

**Bloodhounds or Missionaries:
Role Definitions of German and British
Journalists**

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A comparative study of British and German journalists has brought to light extensive differences in their perception of their role, their professional motivations and their evaluation of the norm of objectivity. Even in countries with freedom of the press, therefore, journalism can develop in completely different directions, dependent upon the political, legal and historical settings. German journalism follows the traditional role of a species of political and intellectual career, which tends to place a lot of value on opinion and less on news. British journalism, in contrast, particularly sees itself in the role of transmitter of facts, a neutral reporter of current affairs.

Introduction

Communication researchers of many different nationalities seem to communicate effortlessly about journalism as they draw upon the wealth of theoretical and empirical national research results to put together little by little a comprehensive view of the profession: its goals and view of its role, the working conditions and methods, its ethical norms and the importance of journalism in a democratic state. The clearly defined task of providing information, the great and, in fact, increasing similarity of the technical conditions of production and the international network of mass communication, promote the image of a pan-cultural profession. Admittedly, Siebert, Peterson and Schramm (1963: 1) base their theory of the media on the main thesis '... that the press always takes on the form and coloration of the social and political structures within which it operates'. O.J. Hale (1964) saw an even closer relationship between society and the media; it was his conviction that there is no other social institution where national distinctions show up as clearly as in the organization and practice of the media. The empirical attention devoted to national peculiarities in the media scene, however, is essentially limited to comparisons of ownership and organizational

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Republic shows a consistent pattern, pointing to a different view of government and individual interests. There is more willingness to limit freedom of the press in favour of government interests in Great Britain than in the Federal Republic, while there is less willingness to limit it in favour of private and individual interests.

In contrast to the Federal Republic, Great Britain does not have press legislation, a legal guarantee of freedom of the press, in line with the English legal tradition of protecting freedom by keeping certain areas free of the law rather than by means of regulations (Löffler, 1969: 130; Report of the Commission on Privacy, 1972: para. 16). The guarantee of a privileged position for the press is represented by German press legislation (Stammler, 1971: 209-10; see also Donsbach, 1982), was most recently considered by the Third Royal Commission on the Press in Great Britain in 1977 and then rejected. While German press legislation, as well as the jurisdiction of the German Federal Constitutional Court, ascribes a different quality to freedom of the press from that it ascribes to individual freedom of speech, the Third Royal Commission, on the Press, concluded its statement by saying '... we believe that, as a general rule, the press should stand on the same footing before the law as other institutions and all citizens' (Royal Commission on the Press, 1977: 185). This rejection of a legally privileged status for the press also characterizes labour law in Great Britain, which, in contrast to the German situation, does not allow for special regulations on the media or for limits on the influence the trade unions may exert.

This rejection of a legally privileged status weakens the British press in dealing with governmental interests. Though freedom of the press developed at an early stage in England, this should not obscure the fact that the English government has always been able to protect its interests vis-à-vis the press, in part by means of rigorous laws. Thus the importance of the libel laws has been underestimated by many of the envious admirers of early British freedom of the press. In the beginning, under Elizabeth I, they strictly served to protect government interests against undesirable publicity and criticism and even today are viewed as a really serious limitation on freedom of journalism, having a more serious effect than comparable laws, for example in the United States (Siebert, 1965: 55-6; Murphy, 1976: 168; and Rothman, 1979: 350). The Official Secrets Act, which makes the transmission and use of secret state documents punishable by law, is also considered by many to represent a threat to the freedom of journalism. While the Committee on the Official Secrets

arrived at this conclusion, it also rejected the view that Great Britain's strategy of secrecy is excessive compared with other democratic states (Report of the Committee on the Official Secrets Act, 1972: para. 25/26). The Third Royal Commission on the Press, however, expressed the conviction that accessibility to information of public interest is subject to unjustified limitations in Great Britain, resulting particularly from the over-classification or non-classification of information (Royal Commission on the Press, 1977: 189-90). In the conflict with government claims to protection, German journalists are in a more favourable legal position than their British colleagues, since the German press receives privileged treatment even according to criminal law; the special regulations on state treason by journalists' basically require protection of the state and freedom of the press to be weighed against each other (Löffler, 1969: 254-5).

