between academic knowledge and knowledge of practice becomes possible with acknowledgement of the social and political context in which journalism is practiced. The participants argue, for example, that for journalism students at Rhodes in the 1980's, the relevance of academic knowledge to media practice seemed obvious because of their investment in an engagement with social context. The proposal is then that journalism education needs to operate as a process of negotiation, in which students are encouraged to acknowledge the importance of social and political context to the practice of journalism.

The discussion deals, firstly, with the participants' understanding of the importance of such contextual knowledge when teaching about reporting practice. It then considers the role that different categories of academic knowledge about media can play in the contextualisation of such practice. Finally, it deals with the importance of the theorisation of knowledge, including World Three debates, in facilitating this process of contextualisation.

### 11.3.1 Contextualising knowledge of practice

The participants generally note that there is a tendency, within journalism education, to foreground knowledge of practice at the expense of contextual knowledge. Fourie notes, for example, that educators fail to draw a relationship between technical competence and the social contexts in which journalism operates:

I think we have too many lecturers ... who are so focused on skills, skills, skills, and who themselves are not able to relate what they are teaching ... to what is going on in society (Fourie, 2010).

It is generally argued that education that aims to prepare students to work as journalists should necessarily include a strong focus on technical knowledge, both with regards to the use of equipment and software, and the more general skills involved in gathering content and crafting texts. The focus on the technical should, however, be combined with an emphasis on knowledge of context.

The participants can be seen to refer to three learning outcomes that depend on this emphasis. They note, firstly, that through an exposure to contextual knowledge, students can learn how to identify events and issues to report on, and also how to approach the process of reporting. In discussing this outcome, the participants speak both of the need to develop students' knowledge of history, and their knowledge of current social events. The argument is for education that allows students to make sense of the contemporary moment against the backdrop of broader historical processes. Such understanding is presented, by the participants, as being of fundamental importance to the development of students' methods of practice. Diederichs notes, for example, that as part of such preparation, student should be encouraged to read about history, and at the same time be exposed to voices of people who are framing current public debates:

...the old kind of knowledge ... the book knowledge – reading about people ... important people, and important happenings in history – getting a broad background of ... world history, you could say ... and then very important – leaders from the communities, you know? From the society where they are going to work in ... the political guys, the social guys, the economic guys – those people ... I think that is the way to really get them feeling part of it (Diederichs, 2010).

Diederichs argues, here, for teaching in which knowledge of the contemporary moment is understood in relation to knowledge of history, in order to ensure that students are able to develop an approach to reporting that is based in a historically grounded understanding of current social events:

They must ... understand ... what the journalist will keep himself busy with, but he must know where did it come from. Otherwise he won't have any context at all (Diederichs, 2010).

Claassen also talks about the importance of reading, in ensuring that journalists gain the necessary contextual knowledge to inform their practice:

...they must have a very good broad general knowledge. I can't see how anyone can venture into the field of journalism if they don't have that. If they are not ferocious readers (Claassen, 2010).

The suggestion, here, is not only that students must read a great deal as part of their tertiary education, but also that they need to develop the ongoing habit of ‘ferocious reading’, as part of their practice as journalists.

The participants note, secondly, that exposure to contextual knowledge can enable students to develop an approach to reporting practice that meets the requirements of cultural sensitivity, democratic process and economic development. Here participants emphasise that, in order to establish such an approach to practice, students need to be exposed to social experiences and world views that differ from those that they have grown up with. Diederichs, for example, argues that through such exposure, students are encouraged to become more openminded and tolerant, and as such to internalise what it means to live in a democratic society:

That is without doubt in journalism schools, where they have to get that kind of input ... where they are going to be ... challenged on their ideas and their cultures and all those kind of things ... If they have not come out of their part of the South African society, where there is an openness, you know, that they accept things will ... be based on a variety of everybody's rights and so on ... (Diederichs, 2010).

Gideon De Wet suggests, similarly, that journalism education programmes should diversify students’ knowledge of their social context. He, like Diederichs and Claassen, believes in the role that reading can play in enabling students to make sense of the society they live in:

When you talk about journalism ... you find yourselves in context ... you've got to be exposed to the ... broader complexity ... they've got to read a lot ... just a very solid exposure to the dynamics of society, I mean we still live in different worlds, as you know (G De Wet, 2010).

De Wet proposes that, in order to achieve such understanding of society, it is important that students come to acknowledge the circumstances that characterise their particular social environment. In his view, for students in South Africa, this should involve an acknowledgement not only of social issues and processes in their own country, but also of how these are grounded within the broader African context. He contrasts this approach to his own experience of tertiary education, in which there was little attempt to position students’ learning within the African context:

...we were talking about Africa as being somewhere [else], you know. And yet ... to find that ... let's call it the GPS context, you know – where do we find ourselves ... I think that is so, so important in our training of our students (G De Wet, 2010).

It is possible to identify, within these participants’ comments, the recognition that many students who enter South African journalism education programmes still come from privileged backgrounds and, as such, have limited experience of the social conditions and that exist within their own country. The suggestion seems to be that, for this reason, it becomes even more important that journalism education focuses not only on the technical but also deals with contextual knowledge. By becoming aware of social experiences that differ from their own, students are better able to develop a method of practice that is appropriate to the South African context.



The third learning outcome that depends on an exposure to contextual knowledge, according to the participants, is the ability to interpret and discuss current developments in the journalism landscape. The suggestion is that through such interpretation, journalists are able to situate their own practice within a broader social context. Gideon De Wet notes, for example that there should be a strong emphasis in journalism education on the relationship between new developments in technology and the role that media play within social processes:

It is not only a question of having the technology and how to use it, but it's also in terms of how it relates and interacts and interfaces with ... social dynamics that we are seeing at the moment ... We cannot throw on top of a curriculum for instance technology and think that guys will be able to understand the technological consequences ... unless we expose our students to a much broader ... understanding of society (G De Wet, 2010).

Within this analysis, the process of relating knowledge of practice to contextual knowledge is seen to be fundamental to students' general understanding of developments in the media landscape.

Booyens suggests, again, that knowledge of context is important, if journalists are to contribute to public debate about state regulation that are of relevance to journalism. He notes that, in order to be prepared for this role, students should familiarise themselves with the history of journalism, and pay particular attention to its relationship to the history of democracy:

The media must be able to articulate why it is legitimate for them to have certain information, and why it cannot be ... taken out of the public domain. And you have to do better than say "hell, this ought not to be like this". You have to provide reasons that go back to the nature of democracy, and the nature of society. So you have to have that broader understanding of it (Booyens, 2010).

The suggestion, here, is that through such "broader understanding", journalistic communities can position themselves knowledgeably within the power struggles taking place, in South Africa, around issues such as access to information and freedom of the press.

### 11.3.2 The role of the academic study of media in the contextualisation of practice

Many of the participants argue that academic knowledge about journalism and media more generally has a key role to play within the contextualisation of journalism practice. They point out the contribution that different approaches to the study of media can make to such a process of contextualisation. The academic study of media is generally understood, within this evaluation, to provide students with conceptual tools that enable them to make sense of the role that journalism plays in society. De Jager, for example, argues that such understanding is of particular importance in preparing students to work as journalists in the South African context, given the complexity of this social environment:

I think [research about culture and communication] is very necessary in a diverse community [and] culture like ours ... we must understand the dynamics and the functioning of the mass media ... it is part of the understanding of your tools ... (De Jager, 2010).

Participants also note that the academic study of media enable students to understand the way in which journalism constructs meaning within historically specific social contexts. It is argued that if such understanding informs the approach that students adopt to the production of journalism, they are better able to establish a reflective approach to their own journalism.

Many of the participants note that traditions of scholarship informed by critical theory can, in particular, contribute to such processes of contextualisation. Such scholarship is understood to help students to make sense of the role they play, as journalists, in the construction of social knowledge. Motsaathebe insists, for example, that critical studies of the media can help journalists to become more aware that the words and images that they select, when telling stories, have important implications for the meaning they give to social events:

If you are ...covering a story ... it forces you to think about what you are doing and what is the implication, what is for example ... the covert meaning of this and what is the overt meaning ... so you go a little bit deeper (Motsaathebe, 2010).

Motsaathebe speaks, here, of the role that the academic study of media can play in the deconstruction of the representations that journalists produce of society. He implies that such sensitivity is important in an environment such as that of South Africa, which is characterised by social difference, severe inequality and conflict.

The participants also argue, however, that despite this potential, teaching about the academic study of media within South African journalism education remains disconnected from an examination of context. Fourie notes, for example, that students tend not to “make the link” between “media theory” and an analysis of their own social environments:

...getting the students to apply the knowledge they receive via our study guides and prescribed books, and linking it to what is happening around them. They've got a terrible problem with doing that (Fourie, 2010).

