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The formation of the British journalist 1900-2000

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**THE FORMATION OF THE BRITISH JOURNALIST
1900-2000**

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the
University of Westminster for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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Anthony Delano

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ABSTRACT

This study represents the first comprehensive investigation into the nature of the present day British journalist and the influences that shaped him or, increasingly (as it clearly demonstrates) *her*. Quantitative and qualitative methods produced a range of socio-economic profiles and a comprehensive array of data concerning, education, training, income, social comportment occupational status, race and gender distribution. The result should do much to remedy what a leading communication scholar called the 'remarkable lacuna in the annals of media sociology and communication caused by neglect of the 'flesh-and-blood journalists' who composed 'the stories we call news' (Schudson 1991:141). Such an achievement, augmented by an appraisal of the significance of the data in the light of suitable theory, represents a significant and original contribution to knowledge in this sphere of study.

The study data also allowed comparisons with the general characteristics of journalists recently surveyed in the United States and Australia, although the British sampling was more exhaustive. In addition to the overall journalist-figure that emerged, separate portrayals were generated of the contemporary female journalist and of the journalists who practise in the three clearly defined editorial 'nations' charted: newspapers, broadcasting and periodicals.

Unlike the American studies, the most recent of which replicates two earlier projects carried out at 10 year intervals, the data gathered for this project could not be compared with that from earlier investigations, since none had ever been carried out on an appropriate scale. Earlier journalist-figures to set alongside those of the 1990s could only be evoked by examining the historical context, mainly that of the later half of the twentieth century.

Valuable as the study is in itself in creating benchmarks, it would gain greatly in relevance if it could be replicated, preferably before 2005, to allow the accurate measurement of change in this important occupational universe.

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Throughout the earlier part of the twentieth century men and women from a wide range of backgrounds and differing experience found a niche within the journalistic structure. Some prepared for it by apprenticeship, others found their way into it by natural selection, happenstance or *faute de mieux*. During the 1960s, in an earlier era

of Labour government, the NUJ was able to establish a form of structured entry and a 'closed shop', compelling journalists to join or become affiliated with it, irrespective of whether they considered a trade union the type of organisation best suited to represent them. In the period of Conservative Party government that began in 1979 and was not firmly challenged until the end of the 1990s, legislation effectively abolished the collective bargaining power of trade unions, including the NUJ. As a trade union, the NUJ had always been obliged to favour the intensively socialising apprenticeship system but some at least of the meagre efforts that were occasionally made to improve training and education standards among journalists originated from its leadership.

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Part One

Chapter 1

Introduction

Like sport, management, book publishing and opera singing, journalism has become what the American economist Robert H. Frank calls a 'winner-take-all' market. Journalists can become celebrities almost as quickly as the celebrities they help to create and see their own picture splashed across the papers. In some interviews it is hard to tell who is interviewing whom—Christian Tyler, Financial Times 25.7.98.

Over the past half-century there has been a huge change in the 'balance of trade' between politics and journalism. Once upon a time, pols were officers and gentlemen, while journos were rogues and vagabonds. Today, compared with politicians, journalists are better educated, better paid, cleverer, more important, and quite visibly more powerful. This is a historically important development, and not a happy one for democracy.—Geoffrey Wheatcroft, The Guardian 12.3.01

Section 1: Contribution

This thesis report incorporates a significant, original—and sorely needed—contribution to the study of communication: the first socio-economic profiles of journalists working in all media sectors throughout the United Kingdom. Journalism has been a recognised occupation for more than 300 years but until this project was completed no one could say with any degree of certainty what kind of people became journalists in Britain.

The study establishes for the first time, norms that can be applied to the entire journalist population: levels of education and training; income, status and lifestyle; gender and racial distribution. It assesses the attitudes of contemporary journalists to the issues raised by these factors in their occupational function, their relationship with employers and with the consumers of the media product they generate.

Until now there has been, little dependable information beyond subjective experience and observations, necessarily limited to particular situations and sites, to guide either journalists or managers, let alone media historians and social scientists, through the demographic and cultural shifts that have taken place in this field, especially in the final third of the twentieth century. When, in 1965, Jeremy Tunstall began research for his enduring study of specialist correspondents and their environment he found that there was not 'a single social science study of any aspect of British journalism', no study of recruitment to the occupation nor of all the partial histories of Fleet Street any that 'could satisfy a sociologist or a social or economic historian'. Those few to be found were 'largely anecdotal, fragmentary, scissors-and-paste studies, usually written by journalists' (Lee 1976:17). Apart from celebrities, most of them writers from another realm such as Rudyard Kipling, or charismatic editors like W.T. Stead, the journalist remained an elusive, almost an abstract figure.

The next 30 years saw little change in this perspective. Academic attention continued to be monopolised by 'effects research' (Berridge 1986:201). In contrast to the data accumulated about the audiences which read, listened to and viewed the output of journalists, virtually nothing of a concrete nature was gathered about those responsible for generating it. The preoccupation of media scholars with competing explanations of how news values evolved tended to 'dethrone the journalist and replace his creativity with a group of inexorable pressures'. The journalist seemed to be regarded as 'inert' (Smith 1978:144).

Neither of the views quoted at the beginning of this chapter could be taken as objective but they exemplify the prominence that some journalists at least have attained in today's society. Their function is more diverse

than ever and more visible. ‘Across the world, top newsreaders, anchorpersons, and newspaper columnists acquire the glamour of movie stars and exert the influence of politicians’, aspirants are told (McNair 1994:3). That influence is pervasive. The average British adult spends 26 hours a week watching television and a further 10 hours listening to radio. Over half the population reads one of the three largest circulation newspapers every day. Media consumers might not be seeking news or other journalistic product but they cannot avoid exposure to it nor thus to the mediation of journalists in providing the output, for ‘stories are selected, given priority, the phrasing chosen and amended by reporters, editors and sub-editors’ (Cockburn 1991:147).

Scholarly ignorance of data about the journalists occupying those roles remained a ‘startling omission’ from the continuing debate over the nature of news and news flow, in the view of Colin Sparks and Slavko Splichal:

the people who actually carry out the role of newsprocessing, their origins and social position, their assessment of themselves, are links in the chain of circumstances which brings us the news we actually get (1994:1).

This study should do much to rectify the resulting ‘paucity of research’ to which Splichal and Sparks referred at the conclusion of their 1994 evaluation of first-year journalism students from 22 countries.

One of the obvious areas for further investigation (...) is the need to investigate the changes that are taking place in journalism itself and in the attitudes of young entrants to journalism as they move through their college courses and into the world of work. Given the paucity of research into journalism itself (...) any such investigation will have to begin with establishing a number of very basic facts about the number of journalists, their social profiles and the situation of journalism (1994:183).

If it were to have achieved nothing more, the project has established benchmarks invaluable to future investigations in this under-explored field. But the investigation also examined hypotheses that were supported or qualified by the data it gathered and made possible comparisons with the characteristics of journalists in two other media-rich English-speaking

countries, Australia and the United States of America, thus consolidating its parametric relevance.

Section 2: Journalists as social actors

The function of journalists as social actors became, in the 1990s, legitimised as newsworthy in itself: all five national broadsheet daily newspapers offered weekly 'media' sections which were matched by radio and television programmes. Nor was it only the immediacy of news and current affairs that nourished the impression of journalistic influence. Nicholas Coleridge, managing director of Conde Nast, could confidently assure editors of that glossy magazine group that they enjoyed 'star status' in 'the hottest media' because so many of the articles they published were exploited by other media.¹ The terms 'celebrity journalism' and 'celebrity journalist' came into common use—the one not necessarily produced by the other.

The role of journalists as social and *political* actors had attracted some academic acknowledgment at the mid-point of the century. Howard Strick, a pioneer journalism educator but an economist by training, had urged as early as the 1950s that journalists' own economic and social aspirations deserved to be considered because journalists held the power—'at least equally with any other power in the state'—to determine whether a democracy was given 'the inspiration and the information' essential to it (1957:2). Another pioneer journalism educator, Norman Cattanach, saw them as 'an important body of people through whose ears and eyes and minds, the news of the world is projected' (1978:4). The communication scholar Anthony Smith became convinced that for many people journalists had even come to represent a 'kind of substitute government' (1978:179).

Since those observations were made, an increasing number of journalists have shifted into the government itself, or at least into the Palace of Westminster, Downing Street, Whitehall and the principal party headquarters. At least 36 members of the 2000 parliament held National

¹ Of 'pundits' consulted by other media, he said, 63 per cent came from magazines compared to 16 per cent from newspapers, 14 per cent from television and seven percent from radio (*Press Gazette* 09.05.97:1)

Union of Journalism cards—before the House of Lords reforms there had been several more.¹ Fame as a television correspondent rather than any political standing won one of them, Martin Bell, his parliamentary seat, just as prominence as a political journalist qualified the prime minister's press secretary, Alastair Campbell, for a position at the centre of power. Journalism seemed to have been revived as a bridging occupation to politics, for which it was renowned in the early nineteenth century (Tunstall remarked that politics was one of the few occupations for which journalism appeared to be a suitable preparation).

Journeymen reporters and even editors might question whether such prototypes of the celebrity journalist as McNair's newsreaders, anchors and columnists, should be regarded as journalists in the same way as themselves. Tunstall, who remains the doyen of media sociologists, showed a keen awareness of how few journalists genuinely exuded 'glamour', comparing the journalistic hierarchy of the 1990s to that of professional sport or show business: 'a small layer of stars and a huge following oversupply of eager seekers after fame, fortune and stardom' (1996:136).

But even when they work at the less scrupulous end of the occupational spectrum or in the most menial of jobs, journalists have come to be seen by many as privileged and powerful beings who possess knowledge denied to others. They are granted access to areas of life from which ordinary citizens are excluded; able to influence events, often by their presence alone. In certain circumstances this impression may be a valid one but for many people it has become dominant, constantly reinforced by complementary media, particularly film and television. The marauding, free-spending reporter, the overbearing editor pandering to the demands of proprietor or politician, appear as protagonists of large and small screen drama as regularly as the private eye or police inspector (and are just as improbably portrayed). Whether looked at as a way of life, or merely a way of earning a living, journalism in the late 1990s seemed a far cry from

¹ NUJ records

H.L. Mencken's description of it at the beginning of the century as 'a craft to be mastered in four days and abandoned at the first sign of a better job'.

Growing numbers

One reason journalists increasingly attract attention is the startling rise in their number and in the number of outlets that employ them. By the 1990s it had become common for journalists (augmented, in the case of television, by technicians) to dwarf any other group of participants in news events. The 1994 D-Day anniversary celebrations attracted 4000 journalists (only 558 had participated in the 1944 event that was being commemorated). The 1995 O.J.Simpson trial in Los Angeles was covered by more than 50 news organisations. When the first NATO peacekeeping force entered Kosova in 1999 it was outnumbered (and impeded) by the 2700 journalists who had been accredited.

The study established that in 1996 at least 27,826 men and women in the United Kingdom earned a full-time living from journalism, compared to 7,000 in 1928 when, by most accounts of that time, workaday journalism was not seen as a particularly desirable or distinguished calling.¹ The relatively new-found conviction that there is status, charisma and an enviable income to be had from journalism nourishes the ambitions of an ever-increasing number of aspirants. In 1996 some 3000 young men and women were enrolled in journalism training courses or vocationally orientated degrees in Britain, a figure that represented only a small proportion of those who applied to them.² Even warnings as sharp and authoritative as that delivered by a former managing director of the BBC World Service could not deter the hopeful.

... journalism is not a career if that means an orderly progression up a hierarchy of responsibility and reward. It is not a way of making money (...) It is hardly secure, increasingly casualised.(...) If it is a profession, it is pretty lax about establishing consistent standards of work, conduct and behaviour among its members (Tusa 1991).

¹ ILO:1928

² 1998 National Union of Teachers Survey showed 25% of sixth formers aspiring to a career in media/public relations.

Nor, as the study makes clear, is the formal training referred to above the only gateway to the occupation. Despite the multiplication of training courses and of higher education awards in journalism, anyone may embark on this enticing career with no credentials whatever. As an American researcher was told: 'You become a journalist when you declare that you are one, and you remain a journalist as long as you keep declaring you are one.' The journalist being interviewed wondered if there could be another occupation of comparable importance to society that exercised so little formal control over itself—no entrance requirement, no explicit code of ethics, no system for weeding out 'the incompetents and the scoundrels' (Goldstein 1985:157). That observation draws into focus a major obstacle to any investigation of journalists as a social group: who is to be included; who excluded?

Perceptions of journalists

Even when the incompetents and scoundrels and the spurious fictional image are disregarded there remains a problem of perception concerning 'this elusive bureaucracy...the salaried men and women, anonymous, limited in responsibility, safe from criticism who buy and sell and try to make and unmake opinions' (Hasluck 1958:13). Much of the manifest public disapproval of media concentration on the Royal Family which followed the death of Diana, Princess of Wales was deflected from the *paparazzi* originally implicated to the client editors who encouraged their behaviour. Even before that event a public survey appeared to acknowledge a nexus between journalists and politicians in a way flattering to neither group. Invited to rank occupations according to the level of 'respect' felt for them, respondents awarded members of parliament and journalists a negative score respectively of -32 and -33, which left journalists only a notch above real estate agents.¹

There are examples of more focused disquiet. An American communication scholar called the influence attributed to journalists one of the 'outstanding conundrums of contemporary public discourse', blaming

¹ *British Social Attitudes*, 1995. MORI surveying 2000 adults.

her fellow academics for 'the public's inability to grasp fully the power of journalists' and scolding them for failing satisfactorily to explain 'the persistent presence of journalists as arbiters of events of the real world' (Zelizer 1993:80). This built on the widely welcomed view of a British authority who linked the training of journalists (and the socialising effects associated with it) to 'complex and subtle' connections with media ownership which ensured a 'passive' media liable to uphold the status quo' (McBarnet 1979:193). That structuralist view, widely held among communication scholars (Chomsky et al), will receive considerable support from this study.

Some thoughtful journalists share the misgivings of academic critics such as Zelizer, McBarnet and others. They are fully cognisant of the extent to which professionalism, in the sense of techniques applied to the manufacturing of media product, affects the gathering and reporting of news and thus, as Soloski argued, makes 'the use of discretion predictable' in the construction of journalistic accounts (1989:209). They worry openly about the obstacles that media structures place in the way of dealing with issues of public relevance; of the danger that the journalistic process could become the primary, sometimes the sole, means of access to 'knowledge, understanding and taste' (Adair 1993). They fear, as this study reflects, that the increasing concentration of the ownership of media outlets may eventually affect the way that journalists would prefer to carry out their work; the implication being whether they could be sure of having their work published or broadcast at all if it did not conform to a narrow and increasingly banal set of editorial values. They lament that the 'individuality' which had once been seen as an important element in the appeal of journalism as a way of life—and one on which its latent claim to recognition as a profession partly rested—appeared diminished.

Apropos of the professionalisation to which Soloski referred, heremarked with exasperation on the amount of ink that had been spilled over arguments about whether journalism could be considered a bona fide profession (1989:207). This study has used up a good deal more of it to re-examine the question and assess its relevance, while bearing in mind the

conclusion to which David Weaver, the most seasoned of researchers in the field, seems to have come, however belatedly: that the intrinsic and formative characteristics of journalists might prove more significant than any observations of and about them that had hitherto been made; *who* and *what* they were rather than what they might or might not *do*.

In the end, it seems more important to discover who journalists are, where they come from (including their educational experiences) and what they think about their work, their roles, their methods and their publics than to try to classify them firmly as professionals or not (1998:478).

Section 3. Origins

Weaver's work in the United States (until recently in partnership with the late C. Cleveland Wilhoit) provided the prime motivation for this project, which was originally conceived as a straightforward comparative study of British journalists. Data concerning them would be matched to that provided by the surveys of American journalists which had been repeated at 10-year intervals since 1971 and another survey of Australian journalists by Professor John Henningham in 1993 which replicated the 1982-83 and 1992-93 Weaver-Wilhoit studies. However, the scope of the American and Australian data was soon seen to be too restrictive to provide an accurate portrayal of British journalists in their far richer variety and complexity. It also became evident during the course of the project, that developments in both practice and training were occurring with such speed that a comprehensive statistical snapshot, rather than the limited one presented by the other researchers, was crucial if future data that might be harvested among British practitioners were to have any useful basis for comparison.

Lean mean and eerie

The catalyst of the greatest change affecting journalists was the technological development in editorial production during the final third of the century. Even during the fieldwork period methods and techniques in place for only a decade or so began to change anew, under the pressure of newly available technology, at a rate few journalists themselves appeared

to understand. The oldest journalists working in Britain today experienced an industrial revolution which brought great changes to the functioning of their occupation; the youngest are having to adjust to a second reorientation in the form of the internet and web publication, which has expanded with bewildering speed into a new editorial medium with techniques that verge on the postmodern.

The introduction in the 1970s and the 1980s of ‘new technology’ to print media offices in the form of direct input of copy to editorial computer systems by reporters and other writers, and the concurrent requirement that sub-editors and page designers process the resulting text on-screen, produced consequences far beyond the savings that had been anticipated in the labour of printers and other technological intermediaries. Newspaper and magazine journalists found themselves taking over tasks which for centuries had been the responsibility—the prerogative—of printers.

Much the same effect could be seen in broadcasting. It became accepted that a BBC journalist’s career ended at 50¹ with the result that new recruits could no longer depend on finding experienced colleagues at whose hands they could be ‘easily nurtured, coaxed and sometimes bullied’ into shape (Wilson 1996). A new ‘mixed economy’ of television and radio demanded ‘multiskilled’ journalists who could edit video or audio tape as well as record on it and be responsible for effects that had hitherto been added by technicians.²

Managers had intended a reduction in editorial personnel as well as the elimination of mechanical typesetting and manual compositing but no one foresaw the extent to which the new procedures would eradicate much of the higher age stratum of experienced journalists who had been trained and conditioned in ways that will be examined in Part Two. Not only did the march of technology transform newsrooms and broadcasting studios into ‘lean, mean and eerily silent places’ where the computer seemed as much in charge as the editors (Hayward 1995:22), many senior journalists,

¹ Letter to *Press Gazette* 6.6.97 from C. Underwood, secretary, Chartered Institute of Journalists

² The director of technology at ITN coined the term ‘journotech’ for the operators of the digital newsrooms already coming onstream which would require fewer technicians. ‘About 90 per cent of editing is fairly straightforward and journalists will do it. ITN has 40 picture editors; that figure will probably come down to six or eight.’

usually male sub-editors aged 50 or over, faced with the transition from typewriter, pencil and ruler to computers welcomed, or at least accepted, redundancy. Others were given no choice by managements which saw older journalists simply as more expensive than the younger computer-literate replacements who were becoming available for the technology-led plunge on which many publishers and broadcasters embarked.

The disappearance of a generation of elders, together with their accumulated professional 'wisdom' and skills which otherwise would have been emulated by their natural successors, interrupted the process of occupational socialisation that had long been associated with the training of journalists. The powerful formative influence of an older generation of journalists was diluted from without as well as within. Some employers, faced with the prospect of paying off large numbers of redundant printworkers retrained them as sub-editors. New recruits emerged from a mould different from that of their predecessors: increasingly they were university graduates; increasingly they were likely to be female. Whatever preparation for journalism the newcomers had received it was increasingly unlikely to have been in the form of a lengthy and socialising apprenticeship.

A study seemed called for that would register and assess the nature of media practitioners of the 1990s before a new wave of change overtook them; define the kind of person who operated as a journalist in the closing years of the twentieth century; establish how they had been shaped to their occupation and to try to gauge the ways in which they might differ from their predecessors.

Established journalists at work during the transitional period would frequently try to relate their growing doubts about the continuing effectiveness of once-dependable editorial methods, techniques and value systems to the redistribution throughout the journalism population of basic factors such as age, education, class, gender. The effect that the characteristics of a new generation might have on the overall discourse of journalism could only be speculated upon or assessed anecdotally by those in the workplace, but this study has placed these traits beyond surmise.

One ideal outcome for such a project would have been to compare the quantitative findings of the study not only with those of the foreign studies referred to above but with an array of comparable statistics on British journalists assembled earlier, say before 1960. No such data existed and therefore exhaustive matches were not possible.

Valid picture

Partial studies had been undertaken, in addition Tunstall's admirable but deliberately limited investigations. Serial collections of basic demographic data on regional newspaper *trainees* had been compiled by the National Council for the Training for Journalists (NCTJ) and others. But in order to produce comprehensive results of genuine and durable value a research project would have to scrutinise data assembled from the entire spectrum of journalists responsible for the gathering, processing and dissemination of print and broadcast news in the United Kingdom and for producing thousands of periodicals and feature programmes on radio and television.

This was a task beyond the resources normally associated with a doctoral study. Because the investigation needed to encompass the entire United Kingdom and because, in order to provide a valid and viable statistical picture, the surveys had to be completed within a short period, they could only be carried out by a professional research organisation. Funding for this was provided by the Higher Educational Research Funding Council and administered through the London Institute, of which the London College of Printing and its School of Media are subsidiaries. The revised and amplified questionnaire and sample frames, together with the assembled contact details of the journalists to be approached, was consigned to the MORI subsidiary On-Line Telephone Surveys, whose operatives were then briefed to select respondents from the stratified sample frames that had been prepared at random for as long as the funding permitted [Appendices A and B].

Three nations

The surveys and other aspects of the methodology produced results far beyond those that could have been yielded by merely replicating the

American and Australian studies. A notable outcome of preparing stratified sample frames to reflect normal distribution was that an accurate comparison could be made of the characteristics of three distinct groups of journalists at work in the major sectors that employed them: newspapers, broadcasting and periodicals—the three nations of British journalism.

At the same time that the study gathered, by qualitative as well as quantitative means, those basic facts about British journalists that Splichal, Sparks and others had yearned after, it re-explored much of the theoretical ground charted by earlier scholars (Porter 1968; Elliot 1977; Skornia 1968; Fromont 1981; Halloran & Jones 1985; White, 1986; Becker et al 1987; van Doonen & Donsbach 1988). This ensured that the socio-economic portrait of the contemporary British journalist generated by the data was framed within the social, professional and historical context within which he and she had been shaped.

The project was extended historically to offer an appropriate perspective on aspects of the formation of journalists that have an important bearing on their present circumstances. Much of Part Two of the thesis report is devoted to this, even though the historical perspective is incidental to the much broader approach of the study. Comparative data which could relevantly be aligned with those yielded by the American and Australian studies have been preserved and are presented together in association with the analysis of the intrinsically British results in Part Three.

Section 4: Aims

At the time the initial project was being planned it was decided to examine a hypothesis, based on empirical observations, of the fundamental change of social configuration in the nature of younger journalists. Although, as already noted, there are no formal requirements for entry to the occupation or to advancement within it, and training is in many cases notional, by the final quarter of the century the number of university graduates practising journalism suggested that a higher education qualification had become a *de facto* prerequisite.

In formulating the original hypothetical approach it was supposed that

- a) because the recruitment base for journalists appeared to have shifted away from the C1-C2 socio-economic group towards B1-B2 and even A¹, a working class background would become less usual among journalists and a broadly middle-class one the norm;
- b) because their formation was increasingly sited outside the workplace, the middle-class values, attitudes and expectations of the ‘new’ journalists were less likely to be eroded by the lengthy socialisation of apprenticeship or other experiences that induced conformity;
- c) because the majority of future journalists would be likely to compare themselves socially to their contemporaries who were engaged in occupations that had traditionally enjoyed higher status than journalism, they would strive to raise the status of their own occupation;
- d) because these ‘new’ journalists would have been educated more extensively and to a higher level than their predecessors, their status would be more complex, combining elements of class, economic reward and power—the power to control the technical and ethical standards of the occupation.

It was further hypothesised that these changes would be likely to lead to a modulation of attitudes. University-calibre education and pre-entry training in independent establishments, it was surmised, would lead to middle-class professionalisation characterised by, among other things, a high degree of ethical awareness and self-regulation at the personal level. If a British journalist of the end of the twentieth century displayed an affinity with the American model of journalist in particular, a considerable divergence would be implied between the values with which ‘new’ British journalists were equipped and those that had been imposed on their older colleagues by the organisational requirements of earlier journalistic practice.

The earliest findings appeared to provide an evidential basis for the jaundiced conviction of many veterans (whether displaced or retained) that

¹ See Chapter 8.

the late twentieth century work force might well lack the 'know-how' to cater expertly to a wide spectrum of consumers. The median age of all journalists was found to be 36.1 and the average length of experience 13 years. More than one in three—an even higher proportion among the youngest—were women. But a particularly telling result demonstrated was the extent of change in educational background of already mature journalists as well as beginners—and in the related social status implied. Four out of five journalists actually at work were university or college graduates and a similar proportion was reflected in the intake of formal trainees.¹

In 1957 graduates formed only ten per cent of a year's intake of provincial newspaper trainees and a negligible proportion of senior journalists. Even among the specialists and foreign correspondents studied by Tunstall ten years later the proportion of graduates was only 30 per cent and only 12 per cent of regional newspaper recruits had degrees. He subsequently estimated that it would take until the year 2025 before 50 per cent of British journalists were graduates (1977:335). The rate at which graduate entry to journalism accelerated must be considered in relation to the increase in the national university population from 50,000 in 1938 to 750,000 by 1992¹ but it has to be seen as the most significant element in the profile of the present-day British journalist, suggesting as it does (in support of Wheatcroft's claim) that for the first time in at least 100 years journalists are better educated than most of their readers or viewers. The majority of British journalists now believe that their occupation is a profession (rather than a trade or a craft) although over half of them—well over half, except in the periodical sector—belong to a trade union.

Strick had taken the relatively low proportion of graduates among them as helping to explain the 'condescension' shown to journalists at that time by people on the 'right' side of what was perhaps 'the only real social dividing line left in this country': occupations that required university preparation. He listed lawyers, doctors, civil servants, teachers and

¹ Guild of Editors Survey 1994 reported 68% of trainees already working in journalism had 'university education'.

university lecturers, industrial executives and specialists. This study has shown that today's journalists regard themselves as being firmly installed on the same side as most of those and equivalent to them in social status.

The 'privileged' background—as it was often perceived—of the new generation of journalists, and the attitudes it might engender, were open to more complex interpretation than the prejudiced assumptions of veterans. Less than 20 years earlier the NCTJ had believed that no graduate 'would readily accept the canon of the popular press' and thus would be unlikely to work for it (NCTJ 1975:4). Sparks took a reverse perspective but raised much the same question: since so many of the new generation of British journalists were likely to be graduates whose career objectives and social situations were quite different from those of their readers they might be 'unsuitable candidates' to administer some popular editorial styles (1992:31). There seems little in the nature or quality of contemporary media product to justify these contentions but each of those viewpoints raised the question of whether the occupational values that had been consensually developed throughout the century by proprietors and journalists could any longer be depended on as canonical by those employed to administer them. If they could not, then the misgivings of those who saw graduates as being 'potentially subversive' (Boyd-Barrett 1980:316), because they were not as susceptible to socialisation as their less well-educated but putatively more highly motivated confreres, might be justified.

Section 5: Engineers or mechanics?

A thorough examination of the various attempts at organising the occupation was thought essential. Journalists at the beginning of the century had largely rejected the possibility of becoming a chartered profession, with the autonomy over membership, ethics and standards of competence that such a status implied, choosing, by the creation of the National Union of Journalists (1907), to adopt the trade union model favoured by printers and other artisans. For most of the century the greater

¹ Council for Industry and Higher Education, 1995, *Post-18 Education*, London: CIHE.

number of journalists appear to have been content with the craft/trade status that ensued from their preference for seeing themselves as, in Odette Parry's apt comparison, 'mechanics rather than mechanical engineers'. For a significant minority a craving for professional status persisted, evinced by the survival of the Chartered Institute of Journalists (CJoJ), although even at the height of that organisation's influence in the inter-war period it had been apparent that an essential factor continuing to exclude journalists from the status of an established profession was their failure to gain a 'monopoly of a technique indispensable to the proprietors, who are in a position to go their own ways, whether or not existing journalists are willing to work for them' (Carr-Saunders and Wilson 1933:269).

In formulating the early hypotheses it was supposed that a broadly based reversal of attitudes to the organisation of journalism could possibly result in a revival of the dormant notion of an autonomous profession able to organize and rank its members, regulate their ethical conduct and determine certain conditions of their employment. If, within the generation spanning the 1970s and 1990s, the type of young person who became a journalist in Britain had altered radically they might have brought to the occupation a fresh set of career expectations, notions of status, political convictions and professional attitudes. It could be, the speculation went, that at the end of the twentieth century, with trade union influence exhausted and an expanded array of abilities required of them, journalists might turn back to an earlier ideal, perhaps in convergence with other communication media sectors which were also seeking some sort of control over the use to which they and their product were put by increasingly powerful and impersonal media systems. In key areas such as news, journalists might even come to favour a form of accreditation under which certain roles required professional peer endorsement.

A fresh hypothesis was proposed which the study has broadly sustained: whether preparation for journalism takes place pre-entry or post entry; whether it is carried out in the higher education sector or is entirely emulative, the pattern of occupational socialisation that has been structured

into the practice of journalism exerts an influence so powerful as to amount to a form of hegemony.

These suppositions received only patchy support. The earliest data produced by the fieldwork undermined several of the initial hypotheses but they brought into focus some of the salient contradictions in attempting to categorise journalists and their professional attitudes.

Section 6: Outcomes

Whether the conclusions of the study are persuasive or not, presentation of the data will demolish some of the widespread preconceptions held about—and by—British journalists and modify others. The data suggested that contrary to the impressions referred to at the beginning of this introduction a large proportion of journalists, perform bureaucratic routines for quite modest pay, sometimes feel alienated by their work and concerned about the use to which it is put but were disinclined to take any initiative which might disturb the status quo. Some of the conclusions regarding gender and race distribution among the journalist populations are definitive and unexpected—a major contribution to those particular areas of discourse as well as to that of journalism. But the data also provided an important insight into the polarised debate on suitable preparation and training for journalists which, even in the fieldwork period, entered a new phase.

This comprehensive assessment of the present state of an occupation that is responsible for a crucial phase of contemporary news and media production and the collation of first-hand evidence about the effect of present methods of entry, training and stratification represents a valuable original contribution to knowledge of the media and its practitioners. The quantitative armature supporting the study is of great importance in itself, providing as it does a benchmark for subsequent replication of the fieldwork and thus for future comparisons. To journalists, the most useful result of the project may appear to be the revelation of gender-based and other earning discrepancies and the demographic and attitudinal findings.

To communication scholars, sociologists and educationalists the greater value may lie in the theoretical conclusions invited.

Attempting to gauge the effect of the data gathered about the nature of present-day journalists on their output—the journalistic product—was beyond the scope of this inquiry and, save for the few empirical observations included throughout, that has been left for others to pursue.

Social scientists

Although it would be an incidental result, this report may help to pave over some of the broken ground between journalists and social scientists, whose misunderstandings (as catalogued by Schudson) are legion and varied. Tunstall observed that neither occupation appeared to appreciate the extent to which it was dependent on the other, reflecting on his academic colleagues' preoccupation with general theories and their reluctance to 'concede that individual human personalities can play a major part in the development of societies'. On the other hand, he thought that journalists and publishers might have benefited from observations sociologists had made about their operations, particularly the 'extraordinarily short-sighted policies of the newspaper industry in relation to the training and recruitment of journalists' (1971:277-8). The account constructed here of the sorry history of the education 'for' versus training 'in' journalism suggests that he was right.

Journalists for their part, seem all too ready to make use of research data generated by sociologists while remaining hypersensitive to any assessment of their own function. Barbie Zelizer, particularly, was irked by the 'arrogance' that journalists displayed in refusing to respond to criticism. Generously, Tunstall attributed much of the mutual suspicion to ignorance of the kind displayed by the eminent journalist Polly Toynbee, usually an informed and thoughtful commentator, who declared in the *Independent* that sociology was 'nearly dead', its place as a guide to understanding undermined by a preoccupation with soap operas. 'Their work ignored by policy-makers, sociologists have retreated into masonic jargon, peppered with cross-references to one other's work.' Similarly

Michael Leapman, a *Times* and *Independent* writer of normally calm judgment and unpartisan stance, complained in the *British Journalism Review* that those academics whose field of study it was often appeared to hate the media and those who worked in it.¹

Section 7: Background

Qualifications should be tendered for my fitness to undertake this study. After an early career in Australian newspapers, I spent 30 years on the staff of British national titles before entering journalism education. I acquired a masters degree in communication in 1991 and took charge of a journalism degree course at the University of Southern Queensland. I subsequently obtained a research fellowship in journalism at the School of Media of the London College of Printing, where most of the research for this project was carried out. If the references in this report to circumstances in Australia and America appear unexpectedly numerous it may be because of my experience in those countries, where journalism education and training has been more systematic than in Britain. Thirteen years of my active journalism were spent reporting from New York and Washington at a time when American journalism was at once expanding its scope under the stimulation of the Watergate exposés and contracting in its functions because of the technological transition that was later to be experienced in Britain.

Fred Hunter, whose 1982 thesis shed much light on what was considered a suitable educational preparation for journalism in the earlier part of the century, observed that the reason journalism had generated few substantial contributions from scholars was that it had only recently become an academic discipline in itself. In undertaking this study I have aimed to demonstrate that the producers and processors of the basic information that informs and reflects our society are at least as worthy of scholarly attention as the product and at least attempt able to produce a study peppered with cross references to the work of their colleagues.

¹ *BJR* 4:3, 1993 (pp.54-55)

Chapter 2

Earlier research, literature review, theoretical framework.

Research always occurs within the context of past and contemporary theories, methodologies, and research as well as historically specific political, economic, and ideological streams (Splichal and Sparks 1994:10).

Section 1: Facts and fiction.

Although fieldwork was carried out in the closing years of the twentieth century, the study took 1900 as the beginning of the period to be scrutinised because by that year the halfpenny *Daily Mail*, launched in 1896, had established itself as the prototypical twentieth century national daily newspaper—the first mass-communication medium. Methods of printing and publishing which had remained essentially constant throughout the nineteenth century gave way to an era of nationwide circulations, mechanised production and commercialisation in which the role of journalists changed from that of individual practitioners to employees of ever larger companies. Nevertheless, the main focus of the investigation fell on the post-World War Two period and, as indicated by the surveys that were the primary research instrument, the mid-1990s.

Secondary sources for the history of the British journalist are so scarce that there is a danger of over-dependence on the few to be found, such as Smith, Tunstall and the small number of others. Tunstall's 1965 complaint about the lack of material on any aspect of British journalism did stimulate some activity among both sociologists and historians. Even before he was ready to publish his own examination of journalists at work (1970) other British researchers, notably Burns, Blumler and Elliott, began to report on various aspects of media activity. In 1976 Lee, still lamenting the absence of a serious history of the British press that could be compared to the

Histoire Generale de la Press Francaise, published his *Origins of the Popular Press 1855-1914*. A largely Marxist viewpoint led him to regard questions of supply and production, including that of news, as being inseparable from those of ownership; thus he produced a study which was largely confined to the control and structure of the press as an industry. Nonetheless, he constructed a convincing portrait, particularly in its economic detail, of the ordinary journalist of the period immediately before that covered by this study, as well as the far more visible editors and proprietors, but it is not sufficiently detailed to allow it to be helpful as comparative data.

Even in the United States investigation specific to journalists began late. In the 1960s, Tunstall had also found that while a large number of American studies covered various aspects of journalism and particular political or historical situations, there was no 'satisfactory broad social science study of the occupation of journalism' (1971:5). Ten years later an abundance of American research on journalists had accumulated but in Britain Berridge (1986) was still complaining that academic attention was concentrated on effects research.

The transformation of the image and status of the twentieth century journalist first became apparent in the United States during the late 1960s. Just as in Britain nearly two decades later, early observations of the phenomena were entirely empirical and did not immediately lend themselves to comparative measurement or theoretical encadrement. A site where vivid and influential change could be observed flowering vigorously was the territory exploited by the impressionistic and interventionist New Journalism personified in Tom Wolfe and other writers on Clay Felker's *New York* magazine.

This fresh wave of New Journalists (there had been several earlier ones in this and previous centuries) were following signposts similar to those that at about the same time were guiding the early exponents of British Cultural Studies. Their extensive exposure to higher education (Wolfe came away from Harvard with a masters degree in American Studies) imbued the innovative American journalists with a keen appetite for

distilling high culture out of low; high, at any rate, as the readers of *New York* and its advertisers saw things.

American studies that set out to remedy the deficiencies noted by Tunstall and Berridge were both quantitative and qualitative. The former, which include the serial surveys described below, allowed demographic, educational and socio-economic data, employment patterns, skilling, job satisfaction, social and professional affiliations and ratings of employee/employer performance to be measured across a time-scale of more than 30 years, something a British researcher can only envy.

The qualitative path led American media historians to carve new approaches to 'newswriters', a category conceived to encompass typographical and print workers and clerical staff as well as journalists, a concept of consolidated labour favoured by the Newspaper Guild of America. Led by Hanno Hardt (who acknowledged his debt to E.P. Thompson's cultural approach to labour history) these researchers came to argue, in the 1990s, that media history had already become institutionalised, partly because many of the university departments of journalism in which it was taught and written were subsidised by the media industries. The result had been what Hardt called 'great man' or 'top-down' accounts, shaped to the agenda of those industries (1995:24).

But Hardt also echoed Lee in complaining that the earliest journalism historians were themselves mere journalists with no formal training in history or the social sciences. Even when a sociological perspective was introduced into such studies, Hardt grumbled, it had usually been confined to considerations of appropriate methodologies rather than to the systematic treatment of journalists as a social group. The voice of the 'ordinary journalist' had never been heard. Thus, journalists had never been guided towards 'a collective sense of themselves except perhaps through the sporadic fictional treatment of reporters and editorial work' (1995:5).

Somewhat perversely, Hardt and others then turned to that very fictional treatment as part of the 'whole way of life' outlook that Raymond Williams had applied to the portrayal of media workers in Hollywood

films (1995:12). A study by Bonnie Brennen identified more than 1000 titles in the distinct fictional genre of American ‘newspaper novels’ which, she argued, showed that a rich vein of occupational lore had been rejected as primary sources by academic media historians (1995:76). Most of the fiction writers concerned had been journalists themselves and contemporary reviewers generally acknowledged the authenticity of their portrayals. Weaver and Wilhoit the used a novel by a former newspaperman to explain ‘the complicated forces that attract people to journalistic life’ and the validation of works of fiction as sources was complete (1996: 55).¹

This American re-evaluation of cultural products as primary sources encouraged the inclusion in this study of an ethnomethodological factor in the form of reminiscences and fictional portrayals of journalistic life in Britain which convey informative impressions of journalists performing and evaluating their functions. Fictional and autobiographical material have helped illuminate and enliven the quantitative data. Many of the writers displayed a knack for the telling *aperçu*. ‘You left journalism a profession’, remarked an associate of Lord Northcliffe to a colleague stranded by the watershed of early twentieth century popular journalism. ‘We have made it a branch of commerce’ (Jones 1919:173).

This broader conception of what might constitute historical evidence did little to rectify a persistent image of the British journalist when a collection of 60 British feature films centered on journalist figures was presented at the National Film Theatre throughout 1991. Philip French’s view of the ill-matched constructs that emerged was that

Traditionally Americans have seen the cinema as central to life, but not as an art form, and the journalist as a major, heroic figure in the national discourse. Europeans on the other hand have seen the cinema as an art form but not central to life and the newspaperman as a marginal, somewhat disreputable person (1991:22).

¹ *The Paperboy*, Pete Dexter 1995.

When Jeffrey Richards attempted to explain why the journalist had never occupied a comparable place in British culture, all of his reasons were linked to class, a factor that is germane to this study. Proprietors and directors of British news media, he believed, conformed to the national traditions of secrecy and deference. In fiction the British hero was traditionally a ‘gentleman’, something British journalists traditionally were not. Fiction was also dominated by British cult of the amateur: ‘The journalist, with his scoops, exclusives, word limits, deadlines, is the essential professional, the antithesis of the gentleman amateur.’ Perhaps inevitably, Richards fell back on the representation of the British journalist, mischievously personified in *Private Eye*’s Lunchtime O’Booze.

The other and perhaps most enduring image of the British journalist is of the seedy, drunken hack, down-at-heel, improvident, cynical, but with a nose for the truth, an eye for a story and the ability, drink or no drink, to meet a deadline (1991:32).

This durable lampoon was recycled as recently as 1998 in the character of Starkey in the British film *Divorcing Jack*, of which a real-life journalist wrote, ‘He was hungover, reeking of fags and wearing the same shirt for the third day—yep, the one with the curry stain on it. Meet the face of old-time journalism...’ (Hawksbee 1998). It was not, even, in that instance, an old time journalist who was being represented (few of those remain) but one in his mid-thirties, the prevailing modal age range. Tenacious as this dissolute image obviously is, it cannot be supported by the data compiled during this study which is discussed in Chapter 8.

Section 2: Theoretical framework.

The broad approach of this project to its data was empirical. In formulating conclusions from that data, however, mainstream sociology offered much guidance from a range of theoretical attitudes, particularly those concerning occupational status and socialisation. The latter aspect, central to the study, began to attract scholarly attention only in the 1960s, the idea of socialisation as it had been regarded by Durkheim, Freud and even

Parsons having hitherto been preoccupied with infancy and childhood (Moore 1969:861). Moore extended the construct to paid work, in which context it has received sustained academic attention, although not in regard to journalists.

Moore looked at work in terms of the relative desirability of certain forms of it, separate from but parallel to the idea of occupation as an element of status. He ranked occupations by the level of skill employed or the 'talent' required to perform them; by the degree of security offered and that of autonomy implied; even of the 'glamour' that certain kinds of work evoked, thus recognising a factor which is apparently relevant to many journalists—and depended upon by those portray them. French saw the journalist as having

a special function as the ideal representative of the filmmaker and the audience. To a much greater extent than those other enquiring figures—the cop, the federal agent, the private eye and the priest—the reporter is licensed to cross social divides, move around the country, go abroad. It is his duty to observe, ask questions, seek out the truth. At best he is a crusader for justice, a disinterested servant of the public good, combining some of the functions of the priesthood without being clothed in sanctity. He is the guardian of the well of truth; he can also be the polluter of that source.—(1971:16).

Moore raised the 'fundamental question' of *selection* versus *socialisation* to decide whether certain personality types inclined to certain occupations or, conversely, whether personality differences might be brought about by occupational socialisation. Since this study suggests that either may be the case with journalists, the distinction that Moore offered between a process of *commitment* and one of *conditioning* was a welcome signpost. The former was defined as 'the enthusiastic acceptance of pleasurable duties' rather than, as he described the latter, 'reluctant adjustment to a harsh reality'.

Although few journalists are likely to experience the level of conditioning implied by that definition, Moore's socialisation assumed, in either case, a combination of cognitive learning and the internalisation of a

minimum of appropriate norms which would have ‘the great social advantage of reducing the necessity of surveillance and discipline’ (869). Since such an ‘advantage’—the prospect of at least the possibility of a high degree of autonomy—may be inferred from the study as forming an important requirement in the management of contemporary journalists, Moore’s guidance was helpful once again.

In similar context to Moore, White (1977) argued that the strongest agents of adult socialisation were the family and the employer and that the employer provided the frame for the powerful significant others who influenced an individual’s behaviour, including perhaps his or her actual choice of career. That choice, Moore remarked, was clearest where there was in fact *little* choice: when a business, an occupation such as farming, or certain professions might create the expectation that a child would follow in a parent’s footsteps. The study data is equivocal on that particular point but there are indications that it may be a rewarding path to follow in future research. In assessing the effectiveness of occupational socialisation, the age at which journalists made their career choice would seem an important indicator. Establishing the differences in that regard both between the separate editorial sectors as well as the opposite sexes is a striking outcome of this study.

Models

A certain difficulty has to be acknowledged in keeping the characteristics of journalists entirely separate from the effects of their attitudes on output and audiences. Some of the widely applied social and communication theories that surround and impinge upon news production have been stretched thin from being pulled in several directions to cover every element involved, including the function of journalists. This is especially true of the propaganda model espoused by Chomsky that ascribes all power in news-making to elites, particularly governments, and dismisses the activities of journalists as mere ‘gatekeeping’. It is possible that in examining the attitudes of the successors to Mr Gates in such unprecedented breadth and depth this study could to a modest extent

restore some spring to at least one of the three commonly adopted perspectives in the sociology of news production, all of which have been recently reassessed by McNair (1994) and Schudson (1991).

Political economy. The political economy approach so greatly favoured in British media studies is uncompromising. Economic, political and managerial control of the means of intellectual production by a dominant class ensures the percolating down through society as a whole of that class's ideology—which becomes dominant (McNair 56). In short, journalists do the bidding of Schiller's (1989) 'Commanders of the Social Order'. Schudson faulted this politico-economic view for relegating everything that came between the economic structure of the news organisation and the outcome of the news process—the actual work of journalists—to 'a black box that need not be examined' in order to understand the relationship described above (143). As a result of this inquiry some, at least, of the contents of the black box may be less mysterious.

Organisational. The organisational theory, with which these writers also dealt, appears to be accepted to a greater or lesser degree by most media sociologists. According to this, it is assumed that while journalists might be able to exercise a degree of autonomy in their work, their output—like their attitudes—is determined by the organisational and occupational routines that constrain them and which are more important than any form of ideological class bias in shaping their output. To particularly fervent advocates of this theory an organisational model would absolve journalists of responsibility for their output as they would be rendered powerless by the rigid social apparatus within which they operate.

Cultural. The third approach, 'culturological' or 'culturalist', depends upon the constraining force of broad cultural symbols, irrespective of the organisational factors. As McNair (and Gramsci before him) saw this effect, the hegemonic pressure of these symbols, which have been chosen or erected by privileged groups, is likely, in liberal pluralist societies, to be diluted, at least to some extent, by the autonomy and objectivity, however partial or relative, of the media. Of journalists. Although Schudson noted

disarmingly that all of these approaches, even taken together, ‘have so far fallen short of providing an adequate comparative and historical social science of news production’, McNair concluded:

Each of the approaches should be seen as being of potential value in dissecting the process of journalistic production. Determining the relative importance to be attributed to each requires careful analysis of the specific economic, political and ideological contexts within which individual journalists and media are working. (58).

It is exactly the point made by McNair’s observation that certain of the questions in the surveys that underpin this investigation were designed to elucidate. A series of studies has attempted to show how social control values and status hierarchical models were used to compel or persuade individual journalists to accept, in Murphy’s phrase, ‘the policy slant or bias of the management in writing news’ (1991:140). Murphy, like most of the authorities he cites (Matejko, Tunstall, Manning White, Tuchman, Sigelman) mainly took a functionalist view of this process which could be extended to the interaction among journalists themselves concerning their social, inter-generational organisation.

Other responses to the project surveys also lent themselves to interpretation in the light of the approaches mentioned above, all of which were of help in evaluating the occupational tensions and restraints which the questionnaires invited journalists to identify. The findings of this investigation may prove helpful in substantiating or modifying one or another of these theoretical positions, for instance the ‘difficulties in discussing the status of journalism as a profession’ raised by Splichal and Sparks (34).

Section 3: Profession/professionalism

Whether journalists could be said to constitute a profession or merely to go about their work in a professional way is a question that in the light of the above, reinforced by Wilensky’s seminal observations 30 years earlier about the ‘professionalisation of everyone’ (1964:137), might be thought moot or at least, as Wilensky argued, a confusing distraction from more

important matters. That would not however be true of the related consideration of status, which is of the keenest concern to many journalists. Nevertheless, as Weaver said, although no intellectual occupation 'eluded the sociological categories of professionalism as deftly as journalism, there remained an irresistible attraction to couching the values and roles of journalists in the context of professionalisation' (1986:104).

The literature on profession/professionalism/professionalisation is as exhaustive as it is equivocal and the use of those terms by scholars as haphazard as the terms themselves are difficult to avoid. Historically, at the narrower end of its scope of meaning, the term 'profession' encompassed only 'closed' professions such as medicine and law, the military and holy orders. At the broader end of meaning, actors—to whom journalists are sometimes compared organisationally—had always spoken of 'the profession'.

Although there was no universally applicable parameter, all the exclusive occupations, powerfully structural in their orientation, had in common defining 'traits': a governing body composed of practitioners and sanctified by law which controlled entry, established training standards, granted the right to practise, set conditions and agreed fees (usually high); implicitly a monopoly was enforced. There was also a connotation of 'service' or altruism, which Weber was ready to see extended to the role of certain state functionaries.

Greenwood (1957), on whom Tunstall depended for guidance, specified five distinguishing traits in characterising a profession: authority (meaning most of the above) systematic theory, community sanction, ethical codes, a peculiar culture. Other authorities have demanded a recognised and definable body of professional knowledge. These factors have usually been taken to apply even to such occupations as teaching, architecture, nursing, accountancy which are sometimes described as semi-professions or 'liberal' professions. Journalism conspicuously lacks some of those attributes but others are at least as evident in its general practice as in some of the other occupations mentioned.

Splichal and Sparks turned to definitions provided by Blau and Scott

¹:

1. The professional should be guided by universalistic norms.
2. Stress should be laid upon the importance of expertise.
3. Relations with clients should be characterised by affective neutrality.
4. Professional status should be achieved, not ascribed.
5. The work of the professional should be carried out in the interests of the clients, not the professional.

Conditions 1-3 above also seem to be consistent with much present-day practice of journalism in the UK and even the least cynical of contemporary observers would have to question if all of them, especially 5, could be said to apply invariably and in their entirety to *any* recognised profession. Nevertheless, Splichal and Sparks concluded that despite the shift towards professional education, an important element in most theories of professionalisation, journalism had yet to achieve the necessary 'common terminal status' in which

All qualified members of the profession have equal rights and equal status, all have the same right to a professional opinion, and there is no bureaucratic hierarchy of expertise, and in principle all share material rewards on the basis of the assessments of their peers (45).

Such provisos, like Weber's altruism, might not always be acknowledged in a 1990s teaching hospital, a legal firm or chambers; even a university. Indeed, the authors displayed an awareness of the distortion and dissimulation inherent in the concept of professionalism, quoting Rothman on the restrictive nature of legal practice.

Attributes such as self-regulation are thus reconceptualised as techniques for gaining a monopoly over the delivery of services and protecting group autonomy rather than standing as a public mandate. Thus the phenomena that were once used to define professions have come to be recognised as resources employed

¹ That had already found favour with Windahl and Rosengren (1978:467).

in the struggle to extend prerogatives and rewards in the labour market (1984:184).

Professional and other grammatical derivatives have less confusing applications. In its most commonly used sense ‘professional’ refers merely to an activity performed for a living: professional sportsman, professional musician, professional politician. Gallagher briskly summarised the three common usages, the first (most recognisable by journalists) to denote ‘expert’ as opposed to ‘amateur’. Second, she placed the Weberian view of the rational, efficient bureaucrat incarnating an ethic of ‘service’ to client or public. Third was a Durkheimian adaptation describing the way in which professionals invested their work and their organisations with moral values and norms (1977:102). At least in the view of its more responsible practitioners all of these usages might justifiably be applied to journalism in the majority of its applications.

Professionalism describes a quality easily recognised in occupations ranging from lorry driver to computer programmer. Even journalists who reject the idea of being regarded as members of a profession do not usually object to their activities being described by either of these derivatives, inferring a resonance distinct from the stricter meaning of the noun.

Sui generis

Faced with the challenge of taxonomising the range of occupations that laid claim to being ‘professions, near professions and would-be professions’ (Carr-Saunders 1955:281) the sociologist Leggatt was inclined to hand the matter over to historians on the grounds that it related to ‘a one-time period of Western development’ (1970:159). In regard to journalists, an equally pragmatic conclusion had been reached as early as 1917 by the Australian federal arbitration court judge, Mr Justice Isaac Isaacs, who in the course of establishing an industrial award conducted a comprehensive analysis of working conditions on newspapers and the nature of that work. Arguments presented by the Australian Journalists Association and an array of newspaper proprietors led him to declare that journalism ‘is really a profession *sui generis*, a tag that subsequent generations of Australian journalists have been delighted to flaunt.

It is evident from the extensive literature that the ‘profession’ question has meant different things to—and about—different journalists at different times and that usage has frequently prevailed over definition. A document which goes unmentioned in most discussions of the occupation, a report by the International Labour Organisation of the League of Nations (ILO) published in 1928,¹ showed no hesitation in referring to journalism as a ‘great modern profession’ and proposed yet another analogy, while acknowledging at the same time factors cherished by the proponents of nature over nurture:

it seems that people will become journalists more and more in the same way as they become architects or engineers or violinists—that is to say, thanks to preparatory work, to experience beyond ordinary reach, and to knowledge perpetually brought up to date (...) not to mention innate propensities and initial talent (1928: 7, 19).

The 1947-49 Royal Commission on the Press displayed a similar lack of inhibition about terminology, referring repeatedly in its reports to the ‘profession of journalism’. Nevertheless, Tunstall, after his 1971 study of journalists, was of the view that only some 3000 practitioners in the United Kingdom at that time, out of a journalist population estimated at 20,000, deserved to be seen as members of ‘a powerful profession’; the elite minority of writers and broadcasters who displayed the capacity to ‘look politicians, publishers and editors in the eye’ (1971:190). Journalism was, on the whole, a ‘semi-profession’ (68-70).

Efforts by Smith to settle the matter exemplify the confusion, semantic and otherwise. He began by contending that journalism could not even be recognised as an occupation until the early seventeenth century when postal service, printing capacity and supply of material became sufficiently developed to make regular publication possible. So long as its final product had been provided directly by some interested party or official source rather than mediated by a journalist the occupation remained ‘a mere appendage of printing, or in its grander forms, a sub-branch of

¹ *Conditions of Work and Life of Journalists*

diplomacy'. It could not be regarded as anything loftier until the journalist had developed into a 'professional processor of information whose task it was to provide an unblemished version of events'. Thus Daniel Defoe, frequently referred to as the father of British journalism, would have to be seen, for all his accomplished techniques of reportage (or at any rate the appearance thereof), less as a journalist than a popular historian. If journalism in Britain was 'definable as a profession at all', said Smith in one of his not always consistent specifications, it became so only in the second half of the present century. Before that, 'The journalist was not yet a man who went to look though occasionally he might, by chance, see' (1978:179, 185).¹ But Smith appeared unconvinced that the professional code of journalism, at least as it stood in the late 1970s, could be regarded as that of a 'fully fledged profession' or that if it could it owed the rise in status to its antithetical occupation (244).

if anything had enabled it to become a profession it was the highly organised nature of the regular sources of news. The growth of the public relations industry and the proliferation of Press officers and government information officers had made it necessary for society to acquire a specialist, quasi-professional group of information sifters and recorders (1974:245).

Smith later turned to a communication model to expand his theory. Only when the flow of news became voluminous enough to allow accuracy and impartiality to be imposed by the journalist could the journalist consider his function that of a profession. Once a DUAL (his capitals) communication system had developed, when the same news was flowing along more than one channel at a time and mediation and discrimination—gatekeeping—was required, could journalists demonstrate 'professionalism' (1979:180).

'Underdogs'

One scholarly American view held a certain attraction, that of Atkinson, which held journalists to be, in a sense, privileged that they remained

¹ Smith excepted the reporting of parliament, forbidden for the greater part of the 18th century and obstructed for nearly half the nineteenth..

outside a professional encadrement (1983:227). If the paradigm of symbolic interactionism adopted by the ‘interactive’ school of American sociological writers in discussing the ‘employed professionals’ that had, as may be seen below, so preoccupied Harry Christian were applied, journalists would simply see themselves as functioning pragmatically in the everyday performance of their work, unencumbered by organisational apparatus but nevertheless confronting and overcoming an array of conflicting pressures purely out of a sense of mission. Many journalists would find such a vision of themselves appealing, particularly when linked with Atkinson’s further observation that, viewed in this way, their moral concerns would permit them to celebrate the ‘underdog’ and deride ‘the rhetoric of superordinates’.

A less complex, but also less helpful American view was the compromise offered by Weaver and Wilhoit (which seemed more or less reconcilable with the conclusions of Smith and Tunstall): journalists were *of* a profession although not *in* one. This seemed even more evasive a conclusion than that to which the earlier American team, Johnstone and his colleagues, had been led a decade earlier: journalism was not a profession ‘in an abstract formal sense’. Echoing Hughes, Weaver and Wilhoit, thought the more important question was whether journalists *behaved* as though they were practising a profession. In some ways they did—valuing public service, autonomy and (relative) freedom from supervision and leaning towards altruism. In other ways they did not, notably in their lack of interest in a professional organisation (1992:105).

Faced with such a bewildering array of informed opinion, Soloski’s dismissal of the protracted debate was refreshing. The more important question, Soloski insisted, citing Hughes (1958), was what it *meant* for an occupation to claim to be a profession (207). That view was shared by Donsbach, the most active German researcher, to whom the search for ‘universal tendencies’ in the professionalisation of journalists was ‘senseless’ (1983:64). Journalism had long been accepted as a profession in Germany with legal rights and privileges but, argued Donsbach, that had not brought about uniform standards of preparation, qualification or

responsibilities. The more significant issue lay in the effect of professionalisation on the relationship between journalists and society (57). He proposed a professional paradigm structured around technical competence, content competence and competence concerning effects, which will receive further attention in Chapter Eleven:⁸

If the notion of profession could be considered separately from that of class or status, these judgements would appear equally commendable, but it cannot. Meanwhile, since avoiding them would lead to tiresome circumlocution, the terms 'profession' and 'professionalism' are frequently used throughout this thesis report without regard to their significance as sociological classifications. The discourse in which they are thus applied is, however, dealt with in this chapter. The issue of professional socialisation, often subsumed in that of professionalisation, is dealt with in Chapter 9.

Section 4: Women journalists

The literature on gender equality, although extensive, is not particularly relevant to journalism. The most helpful theory appeared to be the social dominance approach to the gender gap in occupational role attainment staked out by Pratto, Stallworth, Sidanius and Siers. Although not applied to journalists, the study was concerned with occupations that were comparable in terms of perceived status. A helpful perspective was provided by Liesbet van Zoonen's analysis of the pattern in which she saw female journalists employed by different media sectors and her extensive scrutiny of the views of women journalists around the world.

Section 5: Status

If sociological concepts of professionalism remain controversial the same is no less true of sociological theories of class and status differentiation, which in Britain need not be considered synonymous. In classical sociology the more complex Weberian view of status provided a refreshing counterweight to Marx's unswerving insistence that class distinctions of all kinds were grounded in economic distinctions and would, together with the concept of private property, be eradicated by socialism. This patently

did not come about—anywhere—and from the post-Marxist perspective of the late 1990s, David Cannadine was able to look back on 300 years of attempts to classify British society (Defoe, Gough, Runciman, McKibbin, Reid, Thompson, Taylor, Tawney, Masterman, Orwell, Hoggart, Hobsbawm), examine the models most frequently resorted to (hierarchical, triadic, polarised) and conclude that despite all political and economic change the ‘systactic’ categories defined by Runciman remained ‘a constant across the centuries of modern British history’.¹

For much of the century status differential—as distinct from that of class—continued to be analysed (Gordon 1950, Parsons 1951, Dahrendorf 1959, Lenski 1966; Littlejohn 1972, Parkin 1979, Abercrombie, Hill, Turner 1984) in the familiar Weberian terms of ascription (involuntary distinctions such as the demographic) or achievement; and Tönnies’s, *gemeinschaft* and *gesellschaft*, each latter category the ones in which modern journalists might be placed. In the view of Bryan Turner the theories thus developed meant that ‘the very concept of status is vague, and furthermore...in the view of some sociologists...has little or no real analytical value’ (1988:1). Despite these later radical views, much in Weber’s claim to status position (*Ständische Lage*) could readily be recognised in the social placement of the modern journalist: a style of life, a formal education, and acknowledged prestige stemming from an occupational position. (To qualify as a status group in Weberian terms, however, journalists would also need, to practice *commensality*, in the sense of shared living and eating arrangements and enjoy a monopoly of access to power; also *connubium*, the consolidation of social solidarity by marriage alliances. Only a minority of journalists, even among Tunstalls’s 3000 or their successors, might fulfil such conditions.)