While legal guarantees of freedom of the press are subordinated to government interests and the influence of pressure groups to a greater degree in Great Britain than in the Federal Republic of Germany, German journalists are subject to more restrictive regulations when it comes to individual claims to protection. Thus, in contrast to the Federal Republic, Great Britain does not have a legally established right to privacy.

There is a temptation to interpret the different importance ascribed to government and private claims to protection vis-à-vis the press as a corollary of the way the political structures of the two countries have developed historically: between a central English nation-state, essentially unchanged in its structure for centuries, and German 'particularism', initially integrated into a nation-state in 1866/67, through the provisional device of the North German Federation, and definitively in 1870 with the founding of the Reich, but which continues to exist in the federal structure of the Federal Republic.

While the assumption that legal regulation of the press and the political structure are related remains on the level of speculation, there can be no doubt about either the relationship between the centralized structure of Great Britain and the structure of the British press or between German 'particularism' and the German press scene. German 'particularism' favours the development of an extraordinarily diversified regional press. In Great Britain, the local and regional press has never had the importance it does in Germany; instead, the country's centralized structure is also reflected in the

press, in 'London's domination of British journalism' (Hale 43). In the late 1970s, two-thirds of the German population chose to read the regional press, while in Great Britain the regional press makes up 65 percent of the total circulation of the daily press.³ During the same time period there were only two cities in Great Britain where independent provincial morning papers were in competition with each other and only one city with two provincial evening papers; in contrast, nine papers published in London and distributed throughout the entire country made up 90 percent of the total morning press sold (Royal Commission on the Press, 1977: 13-14; 51-2; 270).

It is not our concern, however, to consider the diversity of journalism (which has been analysed repeatedly by investigatory commissions in both countries since the Second World War, with the British commissions tending to reach a more favourable conclusion), but the influence of the political structure, which encouraged a different kind of diversity in journalism and a different view thereof. Diversity of journalism in a centralized setting not only implies that national and regional topics are weighted differently; it also encourages the tendency to seek diversity within one organ of the press rather than by competition between many different organs, each of which is homogeneous in itself.

In Germany the relaxation of censorship in 1848 led to the development of a press aimed at influencing and directing public opinion and with a commitment to a particular point of view. The great majority of newspapers were committed to a political party. Their own view of themselves as the standard bearers of a political camp essentially obviated the need to be objective. The consequence was *uniformity within a particular organ*, while the pointedness in the content and wording at the same time made the German press appear to possess extraordinary diversity (Hale 1964: 44).

This diversity and heterogeneity of the individual organs distinguished the German press from the English press. The popular mass press, which became established earlier in Great Britain and achieved success more quickly than in the other European countries, saw its main job as providing entertainment and information on a level geared to finding the widest possible readership (Ascherson and Wolter, 1977: 77-8). Neither a high level nor partisanship were considered compatible with this goal, as they were considered barriers to maximizing readership. Like the centralized orientation,

it contributed to seeking *diversity within a particular organ*; it was the norm, not only to reflect the spectrum of opinion by means of different points of view but also by considering different points of view within each contribution — an indication of an attempt to reflect reality in comprehensive fashion, something which the missionary stance of the German press essentially precluded.

In addition to the different structure of the press, a different approach to freedom had the effect of encouraging journalists to view themselves as serving the neutral function of a neutral reporter in Great Britain but as being committed to a journalism of opinion in Germany. The English Liberals' struggle for freedom of the press was a freedom of speech originated in a concept of freedom, which, in contrast to continental philosophy, rather than taking the autonomous and separate individual as its point of departure, was focused as well on the position of the individual in society (Stammler, 1971: 89). As a consequence, freedom of the press was interpreted as 'freedom of social communication from the very beginning in England' while on the continent — including Germany — there was a tendency to view it as a natural right of the individual to develop freely (ibid). The latter view encourages conscious subjective evaluation while the former impedes it.

Some Preliminary Hypotheses

Journalism has had a different course of development in Great Britain and in Germany amidst a different intellectual and political climate and in a different political and media structure and with different legal privileges and limitations. Taking the difference in the historical and contemporary settings — which we have only been able to sketch in a general sense here — as a point of departure, the German-British Journalism project posited the existence of a clear distinction between German and British journalists, as regards their demographic structure, their motivation and their view of their role, specifically:

— In Great Britain the view of their function is defined by the role of a neutral reporter, while in the Federal Republic journalism is primarily viewed as a 'species of a political career' (Weber, 1919: 28).