Some of the participants propose that the difficulties that students experience in making the connection between their coursework and their social environments may have to do with the way in which the academic study of media is framed. De Jager notes, for example, that communication research produced in South African academic institutions is often of little relevance to an understanding of context. This is, in his view, because such studies are often produced purely in response to an institutional requirement that academics should meet their research quotas:

So what I am trying to say is ... research for the sake of research. And that is worrying ... we're back on how many germs can you find on the head of a pin ... When I first lectured ... it was to establish the discipline. Now ... it seems to me ... that they are ... like pump donkeys, in a circle, doing research for the sake of research, the total overemphasis on quantitative research ... it's ridiculous (De Jager 2010).

The suggestion, here, seems to be that ‘research for the sake of research’ can result in an approach to scholarship about media that is disconnected both from social context and from social purpose.

Other participants argue that even when research is designed to be of direct relevance to the study of journalism and its social contexts, its value to journalism education can still remain limited. Gideon De Wet proposes that such a critique can be applied equally to quantitative study of the kind De Jager refers to, above, and studies based within the critical tradition of the study of media. In both cases, the approach to research about journalism is characterised by what he refers to as ‘parochialism’ – or a retreat from an engagement with the empirical specifics of social reality. De Wet argues that it is the focus, in both traditions of study, on the identification of universal laws which help to explain social processes in broad terms that works against an acknowledgement of the specifics of local context. In the case of Mass Communication studies, such lack of acknowledgement results from a preoccupation with what he refers to as a functionalist analysis of the social:

The old sort of behaviouristic paradigm ... you stimulate something, you get a certain response, you predict the outcome, and you repeat that thing ... you ... get a pattern ... and you ... lay down a particular law ... That kind of thinking, you know? (G De Wet, 2010).

De Wet argues that within the critical tradition, it is possible to identify an equally ‘mechanistic’ approach to analysis, in which preoccupation with a particular conceptual framework again places limitations on the extent to which such work contributes to understanding of a specific social context:

...when you look at ... Marxism in terms of that, there is just an underlying sort of deterministic kind of thinking ... You know the owners of the means of production would determine [how] people will be behaving ... (G De Wet. 2010).

The suggestion seems to be that within scholarship about media generally, a strong investment in particular disciplinary traditions can work against the growth of empirically grounded knowledge about historically specific instances of journalistic practice.

Many of the participants also refer to the difficulties involved in teaching students to relate knowledge of journalism production to knowledge drawn from the critical study of media. In Chapter Nine, Amner spoke about this difficulty in context of the journalism education curriculum at Rhodes. He argued that these two forms of knowledge require of students to adopt very different positions in relation to their own work [see pg. 349]. Wasserman, who teaches within the same programme, reiterates this point:

I think it is problematic, sometimes, because you teach students to produce and then at the same time being critical of that production ... in other words, you immerse them in that world [of production] and then at the same time you require of them to stand outside of that world and ...be critical of it ... the ideal is to create a ... self critical, self aware journalist. But ... pedagogically that is something that is difficult to pull off ... because these are different discourses, and they ... require of students to be able to stand at a ... remove from their own work, sometimes. And that's difficult, I think, for students to achieve (Wasserman, 2010).

The participants also point out, however, that it is important to distinguish between different modes of critical engagement with journalism, and that not all engagement is positioned as ‘standing outside’. Earlier in this chapter, Wasserman refers traditions of critical scholarship that tends to view

journalism 'from the outside', as an object of study to be deconstructed. Other participants also suggest that there are limitations in the extent to which such work can enable students to develop a reflective approach to their own practice as journalists. Harber notes, for example, that the critique of journalism that has emerged from media studies tends to be framed in a language of hostility:

...students absolutely need a critical understanding of media and its role in society. The challenge we face is in making ... media studies talk to professional journalism... because often media studies writers and thinkers have a visceral antagonism towards journalists and the media they are working in (Harber, 2010).

Botma also explains that critical scholarship is often condemned for adopting a position of distance, and for not moving beyond the 'deconstructive' mode in order to articulate solutions to the problems that it identifies:

...the big ... criticism of critical theory is – so what? We've described this whole fiasco, but ... now, you know, what next. And ...I say this as somebody who is very much into critical theory.... [but some people are] very critical of this idea that you sit and just produce hot air ... so... what are [students] going to do with this (Botma 2010).

Kruger speaks in similar terms about the limitations of studies based in the field of political economy:

I think it's ... useful to think about the media in ... terms of ... the ... economic base and how ... these forces impact on what people do ... [but] I think having made the point one needs to ... move on and get over it ... what I have difficulty with is the endless reiteration of statements that basically amount to – 'the media are rubbish because they are driven by business' ... Because it is true, but then what? ... What do we do with that? ... That to me seems ... a potentially sterile kind of critique (Kruger, 2010).

Kruger suggests that a similar problem can be seen to apply to studies of media based in the field of Cultural Studies. He argues that such scholarship has an important role to play within the journalism education curriculum, because it contributes to students' understanding of "... how it is actually that journalists do what they do". Through the study of such literature, it becomes possible to "... have a reasonably clear-sighted view of the factors that shape journalism and other things in society". In his view, however, the role that Cultural Studies can play in the articulation of reflective practice remains limited by the approach that researchers tend to adopt in the task of critical examination:

It seems to me that if you simply stop at that critique, you are closing yourself off to an engagement and an involvement and some kind of contribution, actually (Kruger, 2010).

He adds that studies based in a 'postmodernist' tradition can also play this limiting role, because they produce a perspective on society "... where everything is relative":

OK, well, everything is relative, but then what ... you've still got to engage, you've still got to talk to the world, you've got to interact. You know? (Kruger, 2010)

Kruger generally affirms that the learning that can be gained from the intellectual tradition of postmodernism and the fields of political economy and Cultural Studies is of value to the deconstruction of journalism. He argues, however, that within journalism education, it is also important that such knowledge play a role in the articulation of guidelines for good practice:

I think those things are useful ... all I am saying [is that] ... if one is working in an area where you are training people to do work, is to use those insights hopefully to contribute to ... doing that kind of work better (Kruger 2010).

Garman also notes that the critical tradition of the study of journalism tends to be concerned primarily with its deconstruction. She is, nevertheless, able to identify examples of critical scholarship that can guide journalists in the establishment of a reflective approach to their own practice. This applies to "... even some of these hugely critical people, who have been very ... fierce". The value of concepts drawn from such scholarship lies, however, not only in the role that they can play in the deconstruction of journalism, but also the articulation of guidelines for good practice:

...it seems to me that a ... sharp piece of insight is actually terribly valuable if it helps you think well about how to work with this thing, not just – how to dismiss it ... (Garman, 2010).

Garman recognises in John Hartley's work an important example of scholarship that is of relevance to the conceptualisation of a legitimate approach to journalism as a social practice. Most of the writers that she mentions are, however, not those generally associated with media studies or Cultural Studies, but rather the authors who have played a role in establishing the foundations for the development of Journalism Studies as a field in its own right:

...Schudson, you know, Stuart Allan, Barbie Zelizer, and so on – I suppose the thing that characterises that for me is not the sort of sitting over here with this high level critique but the sympathy of how important this practice is in the world, and how you engage and think about it always with a kind of – maybe even a love, you know ... because to devalue and to denigrate the practice is not in any way helpful (Garman, 2010).

In Garman's view, this work can be seen to 'take journalism seriously' as knowledge that plays an important role within contemporary society, and therefore as a worthy object of academic study.

It is noticeable that, within these discussions of the academic study of media, most of the participants refer to traditions of study other than that of Mass Communication. Botma suggests, however, that it is in fact the knowledge associated with this field that is often of more direct relevance to the articulation of an approach to journalistic practice than that of studies informed by critical theory. He argues that this is because there is a tendency towards an instrumentalist approach within such scholarship, which necessarily means that the relationship between conceptual knowledge and an empirical consideration of journalistic practice is self-evident:

...a type of positivistic [approach] where you solve a problem – you know, we want to increase the circulation of this newspaper, what are we doing wrong? Those type of questions ... (Botma, 2010).

He notes, similarly, that students are able to make sense of concepts that have emerged from Mass Communications, such as 'agenda setting' and 'framing', because of their immediate relevance to practice (Botma, 2010). According to Botma, the "critical tradition" of journalism scholarship, is "...further removed from practice", and this is exactly because such scholarship tends to be more concerned with the political critique of relations of power. Such critique is more strongly conceptual

in nature than positivist studies, demanding the consideration of complex, “philosophical” questions, which are often difficult to relate directly to guidelines for journalistic practice:

If you ask about ideology and ... discourse analysis from a critical perspective, and power, and that type of thing ... I think it is just more removed from practice to start off with (Botma, 2010).