Turner speculated that post-modern evaluation of status introduced the possibility of a social system ‘based upon somewhat different principles of stratification which will render much of contemporary sociology redundant’ (1988:76). This radical approach was modified, however, by

¹ A small elite, a larger group of managers, businessmen and professionals, a deprived, impoverished and sometimes criminalised underclass. Runciman, W.G., *Substantive Social Theory*, Cambridge, 1989:108.

the attention he was prepared to give to a development first noted by Collins (1979) and directly relevant to the ‘credential society’ of which the latest generation of journalists is demonstrably part.

Because modern societies place this emphasis on personal achievement, educational success and the acquisition of credentials become crucial in the distribution of prestige and rewards (4).

Cannadine moved even further out of the Marxian shadow, dismissing the notion of class identity as collective and irrevocably coupled to the means of production—‘too narrow, too materialistic, too reductionist’—but urged the recognition that, nevertheless, Marx had been ‘on to something’

in his insistence that the material circumstances of peoples’ existence—physical, financial, environment-al—do matter in influencing their life chances, their sense of identity (1998:17).

Turner’s view suggested the clear likelihood of today’s graduate journalists being moved to compare themselves to their credentialised counterparts in the recognised professions, as they may be seen to do in Chart 6. He also identified applicable notions of the ‘subjective’ dimension in status, which relates to individual perceptions of prestige, and the opposing ‘objective’ dimension relating to individual socio-legal entitlements (5), both of which become apparent in the study data. Turner wanted it understood that ‘the location of a group within the social system is expressed by their taste, which is as it were the practical aspect of lifestyle’ (67). This could be seen as an acknowledgment that Weber’s insistence that an individual’s place in society depended on cultural and legal-political factors as well as economic ones appeared to have been revived—via Bourdieu (1977, 1986) and Bell (1976)—as ‘lifestyle’.

Turner was not, in any case, ready to accept that social stratification based on role differentiation and the evaluation or assessment of it by others was likely to disappear. He agreed with Featherstone (1987) that a more probable development was the growth of tension between modern and post-modern culture (and lifestyles) expressed as

a competitive struggle between an established status elite (managing the remnants of high culture) and various emergent social groups, associated with the new middle class of the service sector, who seek some position within the cultural market-place (77).

Journalists have come to display the characteristics of just such an emergent social group and they will later be discussed in those terms.

Section 6: Training 'in' v. Education 'for'.

The 'trade' or 'craft' versus profession controversy is reflected in another prolonged debate around the concepts of training *in* and education *for* journalism. The 'trade' faction among journalists usually regards these as separate if not opposed concepts. University Journalism degree courses begun in the 1990s attempt to hybridise them. However, the training element, whether it is delivered before or after entering the occupation (or both), must play a powerful part in shaping occupational attitudes and values and it is an important contention provoked by the conclusions of this study that training tends to prevail over education and, in an important sense, outweigh it.

McBarnet (1979) introduced his examination of training methods with an expression of surprise that there appeared to be so little published material on the topic of journalism training but Boyd-Barrett was soon to weigh in with a magisterial exposition (1980) which is particularly valuable for its recognition of the narrow interests served by the employer-endorsed NCTJ scheme and the extent to which that type of training, fervently advocated still, particularly in the local newspaper sector, involved 'considerably more than the transmission of technical know-how'. Both these scholars were alert to the distinction to be drawn between education and training and of the socialising effects of the latter, not merely as

some naive socialization theory which would have all journalists going in one end as empty vessels to emerge the other end fully indoctrinated. It is not so much socialization into particular values that concerns us as socialization into the techniques which make someone recognizable as a journalist in the labour market, techniques which may also of

course produce values and assumptions of a very particular kind (McBarnet 182).

McBarnet also took full note of the attitude held towards direct entrants in the 1970s, usually graduates, who slipped through the 'ever-widening net' of formal training, and the efforts likely to be made by the journalists amongst whom they found themselves working to 'pull graduates down a peg or two'. Given the proportion of graduates now established, this appears a less likely fate for a newcomer but there are indications in the study data that the next group in line for pegging down could be graduates with degrees in Journalism.

Section 7: Reports

The ILO report referred to above also examined the related topics of preparation for and entry to journalism, summarising admirably the argument that remains unresolved 60 years later.

Two principal tendencies in the opinions expressed by the journalists of various countries may be distinguished. Some, holding that the career of the journalist requires above all innate qualifications and natural talent, think that a good general education acquired in no matter what school suffices to fashion such talent and that practice in the profession constitutes the principal factor in the training of a good journalist. Practice is, in their opinion, the indispensable factor which the best education could not replace. They fear schools of journalism where there is the risk of artificially forcing natures which have no leanings towards the profession, and of launching on their careers a host of people doomed to unemployment, or ready to accept any pittance. Such people lower the conditions of employment for the entire profession. Others, persuaded that the modern journalist needs not only wide culture which enables him to interest the reader who is more or less educated and exacting, but also a sound professional training which may spare him many hesitations in his first days in the profession, urge the creation of special schools of journalism, and even go so far as to propose the institution of certificates which alone would give access to the profession. They declare, moreover, that far from bringing into journalism numbers of persons without capacity, the schools, with their long and detailed courses, have turned many from the

profession, the difficulties of which they had not imagined (28).

The question of who could and should become a journalist and how was examined closely by two of the three Royal Commissions on the Press that sat between 1947 and 1977, all of which produced reports which are milestone texts for students of the media and its populations. The first commission in particular turned to academic researchers to provide data on, among other topics, education and training and some of these (Boyd-Barrett, Curran, Christian, Tunstall) were thus enabled to mine fresh lodes. Christian (1980^a) scrutinised the changing relationship of journalists with employers and with organisations. Pitting himself against the widespread but simplistic impression of conflict between a ‘moderate’ Chartered Institute of Journalists and an ‘extremist’ National Union of Journalists (NUJ) which was bent on imposing a left-wing censorship of the media (at a time when the NUJ was feeling the effect of the 1974 and 1976 Trade Union and Labour Relations Bills, which circumscribed the activities of all trade unions in Britain), he analysed the CIOJ failure to become a representative organisation.

Boyd-Barrett examined the process of recruitment and training in terms of role and status socialisation, turning to authorities of the early 1970s (Elliott, Turner). He saw more clearly than many of those involved in such research that the requirements for training tended to reflect ‘the immediate needs of one particular sector’ of the media industries—the local and regional press—rather than offering prospective journalists the opening to wider career possibilities which is inherent in the latterly developed higher education vocational courses. Until these courses were developed there could be no doubt about which party to the transaction was expected to benefit most from the concept of training epitomised by the NCTJ: employers, whose interest was centred on cultivating a narrow and limited scope of ability on the part of the journalists they wished to employ.

Section 8: Theses

Much research on British journalists remains unpublished in detail, although some of the material Christian (1980) eventually did publish (in

which he abandoned the restraint of his Royal Commission submission to describe the CIOJ, as a 'company union' and a 'yellow' union) was drawn from his 1977 doctoral thesis on trade unionism and professionalism in the British press. Christian provided much illumination in theoretical terms of the struggle between the NUJ and the CIOJ which he believed had been the main obstacle to an agreement on professional standards. But he offered little by which to explore the situation in the 1990s in which the union stood toothless and the institute was reduced to irrelevance.

Concerning the 'professional' argument, Christian appeared more interested in the question later echoed by Johnson (1972:38): ought it be the occupational activity itself that attracted scrutiny or the institutionalised control of that activity? In much the same way as Rothman, Christian saw the idea of professionalism as no more than a status-seeking strategy. He questioned if rather than being a quality inherent in an occupation and definable in terms of skills, knowledge and organisation, it was merely a form of control over jobs and job markets; an ideology espoused by members of an occupation hoping to emulate the established professions in which such control was firmest (1977:374).

Christian accepted the view shared by Weber and Marx that beyond the fundamental division created by the ownership of the means of production, industrial-capitalist societies could include classes *other* than capitalists and employees: independent professionals and artisans; self-employed small traders. In Christian's view these exceptions did not include journalists, who were 'a non-manual occupation with professional pretensions'. Following Lockwood and Klingender, he saw journalists as having been transformed into something akin to factory hands or clerical workers belonging to, in Boyd-Barrett's description, an 'industrial subculture'. Despite the privileges they might enjoy—mainly a certain level of autonomy—the insecurity of being sellers of labour and the frustrations of a 'controlled and mechanically organised workplace' induced in journalists 'those symptoms of disassociation which are popularly called alienation' (1980b: 269).

Recognition of the particular status of employed professionals is crucial to the discourse of journalism and Christian's estimation of them was uncompromising.

Employed professionals typically have lifestyles which reflect their belief that they are in the middle of the general status scale, and the actions of others towards them typically confirm this view. Their specific statuses also tend to reinforce this view. On the other hand their life chances are those of people who sell their working ability to earn a living, thus they are clearly on the subordinate side of the economic power division. The result of being in an occupation which combines these two aspects is that two quite distinct ideologies are generated among members as well as a variety of well or ill-thought out combinations of the two. Insofar as employed professionals are subject to the hiring and firing of others, whether or not those others have also undergone the same professional training as themselves, they have the potential for evolving an outlook which favours changing the existing division of power and material rewards in their industry and with it the wider society. Insofar as they are in intermediate positions in the 'general status' scale and have relatively privileged specific class situations, they are likely to favour the maintenance of the existing social order which gives them these advantages over at least some others and which seems to promise them a chance of rising higher (1977:26).

Despite the bleakness of many of Christian's judgements, few of them were refuted by the data generated by this study and they provide valuable support for some of its conclusions.

Strick and others

Experience as the NCTJ's first secretary led Strick to choose British newspaper journalism as a study in industrial relations for his 1957 PhD thesis, even if he too found 'journalist' an insufficiently precise description—although not in the same way as Splichal and Sparks—remarking loftily that from what he had seen of the way in which certain members of the NUJ and CIOJ earned their living he would not associate the description with them.

The NUJ's organisational influence was mounting in the mid-1950s and Strick was convinced that tension between journalists and their employers was approaching the point at which its resolution would crystallise their relations for the future. That moment, or one approximating it, was not to be reached, however, until the Wapping confrontation of 1986 which was indeed one of the hinges on which the door to a new level of technology hung.

On the topic of professions/professionalisation, Strick appeared hampered by a shortage of sociological reference, falling back on the dated views of Carr-Saunders and Wilson (1933). The most helpful of his material was the data, however limited, gathered on trainees.

Norman Cattanach, a journalist turned academic, provided a survey in his 1979 MEd thesis of journalism training up until the establishment of the Printing and Publishing Industry Training Board (PPITB) in 1969, an event which froze in its tracks any progress being made at that time towards systematic selection and formation. He charted the erratic course of attempts to formalise and standardise preparations for journalism, noting that after 1945 little was to be heard about 'education' as opposed to training. By then, the parties to the various discussions had abandoned attempts to place journalism in an academic context in favour of an approach geared to practical skills.

For his 1983 City University PhD thesis, Fred Hunter (1982), whose career path had been similar to that of Cattanach, over-rode the lack of academic literature on the formation of journalists by amassing an array of judgements and opinions from recollections and memoirs (while reflecting the historiographic suspicion of memoirs that, as noted earlier, has now been overcome). Hunter conceded that, at least until after World War Two, journalists' yearning for professional status had been on questionable ground.

Hunter disagreed with many of Cattanach's conclusions, although the two shared a deep exasperation at the repeated dead-ends and reversals of training policy between employer and the journalist organisations. He argued against the widely held view of the NUJ as an organisation

interested only in pay and conditions and unearthed traces of goodwill and support for higher educational standards both among employers and within the NUJ. Reminding that ‘university *training*’ [emphasis added] had been a common expression well into the twentieth century, he identified a ‘small team of dogged and enlightened propagandists’ in both camps which continued to advocate that journalism be taught at higher education level or that journalists be encouraged to pursue appropriate studies. There is some irony to be found in the contrast between Hunter’s reflections on the reluctance shown by the new universities in the 1960s and 1970s to respond to the needs of modern society by preparing students ‘professionally’ for jobs in journalism (or in government or commerce) and the resentment aroused in sections of the media industry in the 1990s when the same universities belatedly attempted to do so.

Another journalist who moved into education and another sociologist, both at the University of Wales, carried the education-training discourse a stage further. Jean Evans (1988) wrote an MA thesis on the changes in journalism education and training in the periodical sector in the aftermath of the 1977 Royal Commission. Odette Parry (1988), a sociologist, studied the activities of the postgraduate diploma course in periodical journalism at University College, Cardiff (where Evans and Cattanach taught) and produced a doctoral thesis on the occupational socialisation of its students. She examined an extensive American literature (Becker et al 1961, Olesen and Whittaker 1968, Bloom 1973, Miller 1970, Atkinson 1983) which juxtaposed functionalist and interactionist approaches to the concept of ‘profession’. She came to regard the widely accepted guidelines of trait theory with scepticism, observing that its supporters had tended to reproduce the claims of established professionals untested, a conclusion which suggested that as recently as a decade earlier the ‘profession’ parameter might not have been so rigid as to exclude journalism.

Nevertheless, Parry became satisfied that traditionalist employers and an earlier journalism establishment preferred recruits to journalism to be ‘untainted’ by any *preliminary* socialisation in the form of schooling or higher education at first degree level, unlike the recognised professions

which had always recruited from graduates, many of whom were educated in courses designed by the professions themselves. Socialisation began at the hands of the veteran journalists who were instructors on the postgraduate course.

Traditional views of graduates held by both industry and those within the training body [in this case the NCTJ] have cast them into ivory towers, far removed from the 'real world' of occupational practice (84).

Parry found the functionalist approach with its emphasis on homogeneity and consensus unsuitable by which to evaluate the socialisation inherent in journalism *training*. It seems, however, well suited to the evaluation of a study of a wider occupational culture such as this project.

Chapter 3

Methodology

We may hate journalists—indeed, we rank them, according to some polls, below estate agents and politicians. But hating is not knowing them. How do they work? How is it done? What are the skills involved? How does one become a journalist? How does one remain one? These strike me as pretty interesting questions, since whatever we think of journalists it can hardly be denied that journalism is important. But they are questions which journalists do not normally go out of their way to answer. I don't think they are necessarily any more secretive than any other group of people, but that they should be secretive at all, given that they are dedicated to finding out and writing about other people's secrets, is definitely odd.—
 Stephen Glover, Introduction to *The Penguin Book of Journalism*.

Section 1. Surveys.

The quantitative approach that led this research was essential if a dependable set of even the most basic data hitherto lacking about the journalist community was to be gathered; indeed a notion formed of the very size of the journalist population and its factions whose numbers are now, as a result of the project, less open to question than before. Nor could any other method be depended upon to synthesise views from journalists engaged in the various aspects of print and broadcasting from all regions of the United Kingdom. The table below of estimates made at irregular intervals throughout the twentieth century, all using different bases, demonstrates the difficulty of establishing accurate numbers for comparison over time and therefore of detecting trends. To appreciate the significance of the data yielded by this study it is only necessary to contrast the (relative) success of the American and Australian research

projects earlier referred to with the (relative) failures of similar British efforts.

Table 1. Estimates of journalism population. ▼

Date	Source	Base	Number	Qualifying factors
1928	ILO	All media	7000	
1938	PEP	Newspapers only	9000/10,000	
1964	NUJ/Viner	All media	22,000	Including photographers
1969	Prices and Income Board	National newspapers only	2480	London only*
1969	Tunstall	All	20,375	Including photographers
1974 Royal Commn.	McGregor	All	20,982	NUJ membership excluding 19.3 % PR etc.
1996	This study	All	27,826	Excluding 'floating' freelances and photographers

▲Exclusive of photographers and staff of *The Guardian*, which was unable to provide pre 1969 figures (NPIB Report, 1969, Table 1.)

Johnstone, Slawski and Bowman. The foundation US study, published in 1976 as *The News People*, was carried out by sociologists Johnstone, Slawski and Bowman in 1971. Their survey sampled 1313 news journalists from print and broadcasting media throughout the USA. This investigation allowed Johnstone and colleagues to identify a journalistic population which except for its largely male element (80 per cent compared with the general workforce male proportion at that time of 66 per cent) was, a quarter of a century ago, similar to that in the UK today: median age 36.5, predominantly 'Caucasian', middle-class, well-educated—86 per cent holding degrees.¹

Weaver and Wilhoit. The inheritors of Johnstone's mantle, Weaver and Wilhoit, used a similar questionnaire in major surveys in 1982-3 and 1992-3, both funded by the Gannett Foundation (now the Freedom Forum). In addition to 1156 randomly chosen journalists, 254 'minority' cases were interviewed. This later investigation detected an overall shrinkage in workforce size, decline in job satisfaction, a levelling out of the female proportion which jumped from 20 per cent to 34 per cent between 1971

¹ 94% by 1996, (Medsger)

and 1982 and remained constant for 1992. At first glance this percentage appears almost equal to the overall UK proportion but because the US samples excluded journalists in the periodical sector, a more valid comparison would be with the UK news sector (newspapers and broadcast) proportion of 25 per cent female—when the gap becomes apparent.

Henningham. In Australia in 1992, John Henningham of the University of Queensland adapted the Weaver and Wilhoit questions and applied them to a national sample of 1200 journalists, approximately the same number that had been interviewed in America. The response rate was 90 per cent. His findings reflected, proportionately, many of those evident in the later American data (including the indication, significantly absent from the British) that journalism had become regarded by many of its practitioners as a short-term or bridging occupation on the way to another career). Funding is being sought for a replication of the Henningham study in 2002.

Royal Commission. The only comparable effort in Britain to these American and Australian projects, was a postal survey attempted by the 1961 Royal Commission on the Press, which foundered on NUJ attitudes of the period, producing a discouraging response rate of only 63 per cent from editors and 43 per cent from newsroom journalists, an outcome which ‘surprised and disappointed’ the Commissioners (although it surprised no one sensitive to the prevailing atmosphere). The responses to attitudinal questions were published, but those provided by the journalists were admitted to be ‘too low to be relied on statistically’(Cmnd 6810-3).

In 1980 some comparative research on British and German journalists was conducted jointly by the Centre for Mass Communication Research at the University of Leicester and the Institut für Publizistik at the University of Mainz. Although not based on random samples, and therefore statistically weak, journalists from all news media were questioned: 405 in Britain, 450 in Germany. There was deliberate over-representation of senior journalists and executives. Questions on ethics dominated: the use of leaked documents, false identity, breach of confidentiality, payment to

sources. (The British were notably less concerned by the niceties than the Germans.)¹

Splichal and Sparks included Britain, the USA and Australia in their 1994 survey of first-year journalism students but the results have a limited application to this study for two reasons. First, the inquiry sampled opinion from 22 countries but did not use the data comparatively except to draw the authors to the rueful conclusion that

Because the commonsense definition of journalist varies from country to country and cannot make any claims either to rigour or consistency, it has not been possible for us to make any detailed comparison between the occupations in different countries (30).

Even if that had not been the case, the circumstances of a journalist in Peru or Ghana would be of little relevance to one working in the Anglo-Saxon tradition. But more significantly the investigation was aimed at first-year students of journalism at university/college level (and included those intending to specialise in advertising and public relations). These cases can be considered typical, therefore, only of a category of aspiring journalist from which—the authors acknowledge, citing Becker, Fruit & Caudill (1987:8)—only 36 per cent would be likely to end up practising journalism.²

In 1998 Weaver produced a compendium of surveys carried out at his invitation by collaborators in a wide but inconsistently ranked spread of countries and published under the aegis of the International Association for Media and Communication Research (IAMCR)³. In most cases an adaptation of the 1991 Weaver and Wilhoit ‘news’ definition of journalists had been adopted and their questionnaire adapted. This added to the range of sources where commensurate material, at least of an indicative nature, could be sought but even Weaver himself seemed doubtful about the outcome, noting disarmingly: ‘Comparing journalists

¹ Renate Kocher ‘Bloodhounds or missionaries?’, *European Journal of Communication* (1:43-64).

² In 11 countries reported to Weaver (1998) Journalism graduates formed less than 40% of the journalism workforce; Britain was lowest at 4%.

³ The section on British journalists was contributed by Henningham and Delano.

across national boundaries and cultures is a game of guesswork at best' (455).

Section 2: Comparisons

There was no guesswork involved in achieving the objectives of the first survey in this project: to elicit data that could be compared with those produced by the investigations in the United States and Australia. The earliest interviews were, for the most part, restricted to a population of 'news' journalists in the categories established by Weaver and Wilhoit and replicated by Henningham. Specifically excluded from consideration were photographers ('those auxiliaries of the journalist', the ILO report had called them—a description unlikely to appeal to today's photojournalists), camera operators and sound technicians. But since an equally important aim of the study as a whole was to gather data relevant to all aspects of British journalism some variations were introduced in compiling both the sample and the questionnaire. The requirement imposed in America of 'full-time' employment would not have been appropriate in the United Kingdom, since part-time engagements and the use of freelances were widespread, even in the mainstream. Also, technological developments since the 1980s had altered many functions and procedures in the practice of journalism, bringing about considerable fusion of the 'symbolic' and the 'mechanical' functions identified by Splichal and Sparks. So television and radio producers working on news programmes were specifically *included* as, since their activities had expanded with technological development, were editorial graphic artists and designers.

In order to produce a sample as closely aligned as possible with the American and Australian studies, the first national survey launched for this study, *The News Breed*, was limited to journalists working in the newspaper and news broadcasting sector. Fieldwork to establish the population and compile the sample frame, stratified by medium and region, began in April 1994. Interviews with 726 respondents (4.8% of the estimated national population of news journalists) were carried out throughout November and December 1995 which represented a response

rate of between 72 per cent and 81 per cent. Estimated sampling error at the 95 per cent level of confidence: 3.6 per cent. [Appendix B].

As the first survey progressed it could be seen that the Weaver and Wilhoit category of media employers was too restricted to provide an adequate picture of British activities. Limiting the inquiry, as the Americans had, to employees of daily and weekly newspapers and wire services and the news services of radio and television stations would have meant the exclusion of nearly half the UK journalist population, most notably those working in magazines and periodicals and broadcasters in 'non-news' roles. A second survey was judged to be vital in order to ensure a full picture. That one, *Business and Pleasure*, brought within the definition of journalist many whose work might once have been thought to consist of the provision of entertainment rather than news, although both of those concepts rest upon shifting definitions: what might entertain one audience informs another and vice versa. (Even—especially—in the proto-journalism era of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries news content consisted, in some measure, of entertainment and has continued to do so ever since.) Fieldwork for *Business and Pleasure*, which was directed at journalists working in the periodical and non-news broadcast sector was completed in April 1997.

Table 2. Population of news journalists proportionately assembled for England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland by region or, in the case of national newspapers, by class of readership.

Strata	Estimate	%	Sample	%
National daily newspapers + <i>The Scotsman</i>	2462	16.22	167	32.00
National weekly newspapers (+ <i>European, S.Sport</i>)	820	5.40	55	7.57
Regional daily newspapers	6105	40.23	247	34.02
Regional weekly newspapers	2035	13.41	82	11.29
Independent TV & radio (nat/reg.)	1015	6.68	74	10.16
Reuter/PA/other wireservices	1000	6.58	25	3.44
BBC-TV & BBC radio (nat/reg)	1038	6.84	48	6.61
Newsagencies	600	3.95	28	3.85
TOTALS	15,175	99.31	726	99.97

Table 3. Population of periodical journalists proportionately assembled by class of readership.

Strata	Estimate	%	Sample	%
Business, professional, trade, technical	5650	66	147	2.6
Entertainment, consumer, 'glossy'	2850	34	74	2.6
	8500		221	

Table 4. Population of non-news broadcast journalists proportionately assembled by region .

Strata	Estimate	%	Sample	%
BBC	1900	45	50	2.6
Independent	2251	55	58	2.6
	4151		108	

The numbers of journalists employed in the three sectors that could be accepted with confidence were:

Although they are not covered by this study, if photographers were included in the newspaper sector at the 12 per cent proportion of staff calculated by the 1974 Royal Commission and if the commission's formula of ten per cent augmentation of freelances were also applied (already included in the broadcast figure) the numbers would be

Interviews were conducted with 328 respondents (2.6% of the estimated national universe represented by these classifications of 11,730 journalists in these categories), once again by On-Line. The journalists interviewed provided a response rate of 84% from a sample drawn by random selection. Estimated sampling error at the 95% level of confidence: 3.2%. **[Appendix B]**

Plymouth Brethren

A third survey carried out concurrently with *Business and Pleasure* was intended to act as a verifying device for the responses synthesised from the broader sample of journalists in the other two surveys (although it makes an informative and significant study in itself). Its subjects comprise the most cohesive group of journalists to be produced by any training

Table 5

Newspaper	13,122
Periodicals	8,500
Broadcast	6,204
Total	27,826

Table 6

Newspaper	16,165
Periodical	9,350
Broadcast	6,204
Total	31,719

programme. Graduates of the Mirror Group Training Scheme, which operated from 1966 to 1981, may be found in every sector of British journalism, usually at levels that denote high achievement or fulfilment.¹ Seventy-five of the approximately 120 men and women who completed the programme were located and interviewed, using the significant parts of the questionnaire common to the two general surveys. The characteristics and opinions of this rich sample of mature practitioners helped substantiate or modify those generated from the broader sample frames. Where they have responded to identical questions their views may be taken as representative of an established earlier generation and thus provide some degree of comparison.

Paradoxically, broadening the scope of the study made what small amount of data had been found from the earlier British investigations (and the later ones referred to below) even less useful for comparison. Like the journalism population estimates, all the observations were fragmented in various ways. Some dealt only with national newspaper employees. Some included photographers, some did not. All ignored freelances. Baldly, there were few instances in which like was compared to like. Thus, although statistical extrapolations from the samples of today's British *news* journalists may validly be compared with other studies, particularly the American and Australian ones referred to, it can be seen that the greater part of the quantitative yield from the project surveys remains archetypal, awaiting a replication of this project when what is compared will actually be comparable. Meanwhile, the limitations of quantitative sampling in the absence of a comparative range of earlier data were redressed by a series of structured interviews with strategically placed individual journalists, whose observations shed a pragmatic light on many areas of the quantitative picture.

¹ Some familiar by-lines or personalities: Jackie Ashley, Patrick Bishop, Hilary Bonner, Alastair Campbell, Paul Donovan, Steve Doughty, Ted Graham, Mary Greene, Christian Gysin, Tessa Hilton, Phillipa Kennedy, David Lamb, Judy McGuire, David Montgomery, Andrew Morton, Paul Newman, Lindsay Nicholson, Ric Papineau, Angela Rippon, Matthew Symonds, Tom Utley, Colin Wills.

While this investigation was in the preliminary stage, stirrings of interest in the nature of journalists in the immediate 1990s were noted elsewhere. The Newspaper Society (NS), the employers' organisation for regional newspapers (which, like its magazine counterpart the Periodical Publishers Association (PPA), was unable to discover the number of journalists its members employ) commissioned a survey that demonstrated the dominance of middle-class, white, graduates in journalism training schemes. In the same year the Guild of Editors (GE), most of whose members work in regional newspapers, commissioned a survey of editorial training needs carried out by the Department of Journalism Studies at the University of Wales, Cardiff. The response rate for 997 editors was 42 per cent and from 862 trainees 66 per cent. Despite the low response rate of the latter, both these studies provided indicative data.

NUJ. In 1994 and 1996 the NUJ conducted postal surveys of its membership (which is also drawn from book publishing and the public relations sector—and includes photographers) aimed principally at establishing a pattern of employment and earnings. The response rate of the 1996 venture—entirely voluntary and self-selecting—was 27 per cent; an questionable level for statistically based conclusions.

Skillset. This organisation was established by broadcasting interests, including the BBC, to oversee training methods for all the skills required in that sector. A report on broadcast journalists was published in 1996 as a sequel to an earlier (1989) survey which dealt only with television journalists. Its conclusions and wider applicability must be evaluated in the light of its methodology.¹ A questionnaire was mailed to 6921 prospective respondents whose names had been collected from employers and from the NUJ. Recipients were invited to respond if they considered themselves to be a (not necessarily an employed or active) broadcast journalist. Returned questionnaires numbered 2777 (43%) and a statistical analysis was carried out on these. The population size was calculated by an inverse extrapolation of the responses (1996: 6,121-122). The factor of normal distribution on which a sound statistical projection could be based would

seem to be negated by the self-selective element of this exercise but as a census of 43 per cent of an estimated population the results have indicative value.

Women in Journalism. While data was being gathered for the second survey in this project, *Business and Pleasure*, the organisation Women in Journalism (WIJ) asked for some supplementary questions to be asked on its behalf. This was agreed but, when WIJ realised that only part of the universe remained to be sampled, it asked for the earlier *News Breed* sample to be revisited, persuading the supermarket chain Tesco to underwrite the cost of MORI applying a supplementary questionnaire *to print journalists only*. Since both questions and sample were produced as part of the fieldwork for this study, the responses have, with certain provisos, been incorporated.

Section 3. The inhabited universe

In the course of the project, the universe of journalists came to be seen as three distinct sectors of practice and employment: newspapers, periodicals, and broadcasting. The stratified sample frames for *The News Breed* and *Business and Pleasure* were assembled proportionately from each of the editorial sectors described here.

Newspapers. These together with newsagencies are the largest source of journalistic employment. Twelve daily and nine Sunday newspapers circulated throughout the United Kingdom during the period of fieldwork—the *national* press. The national publications were classified, according to the dominant socio-economic status of their targeted readership, into broadsheets, ‘bluetop’ mid-market tabloids and ‘redtop’ tabloids. Restricting the field of research to the categories adopted from the Weaver and Wilhoit surveys excluded foreign language newspapers and such relatively specialised daily publications as *Sporting Life* and *Lloyd’s List*. Specialisation also ruled out of this category *The Economist*, the only British title with pretensions to the category so important in America of newsmagazines.

¹ Employment Patterns and Training Needs 1995/6: Broadcast Journalists

The regional and local newspapers of the United Kingdom were less easy to classify or even to count, being more prone than the national titles to closure, merger, retitling and mutation into localised editions. During the fieldwork period 91 apparently separate daily titles were logged throughout the various regions and ten Sunday titles (one of which has since closed). There were also 1138 weekly titles, 666 of them freesheets.

Ownership in this sector is concentrated. At the local level, one small company or an alliance of jointly managed companies will frequently produce a mixture of free and paid-for titles. Production and editorial facilities are pooled with the result that journalists are often required to service several titles of each category. Centralisation may intensify at the next level of ownership, where the local titles or groups usually become linked into publishing chains throughout which editorial material was shared or exchanged. Six of these large chains owned or controlled some 80% of local and regional titles in the UK at the time of the survey and four of those also owned or were owned by groups that published national titles.

Agencies. The term 'newsagency' is used in Britain both as the equivalent of the American 'wire service' and to describe independent newsgathering operations. In this report it has been reserved for the latter and 'wire service' applied to the national 'wholesalers' of news which are dealt with below. Like the populous corps of part-timers and freelances referred to below, journalists who work for newsagencies represent a distinctive category in Britain and an important element in the newsgathering network. Agencies range in size and function from well-manned offices specialising in fields such as finance or sport to one-person businesses or partnerships offering general coverage of districts. Although the larger ones may have salaried staff, many maintain a freelance ethos.

The opposite is true of the wire services which are models of Weberian professionalism. Dominant among these in the field of international news and financial data is Reuter and for domestic news the Press Association (PA). PA has a virtual monopoly but Reuter, which supplies television footage as well as text, must compete with Associated Press, United Press

International and other foreign-owned services. The staff of those foreign operations in the UK are predominantly British.

Periodicals. The distinction between the type of journalistic input required by a newspaper and a periodical is frequently hazy. There are magazines that resemble newspapers but which appear only monthly or even quarterly and whose content consists of ‘timeless’ feature articles. Others such as *The Economist* and *The European* (defunct), look like magazines but offer up-to-the-minute news and analysis. The main internal demarcation in the sector is between consumer publications and business and professional titles, both of which are highly dependent on specialised readership and advertising. Although magazines with large circulations must have generalised appeal, many smaller titles thrive on tightly focused readerships and ‘niche’ markets. The high design content of these publications means that graphic designers are employed in larger proportion than in newspapers.

Radio. BBC radio news is networked on five national stations—Radio One to Radio Five—supplemented by 56 regional and local stations. All but the smallest of these have some input into the overall newsflow. The Independent National Radio network consists of the national stations INR-1, INR-2 and INR-3 (occupied at the time of the study by Classic FM, Virgin 1215 and Talk Radio UK), augmented by 180 regional and local stations, many of which are linked by group ownership. Larger commercial stations have some editorial staff and generate their own programmes but all depend heavily on material supplied from London by Independent Radio News, an ITN subsidiary, and links to centralised newsrooms. The BBC World Service also broadcasts radio and television programmes globally.

Television. The publicly funded British Broadcasting Corporation provides broadcasts throughout the United Kingdom as networked programmes on the national channels BBC-1 and BBC-2 and locally from the 18 television stations of the BBC’s six Regional divisions. Channel Three is the national frequency dedicated to the ‘independent’ or ‘commercial’ television companies which hold franchises for the 15

regions into which the area is divided (plus, in London, a second weekend time slot). This ITV network carries news programmes fed to the regional broadcasters from London by the agency Independent Television News. In addition, all the ITV companies have editorial operations of varying magnitude. Channels Four and Five are separate commercial national networks on which news is a blend of ITN feeds and footage from other sources. In Wales, Channel Four is known as SC4 and carries the Welsh language service *Sianel Pedwar Cymn*.

Satellite and Cable. At the time of fieldwork BSkyB was the only satellite service originating and broadcasting news within the UK. Several cable companies, notably Channel One in London and Live TV in London, Birmingham and Glasgow, had incipient news operations.

Freelance. There appear to be many more self-employed and partly employed journalists in the United Kingdom than in any other developed country and like newsagencies they represent a vital element of the journalistic workforce. In evidence to the 1974 Royal Commission the NCTJ and the PPA estimated that 10 per cent of the 26,000 journalists (22,880 if photographers were excluded) of the 1970s were freelance.¹ The term, however, is elastic. Journalists frequently speak of freelancing when an American might say ‘moonlighting’—being paid for work done outside a regular job and usually for a publication or outlet other than their main employer. They also use it interchangeably with ‘part-time’, intending to include those journalists who regularly work on staff terms for an agreed number of days or shifts a week. The distinctions and contradictions of this category are explored in Chapter 9.

¹ Niblock believed that ten per cent of all journalists were freelance and that 50 per cent of copy in the periodical sector was generated by them (186-188).

Part Two

Chapter 4

Institutionalism v. Unionism

An unfortunate dichotomy runs right through the whole journalistic profession. Some regard themselves as professional men and others regard themselves as workers, required to hold out for a certain stint of words, for a fixed pay and to get the maximum pay for the least amount of work. The two points of view are represented by the Institute and the NUJ.—Cynric Mytton Davies, vice-president of the CJoJ, to the McGregor Commission.

The CJoJ is popularly known as the bosses' union, while the NUJ is more for the lads, the ordinary journalists.—Russell Kerr MP (Lab) to a House of Commons Standing Committee 27.6.74.

Section 1: Rival organisations.

A historical perspective is essential in gauging the significance of some data produced by the study, particularly that applying to methods of preparation for journalism and the social status of journalists. It would be convenient to be able to argue that the rival outlooks of the two journalist organisations that were founded, one on either side of the turn of the nineteenth century, allowed their opposing influence in the formation of journalists to be discussed solely in terms of trade union versus professional organisation, as the views quoted above suggest, but the issue is not so clear-cut. Nor is it possible to present the views of the National Union of Journalists and the Chartered Institute of Journalists on preparation for journalism as consistently polarised between 'practical' training and 'elitist' education. For one thing, the polarity has occasionally

been reversed; for another additional views demanded attention: those of publisher-proprietors and, eventually, those of the academic establishment. At no point in the irresolute and confused efforts made across more than 100 years to establish standards for entering or practising journalism have any of these factions even come close to agreement on a coherent framework of recruitment, preparation or qualification for journalism. Their intermittent attempts to reach one amount to a sorry tale of false starts, missed opportunities, bungling, fear, inverted snobbery, and pretension.

The position of journalists at the beginning of the twentieth century contains the seeds of present-day considerations of status, occupational hegemony and organisational preference. A century earlier, journalists could have had little reason to doubt the success with which printing, the oldest method of mass production, had been converted into the newest of professions—as journalism was unquestioningly accepted to be in the eighteenth century—built partly around the central tenet that had distinguished the early printer-publishers: the professional right of anonymity that protected sources and allowed writers to express their views free from social repercussion or the consequences of libel. Throughout the eighteenth century and well into the nineteenth, newspaper and periodical production remained centred on an editor who was often less a journalist or master printer than an amalgam of unelected politician and small businessman. Frequently he functioned on behalf of a patron who wished to exert influence either on his own behalf or that of a political party. Newspapers existed mainly to influence their readers and through them governments. Writers of editorial ‘leaders’, usually the editor himself, were the focus of the operation; the function of reporters and correspondents was to keep the editor well informed (Smith 1978:148,184).

The gradual popularisation and eventual commodification of the press once stamp duty was abolished brought about a decline in the status of subordinate journalists even before the advances, towards the end of the nineteenth century, in typesetting, printing, communications and

distribution made their occupation less exclusive. Sons of the emergent Victorian middle classes were firmly warned off from becoming journalists; but so they were from becoming actuaries, teachers, architects or civil engineers (Lee 1976:105).

The term 'gentlemen of the press' had become ironic usage as early as 1835 when even firm supporters of a free press had to admit that it had become 'degraded from the rank of a liberal profession':

the employment and the class engaged in it sink: and the conduct of our journals falls too much into the hands of men of obscure birth, imperfect education, blunt feelings and coarse manners, who are accustomed to a low position in society, and are contented to be excluded from a circle in which they have never been used to move.¹

There is in this observation a hint of the nervousness that journalists had come to induce in office-holders and the well-off. Journalists were no longer drawn from the same social ranks as themselves and could not be depended upon to share similar social and behavioural priorities (the reverse in class terms of what might be argued about their successors of today).

Shorthand

Yet it was at this time that the advent of shorthand brought about a revolutionary change in the practice of journalism by introducing a new element into the gathering and presentation of news: accuracy. For Smith this 'transformed the business of reporting into a kind of science'.

A fully competent shorthand reporter seemed to have acquired an almost supernatural power and shorthand was invested with the same kind of social optimism as the microphone and the television camera in later times (Smith 1978:186-187).

The development of Pitman's shorthand system which replaced the older Gurney's Brachygraphy, of which Dickens complained so much while a Law Courts reporter, brought the freelance reporter into being. Smith

¹ Quoted in Aspinall 1949: 219.

conjured up a picture of how the footloose and competitive new model journalist might take himself off to the venue of an interesting speech and

armed with a shorthand notebook, make his report and walk late at night through the newspaper offices of Fleet Street until he found an editor interested in having the article. Shorthand was the lingua franca of the freelance, it democratised the profession, in a sense. It provided it with a 'mystery' (1978:215).

The triumph of accuracy over interpretation was soon to be reinforced by the telegraph and the wire services whose operations it facilitated. The market for Reuters and other wholesalers consisted of many client newspapers which published more or less simultaneously. This placed a premium on the 'hard fact', substantiated by a shorthand report. Smith interpreted this as an early step towards the establishment of journalism as a profession in the modern sense, even though it was based on a craft skill which for more than a century was the only measurable ability in journalism—and remains so in the minds of many employers and practitioners to this day.

By the last few years of the nineteenth century extended franchise had led to mass democracy. Overt political activity was largely confined to parliament, where the Liberal and Conservative parties represented an economic as well as a political dichotomy. The widely utilised triadic social model, however, was at its most effective, enhanced by a vastly expanded middle class that had been nurtured in the aftermath of the Industrial Revolution. By that time few journalists would have qualified for the top layer of the model and many would have been in the bottom one. Most, though, would have been found in the middle layer, on a par with 'semi-professions': teachers, bank clerks, social workers, the police. As one of the veterans of the era recalled, journalism had become

a one-time profession that was being degraded into a trade, and a shockingly underpaid and exploited one at that...for the mass of working journalists there was nothing but unlimited hours for pittance...the older men were looking longingly back to what were described as the 'good old days' of the profession thirty years before. The young recruits hopelessly

struggled to shoulder the burden of their shabby gentility.¹

Within the crucial few years bridging the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, many newspapers which had been published less for profit than for political or social influence had been restructured as businesses whose major goal was to profit from the new revenue stream generated by advertising. As Christian noted in his definition of ‘commercialisation’ applied to newspapers, the realisation that demand could be manufactured as readily as commodities was more easily to be seen in the press than in any other industry. Once circulation—upon which advertising revenue depended—became competitive a publisher could no longer afford to produce a paper simply to fulfil a need for which its readers were prepared to pay the modest price demanded. Like the goods being advertised in its pages, the paper itself had to be competitive: increase sales by costly promotion; achieve ever wider distribution by expensive production methods and transport. The kind of venture capital that might once have been available to an individual journalist to launch or maintain a publication was no longer sufficient. Finance had to come from the stock exchange and shareholders would expect speedy dividends.

The changes embodied in the new *Daily Mail* of mass circulations and mechanised production completed the transformation of the journalist from an individual practitioner who might be likely to own or edit a publication at some stage of his career to an employee of some large and ever more anonymous company. In the bombastic new world of high-speed rotary presses, Linotype machines, competitions, sponsorship and sales drives journalists soon became outnumbered by other groups of workers until, as Christian found,

instead of being employed by ‘colleagues’ whose motives were professional as well as economic [they] are now just one category of hired labour among others in organisations whose main purpose is making profits (1980: 264).

¹ The Journalist, 1.3.1951

Gentlemen v. journalists

The erosion of their status from professional to artisan over a relatively short time ('literary artisan' was one of the defensive euphemisms resorted to by the 'craftsman' school which was to develop) took many journalists by surprise. For the equivalent in that era of the sprinkling of stars that Tunstall would later identify, their platform had brought contacts with the wider world, social standing and influence which now came under threat. Those elite 'literary journalists' had now to ensure, as old William Gladstone (who was proud to be one of them) put it, that they remained a cut or two socially above their readers (Curran 1991:29), blind to the paradox of imagining that they were entitled to greater prestige than the reporters who provided the interface with those readers (Christian 1980: 266-269).

The Chartered Institute of Journalists was not founded to provide journalists with an advantage in their relationships with publishers but to raise or protect the social standing of both parties. This was clearly the appeal it held for proprietors, since their commercial interests were already represented by the Newspaper Society that had been formed to campaign against Stamp Duty, oppressive libel laws and other nineteenth century impediments to a free—and profitable—press. The idea of belonging to a 'profession' had acquired great cachet in the era of late-Victorian prosperity and there were numerous examples of trades thus elevating themselves into the new occupational middle class. The more status-conscious journalists, particularly proprietor-editors of local newspapers and the *litterateurs* of the national press, were keen to emulate the strategy adopted by engineers, accountants, architects and the like who 'by means of grand institutional charters and the establishment of professional examinations' imitated the recent success of medical practitioners in organising themselves into associations that were established in law.

The 'gentlemanly' character and status-building aims of the project that was devised became evident soon after its reification as the Association of Journalists in 1886, when it elected as its president Sir Algernon Borthwick, Conservative Member of Parliament and proprietor of the

Morning Post, the oldest and most staid of London dailies. The Association became the Institute in 1889 and received its Royal Charter the following year. This document, similar to those granted to other chartered organisations, declared the institute to be a Body Corporate empowered to test the qualifications of candidates for membership ‘by examination in theory and practice, or by any other tests; to promote the elevation of the status and the improvement of the qualifications of journalists’. In petitioning for this privilege, the institute pledged to compel ‘the observance of strict rules of conduct’ and to set ‘a high standard of professional and general education and knowledge’. These aims were not pursued with any urgency then or subsequently.

Section 2: An occupation downgraded

Lee believed that the decline in the status of journalists in these middle ages of media history owed as much to the shift of patronage from the aristocratic political masters of the 1800s to the more commercial ones of the 1900s as it did to technological expansion. The increase in numbers that diluted the exclusive nature of the occupation must also have been a cause. No estimate exists of the number of journalists at work in 1900 but between 1846 and 1890 the number of publications that could provide them with work increased from 551 to 2491. Erosion of social standing may have been a simple matter of money. The creation of a mass market in journalist labour—a situation recognisable in the year 2000—meant a levelling, if not a lowering of income, and thus in the affordable lifestyle which began to fall off in inverse ratio to the creation of jobs. Even in the late nineteenth century Golden Age, for which they began to pine once the twentieth century was under way, journalists’ earnings lagged behind those of the established professions. In the 1870s, when £1000 was a median annual income for professional men in other callings, the editor of *The Times* might have been paid as much as £5000 a year but his regional counterpart as little as £500.

Journalists who were less concerned with emulating *arriviste* neo-professionals than with the more pressing matter of wages had soon seen

that the CIoJ could hardly function as a collective bargaining body while it included proprietors and editors as members. The CIoJ members who broke away to form the National Union of Journalists (NUJ) were obviously aware of nuances, whether felt in terms of status, class or raw domestic economics, that distinguished their perceived function from that of the ‘professionals’ they were leaving behind. The minutes of the Manchester Press Club which recorded their first informal meeting in 1883 did not even mention ‘journalists’, referring to ‘a League or Association of reporters, sub-editors, and others engaged on the Press...’. Nevertheless, the National Association of Journalists was formed the following year and in 1907 became the NUJ.

For the first quarter of the twentieth century the greatly increased number of journalists working in large newsrooms and small provincial offices were worse off in terms of job security, earnings, working hours and holidays than most other clerical workers and certainly far worse off than printers. In 1901 a junior reporter on the best of London newspapers or a senior one on the best of provincial papers could expect a salary of £150 to £200 a year, although in the provinces it might be as low as £75 (Lee 1976:110-112).

Reporters suffered worst. Even the *lingua franca* of Pitman’s lost its allure. One of Northcliffe’s counterparts remarked irascibly that hundreds of people in Britain who had come to call themselves reporters were ‘just shorthand writers with a notebook’. Having not been properly trained they were wholly unfitted for the tasks allotted to them. The twentieth century’s new man of journalism (and of Brixton where most of those employed in London on the national titles lived, because of the late night train service) was the sub-editor, the ‘unknown soldier’ of journalism

the real craftsman of his profession, the maker of the newspaper in the real sense of the term—in the final form in which it reaches the reader. Other branches merely provide him with raw material or at best with partly manufactured goods. His task is to fashion the finished product. It is one that requires all manner of deft and high-speed operations: the cutting down and sometimes the rewriting of manuscript, the insertion of punctuation, the

detection and correction of all kinds of errors and imperfections, and the composition of suitable headlines (Blumenfeld 1933:100).

Born of the need created by the telegraph to cobble together stories from a variety of sources, the sub-editor had come into his own with the increasingly complicated design and editing requirements of the new newspapers. The advent of the *Daily Mail* and its first mass-circulation imitator the *Daily Express* brought about a 'startling development...spoken of with amazement by journalists'.

There is fierce competition among the papers...in order to miss nothing they have to employ an army of sub-editors to fly through tons of matter at lightning speed, fastening instinctively on any 'point' worth a par...and crystallise it into a few lines (Hunter 1982: 32).

Here, then, in this shift of emphasis from fact gathering and writing to processing, was Christian's 'controlled and mechanically organised workplace'. And since in pay and employment conditions journalists had become more like 'factory workers or routine non-manual workers in any industry', their employers remote and impersonal, some of them began to behave accordingly. The NUJ had from the beginning set out to model itself on the organisations that had allowed printers such a high degree of control over pay and conditions. In the wider world, few professionals or white-collar workers enjoyed close contact with their unionised blue-collar counterparts but, although the demarcations of mechanised production had begun to separate them, journalists were still yoked together with the stone-hands and compositors who had been among the first workers employed in factory conditions to organise themselves into trade unions. The discrepancy in earnings between these interdependent occupations appeared as a repeated theme in journalists' public correspondence of the early 1900s and provoked the demand that a fully qualified journalist should be paid at least the same wage as a Linotype operator in the same office (a similar demand could be heard in the 1960s and 1970s).¹

¹ Institute Journal, January 1914

Income v. Status

Despite the outward polarisation of trade versus profession that divided them the two journalist organisations shared many similar objectives, even if neither appeared capable of pursuing a cohesive policy in order to attain them. Christian claimed to have identified three occupational ideologies and strategies that institute and union had both pursued throughout their long rivalry and only one on which they differed. They were in accord over professional status-seeking and the attainment of professional self-control and autonomy, each of which issue was, in its own way, ‘a form of narrowly focused trade unionism’. The factor that distinguished the NUJ, was ‘class awareness and action tending towards full (worker) class consciousness’ (1980: 271). There may have been a tinge of Marxian wishfulness in Christian’s diagnosis but that third factor was enough to make the organisations irreconcilable, even though some CIOJ members came to envy the union’s dynamism in raising wages.

Christian’s contempt for the CIOJ was unrelenting. The institute was ‘simply a rallying point for Right-wing journalists’. The concept of professionalism, though no doubt sincerely believed in by some institute members, provided it with a ‘convenient ideology’ but it was an aim, he believed, that was more likely to be fulfilled by the trade unionists of the NUJ.

The persisting aspiration to professionalism by many [NUJ] members, and the NUJ’s increased response to this over the years, show that the promotion of some degree of professionalism is possible on a basis of trade unionism, whereas in prevailing conditions [original emphasis] the converse has not succeeded and is not likely to succeed (1977: 228).

In its early years NUJ activity focused on raising its members’ status by raising their income. By 1913, when it had 3600 on its rolls, more than half of them earned less than £3 a week and it was assumed that most of the worst paid of journalists would not be members (Lee 1976:110-112).¹ In the same year the first successful negotiations took place with the

¹ In 1917, 40 per cent of members, the largest proportion responding in a survey, were paid at a similar level.

Newspaper Proprietors' Association, which since 1906 had united the publishers of *national* newspapers in an organisation separate from the NS. As a result the association 'recommended' that its members pay sub-editors six guineas a week and reporters five guineas. Intriguingly, the payment in guineas (£1 plus a shilling) denotes a *professional* fee, distinguishing the national settlement from a parallel one made in the provinces by the NS in unpretentious pounds, shillings and pence: £4.7.6 to the staff of weeklies and £5.15.0 to that of dailies.¹

CIOJ members who were eager to share in the union-won spoils and NUJ members keen to establish a monopoly of journalist labour engineered four attempts to merge the organisations, the first two in 1916 and 1920. On each occasion a majority of CIOJ members refused to abandon, as the NUJ insisted they must, their founding principle of including employers or their representatives in the membership. Members like Frederick Peaker were

not going to turn out a brother journalist because he happens to have a few shares in a newspaper or has attained to a position of influence thereon. We exist to look after the interests of the profession—profession not a trade—and if we do not care about trade union methods it is not because we have lost sight of the journalist and care only for the proprietor, but rather because we have a nobler conception of our calling and believe it can be raised by other and better methods.¹

Where control over entry and training was concerned, the NUJ adhered—in common with printers—to the principle of apprenticeship: a beginner should be accepted for the job first and only then should they be trained. The highly socialising effects of such 'on the job' training (which Tom Hopkinson would memorably disparage as 'sitting next to Nellie') were evident to Howard Becker from his workplace observations of engineers and others (1958, 1972, 1987). The NUJ obviously regarded this form of selection as sufficient (for the time) control of entry to the occupation; it was one of the few matters on which it was in accord with employers. It did not seem to occur to its leaders then—and does not to many of them

¹ In 1919 the first firm NUJ-NPA agreement raised the minimum to eight guineas which increased to nine guineas in 1921, the figure at which it remained until 1939.

today—that endorsing a form of training modelled wholly on the requirements of an employer was unlikely to do much to empower journalists, individually or collectively.

Despite its ostensible commitment to the ‘professional’ concept, the occasional efforts within the CIOJ to establish an ethical structure and an entry qualification scheme were effectively doomed by its hybrid membership. In its initial enthusiasm the CIOJ did draft a basic entrance examination (1889), then a scheme for ‘pupil-associates’ similar to that used by barristers (1893). It even worked out a curriculum with London University (1908) for a two-year postgraduate course that was heavily weighted towards general education but included some practical instruction in newspaper work. [Appendix C] None of these measures was ever implemented, nor for many years to come did the upper echelon of the CIOJ, least of all the proprietor members, who ‘feared a reduction of their prerogatives and advantages as employers’, show any interest in improving the pay or working conditions of journalists (Christian 1980). The idea of an academic qualification in journalism remained a principle of CIOJ policy but when in 1919 one was eventually launched, in the form of a confused and ill-fated offer of a London University diploma, the initiative came from the Ministry of Labour as a measure to provide career opportunities for returned servicemen.

In the 1930s, prodded by a faction of the membership that remained motivated by its original values, the CIOJ did make an abortive effort, through a private member’s bill in Parliament, to set up a statutory Journalists’ Registration Council, similar to one established by architects, to register journalists and supervise the award of diplomas. That was the only attempt ever made to introduce a qualification that, while it might not have been exclusive, could have led to a form of licensing for journalists. Such an outcome, though, could never have succeeded without the complicity of the NUJ to which, however much it might want a closed membership, the idea of a qualifying credential was anathema. The sole result of the CIOJ move was to spur the NUJ into drafting its first code of

¹ *Institute Journal* January 1920:112

conduct that, as the CIOJ pointed out rancorously, was hardly a *professional* code since it would apply only to union members. These episodes, during which the membership of the organisations were as confused or indifferent as their leaders, exemplify an attitude that the ILO report had already noted with eloquent restraint:

Journalists are not in agreement on the subject; if they are unanimous in desiring a certain standardisation of recruitment and professional training, they differ as to the means of attaining the end (1928:207).

After the failure of the first merger attempt the CIOJ reluctantly had itself certified as a trade union so as to be able to participate in discussions on the future of the print industry. But the Printing and Kindred Trades Association, which had come to incorporate the participating unions, denied the institute the affiliation it had readily granted to the NUJ.¹ Nevertheless, employers conceded the CIOJ a place at the collective bargaining table. A final attempt at reconciliation took place in 1969 in the form of a ‘trial marriage’, in Christian’s term, when for a period a member of each organisation was recognised as being a member of the other. Thus the ‘tradesmen’ of the NUJ became eligible, in the words of an CIOJ grandee, ‘for the priceless gift of professional status...through a body honoured by a Royal Charter’.

The intrinsic contradictions of the CIOJ have never been resolved. In 1991 it became affiliated with the Federation of Professional Associations. In 1997 the late Sir David English, chairman of Associated Newspapers, became its chairman, mirroring the image of Sir Algernon Borthwick a century earlier. Its membership was 901; that of the NUJ 29,352.¹

Section 3: Warrington to The Strand

The earliest recorded attempt at training in Britain was made in 1877 by the proprietor of several weekly newspapers headquartered in Warrington, Lancashire, Alexander Mackie. Mackie devised a course of six months for

¹ The opposed interests of employee and employer members led to a farcical compromise. The Executive Council of the Institute continued to be dominated by proprietors but an Economic Section was created of employee members who were supposed to negotiate improved working conditions—often with the proprietor members.

his Newspaper Institute, to be offered to 'those gentlemen who wish to be connected with the newspaper press but have no means of becoming technically educated except by serving a long apprenticeship with its attendant drudgery'. He wished to attract not only practising or aspiring journalists but proprietors and editors 'who know nothing of the duties of sub-editors, reporters, "readers" or book-keepers, and are consequently at the mercy of their staff'. The curriculum was to include compositing, proof-reading, Pitman's, sub-editing and book-keeping. Six months of practical experience on top of that would bring students up to 'average perfection'. Mackie failed to attract enough applicants for the course to be launched, which in Lee's judgment showed how well rooted, even at that time, was the idea that the only real way to learn journalism was 'on the job' (Lee 1977:35-37). It is also a reminder, as Boyd-Barrett observed, that there were journalists long before there were people who attempted to teach journalism (1980:307).

The next attempt to found a school of journalism was made in 1887 by a 'working' journalist rather than a proprietor. David Anderson, a leader writer and political correspondent on the *Daily Telegraph*, offered a 12-month course for students who should already know English history, constitutional law, political economy and had 'a large fund of general knowledge to draw upon'; the fee: 100 guineas.

Younger aspirants were targeted by an experiment at the City of London School, inspired and financed by Lord Northcliffe, whose success with the *Daily Mail* had transformed him into a newspaper prophet, and overseen by William Hill of the *Westminster Gazette*. It began in 1902 and lasted only a few years. Boys were instructed in journalism subjects by 'eminent journalists' and went out reporting after school. Hill reappeared in 1907 to persuade Birmingham University to set up 'the first organised university instruction in journalism' which he described in print the following year but which was never offered to students.

¹ Inclusive.

Journalists v. Academics

It took World War One to bring journalism and academe together in Britain, even though the partners still seem nervous about the propriety of the relationship. The first conclusive effort to provide specialised education specifically for journalists was the two-year diploma course launched in 1919 at the University of London. The course was to be open to applicants who could show some connection with the press before their military service or those who could convince a selection committee of their suitability.

LU authorities had clearly been baffled by the concept of vocational training. The course they devised must have represented, in their view, a suitable education for someone who intended to practice journalism rather than instruction in how actually to go about it. By establishing the award as a diploma *for* rather than *in* journalism the university traced out a paradigm of the later debate.

Outside Britain, formal preparation for journalism had long been sited in universities. The University of Breslau¹ offered the first journalism course as early as 1806; Heidelberg followed suit in 1895, as in the next few years did universities in Basle, Zurich and Paris. In the United States after the Civil War, the former Confederate general Robert E. Lee became president of Washington College (now Washington and Lee University) in Lexington, Virginia, where in 1869 typography and stenography began to be taught. Kansas State College (now University) established courses in printing and reporting in 1873 and in 1878, the University of Missouri began teaching journalism in its history department.

An exception to the American model of university-based combination of education and training was provided by Martha Louise Rayne, a woman omitted from the history of journalism until restored to her rightful place by Beasley and Theus (1988). A former writer on the *Chicago Tribune* and the *Detroit Free Press*, she opened Mrs Rayne's School of Journalism in Detroit in 1886, a private establishment intended to attract women

¹ Now Wroclaw and in Poland, rather than Germany as it was then.

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excluded from predominantly male university courses. It lasted until 1900, catering to a steady demand.¹

By that time eight American universities were offering degrees in journalism. Two took the lead and have held it ever since. The University of Missouri (now Missouri-Columbia) gave journalism its own school in 1908, where the Missouri Method was developed. This became a model for many other Bachelor of Arts or of Science courses later developed in the United States with journalism available as their major strand: a curriculum comprising 75 per cent arts and/or science subjects and 25 per cent journalism.

The original course offered at Missouri comprised two years of study rather than the eventual four. It was devised by Charles Eliot, president of Harvard University, at the behest of Joseph Pulitzer, publisher of the New York *World*, to produce 'well equipped men for leadership in journalism, with high ideals and special training'. Pulitzer's motives were undoubtedly altruistic but his initiative set a pattern of patronage by employers which was eventually to become controversial. By 1912 Pulitzer had offered Columbia University in New York City \$1million to endow a school of journalism. A long wrangle ensued with the Columbia authorities.

Pulitzer wanted the proposed journalism course to be available to men and women school-leavers who could pass an entrance examination. Columbia, unhappy with the idea of students who might not meet its usual entry requirements, preferred that the course be offered only to graduates. A compromise accommodated both groups of potential students: a graduate course of one year; an undergraduate one of four.

At first, American journalists, were also suspicious of university preparation for reasons similar to those that in Britain have persisted for nearly a century. To Edwin Godkin, the influential (and British-born) editor of *Nation*, journalism was a 'gift' that could be imparted only in a newspaper office (Salacetti 1995: 60). Nevertheless, by 1928 journalism was a degree subject at 28 state universities across the United States, 19

¹ The 1870 US census recorded 35 women journalists (0.6% of the total); by 1890 there were 888 out of 21,849 (4%).

state schools and 50 private universities; frequently the department teaching it would be subsidised by a news organisation (ILO 1928:18). By 2000 there were 456 degree-granting programmes in Journalism or Mass Communication in the USA.