— As a consequence, the attraction of the profession resides in different phases of professional activity, for British journalists in

the research phase and for German journalists, in contrast, in the analytical phase, in the subjective-creative processing of the material.

— The requirement of objectivity does not basically conflict with the way British journalists view their role and thus is essentially accepted by them, while it conflicts with the German journalists' view of their role and is thus rejected by them.

— *but are the British more objective than the Germans?*
Interpreting the Evidence

There are striking differences in the demographic structure of British and German journalism, which indicate that journalism as a career attracts different kinds of people in the two countries. The age composition makes British journalism a considerably 'younger' profession, which, in comparison to German journalism particularly, shows almost twice as large a proportion of journalists under thirty years of age.

The high percentage of very young journalists in Great Britain also means that the educational level is lower in terms of formal education. The Third Royal Commission on the Press set the proportion of British journalists with a university degree at 10 percent, with a gradually increasing tendency (Royal Commission on the Press, 1977: 178). During the same time period, studies in the Federal Republic show a far above average educational level for journalists compared with the general population: approximately 80 percent of German journalists have fulfilled the requirements for entering the university, two-thirds have at least begun university and one-third have a university degree (AFK, 1977: 33). These findings were confirmed by the present investigation. The extraordinarily great difference in levels of education between the German and British journalists is expressed in their view of themselves. Forty-two percent of the German journalists, as opposed to only 14 percent of the British journalists, categorize themselves as 'intellectuals'. The obligatory route via the provincial press in Great Britain may — as the Royal Commission suspected — contribute to the difference in levels of education between German and British journalists. The extent of the difference; however, suggests that in Great Britain journalism is a career which is less attractive to intellectuals to begin with or — to use a more objective definition — to persons with a higher level of education than in the Federal Republic.

The demographic differences indicate that there are different mechanisms of selection for the profession of journalism. We must

this could in part be a reflection of reality; in part a reflection of cultural norms — it is not hard to admit to being an intellectual in Britain (do the Germans do so people of being

distinguish between two processes of selection: selection by the profession, based on the application of its standards, rules of admission and recruitment mechanisms; and self-selection, which is essentially determined by the particular expectations of a career in journalism and by the specific motives of those concerned. What motivates the individual to choose a career in journalism? With the aid of factor analysis in both countries, the following attractive features of work in journalism were deduced as constituting the motivation for choosing a career in the field.⁶

— The attraction of dealing with news; this cluster of motives includes the variety of the profession as well as the chance to impart knowledge to others, to present the news.

— The excitement of the profession, the race against time.

— The professional freedom.

— Self-expression, stimulating situations and opportunities for development, resulting from meeting interesting people, pursuing one's interests, and the chance to work with language. In contrast to German journalists, British journalists also include contacts with interesting colleagues here.

— The desire to have an influence. In both countries this aspect includes criticizing abuses and publicizing grievances and the chance to influence political decisions. Among German journalists, these motives are related to the desire to have a broad forum for one's own convictions. Among British journalists — in contrast to their German colleagues — the chance to champion values and ideals and to impart knowledge are aspects of this desire to have an influence.

— Material aspects such as good pay and prospects for the future and social prestige constitute a separate cluster of motives only for German journalists.

Thus, the most important motives for German journalists are those relating to the need for self-expression and for developing one's potential as well as to the attraction of dealing with news and imparting information, followed by the motive of professional freedom. Limited importance is assigned to material motives and to social prestige. Among the majority of German journalists, the desire to have an influence is essentially limited to the urge to criticize abuses and publicize grievances, with only a minority listing the chance to express one's convictions or to directly influence political decisions as attractions of journalism as a career. The dominant motives for British journalists are those related to the excitement of

obs!
Education differences

the profession, such as working under time pressure, the eventful nature of the work and the attraction of dealing with news. Among British journalists the desire to have an influence is again expressed primarily by the urge to criticize abuses rather than by wanting to directly influence political decisions.