According to Botma, students are less able to engage with scholarship that deals with the analysis of “big structural power”. He explains that the problem with such scholarship is that it leaves students feeling helpless, as if there is little they can do, in their approach to their own practice as journalists, in challenging the structures of power:

I showed students these DVD's of old Chomsky and Herman and the propaganda model ... and some of the students were so depressed afterward, they were looking at me with ... teary eyes and said "but what can we do about it?" And I realised then that in a sense ... it is unfair to them. Because they can't do anything about it. They are so idealistic and they want to change things ... (Botma, 2010).

Botma proposes that the conceptual framing of such scholarship can be fundamentally disempowering to students:

If you come from this heavy structural and philosophical approach, sometimes the tendency is just to take out all the energy, or all the hope about what is possible ... then somebody probably can complain and say, well, shouldn't you have spent the time teaching them some basic writing skills (Botma, 2010).

He argues, further, that an exposure to the critical tradition of media scholarship does not, in fact, prepare students for the work that they have to do as journalists:

I can easily say I want them to think, I want them to be critical, I want them to be analytical; [but] in that sense then, obviously ... I am more preparing them to be media scholars in the end, but not everybody wants to be a media scholar (Botma, 2010).

On one hand, then, some of the participants argue that critical studies of journalism can play a valuable role in contributing to students’ understanding of historically specific examples of journalism, and of the social contexts in which they are based. On the other hand, some suggest that the conceptual knowledge that is foregrounded within such scholarship cannot easily engage with the ‘technical’ knowledge that students need in order to produce journalism. Botma’s argument is also that studies based in the field of Communication Science are of more direct value to the articulation of an approach to practice than studies based in the tradition of critical theory. The argument seems to be, here, that conceptual knowledge produced in context of Mass Communication scholarship is able to engage better with ‘technical’ knowledge. Such conceptual knowledge can, then, presumably assist in the establishment of a reflective approach to journalistic practice.

Earlier in this dissertation we have seen, however, that Mass Communication as a tradition of research tends to be associated with a conservative conceptualisation of society. The examples of ‘agenda setting’ and ‘framing’, referred to above, can also be refer to traditions of research that remains framed by a positivist conceptualisation of social knowledge. It may therefore be that the



degree to which such research can assist in the establishment of a transformative approach to journalism practice that moves beyond engagement with the liberal model of journalism remains limited. Botma explains that it is for this reason that he chooses to concern himself with critical studies of journalism:

I work in a critical tradition and its further removed from practice in a sense ...[than positivist research] ... But ... that's my particular interest, I am not really interested in giving the industry hints about how to ... make more money or that type of thing ... (Botma 2010).

### 11.3.3 The importance of 'knowledge literacy'

The participants refer, then, to a number of difficulties that journalism educators experience in their attempts to establish a synthesis between academic knowledge about journalism and knowledge of practice. In discussing solutions to these difficulties they refer to the importance of including a focus, within journalism education, on the study of knowledge.

The participants comment, firstly, on the importance of including such an emphasis within teaching about reporting practice. Reference is made, in particular, to the importance of exposing students to the existence of different approaches to journalism, and locating such an examination in a discussion of the politics of knowledge. Pretorius, for example, makes this point in context of an argument for the prioritisation of an alternative paradigm of reporting practice to that of 'objective' journalism. She draws a correlation between the conceptualisation of journalism as 'objective' knowledge and the assumption that journalism education primarily involves the transmission of neutral, 'technical' skills. She contrasts this approach to teaching with one that adopts an explicit political position, and in which the journalist's subjective engagement with social context in all its diversity becomes of central importance. Within this approach, teaching does not function as the unconscious reproduction of one 'paradigm' of journalistic practice. Instead, students are encouraged to consider a wider spectrum of approaches to journalism, and to position themselves consciously within this spectrum. The suggestion is also that through such education, students learn to consider social experiences other than their own. Pretorius argues that, in order to ensure that students are able to produce journalism that engages with South African society in all its diversity, it is important that they become personally invested in learning about different social experiences:

I think they should be ... more willing to experience the different sides of ... this country. ... and ... try and develop empathy for where people come from [different backgrounds] ... 'cos I think that's lacking. You can have ... the writing skills, you can have the research skills, you can ... be accurate, but ... if you lack that kind of exposure ... you'll not tell a story ... that's true in all its ... facets ... (Pretorius, 2010).

In the comments that Garman makes about the teaching of reporting practice, it is possible to identify a similar preoccupation with the need to interrogate the generally accepted approach to journalism as



a form of knowledge. She points out, in particular, that such teaching should not operate as the unquestioning reproduction of the requirements of industry:

...you don't want to do the kind of – “well you need to know this package of skills so that you won't be thought of by an outside employer as useless, and our school won't be thought of as useless” (Garman, 2010).

As an alternative, Garman proposes an approach in which students are encouraged to consider why one particular set of skills are prioritised by industry, rather than another:

...rather ... from the word go [be explicit that] there are different types of knowledges ... you ... need to equip with skills in a context; [we should say] “why are these skills prized” ... not just “they are prized, and you have to have them” (Garman, 2010).

Journalism education should, in other words, encourage students to reflect critically on the kinds of technical competencies that media organisations are understood to require of them in order to work as journalists. Teaching about reporting practice and technical skills more generally then forms part of a more general attempt to encourage students to distinguish between different approaches to journalism, and to consider the social significance of each.

Some of the participants also suggest that this explicit focus on the politics of knowledge should form part of the academic components of journalism courses. Garman argues, here, for teaching which locates an examination of the South African example of journalism practice within a broader exploration of the history of knowledge in modern society:

I would try to ... teach ... that over ... hundreds of years we've done a very big shift in human understanding. We've ... gone into ... this thing we call modernity, which is a particular way of structuring knowledge and life (Garman, 2010).

She explains that such an exploration would enable students to make historical sense of the way in which the social purpose of journalism is explained in contemporary society:

If you don't know, you can't make choices, if you can't make choices, then you don't know ... how to ... hold your politicians accountable; that's the light version of – why do we think like that? We think like that because sedimented over hundreds of years have been these ways of re-engineering our societies (Garman, 2010).

Wasserman, similarly, suggests that one of the core functions of journalism education is to encourage students to become skeptical of the conventional understanding of journalism as objective knowledge:

...so not to indulge in claims around “we are just a messenger, we are just reflecting reality” ... you are not neutral (Wasserman, 2010).

He explains that students should be encouraged to consider that, as journalists, they necessarily view society from a particular position. He, like Garman, understands knowledge of history, and the history of knowledge, to be central to the establishment of such consciousness:

You have to think critically about what that position is, how that position is informed through history ... turning that gaze back on yourself I think is an important skill for journalists to acquire when they are educated ... So ... critical self awareness of

journalists and their positioning within ... history and within a specific social- political context; for me that is an important perspective (Wasserman, 2010).

Johan De Wet also argues that students of journalism should become familiar with different paradigms of knowledge. He proposes that, in order to achieve this goal, students should be introduced to the spectrum of approaches to epistemology available within the academy. They will then be able to locate themselves within this epistemological spectrum, once they become journalists:

In the end they will probably, depending on where they are going to work ... operate, function, within a given paradigm ... [and then] at least you know what the hell you are doing, and why you are doing it, and that there are other possibilities (J De Wet, 2010).

De Wet understands the advantage of such education to be the exposure of students to different conceptual frameworks for making sense of social knowledge. He suggests that, in this way, students can come to recognise the broad spectrum of knowledge paradigms that exist within the academy:

Because each of those ... disciplines ... they all have their theoretical approaches. And the three paradigms are basically the positivistic functionalist, the Neo-Marxist, Marxist, which is sometimes called the critical, and then the existentialist phenomenological (J. De Wet, 2010).

In Chapter Nine we have seen that Rumney and Brand make similar proposals, in context of their evaluation of the approach that is adopted to media studies in the journalism education programme at Rhodes. Rumney suggests that the Rhodes programme does not provide students with a full spectrum of epistemological positions that make up the university-based landscape of academic study. He proposes that an explicit commitment to this aim is important, since such a map would allow students to understand how different approaches to journalism are positioned within debates about the nature and purpose of knowledge about society [see pg 352 - 353]. Brand makes a related point, arguing that students would be better placed to understand the connection between the production and study of journalism if the curriculum was designed to ensure that they are exposed to the full spectrum of available scholarship about media. Students should, in other words, be able to trace the outlines of the whole landscape of such scholarship, both as this exists within positivist tradition of Communication Science and as it has established itself in fields of study associated with critical theory. In this way, they would become empowered to make autonomous decisions about how to position themselves within the epistemological spectrum represented by this landscape, and then to draw on academic knowledge in ways that are appropriate to their practice [see pg 352].