The direct industry sponsorship, which continued, was held by Hardt and his colleagues to be partly responsible for the high level of socialisation to the requirements of publishers to which they so object.

The 1919 British diploma was inaugurated in a university building in South Kensington with a lecture to 102 students by the editor of *Punch*, Sir Owen Seaman, on The Art of Parody. The diploma itself could have served as an example. The course was not based in any university department or faculty, had no monitoring system for evaluation apart from examination results and, until 1935 when a home was found for it at King's College in the Strand, no premises. The only structural element provided by the university was the advisory committee.

Almost by definition the earliest entrants were unmatriculated. Nevertheless, the curriculum was structured academically: English literature, general history, development of science, history of political ideas, the principles of criticism and elective subjects from courses in modern languages, philosophy and psychology [Appendix C]. Elements of its curriculum were familiar from the CIOJ 1910 proposal but Cattanach was scornful of an institute claim to have inspired the diploma. He was convinced the course would never have got under way without the backing of the government, which provided scholarships for the returned servicemen until the third intake in 1921.

Neither journalist organisation was involved until the course was well under way. Even when the NUJ was given two seats (against one for the CIOJ) on the committee overseeing the course the union showed no inclination to depart from its industrial model of indentured apprenticeship. The NUJ model had been adopted, with some refinements, in Australia where it is still in operation. A form of apprenticing called 'cadetship' is spread, notionally, over four years although an employer may arbitrarily upgrade cadets according to their progress. The Australian

Journalists Association (AJA) has an agreed formula with employers about the proportion of cadets to 'graded' members that may be employed.

No news

Faithful to the education *for* concept, no practical instruction in journalism was provided in the LU course until two years after it began and then externally for one day a week during term, Students were advised to learn shorthand and typing privately. One prospective candidate, dismayed at the lack of practical instruction sent the CIOJ a University of Missouri prospectus packed with course titles such as Advanced News Writing and Newspaper Make-up to show what would be required for training or education *in* journalism.

The first batch of diplomates numbered only 29 (of whom four were women) of the inaugural 102. Two more women and 15 men were referred. The advisory committee heard complaints from tutors that much time had had to be devoted to repairing defects in the student body that might not have been present if matriculation had been a condition of entry. The poor results raised the questions of whether the curriculum LU had devised was not merely unsuitable for aspiring journalists but too challenging and whether its content should be less demanding. Peaker, the proponent of a 'nobler conception', who had joined the advisory committee as an independent member led the resistance:

Nothing is ever gained by cheapening degrees or diplomas...and I do not like to feel that London is offering a soft option at a time when Oxford and Cambridge honours graduates are entering the profession in increasing numbers.¹

The indifference to higher education that had hitherto been shown by British journalists and employers did not mean that at this time there were no journalists with a university education. Graduates, particularly from Oxford and Cambridge, had been infiltrating the national newspaper scene for years. Although their presence had often been resented, their absence in the immediate post-World War One period was apparent. At least 5000

¹ Quoted in Hunter 1982:181.

graduates had been lost in the war and as Percy Cudlipp, one of a triumvirate of brothers who became national editors, observed to another editor, Arthur Christiansen:

We benefited from the fact that many clever men had been killed in the Great War There were gaps to be filled, and so fellows like you and me who had been too young to fight, had an early chance to show what we could do.¹

Although neither the NUJ nor the CIOJ was to have a significant input into the LU course, the diploma concept became the recurring focus of discussions about external preparation for journalism. An NUJ education committee was formed; it wrote to 13 universities asking for advice on appropriate courses for journalists. There seemed to be nothing suitable in existing curricula, it said, for 'the creation of an educated profession with a common consciousness and aims'. The guarded responses from the eight universities which replied seem in keeping with the bemusement shown by LU at being invited to impart skills as well as knowledge. Several of them included the suggestion that the most suitable forum for instruction in journalism might be the Workers Educational Authority. Others recommended a general arts degrees followed by specialised training (the most frequently counsel offered today by those who accept that journalists should be appropriately educated as well as trained) but were not inclined to provide such an award themselves. Boyd-Barrett found this typical of the resistance in British universities to offering vocational training on academic campuses (1970:193). Hunter made a harsher judgment:

the kind of journalism we have today is, to some extent, the result of the inability of academics, over the past century, to respond positively to requests from journalists to help educate them for their professional role (1996:4).

The NUJ also proposed that the LU diploma be made available to external students. The university was ready to offer an external diploma but not one that would rank with the internal one. It remained equivocal about the award, even though the course became a welcome source of income. More

than 100 students enrolled each year until the outbreak of World War Two, against the 30 originally predicted by the Department of Education. A significant number of the places were sponsored by the NS and some national newspapers offered scholarships.² The curriculum underwent frequent modification but not until 1926 were any of the seven prescribed examinations concerned with practical journalism and not until 1931, when Tom Clarke, a former news editor of the *Daily Mail*, took it over did the course come under the direction of a seasoned journalist.

Editors were suspicious of the LU diplomates; even pitying. Linton Andrews wrote of the 'bitter hearts among those who spent two hard years on learning to be journalists without ever getting the humblest job in a newspaper office'. How much better it would be, he mused, if this kind of training could be given 'to those able to make ready use of it' (1962:72). His own view of what was required to be an effective journalist would have delighted a 1990s examiner for today's resolutely 'trade'-orientated NCTJ:

a certain speed in shorthand, a habit of accuracy, a wholesome and knowledgeable fear of libel and of contempt of court and acquaintance with local council, magistrates' court, county court and other procedure (1962:71).

In 1939 the CIOJ offered a scholarship to the diploma course but there were no applicants. Teaching was suspended at the outbreak of World War Two and never resumed. Cattanach quoted Hopkinson as saying that the diploma course had 'failed to make any impact on journalism in this country' (10-11). Hunter, who did give the CIOJ credit for inspiring the course, argued that the institute also deserved much of the blame for its failure.

In their search for status for their profession the members of the Institute of Journalists sought the respectability accruing from academic accreditation without foreseeing the possible consequences of their initiative. By submitting to the university's insistence on the purely

¹ Quoted in Hunter 1982:383.

² Course fee of £2200, estimated by Hunter as worth £53,000 in the 1990s.

academic approach to their problem, with no department to organise the teaching, the journalists perpetrated a basic, craven mistake from which the Diploma never really recovered (1982:165).

Private enterprise

Beyond any genuine interest they may have had during this period in exploring the possibilities of external career preparation and entry, both journalist organisations had another factor to consider. The ILO report noted the extent to which journalists in Britain had become concerned by ‘private schools which are prepared to give a rapid veneer of journalism to any person of intelligence no matter who he may be’ (1928:23). The NUJ warned its members about such ‘private schools of journalism, which are multiplying in England, throwing many amateurs on labour market and contributing to lowering conditions of employment’.¹

One of these was an English emulator of Detroit’s Martha Rayne, one Florence Low, who in 1910 opened a Salon and School for Journalism in Mayfair to cater for women.² But the most prominent private establishment was Anderson’s London School of Journalism which had flourished (and continued to into the 1990s), applying a technique of intensified tuition it called ‘guided learning’: practical instruction from experienced journalists supplemented by immediate feedback, a method favoured by most instructors in practical journalism. Many graduates coming into journalism in the years between the world wars were ‘finished’ at the LSJ. As the number of British universities expanded, the Oxbridge factor declined proportionately. Despite widespread belief that certain media establishments—*The Times*, the *Financial Times*, the BBC—are dominated by the products of Cambridge or Oxford, as will be seen in Chapter 8, no overall prevalence of graduates from those universities is reflected in the survey data from this study.

¹ *The Journalist* June 1927, vol X, no.6

² *Nineteenth Century*, February 1908.

Summary conclusions

This examination of early developments in the formation of journalists suggests several persuasive inferences about the ways in which they had come to regard themselves at different times before the beginning of fieldwork for the study. It also identifies the roots of the enduring polarisation between the models of on-the-job 'trade' learning and pre-entry 'professional' preparation.

It seems evident that whether they preferred membership of either organisation, many journalists wished to raise their standards of knowledge as well as competence. Employers were uninterested in helping them do this.

It seems unfair to blame the institute specifically for the LU fiasco. The NUJ had been no more effective in establishing standards for the course or otherwise supporting it. Either way, however, the failure of the diploma course to devise and deliver a credible mix of practical and academic subjects could only have helped to lock in the conviction among established journalists that theirs was an occupation that must be learned by experience and then only by pre-selected initiates.

In considering whether LU ought to have responded more imaginatively to the task of training as well as educating aspiring journalists, it must be remembered that outside the handful of great universities, academics of the 1920s and 1930s were, in themselves, a new and hastily expanded profession which might have been sensitive to any precipitate divergence from traditional learning patterns.

It can also be seen that

—Apart from the lengthy stasis between world wars, for most of the twentieth century modern journalism was characterised by technological upheaval and occupational 'churn'.

—The more their occupation expands numerically, the less likely journalists are to enhance their employment prospects and earnings.

—Class and status, if only by association, have always been of concern to a number of journalists as exemplified in the trade-profession dichotomy.

—Neither of the principal forms of organisation with which journalists experimented provided a sustainable means of ensuring suitable rewards and conditions.

Chapter 5

Selection, training, qualifications

Those who do not complete a pre-entry course, despite the investment required, are unlikely to be properly trained once they start work.—Colin Bourne, national officer, regional newspapers, NUJ.¹

The trouble with so many who have 'made it' in journalism is that so many of them have undergone no training whatever. I fall into this category myself...many indeed seem to regard any kind of training as the enemy of journalism...if they didn't need it, it would diminish them if they admitted anybody else did (...) worst are those small regional papers with dinosaur editors, who still talk about hiring 16-year-olds off the council estates as long as they can ride a bike.—Professor Peter Cole, University of Central Lancashire.¹

Section 1. Journalists wanted

Although it might not be possible to define with statistical precision the consolidated characteristics of pre-World War Two journalists, the point at which the present day representative of the occupation could be seen emerging is evident. By the 1950s there was a shortage of trained—or at any rate experienced—journalists, which Strick attributed to the growth of the public relations industry and the setting up of the Government Information Service (a different reading of the significance of these institutions from that of Smith), whose regular hours and Civil Service perquisites had tempted some veterans away from the hurly-burly of the newsroom.

This sellers' market ensured that the expansion of radio and television news in the 1960s would create an eldorado for many ambitious and

¹ UKPG 13.3.1995:19.

motivated graduates emerging from the expanded postwar tertiary education programme. Those who displayed a natural flair for broadcasting or who might be wanting to spend only a short time in print before looking for a career in electronic journalism were often able to get jobs without any formality. Partly as a result of this influx, which was encouraged by a modest government subsidy to employers ready to offer careers to graduates, the number of national newspaper journalists employed in London alone increased between 1964 and 1969 by 15.1 per cent to 2480 and the number of regional recruits by 43.5 per cent from 340 to 607 (PIB 1969:Table 1; Cmnd 6680, Appendix H, Table 1). The increase in the number of women in journalism dates from this era as does the inexorable if spasmodic displacement of occupational preparation from one site to another.

Mature journalists at the mid-century (who included a small proportion of women) would have come to their jobs in a variety of ways. Even before the war it had been a truism that national newspapers had difficulty getting trained journalists and that provincial newspapers had difficulty getting journalists trained. The local and regional press, the principal breeding ground, clung to the industrial model and the system that, largely under NUJ guidance, had been settled into after World War One by which a journalist was expected to become apprenticed in the provinces and steadily work his or (far less frequently) her way towards London, where the national press was headquartered. In reality, this had never been more than an ideal. Employers, of course, remained at liberty to take on anyone they wished irrespective of whether a journalist might have completed indentures or not—the fundamental barrier to professional status seized upon by Carr and Wilson.

The opposed views and objectives of the CIOJ and the NUJ would have been sufficient to ensure continuing disagreement over who might become a journalist and how, but confusion over standards of entry had been compounded by harsh employment conditions during the 1930s and the organisational turmoil of the war and its aftermath. Pre-war agreements in

¹ *BJR* 7:2 1996

the provinces with the NS on minimum salaries and the ratio of juniors to seniors were regularly breached because they were based on age. Applying ageist policy to the opposite end of the scale from that used in the 1970s, even scrupulous employers of the pre-war period were tempted to keep their reporters as young as possible, preferring not to have to take on anyone over 17 to train (Strick 1954: 447). Although not a deliberate tactic, such a policy closed off this avenue of entry to those who would not graduate from university until they were several years older.

During and immediately after World War Two, however, a large number of men and women, many of them conspicuously talented, at least for the tasks they performed, became established as journalists (and subsequently members of either the NUJ or the CIOJ) without the benefit of any formal training. This was particularly true of the national press, which had always been regarded as the apex of a journalist's career in terms of both status and income, and of the BBC, then the only broadcaster.

Social progress

Class and status in relation to journalists are to be dealt with extensively in Chapter 8 but they are introduced here to provide a perspective on some of the issues raised below. At the mid-point of the twentieth century journalists had made some slight progress up the social scale from their setback at the beginning of the commercial era of newspapers, becoming bracketed in social 'prestige' just above chefs, newsagents and tobacconists, insurance salesmen; just below farmers, nonconformist ministers and works managers. Their equivalents were elementary schoolteachers, commercial travellers, master builders.¹

Shifts in demography and social perceptions had made the triadic model obsolete. Despite the egalitarian mood of wartime legend, much social research of the late 1940s and 1950s had come to be guided by the binary notion of 'us and them': 67 per cent of Britons choosing to describe themselves as working class and only 29 per cent as middle class. This polarisation might have been simplistic, but to the researchers who

¹ British Journal of Sociology, Vol 1, No.1, March 1950

gathered the data it appeared to have a profound hold on the perceptions of class in British society which demonstrated the ‘psychological validity of treating social stratification in terms of two main classes’ (Kahan, Butler, Stokes 1966:124-130). It is a safe assumption that most of the established journalists of the period, certainly those who identified with the NUJ, would have seen themselves—or have been seen by their colleagues—as belonging to the larger working-class group.

The middle of the century provides a useful reference point from which to gauge the changing of that impression. Before the twentieth century was out, 70 per cent of newspaper trainees who were asked by the Guild of Editors to classify themselves, chose ‘middle-class’ as a designation, which led to some editors aligning themselves, by instinct rather than reason, with the views of those scholars referred to in Chapter 1 who wondered if rising educational standards would eventually elevate journalists, culturally speaking, above their readers. ‘If we are not careful, we are going to have staffs dominated by classes of entrants who have little in common with the people they are writing about’, said the chairman of the GE survey, Sean Dooley. This stance, embodied in the policies of the NCTJ and NS and their supporters, underlies the issue raised by Sparks and others: the questionable contention that for journalism to be effective its product needs to be delivered by people of the same background as those who receive it. It must be evident from past chapters that for many years journalists were producing newspapers for readers who were, by most criteria, their socio-economic superiors.

Taking sides

A wave of general post-war optimism, aided by the 1944 Education Act, stimulated interest in preparation for journalism anew, but with a lack of focus that must have been by then entirely predictable. The Ministry of Labour underwrote a three-part correspondence course (reporting, sub-editing, law) for journalists being demobilised from the armed forces, which was administered by Ruskin College, Oxford. Of 713 who registered for the course only 61 completed the requirements. London

University sought to revive its journalism diploma but the proposal confounded the journalist organisations and employers alike. The university wanted the course subsidised by the newspaper industry; the industry refused.

The NPA reiterated the policy it has largely adhered to ever since: the only journalists needed by national newspapers were those who were already fully competent and experienced. In short, those who had already been trained elsewhere. National newspapers—and for that matter the BBC—had never had to provide any but the most limited training; even now the journalists those organisations employ have, in the main, been shaped at the expense of employers further ‘downstream’.

Boyd-Barrett had no doubt that far from intending to encourage any idea of professional autonomy—or, indeed, effective journalism—training schemes and apprenticeships were invariably devised from the point of view of managerial advantage. The value to those employers of a lengthy indenture period during which trainees provided cheap labour is as evident as the socialisation provided is reassuring (McBarnet 185). Provincial newspapers eagerly exploited the ability of trainees to, in effect, pay for their own preparation by accepting low starting wages (as will be demonstrated in Chapter 7). As the background of new entrants became more prosperous, cheap labour remained an important consideration, which Dooley acknowledged by recognising the ‘correlation between low pay and the class of entrant who can subsidise their training’.

The issues were never publicly defined, but soon after the end of World War Two sides began to form for an ideological stand-off that pitted training *in* against education *for* journalism which, occasionally refreshed by ill-timed government intervention, was to last beyond the end of the remaining half-century. Between 1944 and 1946 the NUJ and the CIOs held desultory discussions with the NS about a vocational training scheme. Despite its pre-war support for the LU diploma, the NS, as it was soon to emphasise, came to oppose any suggestion of further or higher education as a preparation for journalism and was interested only in practical training.

In the early skirmishes the NUJ had fought harder than the institute in favour of education, at least as represented by the diploma; but at this stage those supporting that view seemed to have lost heart. The talks were hampered by NUJ insistence that the union should have a voice in the selection of recruits; but even when that attempt at entry control was defeated the NS refused to accept union plans prescribing a three-year apprenticeship for entrants of A-level standard or two years for graduates. Indignant at the employers' vacillation over a proposal that Cattenach judged to be 'remarkably clear-sighted', the union prepared a report of 'these protracted proceedings' for the first Royal Commission on the Press which assembled in 1947.

The Commission was appointed by a Labour government, partly at NUJ instigation, to investigate monopolistic tendencies in press ownership and the possibility of news being distorted or suppressed. In effect, it absolved the industry of monopolisation and news manipulation but it also paid close attention to a recommendation the NUJ put before it for 'the setting up by proprietors and journalists of a joint scheme for the training of apprentice journalists'. The commissioners heard from all the parties concerned—or that ought to have been concerned—with training and produced a report that in Cattenach's view was enlightened, far-sighted, innovative and largely wasted effort (22).

The commissioners went a good deal further in supporting the case for an educated corps of journalists than either the journalist organisations or employers would have preferred. It recommended the formation of a General Council of the Press to take responsibility for, among other matters, the education and training of journalists, research, and the supply of information of public interest. (Some members wanted it to be called an 'Institute of the Press' because they thought that would sound 'unalarmed'.) The commission left no doubt that it intended the council to function as a supervisory body for

all engaged in the profession [there were repeated references to the profession of journalism]—that is, in the editorial production of newspapers—whether as directors, editors or other journalists; and to further the efficiency

of the profession and the well-being of those who practise it; to improve the methods of recruitment, education and training for the profession... (RCP 1947, Document 3A, par 684).

The Press Council that was subsequently set up in 1953 was a feeble institution from the beginning, ignoring most of the objectives proposed for it, apart from hearing complaints from the public; functioning for its first 10 years, in one authoritative view, as 'little more than a public relations agency for proprietors' (Curran and Seaton 1991: 295).

Nevertheless, fears that a government which had appointed the commission might be ready to take its own steps to impose training standards did move some publishers to act. In 1949 Kemsley Newspapers, a chain of provincial and national titles, launched the Kemsley Editorial Plan, which organised technical training in its own offices and sponsored staff to attend university extension lectures in appropriate subjects. Kemsley also encouraged the setting up of a course at Cardiff Technical College that became an early model for the day-release and block-release courses which were to spread throughout Britain in the 1950s.

Polytechnic

Academic interest in journalism re-emerged. In 1949 the Polytechnic of Central London was asked by the Foreign Office to provide a one-year course in diplomatic practice for students from Commonwealth countries that were then approaching independence. The polytechnic considered adapting parts of that curriculum for journalists and in the process devised short courses for graduate entrants to journalism who were being fitfully recruited by some nationals.

Although the new Press Council showed no enthusiasm for encouraging the 'sound education' that the Royal Commission had thought was essential to journalists it did bring about the 'novel situation' of getting the rival journalist organisations to sit at the same table to discuss preparation and entry (Strick 223). Proposals emerged from these meetings for correspondence courses—even one for an NUJ diploma—which might be

sponsored by Ruskin College, the NS or the Oxford and Cambridge Joint Examinations Board.

It was, at this stage clear to all that the NS was implacably opposed to any requirements in shaping journalists other than its own extremely limited 'trade' values of shorthand, local government and enough knowledge of law to protect employers from the consequences of libel and contempt of court. The resuscitated diploma proposition was attacked by the NS and from within the union itself, where much of the resistance appeared to be due simply to fear of competition from the better-educated. A delegate from the Trade and Periodical Branch proclaimed during an NUJ debate on the diploma proposal that he had never passed an examination in his life and the prospect of such an innovation posed a threat to his livelihood. The union had enough to do, he protested, without examining 'the brain content' of its members (Cattenach 15).

The NS and the Guild of British Newspaper Editors (to be absorbed in the GE) eventually put forward a proposal for a national training scheme which was effectively the one envisioned by the NUJ in 1946 but from which union thinking had by then moved on. It was to be administered by a National Council for the Training and Education of Junior Journalists (NCTEJJ) which was duly formed with Howard Strick as its first executive officer. This body quickly became noted for 'confrontational meetings of 20 or more delegates from warring employer and employee factions'. The improbability of its ever being able to agree on anything constructive can be seen from its make-up. As well as delegates from the two journalist organisations there were representatives from the GBNE, the NPA, the NS and their Scottish equivalents. Additional non-voting participation was granted to the National Association of Further and Higher Education, the Independent Television Organisation, the BBC, Irish representatives, one of Her Majesty's Inspectors of Education and the principal of a college of further education.

The scheme on which the council's disparate sponsors finally agreed was firmly founded on the principle over which the NS had fixed its banner of exclusively *post*-entry training. The requirements for the National

Certificate of Proficiency (NCP) that was envisioned were reduced to the sternly practical: English, Law, Public Administration, shorthand and typing—much the same instruction *in* journalism that the NCTEJJ's successor, the NCTJ continued to require in the year 2000.

Strick was a former civil servant whose career had been devoted to training other civil servants, most recently at the Treasury. There is much to question in his attitude to journalists and journalism but there can be little doubt that his considerable diplomatic and managerial abilities ensured that the training scheme became established in the face of indifference from employers, suspicion on the part of many editors and much resentment from journalists. Juniors resented the extramural demands of day release and block release to study shorthand and law; seniors resented having to take over the juniors' work in their absence.

The relationship of the NCTEJJ with the NS was clientist. NS members (who were also the employers of most of the editors in the GE) were to finance the training council, whether by levies or voluntary payment, and that fact alone gave the NS leverage. The NUJ fought to retain the diploma principle and Clause Four of the NCTEJJ founding document specifically mentioned the desirability of providing facilities for further education in addition to those for vocational training (Pitt Robbins 1956). But the union's educational ideas had to be 'severely pruned' before the NS would accept them.

Essentially, the NCTEJJ scheme was structured around an apprenticeship spread over five years: six months probation, three years basic training after which the examination for an NCP could be taken, then 18 months to gain a diploma by means of a dissertation. Candidates were to be nominated by the editor who wished to employ them. They needed three O levels, one in English (except in the case of a graduate) and another in English Literature unless an alternative was approved—by the editor. Articles bound the trainee to follow the curriculum and the employer to provide training in accordance with NCTEJJ requirements. Thus, graduate applicants would be faced with, including their completed studies, a period of qualification as long as that for medicine.

Strick quickly demonstrated his loyalty to NS values by emphasising the two principles that would distance the scheme even further from any notion of *pre*-entry preparation that might be independent of employers and their proxies. Only individual editors would be able to decide which applicants were likely to make an employable journalist, he pledged. And it would always be the newspaper office rather than the lecture room where the 'indefinable and imponderable mystique' of journalism could effectively be developed (1957:156).

Although Strick thus placed his efforts squarely behind the 'training' school of thought, his personal views were at odds with the conviction widespread among his patrons and associates, most of whom believed that because editors in the remote past had 'come up the hard way' a university education somehow implied 'a softness of character and an unrealism of thought which a journalist cannot afford to have'. Strick thought such opinions absurd.

In fact, anyone of even average intelligence and personality nowadays, would only need to 'come up the hard way' as a self-made, self-educated man out of perversity or unusual bad fortune (1957: 499).

To begin with, participation in the national training scheme was voluntary on the part of employers and employed, although there was a powerful incentive in addition to any career ambition for young journalists to sign on. Enrolment was recognised by the Ministry of Labour and National service as grounds for deferment from conscription that was in force at that time into the armed services or the coal mines (Cattenach 38).

The first examination for the NCP was held in 1954 for junior journalists who had already been in work when the scheme began. Candidates had to write a news story against the clock from council minutes or a handout; a report of a 15-minute speech delivered live; complete a question paper on the work of a reporter and another on current affairs, arts, and sport. Of the 122 reporters who sat 87 passed. Applications for diplomas were also considered but only two were awarded. In 1955 'Education' and Junior' were dropped from the council's title and it became the NCTJ, proof to

Hunter at least that the provincial newspaper industry 'did not want education but training' (336). It was to be another 20 years before the NCTJ explained that the notion of further education embodied in its mission statement was

not designed to give a wide or profound education but to provide trainees with bodies of knowledge on matters connected with their work as journalists (NCTJ 1975:32).

The NCTJ scheme had been running for nine years before an agreement was reached between the journalist organisations and the NS that made training in the regional press obligatory for every newspaper journalist under 24. Employers were obliged to provide training during working hours in accordance with NCTJ requirements: day and block release courses. A 17-year-old trainee would be paid £6 a week, plus 10 shillings if they had five or more O-levels. There was to be a six-month probationary period followed by three years of indentures. The NPC was to be awarded on the basis of the existing examinations. The agreement preserved the diploma originally so valued by the NUJ to be granted, post NPC, on the basis of a dissertation. It was a token victory. The minor faction of the union that backed that particular objective had lost interest in it and the diploma was soon to be abandoned.

Formalised training might well be made obligatory but still no editor was obliged to consider the outcome of it—although many did in the form of bonuses for success in achieving a certificate and sacking for failure.¹ In the light of its subsequent near-sanctification in the minds of editors who regarded themselves as apprentice-masters it is instructive to note that the NPC was neither universally acclaimed nor widely coveted—then or later. The participation rate fluctuated, the drop-out rate was high; the failure rate even higher. In 1959 Strick insisted that in the three previous years 80 per cent of beginners were being enrolled for the NCE examination but it is evident that the proportion sitting or passing for the certificate was far lower. In the 1962 NCE examinations one third of candidates failed the

¹ A PPITB survey found that the majority of participating employers *preferred* their young journalists to have a certificate but only two per cent would insist upon it.

interview and copy producing test, an outcome that Strick's successor, John Dodge, provincial journalist (and Cambridge graduate) called a 'grave indictment'.

Poor education

In the earliest days of the NCTJ the low participation and poor results could be partly explained by the fact that with journalists in high demand jobs were easily come by without certificates and that the participation of colleges was disorganised and inconvenient for working journalists (Cattanach 38, Evans 40). But by 1962 there were 40 day-release centres taking in NCTJ trainees and their deficiencies were conspicuous. Only gradually did it seem to dawn on those defending the training side of the debate that the difficulty many candidates had with the examinations might lie in the relatively low standard of education that employers were ready to accept. When Linton Andrews became chairman of the NCTJ and discovered that beginners with A levels performed twice as well in proficiency tests as those without he was 'amazed'. The subversive thought occurred to him that his colleagues could be mistaken in their seemingly unshakeable conviction that there must be 'bright boys' somewhere in society's lower echelons who would make crack reporters if only they could master their own language. In an echo of Strick a few years earlier, Andrews wondered if the 'traditionalists' were

not being out of date in supposing that today's Edgar Wallaces are forced to leave school too soon and take the humblest employment as they did a generation ago (81).

Boyd-Barrett, too, took note of the illusion pursued by many editors, particularly in the provinces, who preferred to look back on a time when 'talent too often failed to coincide with educational qualifications'. Summarising the misgivings shared by Strick the rigorous economist and Andrews the staunch pillar of the old editorial school, he questioned that

in the mid-1970s, with the rapid expansion of opportunity in education for all classes, it was less likely that talented people would ignore or fail to take advantage of available education (1980:322).

In an effort to remedy matters Dodge carried through an idea of Strick's by launching a residential one-year preparatory course for school leavers at Harlow Technical College. Applicants had to have two A levels—an entry requirement that the third Royal Commission on the Press would advocate 10 years later—and be no older than 19, which effectively eliminated graduates. Those finishing this one-year course would still be expected to complete two and a quarter years of indentures if and when they got jobs and the NCTJ had been able to insist that when the entrants had completed their apprenticeship they must still pass a 'pre-qualifying examination' before being entitled to sit the proficiency test.

Despite the agonisingly contrived conditions of the Harlow residential scheme, it represented the first departure endorsed by the NUJ from the rigid principle that training be reserved for those who had already been chosen as trainees by established journalists. This did not, however, mean a lessening of the pervasive socialisation in accepted occupational values inherent in the apprenticeship system. Every organisation involved with the NCTJ had demanded some sort of concession to the 'trade' view that embodied the preoccupation with on-the-job conditioning that for different reasons all shared. The NUJ was persuaded to agree to the Harlow scheme only by an assurance that it would be represented on the NCTJ panel which selected candidates and the NS had given an undertaking that the union would be consulted on the 'supply of labour', a token nod in the direction of controlled entry. Nevertheless, it was evident that introducing journalism training into colleges 'overturned the belief held by so many for so long—despite a great deal of evidence to the contrary—that the newspaper office was the only possible venue for imparting knowledge of the journalist's trade' (Cattanach 58). The Harlow course was to be replicated in at least a dozen colleges of further and higher education over the next 20 years.¹

1

Darlington
Preston
Wolverhampton
Sheffield
Harlow
Portsmouth

Cardiff College
Wednesbury (photographers)
Sheffield
Bournemouth
Teeside
Southampton Institute of Higher Education

Graduates down

NCTJ records omit many details that would be helpful to a study of this kind, such as the age and sex of the earliest applicants. The records cover only England and Wales and neither they nor those of the Scottish Council are complete for all years. In any case, they include only those trainees who registered for examinations and whether they passed or failed. However, in 1956—exactly 40 years before the fieldwork period for this study—when the annual intake of

Table 7. 1955-56 trainee intake (not only NCTEJJ and NCTJ enrolment) 1960-61

%	1955-56	1960-61
Graduates	9.5	6.0
A levels only	75.5	12.0
O levels only (Minimum 3)	12.5	70.0
None	2.5	12.0
	100.0	100.0

newspaper trainees was estimated at 300, Strick made a tabulation in which it is possible to see a pattern of educational background. By 1960 the number of entrants had risen to 325. The proportion of graduates decreased during that five-year period but that of candidates with *no educational qualifications at all* increased.

A possible explanation for the discrepancy is that the NUJ had begun its campaign to keep beginners in the provinces for lengthy periods had begun and that this temporarily discouraged many better qualified aspirants. When the NCTJ supplied a table of entrants in to regional newspaper journalism to the McGregor Commission, it could be seen that the proportion of graduates rose more or less steadily from 13 per cent in 1964 to 25 per cent in 1977 while the proportion with fewer than five O levels declined over the same period from 32 per cent to one per cent (although that figure rose to five percent in 1982/83).

Shortly afterwards the NUJ and the CIOs made their greatest effort towards common cause to bargain with employers. By the mid-1960s this coalition, overwhelmingly dominated by the NUJ, achieved, in the

sympathetic atmosphere of successive Labour governments, a virtual closed shop. Claiming control over the supply of the labour it represented comparable to that exerted by the printing trades, with which it continued to see a natural affinity, the NUJ/CIoS was able to insist that *all* beginners spend a certain amount of time at specified levels of practice and pass proficiency tests. This stricture was intended to make sure that no entrant escaped the obligation of a formal apprenticeship. Under a 1965 NPA-NUJ/CIoS agreement even the most able of graduates were compelled to spend two and a half years working in the provinces before they could be employed in London. These strictures applied even to trainees, graduates or not, emerging from courses run by employer groups, the BBC included. There was also a ban in principle on the regular use of non-member contributors to newspapers. Only 'trained, full-time and committed' journalists, it was said by the NUJ enforcers, were qualified to write for newspapers, a claim that Charles Wintour, editor of the *Evening Standard* at that time, called 'extraordinary and mean-minded' (1972: 81).

For a time these obstructions impeded the absorption of graduates into newspaper journalism and discouraged many young regional journalists who were impatient to achieve national status. It also irritated editors who considered that they should be able to hire or employ whoever they considered best suited to the work they wanted done. Among those who attacked the NUJ policy was David Astor, then editor of *The Observer*, a publication particularly dependent on talented 'amateurs' and journalistically able specialists. The kind of preparation being wished upon him by the NUJ, said Astor, was neither necessary nor sufficient for the kind of journalists his paper wished to employ. 'To put it quite simply, most of our best people didn't have this training'. Astor argued that 'as a general principle' journalism was a creative or semi-artistic occupation, with important political aspects. He opposed any measure that would keep 'gifted people' from contributing to it. Many *Observer* staff journalists—who might be thought to have a vested interest in excluding 'outsiders'—supported Astor, motivated by a consideration that, as will be seen, implicitly remains valid for the majority of journalists today: the next step

on from restricted entry to journalism could be some form of licence to practise (Whitehorn, undated:7).

Sidelined

The intervention of the (Labour) government at this time did nothing to advance the recommendations that the first Royal Commission had made in regard to preparation for journalism. The Industrial Training Act of 1964 set up Industrial Training Boards for various industries and the NCTJ applied to the Ministry of Labour for recognition as an official training body. The application was rejected and in 1968 the Printing and Publishing Industries Training Board (PPITB) came into being, charged with supervising training in the entire printing and publishing area. It was to be supported by payroll levies on the various businesses concerned. Its main interest lay with the manufacturing side of the print industry. Journalists were estimated to number fewer than 20,000 out of a total of 400,000 employees affected.

The PPITB, on which the NUJ was given a seat, briskly made clear that even if it had reservations about the NCTJ and its functions it too agreed with the policy of training rather than education. Dodge resigned and the NCTJ surrendered most of its functions to the PPITB. The NCTJ was permitted to remain in existence as an examination body and registry and to be responsible for the selection of pre-entry students. It was to receive a subsidy of £375 a year per student.

The NCTJ never regained the authority it lost in being sidelined by the PPITB nor, subsequently, the financial security that came from the PPITB handouts. These ended when the PPITB was dissolved in 1982 and the NCTJ was thereafter sustained only by an agreement through the NS that publishers would pay it an annual charge according to the number of journalists they employed. This commitment was frequently not honoured and the NCTJ became dependent on fees for the registration of trainees, the administration of the proficiency tests and short training courses which it offered to practising journalists. In this fashion it limped along until

1992 when it was relaunched as an training and examining body dependent on fees and the largesse of the NS.

Although the plight in which it found itself was not directly of its own making, the NCTJ, throughout its 16 years of existence before the PPITB elbowed it aside, had been, in Parry's words, 'far from an exemplary training body' (1988:60). The only real impact it had made was in achieving (via the NUJ) the 1961 agreement with newspaper employers that training should be obligatory and even that, in view of the extent to which the principle was ignored in practice, must be regarded as a hollow victory.

In spite of NPA indifference to training, Dodge's vision of a residential college provided the chairman of the association (which by then had become the Newspaper *Publishers* Association) at the time the idea was being developed, with an inspiration. Cecil Harmsworth King, who was also chairman of the International Publishing Corporation, owners of Daily Mirror Newspapers and many periodicals, moved unilaterally to launch an ambitious project as an alternative that the government would permit to paying the training subsidy the PPITB had imposed on employers. The Mirror Group Newspapers Training Scheme came into operation in 1966 and ran until 1983.

Section 2. The Plymouth Brethren

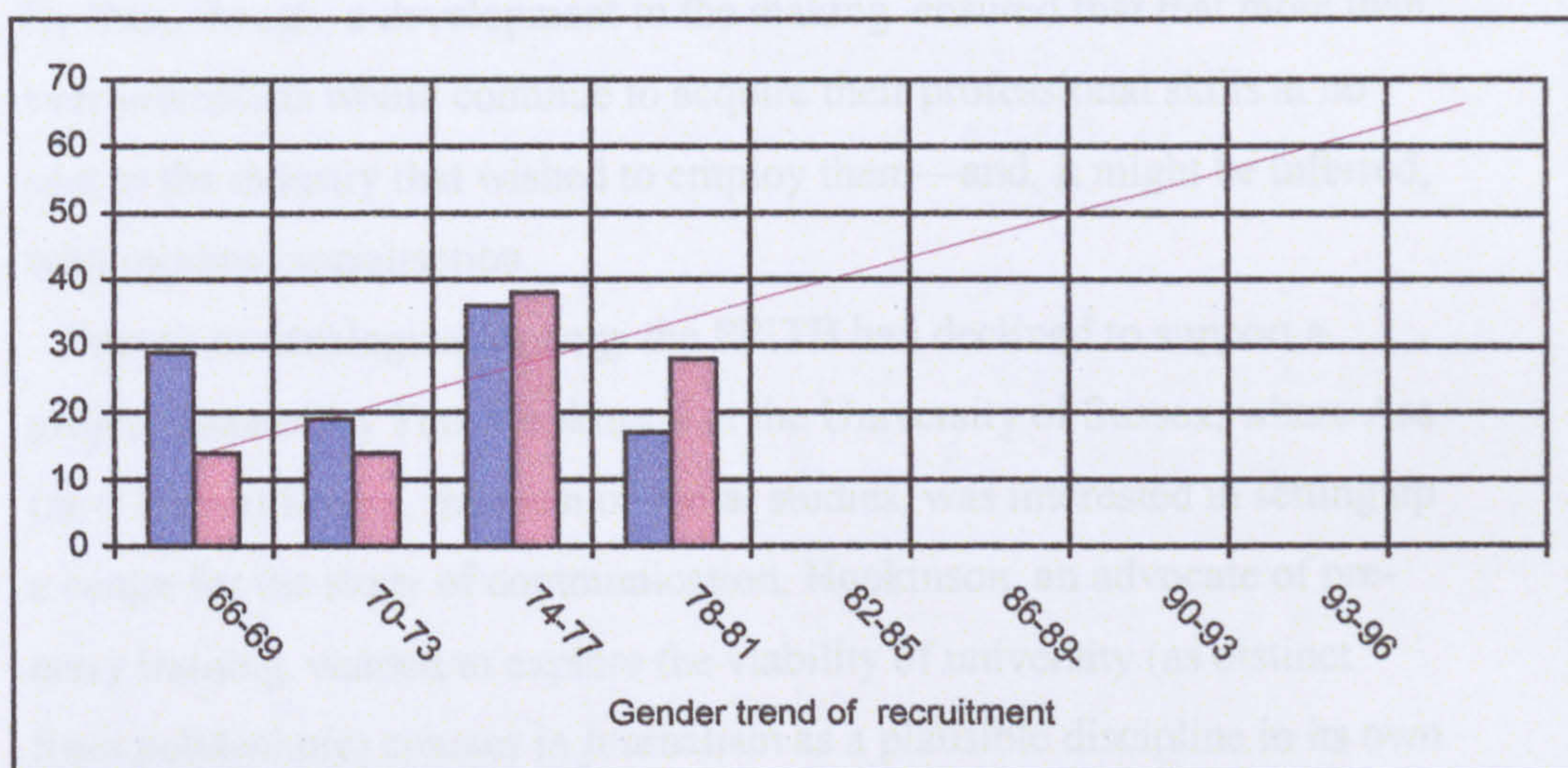
The MGN scheme recruited about 30 trainees a year. The gender ratio varied from year to year but overall it was 61.3 per cent male and 38.7 per cent female. The rate at which women were enrolled was slightly faster than that observable within the general journalist population, as the trend line in Chart 1 shows.

At first, half of each intake were graduates and half A-level school leavers but as the literacy level of applicants began to fall in the wake of the comprehensive school reforms only graduates were recruited.¹ The 19-month course incorporated the NCTJ curriculum and its graduates sat the

¹ Wynford Hicks, senior lecturer in journalism at City University, claimed the collapse of traditional English teaching in schools contributed to the failure of working class youth and ethnic groups to obtain training and jobs (*The Times* 8.2.95:23).

NCE examination. The Plymouth Brethren, as these men and women became known from the scheme's location in Devon and Cornwall, where it produced local newspapers, constitute a group of high achievers who are now sprinkled through every sector of journalism. Not all of them were expected to get jobs on Mirror Group titles but 63 per cent of the total intake did. The survey, which allowed the views of this professionally homogenous group to be incorporated in the study, showed 50 per cent of Brethren working in print journalism, 13 per cent in some form of electronic journalism, 16 per cent outside journalism altogether. Twenty-one per cent of them worked casually or as freelances.

Chart 1. MGN recruits by gender and cohort years.



The narrow NS/NCTJ view of training, and dissatisfaction with the PPITB-endorsed college courses, persuaded several other large publishing groups to follow the MGN lead and start their own training operations, although not on such a grand scale. The old Kemsley scheme was relaunched by Thomson Regional Newspapers with centres at Cardiff and Newcastle. However, the interest in training aroused by these activities did not hold the attention of the NUJ or the CIOJ for long. The journalist organisations became less concerned with standards of practice than in achieving control of the rising and diversifying journalist population, a

challenge that expanding employment opportunities and Thatcherite labour legislation ensured could not be met.

In 1970 the original NCTJ entry requirement of three O levels, was raised to five. By 1977 70 per cent of recruits had at least one A level and 25 per cent were graduates (Jay 1977; Boyd-Barrett 1980:317). This increase in the educational standard of applicants led to the indenture period being reduced to two years for graduates and two and a half years for a trainee with two A levels. The reality of educational demography had begun to erode employer resistance, embodied in the NS, to seeing the educational calibre of trainees raised.

Universities

By then, though, a development in the making ensured that that more than ever journalists would continue to acquire their professional skills at no cost to the industry that wished to employ them—and, it might be inferred, with minimal socialisation.

True to its ideological strategy the PPITB had declined to support a project planned by Tom Hopkinson at the University of Sussex, where Asa (now Baron) Briggs, the dean of social studies, was interested in setting up a centre for the study of communication. Hopkinson, an advocate of pre-entry training, wanted to explore the viability of university (as distinct from polytechnic) courses in journalism as a plausible discipline in its own right. This decision moved the *UK Press Gazette*¹ to reflect that

there are a number of newspapermen who regard any form of university training with abhorrence, just as there are many academics who regarded newspapers with contempt...the suspicion seems to be that the Training Board has fallen under the spell of those who abhor.²

The NCTJ had already shown itself aggressive in impeding any proposals that departed from the purely vocational. In 1967 Dodge had tried to insist that the somewhat perfunctory journalism courses that had continued to be offered at the Central London Polytechnic include practical instruction to

¹ Its title at the time

² 22.9.69: 12

NCTJ standards rather than ‘elitist training or education’. The course director, Richard Boston, had been pursuing an education *for* policy, arguing that it was more important to provide the background knowledge essential to enlightened journalism. Practical training could be left to the workplace: ‘The well-educated individual can generally master such techniques in a fraction of the time required by a secondary school leaver’ (Cattenach 63). Rather than surrender academic autonomy over course content to the NCTJ the Polytechnic abolished the courses.

Now, however, its ties to the NCTJ loosened, the NUJ’s earlier interest in the potential of university preparation was stimulated by a new education officer, George Viner. The union provided £10,000 for a two-year fellowship at the University of Sussex so that Hopkinson could develop a postgraduate diploma in Journalism. The course that Hopkinson envisioned for Sussex, a one-year diploma, was eventually to be inaugurated at University College, Cardiff (UCC) in 1970, not without difficulty because some subjects had to be provided from the longer, relatively slow-paced undergraduate curriculum. One reason Hopkinson was not enthusiastic about a bachelor level degree in journalism was because the rigidity of academic time-tables could make it difficult for journalistic assignments to be integrated with other subjects. Also, he feared a BA in Journalism would be too limiting should a graduate subsequently want to change his or her mind about a career. In any case, Hopkinson believed that journalism would benefit from practitioners who had been trained in a variety of disciplines, a notion whose currency will be demonstrated in Chapter 7

The NCTJ agreed to support the Cardiff course, accepting at first that it could not expect to play a part in selecting students for an academic institution nor in devising a curriculum. The college would set and mark its own examinations. External examiners would be practitioners. The final examination would subsume the NCTJ preliminary examinations, qualifying those diplomates who found jobs for a reduction in their indenture period. This arrangement continued amicably, even after the diploma studies were bifurcated to accommodate broadcast students as

well as those preparing for print, until 1984 when, without prior consultation, the NCTJ moved to make its own curricula and examinations mandatory. The university resisted but the NCTJ persisted until 1987 when it also began to demand that it be allowed to monitor the content and marking of diploma examinations in law and public administration, approve the appointment of external examiners and be given a place on examination boards. Similar demands were made at City University, London (CU), which had begun its postgraduate diploma in 1978. UCC compromised but CU renounced its NCTJ connection.

Section 3. Periodicals and broadcasting

The third Royal Commission on the Press was set up in 1974 and reported to Parliament in 1975 and 1977. Its brief had been to report on the economic state and structure of national news media and on editorial standards. It is frequently referred to as the McGregor Commission after the late Professor Ross McGregor (subsequently chairman of the Press Council) who succeeded to its chair after the death of Sir Morris Finer.

The commissioners looked out on a different media landscape from the one surveyed by their first predecessors 27 years earlier and even that viewed by the second commission 13 years before. Since the first commission, commercial television and radio had been introduced, an explosion of free newspaper titles had fragmented the local and regional scene, the periodical market had expanded, a national training scheme for young journalists had been put in place in place, pre-entry one-year Higher National Diploma (HND) courses in Journalism were running at eight colleges in the further education sector and the postgraduate diploma in Journalism was being offered at Cardiff. Surveys conducted on behalf of the commission showed that all but a mere two per cent of provincial newspaper trainee journalists now received at least some training other than sitting beside Nellie. In the distinctive sector of magazine and periodical journalism, however, the untrained proportion of beginners stood at 75 per cent, a matter to which the commission turned its attention.

It was evident that periodical publishers had given even less thought than their newspaper counterparts to how their staff were trained. The employers' body involved was the Periodical Publishers Association (PPA) which represented (as it still did in 2000) the major magazine publishing houses but which, unlike the NPA or the NS, did not negotiate agreements on wages or conditions with the NUJ. That was left to individual publishers. The NCTJ, under-extended since the 1969 PPITB takeover, spotted a market gap and set up a Standing Committee on Periodicals.

In the absence of the hostility that marked the attitude of the NS to any but on-the-job training it was relatively easy for a joint effort by the NCTJ and the London College of Printing to launch a one-year pre-entry HND course in Periodical Journalism patterned on one in newspaper journalism that was already running at the college. Applicants had to be aged 18-20 and have at least one A level and four O levels, including one in English. The first LCP intake numbered 36. Parallel block-release and day-release courses accommodated a further 65 and 15 trainees respectively who, unlike the students in the diploma course, must already be employed.¹

A critical distinction between newspaper and periodical trainees was that the latter were not expected to enter into formal indentures, the NUJ having conceded that most periodical employers of that time were too small to support apprenticeships. The risk of friction was further lessened because the NCTJ had no part in selecting the pre-entry candidates or in examining them. The PPA had persuaded the PPITB to keep the NCTJ on a tight rein, arguing not only that small staffs made it difficult to release journalists for training but the periodical sector required a flexible and modular system to allow for the greater mobility of its unindentured trainees. In addition, the high incidence of specialist publications made general journalism training 'less relevant' (Evans 1988:19). The PPA presented these arguments to the McGregor Commission, insisting that its members could not be expected to train staff in a manner that would match that agreed with the NS. The commission evidently interpreted this

approach as a disavowal of responsibility on the part of the periodical publishers and rejected it.

The commission also criticised the PPITB policy of 'industrial' as opposed to the 'professional' training that it believed journalists should have. Its report endorsed the idea of courses in journalism at higher education establishments. The commissioners urged that such courses be aimed at providing a common foundation for all forms of journalism, a thought repellent to the newspaper orientated NCTJ and of little appeal at that time to the training bodies that were to serve the periodical and broadcast sectors.

Training package

The only effect of the commission's recommendations was to provoke the PPITB to take matters into its own hands, thus adding another complication to the growing tangle of training patterns. By-passing the NCTJ yet again, the PPITB produced its own training plan for the periodical sector based on a 'package' of training material distributed to publishers, which editors were expected to administer in-house.

The involvement of both the NCTJ and the PPITB in the periodical sector ended with the latter's dissolution in 1981 when the Thatcher government decided to place responsibility for training directly on employers. Despite its confusing experience thus far, the PPA decided to continue training not only journalists but other occupations in the sector. Thus, the Periodical Training Council (PTC) which was subsequently formed prefers to speak of *editorial* training. The PTC continued with the in-house package and experimented with a variety of short courses, throughout which the progress of junior journalists was to be recorded in a personal logbook, a cumbersome and usually neglected device.

The PTC had the implicit support of the major publishers, several of which were eventually to develop in-company schemes, that were duly approved by the PTC.¹ (Unlike the NCTJ which purports to 'accredit', the PTC 'approves' courses at colleges and universities but plays no direct

¹ also at LCP

part in their administration). During 1985 and 1987 the Manpower Services Commission, which took over some of the functions of the PPITB, and the PTC jointly monitored training activities and concluded that although there had been notable improvement in the 10 years that followed the Royal Commission, the 'felt need' for training of which the commissioners had spoken remained to be satisfied.²

The NUJ recognised the distinctive nature of the periodical sector (and the opportunity for recruitment) by establishing a Magazine Branch. Evans used its records for a 1986 survey of the training record of 320 magazine journalists with less than three years experience, 78 per cent of whom were graduates or diplomates and 44 per cent of whom were female—another significant milestone in the diffusion of women throughout the occupation.

Table 8: Evans's 320 periodical trainees 1986.

GRADUATES %	All	Pre-entry training	Block/Day-release	Company scheme	Some other	No training
Women	44	19	4	11	16	50
Men	43	15	5	13	11	56
All	78	17	4	12	14	53
A/O LEVELS						
Women	16	24	8	6	12	50
Men	6	10	0	5	10	75
All	22	20	6	6	11	57
Overall %	100	18.5	5	9	12.5	50

The difference in the amount of training received by either sex is insignificant among the graduates but becomes marked among the non-graduates. The majority of these beginners in periodical journalism were evidently expected to train themselves or rely on Nellie. Even though the breakdown was incomplete, Evans saw significance in the pre-entry training sites from which the 1986 respondents had come: 18 from LCP, 10 from CU and one from UCC. Since it was only two years and three

¹ Reed Business Publishing, IPC, Morgan Grampian, Bennis, Haymarket.

² The Commission had said it was 'not persuaded' that any priority need be given to establishing first degrees in Journalism.

years respectively since journalism teaching had begun at the two universities, it might appear that there had been an immediate effect from the one-year, postgraduate pre-entry courses they offered. But in addition, Evans noted that nine of the pre-entry periodical trainees had come from NCTJ *newspaper* courses and three from *radio* courses (102). Some at least of the common ground the McGregor Commission had wished to see between journalists in different media sectors appeared to exist already.

Technique

Hopkinson, drafting his course document for Sussex University, had sensed that the hitherto accepted view that broadcast journalism functioned more or less as an extension of newspaper journalism might be changing. He made passing reference to radio but did not stray so far from the familiar territory of print as to make contact with broadcasters, something that surprised Robert McLeish, who as early as 1969 had been appointed as a training officer by the BBC to prepare for its expansion into local radio (Hunter 351).

To a large extent training in broadcast journalism meant—and still means—training in radio much of which, particularly in the older postgraduate diploma courses, has always been of high standard. Several factors helped ensure this: an enlightened if not actively supportive attitude on the part of the broadcast sector; the crucial need for technique and a grasp of the regulatory requirements unique to this sector; above all a training organisation less interventionist than the NCTJ. In addition, the NUJ did not, until the 1990s, show much direct interest in the way broadcast journalists were prepared—the background of NUJ activists had usually been in print—although it later recruited vigorously in the sector and enjoys a good relationship with the Broadcast Entertainment Cinematograph and Theatre Union (BECTU).

The first courses in radio journalism opened in 1978, one-year postgraduate diplomas, at the London College of Printing and at Falmouth College, both partly funded by the BBC. In 1980 the Independent Broadcasting Authority (IBA) sponsored the first university lectureship in

broadcasting at University College, Cardiff (for a three-year period) and set up its own training centre, the National Broadcasting School, which closed five years later.

In 1980 an increase in the number of broadcast journalism courses led to a meeting between representatives of the BBC, the IBA, the NUJ and thus to the formation of the Joint Advisory Committee for the Training of Radio Journalists (JACTRJ). The new organisation at first aspired only to an advisory function, offering guidelines but taking no part in developing curricula. It did however undertake to 'recognise' courses, whose graduates would be in turn recognised by the BBC and the Independent Local Radio association (ILR). Although it was never to act as assertively as the NCTJ, JACTRJ also served the NUJ purpose of monitoring employment opportunities; to some extent controlling entry. When in 1983 Bristol Polytechnic sought to launch a broadcasting course, JACTRJ persuaded the Education Secretary not to allow it (Parry 1988:80).

JACTRJ mutated into the National Council for the Training of Broadcast Journalists (NCTBJ) but, increasingly uncomfortable at being taken for the equivalent of the NCTJ, renamed itself in 1997. Now the Broadcast Journalism Training Council (BJTC), it includes representatives from the BBC, ITN, Channel 4, Independent Radio and some colleges. It maintains the hands-off policy of the original organisation but is active in arranging placements in the broadcasting industry for students and graduates of the three undergraduate and 12 postgraduate courses it recognises and in monitoring their progress.

In the print sector the NCTJ, kept at a distance from the university and college based courses which were being developed, largely at the initiative of the establishments themselves, began efforts to recover its lost ground. In 1987 it produced a green paper entitled *The Next Decade* which claimed that in-house training had deteriorated since the demise of the PPITB.

A detailed review...is urgently required and the NCTJ should take over the supervisory role which the PPITB fulfilled. Staff resources will be needed to carry this out (14).

This blatant power bid was ill-timed. Ten years had passed since the McGregor Commission had registered its disappointment at the general education level of young journalists and the effect of NCTJ-supervised training. Between 1953 and 1968, 4254 candidates were enrolled in the scheme. Of those, 3651 (88.82 %) sat the examination which 1460 passed. Thus 40 per cent of candidates passed—but this figure represented only 34.36 per cent of all trainees.¹ The records of six NCTJ proficiency tests held between April 1974 and October 1976 showed that even fewer trainees were sitting them and an even smaller percentage passing. No more than 69 per cent of the junior journalists eligible for examination had ever presented themselves and in one cohort the level had fallen to 41 per cent. The average pass rate was 71 per cent from a range of 49 per cent to 29 per cent of *all* trainees eligible.

The green paper suggested that there had been little improvement. In 1989, the year before it was published, only 40 per cent of eligible trainees had gained a proficiency certificate, the same proportion as in 1953-1968. The main reason for this sorry record was failure in the shorthand examination which, together with those in law and public administration, had to be passed before candidates could carry out the reporting procedures on which they were to be tested.

The authors of the green paper pondered the possibilities of ‘distance learning’ as applied by the Open University and a logbook method that the PTC had already found unsatisfactory. They then faced up to the message that had emanated from the the McGregor Commission a decade earlier and dared to wonder ‘whether the time was ripe to reinstate discussions about a degree in journalism’. But, seemingly unnerved by their temerity in venturing into this hitherto forbidden territory, the NCTJ thinkers decided, virtually in the same passage, that the award of a one-year HND in the further education sector was as far, academically, as a journalist need venture.¹ The drafters of the paper had, however, readily spotted a potential advantage to the NCTJ in that other notion the commission had

¹ NCTJ

put forward: that journalism in all sectors required a common grounding. The paper suggested that courses on which the NCTJ bestowed its approval could offer modules relevant to periodicals and broadcasting, 'so that other branches of journalism restore contact with the NCTJ' (12). 'Restore' seemed a questionable concept.

Those green paper proposals, radical for the NCTJ, appealed to both NUJ and CloJ representatives on the council but were opposed by the NS and the Guild of Editors (GE). The Guild had simplified its name but its relationship with the NS was as close as ever and as subservient as that of the NCTJ. The white paper that followed the green within a few months seemed merely to confirm the *status quo ante*, apart from renaming the NPC the National Certificate in Newspaper Journalism, a change that emphasised more than ever the exclusively newspaper orientation of the NCTJ and its sponsors.

None of the green paper's interest in a devolved base of journalism training that would be of relevance to beginners in either the periodical or broadcast sectors was reflected, nor in any training other than the traditional 'shop floor' basic standards and the highly socialising practice of indenturing. A proposal specifically rejected would have permitted trainees to sit for the new style national certificate without first achieving 100 words-a-minute shorthand, something that would obviously have lowered the overall fail rate. For the traditionalists, this represented been an unthinkable concession.

To Parry, the white paper demonstrated that it was no longer possible 'to elevate NCTJ claims to leadership in journalism training above those of the PTC' (1988:121). The stubborn resistance to change, effectively restating the determination of the NCTJ employer delegates to concentrate the council's efforts on the regional newspaper sector that largely financed it, dismayed many senior journalists in all sectors who agreed with the now yellowing McGregor recommendations and dismayed the *UK Press Gazette*.

¹ In 1975, even while the McGregor Commission was reaching its conclusions, the NCTJ handbook had claimed that the 'school of journalism system' in place elsewhere was 'too theoretical' for Britain (1975:9).

Entry into newspaper journalism nowadays comes from a number of directions and there are increasing numbers of journalists who have never been subjected to that [NCTJ] discipline. If this is a bad thing then the determination to resist devolution to adhere to traditional teaching systems is, effectively, to stick our head in the sand. (...) We should like to see the newspaper training system reaching out towards the other two disciplines in an attempt to define some common ground. (...) Journalists could swap between disciplines with greater ease rather than having to go back to square one and satisfy a totally different examination...it would mean greater regulation of all entrants into journalism.¹

Disappointment

The data relating to NCTJ/NCTBJ certificates that emerged from this study will disappoint those who place great store in these credentials or indeed in the courses recognised by each organisation.² There is an obvious possibility of statistical duplication where journalists or trainees might have taken one credential then pursued another but the main conclusion of the study in this regard is inescapable. Only about one in three journalists appears to want or need an NCTJ/BJTC certificate.

Table 9. Do you hold or are you studying for:

%	Broadcast	Periodical	Newspaper	All
NCTJ/BJTC National Certificate	33.3	12.3	40.7	28.76
National Vocational Qualification	1.7	2.1	2.8	2.2
Neither	65.6	85.6	56.8	69.3
	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

¹ 4.6.1988:1

² The Skillset survey carried out at the same time as the study fieldwork showed that 35 per cent of those entering broadcasting had a pre-entry postgraduate qualification in journalism, half from courses which had been 'approved' by the NCTJ and more than one-third by the NCTBJ. Intriguingly, one in six of these broadcast beginners did not know which organisation had endorsed their credential (1996: v).