Since the individual factors in the motivation of German and British journalists in part show a different composition, the results are presented in Table 1, item by item, so as to facilitate a direct comparison. This direct comparison between German and British journalists shows that great differences exist in the importance attributed to the opportunity for self-expression and for development of one's potential, to imparting knowledge, to the eventful nature of the work, as well as to the potential for influencing society. British journalists much more frequently mention the exciting, eventful nature of the work as well as the appeal of working under time pressure as advantages of their profession. German journalists, on the other hand, more frequently name the chance to criticize and to express themselves. German journalists do, in fact, appreciate the eventful nature of their work; however, they essentially do not see themselves as passionate researchers who want to be the first to have the news and feel that they are constantly in a race against time. Only 20 percent of the German journalists, as opposed to 62 percent of the British journalists, like the quality of working under time pressure; only barely one out of three Germans as opposed to 55 percent of the British journalists finds the profession's lead in information appealing. German journalists, however, assign considerably more importance than their British colleagues to the chance to pursue their own interests further and to influence political decisions, as well as to the role of critic and to opportunities for self-expression. The differences support the thesis that British journalists concentrate more on the research phase than their German colleagues as well as the assumption that German journalists are more concerned with having an effect on society.

Older and younger journalists essentially view the attractions of the profession similarly, as the analysis by age groups again shows the homogeneity of this profession. Only two motives are mentioned in both countries significantly more often by younger journalists: the chance to criticize abuses and publicize grievances, and the opportunity to pursue one's own interests further. Only a time-series investigation can clarify whether the deviant responses of young

TABLE I
Attractive Features of Journalism Identified by German and British Journalists

Question:
What aspects of your present job do you particularly like? Please pick out all the cards that apply!
(Presentation of cards)

Responses	German Journalists Total %	British Journalists Total %	Difference
The chance of uncovering and criticizing grievances	70	57	+13
The chance to express oneself	68	54	+14
The exciting, eventful nature of the job	64	70	-6
The professional freedom to choose one's own tasks and subjects	64	59	+5
That one meets interesting people	55	56	-1
The chance of imparting knowledge to others to expand their horizon	46	60	-14
The chance of championing values and ideas	42	44	-2
The chance of pursuing one's interests further	38	25	+13
That there is so little routine	37	49	-12
The chance of passing on my convictions to a lot of other people	34	—	—
To be among the first to know what's going on	32	55	-23
The chance of influencing political decisions	29	18	+11
The interesting people one works with	22	42	-20
Having to work under time pressure	20	62	-42
Because it is fun to see one's name and work published	17	27	-10
Good pay and prospects	13	36	-23
The high regard people have for journalists	2	6	-4
The good prospects for the future	1	1	—
No answer	1	1	—

journalists indicate a change in professional motives and in their view of their role, a trend toward journalism with an increased interest in muckraking. The age correlation in the Federal Republic as well as in Great Britain tends to point to a difference by generations rather than to a long-term change in journalism.

There are also significant differences between British and German journalists in the view they take of their role, as is shown in Table 2. The study examined the degree of acceptance of channel roles among journalists, that is the extent to which the reporter sees himself or herself as a neutral reporter of events and a mirror of the public's thinking. Definite advocacy roles were also included in the study, specifically the roles of 'a spokesman for the underdog', 'a proponent of new ideas', 'a guardian of democracy', 'someone who exerts political influence', and 'someone who takes up grievances', as well as the roles of entertainer, instructor, and advisor.

The expectation was confirmed that channel roles meet with less acceptance from German journalists than from their British colleagues; German and British journalists differ more with respect to the mirroring function than in the view of their role as a neutral reporter of events. Interestingly, factor analyses show that the two channel roles — the neutral reporter of events and the mirror of the public's thinking — are viewed as part of one and the same dimension only by British journalists. In the responses of German journalists, however, the mirroring function is part of the same dimension as the view of oneself as 'a spokesman for the underdog', a helper and an advisor. This would indicate that German journalists not only accept this instrumental role of neutral reporter to a lesser extent than their British colleagues but that they also in part interpret it differently, as a really active role of advocacy.

Again in line with the hypotheses, the roles of criticizing abuses and of spokesman for the underdog, which stand for value judgments and advocacy, tend to be accepted by German journalists more than by their British colleagues. On the other hand, there is no significant difference in their view of the journalist's function as a guardian of the democratic system. When it comes to explicitly claiming a political influence, British journalists outdo their German colleagues, a finding which initially runs counter to expectations.