Pretorius, Garman, Wasserman, De Wet, Brand and Rumney all argue, in different ways, for education that understands World Three knowledge to be fundamental to students' conceptualisation of their role as journalists. It is possible to identify, in their commentary, a proposal that World Three knowledge can provide students with a map that enables them to recognise the full spectrum of approaches to social knowledge available in the university and more broadly in society. Once they have been provided with this epistemological map, students are able to make sense, for themselves, of the relationship between technical, contextual, and conceptual knowledge of journalism.

## Conclusion

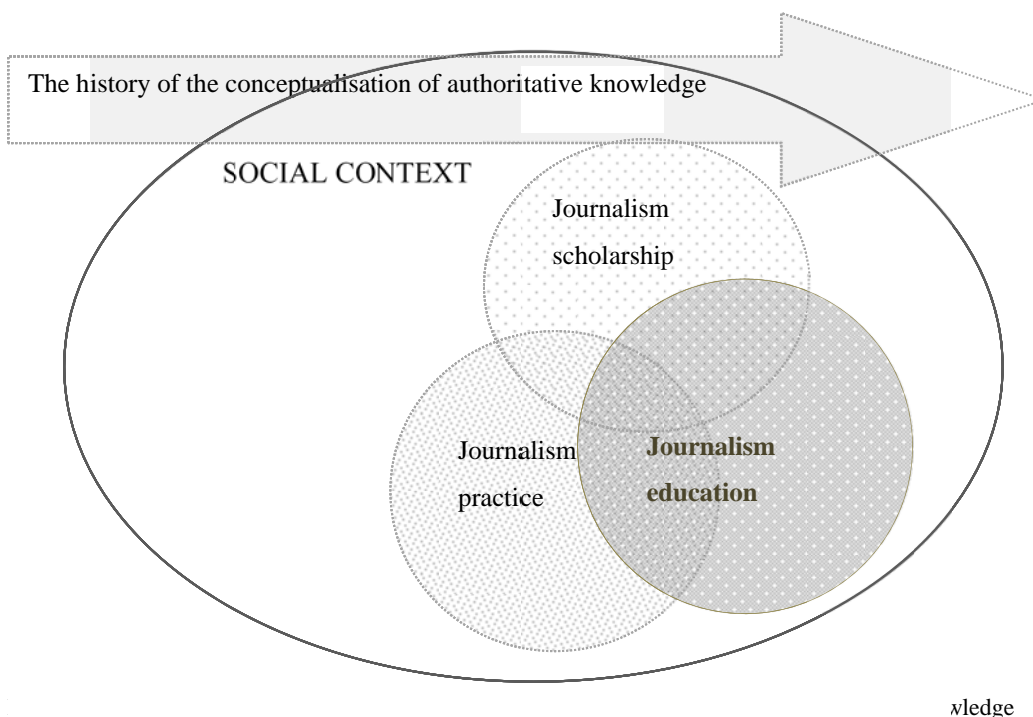
The aim of this chapter has been to examine the participants' understandings of the role that the academic study of knowledge can play, within journalism education, in facilitating an engagement between academic knowledge and knowledge of practice. The chapter dealt with this question, firstly, in context of the participants' observations about the approaches that are adopted both in journalism practice and the academy to critical reflection about journalism as a form of knowledge. Their comments suggest that an exposure to the study of knowledge could be of value in preparing students to negotiate the processes of contestation that take place around approaches to journalism in news environments. As part of such preparation, students should learn how to recognise different traditions of journalism and to locate their assessment of these traditions within a broader analysis of the politics of knowledge. Closely associated with this proposal is the argument that students should learn to distinguish between different paradigms of knowledge production. Once they have been provided with this epistemological map, they should be able to make sense, for themselves, of the relationship between academic knowledge and knowledge of journalistic practice. They can, then, make autonomous and informed decisions about the way in which they wish to locate themselves within this epistemological spectrum, as producers of knowledge.

The chapter also dealt with the participants' proposal that the relationship between journalism education and journalism practice should be one of 'supportive critique'. Within this commentary it is, again, possible to see an emphasis on the importance of introducing students to conceptual tools that enable them to reflect critically on the nature and purpose of social knowledge. It is argued that as part of 'supportive critique', journalism education should make visible the theoretical foundations on which approaches to knowledge within particular, historically situated approaches to journalistic practice are based. The participants explain that, in their experience, there tends to be resistance to such processes of critique from within journalistic practice. It has been suggested in this chapter that such resistance may perhaps apply specifically to journalism practice that defines itself in terms of a commitment to the ideal of journalistic objectivity. This points, again, to the importance of establishing an approach to journalism education that includes a focus on a wider variety of approaches to journalistic practice.

As we have seen, the participant's description of journalistic practice also suggests that, even within journalism practice defined by the liberal model of journalism, the approach to journalistic knowledge is not monolithic. Journalism practice is, rather, characterised by ongoing contestations between different approaches to journalistic knowledge. This would imply that, in order to facilitate a relationship of engagement between journalism and the academy, it is of value for journalism education to identify those spaces within journalism practice in which openness to critical engagement can in fact be seen to exist.

### CONCLUSION PART THREE

In the introduction to this study, it was proposed that the history of university-based journalism education can be described as a process of interaction between three ‘spheres’; that of journalism practice, -scholarship and -education. It was further argued that the relationship that has come to exist between these spheres can be better understood when one considers their position within patterns in the history of the conceptualisation of authoritative knowledge. These relationships should be read against the political-social context in which the three spheres are located (see Figure 1).



The introduction notes, furthermore, that the interaction between the three spheres can usefully be discussed in terms of Babbie and Mouton’s distinction between three kinds of knowledge, situated in different knowledge ‘worlds’. This framework distinguishes between knowledge as it exists in World One (everyday life) World Two (science or scholarship) and World Three (meta-scientific reflections on knowledge). Approaches to journalistic practice within each of the three spheres of journalism can then be seen to be characterised by contesting understandings of authoritative knowledge, expressed within and between all three knowledge worlds. From one perspective within such contestation, knowledge is understood in positivist terms, based in its correspondence to an externally verifiable and independent reality. From another, which is described in this study as a ‘constructivist’ position, it is assumed that knowledge is always social, existing as a shared reality, necessarily informed by the relations of power and ideological interest. Within communities of epistemic practice in the three spheres of journalism, the articulation of the positivist position is framed by references to the ideal of knowledge that is objectively produced, and of universal relevance. The constructivist position is

framed by an emphasis on the role that relations of power and social interest plays in the production of knowledge, and arguments for knowledge that is sensitive to or even dependent on specific contexts. Invocation of both sets of ideals can be observed in the histories of the university-based journalism scholarship and education, and have important implications for the nature of their engagement with journalistic practice.

It was argued in this study that familiarity with meta-reflection on such contestation is of particular significance to attempts, within academic environments, to engage critically with the sphere of journalistic practice. Metascientific debates can, in other words, offer conceptual frameworks not only for making sense of approaches to “scientific” knowledge, but also for the examination of journalism as a form of knowledge that exists in everyday life. It is pointed out that the history of meta-theoretical debate has dealt with questions and problems that can also be traced in everyday life, in developments within the sphere of journalism practice. Within both histories, acknowledgement of the role played by social interests in the production of knowledge has represented a central impetus for the articulation of guidelines for the evaluation of authoritative social knowledge. Both contexts have also remained characterised by attempts to reconcile such acknowledgement with a commitment to an idealised conception of objective and universally relevant knowledge. As we have seen in Chapter One, it is nevertheless possible, in context of the 20<sup>th</sup> century history of meta-debates, to identify ongoing attempts to transcend the limitations of this approach to authoritative social knowledge. This has, over time, resulted in the emergence of conceptualisations which with increasing confidence situate the credibility of knowledge in an acknowledgement of social construction. It may be, then, that such debates offer important resources for a critical engagement with conceptualisations of journalistic knowledge in everyday life. A comparison of the history of such conceptualisation with that of meta-theoretical knowledge can, firstly, help to explain why a commitment to objectivity has persisted in journalistic practice. Secondly, knowledge of these epistemological debates can contribute to the articulation of alternative approaches to journalism, which foreground the legitimacy of socially constructed knowledge.