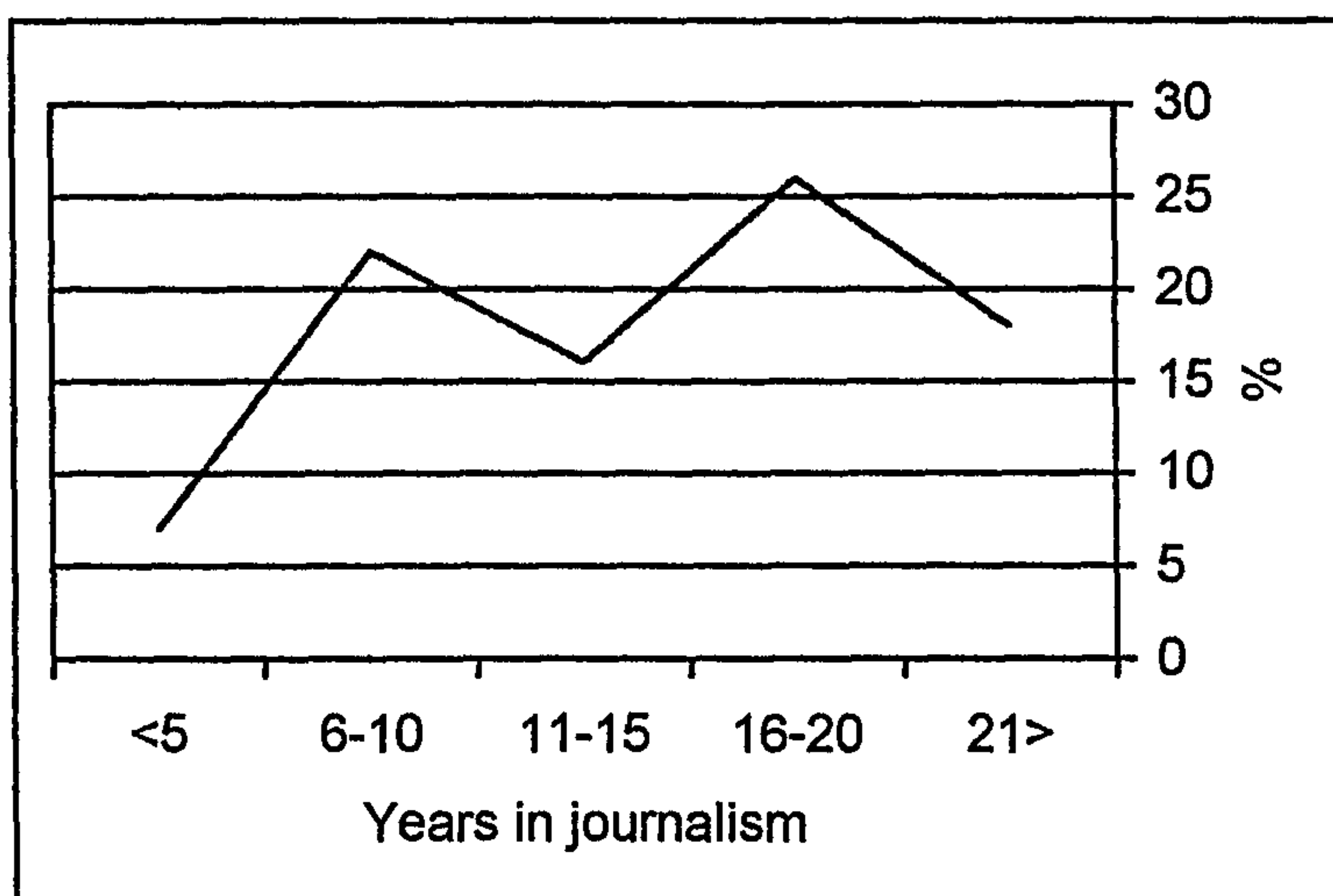
Table 9a. Have you attended or are you attending:

%	Broadcast	Periodical	Newspaper	All
NCTJ block release	22.1	6.2	22.6	16.96
NCTJ day-release	1.7	4.0	10.7	5.46
NCTJ pre-entry	11.0	0.1	16.9	9.3
In-house training scheme (e.g. Westminster Press, BBC, Thomson, MGN)	36.6	30.8	25.1	30.8
▼				
	71.4	41.1	75.3	62.52

▲Duplication likely

It could be seen that the highest uptake of NCTJ certificates coincided with the earliest years of mass graduate entry into journalism (exemplified by the MGN scheme, which prepared candidates for the examinations). Chart 2, below, suggests that penetration by NCTJ/BJTC credentials reached a peak in the 1970s. There is also a clear relationship to length of experience.

Chart 2. Certificate holders by years in journalism



Summary conclusions

Even editors who might insist on a university education for their own children seemed sometimes to hanker for a mythical figure of the past, the feisty but malleable, young 'natural'. Even when the Guild of Editors

survey demonstrated the middle-class standing and graduate predominance of the 1995 trainee intake, a widely repeated reaction from one veteran was, 'Where are the council estate kids who know their patch because they've been brought up there?' This was the voice that had been raised all down the century, proclaiming the conviction that true journalists were born to their calling and needed only the most basic training and a modicum of experience to transform them into efficient craftsmen. In this view, education—as distinct from training, and the concurrent shaping upon existing models—was not merely unnecessary, but could be an encumbrance.

This sentimental attitude, which seemed to class journalism as an escape route from slum or ghetto (another analogy with sport and showbusiness) persists despite the obvious improbability—as Strick and Linton Andrews had come to see 40 years earlier—that a child in modern Britain who nursed an ambition to become a journalist and who could demonstrate some aptitude might not be able to acquire the modest qualifications that a potential employer or college would require.

—From the very beginning of the national training scheme it had been apparent that the NPC/NCE examinations could never have any great success in raising the quality of journalism, if only because editors were free to disregard them. This remains one of the more questionable anomalies concerning the NCTJ and its supporters.

—Far from encouraging any idea of professional autonomy—or, indeed, effective journalism—training schemes and apprenticeships were invariably devised from the point of view of managerial convenience. The advantage to employers of a lengthy indenture period during which trainees provide cheap labour is obvious.

—A trainee intake two-thirds of which described itself as middle-class must be seen as further evidence of a media industry being relieved of having to bear the cost of training its practitioners. The quantitative data amassed by this study will continue to show how little effect the labyrinthine efforts by employers, government and journalist organisations have had on ordering the course of career preparation.

Boyd-Barrett noted (1980:314) that the greatest pressure for college and university courses in journalism was coming from outside the media industries—and their proxies such as the NCTJ. It becomes evident from this study that the pressure is applied by aspirants intending to use as pre-entry credential to break into journalism and catered to by universities and colleges anxious to attract students.

—The general pre-entry education level of journalists rose steadily throughout the second half of the century in the face of indifference or even entrenched resistance from both employers and practitioners, particularly to the idea of graduate preparation with its connotation of elitism and a perceived disinclination on the part of graduates to accept the status quo of much journalism practice.

—The idea that journalists needed to come from a background similar to that of their readers, viewers and listeners is difficult to accept in the light of the educational background of journalists working in all media. Not only does such a notion place no premium on professional ability—audience awareness is cultivated as a prime attribute in journalists—it ignores the obvious: that for the greater part of the time in which journalism has been legitimated as an occupation, its practitioners—particularly those on the more influential newspapers—have been the social inferiors of many of their readers

Chapter 6

Alphabet soup

*They have names, these 'initiatives', but none remember them and nobody is meant to for the Department for Education and Employment is a parallel, hologram world. Task forces, reports, New Deals, projects, pilots, schemes, ventures and agencies bob along the horizon like a flotilla of Mary Celestes, bedecked with gay strings of acronyms and lit with pretty words like 'beacon' and 'excellence'. Approach, however, and you'll sail slap through and out the other side, appearance leaving no mark on reality. Even the recollection will be wiped from your consciousness.—Matthew Parris, *The Times*, 9.2.01*

The NCTJ process—particularly the NCE—needs a relaunch. There obviously has to be some sort of industry standard examination on which editors can rely—some proof that a reporter is competent and, at the very least, won't drag the paper into court. But there is so much more that the NCTJ misses' (1997 Addison).

Section 1. The credentials menu

The sometimes converging but more often diverging attempts to provide access to and qualifications for journalism deserve such detailed scrutiny because, combined with the quantitative data provided, the convoluted manoeuvring that was still under way at the end of this study plainly indicates the value placed upon traditional conditioning by regional newspapers which have right throughout the twentieth century been taken as the model in contrast to the other less conservative media sectors. It is difficult to avoid the impression that rather than attempt to arrive at a consensus of what might be required as a standard of journalistic ability concerted efforts have been made to avoid reaching one.

The efforts that were made—especially those that received government patronage—took place virtually without input from practising journalists. The circumstances in which journalists worked, the standards they were expected to meet, the directions in which the occupation developed were all determined without the vast majority of practitioners showing an active interest. The NUJ had, by the mid-1990s, taken to describing itself as a professional body but showed little interest in establishing or enforcing standards of practice beyond its token representation on the NCTJ. Nor did its rank and file demand that it do so. Editorial representation on the Press Complaints Commission (successor to the Press Council) was by editors and on the Broadcasting Complaints Commission by senior executives. Journalists appeared content to allow the requirements of their occupation and even their professional rights to be ordained by employer groups or their proxies; and in the matter of credentials these remained ineffectual. Largely indifferent to the NCTJ efforts to impose its restrictive standards, other training operations continued with their own programmes, as did the universities and colleges which were pioneering hybrid courses that combined academic subjects with practical instruction in journalism. In 1991 the first BA (Hons) degree courses were launched at the LCP and the University of Central Lancashire (UCL). CU also began offering a joint honours degree in Journalism and Social Science.

The London School of Journalism remained in business and fulltime students there could be prepared for the NCTJ examination as well as the school's own diploma. Several training schemes were still operating at that time, primarily to accommodate regional and provincial newspapers. One belonging to Westminster Press, established in 1980, had granted its diploma to more than 800 young journalists by 1995. It then became the Editorial Centre as the result of a management buyout by its director, who was convinced that the NCTJ and with it the NCE were obsolescent.¹ Another, operated by the Trinity Group, developed a diploma 'adapted to reflect the specific needs of individual newspapers'. These private sector establishments accepted entrants who were sponsored by employers or

who paid their own fees.² Entry standards were flexible but the nature of the intake contributed to the impression that journalists were now being drawn almost exclusively from backgrounds that an earlier generation would have regarded as middle class. As one scheme director related:

Several editors in one group apply a positive discrimination policy, selecting likely candidates irrespective of educational background and sponsoring them to the course. Nevertheless, 90 per cent of those sent on courses by editors are graduates (Johnston 1996).

Vocational qualifications

In 1985 National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ) and the equivalent Scottish Vocational Qualifications (SVQ) had been introduced as a Conservative government 'initiative' to provide qualifications 'which met the real need of employment'. They also satisfied the ideological Thatcherite purpose of removing from some professions the self-perpetuating monopoly of granting professional status (and of enforcing professional ethics and obligations) since they were to be 'available to anyone able to achieve the required standards'.³ Anyone that is who was already in work, for NVQ/SVQ, like the NCE certificate, were intended not as pre-entry credentials but as tokens of competence in the workplace. They were to be 'industry-led' awards and journalism had been included with 880 occupations from Accountancy to Zoo-keeping.

The NS and the PPA, together with the Trades Union Council and the Confederation of British Industry, had been represented on the various committees which advised the Department of Employment on appropriate qualifications for journalists but both the NCTJ and the NUJ were excluded. The publishers' organisations appeared relieved that vocational qualifications represented quite a different approach to training from that adopted by the PPITB which in the 1960s had 'attempted to tell the industry how it should manage its own training affairs'.⁴

¹ Sands, P. *UKPG*, 8.1.96

² Typically, £3700 + VAT for a 15 week course

³ NS brochure undated.

⁴ NS brochure, undated

From the inception of these qualifications the quangofication that characterised the late Thatcher period led to confusion, duplication and bureaucratic exuberance. The governing body was the National Council for Vocational Qualifications (NCVQ). This did not, however, set the standards for a qualification. That was done in the case of each industry by a Qualifications Council consisting of representatives from industry groups. A National Training Organisation (NTO) was responsible for designating Industry Training Organisations (ITOs): the NS for newspapers, Skillset for broadcasting and the PTC for magazines. The NS became recognised by the Employment Department not only as the ITO for the regional newspaper publishing sector but the Lead Body for developing overall newspaper NVQs. A similar arrangement was made with the PPA. The NPA remained, as ever, aloof, although the Scottish Newspaper Publishers Association (SNPA) participated.

None of these bodies, however, had any responsibility for actually providing training. That could come from wherever or whomever a candidate or an employer chose. Nor were they responsible for ensuring that assessments might have been appropriately carried out. Verification—supervision of examiners and candidates—was allocated to yet another body, the Royal Society for the Arts (RSA) Examination Boards, except in the case of broadcasting where for verification Skillset was linked with the Open University. In Scotland the Scottish Vocational Education Council became both the awarding body and that responsible for monitoring standards for newspapers and periodicals.

A number of NVQ or SVQs at Levels 1 to 5 were established for various occupations within the media industries, including three categories of journalism: newspapers, magazines and broadcast.

Newspaper journalism

Writing. Production. Photography	Level 4
Graphics	Level 3

Periodical journalism

Writing. Sub-editing	Level 4
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Broadcast journalism

	Level 4
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The government intended that in many cases NVQ/SVQs would have parity of esteem with existing educational and professional qualifications. The NS accepted NVQ Level 4 as being 'at least' the equivalent of the NCE¹ but the NCTJ insisted that Level 4 represented 'degree standard' and that Level 5 was 'similar to a postgraduate qualification' (1996:3). Such a claim would be resisted by the holders of degrees or academic diplomas and the institutions that bestowed them. Vocational Qualifications laid down standards of competence in prescribed tasks but did not denote a level of education.

Section 2. NCTJ redux

Vocational qualifications provided a new opportunity for the NCTJ to keep itself in business. In 1992 it relaunched as a limited company, 'saved', as its chairman Don Mildenhall told the first annual meeting, 'to serve the needs of the industry, as well as trainees'.² Member bodies, of which the NUJ was the only one that could be said to represent the interests of trainees—or any other journalists—over those of employers, nominated representatives on the following basis:

Newspaper Society	3
Scottish Newspaper Publishers Association	1
Scottish Daily Newspaper Society	1
Associated Northern Ireland Newspapers	1
Guild of British Newspaper Editors	3
National Union of Journalists	2
Chartered Institute of Journalists	1

The veterans

The NCTJ moved speedily to forge links with the VQ authorities. A former chairman of the NCTJ executive, John Hardeman, became the RSA Chief Verifier for Journalism NVQs. NCTJ veterans jostled to take the two days of training intended to qualify an experienced journalist to be able to test the competence of candidates by a combination of methods: observation, checking work, discussion, written assessments, simulation, evidence or prior achievement. Any registered examiner could be

² UKPG 6.12.1993:16

appointed by an employer but in nearly 75 per cent of cases they were provided by a hastily established consultancy or assessment centre, most of them manned (literally) by old NCTJ hands, of which by 1996 the VQ scheme had approved more than 50 in publishing groups, training centres and colleges.

The NCTJ offered or continued accreditation to five in-company schemes and to courses at 15 colleges of higher education. It also set out to extend its writ to the new journalism degree courses, two of which were about to produce their first graduates. These courses, it observed, had been 'academically constructed and do not specifically set out to fulfill industry requirements'. This was true, of course. The main purpose of the courses was to deliver a BA degree. 'Industry requirements' were fulfilled incidentally but adequately, as the NCTJ was compelled to recognise in offering 'exemptions' to some of the courses it accredited, meaning that graduates from those would, after 18 months at work (rather than two years) be able to sit the NCE examination without further preliminaries—apart from the fee. Other graduates would have to take (and pay for) a prescribed NCTJ course before being allowed to sit. This insistence on the part of the NCTJ was in marked contrast to the view taken by the PTC and the BJTA, both of which having given their approval to a course accepted the award that resulted.

In addition, the NCTJ itself offered correspondence courses and a number of one-week and two-three day courses in its new premises at Harlow which, together with the £160 fee charged trainees sitting the NCE test, provided revenue. Journalism graduates from 'unaccredited courses' were offered a 'distance learning pack' for £600, to prepare them for the examination, which some regional newspapers continued to insist they take.

I withdrew my application and now find myself indentured for 18 months with no qualification at the end. Not that I want one—I feel I have a very good journalism qualification already that is not being recognised.— Emma-Jane Harper, BA (Hons) Journalism from LCP, junior reporter on *Buckingham Advertiser*.

In 1993 Rob Selwood, an accountant who had been the NCTJ office manager for 15 years, became its chief executive. From a 1991 trading loss of £84,324 it moved in 1995 to a profit of £99,000. For the year 1999/2000 the figure was £80,901.¹

Slow uptake

VQs generally were slow to be adopted. To encourage support from employers another 'initiative' by the Department of Employment, the Modern Apprenticeship scheme, was launched in 1995. Subsidies became available from Training and Enterprise Councils (TEC) for employers who would undertake to train apprentices. By 1997 there had been so little interest in the scheme that one desperate TEC was reported to be offering employers £7000 for every candidate who could attain a Level 4 NVQ by the age of 25.²

Nevertheless, the NS believed that the MA scheme stimulated interest in Newspaper NVQs and noted that by June 1997 there were nearly 1000 registrations (1997 Cullum). Only 40 of these, however, were in *journalism* rather than other occupations associated with newspaper management and production.³ Four of the registrations, 10 per cent of the whole, were at Cumbrian Newspapers Limited where until 1995 trainees had always been graduates. The Cumbrian change of policy exemplified the 'know-their-own patch' outlook. Keith Sutton the Carlisle editor of the group explained, 'Although our graduates were always of a very high calibre we always felt they lacked local knowledge and an understanding of the community.' The Department of Employment included the newspaper group in a brochure as an example of employers favouring VQs together with a farmer, a baker, an engineering company and the Flymo factory.

To cast the VQ net at greater depth, in 1992 a *General National Vocational Qualification* was introduced in the Further Education Sector. The intention was, according to the professor of Education at the

¹ Interim years: 1996/7: £53,932; 1997/8: £40,890; 1998/9: £52,797.

² Press Gazette

³ Letter from Department of Education 18.11.96

University of Liverpool, 'to secure for practical learning its rightful place in an educational system where it has long been undervalued' (Smithers 2000). Supposedly at its Advanced level the award would have parity of esteem with two A levels. Several FE colleges launched two-year courses leading to a GVNQ in Journalism.

The principal effect of these new awards was merely to thicken the 'alphabet soup' of qualifications for journalism, none of which was any more likely than hitherto to be considered obligatory.¹ Even before the 1997 change of government the Department of Education and Employment had begun to act on the recommendations of the Beaumont Report proposing changes in the bureaucratised NVQ/SVQ structure, only the slightest effect of which was apparent at the end of the century when 464 journalists had obtained a Level 4 award..

Section 3: 'Tomorrow's Journalist'

At the same time that the Beaumont Report was being prepared the GE which hitherto had always acted in concert with the NS where training was concerned, moved unilaterally to address the developing 'hotch potch of assorted qualifications'. By then, those that had accumulated were:

Table 10. Pre-entry credentials on offer after 1992.

Schools	Private sector	NCTJ	Further Education	Higher Education
GCSE or A-level, usually in Media Studies	Industry diplomas	Short courses	Postgraduate certificate in periodical journalism	Two-year HND
GVNQ in Journalism	Short courses		Short courses	Three-year degree
			One year courses	One-year postgraduate diploma MA

A consultative document, *Tomorrow's Journalist: A Green Paper on Editorial Training*, proposed a National Diploma in Journalism to replace both the NCE and the NVQ. It advocated a new training programme

accessible to both school leavers and graduates that would be modular and therefore flexible, with a syllabus that would include commercial and administrative subjects. Such an innovation, said the Guild's training committee, emphasising the seemingly revolutionary change in attitude and direction it was suggesting, would be 'a training programme geared towards tomorrow's journalists rather than towards tomorrow's *provincial* journalists'. The ideal of a common, comprehensive grounding advocated by the McGregor Commission was back on the agenda.

Even the NCTJ acknowledged the 'bewilderment' felt by employers and trainees over the multiple methods of testing competence that had accumulated and gave its backing to the GE green paper. A report by a working party of its own had decided that NVQs were inadequate in testing the ability to report a speech or carry out a face-to-face interview, both requirements of the NCE (NCTJ 1997). The 1996-99 and NCE pass rates drifted down from 44 to 40 per cent, which the NCTJ attributed to the intensity of the one-day examination.² In 2000 only 35 per cent of those sitting passed. This time the NCTJ blamed employers for neglecting in-house training, provoking a sharply polarised debate.¹

The proposal by the GE training committee envisioned a three-stage process. The requirements of the two earlier stages would have much in common with both the NCE and the NVQs (and preserve 100 wpm shorthand). But they would also incorporate the subjects conspicuously neglected by the NCTJ: production and computer skills, photography and electronic media. Stage Three, which the GE suggested might be of interest only to 'high-fliers', would pitch some studies at an advanced level and include a 'Diploma Thesis'. This proposal seemed to acknowledge the rising academic standards of young journalists and offer an opportunity for non-graduates to equalise their status, although the *Press Gazette*, otherwise supportive, saw it as 'potentially controversial'.

In presenting the document GE members emphasised its relevance to all journalists but neither the PTC nor the BJTC was consulted during its

¹ *Press Gazette* 2.05.97

² 'The poorest on record', NCTJ letter *Press Gazette* 11.07.97:10

drafting. Nevertheless, the chairman of the PTC, a consumer magazine editor-in-chief, gave it a gracious welcome:

We hope it will lead to more unification of all training activities and even a single journalism qualification across all sectors which will meet the needs of the increasingly multiple media environment of today (1997 Roberts-Cairns).

Elsewhere, the green paper was more critically received. UCC and the LCP pointed out that the proposed national diploma curriculum was virtually identical to their postgraduate diploma and HND courses in journalism and to the vocational content of their journalism degree courses. In a meeting with the GE draftsmen university journalism tutors were unenthusiastic about the suggestion that courses might be ‘accredited’ by the GE on the NCTJ model and equally so to the idea that a compound form of certification might be introduced, allowing a VQ to be incorporated in an academic award. Both they and their students, the tutors argued, would find it difficult to adapt to speedily changing employment opportunities if they were tied down to a narrow and detailed curriculum.

The guild, it soon emerged, had another consideration: an important reason underlying its proposal was the need that it saw to help produce entrants with ‘the right attitude’, an overt reference to the value that these employers’ intermediaries placed on the socialising process. The academic audience, sensing the shadow of indoctrination, reacted even more warily. ‘Do we *want* journalists with “the right attitude”?’ asked a representative of Goldsmiths’ College.²

GE internal debates had shown that for many guild members ‘attitude’ remained an important consideration. A regional editor offered an ominous reminder of the source of his colleagues’ entrenched resistance to anything but basic training.

If there is going to be a change, there’s no doubt that two generations of NCTJ certified bosses must first be convinced that it will be better than the present system, at the same price

¹ *Press Gazette*, December 2000, January, February 2001.

² Angela Phillips

or less, and as painless to the newsrooms if not more so (Hall 1997:11).

Old fears were surfacing. 'Painless to the newsrooms' decoded into anxiety that editors who might not themselves have reached a particularly high level of education were worried that overeducated trainees could be hard to handle (Jay 1977:67). 'Two generations of NCTJ certified bosses' would be all too likely to display the misgivings identified by Boyd-Barrett (1980) that employers displayed about 'cosmopolitan' graduates who might be less willing than locally recruited trainees to settle down to a job for life on a newspaper in the provinces.

The dichotomous attitude of the local newspaper sector, from which the GE membership was largely drawn, was exemplified by a 1995 decision by United Provincial Newspapers¹ to sponsor places on a one-year pre-entry course at the UCL while at the same time establishing its own two-year diploma course for trainees who would be expected to qualify for an NVQ. The guiding concern in the group was similar to that of Cumbrian Newspapers, although with an overt commercial as well as a cultural focus. 'We want to strike the right balance between school leavers, graduates and mature entrants', said the editorial director. 'We have a number of editors who are keen to see more local people taken on who will stay with them.'

The NCTJ was not mentioned in the GE white paper but its old imperialistic—and opportunist—voice was soon to be heard from a new pulpit at the RSA.

It is the multiplicity of trainers and training schemes that should be under scrutiny, then those of the highest calibre can be given a seal of approval by an acceptable and properly recognised industry body (Hardeman 1997:14).

The writer had no need to name the industry body he had in mind. When the guild's white paper followed the green a year later, the hand of the NS was plainly apparent, supported by the arm of the new Department for Education and Employment which had decided that NVQs/SVQs were

¹Six daily and 24 weekly titles,

here to stay. 'Those who mock vocational qualifications', said Baroness Blackstone¹ Labour's minister for higher education, 'want to exclude ordinary people from training.' (When, in 1999, 45 per cent of all GNVQ students failed to complete their courses, Lady Blackstone said that those who had finished would have acquired 'an excellent qualification'.) In 1998 DEE handed over management of VQs to the newly created Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) which declined to recognise journalism as a discrete discipline, including it in the category of Communication, Media, Film and Cultural Studies.

The GE white paper made no mention of a national diploma. The proposal for a Stage Three qualification for 'high flyers' survived despite the 'unfortunate use' in the green paper of the word 'thesis' which 'may have sent the wrong signals, especially to those editors to whom anything tainted with academia is anathema' (GE 1997:9). The guild now wanted the capabilities of journalists assessed by a restructured NVQ system which would, however, allow Level One qualifications to be awarded in training establishments, including colleges and universities.

Choosing the VQ route, the white paper explained, would allow employers to 'plug in' to government funding via TECs and the Modern Apprenticeship scheme which could be worth up to £6000 a year per trainee to an employer. But the GE and the NS had misread some signals. The DEE was soon to announce that grants would no longer be available on behalf of graduates, a decision that the NS warned would 'crash' the VQ scheme because of the high percentage of graduates enrolled in it.² It would certainly crash the opportunity for employers to collect a subsidy for taking on a graduate who had been at least partly trained already in a journalism course at university or college.

The OCR did permit the rewriting of requirements for Journalism NVQs and agree to the creation of an NVQ foundation level qualification which could be offered in colleges. With varying degrees of enthusiasm, NS and PPA members took on the part required of them in preparing employees

¹ PhD (LSE)

² *Press Gazette* 6.02.98: 15

for NVQ assessment and the number awarded gradually increased until in 1999 it reached 464. There were signs of despair in the newspaper sector.

Peter Sands, director of The Editorial Centre wrote:

The initiative taken by the Society of Editors, which culminated in the White Paper on training, is now lost. Nobody seems sure where we go next. The Society's training committee meets once in a blue moon, has reached few meaningful conclusions and has more gums than teeth. As a result the industry offers a confused choice of NVQ, NCE, in-house diploma or nothing at all. It is a very dangerous path. Recruitment and retention of staff is now the biggest threat to the quality of regional and local newspapers. And until editors and their employers take real responsibility it is going to get a lot worse.¹

At the end of that year, the PTA withdrew from the scheme, saying it had come to regard the journalism NVQ as 'devalued'. Within 18 months it outflanked the other participants by organising a Publishing NTO funded by seven employer organisations including the NS, which until the last minute insisted it would not participate if the NUJ were also allowed to join. Under pressure from the New Labour DEE both organisations eventually took part. Among its other plans, the PTA intended to revive the device of the logbook.

Section 4: Graduates welcome

Whatever the NCTJ view of the 'industry requirements' factor in academic courses in journalism, media employers appeared to welcome their graduates. In the year following completion of the first BA course in Journalism graduates immediately found jobs in journalism in the following proportions:

Table 11. Early graduate employment rate.²

LCP	24 out of 32	
UCL	13 out of 34	
CU	'Several'	(Only 10 graduated in Journalism strand.)

¹ *Press Gazette* 02.02.01:17

² Establishment records.

By 1999 it was estimated that some 60 per cent of BA level degree holders found work in the media industries¹. The postgraduate diploma courses in journalism, for which students usually had to pay their own fees,² performed even more impressively. It became commonplace for nearly every postgraduate diplomate from CU, UCL, UCC and Strathclyde to be employed immediately after graduation; in the case of UCL the full class of 40 in the first two outputs, 1993 and 1994, went directly into employment, a pattern that has been repeated annually since. Few graduates appeared to want an NCE certificate although, as noted earlier, some were required by regional newspapers to obtain them and the NCTJ was happy to charge for teaching them subjects in which they had already been instructed, usually to a higher standard.

Media Studies

The GE's reforming zeal cooled but the soup continued to thicken. Media and communication studies (often combined with cultural studies) had become established in the national curriculum by 1993 as A-level and GCSE subjects, with 10,000 and 25,000 registrations respectively in England and Wales (in Scotland, media studies was introduced into the curriculum for the first year of primary school). In 1997 degree and diploma courses in those disciplines were being offered in at least 60 universities and colleges. Enrolments were estimated to have risen from 6000 in 1990 to a peak of 32,000 in 1996, after which a slight decline became evident.³

In both the secondary and tertiary curricula these courses, although immensely popular with students, were the subject of a remarkable level of confusion within the media itself. Few editors or editorial writers appeared able to distinguish between degree courses in journalism, which synthesised practical instruction in journalism, usually delivered by journalists turned academics, with academic subjects; and the predominantly theoretical degree courses in communication or media

¹ AJE poll 1999.

² In 1997 Preston £1750; others £2950).

³ UCAS

studies, which were conducted by cultural studies and communication scholars.

Editors and employers complained that applicants for employment appeared to believe that media studies prepared them for a career in journalism. The managing editor of an important regional newspaper group wrote (in terms reminiscent of Linton Andrews's reflections on the pre-war LU diploma) of his sadness at having 'to tell enthusiastic applicants who have spent up to three years in higher education that they have to begin again, working on the basic "musts" for journalism, including shorthand and a law qualification endorsed for our industry' (1994 Daniels). The *Independent*, primed no doubt by the published views of its commentator Toynbee, carried an editorial entitled 'How not to be a journalist'.

Media Studies is a trivial, minor field of research, spuriously created for jargon-spinners and academic makeweights. Students learn nothing of value because the subject doesn't know its own purpose, is unimportant, and because most people teaching it don't know what they're talking about. Yet it is the fastest growing subject in higher education. Careers counsellors might wonder why they have failed to stop students applying to waste their time and taxpayers' money. Perhaps we can help: this paper regards a degree in media studies as a disqualification for the career of journalism. That might put a few of them off.¹

Although much of the criticism of media studies courses was similarly churlish and ill-informed,² in their anxiety to meet course targets many higher education establishments were undoubtedly less than scrupulous in explaining the limitations of such courses as a preparation for journalism. There was some justification for the NCTJ chief executive's complaint that the selection of candidates for college courses ought to be better. 'Sometimes it appears it is just a case of putting bums on seats' (1997 Cullum).

¹ 31.10.96.

² The Secretary of State for Education described the field as 'one of the flabbier social sciences' and 'a pseudo-religion'. 'For the weaker minded,' he wrote, 'going into a cultural Disneyland has obvious appeal' (1993 Patten).

There was, too, the question of resistance inherent in traditional academic attitudes reminiscent of that encountered in the 1920s. Donald Trelford, a former editor of *The Observer* appointed professor of journalism studies at Sheffield University in 1995, found academics teaching in the course eager to dismiss the contributions of distinguished journalists as 'anecdotal'. A journalism educator with broad experience in North America was discouraged by the difficulty of getting academics at the Southampton Institute to accept that academically unqualified but vastly experienced veterans of broadcasting would make suitable partners in presenting a course and argued:

There is a need for a change in educational culture. Pure study for its own sake is a valid and important occupation but the need is growing for first degree courses which are vocationally orientated, that impart knowledge and skill for immediate practical use. The average employer is reluctant to train but so are many of the educational institutions to which an aspirant might look even though they resort to euphemisms as 'vocational education' (1996 Wilson).

Eyeshades

The DEE decision to deny independence to Journalism as a distinctive discipline seemed ominous to those engaged in teaching it in universities, who feared the engulfment by communication and media studies that was being complained of in America towards the end of the twentieth century (1996 Medsger).¹ In the United States the 'Green Eyeshades', vocationally inclined journalism educators, had barely managed to prevent the increasingly dominant 'Chi-squares', the heavily theoretical, research-orientated communication scholars, from having 'Journalism' removed from the title of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC). University politics and practices were seen to be favouring the more recently organised forces. When the University of Michigan ended the autonomy of its Department of Journalism in the 1990s and absorbed it into one of Communication Studies, *Detroit News*

¹ Annual general meetings 1999, 2000 Association for Journalism Education.

reporter Jim Tobin, himself a PhD in History, asserted that every working reporter knew that 'the academy's attitude towards journalism usually ranges from vague distrust to outright contempt' and offered a succinct, if inelegant, explanation.

I suspect that when a university like Michigan moves against journalism it is partly motivated by a competition for cultural authority—a competition over who gets to speak the truth to the public. The academic who works on a single article for months believes not only that he simply knows more than a reporter writing for tomorrow's paper—which is usually true—but also that he holds to a higher standard of truth. His own motives are pure; the journalist's are commercial. Yet every day the academic realizes that he speaks the truth only to a small band of colleagues and mostly indifferent students, while the reporter speaks dreck to an audience of millions. So when it comes time to evaluate a journalism department, the academic says, 'why should we teach students to do this shit?' (Carey 1996:24).¹

Graduates the norm

This study can leave no doubt that despite wide scepticism and hostility among established media employers and employees the graduate journalist became the norm without any decision or selection on the part of the NCTJ, the NS or any other employer group.

Chart 4 below illustrates the percentages in the different sectors of practitioners holding degrees of some kind. The position of the *Journalism* graduate

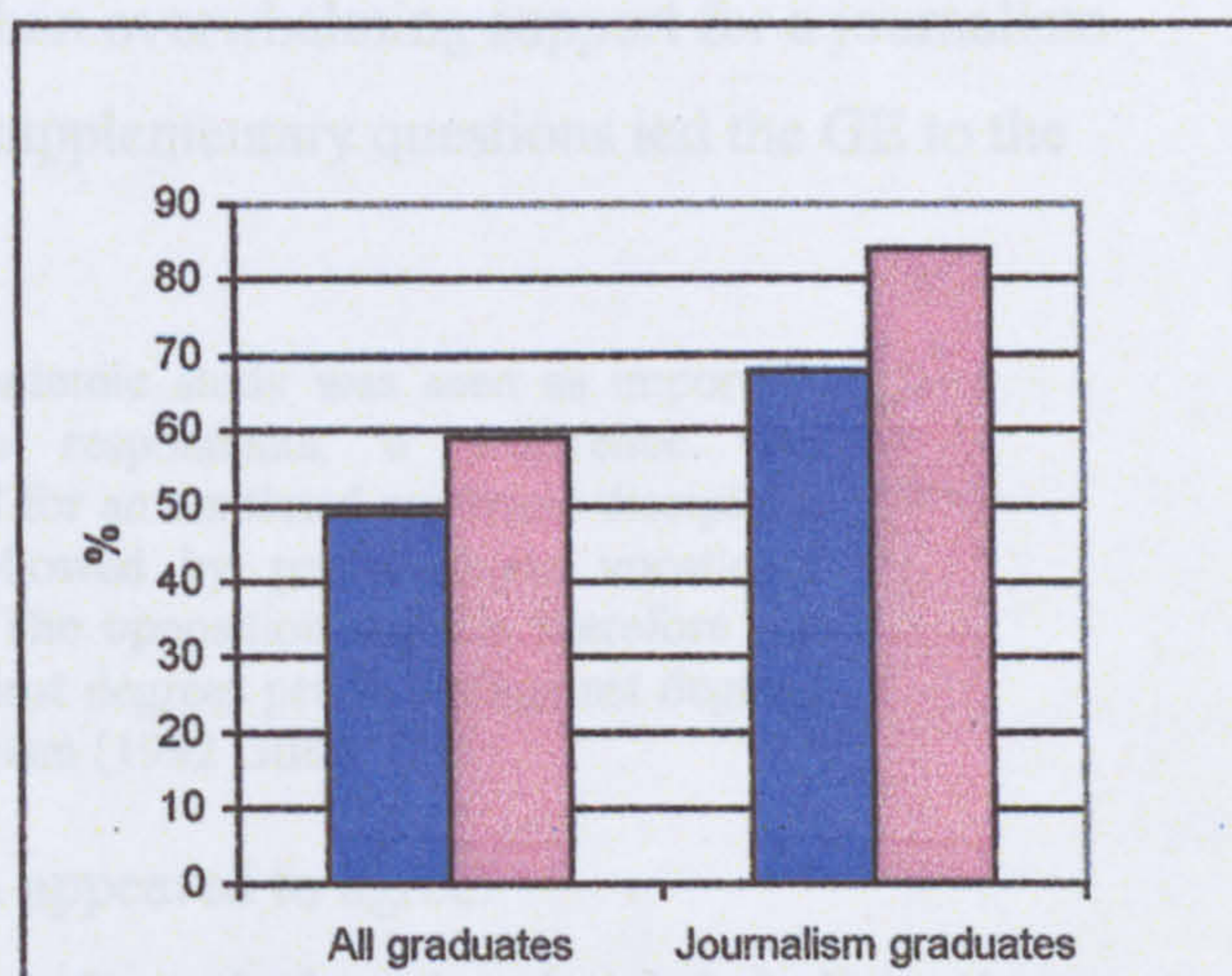
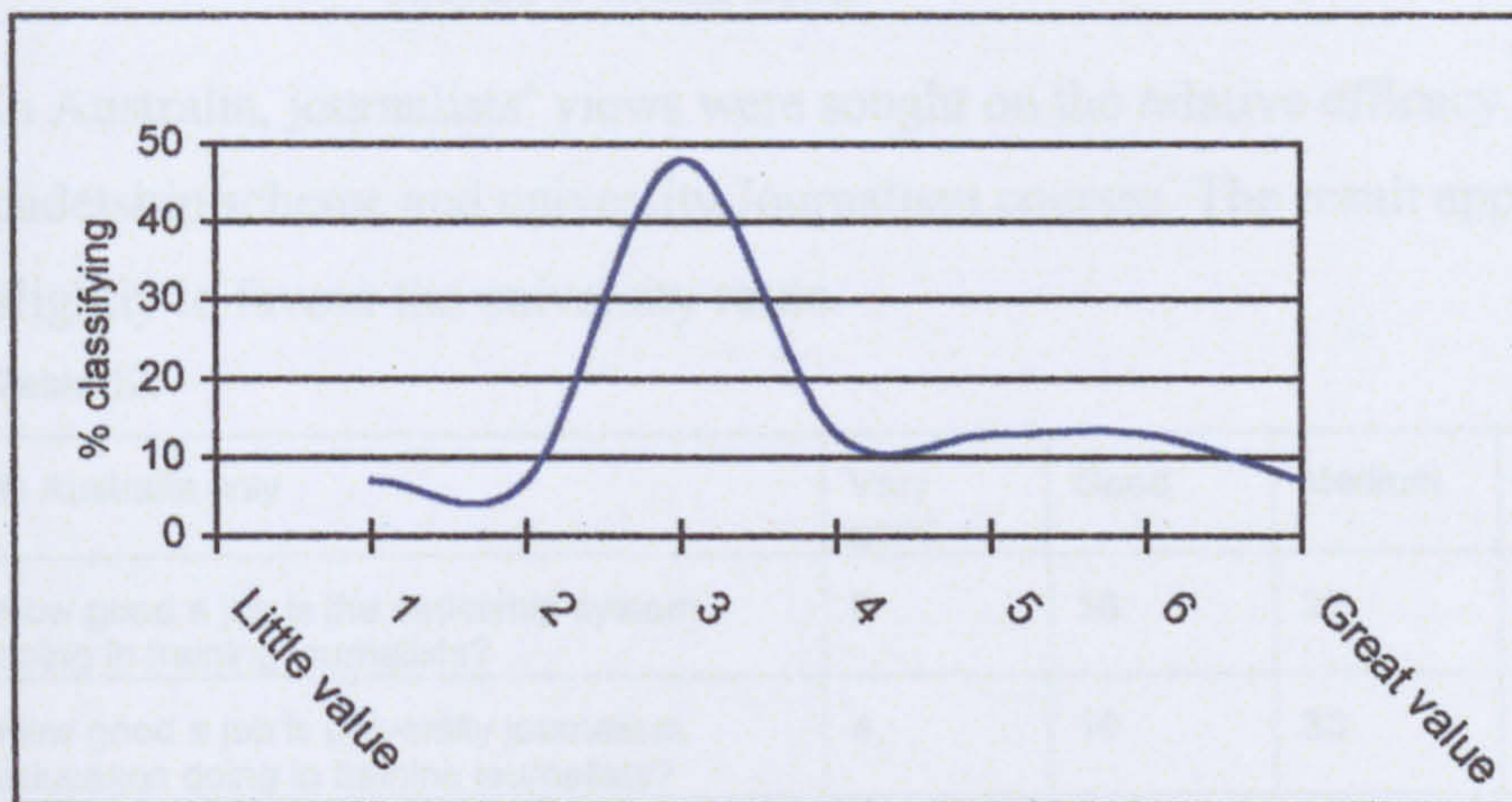


Chart 4. Graduate journalists and Journalism graduates

¹ Gene Roberts, managing editor of the New York Times and a visiting professor at the University of Maryland, told a subsequent forum that rather than 'communications esoterica' a better partner for the study of journalism would be history (Medsger 1996: 20).

remains to be established. Some of the misgivings that the more conservative occupational gatekeepers displayed about higher education as a preparation for journalism have evidently been redirected at the post-1990 BA/BSc courses in journalism but there are pragmatic reasons to question the suitability of vocational degrees and undergraduate diplomas in journalism (p.160). In the course of the GE's research for its green paper a sample of regional editors and managing directors were invited to rate journalism degrees on a 1-7 scale.

Chart 3. Guild of Editors evaluation of Journalism degrees



The result indicated less than overwhelming support for a journalism degree qualification, but supplementary questions led the GE to the conclusion that

While academic study was seen as important by some respondents, a preference was expressed for an unrelated academic discipline, to be followed by post-graduate vocational training. The opposition appears therefore not to be against degrees per se but against degrees in journalism (1992 Gillan 22).

The chairman of the NPA appeared to agree.

I have no fixed views on *formal* education, but I *do* believe that training received in provincial papers, accompanied by day release

for some formal training in law, constitution etc. is the most effective.—Jeremy Deedes.¹

From the reverse point of view, a 1995 postgraduate diplomate from City University also agreed:

I think there is a feeling among managing editors that they want people who've done a first degree other than journalism, which they equate with media studies. They want someone who has got their teeth into hardcore chemistry or Greek and then done a postgrad course rather than got wrapped up in media psychology or media sociology which isn't relevant to writing stories.²

In Australia, journalists' views were sought on the relative efficacy of the cadetship scheme and university Journalism courses. The result appeared slightly to favour the university route.

Table 12.

% Australia only	Very good	Good	Medium	Poor	Very poor
How good a job is the cadetship system doing in training journalists?	8	16	27	28	13
How good a job is university journalism education doing in training journalists?	4	19	33	21	6

Paradox

Of greater interest, however, were the reservations about both general degrees and degrees and diplomas in journalism that were evident among the practising journalists interviewed in the study fieldwork, even—especially—in the case of those who were themselves graduates. In the broadcast and newspaper sectors not more than one in four (25.3%; 22.5% respectively) thought it *desirable* that future recruits to journalism should have a degree of any kind. In the periodical sector those in favour rose to 42 per cent. When the same question was posed about degrees *or diplomas* in journalism the percentages answering yes in broadcast and newspapers

¹ Conference *Journalists for the New Century*, London, March 1996.

² Oliver August, business reporter *The Times*.

were only a little higher (31.6%; 31.4%) but much lower in periodical: 25.5 per cent.

A fundamental paradox was revealed in attitudes to higher education. Although so many of them went to university or college only 22% of all British journalists were convinced that a degree was desirable for future recruits to the occupation. Of those, more than half favoured a degree in a subject other than journalism. However, overall, 32% were in favour of either a degree *or a diploma* in journalism.

Table 13. Q: Do you think it desirable that future recruits to journalism have a university degree?

	Broadcast	Periodical	Newspaper	All	MGN	Australia
No	71.3	55.1	72.1	66.1	53.3	45
Yes	25.3	42.0	22.5	29.9	30.7	52
Don't know	3.3	2.9	5.4	3.9	16	3
	100.00	100.00	100.0	100.00	100.00	100.00

Table 14. Do you think it desirable that future recruits to journalism have a degree or a diploma in JOURNALISM?

	Broadcast	Periodical	Newspaper	All	MGN	Australia
No	64.9	72.4	64.2	67.2	44	70.0
Yes	31.6	25.5	31.4	29.5	38.7	27.0
Don't know	3.5	2.5	4.4	3.5	17.3	3.0
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

The highest level of support for university education in general came from the 35-50 age band, although when asked about the desirability of a Journalism qualifications there was no notable difference in the sources of response. Even among the Plymouth Brethren, of whom 75.7 per cent were graduates, only 29.7 per cent thought a degree of any kind *desirable* for future recruits, although when the question was asked about a degree or diploma in journalism 39.2 per cent answered yes, the increase presumably indicating approval of a postgraduate *diploma*. The Brethren displayed an uncharacteristically high level of uncertainty in this regard: 16.2 per cent answered *not sure* to each question.

Table 15. 78. Desirable that future recruits should have (i) university degree (ii) degree in Journalism?

	Broadcast			Periodical			Newspaper			MGN		
	Yes	No	Unsure	Yes	No	Unsure	Yes	No	Unsure	Yes	No	Unsure
Degrees desirable?	25.3	71.3	3.4	42.0	55.1	2.9	22.5	72.1	5.4	29.7	54.1	16.2
Degree or diploma in Journalism desirable?	31.6	64.9	3.4	25.5	72.4	2.1	31.4	64.2	5.4	39.2	44.6	16.2

The responses to these questions were so unexpected, not to say remarkable, that a sample of the respondents who had responded negatively were asked to explain their reasons [Appendix D]. All of those re-interviewed were themselves graduates. Of the recent Journalism graduates among them, 75 per cent thought that their own experience had provided the best grounding.

I think I must have misunderstood the question. Of course I think journalists *should* have a degree of some kind. I just don't think it is *vital* for a journalist to have one.—Paul Donovan, MGN.

I wouldn't want to see a situation develop where every journalist had to have some credential or another.—Tim Gopsill, MGN.

Talent and flair are worth more than paper qualifications.—Ric Papineau, MGN.

Sure you can be a journalist without going to university. Even without going to school. It's a matter of talent. But I believe my BA in Journalism was the best possible start.—Everton Gayle, BA (Hons) Journalism, LCP.

Journalism does require training. But people are easier to train if they are intelligent. And most intelligent people went out and got themselves degrees.—Bronagh Miskelly BA (Hons) Journalism, LCP

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Summary conclusions

Whenever the Department of Education and Employment has recognised that some form of preparation for journalism might be incorporated in the education system, it seems to have adopted a resolute ‘trade’ pathway, as indicated by the introduction of NVQs. On the other hand, by creating degrees in the subject, universities imply that it could be invested with the character of a profession, even if it is one of which they do not entirely approve—except for its appeal to students. The decision to deny journalism independent status as a subject of study suggests that universities are as nervous as ever of vocational courses.

—Specialised BA level Journalism and Media degrees may be on the way to becoming an entry-level norm, nevertheless, there is qualitative evidence to suggest that the combination of a degree in a field other than journalism and a postgraduate diploma in some aspect of journalism may emerge as the most convincing pre-entry preparation.

—Enlightened editors, aware of the confusion caused by the uneven range of pre-entry credentials appear powerless before the Newspaper Society which, although it represents only a fraction of journalist employers, is the only organised body with genuine influence.

—The much less influential NCTJ has attempted to make up for its loss of relevance as an arbiter of various training courses by setting up in competition with them in ways that sometimes appear extortionate.

Chapter 7

General characteristics of journalists (ascriptive)

*Journalists have always been seen as deraciné, liminal figures...clannish, improvident, imaginative Bohemians, fuelled by drink and tobacco.—Jeffrey Richards, *The Journalist in British Films*, 1991:31.*

*What is 'The Press'? Sometimes 'it' preens itself on a courtesy title...*The Fourth Estate*. But, once personalised, 'The Press' can be seen as no more, surely, than a bunch of journalists. Fellows with, in the main, squalid and unfulfilling private lives, insecure in their careers, and suffering a considerable degree of dependence on alcohol and narcotics.—Alan Clark MP, *The Penguin Book of Journalism*, 1999:281*

Section 1: Living it down

The coarse brushstrokes provided by the data for this study portray the archetypal British journalist of the mid-1990s as a 36-year-old androgynous but heterosexual, white, protestant, university educated, Radio 4 listener, *Daily Telegraph* or *Guardian* reader living in or within commuting distance of London who voted for the Labour Party at the last election; a non-smoker and moderate drinker who is co-habiting, has less than one child and earns as much or even more than someone he or she might regard as a social equivalent: in short, a parameter of 'middleness' that approaches caricature. Nevertheless, establishing a dependable statistical profile as the benchmark for future comparison may be the most enduring achievement of this investigation.

Despite that relatively low median age, national *newspaper* journalists seemed to be older than 20 years ago when the McGregor Commission put

their average age at 34.5.¹ This is particularly so of male journalists, among whom the median age is 37. Such a level of maturity may be one of the reasons that make it difficult to reconcile the profile that has emerged from the fieldwork for this study with Richards's 1991 image quoted above and similar impressions which have persisted in the wider world throughout the period under scrutiny. The study suggests that British journalists of the 1990s appeared to drink carefully, and smoke hardly at all. (The rates of alcoholic consumption detailed below have an oblique relevance to complaints recorded in Chapter 10 that women journalists were excluded from the 'pub' culture so relevant to the careers of their male counterparts.)

Nor is there evidence of excessive clannishness, either male or female centred. Modern journalists do not seem to confine friendship or relationship to their own ilk. They appear to marry and divorce with restraint. Indeed, by the standards of many of the people they write about, the lifestyle of journalists seems conservative; further confirmation perhaps that a level of social and cultural conformity has become the norm among them. Only one in 100 for instance lives with a partner of the same sex.

Section 2: Age

The survey data proved helpful in plotting class and status, depending on the model employed, but in order to demonstrate that the basic hypotheses upon which this study was launched were well founded the earliest data from *The News Breed* should be looked at separately. It can then be seen how closely British journalists resemble their counterparts in the categories used in the 1992-93 Weaver and Wilhoit survey and Henningham's of 1993 and thus justify the expectation that similar attitudinal responses might eventually be expected of them.

The median age of 38 for journalists working on *news* in Britain appears to be slightly older than that revealed in America and notably so when

¹ As late as 1982 the average age of journalists on the London staff (excluding Manchester and other regional offices) of a typical national newspaper was 42; only one was under 29. Most would have entered the occupation at 18 or even younger (personal knowledge).

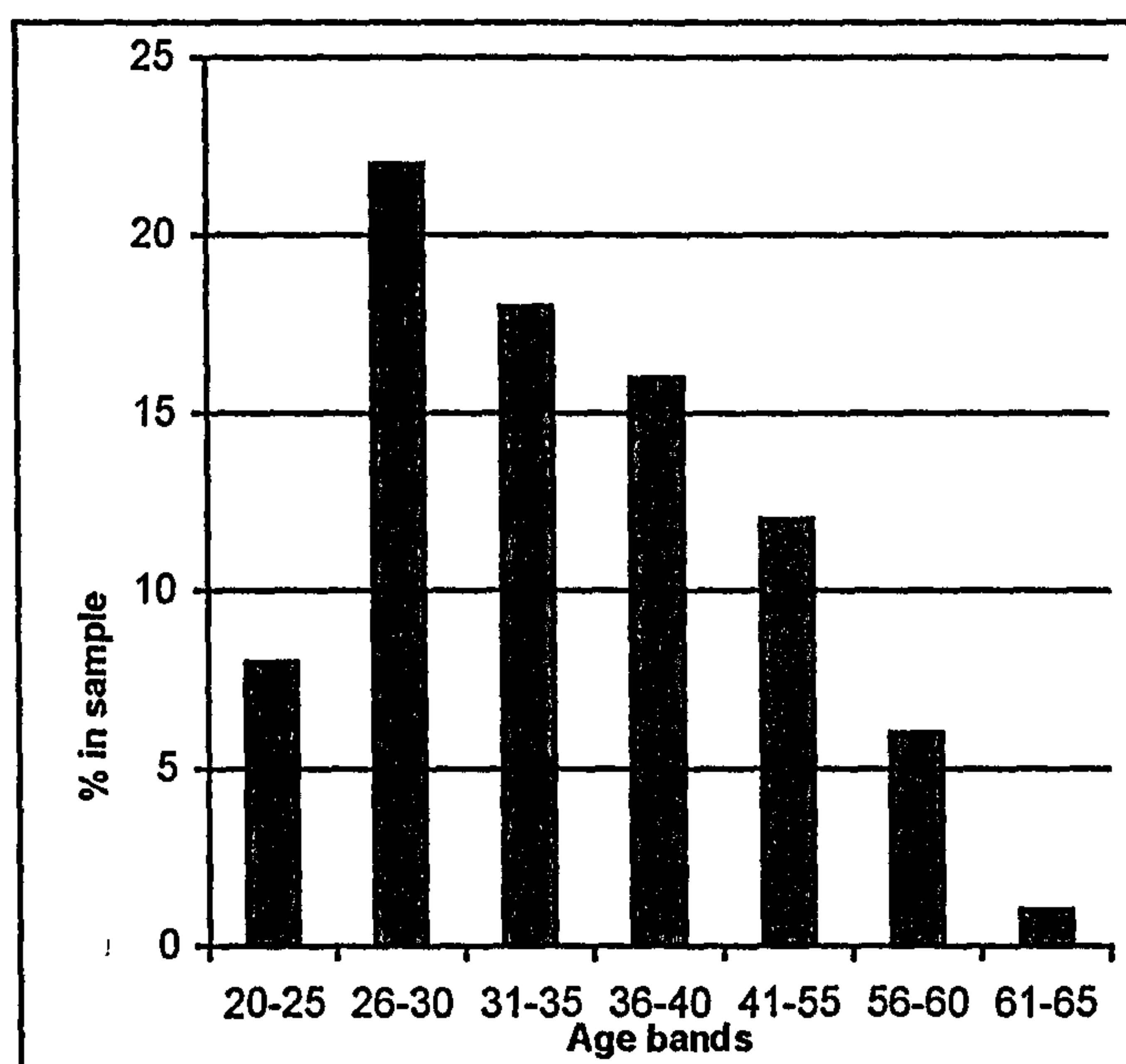
compared to the Australian counterparts. In fact there is little difference between the American and British figure since the age bands used in each country were slightly different.¹

Table 16. Mean age (UK 1996)

Broadcast	Periodical	Newspaper	All	News Breed	USA	Aust.
36.2	32.6	39.4	36.1	38	36	32

The median age figures disguise a great variety within and between media types. The characteristics of journalists as a group have obviously been biased by the increase in the number of women entering the occupation in such numbers over a relatively short period. That demonstrably reduced the median age, a factor that contributed to the bunching effect apparent in the 26 to 40 age bands and helps explain why women journalists over 40 at the time of the surveys are more rare than men of the same age. That and other aspects of male: female ratios are dealt with in Chapter 10.

Chart 5. All UK journalists by age



Where both sexes are concerned, newspaper journalists, especially those working on national titles, tended to be older than news broadcasters. The most youthful news journalists were those working in

independent radio, of whom more than 60 per cent were aged under 30. Regional weekly newspapers, the most common entry point, were also heavily staffed by under-30s (42%). The biggest single group in newspapers, those on national Sundays, consisted of '30-somethings'

¹ Online used 36-40 as median group; US and Australia 35-39.

(46.5%). In radio the largest group was in the independent sector, where they were 'twenty-somethings' (62.5%).

Table 17 News journalists aged ...

%	-30	31-41	41-50	50+
All journalists	24.0	35.0	24.0	15.0
National dailies	11.6	41.8	27.5	19.1
National Sundays	21.4	46.5	25.0	7.1
Regional dailies	28.9	30.6	22.3	18.3
Regional weeklies	41.8	30.3	18.0	18.0
Independent radio	62.5	12.5	12.5	12.5
Independent TV	36.4	40.0	20.0	3.6
BBC	32.7	44.9	18.4	0.0
Agencies	10.0	26.6	30.0	33.4
Wire Services	16.7	41.7	33.4	8.3
100%	256	339.9	23.1	135.3

Section 3: Race

There is a widespread empirically and anecdotally based impression that journalism is racially exclusive but the study suggests that, in proportion, the journalism population may actually accommodate more ethnic elements than are to be found among the general working population of the UK. The term 'white' was not used in fieldwork but overall 10 per cent of journalist respondents chose not to classify themselves *ethnically* as European. Even among news journalists the proportions was seven per cent. The proportion of individuals *of working age* in the general population who classified themselves as other than 'white' in the 1991 Census was between 4.0 per cent and 4.5 per cent.¹ If the sample of 'non-whites' in the general population were to be further restricted to those at the levels of education now apparent among journalists, the comparative proportion of non-white journalists would be even higher.

The problems in reaching satisfactory conclusions in this area are manifold. In addition to the common mismatch of variables, the difficulty of establishing numbers and proportions is compounded by sensitive

¹ Tables 1.8, 6. Some stratae include ages 16-18 and 65+. Northern Ireland excluded.

responses, the confusion inherent in a racial mix and the oversimplification of terms. 'Asian' and 'black' are even less satisfactory categorisations than 'white' or 'European'.

The only previous research project with any claim to academic veracity was that of Ainley, who was frank about the unlikelihood of her sample being representative. Of her 100 cases, 49 worked in 'black media' and 20 on broadcast programmes aimed at black audiences. Ainley's data did little to clarify the piecemeal estimates that have been made of the numbers of blacks and Asians working in the principal media sectors and of all journalists employed in each (1988:103-104). No more helpful were the intermittent efforts of the Black Members' Council of the NUJ to discover how many non-whites work in the occupation. It estimated that there were 12 on national newspapers in 1994 and 30 in 1996 but provided no figures for the regional press.¹ The NUJ estimated in 1989 that 350 of its 28,000 members belonged to an ethnic minority but the usual provisos about consolidated membership must be applied. In the 1997 NUJ survey, 1.6 per cent of members described themselves as Asian or African-Caribbean; another five per cent chose *Other* rather than *White*. Based on an overall membership of 29,352, that would suggest 1937 non-Europeans; however it cannot be seen how many of those NUJ members might be active journalists.

Table 18. Various estimates of the numbers of minority journalists in work.

Year	Source	National newspaper	Regional newspaper	Periodical	Broadcast	All	%
1988	Ainley	20/4000	15/7000	20/7000	100/3700	155/21,700	0.71
1989	NUJ ‡					250/28,000	
1994	NUJ/BMC	12					
1996	NUJ/BMC	30/5000					
1995	Skillset				584/7300		8.0
1997	NUJ ‡					1937/29,352	6.1
1999	Guardian	42					
2000	NUJ				100		
2000	BT	20-30					

‡ All categories of membership in UK and Republic of Ireland.

¹ *The Journalist* Oct-Nov 1996:8.

The response from broadcast journalists registered by Skillset further exemplifies the difficulty of achieving a definitive projection in this field of elusive definitions. Skillset applied the ethnic categories used in the 1991 UK Census, including the uncompromising but subjective 'white', in its survey of all broadcasters with the result shown. When employees of the BBC World Service (which are included in the present study) were factored out of the Skillset figures the 'white' or European proportion rose to 92 per cent—higher than the 90 per cent overall figure established by this project.

Table 19. Skillset 1995/6: 14

%	
Black (all)	3
Indian	2
Chinese	1
Other	5

Overall, 1.2 per cent of journalists interviewed in the surveys chose the category *Asian*, 0.9 per cent *Black Caribbean*; 7.2 per cent *Other*. The lowest percentage of Asians and blacks was in newspapers and periodicals (0.3 and 0.5 respectively). The highest Asian percentage was in broadcasting and highest black in periodicals.

Table 20. : How do you classify yourself ethnically?

%	Broadcast	Periodical	Newspaper	All	News Breed
European	93.1	88.1	88.8	90.00	93.0
Asian	1.7	1.6	0.3	1.2	1.0
Black	0.6	1.6	0.5	0.9	1.0
Other	4.0	7.4	10.4	7.2	
Refused	0.6	1.2	0.0	1.8	
	100.	100	100	100	

Attempts to refine these categories led to infinitesimal fragmentation of proportions that were already minute.

A major qualification must be applied to these data since, following Weaver and Wilhoit, journalists working for specialised publications and outlets were not included in the sample frame for the surveys connected with this study. Thus journalists working in the black, Asian, Middle Eastern press and 'ethnic' broadcast programmes were not included in the

research parameter. (Nor were any primarily religious media.) For the purposes of comparison this made the few earlier estimates available of a 'non-European' element in British journalism virtually worthless, since those included—indeed depended upon—journalists who were for the most part employed in ethnic media.

Table 21. Journalists from ethnic minorities.