The greatest difference in the respective views of their roles taken by British and German journalists, initially comes as a surprise. It shows up in the claim to be an instructor or educator, a role included in the study as an aspect of opinion journalism, which is geared to having an effect. Only 16 percent of the German journalists make this claim in contrast to 74 percent of their British colleagues.

As Table 3 shows, by testing abstract descriptions of roles using concrete professional decision-making situations, it is possible to draw conclusions about how abstract concepts of roles are

interpreted, for example the view of one's role as an 'instructor or educator' (Donsbach, 1982: 185). The apparent contradiction is resolved if the claim to act as an educator is not simply seen as representing a desire to provide guidance and, instead, the aspect of imparting knowledge is also taken into consideration.

The differences between German and British journalists in their acceptance of the educator role only fit in with the other findings of the study if we assume that imparting knowledge is the most important aspect of the claim to be an educator. In actual fact, there is a limited connection between the view of oneself as an educator and the inclination to educate and direct, both as regards British and German journalists. On the other hand, journalists in both countries who accept the role of an educator term the chance to impart knowledge and information an advantage of their profession far more frequently than their other colleagues. Thus the stronger emphasis on the educational role characterizing British journalists in fact fits into the overall view of British journalism as being oriented toward acquiring and imparting information.

TABLE 2
Perceptions among British and German Journalists of their Roles

Responses	German Journalists		British Journalists		Difference
	Total %	%	Total %	%	
Taking up grievances	95	76	90	76	+19
A neutral reporter of events	81	82	79	82	-9
A guardian of democracy	72	76	72	76	-4
A proponent of new ideas	70	60	70	60	+10
A spokesman for the underdog	58	61	58	61	-3
Someone who advises and helps people	54	76	47	61	-22
Someone who entertains the public	16	74	16	74	-58
Mirroring what the public thinks	12	24	12	24	-12
An instructor or educator	12	24	12	24	-12
Someone who exerts political influence	12	24	12	24	-12

or appropriate public opinion

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TABLE 3
Interpretation of their Instructive Role by British and German Journalists

Question:		Responses	
Two journalists were sent by different editorial offices to attend the annual congress of a major political party. Both of them find the policy of this political party dangerous, but have different views on how to write their reports. Here you can read their comments. Which of them says what you also think? (Presentation of an illustration)			
Who do not See their Role as to Educate, Instruct	German Journalists	Who See their Role as to Educate, Instruct	32
		Who do not See their Role as to Educate, Instruct	41
Who See their Role as to Educate, Instruct	British Journalists	Who See their Role as to Educate, Instruct	69
		Who do not See their Role as to Educate, Instruct	31
I regard this policy as dangerous. But in the account I write I shall simply report the discussions and decisions and leave my readers to see the danger for themselves	54	Other answer	1
		No opinion	14
I regard this policy as dangerous too and in my account I shall select and emphasize the dangerous aspects. My readers should be in no doubt that I am giving them a warning	17	Other answer	5
		No opinion	1
Number of journalists who named as an aspect of their job that they like: the chance of imparting knowledge to others, to expand their horizon	68	Other answer	1
		No opinion	14
Follow-up Survey:	4	Other answer	1
		No opinion	1

Despite differences in the way British and German journalists interpret their roles, the hypotheses are initially only confirmed in general terms: the extent to which abstractly formulated professional roles meet with acceptance, however, certainly does not allow for a strict distinction between British journalism, which is oriented toward channel roles, and German journalism, which is geared to advocacy. Instead, the way German and British journalists interpret their roles is a conglomerate of neutrality and advocacy. More than two-thirds of the journalists in both countries include the roles of a neutral reporter of events, a guardian of democracy, and a critic of abuses among their jobs. Neutral journalism and participant journalism are theoretical constructs, but it is almost exclusively mixed forms which exist in reality. This was the conclusion reached by Johnstone, Slawski and Bowman (1976: 120) when they tried to put American journalists into one of these categories: 'Despite the fact that neutral and participant values tend to be antithetical... it can be concluded that most newsmen do in fact hold patterns of beliefs which combine elements from each perspective.' In line with this, the view of their role taken by British and German journalists, rather than dividing them into supporters of a neutral role, on the one hand, and of a spokesperson's role, on the other, tends to show that there is greater emphasis on the spokesperson's role in German journalism.