The study also notes, however, that the disciplinary identity of the fields in which research about journalism has located itself has placed constraints on the role that knowledge of meta-theory can play within the academic study of journalism practice. It was argued, firstly, that research about journalism became broadly institutionalised in universities in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, in the ‘moment’ of positivist hegemony in social science, and in context of the establishment of Mass Communication Studies. The relationship that was established at this time between academic research and journalism practice was one of instrumental service. Within the second moment, which occurred during the 1960’s, the study of journalism became associated with a critique of the social construction of meaning, particularly in context of Cultural Studies. This did not result, however, in a sustained tradition of research that engaged critically with journalistic practice. Both in the context of Mass Communication Studies and Cultural Studies, the potential for such engagement has been constrained

by academic strategies of self-legitimation that have been adopted by these fields in order to secure their own disciplinary authority. As a consequence of these strategies, the academic study of journalism has not as yet become fully established as a coherent body of knowledge in its own right. This has impacted on the ability of academic research to establish a relationship of empirical and critical inquiry with journalism as it is found in everyday life (see Figure 2).

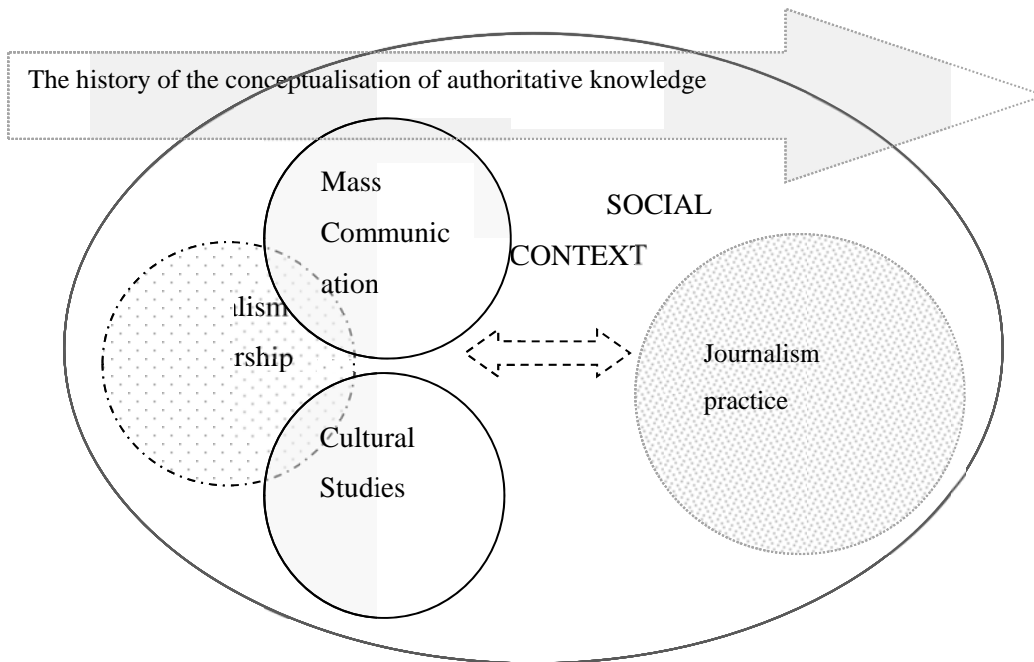


Figure 2: Journalism scholarship and its relationship to the contextualised study of journalism practice

It was argued in this study that the institutionalisation of this relationship between academic knowledge and the study of journalism has placed limitations on the influence of meta-theoretical debates on research about journalism practice. The line of influence between meta-theory and everyday journalistic practice is, in other words, constrained because it is mediated by Mass Communication Studies and Cultural Studies as academic fields that are not dedicated to the study of journalistic practice.

The study then proposes that constraints on the influence of meta-theory within the engagement of the academy with journalism practice can also be identified in the context of journalism education. These constraints can be seen to result from the institutional arrangements through which such education has located itself within university environments. This argument is pursued in context of an examination of the standard guidelines that have come to characterise university-based journalism education as it exists internationally. It was pointed out, firstly, that within these guidelines, the relationship between journalism education and academic knowledge about journalism is primarily understood to involve partnerships with Mass Communication Studies and Cultural Studies, as 'default settings' for the academic study of journalism. Because of this, the disjunction between World Three and the academic study of journalism, described above in context of



the sphere of journalism scholarship, is reproduced in the sphere of journalism education. The partnerships with Mass Communication Studies and Cultural Studies have, in other words, placed limitations on the role that journalism education can play in mediating a relationship of critical engagement between academic knowledge about journalism and journalistic practice (See Figure 3).

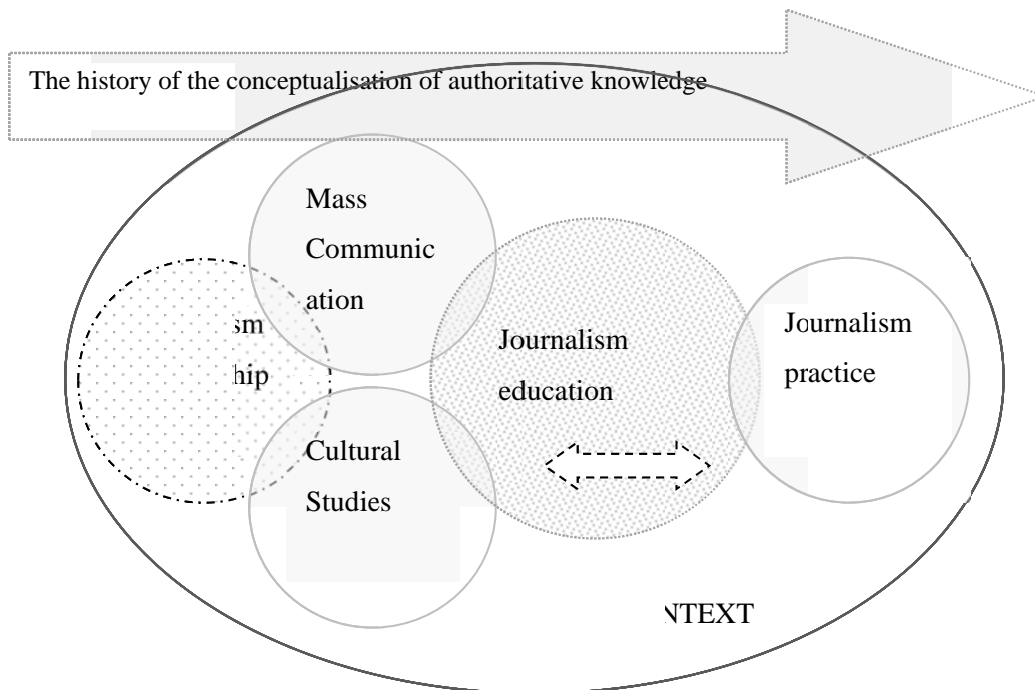


Figure 3: Journalism education and its role in mediating between scholarship and practice

A second context in which guidelines for journalism education can be seen to reproduce this disjunction between meta-theory and reflection on journalism practice is identified in the relationship between the 'professional' component of such education and liberal arts programmes. On one hand, guidelines are based on the assumption that the academic status of journalism education is guaranteed by this relationship. On the other hand, it is assumed that teaching about journalism exists separately from students' involvement in liberal arts programmes. The role that liberal arts education can play in facilitating a synthesis of meta-scientific knowledge and reflections on journalism practice is, therefore, limited by its separation from teaching about journalism.

Thirdly, within guidelines for the structuring of journalism education, the category of knowledge most closely associated with journalism practice is that of principles of reporting practice. Such teaching is, however, situated in separation of 'academic' modules and because of this, there is again a structured division between teaching about journalism practice and critical reflection on the nature and purpose of social knowledge. In this way, guidelines for the content and structure of journalism education programmes can be seen to place limitations on the lines of influence between meta-theoretical debates and reflection on journalism as a form of knowledge that exist in everyday life (See Figure 5).