%	National newspaper	Regional newspaper	Broadcast news	Periodicals
European	86.7	90.7	95.5	84.0
Other	12.3	8.3		11.1
Black Carrib.	0.7	*	0.9	0.8
Black African	0.3	*	*	0.8
Indian	*	0.6	2.9	0.8
Arab	*	0.3	*	
Bangladeshi				0.8
Chinese				0.4
Refused			0.9	1.2
	100	100	100	100

* Statistically insignificant response

Courses

Ainley noted that of her sample, 71 per cent of which were graduates, that only 30 had been accepted by white journalism training courses. By 'white' courses the respondents presumably meant those which had rejected the other black and Asian candidates. Or the applicants may have been comparing those courses with the pre- and post-entry training schemes aimed specifically at racial minorities.

In 1988 the BBC set up an Asian and Afro-Caribbean Reporters Training Trust offering six places a year and in 1992 a post-production course for black trainees offering 12 places. In addition to the 'white' courses (as Ainley's respondents had seen them) the University of Westminster offered a Postgraduate Diploma in Journalism exclusively for racial minorities from 1989 to 1992. It was never able satisfactorily to fill the course and ceased to be exclusive, recruiting in 1998 only 50 per cent of minority applicants.

Prejudice and discrimination

All respondents included in the tiny percentages of journalists of black or Arab background believed it was harder for minority ethnic journalists to get ahead in their careers, while journalists of Indian background were divided almost equally on the question. About half the black, Arab or Indian journalists (compared with only 19.7 per cent of European journalists—the highest in broadcast, 26 per cent) said they had *experienced* or *observed* racial prejudice in their occupation. Although only 19 per cent of all journalists had any *personal knowledge* or *experience* of ethnic prejudice in the newsroom, most (54.7%) believed it would be *more difficult* for minority journalists to get ahead in their careers.

Both Ainley and the BMC had argued that ‘black’ journalists were discriminated against both in access to training courses and in employment. It is likely that this was once true, although the mid-1990 statistics of this study do not offer strong support to their argument. The proportion of one in three applicants accepted that Ainley implied was unfair might be considered a typical ratio of acceptances to applications for some oversubscribed training courses. It has been suggested by a journalism educator who was making strong efforts to increase minority recruitment that immigrant communities intent on elevating their socio-economic status did not at first regard journalism as a suitable means, preferring law, accountancy or information technology.¹ This view received some indirect support from Henningham’s findings. Although 85 per cent of his respondents were of British or Irish background and 13 per cent of Continental European origin less than one per cent had Asian antecedents.

Whatever the reason, there is little room to doubt that hardly any racial minorities were represented in operational newsrooms up to the 1980s or in the early training courses but as those factions gained a firmer foothold in British life their representative numbers increased and will likely continue to do so. A 1999 BT survey found that in 208 ‘non-white’

students had enrolled in journalism courses throughout Britain by comparison with 107 in 1995 but did not establish what proportion might have been UK citizens.² The 1998 and 1999 intakes of BA and HND Journalism students at LCP included five percent Black British and five percent British Asians, which an informal AJE poll suggested was typical of that year's enrolment.³

Such crude statistical comparisons ignore the many factors this study explored as elements in the profile of a modern journalist referred to in this chapter, particularly education and social background, but they serve as a counter to the idea that a racial cultural imbalance ought to be rectified by quota or positive discrimination, possibilities that are raised whenever this topic is discussed.

Section 4. Local origins

British journalist means, for the most part, an *English* journalist. *Other* as an ethnic classification and *Elsewhere* as a country of birth, remain open to interpretation since respondents to the project surveys were offered a limited choice of categories. *Other*, as with the responses concerning race, may include those in the 'Caucasian' category favoured in the USA who preferred not to describe themselves as Europeans—Americans North and South; Australians and New Zealanders; white Africans—and those cases in which a fortuitous birthplace led to the answer *Elsewhere*. Between eight and ten per cent of journalists, the largest contingent in periodicals, were born outside the UK.

Tunstall had seen the 1960s and 1970s national news population as predominantly Southern English and, thus, united by a careers network which favoured them. Since then, the secondary but semi-autonomous Manchester editorial operations on which the activities of northern journalists were centred have largely disappeared. Northerners (although Scots rather less so) may now be less walled-off from London-based national operations and thus part of a larger network.

¹ Chris Horrie, director of studies LCP 1998.

² Related to BT's annual Ethnic Multicultural Media Awards.

³ LCP records.

Of journalists born in England, discovered by fieldwork, by far the greater proportion (25%) came from the east and south-east and another 22 per cent from Greater London. In the main, though, journalists are not city-bred. Irrespective of origins or birthplace, only 19 per cent of all of them *grew up* in a capital city. The largest proportion (36%) came from small towns or villages—which most of them have left behind. Only 28 per cent still lived in the place where they had been brought up. The highest proportion of non-English UK-born respondents work in newspapers; the lowest in periodicals.

Table 22. Where born?

%	Broadcast	Periodical	Newspaper	All
England	77	80.7	69.5	75.73
Scotland	9.8	4.9	12.2	8.96
Wales	3.4	1.6	7.3	4.1
Northern Ireland	2.9	2.1	3.4	2.8
UK Totals	93.1	89.3	92.4	91.59
Eire	0.6	0.8	1.0	0.8
W.Europe/Nordic	2.9	2.5	0.7	2.03
Elsewhere	3.4	7.4	5.9	6.23
	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Section 6. Religion.

Except in Northern Ireland, where the political connotations are obvious, it seems unlikely that religion (and certainly not religious observance) is a defining characteristic of the late-century journalist, although the proportion of Roman Catholics in the occupation (15.5%) is double that of the general population (7.6 %)¹. Even when offered a broad definition of religious observance (including such expressions as attendance at religious services or praying) 76 per cent of journalists responding to the surveys said they did not now practise a religion.. The proportion was little different in Australia: 74 per cent.

¹ 1995. *Social Trends 27*: Table 13.22.

The newspaper sector appeared to be the most religiously active, with just over a quarter (27%) of women, and just under a quarter (23.8%) of men answering yes when asked if they observed a religion in any way. In the periodical and broadcast sector a gender split was more apparent: 24 per cent of women answered yes in comparison with seven per cent of men.

Just under half (45.6%) the journalist population, a little under the general population statistic of 48 per cent, was brought up in the Church of England. Ten per cent were raised in other Christian denominations. Only 1.5 per cent of the sample were Jewish, the proportion in the periodical sector more than twice that in the others (2.5%). Other non-Christian religions (including Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism and Sikhism) accounted for only 1.5 per cent of the sample between them compared to a national population figure of seven per cent for these denominations combined.

Table 23.:In which religious denomination were you brought up?

%	Broadcast	Periodical	Newspaper	All	News Breed	USA	Aust.
Church of England	42.0	49.0	45.9	45.6	46.0	54.4	31.0
Other Protestant	7.5	7.8	10.6	8.6	10.0		22.0
Roman Catholic	19.0	11.9	15.6	15.5	16.0	30.0	32.0
Jewish	1.1	2.5	1.0	1.5	1.0	5.4	1.0
Orthodox	0.0	0.0	0.7	0.7	1.0	10.2	1.0
Moslem	0.0	0.0	0.5	0.5			
Buddhist	0.0	0.4	0.0	0.4			
Hindu	0.6	0.0	0.0	0.6			
Sikh	0.6	0.0	0.0	0.6			
Other	8.0	2.1	9.3	6.4			8.0
None	21.3	25.1	16.0	17.8	17.0		12.0
Refused	0.0	1.2	0.5	1.7	2.0		
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

A comparison of the religious spread between the USA and the UK is only partly effective since the Weaver and Wilhoit categories were restricted to Protestant, Roman Catholic, Jewish and *Other or None*. If the latter category had been used in Britain the percentage would have totalled 23.5

against 10.2, suggesting a larger proportion of irreligious journalists and hinting at a richer mix of backgrounds. The similar proportion in all territories and populations of the general Protestant factor is, however, striking.

Summary conclusions

It seems probable that the proportion of non-white journalists working in mainstream media is already far higher than that of non-whites in the appropriate age band of the general population and would be higher still if those working in ethnic media had been included in the fieldwork. In considering the overall distribution of identifiable minorities within the journalism population, even the basic indication from the data—with the category of *Other* deducted to avoid dilution of the statistic by non-European whites—remained, at 10 percent, substantially above the comparable ethnic factor in the general working population in the UK. It also matched, at least, that in the USA, where the latest available data showed minorities constituting 10 per cent of all *newswriters*.¹

Nonetheless, the issues raised by the responses from journalists belonging to ethnic minorities are important and ought not to be distorted by prejudice or rhetoric. Although it lies outside the scope of this study, it is evident that ‘hegemonic whiteness’ in newsrooms (and, inevitably on the news product) is likely to result in what van Dijk called a ‘them’ and ‘us’ view of the world; one ill-suited to the multiracial society apparent in modern Britain. More recently, Watson urged media students to consider the under-representation of ethnic minorities in all areas of media production as a vital topic for enquiry (1988:23). There would seem to be generous scope for study comparable to that of Clint Wilson’s investigation of African-Americans working in US mainstream media — although there would need to be separate factorisation of ‘black’ and ‘Asian’.

Wilson used Warren Breed’s concept of newsroom socialisation to demonstrate the prevalence of ‘Eurocentric’ news values in all racial

¹ ANPA survey 1987

situations and identified 'four fundamental forces' that ensured the conformity of African-American journalists to 'white' news values: professional isolation, the assumption of incompetence, imposition of a separate standard, limitation of assignments. Some of these at least would be recognisable to anyone with experience of a British newsroom and if they were thought to persist once the proportion of ethnic journalists was no longer remarkable then complaints of discrimination would be better founded.

Chapter 8

General characteristics of journalists (acquired)

Perhaps the majority of journalists would like to refer to themselves as members of a profession but are a little uncomfortable in doing so—Strick (1957:487).

Section 1. Status

If status were to be considered separately from class, that of journalists might be said to have been established objectively and officially by the 1998 redefinition of social classifications published by the Office of National Statistics (ONS). For 90 years the agency used 371 occupational groups to classify the population into six classes: I. Professional, II Managerial and Technical, IIIN Skilled non-manual, IIIM Skilled manual, IV Part-skilled, V Unskilled. Parallel with these rankings were ranged the commercial classifications familiar to journalists from their application to audience targets: A, B C1, C2, D and E.

The earlier ONS grades were decided by occupation and by vague but generally understood qualities of 'worthiness'. The commercial scale placed a high value on spending power and the potential for developing it, together with education, housing and other less tangible factors out of which could be conjured assumptions about 'taste' and other areas of preference. On each of these scales journalists could expect to find themselves assigned to one of several categories, ranked together with an array of other occupations according to income, employer, function and background. A BBC journalist might be put in a different category from that allocated to someone working for a trade publication.

In 1998 the official grades were revised into Classes 1 to 7, on the basis of occupation alone. The new ranking was not intended to be hierarchical,

according to the deviser of the project¹. Nevertheless, it took into consideration the regard in which an occupation was held and 'stability' factors such as pension rights and security of tenure. Class I included, among others, doctors and lawyers, senior civil servants and university professors, but also librarians, airline pilots, social workers and editors (not further defined). Other journalists were placed in Class 2 together with managers of fewer than 25 staff, certain technicians, senior nurses; their old class consorts actors and musicians—and real estate agents. Class 3 accommodated 'intermediate' occupations: sales managers, computer operators, personal assistants.

Plainly, this system did not take into consideration other factors that most Britons would regard as establishing class in the sense of social prestige, such as parental-familial standing, education (more precisely, schooling) and income; all of which would be allied, in the *unofficial* esteem, to other factors represented by the data gathered by this study: religion, race, political affiliations and personal habits—in short, lifestyle.

Fieldwork demonstrated that journalists with professional or managerial family backgrounds outnumbered those whose parents were in the clerical, semi-skilled or unskilled group, although the incidence of *newspaper* journalists with a breadwinning parent who was an artisan or unskilled worker is notably high. In the absence of comparable earlier data no measurement of change is possible, but empirical and anecdotal evidence suggest that it is not a pattern that might have been expected of pre-1960s journalists. It invites the conclusion that not only have journalists come to display inherent middle-class characteristics but they now acquire middle-class categorisation at birth.

A higher proportion of male journalists than women come from backgrounds where the main breadwinner was from a manual unskilled, or skilled or semi-skilled trade (34.5% to 16.4%). By contrast, a higher proportion of women than men come from professional, managerial or media backgrounds (63.8% to 49.6%).

¹ David Rose, Professor of Sociology, Institute of Social and Economic Research, University of Essex

Only 4.5 per cent of journalists had a journalist parent and the proportion would increase by very little if 'other media' were also considered. The highest proportion of 'hereditary' journalists is in the newspaper sector. (This factor may be expected to increase if the respondents referred to in Chapter 9 actively encourage their offspring to emulate them.) The broadcast sector has by far the lowest proportion of 'hereditaries' and also the highest of parental backgrounds in agriculture. This correlation does not invite an obvious conclusion.

Table 24. What kind of work did main breadwinner in childhood household do?

%	Broadcast	Periodical	Newspaper	All	MGN
Clerical/sales	13.2	11.9	11.1	12.06	14.7
Professional/managerial	55.2	55.6	42.7	51.1	38.7
Journalist	1.7	5.3	6.5	4.5	10.7
Other media	0.0	2.5	1.3	1.26	2.7
Unskilled/semi-skilled	9.8	7.8	15.8	11.13	6.7
Skilled trade	13.2	10.3	17.1	13.53	13.3
Armed service	1.7	3.7	2.9	2.76	6.7
Agricultural	4.6	1.6	1.8	2.66	4.0
Minister of Religion	0.0	0.0	0.5	0.16	1.3
	99.4	98.7	99.7	99.16	98.8
Refused	0.6	1.2	0.3	0.7	1.3

It is noteworthy that the MGN cohort displayed by far the highest proportion of journalism-media antecedents, suggesting that part, at least, of the generation of journalists that preceded them had viewed the occupation more optimistically than subsequent ones.

Section 2. Schooling

Education in general is examined below, but the type of school attended is likely to have a bearing on social status. Grammar schooling predominated among journalists in all sectors except the periodical, which also had the highest level of public (and religious) school attendance. The lowest level of public school experience was to be found among newspaper journalists. An overall 21.7 per cent of public school experience cannot be considered a major component in classifying journalists of all types but the variations

between the sectors provide indicators to the differences in the nature of the journalists working in them, which will be analysed in Chapter 11.

Table 25. What kind of secondary school did you go to?

%	Broadcast	Periodical	Newspaper	All	<i>News Breed</i>	MGN
Grammar	33.9	27.6	44.3	35.3	42.0	56.0
Modern	6.9	5.8	8.6	7.1		1.3
Comprehensive	30.8	34.2	26.4	30.5	28.0	10.7
Public	23.0	25.9	16.3	21.7	17.0	20.0
Religious	0.6	4.5	1.1	2.0		5.3
Special (eg lycée)	0.6	0.0	0.5	4.0		1.3
Abroad	1.7	2.1	1.8	2.0		2.7
Other	2.9	0.0	0.2	1.0		4.0

Neither can university attendance in itself any longer be considered a factor in classifying individuals socially (except by its absence) but in view of the recurring debate over the advantages stemming from an 'elite' education such as that supposedly provided by the universities of Oxford and Cambridge, it is relevant to note that, as tabulated below the overall proportion of journalists who *attended* one of those institutions is 6.3 per cent. Considering the appeal of journalism to 'Oxbridge' men and women discussed in Chapter 5, that proportion seems low, although in the case of journalists engaged in news production, whether in print or broadcast, the

Table 26. News journalists in these categories who attended Oxford or Cambridge.

%	National newspapers	Broadcast (BBC & ITV)
Editors/deputies	20.8	30.0
Section editors	7.4	
Reporters	12.0	10.0
Sub-editors	6.1	
Chief subs	10.5	
Feature writers	13.6	
News producers		16.7
Senior editors/news directors		4.8

proportion of those who attended one of those universities rises to eight per cent. It is also instructive to compare the cross-tabulations of Oxbridge with job descriptions in the news sector. The widely held conviction among journalists that

The conviction that they are practising a profession is particularly strong among Australians. Even though they include the lowest proportion of graduates and are, in the main, prepared for journalism by a firmly enforced form of apprenticeship.

The liberal view that journalists take of accessibility to their occupation is amply reflected in the table below; although so is a certain hankering that can be detected in the *semi-profession* category for some form of organised status.

Table 28. Those who believe journalism could be organised into a

%	Broadcast	Newspapers	Periodical	All	MGN
Closed profession	5.2	4.9	1.2	3.76	4.0
Semi-profession	18.4	25.1	21.8	21.76	28.0
Neither	71.8	66.8	71.2	70.00	66.7
Don't know	4.6	3.3	5.5	4.46	1.3
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Subjectively, and notwithstanding the tension that must result in many cases from seeing themselves as belonging to a profession but choosing to be represented by a trade union, a clear majority of journalists regard their social status as being equal to that of solicitors, teachers and university lecturers, accountants, engineers (all of whom are in the new Class I) although not of university coevals who became barristers or surgeons or dentists.

Nevertheless, only a small proportion of journalists believed there was any possibility of adopting one of the prime characteristics of the other occupations to which journalists felt their own was equal—controlled entry. This shift of views in the ancient controversy of trade v. profession may be considered a strong indication of the sense journalists have developed of their social standing. It does not, however, suggest a strengthened inclination towards organisation since less than one in three appears to believe journalism could be organised into even a semi-profession such as architecture or accountancy.

Neither question about profession/closed profession was asked in America, although Weaver and Wilhoit had hoped to find an answer to the first one in their 1992 data. They gave full consideration to a number of views that had emerged since their previous research was published. Merrill (1991) and Glasser (1992) argued that professionalisation would lead to conformity, standardisation and homogeneity.

Chart 6. Believing journalists deserve status equivalent to...

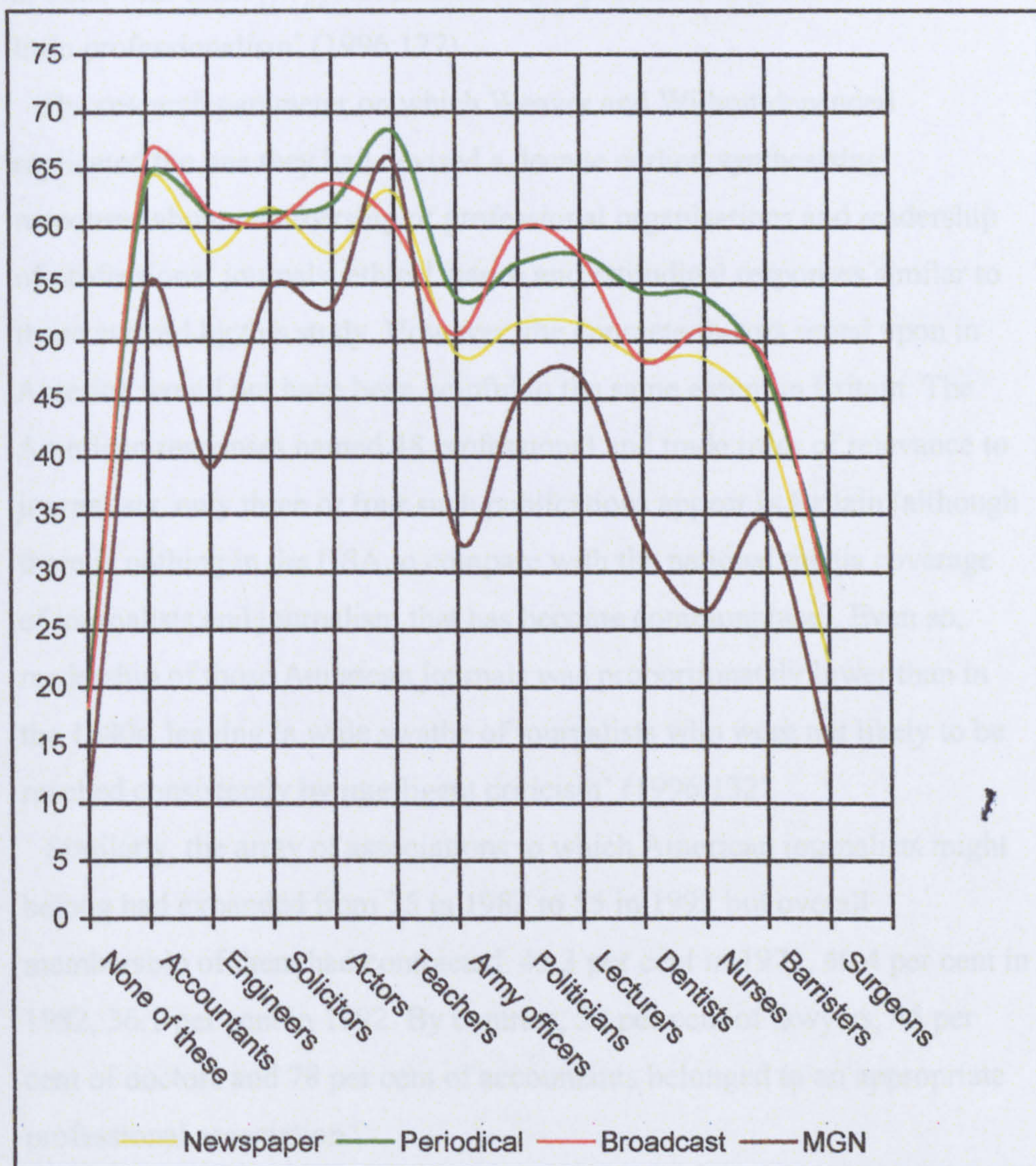


Chart 6 illustrates those responses using the colours adopted throughout this report to distinguish the sectors: red for Broadcast, yellow for Newspapers, green for Periodical and maroon for the Brethren.

Menand (1992) wrote that journalism deserved the status of a profession because what it might lack in strict degree requirements and licensing it

made up for in 'disinterestedness'; Brill (1994) that many journalists believed they did 'constitute a profession, with standards of conduct, honor and purpose that should be... every bit as high as those of the law'. Since the latter view was delivered in the shadow of the O.J. Simpson trial, it may have helped Weaver and Wilhoit to move even further away from a firm conclusion than they had in 1982, observing that 'profound difficulties plague *all* the established professions, and journalism is often at odds with them (...) journalism's major problems may stem from too little professionalism' (1996:127).

The research parameter on which Weaver and Wilhoit depended replicated the one they had devised a decade earlier, synthesising responses about membership of professional organisations and readership of professional journals, ethical stance and attitudinal responses similar to those evoked by this study. However, the concrete factors relied upon in America would not have been helpful to the same extent in Britain. The American responses named 48 professional and trade titles of relevance to journalists; only three or four such publications appear in Britain (although there is nothing in the USA to compare with the national media coverage of journalists and journalism that has become commonplace). Even so, readership of those American journals was proportionately lower than in the 1980s, leaving 'a wide swathe of journalists who were not likely to be reached consistently by intelligent criticism' (1996:132).

Similarly, the array of associations to which American journalists might belong had expanded from 35 in 1982 to 55 in 1992 but overall membership of them had contracted: 45.3 per cent in 1971, 40.4 per cent in 1982, 36.1 per cent in 1992. By contrast, 50 per cent of lawyers, 45 per cent of doctors and 78 per cent of accountants belonged to an appropriate professional association.¹

Unionism

Despite the unreconstructed trade union ethos of the NUJ, a majority of journalists, except for those in the periodical sector, belong to it.

Membership of the other two organisations is insignificant, the British Association of Journalists (BAJ) having gained most of its 610 members² by virtue of being recognised as the 'house' union at Mirror Group, where the NUJ was unrecognised throughout the 1990s.

Table 29. Are you a member of...? ▼

%	Broadcast	Periodical	Newspaper	All□	MGN
NUJ	77.0	24.3	60.4	53.9	50.7
CloJ	0.6	0.0	1.0	1.6	0.0
BAJ	0.0	0.8	1.1	1.9	2.7
None	23.0	74.9	37.9	45.2	46.7
All	100.6	100.0	100.4	102.6*	0

▲ Duplication likely

Several factors shaped the membership of the NUJ in recent years. A dip following the age band 46-50 reflects not only the diminishing numbers of journalists of that age in employment but the large number that withdrew from the organisation in the 1970s and early 1980s when there was wide disagreement with many of its policies and it experienced extensive internal disarray. Those upheavals were partly responsible for the founding of the BAJ.

The discrepancy between the high NUJ membership figure in the broadcast sector and the low one in the periodical sector are due to other factors. Many BBC journalists joined in the early 1990s when the corporation began newsroom reorganisations that included extensive redundancies, especially among those over 50. Retiring journalists at 50 has since become a BBC policy which, though officially unacknowledged has been criticised as 'short-sighted... folly' by the general secretary of the CloJ.³ Reporting an industrial tribunal appeal by three PA journalists who after turning 50 had been replaced by journalists in their twenties, a Press Gazette article said:

When companies are selecting for redundancy
or eligibility for early retirement, the age of

¹ 'Of the other major fields, only the professoriate comes close to journalism in its thinness of professional identity' (1996:129)

² 1997 annual conference statement.

³ 'On their 49th birthday such staff begin to fret openly...' Chris Underwood, *Press Gazette*, 6.6.97:12.

50...is often used as a criterion. Increasingly, discrimination is beginning much earlier—it can start at 35 for women and 40 for men (1997 Charles).

Section 4: Politics.

A clear majority (57%) of all journalists—the highest in broadcast—intended to vote Labour in the 1997 election and only six per cent planned to vote Conservative. The broadcast sector also showed the highest proportion of supposed non-voters and refusals to answer the question. (This question produced the highest proportion of refusals to respond in the surveys.) In the table and in the graph that follows the MGN factor has been introduced as an indication of the views of mature and established journalists. They suggest a firming of support for the traditional parties and a higher level of participation in the political process.

Table 30. Which political party are you inclined to vote for in the next (1996) general election?

%	Broadcast	Periodical	Newspaper	All	MGN
Conservative	5.2	6.2	6.7	6.03	8
Labour	58.0	57.2	56.2	57.13	60
Lib-Dem	2.9	4.9	5.0	4.26	8
Green	0.0	1.6	0.7	0.76	0
Socialist Labour	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.0	0
None	13.0	9.9	8.5	10.46	4
Don't know	12.6	14.2	13.2	13.13	6.7
Other*	2.6	1.5	5.6	3.2	2.7
Refused	5.7	4.5	4.5	4.6	10.6
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

*Other did not include the Communist Party or the British Nationalist Party, neither of which registered responses.

In naming parties for respondents to choose from, the study sought a more specific political inclination than the other territories. Weaver and Wilhoit offered a graduated choice to which 30 per cent of the American respondents proclaimed themselves *middle of the road* with 47 per cent a *little* to or *pretty far* to the left. This represented a 'striking' increase from 1982-3 when the comparable faction was 22 per cent and a marked contrast to the 18 per cent of members of the general population asked a

similar question in a 1992 Gallup poll. Similar categories applied in Australia produced a *middle of the road* score of 41 per cent and 39 per cent of *a little to or pretty far to the left*.

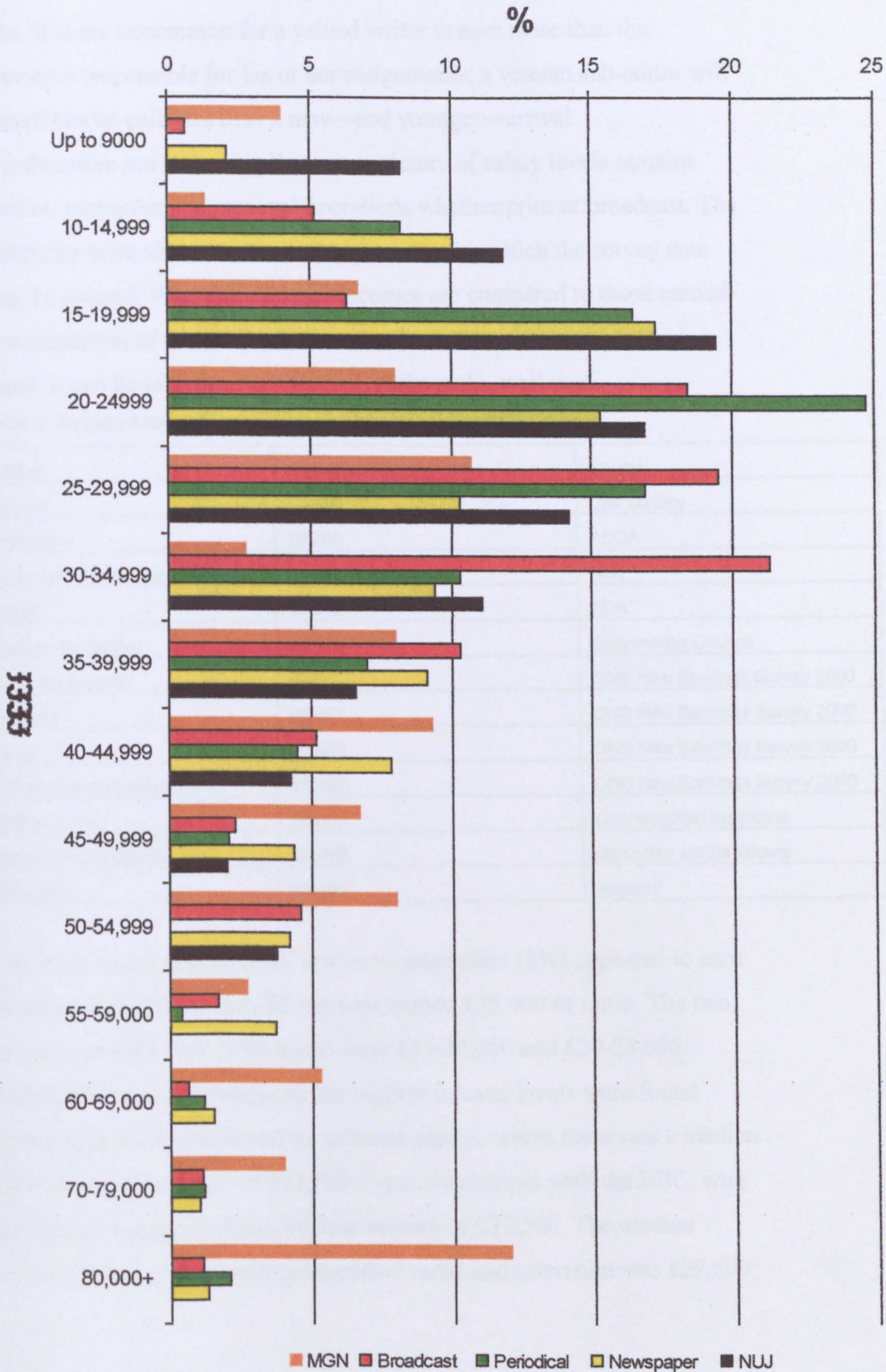
Assuming that prior to the election the Labour Party was understood to be advocating socialist policies, British journalists would seem to be significantly more ‘leftish’ than their counterparts. Given the refusals to answer (6%) and the *don’t knows* (13%) the proportion of them voting Labour could easily have increased. Even so, journalists’ attitudes to a wide range of issues about which a sample of respondents to the *News Breed* survey were questioned seemed robustly pragmatic, showing some reserve about outright socialism (67%). Most were in favour of free enterprise (88%) and competition (95%) business profit (83%) and free trade (90%) but also of a minimum wage (78%) trade unions (90%) and public housing (97%). It might be thought that the outlook apparent from this sampling formed a microcosmic reflection of the attitudes of the first Blair government.

Section 5: Income

As will be seen from the fieldwork analysed in Chapter 11, salary is not necessarily the most important consideration in assuring job satisfaction for a journalist. It will also be seen that an important proportion of each editorial sector earns income in addition to salary from journalistic activities outside regular employment—moonlighting. The survey questions were therefore about *income* rather than salary. Income might not always be the most significant factor in establishing either status or class but it must be considered an important determinant.

Nevertheless, it is *salary* that determines the market value of a journalist. Only a few waypoints exist by which to gauge the rate at which salary levels might have changed in real terms or otherwise during the period under study or how earnings might reflect the evaluation of other occupations with which journalists appear ready to compare themselves. Some of these are presented below.

Income from all sources



Since journalism has no universally accepted pay grades and no hierarchical pay structure, the salaries earned by individuals may merely reflect the market value of their particular skills at the time they took their jobs. It is not uncommon for a valued writer to earn more than the executive responsible for his or her assignments; a veteran sub-editor will sometimes be paid less than a new—and younger—arrival.

It is therefore not surprising that a true picture of salary levels remains elusive, particularly in regional operations whether print or broadcast. The following table also provides empirical data with which the survey data may be aligned. When journalists' incomes are compared to those earned in occupations to which they believe their own should be regarded as equal, it can be seen that they are not, in the main, well paid.

Table 31 Average salaries of occupations comparable to journalism 1995-96.

Position	Annual salary	Source
Solicitor	40,610	Law Society
Accountant	32,000	ACCA
Secondary school teacher	24,000	NUT
Dentist	38,000	BDA
Chartered engineer	36,000	Engineering Council
University lecturer	33,037	ONS New Earnings Survey 2000
Architect	29,451	ONS New Earnings Survey 2000
Nurse	20,683	ONS New Earnings Survey 2000
Civil Service executive officer	19,197	ONS New Earnings Survey 2000
Corporate PR	30,000	<i>Cosmopolitan</i> magazine
Provincial newspaper	20,000	Guardian Media Group
BBC news	29,000	<i>Which?</i>

The study found that, overall, few *news* journalists (2%) appeared to earn less than £10,000 but only 20 per cent earned £35,000 or more. The two largest earning bands (16% each) were £15-20,000 and £20-25,000.

During the period of fieldwork the highest income levels were found among journalists employed by national papers, where there was a median level (from all sources) of £37,500 a year. Journalists with the BBC, wire services and agencies had a median income of £32,500. The median income for journalists with independent radio and television was £27,500;

for regional newspaper journalists £17,500. For men, the median income was £32,500, for women £22,500 (See Chapter 10).

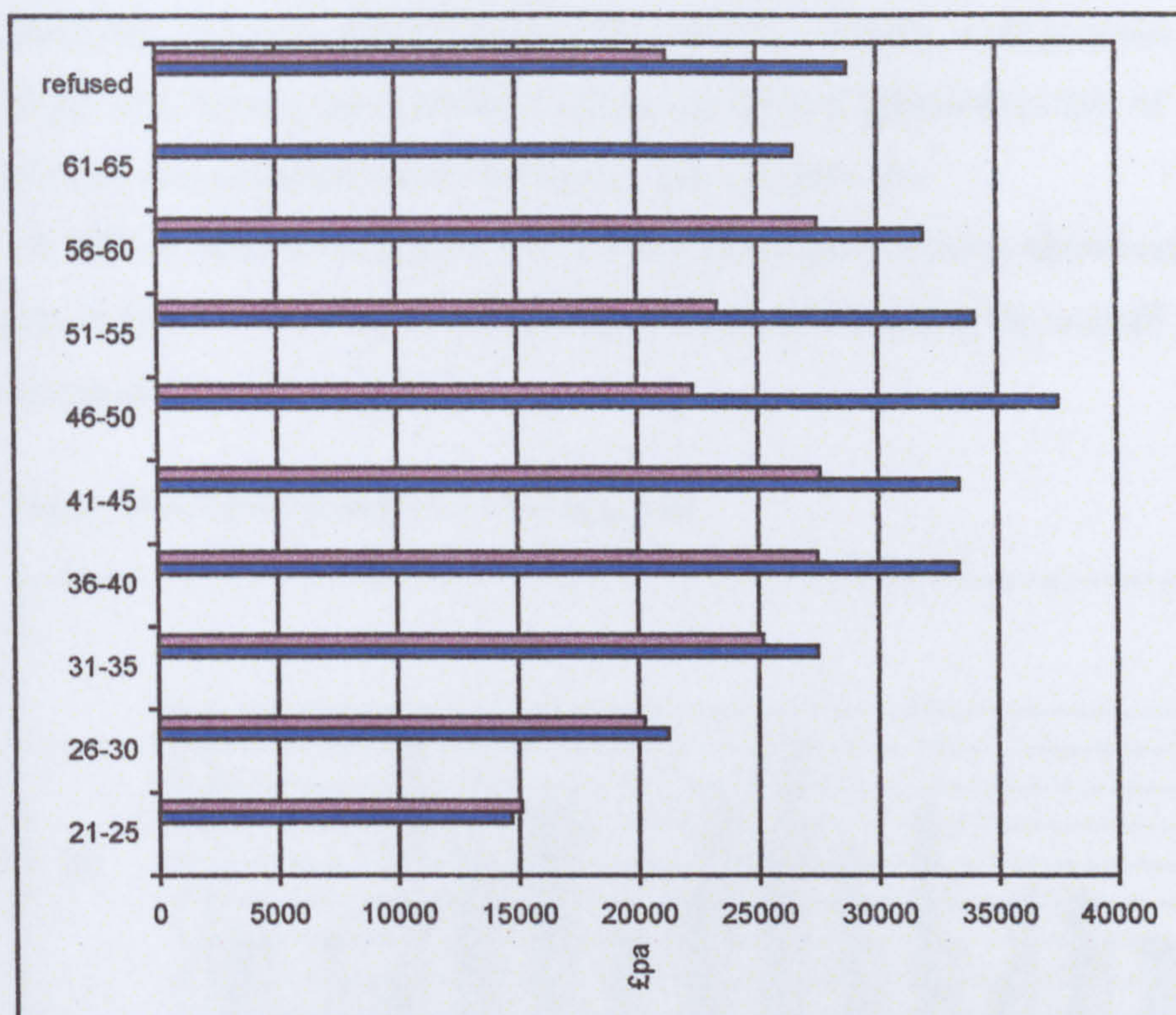
The table below shows 49.4 per cent of all journalists receiving £30,000 or less and 81 per cent £40,000 or less. The NUJ figures which are provided for contrast apply to the entire membership. Inclusion of the MGN factor gives an indication of the financial progress linked to the professional advancement of this identifiable cohort of well-educated, trained and experienced journalists and the chart that follows the Brethren salary levels can be seen relative to gender.

Table 32. Approximate annual income before tax from all sources in journalism.

£	Broadcast	Periodical	Newspaper	All	MGN	NUJ 1997 *
Up to 9,999	0.6	0.0	2.1	0.9	4	8.2
10,000-14,999	5.2	8.2	10.1	7.8	1.3	11.9
15,000-19,999	6.3	16.5	17.3	13.3	6.7	19.4
20,000-24,999	18.4	24.7	15.3	19.5	8	16.9
25,000-29,999	19.5	16.9	10.3	15.5	10.7	14.2
30,000-34,999	21.3	10.3	9.4	13.6	2.7	11.1
35,000-39,999	10.3	7.0	9.1	8.8	8	6.6
40,000-44,999	5.2	4.5	7.8	5.8	9.3	4.3
45,000-49,999	2.3	2.1	4.4	2.9	6.7	2.0
50,000-54,999	4.6	0.0	4.2	2.9	8	+£50,000
55,000-59,999	1.7	0.4	3.7	1.9	2.7	3.8%
60,000-69,000	0.6	1.2	1.5	1.1	5.3	
70,000-79,000	1.1	1.2	1.0	1.1	4	
80,000 +	1.1	2.1	1.3	1.5	12	
Refused	1.7	4.1	2.4	2.7	2.9	
	99.9	99.2	99.9	99.3	100	

At least at its lower levels, income is generally related to experience and therefore to age, although there are particular circumstances, as will be seen in Chapter 11, where particular conditions apply.

Chart 7. Male and female salaries in age bands.



All charts will use PINK for women; BLUE for men.

USA And Australian salaries

British salary levels do, however, compare favourably with those in the United States. The average pay of a journalist of five years experience in the USA in 1994 was \$31,131 (£19,468) and of an editor \$76,877 (£48,000). A 'cub' reporter was paid \$20,000 (£12,500). There were, however, major disparities. In the daily newspaper sector, the median was \$35,000 (£21,875) but in newsmagazines, a category without parallel in the UK, it was \$66,000 (£41,250). The median for television journalists was \$26,000 (£16,250).¹ The nine highest paid journalists in the country with one exception received \$100,000 (£62,500). The exception, a columnist, got a record \$362,000 (£226,250).² British journalists of comparable standing would not find these sums impressive.

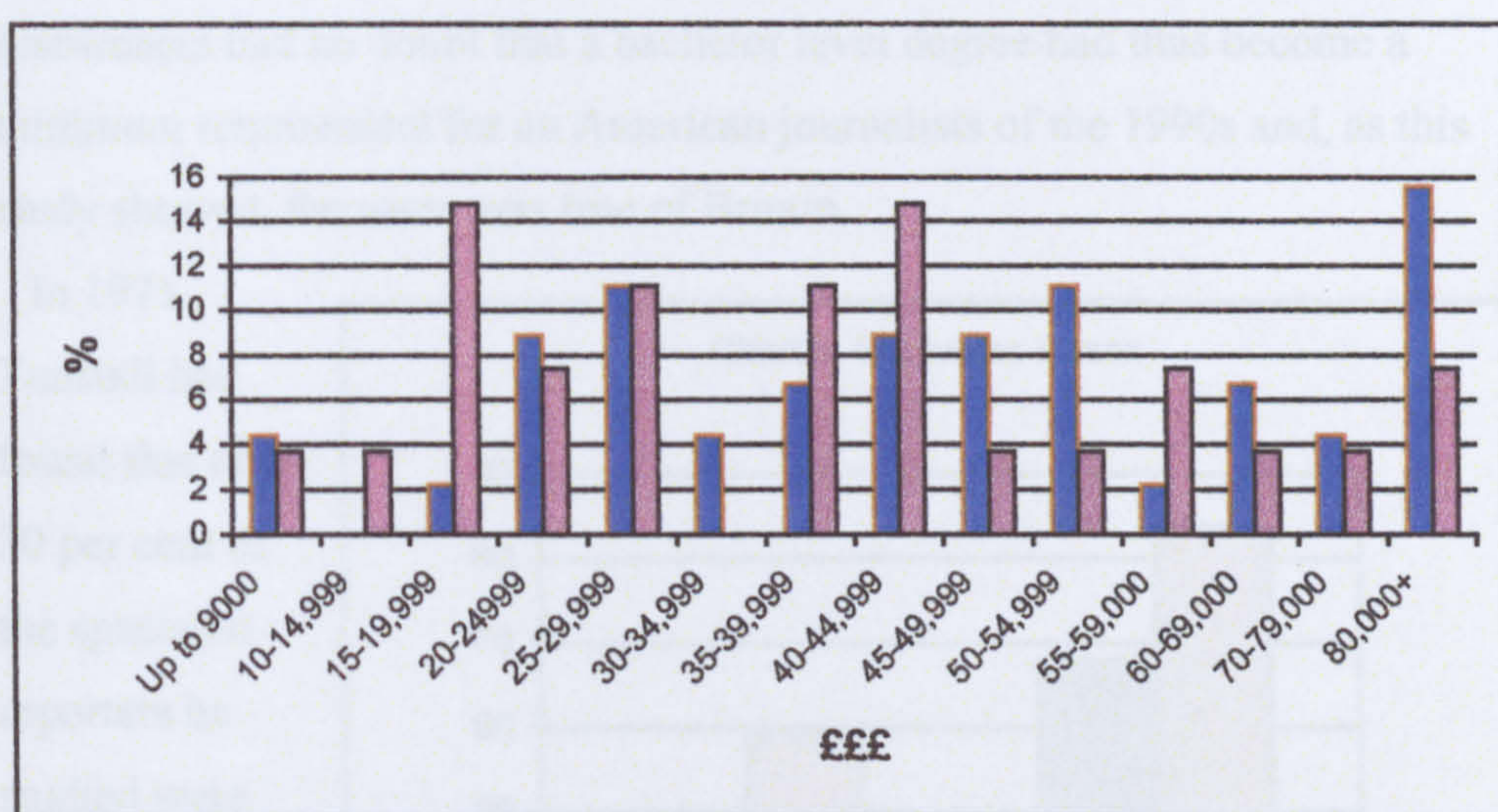
¹ Weaver and Wilhoit 1996:92

² Press Gazette 28.11.1994:5

The Henningham survey, like the ones for this study, enquired about income from all journalism sources. Responses indicated a median of A\$45,000 for men (£16,071) and A\$35,000 for women, a differential of 22 per cent which, Henningham noted, was almost identical to that of professional occupations in Australia (See Chapter 10).

It will be clear from Charts 7 and 8 that although evidence elsewhere may suggest a levelling out of gender income differentials the overall discrepancy remains evident.

Chart 8. MGN Plymouth Brethren salaries by gender



Section 6: Education

Quite apart from any implications of class or status, education at all levels reflects the most significant change in the profile of the British journalist, even though the graduation of the shift defies tabulation. This project established that in the mid-1990s period of fieldwork only two per cent of all journalists were without any standard secondary educational qualification. In 1955-56 the proportion of unqualified trainees was 25 per cent (NCTJ). If only by extrapolation, this represents a significant change across that 40-year period.

Among newspaper journalists the present-day proportion of those with *no secondary educational credential at all* was five per cent but reached only 0.6 per cent among broadcast journalists and 0.4 per cent of the periodical sector. A levels in varying number were held by 86.5 per cent of

the journalist population, a huge increase on the 1970s picture presented in Chapter 7. Overall, two-thirds had three or more A levels.

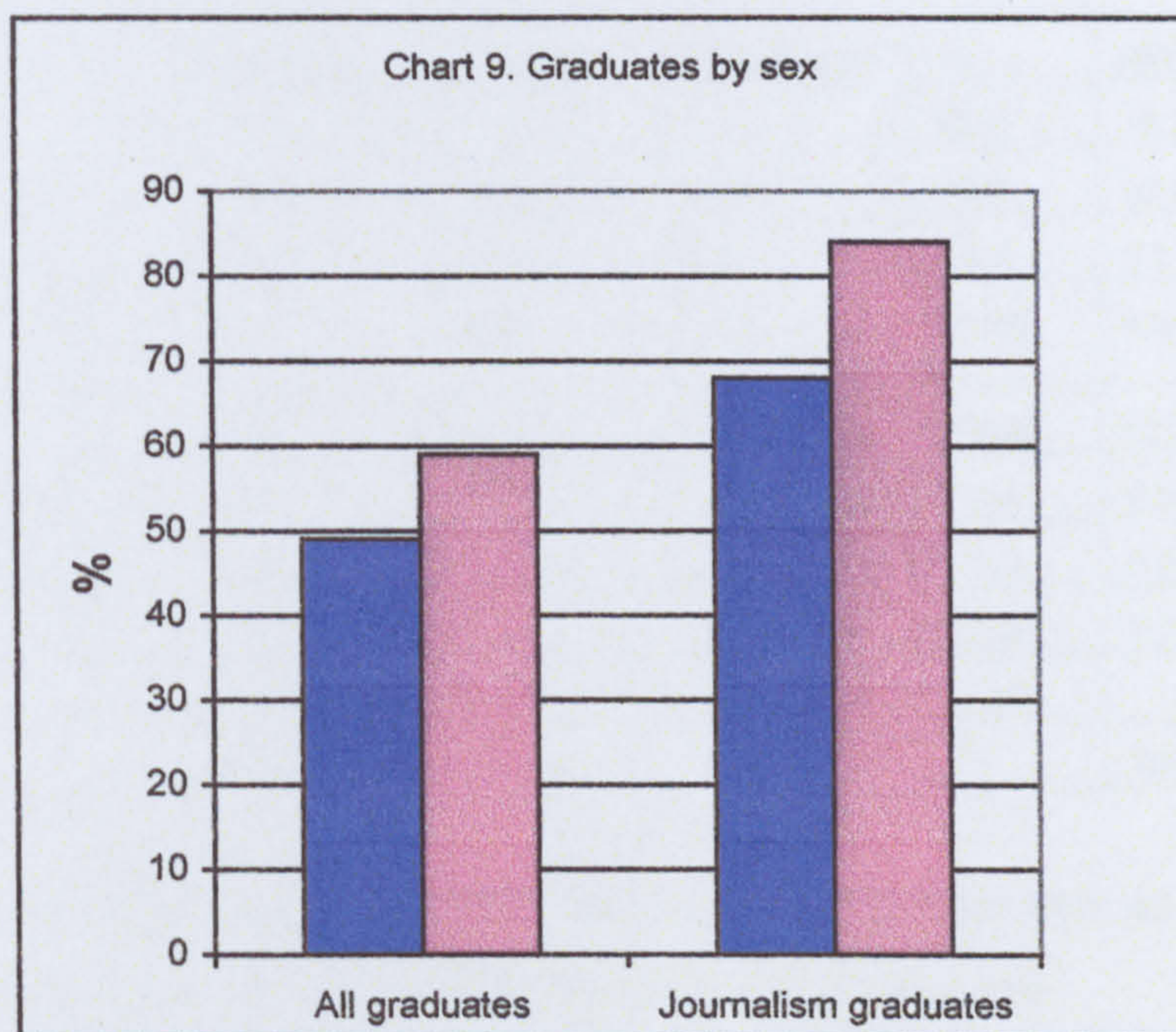
Table 33. Which of the following do you have?

% 'A' Levels	Broadcast	Periodical	Newspaper	All
None	11.6	9.9	19	13.5
3 >	67.3	74.9	57.6	66.6
< 3	21.1	15.2	23.4	19.9
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Of Weaver and Wilhoit's 1992 journalists, 82 per cent held degrees (by 1996 that proportion had increased to 94 per cent'). The American researchers had no doubt that a bachelor level degree had thus become a minimum requirement for an American journalists of the 1990s and, as this study showed, the same was true of Britain.

In 1971

Tunstall had found that only 30 per cent of the specialist reporters he studied were graduates (and it could be assumed that this group would include those most



likely to be), while 20 years before the fieldwork period only 17 per cent of print editors had a degree.² In 1985, 35 per cent of *national* newspaper editors had held a degree, which while not a comparable statistic does

¹ Winds of Change 00

² Royal Commission 1977

suggest a trend. By 1995 that proportion had risen to 55 per cent, an increase in that category by 20 per cent in 10 years (Dugdale 1995)¹.

Although not quite 77 per cent of British journalists had been to university by the mid-1990s, 83.7 per cent of them held degrees (including degrees in Journalism and Media Studies). Of Henningham's Australian journalists of 1992 55 per cent had attended university or college but only 39 per cent had degrees although another 16 per cent had received 'some tertiary' education and four per cent held diplomas. British degree holders were split by gender 45-55 per cent, women predominating.

The largest proportion (33%) of journalists went to a redbrick university. The next most important institutions were colleges of higher education (16%) and the former polytechnics (11%).

Table 33. Did you attend a university or college of higher or further education?

	Broadcast	Periodical	Newspaper	All	MGN
No	21.3	14.8	32.9	23.0	18.7
'Redbrick' university	36.8	41.2	23.5	50.6	33.3
HE or FE college	16.1	11.9	20.5	16.1	2.7
Poly technic or post-1991 university	10.3	15.6	7.3	11.06	4.0
Oxford/Cambridge	6.9	4.9	7.3	6.36	17.3
Scottish/Irish university	5.7	2.9	4.6	4.4	4.0
Fine Arts college/institute	0.0	3.3	0.3	1.2	0.0
Foreign university	2.3	3.3	3.1	2.9	1.3
Open University	0.6	2.1	0.7	1.13	
	100.0	100.0	100.0		100.0

One third of journalists who completed higher education studies took an arts degree. The most notable alternative discipline was science, the majority of graduates from which in the periodical sector. The tabulation below excludes graduates in Journalism or Media Studies who are accounted for separately in Table 35.

¹ In 1963 the entire staff of the *Daily Mirror* and *Sunday Mirror* included only one university graduate—an Oxford man. Personal knowledge.

Table 34. Do you have a bachelor level degree (including Oxford/Cambridge MA) in a discipline other than Journalism or Media Studies.

%	Broadcast	Periodical	Newspaper	All
No	19.0	16.9	26.1	20.6
Arts	36.2	44.0	21.5	33.9
Economics	5.2	2.5	5.7	4.4
Science	3.4	9.5	2.3	3.0
Business/Commerce	2.9	0.8	1.3	1.6
Fine Art	1.7	2.9	0.8	1.8
Engineering	0.0	0.4	1.3	0.5
Law	0.0	0.4	1.0	0.5
Education	1.1	0.0	0.3	0.5
Medicine	0.6	0.0	0.0	0.2
Other ▼	9.2	7.8	8.1	8.4

▲ Includes foreign

Journalism awards

Only 40 per cent of American graduate journalists of the 1990s had majored in Journalism, a proportion that had not varied greatly since the Johnstone surveys 20 years earlier. But if degrees in Communication, Telecommunications, Radio and Television were also considered the proportion became 56 per cent. In Australia, the proportion of graduates whose main field of university study had been Journalism was 33 per cent; another eight per cent had studied Communications: about 12 per cent of the whole. The Weaver and Wilhoit data also showed that 77 per cent of journalists with one year or less of experience in all news media had graduated either in Journalism or some form of media studies (1996: 33). Even considering the discrepancies between those two countries, such results suggest that where journalism education has a longer and more stable history than in Britain, degree courses in journalism, media and communications are well on the way to becoming an entry norm. A considerable attraction both to students and eventual employers is that at least a year of pre-entry preparation is foregone.

At the time of the surveys underpinning this study, British graduates from degree courses in journalism or media studies were not sufficiently numerous to make a large impression on the job market. If anything, media studies graduates appeared to have made more headway than journalism

graduates, particularly in broadcasting; although the greatest penetration of media graduates was in the periodical sector. Some 10 per cent of all (nominal) graduates also held a postgraduate diploma in journalism; rather fewer a postgraduate diploma in radio journalism. Those with either of these were most apparent in the broadcast sector, which is plainly the most receptive to such credentials; the newspaper sector seemingly the least.

Table 35. Have you received any of the following?

%	Broadcast	Periodical	Newspaper	All
PgDip Journalism ‡	16.7	8.7	7.1	10.8
PgDip Radio Journalism ‡	10.1	0.0	0.0	3.4
PgDip Media Studies	0.7	1.0	1.2	0.4
BA/BSc Journalism	0.7	3.1	1.4	1.7
BA/BSc Media Studies	2.9	3.6	1.2	2.6
None of these	70.3	84.1	89.3	81.2
*Duplication possible	101.40	100.50	100.20	100.00

‡ Would include in-company and other private diplomas.

Postgraduate achievement is slightly more evident in other areas, suggesting a fairly high level of diplomas granted by private and in-company training schemes. Only about eight per cent of graduates held research degrees or were pursuing them. In America the proportion was 11 per cent and in Australia four per cent.

Table 37. Have you received any additional or postgraduate qualifications?

%	Broadcast	Periodical	Newspaper	All	News Breed
No	70.8	76.2	84.5	77.2	
Second BA/BSc	0.0	0.5	0.0	0.0	
Masters degree	5.8	9.6	5.0	6.8	
PhD/DPhil	0.0	0.5	0.7	0.4	
Postgrad/professional diploma ‡	21.9	12.6	7.4	13.9	
Other	2.2	1.9	2.4	2.2	
Duplication possible	100.7	101.3	100	100	

‡ Would include in-company and other private diplomas.

Table 36. Q.65: Are you studying now for a degree or diploma?

%	Broadcast	Periodical	Newspaper	All	News Breed
No	97.1	96.3	97.4	97.0	
Diploma ‡	1.7	1.2	0.5	1.1	
First degree	0.6	1.2	1.3	0.9	
Higher degree	0.6	1.2	0.8	0.9	
	100	99.9	100	99.9	

‡ Would include in-company and other private diplomas.

Section 6: Relationships

Despite a widespread impression to the contrary it does not seem that journalism as a career is hard on marriages. Nearly half the journalist population has never married and 43.3 per cent had married but once. Only five per cent altogether were widowed, separated or divorced. Less than four per cent of all journalists had been married a second time and only one in 200 a third time.

Table 38. What is your marital or partnership status?

%	Broadcast	Periodical	Newspaper	All	MGN	USA▼	Aust▼
Never married	43.1	63.0	35.2	47.1	12.3	43.5	42.0
Married once	46.6	31.3	52.1	43.3	61.6		51.0
Married twice	4.6	2.5	4.7	3.9	9.6		
Twice +	0.0	0.0	0.5	0.5	0		
Widowed	0.0	0.0	0.7	0.7	1.4		
Divorced	3.4	2.1	2.8	2.7	5.6		8.0
Separated	5.1	2.5	5.6	1.6	8.2		
Refused	0.6	0.8	0.2	.5	1.4		
	100.0	100.0	99.0	100.0	100.0		100.0

▲ Australian categories: *single, married, was married*. US: *married*.

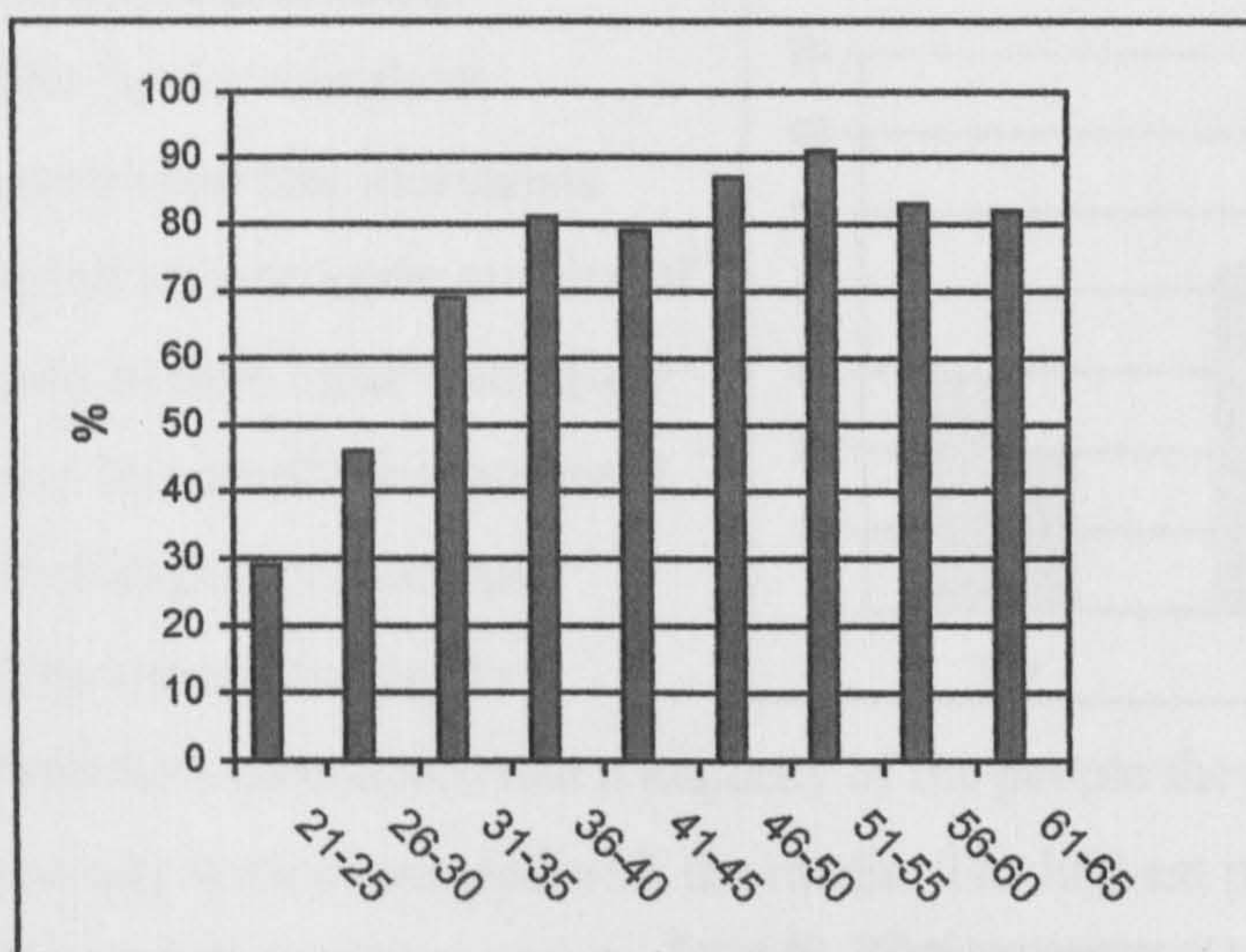
In the 1990s marriage had become merely one form of co-habitation and nearly two-thirds (63.15%) of all journalists—55.1 per cent of women and 71.2 per cent of men—lived with a spouse or partner of the opposite sex. Only 1.1% of women and 1.4 per cent of men lived with a partner of the opposite sex. Even so, the rate of cohabitation among *unmarried* journalists appeared to be below the national norm of 33 per cent.¹ Those

¹ General Household Survey 1996.

journalists who live alone or in shared accommodation were more likely to be women (41.2%) than men (24.2%).