Simultaneous support for the neutral role and the spokesperson's role does not permit us to reach any conclusions about the order in which they are ranked. The rank order of competing roles and norms is decided on a day-to-day basis, most clearly when there is a direct conflict between competing norms. While the level of acceptance of abstract roles appears to confirm the notion that German journalism barely shows traces of the traditional journalism of opinion and that it has essentially adjusted the British notion of the 'professional reporter', there are striking differences when everyday professional decisions are taken as indicators (Fabris, 1971: 360). As is shown in Table 4, faced with a situation where an extremist party is to be founded which would represent a threat to society, 90 percent of the German journalists consider it their job to fight this party, in contrast to only 53 percent of British journalists.

This view of the journalist's political role does not necessarily predetermine the strategy for fighting points of view that are thought to be wrong and dangerous. To the journalist who believes that facts, events and opinions speak for themselves, detailed reporting

obs
for handling
by Democrats

TABLE 4
Interpretation of their Political Role by British and German Journalists

Question:	German Journalists		British Journalists	
	Total %	Total %	Total %	Total %
'Assuming an extreme political party was founded whose policy you thought dangerous to society, would you consider it part of your job to oppose it?'	90	53	10	47
Yes				
No				
Follow-up Question:				
(put to journalists who consider it part of their job to oppose such a party): 'How do you think this would best be done? By treating it according to news value, or by reporting it to show your opposition or by refusing to give the party publicity?'				
Would best be done by -				
Reporting it and showing opposition	56	22		
Treating it according to news value	29	59		
Refusing to give publicity	11	9		
Don't know	4	10		

on the goals and activities of a political party thought to be dangerous will represent a promising strategy for fighting it; to others, this will merely seem a preliminary stage which needs to be followed by criticism of the political party and by emphasis on the threat it represents. The importance of publicity for the dissemination of opinions and attitudes, finally, can make withholding access to the media and remaining silent the only effective strategy.

As Table 4 shows, British and German journalists who consider it their job to oppose strongly points of view they consider wrong were then asked which strategy was the most promising. The responses to this follow-up question widen the gap between German and British journalists, with the latter favouring the strategy of reporting strictly 'according to news value', neither very critically nor selectively. The

majority of German journalists, however, consider emphasizing the danger the most effective form of opposition.

In both countries, only a minority of journalists believes that keeping silent is a promising strategy. Whether journalists in this case basically consider the withholding of publicity to be a relatively harmless means of fighting political positions or whether their opinion is premised on a free media system is an interesting question, though one which cannot be pursued in this investigation. The withholding of publicity is effective only as a unified or at least a widespread strategy, but not if it is only the isolated response of one journalist. The failure among journalists to take seriously the possible strategy of withholding access or publicity may thus result simply from the conviction that this is not really a promising strategy, given the media systems of the Federal Republic and Great Britain.

The question as to the most effective strategy was not directly related to the journalist's own practices on the job. Nonetheless, the responses indicate that German and British journalists tend to act differently. This disposition to act differently was then measured using a situational question, in order to determine how the journalist decides what kind of reporting to engage in. The setting was a party conference attended by two journalists as reporters; the two agree that the policy of this political party is dangerous, but they have different views on how to write their reports of the conference. The desire to describe the events in neutral fashion is contrasted with the determination to report in line with one's own perspective.

Journalists were given two options to choose from to respond to this situational question. The first, more impartial, option was: 'I regard this policy as dangerous. But in the account I write I shall simply report the discussions and decisions and leave my readers to see the dangers for themselves.' While 70 percent of British journalists agreed with this view, only 32 percent of their German colleagues agreed. Conversely, German journalists were more inclined to agree with the second, more committed option: 'I regard this policy as dangerous too, and in my account I shall select and emphasize the dangerous aspects. My readers should be in no doubt that I am giving them a warning.' Whereas 53 percent of German journalists agreed with this view, only 22 percent of British journalists chose this option. When these responses are broken down by age, a generation gap emerges among British journalists in contrast to their German colleagues. While both younger and older German journalists are equally inclined toward a more committed or

discuss

partisan journalism, young British journalists are more definitely shaped by the neutral reporting model than their older colleagues. Among British journalists, a preference for the more neutral first option decreased with age: it was the preferred response of 77 percent under the age of 35, 67 percent between the ages of 35-44 and finally, 62 percent of those aged 45 and over.