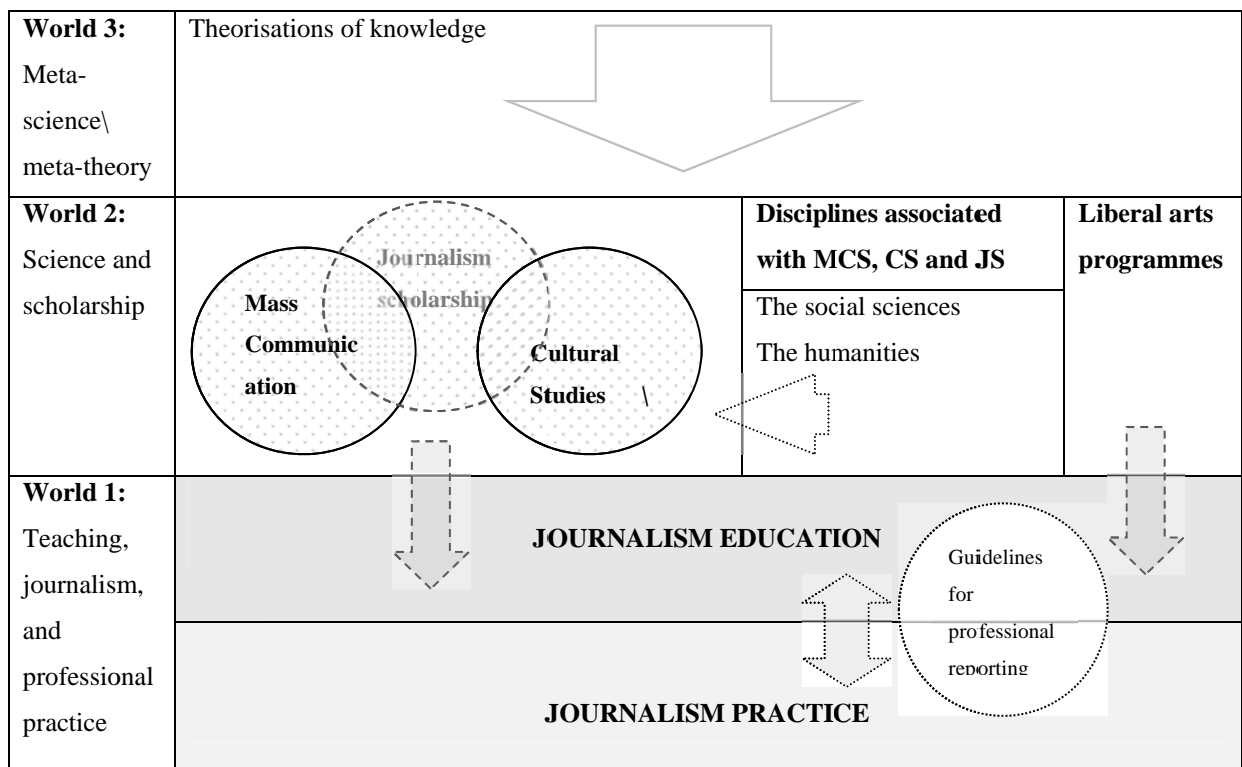


Figure 5: The relationship between knowledge worlds in the standard journalism education guidelines

It was argued, in this study, that an examination of the history of South African journalism education can contribute to our understanding of the role that these guidelines generally play in determining the relationship between journalism education and its social context. The discussion in Chapter Six demonstrates, firstly, that these guidelines can, indeed, also be observed in the South African instance. They can also, again, be seen to place limitations on the role that World Three knowledge plays in establishing a relationship of critical engagement between the academy and historically situated examples of journalism practice. The chapter argues that approaches to social knowledge articulated within the localised history of both journalism and the academy in this country offer important resources for the formulation of alternative approaches to journalism education, based in a critical engagement with journalism practice. A study of the South African example can therefore be seen to offer an opportunity for investigating how different conceptualisations of knowledge may either limit or enable the establishment of such an approach.

With this proposal in mind, Part Three explored the potential that has existed, in the South African context, for the establishment of a critically engaged tradition in university-based journalism education, and also considered the reasons why this approach has not been realised. These questions are studied from the perspective of educators who have participated in the construction of journalism education in this country. The focus was, more particularly, on individuals who have experience both of working as journalists and of studying and teaching in university environments in South Africa.

The discussion in Part Three dealt, firstly, with the participants' description of conceptualisations of authoritative social knowledge in South African academic and journalistic environments, at different moments in time. The participants note that the epistemological knowledge that formed part of general liberal arts programmes in which they participated has played an important role in the development of their ability to reflect on the social construction of knowledge. They also generally refer to the influence of such reflection on their approach to the conceptualisation of journalism as a form of knowledge. At the same time, some of the participants assert that, viewed from the perspective of the practicing journalist, the relevance of metascientific debates to the conceptualisation of journalism is not immediately obvious. It is also suggested that meta-theoretical knowledge tends to be employed in academic contexts to undermine the foundations of journalistic practice, and therefore exists in a relationship of antagonistic critique with such practice.

This need not, however, point to a contradiction in the participants' evaluation of the value of meta-theoretical reflections on journalism as a form of knowledge. Their descriptions of South African journalism suggest, rather, that resistance to such debate may not apply consistently throughout the sphere of journalism practice. The suggestion is, firstly, that communities of journalistic practice have been characterised by ongoing internal contestation around the nature and purpose of journalism as form of knowledge. From one position within such contestation, journalists point to the inevitable role that social interest plays in the production of journalism, while from a second position, the ideal of objective journalistic practice is reasserted. Resistance to the relevance of World Three can be seen to originate from this second position and to respond primarily to concepts and debates that point to the constructed nature of knowledge (See Figure 6).

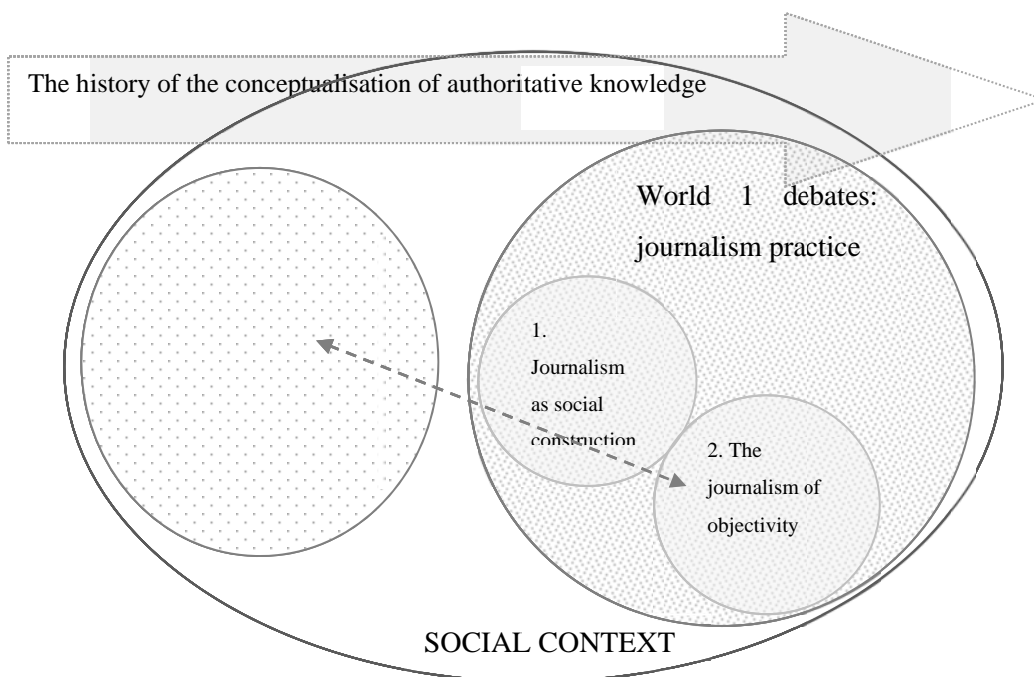


Figure 6: The location of resistance to World Three in debates about knowledge in journalism practice

The participants' discussion suggests, furthermore, that both the first and second position within such contestation has been adopted by interest groups within communities of journalistic practice in an attempt to assert the role that journalism can play in contributing to progressive social change. The second position within such contestation is, at the same time, also associated with the interests of management, and particularly with attempts to ensure the effective management of journalists.

The participants commentary suggests, secondly, that dismissal of the value of meta-theory is associated with the articulation of reporting guidelines based in the principles of 'open bias' and 'courage and truth' that have circulated in context of the liberal model of journalism. These guidelines are informed by a commitment to the ideal of journalism as objectively produced knowledge. In context of these guidelines, dismissal of the relevance of epistemological debate can, again, be seen to be expressive of a resistance to constructivist analysis of social knowledge. Participants also note that one result of contestations around journalistic knowledge, in South Africa, has been the emergence of a third set of guidelines for journalistic practice based in the ideal of socially-situated reporting. This approach to reporting practice is understood to represent an alternative to the liberal model of journalism. The participants make direct reference to the valuable role that knowledge of meta-theory and particularly a constructivist approach to knowledge can play in the articulation of guidelines for such journalism. It is possible, then, to imagine multiple relationships between epistemological debate and those about journalism practice. There is an affinity between particular positions adopted within epistemological debates on one hand, and within debates about guidelines for journalistic practice on the other (See Figure 7).