The largest proportion of married journalists is in newspapers and the smallest in periodicals. This is another of several distinguishing characteristics in the periodical sector which may reflect the high level of women working in it and their relatively youth. The female age factor would also have to be considered in assessing the pattern of parenthood among journalists and also that of divorce, both of which are dealt with more extensively in Chapter 11.

Chart 10. All journalists living with spouse/partner.



In the news sector generally, reputedly the hardest on marital accord, there was considerable difference in marital status between men and

women journalists. Male journalists had much the same marriage rate as males in the British population, but female journalists were much more likely to be single than are women in the general population thus less likely to be divorced.

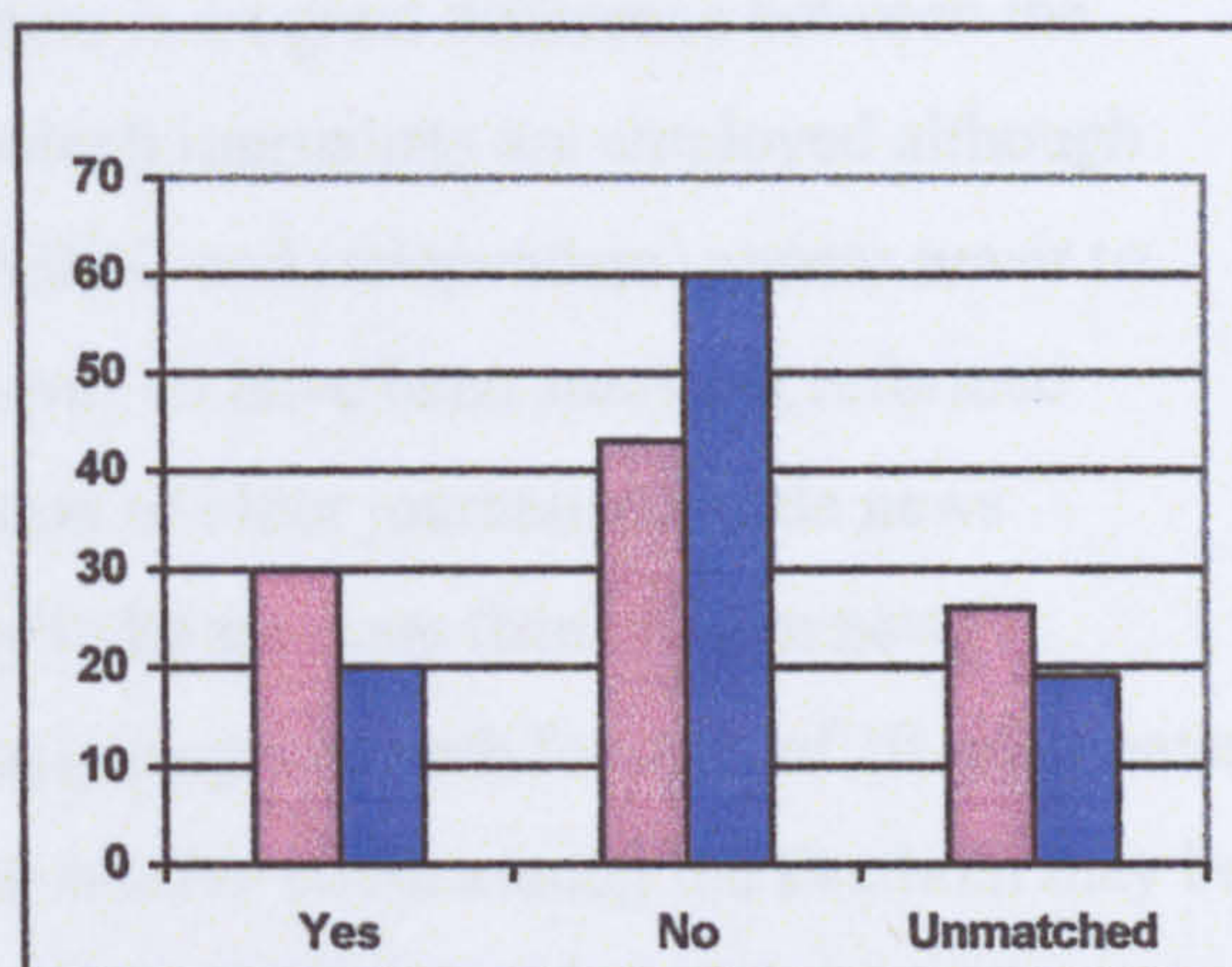
Table 39. Marital status, general UK population (aged 20-65) and news journalists. ¹

%	All males	Male journalists	All females	Female journalists
Single	28.5	30.8	21.2	53.3
Married	64.1	61.9	66.6	39.1
Widowed	1.0	0.4	3.8	1.1
Divorced	6.4	6.7	8.4	6.5

¹ Central Statistical Office 1993

The widespread impression that journalists mix and mate predominantly with their own kind is partly sustained by the survey—25 per cent of all journalists had spouses or partners who were journalists or who worked in the media, the highest proportion in broadcasting (30.5%). Considered together with the finding that only two-thirds of all journalists say they live with a spouse or partner (Chart 10) this becomes some 38.8 per cent of the partnered whole—an impressive showing of the extent to which journalists gravitate towards each other domestically.

Chart 11. Partner a journalist?



Acquaintanceship

The further anecdotal impression that journalists spend an inordinate amount of time in each other's company was less amply demonstrated. Well below half of those interviewed during the

fieldwork considered that a majority of the people they mingled with socially were connected with the media. The highest proportion of those that did was in the periodical sector. Only 19.6 per cent of the general sample thought that half or more of their social contacts worked in the same organisation as themselves. The highest proportion was in broadcasting, another distinctive characteristic of this sector.

Table 40. What percentage of people seen socially are connected in some way with journalism or the media?

Broadcast	Periodical	Newspaper	All
40.0	44.0	38.0	40.6

Table 41. What percentage of people seen socially work for the same organisation?

Broadcast	Periodical	Newspaper	All
25.0	14.0	20.0	19.6

However, of the mature and relatively homogenous group of the MGN respondents, 48.6 per cent said that more than half the people they saw socially were connected in some way with

journalism or other media. The ratio of men to women saying this was 2:1. Of the same group of respondents, 58.2 per cent said that at least 10 per cent of people they saw socially worked for the same organisation. These statistics suggest support for the contention by women that male journalists function more actively within a network which might connect them more strongly with organisations other than their own. An alternative reading might be that men put more time into maintaining acquaintances.

Section 6: Habits

Smoking

Where this habit is concerned there is no great difference between the types of media organisation in which journalists are employed although most broadcast journalists (both BBC and independent) appear never to have smoked. Most journalists over 40 have been smokers; reformed smokers include a large proportion of older journalists. Male news journalists are much more likely to be smokers than women news journalists. Six out of 10 women (compared with four out of 10 men) have never smoked. The high *Former smoker* count among the Brethren may be taken to reflect the wisdom of their age group.

Table 42. Where do you stand on smoking?

	Broadcast	Periodical	Newspaper	All	MGN
Smoker	24.1	32.1	26.9	27.7	21.6
Former smoker	26.4	28.0	31.3	28.56	41.9
Never smoked	49.4	39.9	41.9	43.7	36.5
	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Among news journalists, 50 per cent of women have never smoked compared to 37.2 per cent of men. 22.6 per cent of women were smokers at the time of the survey, as were 31 per cent of men. The rest are in the category of 'former smokers'. Women journalists in the periodical sector are slightly more likely than men never to have smoked (42% to 38%), and if they have ever smoked, they are more likely than men to have stopped. Thirty-two per cent of women describe themselves as former smokers in

comparison with 23 per cent of men, with 27 per cent of women smoking currently, in comparison with 39 per cent of men.

Drinking

Very few journalists of either sex abstain from drinking alcohol, but those who drink more than average are likely to be male. The category of *regular but moderate* drinking attracted an equal proportion of responses from men and women journalists—six out of 10. Those of both sexes who are most inclined towards drink are in their late 40s, their late 30s or are over 55. Journalists in their 20s are relatively abstemious. Overall, a lower proportion are teetotal than the national average but only in the periodical sector did journalists class themselves above the national figure in the *higher than average* category. It is likely that this reflects the close relations that many journalists in this sector maintain with advertisers and promotional sources and the consequent exchange of hospitality.

Table 43. Categorise your alcohol consumption.

%	Broadcast	Periodical	Newspaper	All	National *	MGN
Nil	2.9	5.8	3.4	4.03	10.5	1.3
Occasional	19.5	14.4	21.5	18.46		16
Regular but moderate	66.7	52.3	55.9	58.3		54.7
Higher than average	10.3	26.3	18.9	18.5	20.0	28
Refused	0.6	1.2	0.3	0.7		0
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0		100.0

*Approximate categories 1994-95 *General Household Survey Part 7*

Newsdrinking

Above average drinking is more common in a news environment and in newspapers rather than among broadcast news journalists—especially among chief sub-editors, ‘back-bench’ staff and section editors. This factor, at least, is true to the traditional image, even if the degree may not be as acute as generally assumed. National newspapers employ the highest proportion of heavy drinkers, followed by provincial newspapers.

However, newspaper feature writers, a large proportion of which are women, appear to be the most abstemious group.

Asked to classify their alcohol consumption more than half the news journalists of both sexes chose the *regular but moderate* category. On either side of this, men were slightly more likely than women to describe their drinking as *higher than average* (23.2% of men compared to 16.4% of women) while women were more likely than men to describe their drinking as *occasional* (24.1% of women and 17.3% of men). In the periodical and broadcast sectors the largest proportions of both sexes (56% of women and 47% of men) also categorised their alcohol consumption as *regular but moderate*.

Men are more likely to appear in the extreme categories: eight per cent of men never drink in comparison with four per cent of women, whereas 32 per cent of men categorise their alcohol consumption as *higher than average* in comparison with 22 per cent of women. Women are more likely to be in the *occasional* category (17% of women and 11% of men). It does not seem possible to relate these findings to the resentment of the male-dominated pub culture reported by Smith, which are discussed in Chapter 10. Demonstrably, most women journalists drink—although that is not to say that they drink in the company of men. Nor is it to say, as also discussed below, that since Smith's findings in the mid-1970s they have not developed female networks that are as closely cemented by mutual hospitality as the male ones they then complained of.

Summary conclusions

The ramifications into which the question of profession/professionalism leads tempts an investigator to follow Leggat and leave the argument to historians or accept Isaacs's judgement that the argument need not apply to journalists. If the notion of profession could be considered separately from that of class or status, that might be possible but the 'profession' model is too serviceable to discard, since if British journalists collectively were to regard themselves as a functioning profession it could be an important step towards exercising control over ethical and other standards of practice independently of any requirements by employers.

Also, the further question of occupational—professional—socialisation makes the conclusions arrived at by Oleson and Whittaker (1970:180) compelling: that much as the shift of certain occupations into professions had taken place to accommodate the needs and aspirations of social groups in evolving industrial societies, so the definition of ‘profession’ had come to reflect public regard and therefore a significant social reality. Despite the varying views on what constitutes a profession, the reality at the end of the twentieth century may be that if what an individual does for a living is taken by him or herself and their social equals to be a profession it is *ipso facto* a profession. An aspect of social reality illuminated by this reflection is the discovery, made in the course of the study, of the extent to which today’s journalists perceive themselves to be engaged in a profession; the extent to which they appeared to understand what that might imply is less clear.

—The data on relationships suggests that in these regards journalists are less *domestically* inclined than their equivalents in the general population but to an extent whose significance could only be divined by comparison with their coevals.

—Similarly with the data on personal habits, although even the modest drinking and smoking levels suggest some lack of caution.

—The relative income of male and female journalists may be comparable to the overall national wage-gender differential¹ but in an occupation functioning on the principle that people of similar experience performing similar tasks should receive an equal reward, it is indefensible. More details in Chapter 10.

—The details established about the education levels of modern journalists appear to reinforce the observations of Andrews and Boyd-Barrett that it would have been difficult in modern Britain in recent years to find an aspiring journalist without the minimum educational qualification required, at least by the NCTJ.

¹ Equal Opportunities Commission 1998

Chapter 9

Journalists at work

*Right, lad, I'll now give you your first lesson in newspapers. You're to forget everything, and I mean everything, you learned at university.—News editor's greeting to Donald Trelford, later editor of the *Observer* 1975-1993 on his newspaper office debut in 1961.*

So the news is gathered on the telephone and from the television screen, the background filled in from a databank, and a new generation of journalists interview and write about people they never meet ... they never meet each other any more. The gossip, the discussion, the argument, the exchange of information that is such an important part of helping a writer form a view that will add dimension to his reporting is gone ... with the demise of Fleet Street went the sense of adventure that was a vital part of it. As today's young reporters plough through Docklands traffic to their aseptic open-plan offices they do not dream that they might soon be on their way to join an expedition to the heartland of New Guinea. They know where they will spend the rest of their day—in front of their computer screens.—Phillip Knightley.¹

Section 1: Tusa factors

In attempting to establish a focus for the aspects of occupational practice and comportment most relevant to journalists that can be gleaned from this project it seems appropriate to begin with the factors mitigating against journalism as a career that Tusa invited students to consider in 1991 (p.12). It is also germane to examine the ways in which journalists regard

¹ *A Hack's Progress*, Jonathan Cape, London, 1997.

themselves and their work, together with the influences that affect those attitudes.

The two points of view encapsulated in the quotations above are not irreconcilable. The old-time newsdesk man (it was almost certain to have been a man) and the computer-bound reporter of the 1990s share a set of values about much of what they do that would rarely be disputed, even though they might personify different ways of going about it. The attitude of the old news editor to the reporter would appeal not only to the NCTJ mind but to the pragmatic interactional approach of the Chicago School of occupational sociology (Becker 1961, Oleson and Whittaker 1968) that Parry scrutinised in 1988 in her analysis of journalism training. In this framework, everything a journalist needed to know in order to function professionally could be imparted by journalists in a journalistic environment. This may be taken to represent the NCTJ/NS training 'in' outlook.

The second view, that of a widely experienced 'pencil and notebook' reporter, conditioned to the values of third quarter of the century, reflects the antithetical 'functionalist' approach in which the practitioner is distinguished, for a definition of his or her role, by a reliance on 'traits', the characteristic attributes of a traditional profession which may have been acquired not merely by experience but by education and pre-formed expectations as well. To some extent, at least, this suggests the pre-entry education 'for' stance which, combined with practical training, is now offered by universities. The effect of all these influences can be seen at work in this chapter.

It has already been shown that Tusa might have been correct about journalism not being a way of making money, if it is to be considered against some of the occupations to which it has been compared, although in spite of the lower figures in the range tabulated in Chapter 8, the overall levels of income place the majority of journalists in the top ten per cent of UK earners.¹ The other hazards to which he drew the attention of his

¹ Inland Revenue reports average 1999 male income £23,000. Top 10% has pre-tax income of £34,315; top 5% £42,600; top 1% £91,400.

audience were ‘increasing casualisation’ and lack of job security, considerations which, fertilised by the retrenchments and redundancies referred to in earlier chapters, soon arise in any discussion of career prospects among journalists.

At the time of fieldwork, speedily evolving technology and rising equipment and newsprint costs, had brought about a high level of turmoil in journalistic job markets. In 1994 an employment ‘churn’ of 17 per cent was apparent and yet, subsequently, the number of journalists employed increased, even in individual operations; although this was frequently due to higher output caused by increased pagination in the case of print or its equivalent in broadcasting. One inference was that the abundance of aspirants trained, at least partly, in the proliferating college and university courses had, in the absence of any agreed or enforceable standards of performance or entry, tempted employers to replace seasoned but costly employees with younger, cheaper personnel. There was ample empirical evidence to support that view but the study data suggested that while the employment landscape might indeed be overcrowded, it was less bleak than many of its inhabitants supposed.

Many journalists other than Tulsa feared that dilution of the workforce by freelances and casuals would be a likely consequence of the widespread de-recognition of the NUJ by employers and staff ‘rationalisation’, at least by comparison with the closed shop era referred to in Chapter 5. Those fears appear to have been justified, although there are balancing factors.

As suggested by earlier references, the freelance segment of British journalism plays a singularly important role in the media industries but one that is as difficult to qualitate—as its practitioners are to quantify. The American and Australian surveys ignored this segment of their populations, finding it too difficult to define or access. The International Federation of Journalists, however, surveyed 130 journalist organisations in 98 countries and concluded that throughout Europe 23 per cent of journalists were freelance and the proportion continued to grow (IFJ 1999:5).

There is indeed a difficulty with definition. A journalist who attends an office as a sub-editor or performs some other function for a fraction of the time that might be required of a full-time employee, or a journalist hired by the day as a reporter, is not a freelance in the same sense as a journalist who makes a living contributing articles for publication or items for broadcast—or earns additional income by moonlighting.

The 10 per cent of journalists ‘caught’ in newsrooms by the main surveys who were not full-time employees are better described as *casuals* or *journeymen* and it is evident from the proportion of the workforce they represent that employers depend on their availability. It is likely that some casuals, particularly the younger ones who may, in effect, be probationers, would prefer permanent jobs. Some, though, work on a semi-permanent basis by preference. Many would be experienced practitioners who have benefited from redundancy settlements or be drawing early pensions who perhaps divide their time between a ‘portfolio’ of part-time arrangements.

A journalist employed part-time may still be identified by that employment; a freelance is entirely a self-proclaimed entity. The NUJ has long since abandoned a ‘means test’ for admission to the Freelance Branch under which an applicant had to show that the greater part of his or her income came from journalism. To resort to yet another analogy with the acting profession, just as a person might be admitted to membership of Equity, on the basis of a single walk-on part, and could thereby describe themselves as an actor for as long as they went on paying their dues, anyone could lay claim to the description of freelance journalist (and to NUJ membership) on the basis of a few article in a local newspaper. At the other end of the freelance spectrum a sought-after writer might enjoy instant access to a circle of powerful editors and earn more in a year than those responsible for commissioning the work.

For the purposes of the project surveys, casual employees working on media premises were interviewed on the same basis as regular employees. Contributor freelances, however, posed a problem not merely of identification but of quantitative *representability* as cases within the journalism population. These independent entrepreneurs confound even

the ILO, which although perspicacious about the journalists of the first half of the twentieth century could only, at its end, categorise a freelance as a sort of contract worker. The European Union (EU) officially classes freelance journalists as being in 'atypical employment'. A member of the EU Economic and Social Committee puzzling over their status suggested that they were merely journalists who had failed to find even part-time work.¹

An important determinant in structuring the sample frames for the study surveys was the exclusion of potential respondents whose status as

Table 44. Reason for becoming Freelance.

Career decision	68.8
Voluntary redundancy	6.2
Domestic pressure	6.6
Involuntary redundancy	6.2
Sacked: no payoff	0.0
Other	12.0
Total	100.0

freelances—and therefore as journalists—was merely nominal. The sample subframes included only freelances known to be *active*.

Consultations with magazine and newspaper editors suggested that while there

might be thousands of self-proclaimed contributor freelances, it was likely that at any given time not more than 200 of these earned an annual income equal to the median salary of an employed journalist. A stratified array of editors agreed to forward an augmented questionnaire to a random selection of their regular freelance contributors which was aimed at testing the view (not confined to EU bureaucrats) that they had been forced into freelance work by the vagaries of the job market. The responses to these questions designed specifically for freelances clearly indicated that the majority had made a career decision to operate as individual entrepreneurs, or at least had benefited from whatever circumstances had converted them into one [Appendix A2].

Would you prefer a staff or a contract job for the same income?

No 68.8 Yes 31.2

¹ H.C.H. Van den Burgh, European Federation of Journalists meeting, Copenhagen, November 1997.

This is an issue of particular relevance to women journalists and will be dealt with in greater detail in Chapter 10.

Terms of employment

While the project surveys could map the journalism population into employment categories, it is not possible to see how the overall pattern might differ from that of the past, save for the estimates made when the population and its professional habitat would have been very different. In the 1990s, nearly three out of four journalists (73.5%) *working in offices* appeared to be securely employed on an open-ended basis (72% male; 74% female).¹ Six per cent had contracts of 12 months or less and another 8.8 per cent contracts of one or two years. Nevertheless, most of them (56%) expected to be in the same or a similar job five years hence. The remaining 12 per cent would include, in addition to casual and part-time employees, a mere two per cent representing the proportion which might expect to reach the customary retirement age of 65 while still working, or who anticipated redundancy within the five-year period. Variations were marked: the broadcasters' response reflecting the short contracts prevalent in that sector; the periodical sector showing the highest proportion of part-time work. The high *casual* and short-contract response from the Brethren reflects a career fragmentation that remains open to interpretation: for reasons noted above, accomplished journalists are more likely to be in this category from choice.

Table 45. What are your terms of employment or length of contract?

%	Broadcast	Periodical	Newspapers	All	MGN
Indefinite or +10 years	58.0	77.4	85.3	73.5	44.0
3-5 years	1.7	0.4	0.8	8.8	4.0
1-2 years	18.4	3.3	4.7		5.3
Less than 12 months	9.2	4.9	4.1	6.0	21.3
Casuals	12.6	14	4.9	10.5	24.0
	100.0	100.0	100.0	98.8	98.6

¹ NUJ 1994 survey showed 70% of media membership in 'secure' jobs.

In analysing the study data, an effort was made to correlate changes of employer on the part of journalists as a means of measuring career progression through an occupational structure in which the horizontal dimension is stronger than the vertical. The experience of the mature MGN group suggested that the category of *five or six* job changes throughout a career seemed an optimum number in terms of pursuing personal fulfilment and *three or four* job changes as a means of increasing pay. By the time the journalists responding to the general surveys had reached the median age of 36.1 they had, on average, changed jobs 4.2 times. But 50 per cent had changed no more than three times. Only six per cent had had ten or more jobs. Among the Brethren, only 8.3 per cent recorded eight or more jobs and 26 per cent only three or fewer. Overall, the *five or six* job-change band logged in 29 per cent of all journalists and the *seven or eight* band—the next highest group of those prioritising job satisfaction as a reason for moving on—applied to 21 per cent. But virtually all journalists acknowledged the largest single factor in being tempted away from a job as payment; only two per cent were prepared regarded it as *not too important*. Fringe benefits were also *very* or *fairly* important in 59 per cent of cases. This pattern of movement does not contribute to the image of journalists as footloose, but a change of employer every four and a half years on average does suggest a higher degree of mobility than most professionals experience.¹

Once their careers are established, journalists do not seem readily to switch from one media sector to another as a main source of employment. Only three per cent expected to be working in a different medium within five years from the time they were interviewed. Forty-two per cent expected to be with the same organisation, another 14 per cent in a larger organisation within the same medium and one per cent in a smaller one. One per cent intended to be writing books or scripts for a living. Fewer than five percent wanted to go into public relations. These responses contained important variations of gender and sector that will be scrutinised

¹ The 'freelances' surveyed by the IFJ averaged 18 employers in 16 years.

in the following chapters, as will aspects of job *dis*-satisfaction discernable in the responses which particularly affected women journalists.

Once again, for want of comparative data, the immediate relevance of statistical evidence must be limited. But the impression of job satisfaction—perhaps even of complacency—outweighs the intimations of discontent and disillusionment that was conveyed by some responses. Generally, journalists displayed a high level of job satisfaction, 84 per cent reporting themselves *very satisfied* or *fairly satisfied* with their present job, compared to fewer than 17 per cent who were *somewhat dissatisfied* or *very dissatisfied*.

Section 2: Career choice.

It is a reasonable assumption that many journalists, particularly those who think of themselves as pursuing a vocation, were strongly attracted to the occupation long before they had any experience of it and that the decision to take it up had been manifest early in life. Only ten per cent of the survey respondents claimed to have become journalists more or less by accident.

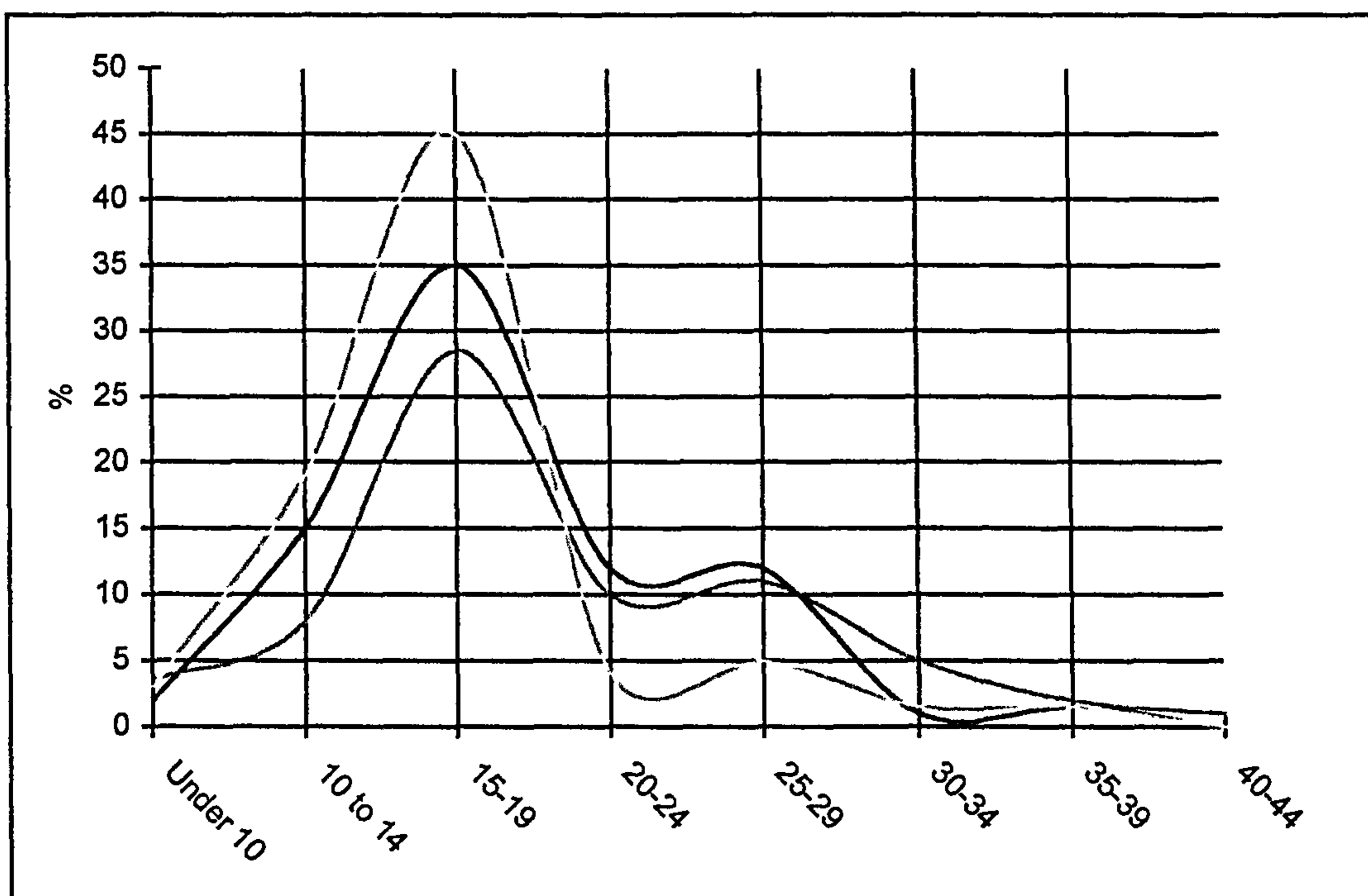


Chart 13. Age at which decided to become journalist.

Five per cent cited 'family influence' as their reason—a similar proportion to that which acknowledged a parent in the media, although those are not necessarily concurrent variables.

The dominant reasons selected for deciding on journalism as a career were *being good at writing* (29%), seeing journalism as *an exciting career* (23%), and *having an interest in news* (14%). The variations between the three nations in this regard were significant, as were those of gender and these will be scrutinised in following chapters.

The largest proportion (43%) of the homogenous journalism population had decided by the age of 19 that they wanted to be journalists and most (70%) achieved their ambition without working at anything else first. Seven per cent had switched careers from a profession, 12 per cent from a lower status white-collar occupation and six per cent from manual work or a trade. Only two per cent came into journalism from public relations or advertising and one per cent from the armed forces. Notwithstanding the popularity of public relations as an alternative career for journalists that attracted Strick's attention in the 1950s and 1960s¹, the small proportion of 'crossovers' suggested by the above statistic suggest that there may, in later years, have been reduced cross-fertilisation between these two fields.

Student journalism. The relevance of student journalism in guiding graduates towards a career seems beyond doubt. Of those who had attended university or college at least 41.5 per cent had practised it. The high proportion of respondents in the periodical and MGN sectors displaying uncertainty in the following table is most likely due to confusion about when the respondents ceased to be students or because outlets to which they were contributing while still students did not fall into the category of student publications.

¹ And that of Tunstall, who noted that the Institute of Public Relations reported that 40% of their 1964 membership had worked as journalists.

Table 46. Did you practise student journalism?

	Broadcast	Periodical	Newspaper	All	News Breed	MGN
Yes	54.3	38.7	31.6	41.5	51.0	62.7
No	45.7	46.5	64.8	52.3		20
Uncertain	0.0	14.8	4.6	6.5		17.3
	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00		100.00

Beginning age. The mean age of beginning paid work as a journalist was 22.66. There are tabulation ‘bulges’ in the entry age bands of 18 and 21-23 that appear to reflect,

respectively, non-graduate and graduate entry streams. Only 14 per cent—all in newspapers—

started work aged 16-17 and 22 per cent aged 24 or later, most of those in the periodical sector.

Regional press. The study throws into question the status of the regional press as an entry point, an assumption on which the NCTJ/NS training policy largely depends. As shown earlier, such a beginning would have been virtually the norm for past generations. But in the mid-1990s only 33.8 per cent of all journalists had begun their careers with a regional weekly newspaper or a regional daily. The new portal—once again in overall terms—appeared to be the periodical: consumer magazines and the trade press responsible for a total of 24.2 per cent.

While the study shows how opportunities for entry have increased it also reveals the limited extent to which journalists tend to switch between media. The proportion of journalists who eschewed the regional newspaper route and went directly into the medium in which they were found by the surveys—50.6 per cent in broadcasting, 61.3 per cent in periodicals—is another important discovery, as is the degree to which newspaper journalists are shaped almost entirely by newspaper experience (77.7%).

Allure

It is in the milieu of the regional press that the most informative fictional—or perhaps, more accurately, impressionistic—accounts are set

Table 47. At what age did you get your first regular paid job in journalism?

Broadcast	Periodical	Newspaper	All
23	24	21	22.6

which, once legitimised by accepting the example of Weaver and Wilhoit and the arguments of Brennen and her co-thinkers (p.00), offer powerful testimony to the allure that newswork held out to a certain kind of aspirant and an equally compelling sense of the socialising pressure on young journalists of being surrounded, in the words of journalist-novelist Gordon Williams, by ‘queer birds who gave newspaper work a special kind of flavour... a closed world for bright but only partially educated misfits’.

Brennen (with considerable help from Raymond Williams and his concept of historical materialism) argued convincingly that media historians had deprived themselves of valuable sources by their suspicion of non-traditional sources such as novels. Newspaper novels in particular, she wrote, ‘locate their plots within a specific social environment that is part of the rich disorder of actual live experience’ (1993:106). Weaver and Wilhoit agreed, citing ‘powerful images’ from fiction that ‘dramatized the heart of our survey findings’ (1996:53). For a view, albeit a reflected one, of journalist-figures that could be compared with those that may predate the ones that emerge from this study—and help explain the derogatory images referred to earlier—there is nowhere to turn other than to fictional descriptions of one of the types referred to above. Here the narrator is Williams’s novelistic creation of a young reporter, Ming, who together with a variety of other characters was modelled on his own experiences as a regional journalist in the 1960s.

He [Gerry Endicott, the chief sub-editor] wore thick-framed spectacles and a sports jacket with leather elbow patches. It was hard to say how old he was: with his hair newly cut he looked twenty-five, at other times he seemed old and worn. He took mistakes seriously and had a terrible temper. During office rows he thought nothing of heaving a paste-pot at a wall. He knew most typefaces at sight and their letter counts across any number of columns. To say that he lived for newspapers was to insult Gerry. He lived in newspapers. He knew the names of every editor, news editor, features editor and chief sub-editor in Fleet Street. To him

wars, riots, revolutions, famines, earthquakes, elections were not events that happened anywhere but that the Express handled better than the Mirror or vice-versa. If you asked him what he thought of Suez he'd tell you how many thousand copies the Chronicle lost by its anti-Suez editorial policy. When a plane crashed killing a hundred or so he'd tell you that the Herald, for once, beat everybody on the human angle. He had no views on politics but he had heartfelt convictions over picture presentation. It was said about him that he'd gone to church only once and left halfway through the service because the layout of the prayer-book made him sick to the stomach (1971:100).

It may be, as Brennen asserted, that media historians have generally rejected, or at least avoided, 'novels, poems, songs and other fictional texts' as sources. But autobiography has sometimes been valued and there is an illuminating contrast between Williams's version of an introductory experience on a weekly newspaper and the one to be found in Monica Dickens's autobiographical recollections of the late 1940s: the one saturated with macho romanticism, the other pragmatic and pre-feminist. Dickens' was at pains to emphasise that at that time

...between working on a provincial weekly and working on a big London daily there is a gulf as vast as the Grand Canyon. On a London paper, you are either, a reporter, or a sub-editor, or a sports writer, or a political commentator, or a woman's angle expert or any one of the hundreds of specialists who go to make up the staff. That is your job, and that is all you do.(...) On a paper like the Downingham Post, things are very different. You don't have only one job, you have dozens. (...)

You think up headlines for other people's stories, you read proofs, and re-correct corrected proofs, you re-word ill-written advertisements and Birth, Death, and Marriage notices (only In Memoriams are inviolate and have to be printed just as they are sent in), and worst of all, you have to rewrite some sense into the

rambling reports on darts matches and whist drives sent in by local correspondents from the villages. You also have to take your turn at fetching copy paper, washing-up yesterday's cups in cold water, and making tea. If you are the only girl, it is nearly always your turn. The only thing you don't have to do is dust, because nobody ever dusts a reporters' room. Nobody ever has, and nobody ever shall (1951: 14-15).

Dickens was not complaining. She insisted that being so deeply involved with every aspect of the paper and the 'the adventure of its appearance every week on half the doormats in the county' meant that although 'you do more work for less pay than on a London paper, you get more fun'. Nevertheless, even more than in the 1990s, the London papers were the undisputed Mecca for provincial journalists. Keith Waterhouse's retrospective impressions give a strong sense of the awe in which they were held by someone like himself arriving from Leeds in 1955 to work on the *Daily Mirror* and a vivid insight into the yearning to belong to the confraternity it represented.

Old newspaper hands like to remember Fleet Street as a village. This is to downgrade it somewhat: it was more of a small industrial township, on a par with Bootle or Heckmondwike (...) actually, Fleet Street itself, the main artery and shopping street of this factory town, housed only two printing plants — that of the Daily Express in its black-glass Art Deco palace, later known as the Lubyanka, and its near-neighbour the Daily Telegraph in, appropriately, a more conservative neo-classical edifice of the same period—both of them architecturally a match for, say, the Boots factory in Nottingham or the Shredded Wheat plant at Welwyn

Most of the other printing works, or newspaper offices as they liked to call themselves, were tucked away in the warren of narrow side streets off Fleet Street proper - the News Chronicle Star at 19 Bouverie Street, the News of the World across at No.30, the Daily

¹ Grandniece of Charles.

Mail, Evening News and Sunday Dispatch at Northcliffe House in Carmelite Street, the Daily Mirror and Sunday Pictorial in Fetter Lane, the Evening Standard in Shoe Lane, The Times, aloof and unneighbourly, keeping itself to itself in what was the miniature equivalent of a garden village, a kind of hot metal Bournville, was down in Printing House Square, hard by the Embankment. The Manchester Guardian, had not yet come south, but it shared London offices with the Baltimore Sun over the Fleet Street branch-post office opposite Chancery Lane (...) I later returned and loitered in the hope that if the great H. L. Mencken happened to be visiting London, I might catch a glimpse of him crossing to the Cheshire Cheese for lunch...

The newspapers that had settled into The Street, as it was always called, attracted camp-followers from ancillary trades—much as, centuries earlier, jobbing printers and bookbinders had set up shop to service the lawyers and friars. Here were paper merchants, office equipment firms, tinplate makers, electrotype makers, stationers, plastic stereotypers, carbon makers, advertisers' typesetters, printing ink companies, lithographic roller makers, printers' engravers, advertising contractors, booksellers, bookbinders, newspaper reps, publicity consultants, news and photo agencies, features syndicates, private wire offices, typing and duplicating bureaux, schools of journalism, commercial artists, printers' valuers, typewriter repairers, literary agents, translation bureaux.

While the neighbourhood was still comparatively deserted, like any small town on a Sunday, and although the smell of printers' ink and metal was at this hour as stale on the air as last night's beer (it lingers on still, like cigar smoke after a banquet), there was nevertheless a stirring, a frisson, the first buzz of that excitement that always mounted throughout the day until it came to a climax, with fleets of predominantly yellow vans pulling out of Shoe Lane and Bouverie Street and Carmelite Street and Tudor Street and

Fetter Lane and heading like wagon trains for the mainline stations. Men in tweed jackets with copies of the Observer under their arms — leader writers, would they be? Feature writers? Editors?— were passing through the handsome entrances of the Telegraph and the Express. Copytakers in shiny black suits and Fair Isle pullovers were arriving for work at Reuter's and the Press Association in their Portland stone citadel opposite.

The industrialisation that intrigued Waterhouse, at least in retrospect, was the very thing that Ming, the creature of the 1960s, detested. He saw newspapers as a world peopled by heroes—among whom Waterhouse might easily, by that time, have counted. The idea of newspaper production as an industry threatened the illusions that had lured him into journalism and he needed to fend off the frustrations of practising it in a small provincial town.

... the one thing which never changed from that first morning was the sense of disappointment he [Ming] felt at his first glimpse of the Hamport Recorder offices. It could have been a carpet warehouse, a red-bricked building whose raw newness had not been softened by weather (...) A newspaper building should not, he felt, look like a factory, even if that was what it was, a printing factory. Through an open door he saw machinery, heavy, mucky, industrial machinery, with no sign of giant rotaries spewing forth vibrant front pages for montage sequences in films about concert pianists and Chicago gang wars.

The little he did know about the reality of newspapers had never destroyed the romantic notions which had drawn him to the job in the first place, notions gathered from films and novels. He had always wanted to be part of that world, where Cabinet ministers queued for audiences with the Editor of The Times; where Dickens hacked out serials which became classics; where Lord Beaverbrook phoned to hire you at fifty pounds a week on the strength of one brilliantly-written article; where Alan Ladd tilted back his fedora

and sat on the city editor's desk and demanded another forty-eight hours to bust the crime syndicate; where Daily Express adventurers typed explosive despatches in the first armoured car to smash its way into the riot-torn heart of any bullet-spattered crisis city from Marrakesh to Mandalay; where Hearst started the Cuban war and then became Orson Welles. The reality—a chugging, growling, chunting, oil-smelling printing factory (1971:19-20).

It is at the threshold where Ming stood, that of the earliest newsroom experience, where the highest level of socialisation might be expected to prevail, the influence that would help shape the Chicagoist symbolic interactionist approach. Until the 1960s, at least, the Chicagoists' prerequisite of an 'homogeneous body of professionals', whose objectives and interests were served by a certain structure of training and for whose benefit novices not only internalised occupational values but acquired strategies to guide their work could clearly be seen in the sphere of regional newspapers and in the values promoted by the NCTJ. The interactionist school was suspicious of training institutions (such as universities) which stood apart from the enfolding occupational culture and, in any case, showed little interest in synthesising education, practice and the organisation of occupational groups (Atkinson 1983:234). Parry, who found the interactionist approach so intriguing, rejected the opposing functionalist theory suggested by Goode (1957) because, following the model of the traditional professions, it supposed a high degree of homogeneity and consensus about (implicitly pre-entry) training. She did not find those qualities in evidence in the early 1980s. Since that era, with so much training taking place outside the workplace and the journalistic workforce demonstrably more highly educated, such attributes may have become more evident; the 'invisible pedagogy'—Bernstein's concept which Parry applied to the assimilation of news values—much less opaque and therefore open to question.

The interactionist view would probably have appealed to the young journalists on whom the character of Williams's Ming was modelled for

whom the pedagogy to which they were subjected by their professional elders may have been invisible but it was far from intangible. The social structure that defined them comprised, in the main, a pantheon of national newspaper deities and the culture that they represented. Ming was uncomfortable in the company of anyone—in the instance below, a colleague's girl-friend—who failed to appreciate the significance of these icons and their signification as keenly as the infatuated young journalists who were eager to embrace the intimate ideologies of their occupation and would unhesitatingly surrender themselves to a system which facilitated

The control of journalists in terms of pliable individuals fitting into a discoverable social structure, defined in terms of order, hierarchy, role and status. This adaptation is a process of learning: it is not a negotiated order and the individual's collective life is defined simply by this structure, to which he learns to conform (Murphy: 141).

Ming struggled with the difficulty of communicating his passion to someone who was 'only a reader'.

She was sensible and knowledgeable. But she had very little idea of what they were talking about (...) She didn't know about angles intros, nut-fronts, single-column down-the-pagers, fiddling expenses, griping subs, padding and waffle, good quotes and punchy phrases, off-the-diary and black blobs ... she didn't know about Edgar Wallace who played cards all night and dictated half a book the next morning to raise enough money to get back into the game ... she didn't know about Charlie Hands who borrowed four children to soften the heart of Lord Northcliffe, who was going to sack him... Charlie Hands who was made news editor of the Mail for a day and told everybody to head for the pubs, where the interesting stories were ... she didn't know that Sylvester Bolam had gone to jail because an editor is somebody in law, no matter who gets the profits ... she didn't know about Sefton Delmer, who could hear the tramp-tramp-tramp of the new jackboots outside on the cobbles ... she didn't know about Boot in Scoop and Wenlock Jakes who got off at the wrong Balkans capital but wrote up the

rattle of the machine-guns anyway and in a few days there was a revolution in the wrong capital ... she didn't know about The Paper Palace and Wensley, who was the man Percy Marshall might have been ... she didn't know Cassandra's real name... she didn't know that Duncan Webb wasn't too good at writing his own stories ... she didn't know that Hemingway had a contract that gave him a dollar a word—as a reporter ... she didn't know that Horace McCoy wrote *No Pockets in a Shroud*, or that Dickens had first-class shorthand... she didn't know that Jake Lingal got a bullet in his head for not sticking to reporting ... she didn't know that Arthur Christiansen replated the *Sunday Express* for the R101 disaster and became a star overnight ... she didn't know that Charlie Hands invented the terms tube-train and suffragette ... she didn't know that James Eilbeck was the star of the *Mirror* at twenty-one and found himself under one of Charlie Hands' tube-trains before he was thirty. She was only a reader and she just didn't know what it was all about (301).

Waterhouse's real-life recollections of the 'queer birds who gave newspaper work a special kind of flavour' in the features department of the *Daily Mirror* of the late 1950s and its largely autodidact inhabitants is even more illuminating as he discovers

what a literary-inclined company I had fallen in with. While I did not expect the conversation of my colleagues to be limited to the brash tabloidese of their calling, or their interests to pin-ups and the soccer results, I did not anticipate their quoting T. S. Eliot by the yard, as MacPugh did, and frequently so, or reciting Stephen Leacock's 'Hoodoo McFiggin's Christmas', from memory, as could Eric Wainwright, a Canadian; nor would I have bet money that one of the leader writers, Sydney Tremain, would prove to be a published poet, that the chief features sub, Freddie Wills, was not only a published poet but a published poet in Russian, which he spoke fluently, or that another leader writer, Alan Fairclough, a

Bradford miner's son with a double first from Balliol¹, would lead regular philosophical seminars at the bar of The Falcon on such questions as 'What is the average time?' or literary debates on whether Defoe, Richardson or Fielding could lay claim to being the first English novelist (43).

Section 3: In the newsroom

The newsrooms portrayed by these authors, and their inhabitants, remained recognisable until well into the 1960s in the regions and even later in newspapers and radio stations, places where, as John Perkins, managing director of Independent Radio News, recalled:

Journalists would have to scream to be heard above the clatter of the typewriters and the teleprinters, and other journalists would then have to scream louder to be heard above them.'

'The day could not possibly be envisaged', wrote Waterhouse elegiacally, from the vantage point of the 1990s, 'when it would all be no more. That as a traditional centre of production it was as transient as the still-prosperous mill towns occurred to no one, except perhaps a few managerial visionaries, and they were careful to keep their visions to themselves. I paced between Embankment and Fetter Lane ... never suspecting for a second that I was treading the pavements of a typographical Pompeii (1995:29).

In these associations of impressionable young workplaces and workmates there is much to be seen of both the selection and the socialisation of which Moore wrote; even more of the readiness he implied of the beginner to unquestioningly adopt the values of those already established and by whom they *expected* to be guided. To the family and employer that he and White saw as the main agents of adult socialisation deserves to be added, in the case of journalists, the workplace models. If the interaction between aspiration and experience is accepted as important it could be further argued that it constitutes the major influence in shaping a journalist's professional values as well as his or her skills; binding

¹ See p.00

together both organisational theory and the cultural approach, at least to some extent. Since it is probable that political-economic values may be seen at work in the professional outlook a novice will be required to form a hegemonic process is at work, at least in microcosm: a leadership is able to impose a fundamental outlook to which all concerned implicitly agree to conform. This would be no less true of journalists than of other professionals, although the value system might be quite different.

Skills

Electronic production systems in both print and broadcast media brought about a profound change in the work culture of journalists, exchanging the 'exciting chaos' of the old-style newsrooms newspapers for the 'cold silence' of screen-based operations. Strick, writing in the period upon which Waterhouse was reflecting, had likened the functions of journalism to those of a theatre company or a film unit in which production depended on an interrelationship between a variety of roles. Crucial input was required from non-journalists: sound engineers, cameramen, darkroom hands, print-workers, photo-engravers, librarians. In either its pre- or post-electronic mode the newsroom—the entire editorial/production/delivery operation—offered a crystalline example of the system of authority (rather than *power*) in action that Weber had seen to be the dominant institution of modern society: the rational-legal. *Rational*, because it was expressly contrived to produce a single, sustained outcome; *legal* because authority was exerted by appointed functionaries who were entitled to enforce procedures. To the properties singled out by Pugh and Hickson (1971:1-7) as those on which the form of Weberian bureaucratic mechanism represented by 'manual' editorial production depended for its smooth functioning—'precision, speed, unambiguity, unity, strict subordination, reduction of friction and of material and personal costs'—another element in the reduction of costs came to be required: a synthesis of skills. By the 1990s the advent of direct copy input, electronic page make-up, digital video and audio editing and satellite transmission, most of the functions represented by those ancillaries were being carried out by the one pair of hands—those of a journalist.

It is evident, if only from accounts such as Monica Dickens's, that multi-skilling on an informal basis was no novelty in small offices. But even on regional daily newspapers the firm demarcation between those who originated material—reporters, feature writers and their supervisors—and those who processed it—sub-editors and page designers—went unchallenged for the greater part of the twentieth century.

This bifurcation, which came into being with mass circulations had at first been seen as 'deskilling' in that it required a journalist to apply only one set of skills out of the array they might have mastered, thus allowing their other abilities to atrophy (1974 Braverman). That approach helped the NUJ, far more recently, to argue that multi-skilling was actually a revival of the de-skilling process, since modern employers were less interested in seeing journalists refine specialised skills than in dispensing with the need to employ specialists for particular tasks.

At the height of managerial enthusiasm in the 1990s for flexibility and re-skilling, camera operators received instruction, albeit sketchy, in writing scripts and compositors were offered retraining as sub-editors. Some regional newspaper reporters and some magazine writers were provided with automatic cameras and expected to perform the routine tasks of a photographer. As relaxed ownership regulations permitted an increased level of local cross-media proprietorship, print reporters sometimes found themselves required to convert their original material into broadcast format. In all sectors, it became commonplace for web versions of editorial matter to be produced, sometimes by the increasing number of journalists specialising in the new medium but quite frequently by those whose primary duties lay elsewhere.

Evolution from the antediluvian typewriter and audiotape era to a digital one did not, however, completely fulfil the expectations of Waterhouse's 'managerial visionaries' who had expected it to produce sweeping economies of convergence. For instance, the concept pioneered in the United States by the Cable News Network (CNN) of video-journalists (VJs), solo camera operators-cum-reporters-cum editors was not emulated in Britain on the same scale, although both the BBC and ITV insisted on

journalists learning the relevant skills and it became commonplace for reporters, particularly in small operations, to edit their own videotapes. Radio reporters had always rough-edited audiotapes; now they had to learn to use digital consoles and other equipment. Beyond that, the main outcome, in short, was that broadcast journalists had to be prepared to work for both radio and television and that print journalists had to accept a measure of production tasks in addition to writing.

In newspapers, the greatest effect of multi-tasking was to be traced in the copy flow: the progress of a story written by one or more reporters through the production process via a copy-taster, a sub-editor, a chief sub-editor, a revise sub-editor, a designer, and a senior assistant or associate editor, sometimes the editor in person before it was committed to print. Many of these roles became consolidated, sub-editors becoming responsible for page design as well as copy editing and for bringing a page to a pre-production stage which less than 20 years earlier might have required the efforts of a team of craftsmen. Reporters of the 1990s were routinely expected to edit their stories for length, house style, legal safety and to provide headlines, tasks earlier performed by a sub-editor.

The study showed that far from resenting the idea of multi-skilling, many journalists seemed ready to embrace the concept, believing that it represented empowerment, if only over technicians, on whom they might previously have been (often grudgingly) dependent; provided them with employment options and enhanced their personal satisfaction. Older production journalists might have felt, as Nick Passmore, production editor of the *Guardian*, said, that 'something had been lost' and that 'many would agree that their jobs had become a little flatter' (Hayward 22) but the once-controversial 'new' technology of direct input and on-screen page make-up has been widely accepted, with 72 per cent of all journalists convinced it had improved the quality of their work. Most (68%) thought electronic systems saved time although 25 per cent said they took up more time. In Australia, where this technology was introduced a decade earlier, 82 per cent found it improved their work and 84 per cent that it saved time. In America, the question would have been irrelevant.

In Britain, shorthand remained a valued asset (as it traditionally would in Australia, although not in America where few journalists are acquainted with it), despite the dissenting views recorded above (p.00). More than half (56%) of all British respondents believed that without it a journalist could not be considered fully trained. Only 12 per cent of all journalists believed it necessary to be able to conduct an interview or read a story written in a foreign language and 51 per cent would not be able to. This did not suggest widespread awareness of the view expressed by a PTC panel that fluency in an additional language could represent an additional £5000 a year in salary¹. The principal languages in which proficiency was claimed are tabulated below. They do not, probably because of the sampling limitation explained in Chapter 8, include any Asian or African language.

Table 48. Would you be able to conduct an interview in, or understand stories written in, a European language other than English?

%	Broadcast	Periodical	Newspaper	All	MGN
No	40.2	51.4	53.6	48.4	56
French	47.1	35.8	37.9	40.2	26.7
German	15.5	5.8	6.8	9.4	2.7
Spanish	6.9	4.3	5.4	5.5	4.0
Italian	2.9	3.9	2.8	3.2	2.7
Duplication likely	112.6	101.2*	106.5*	106.7	92.1

Sociology of the newsroom

Hitherto, editorial demarcation, reflecting the general process of gatekeeping and presentation, was unapologetically hierarchical, despite the pervasive informality that characterised it. Newsrooms were, and remain, a first-name environment, something Strick attributed to the constant high-speed traffic between departments; it might also be seen as a device to soften the effect of the use of authority between social equals. Within the hierarchy of the hot metal era, sub-editors were the principal custodians of professional *values*, in the sense that they routinely passed judgement on what was suitable for publication and in what form. This

¹ 10.7.98

role was not confined to gatekeeping in terms of news selection. A sub-editor's assessment and treatment of a young journalist's copy provided important guidance in the value system of a particular editorial operation and, to a large extent, shaped a reporter's ability to improve his or her work, or at any rate to ensure that it would be acceptable for publication. This influence was often a socialising element as potent as the professional *attitude* engendered by the advice or example of older or more senior newsgatherers, such as a news editor or chief reporter.

For the majority of rank-and-file journalists there would have been a natural career progression from reporter or feature writer to sub-editor, which was usually (although not always) a better paid job, and thus the process of socialisation would continue from one working generation to the next—or did until re-staffing swept away newsroom veterans like those evoked by the editor of the *Uxbridge Gazette*, Anthony Longden.

He may have been the guy who sat there in the corner with the fag in his hand but he damn well knew his stuff. These people no longer exist in the industry because they were the first to get the chop when the computers arrived (Reeves 2000:14).

Danny Lockwood, editor of the *Lancaster Guardian*, also lamented 'the pervasive view that an understanding of a computer programme or two was the same as an understanding of the sub's entire role' and at the same time acknowledged the importance of informal indoctrination outside the workplace.

I spent many long laborious days and a few pissed-up nights as well learning the theories. There's too much of an attitude now that if you teach some youngster how to use a Mac and to run Quark then you've taught them subbing (Reeves 14).

Some frustration became evident on the part of managers who had hoped for a higher degree of synthesis from the redeployment they had instigated. The editorial director of Westminster Press complained that only 38 per cent of editorial staff hours were consumed by newsgathering and 68 per cent by processing, a division of labour he called 'madness'. He did not appear to appreciate that some of the processing now had to be done by

personnel who might once have been employed in reporting. Other regional executives suggested that basic journalism might not require particular skills at all; even that web publication might be produced just as adequately by librarians (Branley, 1998:344). Such extreme views may be merely contentious but attempts continued through the 1990s in both the regional and national press to eliminate the traditional newsroom stratification. Westminster and several other publishers experimented with a variety of reorganisations and configurations intended to homogenise skills but none had succeeded by the end of the century in eliminating the fundamental divide between those who create or gather material and those who decide its place in a publication—if any—and who have the final say in its presentation. Nevertheless, even though their function may have been preserved, the sub-editors of the 1990s were unlikely to be seasoned practitioners—many would have been employed as sub-editors directly after graduation or completion of a training course—they were less likely to function as a link in the chain of socialisation.

The reporter's place in the new newsrooms was also radically re-evaluated. In the first place they were to be found there far more frequently, rather than being out of the office on assignments. A regional editor warned the Guild of Editors that trainees spent too much time on the telephone and too little time reporting at first hand.¹ The NUJ was told that low staffing levels prevented reporters from being sent out.²

The immobilisation of reporters and the static function of dedicated production journalists were intensified towards the end of the century by the strategy of cost-conscious management to which Knightley obliquely refers to above. Following the technological advances of the 1970s and 1980s, many media companies cashed in their valuable centralised real estate and moved editorial operations to cheap but remote sites. Not only did direct contact with sources and the opportunity of observing events at first hand become unusual for reporters; for deskworkers, contact with

¹ Colin Moule, *Cambridge Weekly News*

² Pat Roberts, 1998 annual conference

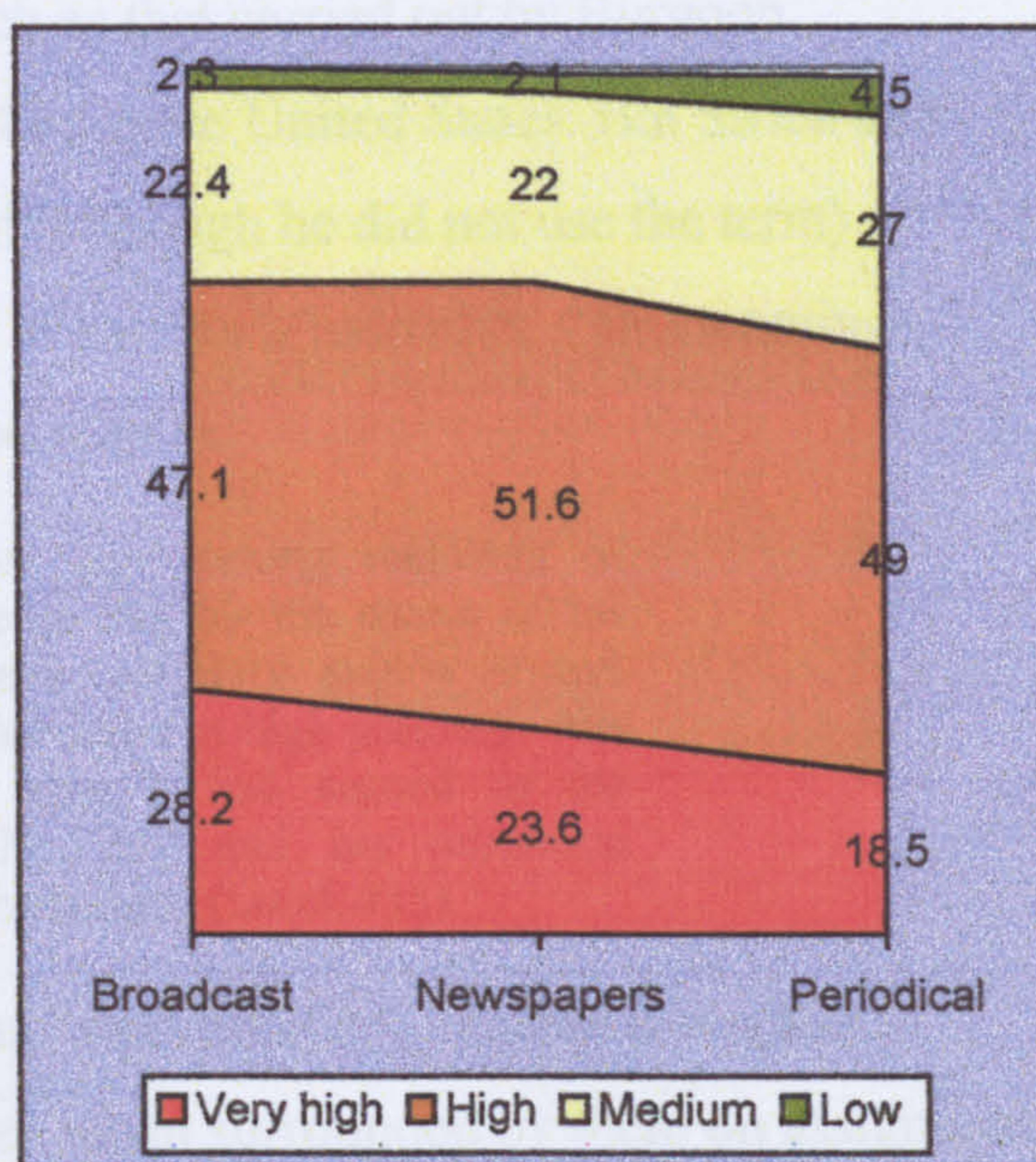
other journalists outside the workplace, once a regularly pursued means of occupational networking, became much less frequent.

Even when they were able to leave the office to observe events at first hand, reporters felt the effect of the least foreseen—but perhaps the most pernicious—consequence of the technology that had not only transformed newsgathering but severely curbed the initiative which was once a prized journalistic quality: the comprehensive surveillance that stripped individual journalists of the freedom to stray from routine in order to enquire, investigate, socialise with contacts, follow leads. Shackled to assignment editors and newsdesks by mobile telephones, satellite links, networked computer screens, all of which could be accessed at ascending levels of supervision, present-day journalists appeared to function under constant scrutiny, as though within an electronic panopticon.