The extraordinary differences between British and German journalists in their respective preferences for partisan and neutral reporting initially comes as a surprise, in view of the relatively similar interpretations of their professional role; in particular, this is inconsistent with the high percentage of German journalists who accept the role of a neutral reporter of events. The effect of this function is more limited for German journalists, however, having less influence on their decisions when there is a conflict between the claim of neutrality and the desire to take sides. These findings demonstrate the need to test the meaning of norms and roles using situational conflicts rather than just abstractly.

The concrete indicators provided by everyday decisions show that German and British journalists are part of a tradition, with a neutral role traditionally having greater importance in British journalism and a pronounced commitment to journalism-of-opinion characterizing German journalism. But what do these behaviour patterns imply when we consider how closely the reports received by readers, listeners and viewers in Great Britain and the Federal Republic approximate reality? Does this evidence mean that the British public is better and more completely informed?

The evidence from content analyses of German media reporting suggests that a definite selection of news based on the convictions of the selecting journalist takes place; that there is an indistinguishable mix of news and opinion and, in addition, that the news is selected and presented in a way which supports the editorial line discernible in the commentaries (see Noelle-Neumann and Kepplinger, 1978: 51ff; and Schönbach, 1977). In order to compare the respective quality of British and German reporting, a comparative content analysis of the treatment of selected topics would be required. There has been a lack of such analyses to date, and therefore these German findings can only be compared with independent British investigations dealing with a similar question. The Third Royal Commission on the Press concluded from a content analysis of reporting on three selected topics 'that the news coverage of the three selected subjects is highly factual in the sense of being both directly attributed

and devoid of any overt bias... (Royal Commission on the Press, 1977: para. 1071). This optimistic view of the success of efforts to be objective is contradicted by the case study of Halloran, Elliott and Murdoch (1970), in which the media presentation of a demonstration against the Vietnam war is analysed in comparison with on-the-spot observation of the event. (by participants). The study shows the extent to which the journalists' expectations shaped the coverage of the demonstration; when there was essentially no sign of the violence the journalists had expected, coverage by all the media focused on violent groups on the fringes of the demonstration, thus artificially making the 'reality' they were describing agree with their own expectations.

A stronger orientation towards the norm of objectivity cannot completely protect British journalism from 'self-censorship', or from being influenced by one's own perspective and knowledge. The goal of objectivity does not necessarily mean that reporting will be truer to reality and more complete if it is not accompanied by a recognition of the lack of impartiality in one's own work and if a high level of objectivity is taken for granted. It is Rothman's (1979: 349) view that in the Anglo-Saxon sphere the great importance placed on objectivity as a norm in journalism rests on this illusion, among others. The general acceptance of certain premises of *weltanschauung* has a long tradition, causing these assumptions to be taken for granted, particularly in the United States, and thus lending them an aura of unadulterated, unassailable truth. The consequence has been that the consciousness of the bias inherent in one's own observations and judgments has increasingly been lost sight of. Tunstall (1970) has also observed a highly uncritical relationship to objectivity, with hardly any doubt being cast on the assumptions that are made.

Conclusion

A final significant contrast between journalists in these two countries is presented by way of conclusion. British and German journalists differ greatly in their views on acceptable methods for obtaining information, as is shown in Table 5. It has already been noted that while German journalists focus on the processing and utilization of materials, British journalists focus on the research phase. This different emphasis placed on the different phases of work in journalism already showed up in their professional motives; the reactions of journalists to the conflict between the 'public's right

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The preliminary hypotheses of the investigation have thus been confirmed with unexpected clarity: German and British journalists differ in their perception of their roles, their professional motivation and their evaluation of the norms connected with work in journalism. While British journalists see themselves as bloodhounds as hunters of news — their German colleagues see themselves as missionaries.