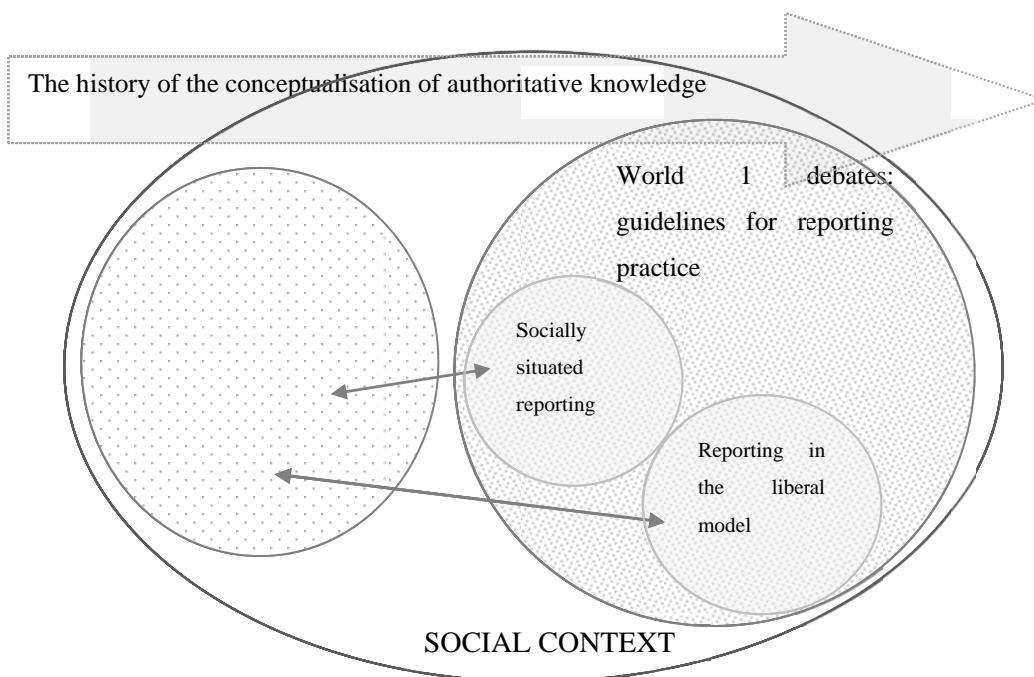


Figure 7: World Three and its relevance to different guidelines for reporting practice

Part Three also dealt with the participants' description of the traditions of journalism education in which they have been involved, either as students or educators. This discussion focused on the participants' understanding of the ways in which such teaching has dealt with conceptualisations of authoritative social knowledge, both as this exists in the academy and in journalism practice. The aim was to tease out the implications, as understood by the participants, for the role that such education could be seen to play in the establishment of a relationship of critical engagement with journalism as social practice. It is proposed, in this discussion, that the participants' description of different examples of teaching practice indicates that South African journalism education has tended to reproduce the standard approach to the content and structure of teaching, as outlined in Figure 5. The relationship between meta-theoretical debate and reflection on journalistic practice is, therefore, one of disengagement. Furthermore, teaching about reporting practice tends to refer primarily to guidelines based in the principles of 'fairness and balance' and 'truth and courage'. The engagement of such education with contestations around the conceptualisation of journalism as a form of knowledge that have characterised South African journalism has therefore operated primarily in support of the reproduction of the liberal model of journalistic practice (See Figure 8). As such, the relationship between journalism education and journalism practice in South Africa has been primarily that of instrumental service rather than critical engagement.

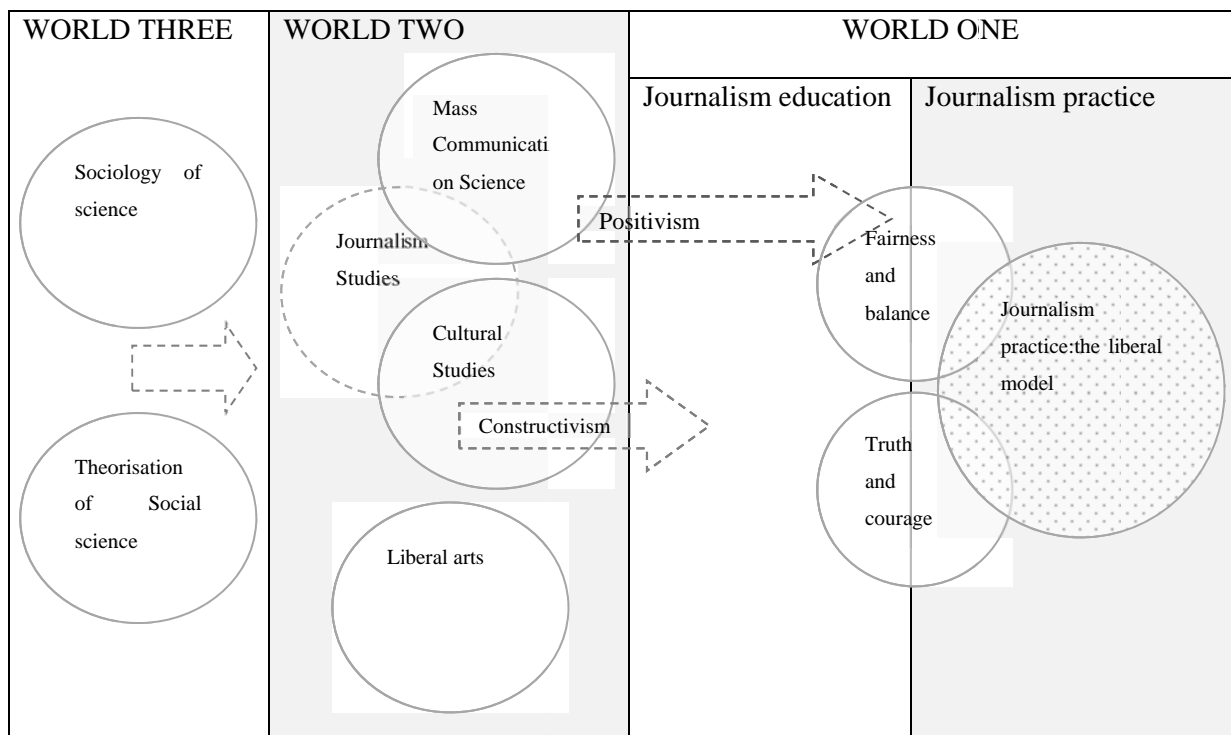


Figure 8: Journalism education and the relationship between knowledge worlds and journalism practice

It is, at the same time, possible to identify indicators within the participants' discussion of South African journalism education for strategies to establish a critically engaged approach to teaching. It is suggested, firstly, that within journalism education, the relationship between teaching practice and journalism practice needs to be one of 'supportive critique'. It is proposed that such a relationship should not merely involve the deconstruction of the conceptualisation of journalism as a form of knowledge that exists within practice, but also the articulation of critical and reflective approaches to journalistic practice. The participants' discussion can be seen to imply, secondly, that a relationship of supportive critique should not serve as a reproduction of the liberal model of journalism. Instead, the aim should be to engage with a diverse spectrum of historically situated examples of journalistic practice. Thirdly, journalism education should include a direct engagement with meta-theoretical knowledge, to ensure that students are exposed to the full spectrum of approaches to the conceptualisation of authoritative social knowledge available to them within the academy. Such knowledge would enable students to locate different approaches to the academic study of journalism within the available spectrum of approaches to the authority of social knowledge. Based on such evaluation, they would then be able to make autonomous and strategic decisions about the role that each approach can play within a critical engagement with journalism practice (See Figure 9).