Section 4: Stress and isolation

Chart 14. Stress levels reported

Stress has always been accepted as a natural component of much journalistic activity ‘a necessary motivator, the boost needed to meet deadlines and make copy sparkle,’ in the words of David Amerland, who analysed several reports on occupational stress compiled after much of the fieldwork in the project



surveys had been completed. A separate survey carried out in 1996 by Guardian Financial Services placed ‘media’ third (51%) to ‘education’ (54%) and ‘healthcare’ (75%) in levels of stress experienced. On the Occupational Stress Indicator devised by the Faculty of Occupational Medicine in London, journalists were also ranked third at 7.5 on a scale of

1-10, together with airline pilots and prison officers; only miners and police scored higher. Dr Doreen Miller, the Faculty's registrar singled out the faster pace of work caused by developments in information technology as the main cause. 'Machines don't get tired but people do. Agreements on display screen use need to address the presence of a human being in the system.'

As Chart 14 records, there was ample support for those findings from the project surveys. Perceived levels of stress were found to be *very high* (19.7%.0) or *high* (49.2%), more so in the broadcast sector, less so in the periodical—and, in the view of most respondents, rising (84%). Taken together, the ratings slightly outweigh those found in Australia of *very high* (24.0%) or *high* (43.0%).

Some of the components of stress, as they appear to be understood in relation to journalists are isolation and alienation, the one contributing to the other. These are conditions, that remain to be explored fully in Britain, and the restrictions accepted for the surveys governing this study did not permit extensive exploration such as that carried out by Burgoon, Burgoon, Buller and Aitken (1986) in the United States. But Strick had seen the dangers of isolation and (although he did not use the term) alienation half a century earlier. Whatever a journalist's shortcomings, Strick believed he deserved to be seen as

one of the most hardworking members of society in the sense that by the nature of his calling he is never off duty and is always subject to irregular hours at high pressure. His private life is often a bad second to the exigencies of his job; and his relaxation spasmodic and inadequate (Strick 415).

That job made the journalist an 'individualist', because a reporter's colleagues were also rivals. Even when surrounded by them on assignment he or she would be working in competition with them and could therefore integrate only to a limited degree. Inside an office, even a large one, journalists would be in a minority among other newswriters—probably more so than now. (Strick found that in seven regional and local newspaper groups the proportion of journalists to clerical workers,

technicians and production staff ranged between 15 per cent and 30 per cent; on a national daily journalists comprised only 15 per cent of the workforce, an enclosed, exclusive group.)

Isolation could also be geographical. At that time a young journalist, might work alone in a district office or be assigned to a regular beat, spending long periods surrounded by ‘almost every kind of member of society except his fellow journalists’ (60). Towards the end of the twentieth century it was more common for journalists at work to find themselves surrounded *only* by fellow journalists.

The study data supports the view that being required to perform tasks which had previously been carried out by technicians not only limited the mobility of journalists but bound their operations ever more tightly to inflexible ‘windows’ of activity in order to meet ever advancing deadlines and ever increasing workloads, an obvious source of increased stress. The majority of respondents believing that present-day reporters spent *too little time in contact with sources* (and by implication too much time among other journalists working in the same operation) would have been higher still if that view had been held by more respondents from the periodical sector.

Table 50. Believing journalists spend too little time with sources.

%	Broadcast	Periodical	Newspaper	All	MGN
	79.3	56	72.	69.1	76

The difference evident in the periodical sector combined with a high level of uncertainty displayed (14.4%) could indicate that journalists in that sector are less immured by technology and periodicity or that the high level of dependency on specialised sources requires contact with collaborators other than journalists: advertisers, sponsors, experts. This qualification could also be applied to the responses about social contacts.

Alone on the fast track

The Burgoon, Burgoon et al study referred to above was motivated by a Weaver and Wilhoit finding that 41 per cent of journalists surveyed reported that more than half their informal social contacts were with other

journalists, a statistic virtually identical to that yielded by this study, although the question referred to social contacts *connected in some way with journalism and the media*. Such a correlation, the researchers felt, ‘hinted’ at the influence of communication practices on the way journalists did their job and how they regarded the public. Analysing responses to detailed questions from a sampling of the staff of ten regional newspapers (only) they decided that the most important predictor of the degree to which journalists might interact with each other and their audience was age. About a quarter of the sample were classified as ‘isolates’ and the team concluded that

The younger the journalist the more isolated he or she is likely to be. As might be expected, those who are newer to their present location also have less community contact. (...) So do those in large newsrooms ... To the extent that the profession is becoming younger, there will be a bias toward insularity.(1986:129-131).

Disconcertingly, this group of isolates was synonymous with ‘fast-trackers’ who were not only young but likely to hold supervisory position and to expect early promotion. Those journalists who had the most social and newsroom contacts with other journalists held the ‘less favourable attitudes’ towards their audiences and saw the public as ‘relatively unsophisticated and undiscerning’. As Williams’s Ming said: . ‘She was only a reader... .’ A strong echo of the Burgoon findings emerges in the reflections of sociologist and radio commentator Laurie Taylor about the atmosphere at the BBC a little more than a decade and a half later.

Until about five years ago, office life at Broadcasting House was amiably gregarious. Some of the chatter was inconsequential but a great deal was about the programmes that were being made. Ideas and references were happily exchanged. Small groups of producers and researchers would disappear for lunch. There’d be regular drinks after work in the local pubs. But life at the BBC, as at so many of the other major organisations, has changed dramatically. People no longer move about and talk. They are instead silently rooted hour after hour to their PC. E-mails have replaced the walks along the corridor to chat to colleagues. There are no informal coffee breaks. Lunchtime get-togethers have been abandoned in favour of the

solitary consumption at one's desk of a sandwich and a tin of Diet Coke. After-work drinks become impossible to organise when almost everyone feels the pressure to work several hours of free overtime every week. One dramatic result of this lack of association is that employees have become isolated from each other. (...) this sense of isolation is encouraged by the new world of short-term contracts in which working longer and longer hours may be the only way for employees to demonstrate to managers that they are worthy of re-employment. What once was a coherent workforce has increasingly become a set of insecure and fiercely competitive individuals (2000)

Section 5: Audiences

This exploration of relative values was an aspect of the investigation in which comparison of real value could be made between national attitudes. The question of what journalists believed their most important functions to be is of obvious importance and nearly all (98%) felt an urgency about *delivering information to the public as quickly as possible*. Most also put a high value on *scrutinising government claims and statements* (88%) and *providing analysis and interpretation of complex problems* (83%). Most thought it important to *discuss national policy as it was being developed* but fewer saw it as a duty of the media to *set the political agenda*. More (56%) felt strongly in favour of *giving ordinary people a chance to express their views on public affairs*.

Most journalists accepted that the provision of entertainment and relaxation was a *very* (47%) or *fairly* (44%) important part of their function. Fewer thought it very important for the media to *adopt the role of public adversary* and *be constantly sceptical* of officials (51%) or businesses (45%).

Table 51. a). How important is it for the news media to get information to the public quickly?

%	British	Australian	USA 1992	USA 1982
Extremely	98	72	67	66

Table 51. b) provide analysis and interpretation of complex problems?

%	British	Australian	USA 1992	USA 1982
Extremely	83	71	48	49

Table 51. c) provide entertainment and relaxation?

%	British	Australian	USA 1992	USA 1982
Extremely	47	22	14	20

Table 51 d) investigate claims and statements made by government?

%	British	Australian	USA 1992	USA 1982
Extremely	88	82	67	66

Table 51. e) avoid stories where factual content cannot be verified?

%	British	Australian	USA 1992	USA 1982
Extremely	30	44	49	50

Table 51 f) concentrate on news which is of interest to the widest possible public?

%	British	Australian	USA 1992	USA 1982
Extremely	98			

Table 51. g) discuss national policy while it is still being developed?

%	British	Australian	USA 1992	USA 1982
Extremely	64	58	39	38

Table 51. h) develop intellectual and cultural interests of the public?

%	British	Australian	USA 1992	USA 1982
Extremely	30	38	18	24

Table 51. i) be an adversary of public officials by being constantly sceptical?

%	British	Australian	USA 1992	USA 1982
Extremely	51	30	21	20

Table 51. j) be an adversary of business by being constantly sceptical?

%	British	Australian	USA 1992	USA 1982
Extremely	45	42	14	15

Table 51. k) to set the political agenda?

%	British	Australian	USA 1992	USA 1982
Extremely	14	10	5	—

Table 51 l) to give ordinary people a chance to express their views on public affairs?

%	British	Australian	USA 1992	USA 1982
Extremely	56	60	48	-----

Not schoolmasters

The overall impression from these attitudinal responses is that British journalists saw themselves as social scrutineers rather than as campaigners or reformers. They seem less inclined than their counterparts elsewhere to imagine that their efforts had a strong effect in opinion leading. This view is substantiated by Wilhelm Donsbach's study of German and British journalists carried out at the time of the 1982-83 American survey. The Germans—recognised as a profession by the state—were inclined to see themselves as a political element active in 'persuading and influencing' public opinion, while the British saw their primary professional task as the delivery of information. Donsbach found that nearly 75 per cent of the British journalists, against only 18 per cent of German, saw themselves as a type of 'schoolmaster to the nation' in the sense of conveying knowledge (1983: 25-33).

Donsbach also concluded, using the 'congruency' model developed by McLeod and Chafee (1964) and applied to communicators by Martin, O'Keefe and Nayman, that neither British nor German journalists had 'a very high opinion of the people with whom they communicate'. Both groups appeared to believe they were writing for a 'narrow-minded, uncritical, uninformed and intolerant public'. By contrast the majority of both groups had a relatively high opinion of *themselves*, choosing descriptions such as 'tolerant', 'involved' and 'progressive'.

In this area of evaluation it is instructive to turn for the last time to Ming as his time on the fictitious *Hampport Recorder* lengthened. The invisible pedagogy to which he had been subjected by Percy the news editor had helped him develop an uncompromising set of values and an imagined rapport with the readership.

He was a hard man now, Percy's hatchet-man, king of the doorstep body snatchers. To a great extent, he knew, it was Percy who had

changed him. They were, Percy always said, when they were alone, the same type. They were scallywags, the pair of them; they believed the worst about people because they knew the truth about people and the truth was generally the worst, Percy said. They believed that councillors were on the make, that charity organizers stole money and called it expenses; they regarded most women as whores and those who weren't as lesbians; they expected all scoutmasters, choirmasters, schoolmasters and reverend gentlemen to be molesters of young boys; they saw the Tory Party as pompous crooks and the Labour Party as petty dictators; they knew that God was a he and that the people who said they believed in him were either hypocritical or insane; they knew that people generally kicked a man when he was down because they were too cowardly to kick him standing; they believed that policemen were sadists or thieves, that firemen were not so much heroes as expert looters, that doctors knew nothing and would rather let people die than admit it; or, as Percy put it: 'To be a good journalist you have to believe what the people believe. You're rotten, I'm rotten —we're bang in tune with our public.'

It must be assumed that Williams's creation of Ming drew on his own real-life observations. That may help explain why British news journalists see themselves—or at any rate their colleagues—as a cynical lot. Asked to grade the level of cynicism among their colleagues, virtually no respondents (1%) chose the response of *low*, rather than *high* or *very high* (84%). Estimates of their own level of cynicism were less harsh, only 61% placing themselves in those upper categories. A high level of subjectivity must be taken into consideration here, together with the possibility that even journalists (and researchers) may confuse the qualities of a cynic with those of a sceptic.

Training. All but 31 per cent of all journalists believed they had received a sufficient level of 'off-the-job' training, confirmation it would seem of the view that experience (and the concurrent occupational socialisation) is

more effective a formative influence than any more objective external preparation. Evidently, most British journalists felt that they were adequately equipped to perform whatever duties were required of them. Nearly double that proportion of American journalists said they would like some form of additional training but the forms ranged from shorthand (0.3%) to political science (4.9%). Only 11.4 per cent of the Americans wanted more training in journalism.

Moonlighting. Nearly half of all journalists (46%) functioned in a specialised area with sport (13%), business and finance (6%) predominating. More (4%) specialised in the arts and culture than in politics (3%). One third freelanced in addition to holding a full-time job, most of them for print outlets. The proportion of moonlighters was a little higher in Australia: 35.5 per cent.

Section 6: Values

Apart from the material considerations registered above, journalists would seem to prefer an employer whose editorial policies reflected their own sense of values. For the majority, the editorial attitude of their publication or outlet was *very* (56%) or *fairly* (35%) important. Only nine per cent regarded the editorial policies of the organisation hiring them as being *unimportant*. Nevertheless, a high proportion had *personal experience* (44%) of 'improper managerial interference' with stories or *personal knowledge* (45%) of it occurring. This experience was pronounced in the broadcast sector, rising to 48 per cent and 54 per cent.

Table 52. Have you ever personally experienced improper managerial interference with a story?

%	Broadcast	Periodical	Newspaper	All	Australia
Yes	48.9	44.0	43.5	45.0	41.0
No	50.6	55.1	55.0	53.0	59.0
Not sure	0.6	0.8	1.5	2.9	—
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

PAGE
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Table 55. How strong do you think the influence of the media SHOULD be on public opinion?

Mean score	
Britain	4.5
USA	5.7
Australia	6.0

This response suggests that British journalists are *less convinced* than the others that media should be a strong shaper of public opinion.

Standards

Despite the many restrictions on newsgathering and publication in Britain, few journalists regarded the level of media freedom as *low* (7%), *very low* (1%)—nor indeed *very high* (10%). The question would have seemed redundant in the USA but the Australian data proved remarkably consistent with the British, although fewer Australians (44.0%) feared that media freedom was decreasing in contrast to nearly half the British journalists (49%—56% among the Brethren).

Table 56. Rate the level of media freedom in Britain.

	Very high	High	Medium	Low	Very low	
Main surveys	10.0	42.0	39.0	7.0	1.0	100.0
MGN	—	38.7	46.7	10.7	4.0	100.0
Australia	11.0	42.0	38.0	7.0	2.0	100.0

Some other aspects of the Weaver and Wilhoit research were too complex and subjective to provide useful comparisons with British views and have not been directly linked. Only 17 per cent of all British journalists believed standards of journalism had *improved* within their career span. The Australian figure was immensely more cheerful: 44 per cent. In Britain 42 per cent, the highest proportion in newspapers (51.6%) believed they had deteriorated. The Australian figure was 32 per cent. Overall, a majority in both countries was *optimistic* (UK 61.4%; Aust.59%) about the *future of journalism*. Nevertheless, the MGN veterans dissented sharply (46% pessimistic; 21.3% not sure).

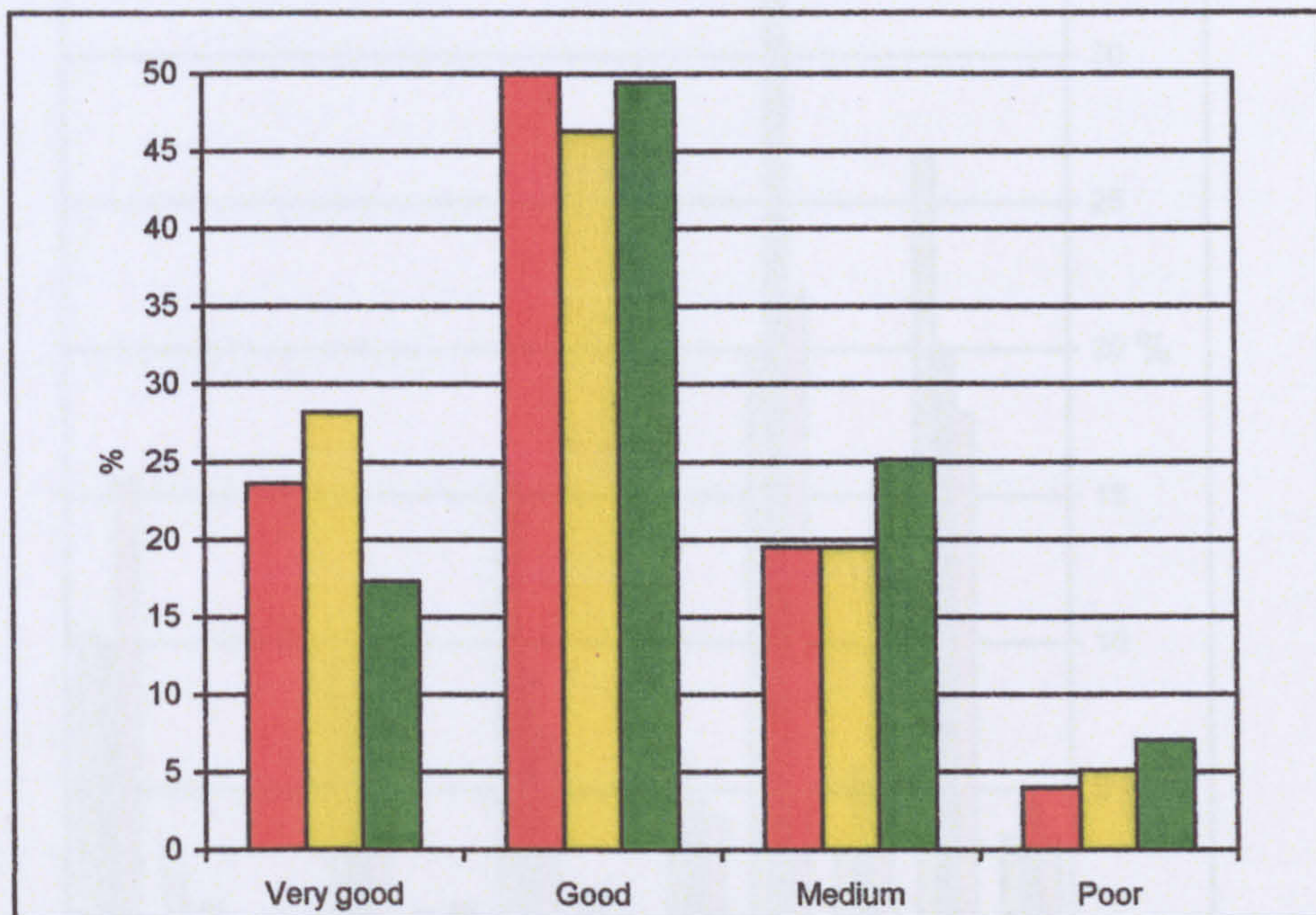
Table 57. Do you believe that journalism standards during your career have...

%	Broadcast	Periodical	Newspapers	All	MGN	Aust.
Got worse	42.5	32.9	51.6	42.33	66.7	32.0
Stayed same	36.2	42.0	27.4	35.2	14.7	12.0
Improved	15.5	17.3	18.2	17.0	14.7	44.0
Not sure	5.7	7.8	2.8	5.43	4.0	12.0
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Ownership

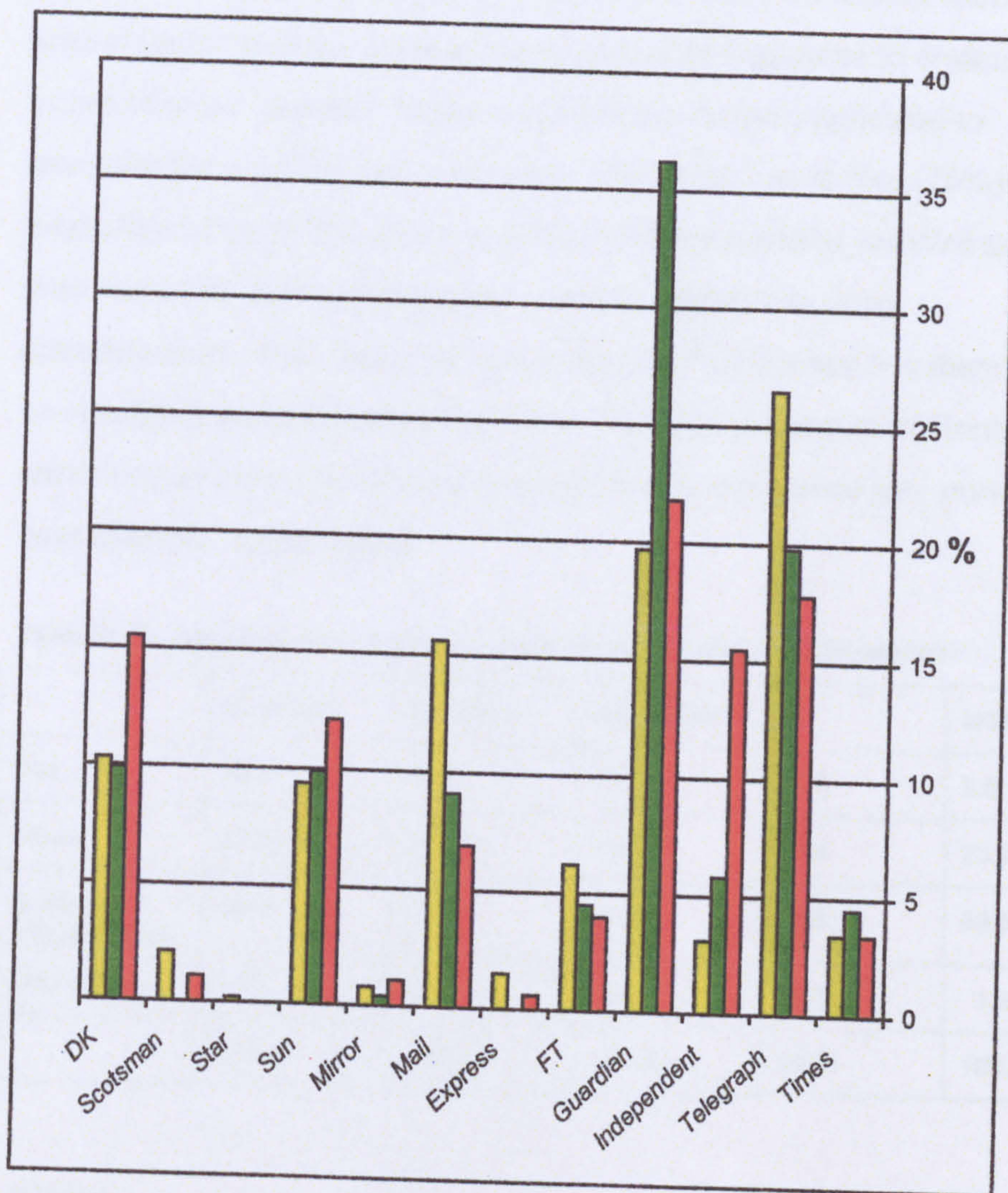
More than three-quarters of journalists (77%) believed the government should prevent greater concentration of ownership in print media. Even more (80%) felt the same about radio and television (including satellite and cable). But only 51% opposed greater cross-ownership between newspapers and electronic media, something their employers are united in advocating.

Chart 15. How good a job does your own outlet do in informing the public?



In general, the British media were rated as serving their consumers well. Seventy-five percent of journalists thought that the job they did of informing the public was *good* or *very good*. This rating jumped to 89 per cent when journalists judged the performance of their own publication or outlet, demonstrating an *esprit de corps* that could be seen as evidence of a hegemonic effect. Only seven per cent thought the overall media record

poor or *very poor* and only four percent felt the same about their own publication or outlet. Only five per cent thought the overall media performance *poor* or *very poor*. Australian responses were similar. Few British journalists thought highly of the tabloid press. Most admired the *Daily Telegraph* (26%) and the *Guardian* (20%). Only one per cent believed that the *Daily Mirror*, once regarded as a paragon of populist communication, served its readers well. Some (14%) believed the *Daily Mail* and the *Sun* did so (10%). The proportion of the periodical sector favouring the *Guardian* is impressive.



Responses to questions about the radio and television news programmes to which journalists paid attention were less clear-cut. The timing of these programmes and their bearing on the work of journalists makes for a

confusing picture. On television, the BBC *Nine O'Clock News* (30%) was preferred to *News at Ten* (20%) or *Channel Four News* (19%). Breakfast-time programmes barely scored. When listening to radio, a high proportion of journalists (38%) preferred local or regional stations. Of the national services, Radio 4 was favourite (53%) with Radio 5 second (23%).

Privacy

An important issue of the 1990s was the strong likelihood that a law to protect privacy would be introduced (on top of the 200 or so legislative strictures that already prevent information from being unearthed or published in the United Kingdom). The implications for serious journalism were clear but perhaps because many journalists had come to disdain the tactics of some 'popular' media sectors that a majority appeared to recognise the need for such a measure. More than one in four (26%) journalists believed that a law to protect privacy could be justified and even more (36%) thought that one could be applied 'in some circumstances'. Only just over one in three (37%) insisted that there could be absolutely no justification for a law. The high proportion of Brethren answering *in some circumstances* suggests that experience may prevail over idealism in this regard.

Table 58. Do you believe the introduction of specific privacy laws could be justified?

	Broadcast	Periodical	Newspaper	All	MGN
Yes	22.4	37.4	25.7	28.5	8.0
Never	27.6	21.8	38.8	29.4	25.3
In some circumstances	49.4	38.3	34.2	40.6	65.3
Don't know	0.6	2.5	2.3	2.5	1.3
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Ethics

Even in the broad view, if there were a single obstacle to the general acceptance of journalism as a profession it would be the issue of an ethical structure devised and applied by journalists themselves: a deontology. The

two voluntary codes which govern the behaviour of journalists and publishers have been drawn up by the NUJ and a committee operating under the aegis of the Press Complaints Commission. In regard to the first, the point made by the CIOs in the 1920s could just as easily have been made in the 1990s: it need apply only to NUJ members. The second is an 'editors' code of practice' intended as a show of self-regulation by proprietors to ward off legislation to defend privacy, forbid payments to witnesses and introduce a right of reply, the effect of which would be to curb the publication of saleable content. As Chris Frost, chair of the NUJ Ethics Council (a largely inert and ineffectual group), has said: 'For too long, too many journalists in the UK have tended to shrug their shoulders and assume morals are for someone else and then wonder why there are calls for legislation' (Frost 2000:xii).

Being subject to statutory regulation, and in the case of the BBC the strictures of its own charter, the broadcast sector behaves more circumspectly than the others. But as Frost noted, the dilution of public service broadcasting and high-grade commercial television by satellite, cable and digital channels is not likely to help protect, let alone raise, ethical standards. Journalists' opinions on the honesty and ethical standards of themselves and their colleagues seldom reached *very high* (7%), centring on *high* and *medium*. But only two per cent thought them *very low*. Once again, it was the seasoned MGN respondents who implied the greatest doubt.

Table 59. Rate British /Australian journalism in terms of the overall honesty and ethical standards of its practitioners.▼

%	Very high	High	Medium	Low	Very low
British	7.0	46.0	30.0	15.0	2.0
MGN	—	28.0	48.0	20.0	4.0
Australia	11.0	47.5	35.0	4.5	0.7

▲ Not asked in USA

When the responses of British journalists to questions about occupational methods and values are compared with those of Americans (Weaver &

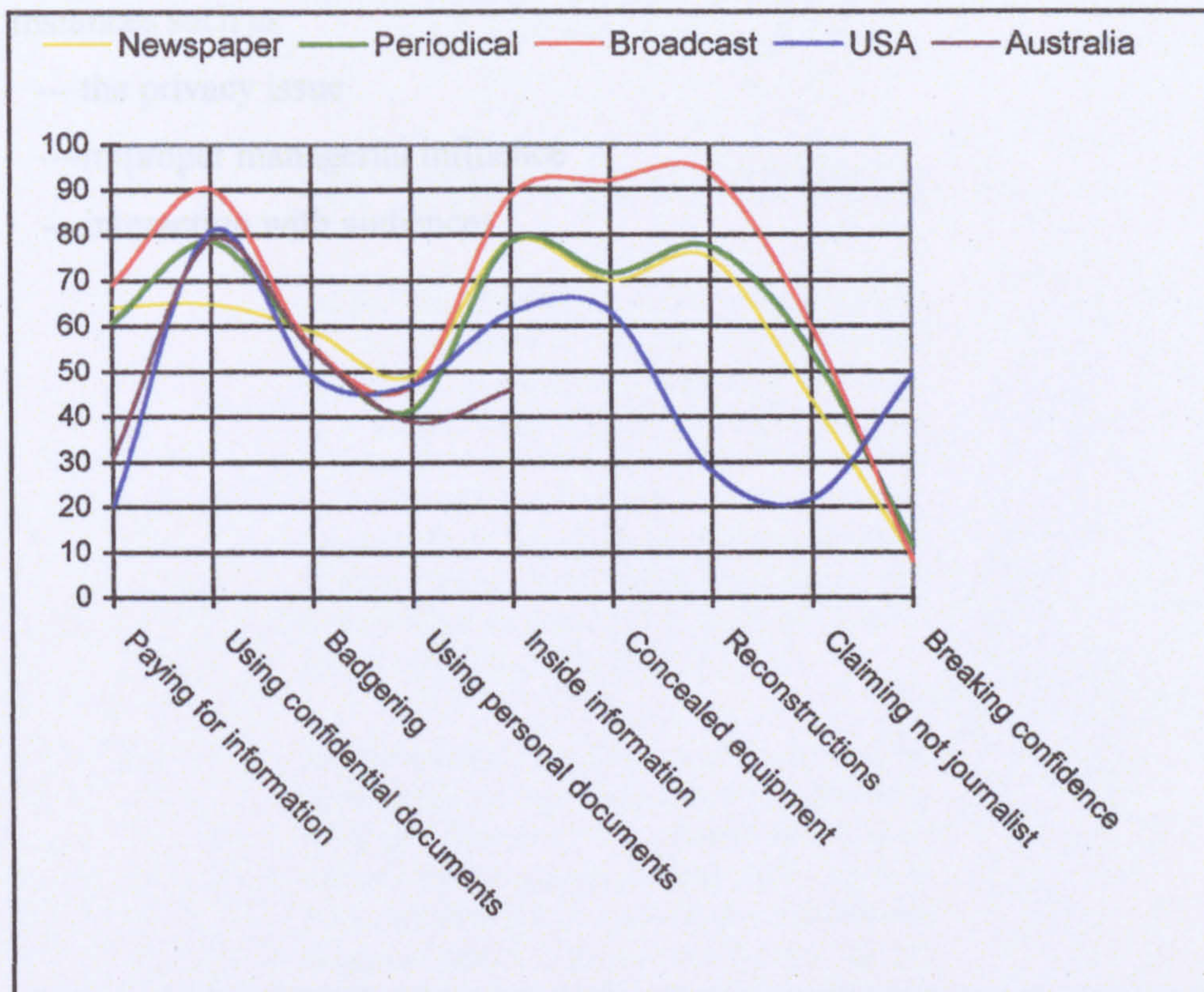
Wilhoit 1991) and Australians (Henningham 1996) the British attitudes appear more pragmatic than prescriptive.

Table 60. Journalists have to use various methods to get information. If it was an important story, which of the methods that I read out do you think may be justified on occasion, and which would you not approve under any circumstances?

% of journalists answering <i>may be justified</i> to the question of...				
	UK	AUST	USA 1992	USA 1982
Paying sources for information	65	31	20	27
Using confidential business or government documents without authorisation	86	79	82	55
Claiming to be someone other than a journalist in order to obtain information	47	13	22	20
Agreeing to protect confidentiality and not doing so	9	4	5	5
Badgering unwilling informants in order to get a story	59	55	49	47
Using personal documents such as letters and photographs without permission	49	39	48	28
Becoming employed in a firm or organisation in order to gain inside information	80	46	63	67
Using hidden microphones or cameras	73	—	60	—
Disclosing names of rape victims	11	—	43	—
Using recreations or dramatisations of news by actors	78		28	—

British journalists in all the sectors appear more aggressive in outlook than their counterparts in the United States and Australia (as they were in comparison to the German journalists surveyed by Donsbach). There is little variation between the values of the two British print sectors but the broadcasters are notably more assertive—especially so by contrast with American broadcasters—on issues that particularly concern their function. A graphic illustration is helpful.

Chart 17. Methods justified.



⌘ Rape victim question omitted.

Summary conclusions

Data scrutinised in this chapter demonstrates that the regional press has ceased to be the principal entry point to British journalism. The extent to which this is the case represents an important discovery, permitting many of the assumptions about appropriate pre- and post-entry training to be questioned knowledgeably. An important clarification has also been achieved on the terms of employment enjoyed by journalists actually at work and on the true position of the freelance in British journalism. Combining the data with fictional and autobiographical accounts, did indeed throw some light on what Weaver and Wilhoit called the 'complicated forces that attract people to journalistic life' and helped provide some insight into how that life has changed in some respects if not in others. There is a sense that by comparison with the inquisitive, adventurous reporter-figure of the past, today's journalist is more

conformist in outlook; complacent, resigned to organisational control in instances such as

- the privacy issue
- improper managerial influence
- interaction with audiences

Chapter 10

Women journalists

*Journalism is a terrific profession for women if you can bear to be Lois Lane and not Superman. I would advise anybody to go into it, even if—especially if—she intended also to have five children and to look after them well. The work is flexible, well paid, varied, important and fun. It is a profession in which women have long been accepted, not snickered at as curiosities, as in the City.—Brenda Maddox, *The Times* 12.6.95.*

At the moment, it's a kind of all-or-nothing workaholic existence in journalism. You have a preponderance of middle-aged male executives and ruthless women who seem to have no other life. It seems to be a deliberate selection process, maybe encouraged by the men. We need more normal women in journalism, we need to change working practices.—WIJ member under nom-de-plume of 'Jane' 1998.

*Make sure you get yourself a mentor. It's essential. And don't sleep with more than one person in the office at a time.—Celia Haddon on her 1959 arrival in the *Daily Mail* newsroom straight from Cambridge University.*

Section 1. Gender context

After education the most relevant factor in the journalist population detected by this study is the proliferation—predominance, in the periodical sector—of women. In Britain, as in the United States and several northern European countries, women have come to outnumber men students in academic journalism courses—and increasingly on their faculties. There is evidence to suggest that by the end of the twentieth century few other occupations had become as accommodating to the egalitarian expectations of the new millennium. The prospects of female recruits and mature

practitioners alike has changed out of all recognition since newspapers declined to employ them as sub-editors because they might have to work late at night or since one of them could recommend journalism to others in these terms:

She may land Gregory Peck like the French girl reporter, or President Kennedy like Jacqueline Onassis (...) most unfair of all she may rise from the top editor's bed into Fleet Street, with hardly any qualifications at all, as I did myself, and as I know some of my colleagues also did (Franklin 1968:23).

The survey data suggests that women journalists need no longer be regarded as a separate group of workers but certain anomalies in regard to them persist. Even at risk of arousing the dormant spectre of discrimination, a separate scrutiny of their characteristics appears justified before dealing, in Chapter 11, with the traits discernible in all journalists working in the three main sectors, when significant gender differentials— together with others—will also be noted.

For the familiar reason of uncorrelateable data, it was impossible to discover the number or proportion of women working in British media prior to this study, let alone to be certain of precisely what kind of work they might have done. Estimates had occasionally been made of the female journalist population but in those the picture was confused (as in the NUJ membership surveys) by ill-matched variables. In 1957 Strick calculated the ratio of female journalists to men in newspapers as 1:16 and in magazines 1:3. In 1975 the first Sex Discrimination Act and the Equal Pay Act became law, which stimulated the pressure group Women in Media, formed in 1970, to audit the London offices of national newspapers that were ready to co-operate, with the following result:

Table 61. 1975 gender split

General reporters	Male	Female
<i>Guardian</i>	26	9
<i>Daily Mirror</i>	29	3
<i>Sun</i>	37	3

This may serve as an illuminating snapshot of gender ratio in that sector at that point in the century but the balance shown is far from definitive. All those papers had fully staffed secondary newsrooms in Manchester whose occupants were not taken into consideration. In addition, regional differences were acute and remained so.¹

Also in 1975, Roger. Smith used NCTJ figures to calculate an increase in women reporter *recruits* to local newspapers from 23 per cent in 1970-71 to 36 per cent in 1975-76 and on the national titles from 9.6 per cent to 12.6 per cent but acknowledged that this may have been less likely to suggest a continuing increase in female numbers than to mark the departure of many men in that period of upheaval (1980:243). He found only five women among 239 news sub-editors working on those national newspapers that were ready to provide him with their numbers (only half the titles he approached responded). It is quite possible some papers had no women at all working outside the 'advertising goal' areas (as Tunstall labelled the women's pages and 'lifestyle' sections towards which Boughner and Brazelton had implicitly directed their followers). Smith came to accept that women formed about ten per cent of newspaper journalists which would have established their number at about 2000² (1976:75).

Table 62. Estimates of women journalists in sectors.

Over a period of no more than 20 years, Smith's ten per cent had become nearly

%		Skillset	NUJ
Broadcasting	40.8	41.0	39.0
Periodical	55.6		46.0
Newspapers*	22.6		23.0
All sectors	39.6		36.0

*NUJ 1994 gender ratio: Nationals 17: 83; regionals 29:71.
NUJ overall figures for 1994 can be taken only as a breakdown of members.

40 percent. The overall ratio of women to men journalists shrank from Strick's 1:16 calculation of 40 years earlier to 1:4.5 in newspapers and in

¹ As late as 1995 the *Daily Record*, Scotland's largest daily, had only 11 women journalists on its staff and 140 men.

² Using 1974 Royal Commission total figure.

the periodical sector the proportions of 1:3 were virtually reversed. This study concluded that during the period of fieldwork some 11,130 women were working as journalists

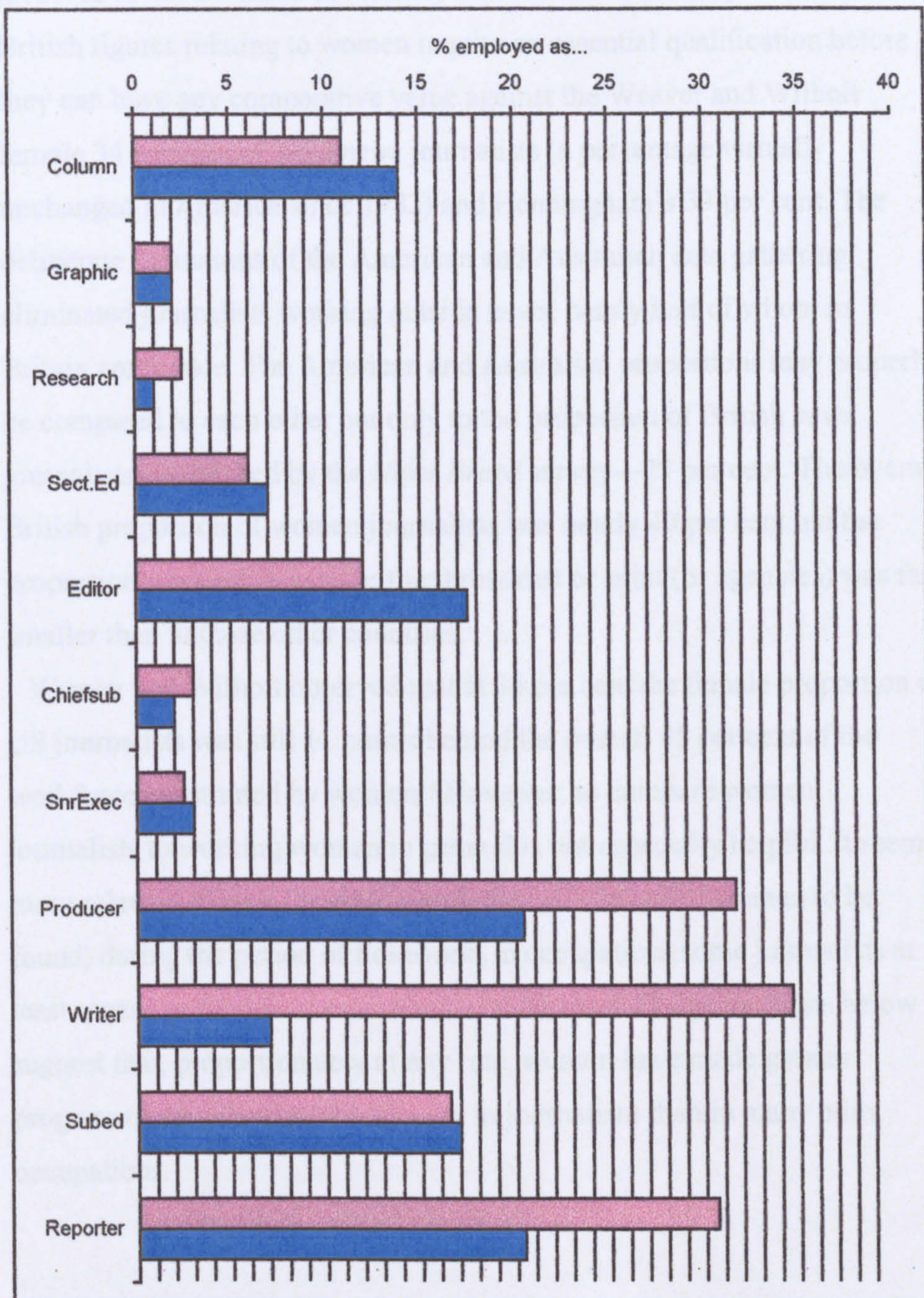


Chart 18. What is your main job?

and that they were distributed throughout the sectors in the proportions shown in Chart 19 below. (The conclusions of other investigations carried at during the period of fieldwork are also shown. Skillset figures for 1995-

96 virtually match those that were independently computed by the present study for the broadcast sector.)

Chart 18 above shows the job distribution by gender among journalists involved in *news*—those covered by the *News Breed* survey. The overall British figures relating to women require an essential qualification before they can have any comparative value against the Weaver and Wilhoit female 34 per cent of 1992 *news* journalists (a percentage virtually unchanged in America since 1982) and Henningham's 33 per cent. The deliberate limitations of the American and Australian data gathering eliminated journalists working outside news, nearly half of whom in Britain are female. The American and Australian proportions may properly be compared to each other but only to the proportion of British *news* journalists established by the *News Breed* survey—25 per cent. The overall British proportion of women journalists was nearly 40 per cent but the proportion working in *news*, either broadcast or print (or agencies) was far smaller than in those other countries.

Weaver and Wilhoit observed that at 34 per cent the female proportion of US journalists was still 11 points behind the overall 45 per cent of the workforce constituted by women.¹ However, to compare women journalists to working women in general is not especially helpful. It seems more relevant to rank them alongside the proportions of women to be found, during the period of fieldwork, in occupations some journalists at least regard as the social equivalent of their own. The percentages below suggest that, proportionately at any rate, women have made greater progress towards numerical equality in journalism than in many other occupations.

¹ Even in the expanded news sector which Weaver and Wilhoit sampled, they established that in the four years preceding their fieldwork women represented 45 per cent of newly employed journalists in the United States. Because of 'negligible growth' in full time jobs during the previous decade and taking into consideration the numbers leaving journalism, the 'absolute number' of women entering did not expand the overall workforce (1992:177).

Table 63. Women in occupations

% 1992▼	UK	USA	UK	USA
	US adjusted below by the news-others proportion of the UK		News only	
All journalists	40	49	25	34
Lawyers	37	22		
Dentists	29	9		
Accountants	19	16		
Medical doctors	35	18		

▲ Law Society, ICAEW/ACCA, BMA, BDA

Section 2. Prejudices

The prejudicial barriers that for much of the century impeded the entry of women to the mainstream of journalism and limited the prospects of those who did gain admission began to crumble in the 1960s and by the mid-1990s had largely been dismantled. The focus of discontent, at least among a vocal segment of women journalists, moved from entry to advancement and an insistence on equality gave way to calls for acknowledgement by employers and colleagues of the particular familial responsibilities of women and claims to higher executive placements (that sometimes seemed to be based solely on gender distribution).

It was not only in Britain that the resistance to women becoming full participants in the occupation remained deeply rooted well into the second half of the century. The view that women journalists must accept their perceived limitations and steer clear of assignments to which they were 'biologically unsuited' was implicit in the advice of two American women journalism educators who established themselves as authorities in the 1920s. Genevieve Boughner and Ethel Brazelton advised women journalists to 'capitalise on their tastes and instincts rather than oppose them, as they are called upon to do in many lines of newspaper writing in which they duplicate men's work' (Beasley and Theus 17).

Nevertheless, American women had been able to look to inspirational examples right from the beginning of the 1900s such as Sallie Van Pelt, a baseball reporter in Iowa, a Mrs Fitzgerald who was night police reporter for the Chicago *Inter-Ocean* and Nellie Bly, the legendary investigative reporter of the New York *World*. Biologically unsuited or not, as early as 1920 women had come to represent almost 20 per cent of American journalists. But for the majority, their work was confined primarily to women's issues and the society pages. The few exceptions were 'front page girls', star reporters valued for their gender slant on major issues of politics and public affairs—and the advantage they enjoyed in ingratiating themselves with certain news sources (Brennen 1995:85).

At that time American recruiting was based on form of apprenticeship even looser than the British. Women were quick to realise they were denied the chance of on-the-job training that was available to men—there were copy boys but no copy girls—and as the number of journalism courses increased across the United States, as shown in Chapter 6, they enrolled in them in ever-increasing numbers. In 1958 one third of the 2500 graduates from American journalism courses were women, by 1984 they represented 60 per cent and since 1971 they have been in the majority.¹ As soon as bachelor degree courses in journalism became established in Britain a similar pattern was established

British resistance

British women aspirants had no twentieth century role models comparable to the American.² Although Hunter found evidence of 'teenage girl reporters' making an impression in the 1880s on provincial newspapers 'usually owned by their fathers', the ill-fated experiment by Alfred Harmsworth of launching the *Daily Mirror* (1902) as a daily newspaper written by and for women may have helped nourish the conviction in

¹ The proviso is implicit that not all graduates would seek let alone find jobs in journalism.

² Although they could look back to impressive earlier predecessors like Mary Manley who founded *Female Tatler* (1709) and took over the editorship of *The Examiner* from Jonathan Swift (1711), Elizabeth Mallet editor of the first British daily newspaper, the *Daily Courant* (1702) which her husband owned and Rachel Beer, owner and editor of the *Sunday Times* (1894-97).

Britain that females were biologically unsuitable for mainstream journalism.

Outside the newspaper sector the only other opportunities were in periodicals, a limited field until the 1950s. Valentine Knapp calculated that in the years 1927-1929, when he was NS representative on the LU course committee, nearly all 80 or so male graduates got jobs but only about half the women diplomates found work 'in the newspaper press'. Even so, throughout the 20 years that the LU course ran, 219 women compared to 194 men (out of a probable enrolment of 1000) were awarded the diploma (1933:43). By the final LU intake in 1938 women outnumbered men 33:27 as did the female graduates of that year 9:7, suggesting an awareness that, as in America, pre-entry training might compensate for the apprenticeships that were unlikely to be available to women. Many of the women graduates that Hunter traced had worked as general reporters, especially during World War Two when, as with many occupations, prejudices were shelved for the duration.¹

Nevertheless, discrimination persisted. Echoes could still be heard in the 1990s of the observation to the CIOs in 1935 by an academic tutor on the LU diploma course that journalism was 'too rough a profession for a woman, who is fit only for the fashion page' (Harrison 1935). Even while women were reporting wars in Bosnia and Chechnya, a national tabloid editor insisted that there were stories to which he would not allow women to be assigned: 'There are some things women shouldn't see.'

By that time, however, it could be argued that when women did see such things as, for instance, the effects of war and misery they saw them differently. Seventy years later the Boughner-Brazelton perspective would have to be adjusted to reflect the view of scholars such as Christmas (1997) and Jansen (1996) that the diffusion of female influence in newsrooms had changed the values of news production. Its effect could be recognised in much news-writing by women in the late 1990s that betokened a weakening of, to borrow a phrase from Robert Connell, the

¹ An impressive number also developed writing careers, among them Stella Gibbons, Elizabeth Bowen, Margery Green (Woods), Kathleen Nott, Betty Miller, Elizabeth Ferrars, Penelope Mortimer.

'hegemonic masculinity' that had hitherto governed news values.¹ This became particularly evident in reporting from the Balkan war zones by women correspondents such as Maggie O'Kane, Janine de Giovanni and Kim Willsher which frequently focused on the plight of non-combatant victims and the effect of war on individual participants rather than on battlefield tactics and weaponry. Wilsher, who became Chief Foreign Correspondent of the *Mail on Sunday*, explained:

It's a forgivable generalisation, but boys are fascinated by the toys of war. Having apparently consumed *Jane's Defence Weekly*, they will discuss at length the calibre, range and provenance of every bit of military hardware for miles around. To most women, the only interesting thing about a bullet is who's fired it and where it's heading.²

Sport, too, was an area of journalism in which male dominance was quickly undermined. At the end of the 1980s there were virtually no women sports writers or commentators; by the end of the century they had become commonplace. Van Zoonen cited examples of gender-determined news values in Danish and Japanese studies: Jensen 1982, Muramatsu 1990 (1994:55). However, in the American experience the traditional newsroom scale of values remained predominant. Whitlow (1977) and Merrit and Gross (1978) found no or little differences in the news values demonstrated by male and female journalists and Weaver and Wilhoit and others who analysed their 1982-992 data found no indications to suggest that a larger representation of women in journalism would automatically

result in changes in news coverage of politics or other subjects unless the culture of newsrooms, the structure of news work, and the traditions of journalism change (Weaver and Wilhoit 1992:191).

Occupational segregation

To explain the increase in the number of women in journalism—or to adopt a more constructive perspective, the low level of their participation

¹ *Gender and Power*, Stanford University Press:1987

² *Press Gazette* 27.08.99:15

in the occupation during the steady accretion of job opportunities throughout the century—‘gender gap’ theories, such as those generated by Pratto, Stallworth, Sidanius and Siers (1997), seemed initially to be helpful. That research team chose to examine the question of occupational segregation as ‘a consequence of gender inequality by conflict theories’. Occupational segregation by gender, it was suggested, could be seen as a manifestation of a self-perpetuating system of deliberate gender inequality. Because men enjoyed greater status and power, men allocated occupations and the prestige and pay that went with them in a way that ensured a permanent advantage over women. Margareta Melin-Higgins’s interviews with women journalists in the 1990s suggested that many of her respondents

experienced problems in the newsroom ranging from sexual jokes, to feeling excluded, and not being promoted because they were outside the ‘old boys’ network’ (...) some found it a problem to be treated like ‘wee lassies’ and be allocated women’s news when they really wanted to be political correspondents. Others found it difficult that women’s issues, which they found important to work with, had such low status (1997:9).

Perceptions

The contrasting views of Brenda Maddox and ‘Jane’ with which this chapter opens suggest differing levels of job satisfaction among women journalists; possibly greater differences, because of the gender factor itself, than those felt by men. It became apparent from the data that perceptions of newsroom sexism could be seen as a function of respondents’ gender. The overall responses for the following questions compared with those in Australia (not asked in the USA).

Table 64. Do you think it is more difficult for capable women journalists to get ahead in their careers, by comparison with capable men journalists?

%	Broadcast	Periodical	Newspaper	All	MGN	Australia
Yes	43.1	46.9	43.3	44.43	40.0	50.0

The highest British score is registered by the sector that employs the most women journalists, the highest paid women journalists; and in which

women represent 73 per cent of journalists with 21 or more years of experience. This suggests that even when their position seems strongest, at least numerically, women continue to feel disadvantaged.

When responses were cross-tabulated for gender, those from the *News Breed* survey showed that almost twice as many women (66%) than men (36%) believed it was *more difficult* for capable women journalists to get ahead, a conviction that appears to be supported by the low proportion of women in news operations, whether print or electronic.

The element of *personal experience or knowledge* brought about a lower score in Table 65, except for the Brethren, whose uniformly longer experience deserves to be taken into account. By contrast with the overall statistic, 60 per cent of women reported *personal experience or knowledge* of women being victims of prejudice. Only 31 per cent of men had observed such prejudice.

Table 65. Have you had personal experience or knowledge of women journalists being the victims of prejudice?

%	Broadcast	Periodical	Newspaper	All	MGN	Australia
Yes	41.4	40.03	37.0	39.47	48.0	45.0

Pub culture

In the 1970s, Roger Smith had recorded complaints from women journalists about being excluded from the 'pub culture' of their male counterparts which they considered to be not only an important socialising factor, even one on which advancement or preference could depend, but one that encompassed 'key learning situations. This factor is clearly recognisable in Reeves's account (196) of his 'pissed-up nights... learning the theories'. Like Parry's findings about the socialising effect at play between students and tutors who were veteran journalists and the fictional extracts in the previous chapter, the women's resentment focuses on what Smith came to call the 'highly informal training and passing off on of relevant occupational knowledge which is characteristic of journalism' (1980:73). There can be no doubt that, particularly before any kind of pre-entry training was available, this extramural process was an important

means of moulding journalists' professional attitudes and Melin-Higgins's respondents were still conscious of

the undefined borders of the news room culture, pub culture and old-boys-network. The hours are very family unfriendly, the attitudes and jokes are often sexist, and perhaps most important, there is a perception that jobs and promotions are fixed in the pub. This way, the pub culture becomes an obstacle for female journalists...(1997:9).

It will be apparent from the data dealt with in earlier chapters that much of the behaviour ascribed to journalists stemmed from questionable impressions in the first place or it has changed, although the recollections of Lockwood and Longden (p.196) suggests that, at the very least, the memory lingers.

The section in Chapter 8 dealing with alcohol consumption reflected differences in habits between male and female journalists and other data describes interacting social and occupational patterns, some of which may have been faster to change than others. Melin-Higgins's women respondents were at pains to emphasise that their objections were not to the amount of alcohol consumed in occupation-related socialising (she found male journalists more concerned about that). As shown in Chapter 8 women journalists put themselves in the category of *regular but moderate* drinkers in equal proportion to men—six out of 10.

The study questionnaire did not refer to units of alcohol but the 1996 proportion of British women from 'professional homes' exceeding the medically advisable limit of 14 units a week was 18 per cent.¹ With that as a guide, women journalists still appear as moderate consumers. Only 16.4 per cent placed themselves in the *higher than average* category (23.2% of men).

In the related matter of tobacco consumption, women journalists score below the national average of 28 per cent of smokers among women in the 25-34 age band.² Even women *news* journalists are much less likely to be

¹ General Household Survey 1998.

² General Household Survey 1998.

smokers than men. Only 22.6 per cent smoked at the time of fieldwork, by comparison with 31 per cent of men. Six out of 10 women (compared with four out of 10 men) have *never smoked*. But in the periodical sector, where women dominate in terms of influence as well as numerically, 27 per cent of women were smokers, by comparison with 39 per cent of men.

Whether the 'pub culture' persists throughout British media operations or not, and if so whether it might continue to represent a strategy of male dominance, it is evident that the boundaries of occupational bonding have moved. Celia Haddon's advice quoted at the beginning of this chapter (or part of it) has been repeated more recently by Phillipa Kennedy, editor of the *Press Gazette*, who emphasised the importance, particularly to women of finding a professional mentor¹. But whereas the mentor relationship mentioned by Haddon (and Franklin) was implicitly male-female, in the 1990s it appears as likely to be female-female. Eleanor Mills, who became assistant editor of the *Sunday Times* news review at the age of 27 after becoming features editor of the *Daily Telegraph*, had no compunction about ascribing her career progress to 'powerful female allies'².

Prestigious media

A more assertive explanation for the changing gender balance in journalism (and, incidentally, for the shortage of women in news operations) has been offered by Liesbet van Zoonen, who argued that so many women had been encouraged to work in radio and magazines because those were among media sectors (together with public relations and advertising) that she categorised by as 'low prestige' (1994:50). Such a ranking would be applied, in that analysis, to Anne Sebba's notion that the spread of local radio, in which between 1970 and 1990 the number of British stations increased from a dozen to more than 200, had been a key factor in 'opening the floodgates' to women.

Editors were desperately looking for large numbers of people, most of whom, it was accepted, would not already be trained. Women seized the opportunity and usually found

¹ Talk to Journalism students LCP School of Media 00.00.99

² O'Rourke I, 'Winning Women', *Media Guardian* 4.5.97:18

themselves working in newsrooms where the atmosphere was much freer than at the BBC and where those in charge generally did not take the traditional view of who was or was not a suitable person to be working in a news operation (1994:38).

An example is provided by Sue McGregor, the BBC Radio 4 presenter, who made her professional debut in South Africa at the age of 20 when the broadcaster whose personal assistant she was left a job without warning.

The very enlightened male boss said, 'Okay, Susan, you do it.' So I was thrust into a studio to broadcast live five days a week for 45 minutes. I was terrified...I did it for five years and then came over to the BBC.¹

But something similar could be seen happening in state or international network television, which van Zoonen viewed as a 'high prestige' medium. Television abounds with anecdotal accounts of women originally employed as secretaries or researchers being transformed into producers and directors when the headlong expansion of news operations after the introduction of independent broadcasting in the 1950s left gaps to be filled. Such a phenomenon is reflected in this study by the remarkable proportion of women who would have been in their mid-20s in the expansive 1960s making a late decision to become journalists. The underlying reason for the trend to gender equality, at least in numbers, may be the wholly pragmatic one that the demand for abilities simply outstripped the supply, offering women opportunities to demonstrate their potential that were as random as they were fortuitous.

Nevertheless, broadcasting continued to attract and accommodate women in disproportion to men: 75 per cent of 2000 enrolments in UK postgraduate broadcast journalism courses, eliciting some concern.

Broadcast news should fairly reflect the society in which it operates. It was wrong when it was dominated by men; it would be just as wrong if it ended up being dominated by women' (Richardson 2000).

¹ *The Guardian* 4.5.97:20

There was, however, some ideological encouragement to increasing numbers. The BBC introduced a recruitment policy of positive discrimination (as it was to provide training courses exclusively for racial minorities) which by the 1990s resulted in a female majority among the 1080 journalists (the majority researchers) in the News and Current Affairs division.

Job distribution

Although it anticipates some data relevant to Chapter 11, Chart 19 provides a picture that suggests that job distribution has evened out in several categories, including the nominally better-paid. In the newspaper sector, the sexes appeared fairly equally split along most categories of job titles shown (sub-editor, columnist, feature writer, assistant editor. Men were more likely than women to be an editor or deputy editor (20% to 14%), while women were more likely than men to be reporters (31% to 25%). In the periodical and broadcast sectors men were more likely to be an editor or deputy editor (40% of men and 27% of women) or a section editor or head (16% of men and 12% of women). Women in these sectors were more likely to be reporters (16% of women and 10% of men) or sub-editors (19% of women and 12% of men). Women were also more likely to be a senior executive, assistant editor, news director or chief sub (12% of women and 4% of men). Like Chart 19, these percentages suggest that, proportionately to their likely length of experience, female journalists may be making greater progress towards numerical and operational equality than women in many other fields.

If only those women journalists working on *news*, either broadcast or print, were to be considered, the basis of the van Zoonen premise could be demonstrated (even if her categorisation of high and low prestige media were to remain in question). Women were proportionately under-

Journalists in three sectors compared by age groups and sex.