Notes

1. An exception is provided by Brigitte Auth's master's thesis: 'Nationales Selbstbewusstsein in England und Deutschland: Eine Inhaltsanalyse der Sportberichterstattung beider Länder' (1983), University of Mainz.
2. The project funded by the Thyssen foundation was conducted by research groups at the Institut für Publizistik, Mainz and the Institut für Demoskopie Allensbach, directed by Professor Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann and at the Centre for Mass Communication Research, Leicester, directed by James Halloran.
3. For the details of the sampling design see Renate Köcher, 'Spürhund und Missionar: Eine vergleichende Untersuchung über Berufsethik und Aufgabenverständnis britischer und deutscher Journalisten' (1985), dissertation, Munich.
4. On the different historical developments of freedom of the press see also: Frederick S. Siebert (1965) *Freedom of the Press in England 1476-1776*, 2nd ed. Urbana: University of Illinois Press; Kurt Koszyk (1966) *Deutsche Presse im 19. Jahrhundert: Geschichte der deutschen Presse*. Berlin: Colloquium; and Martin Cöffler (1969) *Kommentar zum Presserecht*, vol. 1, 2nd ed., Munich: C.H. Beck.
5. Percentage of subscription newspapers which are for the most part distributed locally/regionally as part of the total sales of daily newspapers in the Federal Republic. Walter Schütz (1983) 'Deutsche Tagespresse 1983', *Media Perspektiven*, 3: 190-201. See also: *Bericht der Bundesregierung über die Lage von Presse und Rundfunk* (1978), 14.
6. An overview of the current status of motivation research was dispensed with since other writers have already treated this topic in detail. See Donsbach, *Legitimationsprobleme des Journalismus*, 111-130. The factors described in this study were produced by a cluster analysis of the items listed in Table 1.
7. A first step in this direction was made recently at the Institut für Publizistik of the University of Mainz with the master's thesis by Brigitte Auth: 'Nationales Selbstbewusstsein in England und Deutschland', op. cit.

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to know' and the observation of ethical norms for research show the immense ambition of British journalists to get information almost at any price. British journalists are marked by the conviction that the highest goal is satisfying the public's need for information and that this by all means justifies the use of dishonest research methods. The overwhelming majority thinks that under some circumstances it is justified to gain inside information by becoming employed in a firm or organization or to badger unwilling informants to get a story, or to pay people for confidential information. The only thing the majority objected to was using a false identity; nonetheless, one out of three British journalists still consider this method acceptable. Investigations in the United States have shown that British and American journalists agree to a great extent in their willingness to disregard the norms of honest research methods (Gray and Wilhoit, 1983). The opinion of German journalists is completely different; the majority reject each of these methods and do not approve of them under any circumstance.

TABLE 5
 Methods for Obtaining Information

Question:	German Journalists					British Journalists				
	Total	18-34	35-44	45+	%	Total	18-34	35-44	45+	%
'Journalists have to use various methods to get information. Given an important story which of the following methods do you think may be justified on occasion and which would you not approve under any circumstances?'										
Paying people for confidential information	25	39	23	16	69	74	75	56		
Claiming to be somebody else	22	36	25	11	33	45	32	16		
Badgering unwilling informants to get a story	8	15	9	4	72	78	75	60		
Getting employed in a firm or organization to gain inside information	36	53	41	21	73	87	73	52		

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A Theory of Evaluative Discourse: Towards a Graph Theory of Journalistic Texts

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Charles E. Osgood and his colleagues developed a technique for content analysis called 'Evaluative Assertion Analysis' (Osgood, 1956). An elaboration of the technique will be presented here. Sentences are split up into nuclear sentences, which are predicating something about the relation between meaning objects. Meaning objects might be political actors, empirical variables, attributes or abstract philosophical notions such as 'the good' or 'the world'. By uttering nuclear sentences, meaning objects are associated or disassociated. A computer program, CET-A, has been developed which applies graph theory for combining these nuclear sentences in order to detect the structure of discourse.

Introduction

In this article we shall be concerned with journalistic discourse and, more particularly, with the question of what journalists are trying to make clear to us, the public, in their reports and comments. To put it somewhat loosely, we shall be concerned with the 'mental pictures' which the senders or journalists transmit to the receiver with their information. Take the following fictitious, but fairly typical, editorial:

Unemployment in our country rose again this year and reached the record figure of 800,000. That's really bad business. Undoubtedly the high cost of labour in this country and high public spending are to be blamed. This leaves little scope for industry, which is faced with declining profitability and has therefore barely any inclination to invest. Now the government has resolved to reduce the budget deficit in order to combat unemployment. Plans for cuts in social benefits should be seen in this perspective. The government deserves the support of us all on this issue.

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