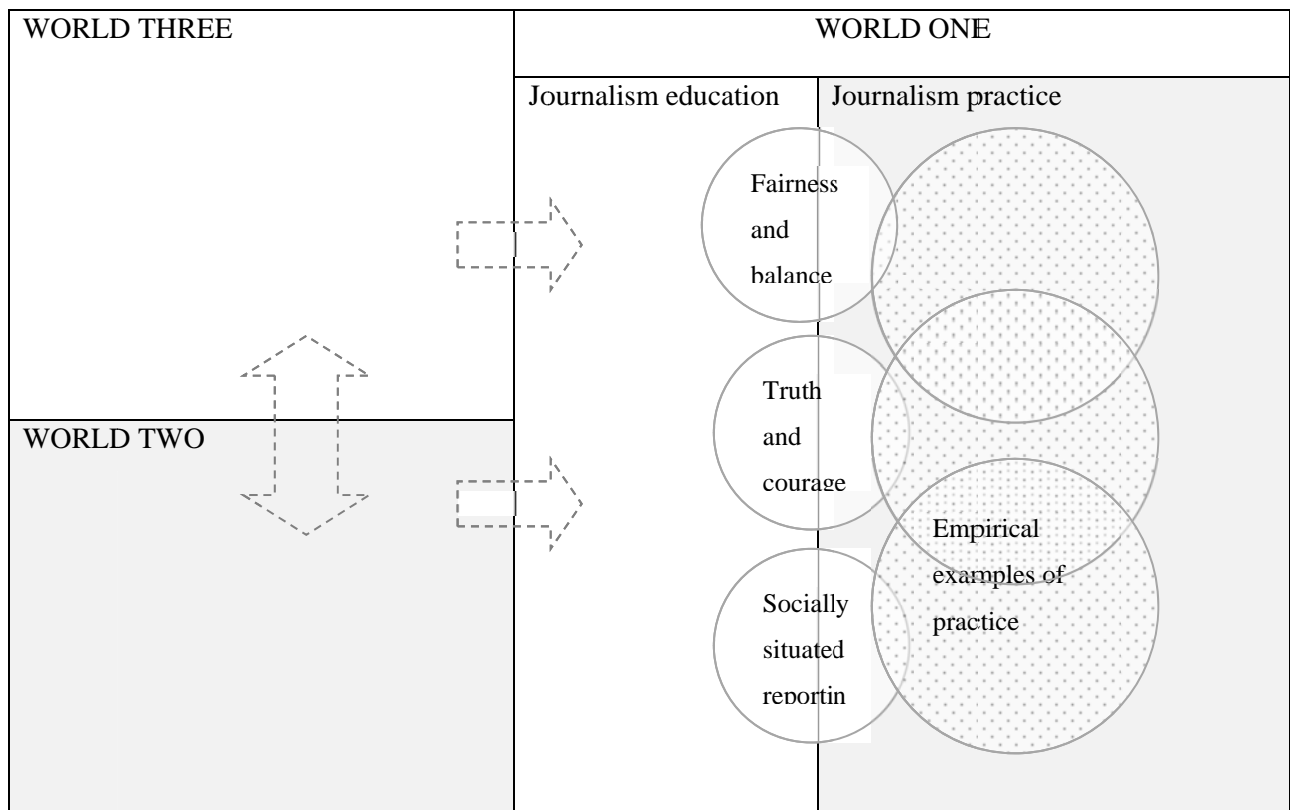


Figure 9: Relating all three knowledge worlds to an engagement with journalism practice

These proposals are of relevance not only to South Africa, but also more generally to approaches to journalism education within the international domain. Of particular importance, in this broader context, is the argument that journalism education should be grounded in a process of empirical engagement with journalism practice as it exists locally. Of equal importance is the proposal that such engagement should be informed by an inclusive knowledge of epistemologies, in order to facilitate a relationship of supportive critique between academic knowledge about journalism and journalism practice.

It has been argued, in this study, that journalism and the university are institutions that have traditionally, in very different ways, defined their purpose as that of producing credible knowledge about society. In doing so, both institutions have grounded themselves in conceptualisations of authoritative knowledge that have placed limitations on the potential for journalistic practice that is open to self-critique. The approach adopted within both journalism and universities to critical engagement with journalism as a social practice has also meant that the potential for university-based journalism education to play a transformational role within such practice has remained largely unfulfilled. The study points out, however, that in context of changes that are taking place globally in the location of both journalism and universities within society, both institutions are now experiencing severe pressure to review their claims to legitimacy and consequently to redefine their social purpose. It is proposed that this requirement represents an opportunity for reinventing the relationship between journalism education and journalism practice. It may be, indeed, that the survival of journalism as a social institution depends on this process of reconceptualisation.

At the same time, a striking aspect of the participants' comments about journalism education as it exists now in South Africa is that much of their discussion does not, in fact, seem to be specific to the South African context. It is noticeable, for example, that in the first four (historical) chapters presented in Section Three, participants make repeated and conscious reference to aspects of social context that are unique to South African history. These aspects are not, however, given as much attention in the comments that they make about the contemporary landscape of journalism and journalism education, as captured in the final two chapters. There is, for example, a preoccupation in the earlier historical discussions with the role that racial identity has played within the participants' engagement with knowledge about South African society, both in journalism and the academy. Many spoke, in particular, about the degree to which their own access to knowledge about the South African context was dependent on the extent to which they were able to escape a "white" social perspective. Consciousness about race seems, however, largely to disappear from the comments that participants make about journalism and journalism education as it exists now in South Africa. One could argue that, at least in Chapter Ten, new preoccupations emerge that are equally specific to the contemporary South African context. One such preoccupation can be identified in the strong emphasis, in the evaluation of current journalistic practice, on the relationship between journalistic and academic communities and systems of legitimate authority, such as that of the new South African state.

However, the conclusions that are drawn in Chapter Eleven about principles that should inform journalism education do not include sustained reference to this issue. Furthermore, other aspects of the contemporary South African social context are not given much attention in the discussion captured in either of these chapters. One question that, in the opinion of the researcher, is for example clearly of special relevance to South African journalism education as it exists now is the need to reflect on the social identity of students and staff who participate in such teaching, particularly in context of categories of class and race. Another closely related issue is the need to acknowledge the multilingual nature of the society in which journalism education takes place. Acknowledgement of the politics of language would be one way in which sensitivity to issues of both racial identity and class could continue to be foregrounded in discussions of journalism education in this country. Such questions are, however, largely absent from the participants' discussion.

One explanation of the absence of detailed reference, in the final chapters, to the specifics of South African context may be that, in their current conceptualisation of journalism education, the participants locate themselves within the second global tradition of such teaching, as identified in this study. In Chapter Five, this tradition was described as that of journalism education as it exists in liberal democracies with advanced free market economies. Through the lens of this tradition, the questions and debates about journalism education that become visible are those that apply also to other such environments across the world. Such questions are represented, for example, by the strong focus on a perceived divide between theory and practice; the impact of new technology on the transformation of media and the preoccupation with the economic challenges faced within the traditional strongholds of journalism. It may be that, for other questions to be acknowledged, educators also need to confront their own location within the second tradition of journalism education identified in Chapter Five, which refers to such teaching as it exists in 'economically disadvantaged' environments. From such a perspective, it may become possible to pay more attention to issues that have been foregrounded in this tradition. Such issues include the need to acknowledge the cultural diversity of local environments; the importance of supporting non-commercial, development-oriented media and the challenges of producing locally grounded resources within African environments. By acknowledging that South African journalism education exists as part of both traditions of teaching, one may, then, be able to confront a wider range of aspects of the relationship between education and its social context in South Africa.



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## Appendix: Guiding questions for Section Three interviews

- A: *Your experience of tertiary education, and its impact on your conceptualisation of credible journalistic knowledge*
1. What, for you, were the most important schools of thought, ideas or debates that you were exposed to during your tertiary education?
  2. How did these ideas influence your understanding, at this time, of the role that journalism should ideally play in society?
  3. How did these ideas influence your understanding of what it would take for journalism to have credibility and legitimacy as a form of knowledge about society?
- B: *Your experience of journalism practice, as a space in which to produce credible \ authoritative journalism*
4. To what extent did you find yourself able, in your work as a journalist, to draw on the ideas that you developed about journalism through your tertiary education?
  5. How the ideas that you developed about journalism in context of your tertiary education compare to those that you observed amongst your fellow journalists?
  6. How did your experience of journalism practice shape or change your understanding of what should count as 'legitimate' or 'credible' knowledge in journalism?
- C: *Your current understanding of good journalistic practice as it should exist in South Africa, and how journalists should learn about this*
7. What would you say have been the most significant changes in South African journalism, since you first worked as a journalist?
  8. What skills and knowledge do journalists need today, in order to work in this environment and produce legitimate or credible knowledge about society?
  9. Where would it be best for journalists to gain such skill and knowledge, and why?
- D: *Your experience, as an academic, of the university as a space in which to articulate your own understanding of journalism:*
10. What were the main debates of relevance to journalism that you encountered in the academy/academic (in literature, debates with colleagues, in the teaching you observed)?
  11. How do these debates compare to those that you have encountered within journalism practice?



- 12.* To what extent have the ideas that you have encountered within the academy allowed you to reflect on the legitimacy of journalism as a practice of knowledge production?
  
  - 13.* What kind of spaces \ opportunities have you found, in your work as an academic (for example in teaching, in writing, in your engagement with media people), to articulate and develop your own ideas about journalism?
  
  - 14.* What insights that you have gained in this way should be introduced back into journalism practice? Please elaborate.
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