Chart 19a. Broadcast journalists

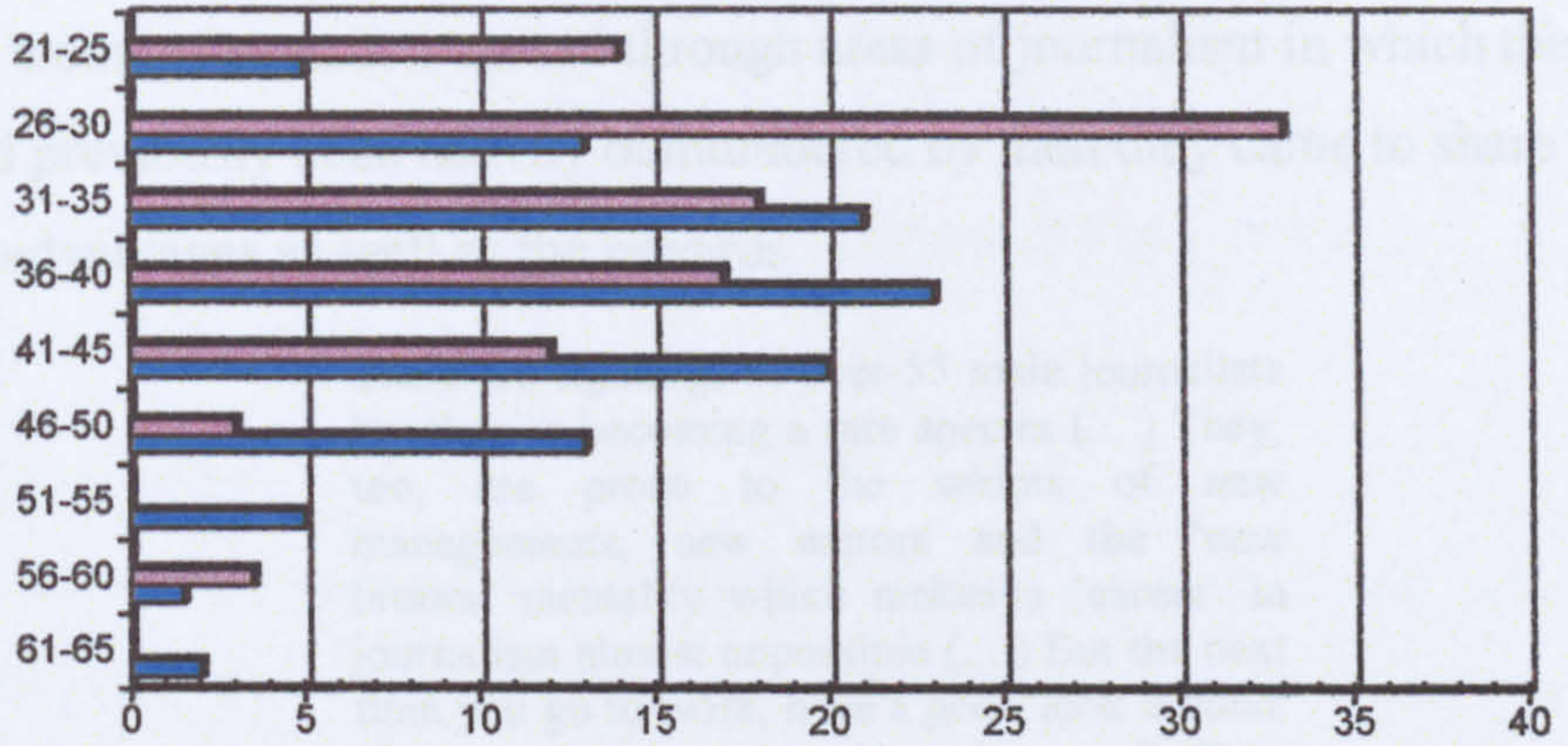


Chart 19b. Newspaper journalists

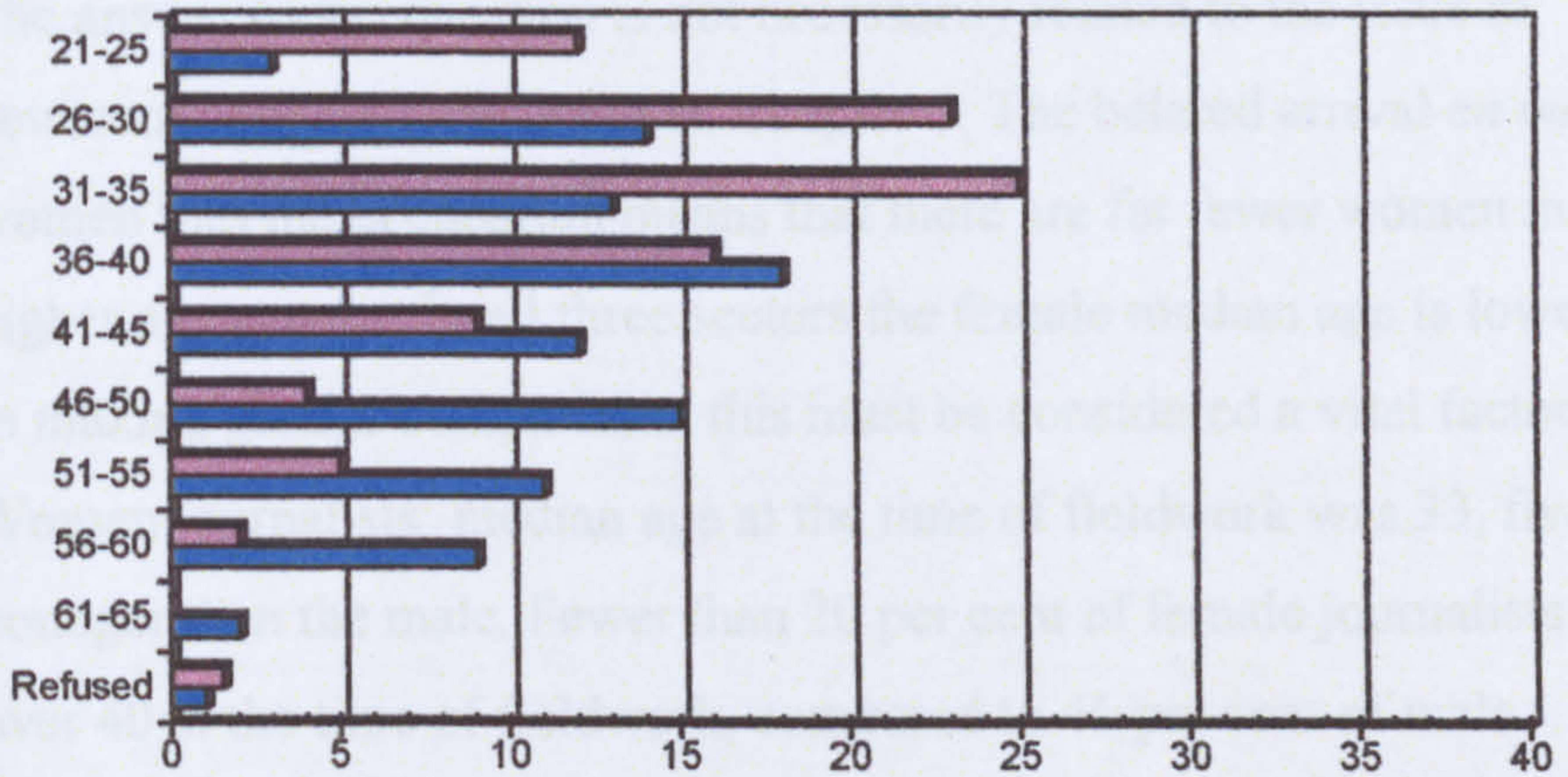
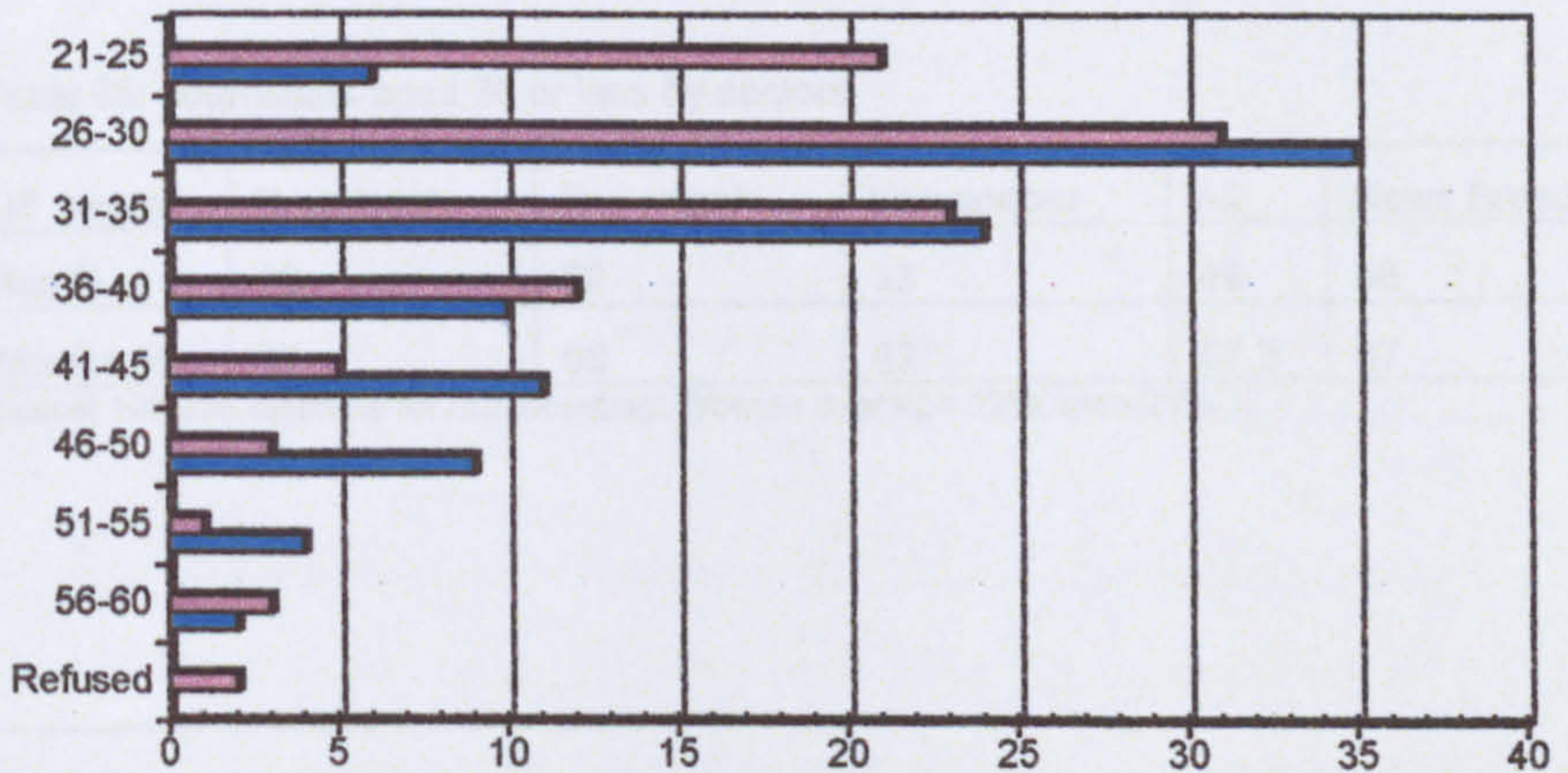


Chart 19c. Periodical journalists



represented in 'high' prestige national daily newspapers (especially tabloids). The highest female proportion was in 'low' prestige independent television and radio and in Sunday newspapers (broadsheet and tabloid).

Section 3: Age differential

As women journalists spread through areas of journalism in which they had previously been heavily outnumbered by men they came to share the disadvantages as well as the rewards.

There are sightings of over-55 male journalists but they're becoming a rare species (...) They, too, are prone to the whims of new managements, new editors and the 'new broom' mentality which makes a 'career' in journalism almost impossible (...) But the next time you go to work, have a good look around. How many women over 40 can you see? Over 45? Over 50? Have you any idea why that should be so?¹

The answer to the question is not necessarily related to the issue of newsroom ageism referred to in Chapter 5. The belated arrival *en masse* of women into the occupation means that there are far fewer women in the higher age groups. In all three sectors the female median age is lower and in making gender comparisons this must be considered a vital factor.

Women journalists' median age at the time of fieldwork was 33, five years younger than the male. Fewer than 20 per cent of female journalists were over 40 at the time of fieldwork, compared to 46 per cent of male journalists; 67 per cent of women in *news* were under 35 against 36 per cent of males.

Table 65: Journalists aged 36 or less by sectors

-36 years	Broadcast	Periodical	Newspaper	All	News Breed	USA	Aust.
Men %	62	52	33	49	36		
Women %	42	68	62	57.3	67	37.9	

Skillsset 1995/96 estimate for broadcasting: Women over 45= 12%; men 21%

¹ Anon *WJ* August 1998:5)

Nevertheless, Table 67 suggests that even in news younger women are fast making up lost ground.

Table 67: News journalists in each age band

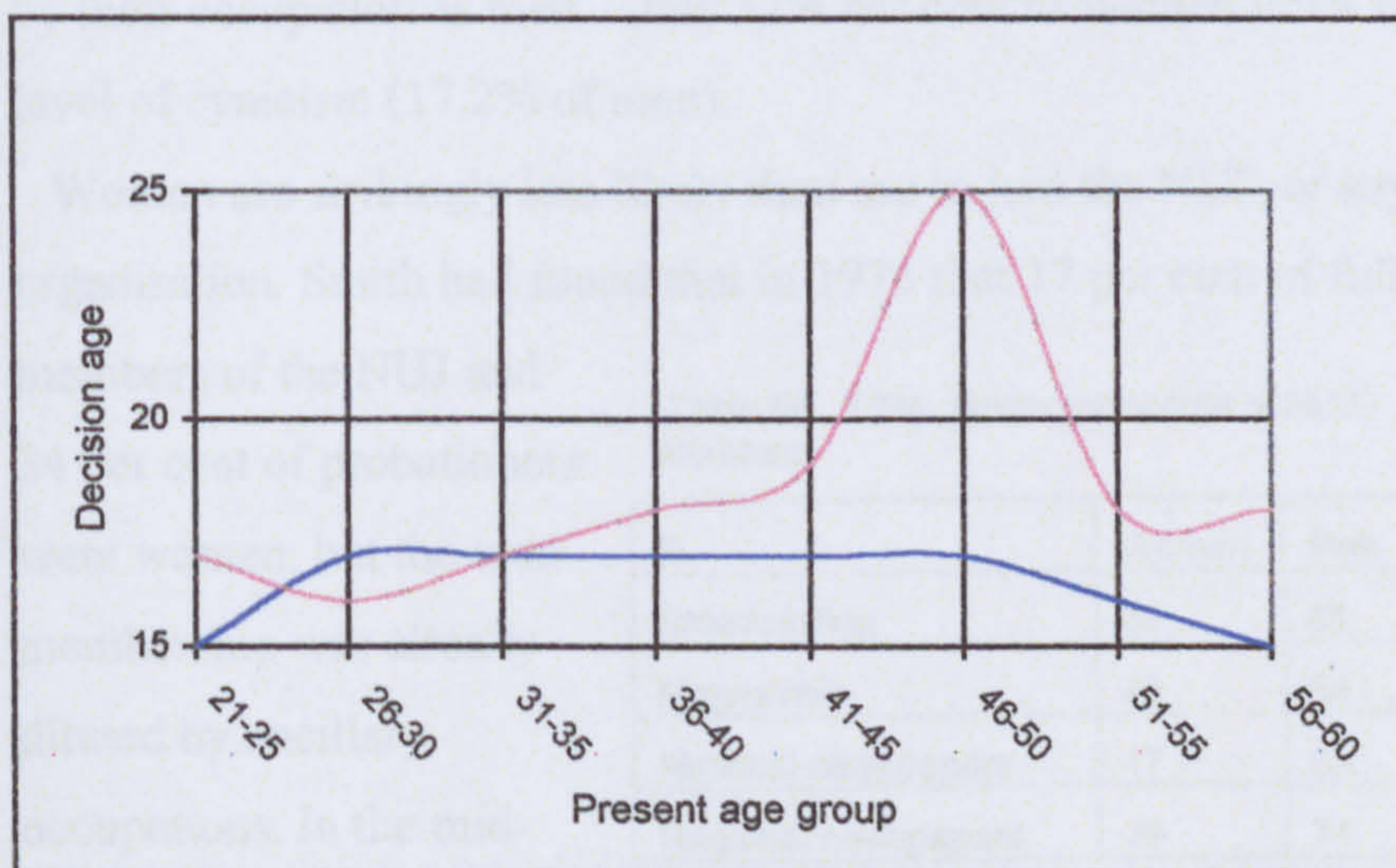
UK	-30	30-40	40--50	50+
Women	40.6	40.7	12	6.6

This trend is even more pronounced in the United States where Weaver and Wilhoit (1992) also showed older women journalists remaining active in important proportions.

Beginnings

Chart 20 shows the large proportion of women that made a relatively late decision to become journalists. This could partly be explained by the 'converts' and 'opportunists' referred to above; also by the likelihood that many women were not motivated to become journalists until their higher education was finished or well advanced. Both these factors would contribute to the relatively high age:experience ratio among women journalists.

Chart 20. Age at which decided to become journalist.



There are other notable differences in the way that women and men entered journalism. Only 37.9 per cent of women journalists started their careers on a regional newspaper compared with 62.4 per cent of men, suggesting that they found this route either unappealing or unnecessary.

By contrast, women were more likely to have begun their career on a magazine (27 % to 14.2 % men) or in the trade press (8% of women to 4.8% of men). Lack of interest in an NCTJ credential seemed higher among women. Fewer female print journalists (24.8%) held or were studying for the NCE than men (36.4%).

Section 4: Other differences

Perhaps because of the newspaper sector's large Roman Catholic component, women working in it appeared to be the most religiously active, with just over a quarter (27%) of women—and just under a quarter (23.8%) of men—answering yes when asked if they observed a religion in any way. In the periodical and broadcast sector a gender split was more apparent: 24 per cent of women answered yes by comparison with seven per cent of men.

Despite the various disadvantages complained of, women were only slightly less content in their jobs than men: 81.8 per cent to 83.5 per cent were *very satisfied* or *fairly satisfied* with their present jobs, compared to the 17.5 per cent of women and 16.1 per cent of men and who were *somewhat dissatisfied* or *very dissatisfied*. Nor do they seem as hardened by their occupation as men. Only 12.4 per cent of women felt a *very high* level of cynicism (17.2% of men).

Women are strikingly less likely than men to join the NUJ, or any other organisation. Smith had found that in 1975 that 17 per cent of full

members of the NUJ and 34 per cent of probationers were women, but the total membership was already diluted by ancillary occupations. In the mid-1990s women lagged well behind men in joining.

Table 68. 1994 gender proportion of NUJ members

%	Women	Men
Broadcasting	39	61
Magazines	46	54
National newspapers	17	83
Regional newspapers	29	71

Section 5: Pay, prospects and promotion

The longitudinal data recorded by Weaver and Wilhoit over 30 years suggests that American women *news* journalists have made steady progress towards equality of reward. Between 1971 and 1992 their average salary had increased from 64 per cent of male earnings to 81 per cent. When age and experience, media sector, size of employing organisation and other indicators were held constant that income gap ‘virtually disappeared’.

At the beginning of fieldwork for this study it was hypothesised that the reason so few women journalists in Britain appeared to have attained executive status would readily be demonstrated: lower average age linked to an average length of experience shorter than that of male journalists. A similar combination of variables could also explain, at least in part, discrepancies that were being complained of in women journalists’ rates of pay. The latter, however, was emphatically shown not to be the case, providing one of the most important findings of this project. The discrepancy in earnings that has been exposed by the study could become an even more crucial issue for women journalists if they were to be persuaded that an observation published in America separately from those of Weaver and Wilhoit could come to apply in Britain: among women and men aged 27 to 33 *who have never had a child* the earnings of women were close to 98 per cent of men’s.¹

In the 1950s, Strick had somewhat innocently resisted the idea that the lower cost to an employer could be a factor in the employment of women as journalists because women had been accorded the same pay as a man for doing the same job ‘since the early national agreements’ (64 & fn). Indeed, the NUJ had incorporated a declaration of equality into its founding document and even in offices where women were rare it had been implicit that they would be paid at the same rate as men. Similarly, in Australia, Article 23 of the Isaacs award had specified: ‘All provisions in

¹ June O’Neill, Congressional Budget Office. *Daily Telegraph* 21.5.96:20.

this agreement shall apply equally to male and female employees' (1917:97).¹

This study established that although equal pay legislation had been in force in the UK for nearly 20 years, women journalists' complaints of systematic departure from the principle were fully justified. Even when

Table 69. Proportion of male income.

All women journalists	
Age band	%
21-25	97.32
26-30	95.26
31-35	91.77
36-40	82.28
41-45	82.63
46-50	59.39
51-55	68.51
56-60	86.12
Average	82.91

factors such as age, experience and length of employment were applied to the data presented in Chapter 8, women journalists, overall, earned approximately 17 per cent less than their male equivalents. This was less true of those in the younger age bands, suggesting that salary discrimination might be on the wane, but it remained sharply

apparent in the 46-55 bands which include those women likely to have entered journalism in the 1960s and 1970s.

Without relating earnings to achievement or function, women and men in

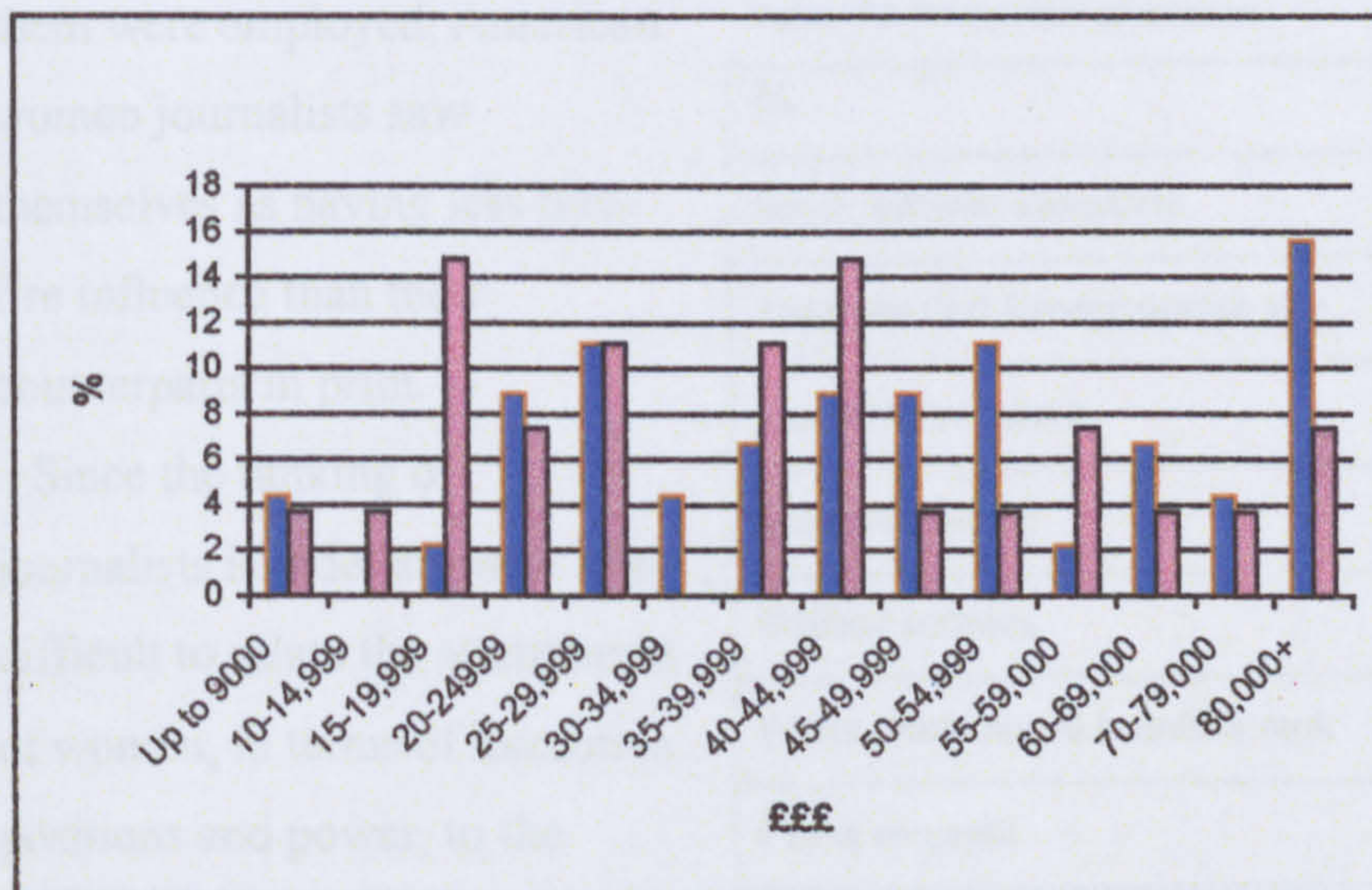


Chart 21. MGN incomes

¹ The attitude of the major British print unions that the NUJ frequently set out to emulate is noteworthy in this regard. During the long omnipotence of SOGAT and the NGA no woman was ever permitted—except in wartime—to work as a typesetter, compositor or machine hand.

the central income bands (£20,000 to £34,999) were roughly equal in proportion. There were evident differences at each end of the scale but the contrast became spectacular among journalists earning above £40,000.

Of these higher earners, 85 per cent were men.

The differential is less marked among the Brethren (above) until the £40,000 band but after that point, however, the gap widens to 'normal' suggesting that the combination of selection, preparation and experience this group manifests has not outweighed this basic gender inequality.

Authority

Where job satisfaction, association membership, ethical attitudes, and role perceptions were concerned, significant differences were more likely to be found between American media sectors than between the sexes. The two areas in which this was apparently not the case were that of achieving *positions of authority*—in the sense of influence on hiring and firing—and in *domestic life*. The media sector played a significant part. Women in US newspapers and newsmagazines could be seen to have increased their (self-) perceived influence *a great deal* from a factor of 27 per cent to 35.2 per cent over a decade. In broadcasting the increase was from 10.5 per cent to 21.2 per cent. Thus, in the broadcast sector, where a high proportion of them were employed, American women journalists saw themselves as having less hire-fire influence than their counterparts in print.

Since the ranking of journalists is indeterminate it is difficult to relate the attainments of women, in terms of executive positions and power, to the structures of other occupations. Using the UK survey category of *senior executive*, random

Table 70. Proportion of women

%	▼
Senior editorial executives	35
Top three Civil Service grades ★	9
Practising barristers	22
Queen's Counsel	3
Solicitor partners	15
Police officer above Inspector rank	12
Police sergeant	6

★ Six departments, including the Inland Revenue and the Department of Education and Employment had no women in those grades.

comparisons were made with the proportions of women to be found in the upper echelons of other occupations during the period of fieldwork. Some measure of female progress in the occupation may be made from empirical consideration of the women journalists scaling the promotion ladder. Strick, like Smith, had noted that most of the women working in 1957 were feature writers or reporters. Only a 'very few' were sub-editors and only about half a dozen magazines were edited by women. (Smith, found that the number of women executives on national titles even appeared to have suffered a decline between 1971 and 1974.)

During the fieldwork period for this project in the late 1990s, ten women held the editorship of national Sunday newspapers, the first appointed in 1987. All but two had been replaced eventually by men.¹ Only one woman (who had also been among the Sunday editors) became the editor of a national daily² although in 1999 six of the nine national daily and Sunday broadsheets had women as deputy editors, as did eight of the 11 daily and Sunday tabloids then publishing.³ The regional press produced only five female editors for its 91 daily titles, the first appointed in 1990.¹ The periodical sector, where women editors had become a virtual norm by the 1990s, provided an example of double role reversal. Four men's glossy magazines, a category which enjoyed spectacular growth in the 1990s, were for a time edited by women. Three of the women editors were replaced by men. Neither series of appointments attracted complaints of gender bias. These proportions suggest that—income apart—women journalists may be more upwardly mobile in their careers than women in some other occupations.

Section 6: Family life

A majority of journalists of both sexes have no children. Nearly three out of four (73.7%) women in journalism were childless, by comparison with 46.7 per cent of men. Over a quarter of the men (26.0%) had two children,

▲ Sources: WIJ/Skillset, First Division Association 1996; Association of Women Barristers 1996; Law Society 1996; *Developing Diversity in the Police Service*, Home Office 1996

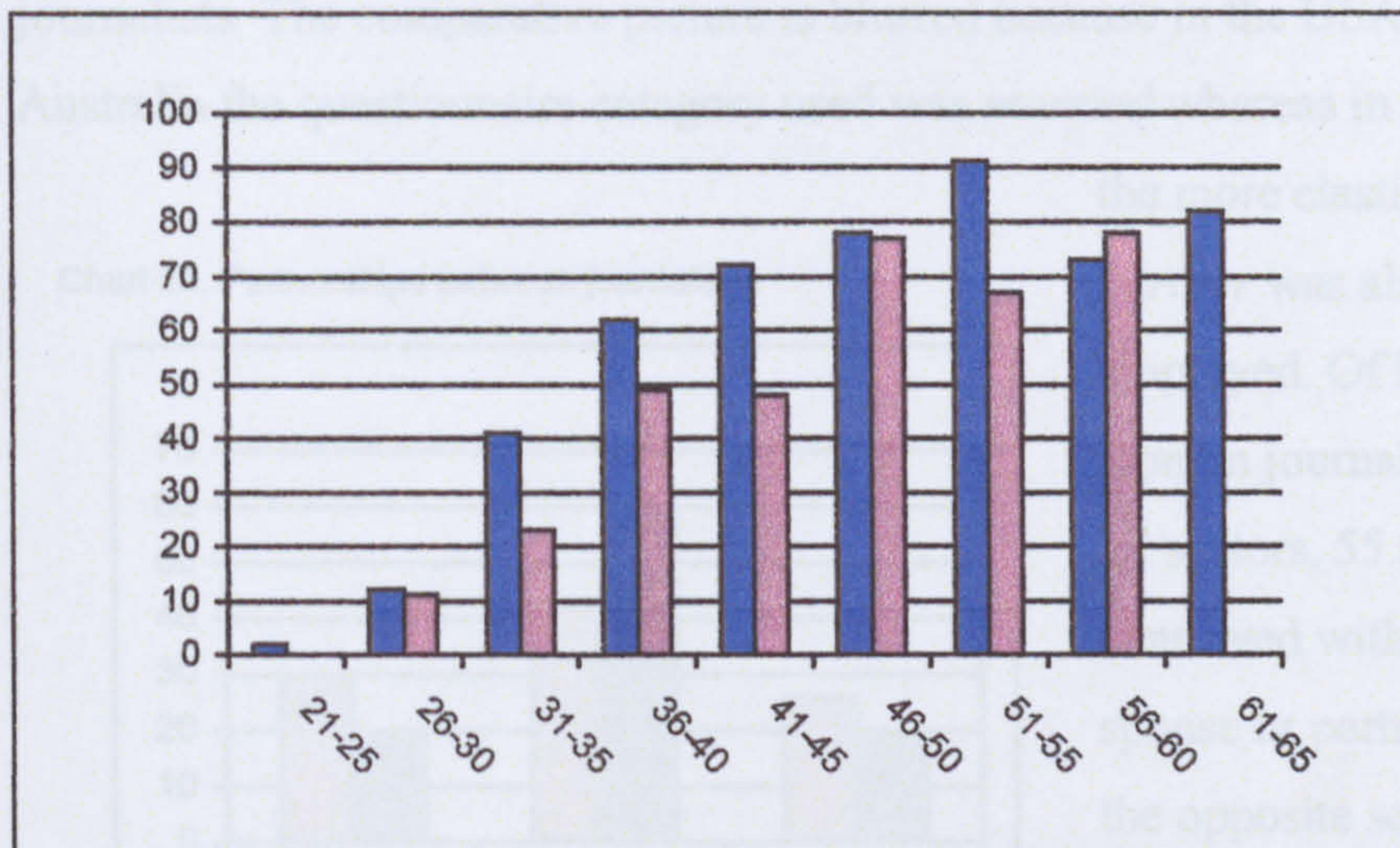
¹ Janet Street-Porter, *Independent on Sunday*, 1999; Rebekah Wade, *News of the World*, 2000.

² Rosie Boycott, actually editor-in-chief of the *Express*, 1998.

³ WIJ 1995 survey.

but the same was true of only 11.0 per cent of women. Only 12 per cent overall had three or more. The chart below reflects the higher multiple birthrate in an era when family planning was less common, together with the negligible proportion of women in the higher age groups.

Chart 22. Journalists with more than one child by age group.



There is an important extraneous factor to be considered in any debate about motherhood and career. The age at which women are likely to give birth has been rising as has the proportion of women who remain childless: in England and Wales less than 12 per cent of women born in 1944 were childless when they turned 35 in 1979; for those born in 1964 the proportion had risen to 20 per cent.² By 1994, the average number of births per fertile woman was calculated at 1.74.³

The low median age of women journalists must be a relevant factor but even so, as shown in Chapter 8, journalists of both sexes cohabit and reproduce at a rate below the national norm. Among the stabilised cohort of the Plymouth Brethren only 15 per cent were childless and 68 per cent had two or more children, figures which may also represent the characteristics of the earlier generation to which these journalists belonged.

¹ Christmas 1997:38.

² Social Trends 27, Table 2.21.

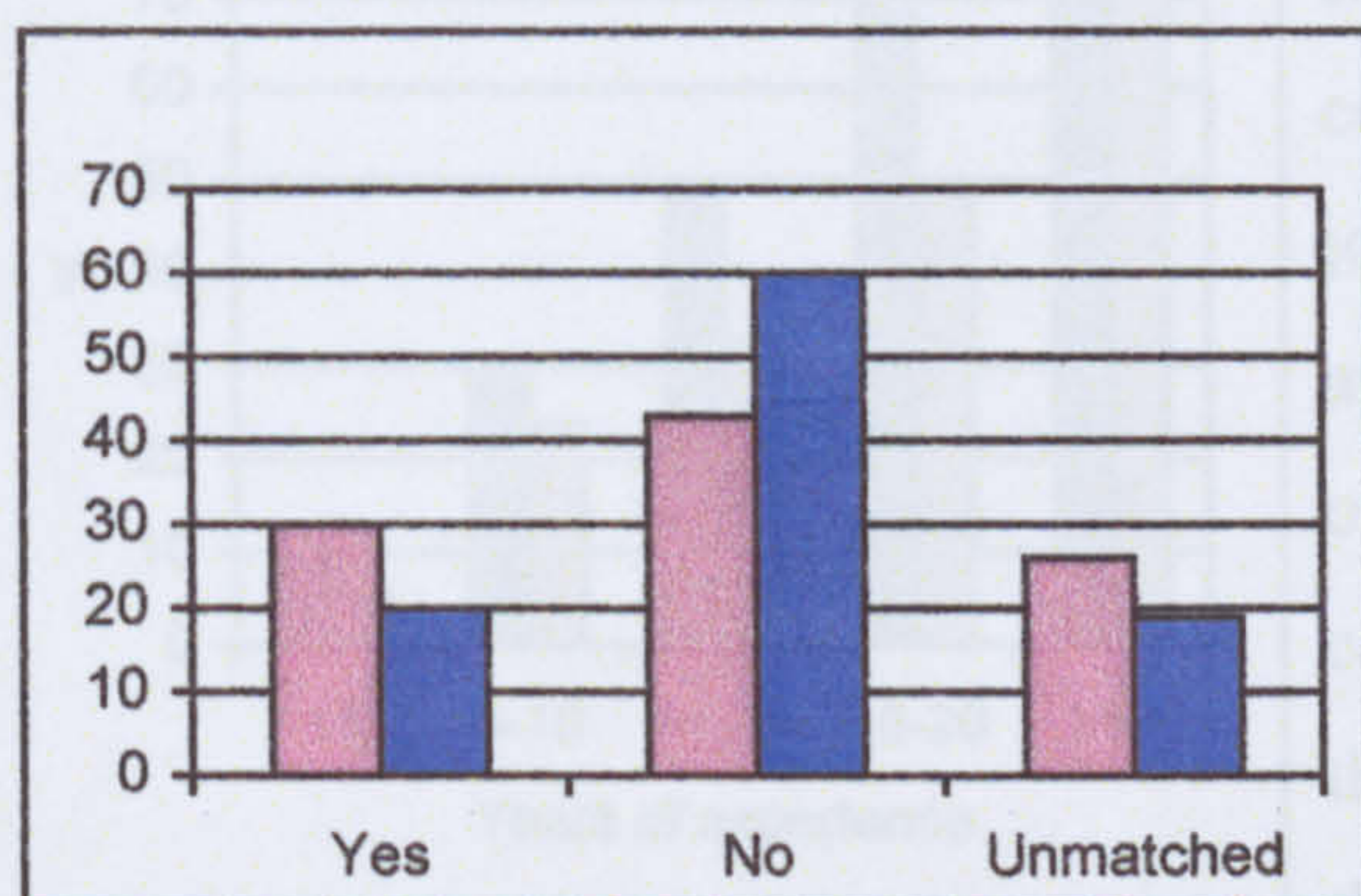
³ Annual Abstract of Statistics 1997. Table 2.13 Total Period Fertility Rate.

Table 71. Married journalists

	News Breed	USA 1992	USA 1982	USA 1971	UK national	Aust. (all)
Women	39.1	48	43	58	63.8	51
Men	61.9	65	62	76	61.1	

The table above refers only to the *News Breed* category of British journalists. The comparative picture is blurred because in the USA and Australia the questionnaire category used was *married* whereas in Britain

Chart 23. Partnerships between journalists.

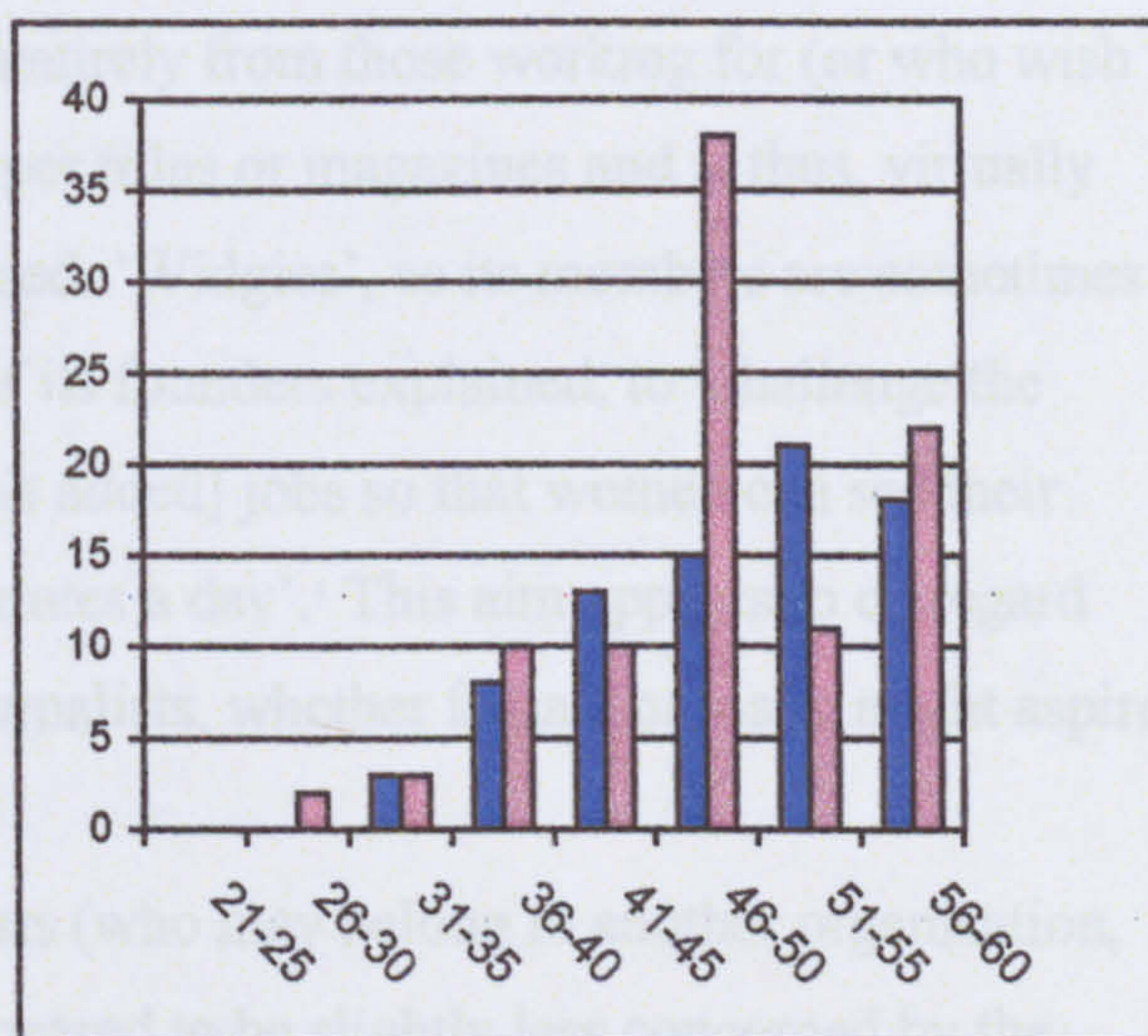


the more elastic partner was also employed. Of British women journalists in all sectors, 55.00 per cent lived with a spouse or partner of the opposite sex, compared to 71.2 per cent of men. Only 1.1 per cent of women and 1.4 per cent of men acknowledged a partner of the opposite sex. Women were more likely to be associated domestically with another journalist (29.6% of women compared with 19% of men).

Chart 24. Journalists divorcing by age.

Divorce

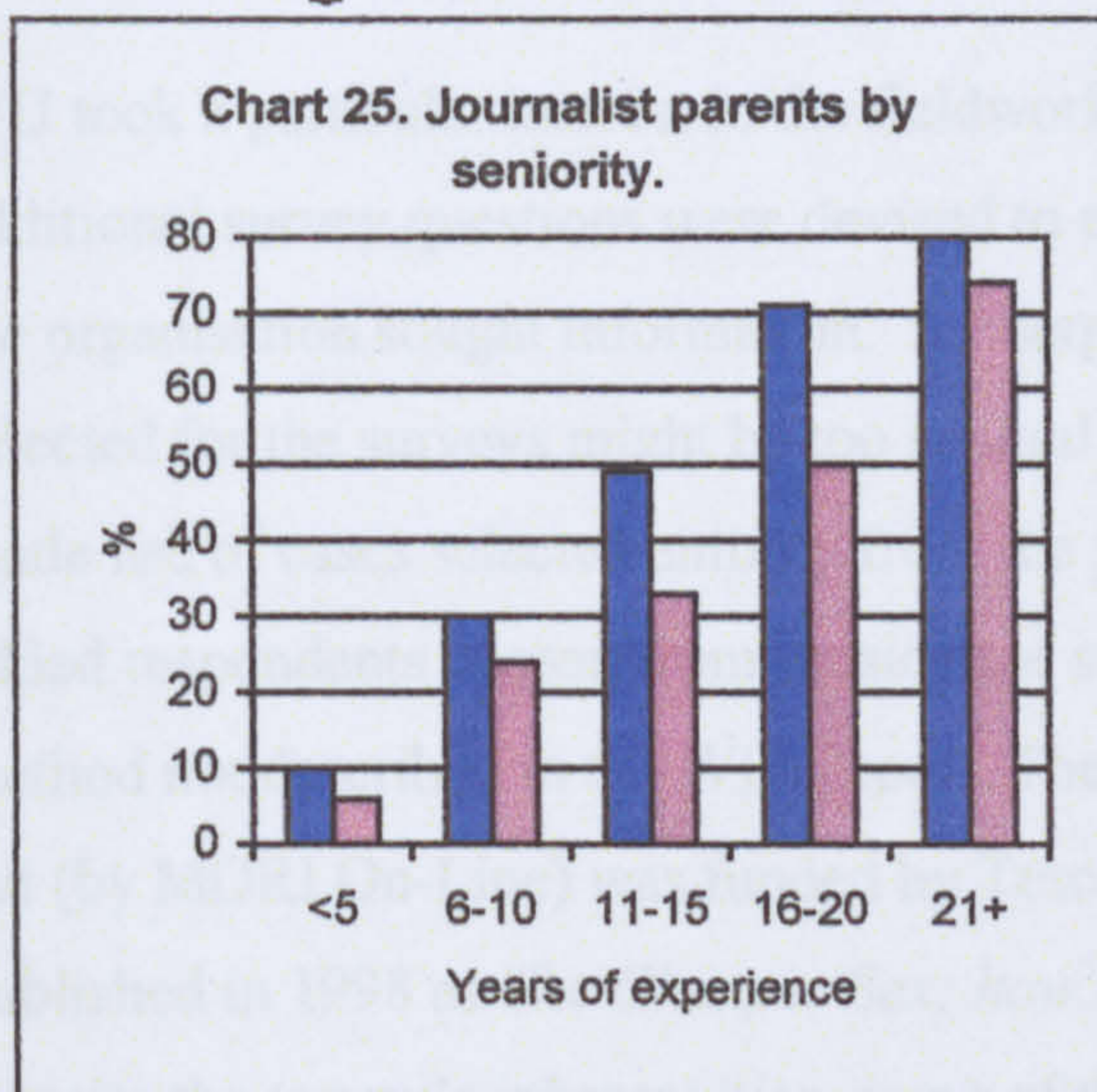
Divorce rates are similar for both sexes, with 1.5 per cent of all journalists being divorced and 1.5 per cent separated. The American researchers felt able to conclude from the rising marriage rate displayed in Table 71 (after the sharp decline 1971-1982) that both



Y2male and female journalists had found it easier over the last decade to 'balance personal and professional lives'.

WIJ

Age as a factor in parenthood may not be a consideration confined to women journalists, but it is of greater relevance to their careers than those of male journalists. The issue of favourable conditions for combining



journalistic employment and motherhood occupy the forefront of any discourse centred on women journalists, since both articulate individuals and organisations devoted to that cause consistently place them there. However, despite the frequency and fervour of

claims that employers and senior executives are unsympathetic to journalist mothers, the data for the study suggests that this issue may be a more pressing one among an emergent upwardly mobile minority of women journalists rather than a concern shared across the national range. Certainly, the membership of the most active and vocal group, Women in Journalism, is drawn almost entirely from those working for (or who wish to work for) national newspaper titles or magazines and is thus, virtually by self-selection, London-based. 'Widgies', as its members are sometimes known, came together, one of its founders explained, to 'challenge the culture of *executive* [emphasis added] jobs so that women can see their family for more than five minutes a day'.¹ This aim appears to disregard the possibility that not all journalists, whether female or male, might aspire to executive jobs.

Women broadcast journalists (who may belong to another organisation, Women in Broadcasting) appeared to be slightly less concerned by the

¹ Seighart, M.A., *Journalist* June-July 1995:6

issues that motivated their print counterparts although there was in that sector

still general concern about the gender imbalance in senior posts and in national news presentation. The main barrier is recognized as being problems with managing child-care responsibilities with work (especially unsociable working hours or being away from home) as well as attitudes of male colleague to this (Skillset 1996:97).

WIJ took a particular interest in the fieldwork for this project and several additional survey questions were devised to explore aspects about which the organisation sought information. Subsequently, fearing that the sample selected for the surveys might be too general for their purposes, the WIJ made use of cases selected entirely from the print sector to which were added respondents chosen from outside the study sample frames by a method not described in the WIJr report. The survey that was then carried out (by MORI On-Line) was funded by Tesco and a partial report published in 1998 as *The Cheaper Sex; how women lose out in journalism*. Despite the survey's inherent bias, some of the responses have indicative value, and where cited their source has been clearly identified.

The table below was compiled from questions that, because they were asked on behalf of WIJ, were put *only to respondents in the newspaper and periodical sectors*.

Table 72. Have considerations of career or livelihood made you decide

%	Not to have a child at a certain time?	Not to have a child at all?	Neither	Refused	
All	20.3	2.9	68.4	8.4	100.0
Women*	25.0	4.0	65.0	6.0	100.0
Men*	15.0	2.1	75.0	7.0	100.0

*When categories were combined, finding matched WIJ (1998) results.

These responses, although they can be applied only to the two sectors from which the samples were drawn, suggest that in at least one out of four cases career considerations may have been a factor in timing or avoiding pregnancies. This appears to be a high proportion by comparison with a 1998 investigation that found only one in 10 *women* saying that they had

postponed or foregone having children because of their jobs, although in that survey no distinction was made between the actions.¹ The male-female proportions in the WIJ data must also be treated with caution. Given the inter-journalist cohabitation rate, there could be a double response from couples.

Uniquely British

To van Zoonen the clash between family responsibilities and the demands of media employment represented the 'final obstacle' to women journalists' advancement. Female journalists were saddled with a 'double burden' because of the around-the-clock nature of some media occupations which, she said 'must be considered a product of professional mythology rather than organisational necessity [although] the impact of the myth is considerable' (53). The 'mythology' certainly exists—as does the need for morning newspapers to be prepared overnight and for broadcast news to go out at times when most of its audience is at home to receive it.

The study data does not offer strong support to van Zoonen's conviction that women journalists considered it 'impossible' to combine career and family because media organisations did not provide childcare facilities and adequate parental leave arrangements. The achievements of female journalists that can be gleaned from this study data show that it must certainly be possible, although there need be no doubt that the paltriness of the concessions made to working parents make it difficult. There appear to be broader considerations. An investigation whose fieldwork predated this study by only a few years disclosed differences between female employment patterns in Britain and other Western countries that deserve to be considered together with other factors relating to women journalists. The most striking was that British women characteristically reconciled employment and child-rearing by taking these experiences in sequence, thus producing a broken employment pattern that survey data showed to be 'internationally, and perhaps historically, unique'. Almost all British

¹¹ Opportunity 2000.

women worked at some point in their lives¹ but the incidence of breaks from work for child rearing was far higher in Britain than in any other country except East Germany²: 59 per cent against a West European average of 44 per cent. The conclusion by Heather Jodi, in her analysis of the results, was that the British pattern was enforced by the limited day care available within the school system and a lack of statutory parental leave. This suggests a general social deficiency in Britain which would affect all working women rather than one specifically related to journalism.

Jodi's study followed three cohorts of employed mothers born decades apart and found a clear correlation between successful employment and education levels. The youngest rank of mothers sampled (born in 1958) were the most likely to be 'elderly primagravidae'— coming to motherhood after 30. They were also the most likely to receive maternity leave and to be able to maintain a full-time employment record. That would be the category in which those women journalists characterised by the present study, who wished to combine motherhood with their work, would prefer to see themselves. Several such instances were recorded in the interviews that formed part of the project fieldwork. There were also contrasting views, such as those expressed below.

However, the study showed that fewer women journalists (28.1% to 41.3% of men) intended to be working in the same organisation in five years time. Nearly one in 10 women intended to be freelance, compared to only one in 20 men. There is thus a strong indication in the 'freelance' responses that women see that as opportunity to sustain a career, if only temporarily, during a motherhood break.

The greater age of the male journalist population is probably responsible for the larger number of men than women who propose to be in retirement (2.6% of women; 9.0 % of men).

¹ 70% according to the Downing Street Summit, 1999.

² A separate nation when the data was compiled in 1990.

Journalist mothers

Jennai Alberts and **Martina Baker** are Journalism graduates, both of whom became pregnant soon after beginning their first jobs on national newspapers. Alberts was 28, Baker 27. Neither baby's father was a journalist. Each woman had a second child a year later. After the first birth, neither mother wished to return to regular employment.

Baker: It seemed to me that there was no real choice. If I was going to go to an office every day, I could not be the kind of mother I wished to be. But I did not want to give up journalism. So I began freelancing. I found I could get all the work I could handle and that most of my research could be done on the telephone or the internet—just as it would have been if I had a regular job.

Alberts: I assumed that freelancing would be an ideal way to combine motherhood with working. I had not accounted for the various problems this combination would throw up but still believe it to be better than being a full-time, going-to-the-office mother, although I felt ready to return to an office when my daughter was about a year old. She is now two, and looking back on her development and the time we have spent together I am glad I did not.

Did you plan to take a few years out and then resume work full-time?

Baker: I prefer the kind of work-lifestyle I've worked out. I'm in charge of my own career as well as my mother function. Why should I work exclusively for some publication when I can have lots of them, in effect, working for me?

Alberts: I don't think this is feasible, in general, in this line of work, particularly if you have even an ounce of ambition. But given the chance now, I would like to spend a few days a week in an office - you do miss the atmosphere and all else that goes with it.

Would the availability of childcare facilities been a factor if you had gone back to an office? Flexible hours?

Baker: I just don't think it's possible for a British outfit to achieve that level of social responsibility. Flexible hours, maybe but never proper childcare. Anyway, who would decide which hours to flex? I'd rather control my own life, which journalism allows me to do. But having a child does make it difficult to get around like a good journalist should.

Alberts: Childcare has been something of a headache. The cost is pretty high and the hours restrictive - if I have to go out to interview, for example, it has to be after and before certain hours of the day.

These women and several other interviewed appear to believe that they are able to combine a certain level of journalism practice with the quality of motherhood they wished to bestow. Although both of these interviewees had two children—unusual as it has been shown among women journalists—they did so by choice, calculating that they would be able to maintain their careers by freelancing.

Worktime.

The question raised here of, to use van Zoonen's terms, the professional mythology of long and inconvenient working times versus genuine organisational need divides male and female journalists alike, although a substantial proportion of women in the overall sample believe they could work as efficiently to a self-defined timetable.

Table 73. Q: 100: Would you be able to achieve comparable professional results if your working pattern could be arranged to suit your personal needs?

%	Yes
Women	56.2
Men	43.8

In WIJ's own survey, 64 per cent of childless women print journalists answered YES, as did 60 per cent of those who were mothers.

The issue of longer or unsocial hours, it must be noted, is one most likely to affect only journalists working in news production—a majority to be sure; and of which 40 per cent of those under 40 are women. Those

engaged elsewhere may reasonably expect to work hours that are no more demanding than in other occupations.

Women did not, in any case, seem to spend as much time in offices as their male counterparts. The two largest work-time bands were 37-40 and 41-45 hours a week. The highest proportion of women were concentrated in the 30-40 hour bands (which may be explained by a higher incidence of part-time work) while more than twice the proportion of men to women put in more than 50 hours a week.¹ Nearly, 20 per cent of journalists worked more than 50 hours a week and in that category the gender split was approximately 67:33, men predominant.

Table 74. Q: 93: How many hours a week do you work?

Hours worked %	All	Women	Men
Less than 30	5.5	42.3	35.3
30-36	9.4	62.1	37.9
37-40	22.9	62.0	38.0
41-45	23.5	57.5	42.5
46-50	10.6	45.5	54.5
50+	19.7	32.8	67.2
Refused	8.4		
	100.0		

Summary conclusions

Even in the absence of dependable data, it may be accepted that whatever the exact number or proportion of women employed in any of the three sectors they remained an insignificant minority until the expansion of the journalist population in the 1960s, from causes already identified. That situation changed rapidly for the reasons the study has examined and it is obvious that despite some disillusion, such as that of the 'Jane' quoted at the beginning of this chapter, a large number of women now find it an accessible and congenial occupation—and an adaptable one.

¹ 31 survey reported that 47% of UK workforce worked more than 40 hours a week. 'UK has Europe's longest hours', *The Guardian* 22.6.97:3

—The data appears to suggest that some women make a more considered decision to become journalists than men, choosing perhaps from an array of possibilities; others simply evolve into practitioners. Either case betokens a less romantic view of the occupation.

—It is obvious from the job tabulations that employers are ready to entrust women with responsibilities that are at least notionally equal to those given to men. The competitive nature of journalism and the exclusive behaviour of their male counterparts, at least towards the early female arrivals, have encouraged women to build their own occupational networks.

—The incremental rate at which the number of women journalists has grown suggests that an overall female majority may not be far off, in which case, gender may cease to be a factor in promotion and authority—if it has not already done so.

—Not all of the journalist population will wish to maintain its present youthful, child-free character (the one in four women journalists who put off having a child at a certain time for career reasons may have made similar decision had they been otherwise employed; the proportion deciding *not to have a child* at all appears negligible) and the complications of parenthood cannot be solved by employers alone. The correlation Jodi established suggests, that some of the most contentious aspects raised by women journalists may be ascribed to generalised social factors and that the issue cannot be assessed outside the general context of employed women in the United Kingdom. However, even considering what Joshi delicately referred to as ‘the gendered restraints of reproductive responsibilities’, journalism appears to have come to offer women equal access, career prospects and—eventually—rewards. More than most occupations it seems able to provide ‘a lifelong source of identity for women as well as men, and a route to emancipation from women’s traditional subordination’ (1996 Joshi 89).

Chapter 11

The three nations of journalism

The skills we look for are rather different. It's not a sector which will offer opportunities to a would-be investigative journalist, but it's perfect for people with marketing qualifications and experience.—
Neil O'Brien, Periodical Training Council recruitment panel, 12.6.99

Section 1. Common ground and alien ways

In the course of the study variations became apparent in the representative profiles of journalists working in the three sectors from which data were gathered and analysed: newspapers, periodicals, broadcast. It is evident that while there are large areas of convergence in values and attitudes between journalists practising in the different media sectors there are sufficient differences—and not merely in occupational techniques and methods—to suggest that they occupy quite different professional territory: the three 'nations' of journalism, substantially federated but with the citizenship of each clearly demarcated.

It has already been shown that journalists were not, in the main, inclined to transfer from one media sector to another once their careers were settled; nor that they habitually worked outside their sector, even when moonlighting. It is also apparent that the choice of or preference for a particular sector is expressed at the outset; in short, today's journalists have continued in their careers much as they began.

The older generation of broadcast journalists would usually have had its formative experience in print. Newspapers or wire services remained the principal sources of talent for that sector well into the 1970s. Only 23.5 per cent of that generation of broadcasters came out of newspapers or periodicals. At the time of fieldwork, slightly more than half of all broadcasters had begun their career in either radio or television; the

highest proportions in radio (32.2%) a factor that, considering the significant female element appears to buttress the observations of Sebba. By contrast, only 1.8 per cent of newspaper journalists began in broadcasting and 7.3 per cent in the periodical sector. In the periodical sector, 61.3 per cent (an equal proportion of men and women) began their career working either for a magazine (47.3%) or a trade publication (14%). Only nine percent of women periodical journalists and 18 per cent of men acknowledged a 'traditional' grounding in regional newspapers.

Table 75. In what sort of organisation did you start your career in journalism?

	Broadcast	Periodical	Newspaper	All
National daily	1.7	4.1	6.5	4.1
Regional daily	1.7	5.3	22.8	9.9
Regional weekly	16.1	7.4	48.4	24.0
Independent radio	20.7	0.8	0.0	7.16
Independent TV	8.6	0.4	0.3	3.1
BBC-TV	9.8	0.4	0.5	3.5
BBC radio	11.5	0.4	1.0	4.1
Trade press	1.7	14.0	0.5	5.4
Agency	3.4	2.9	3.7	9.3
Consumer magazine	2.3	47.3	6.8	18.8

Section 2: Periodical sector

The most distinctive profile to emerge was that of the nation of periodical journalists. As established earlier, the median age within that sector was 32.6, the dominant gender female: 55.6 per cent. As noted in the previous chapter, 75 per cent of its senior citizens, those with 21 years or more of experience, were female.

However, 68 per cent of all women in the sector were no older than 35, the largest proportion of this lower age group in any sector. Despite—or perhaps because of—the female preponderance, this sector showed the highest proportion (47.0%) of those who thought it was harder for capable women journalists to get ahead.

The sector contained the highest proportion of journalists of both sexes who had *never married* and the lowest proportion of those who *live with a spouse or partner of the opposite sex* (50% by comparison with 72.3% in newspapers and 70.7% in broadcast). The low female age level must also be one of the factors that explains why periodical journalists were statistically childless, scoring zero against a mean of one child for each journalist in the other sectors.

It has also been shown that periodical journalists were more likely than those working for newspapers or broadcast outlets to be university graduates: 76 per cent of men and 79 per cent of women had a bachelor level degree. The sector registered the highest score of masters degrees (9.6%) and was the only one in which research degrees were being undertaken to any measurable extent (1.2%). Overall, only 14.8 per cent of periodical journalists did *not* attend university (comparable percentages for non-attenders are 21.3 for broadcasting and 32.9 for newspapers). Graduate periodical journalists did not appear to come from specialised disciplines in any significant proportion, with the possible exception of science (Arts 44 %, Science 9.5 %).

The sector's pattern of earlier education was also distinctive, public school, religious schools and education abroad amounting to a factor of 32 per cent in contrast to only eight per cent of newspaper journalists with such backgrounds. The public school element was the highest of all three sectors, at nearly 30 per cent. The sector also had the largest proportion of multiple A levels (75%).

Periodical journalists were the group most likely to favour entrants with degrees (representing 42% of those who *did* favour them) although they were the least likely to commend Journalism degrees (25.5% of those who *did not* favour them). Periodical journalists represented the highest proportion of all the journalists who favour Channel 4 news (32% compared to 18 % of newspaper journalists) but also the highest of those who *did not know* which television news they preferred.

The sector displayed the highest ethnic element (12%), the smallest proportion of Roman Catholics (12%) and the highest of Jews (2.5%)

although it also produced the highest declaration of 'no religion' (25%). It had the largest non-European element (12%) but was also the most *English*: 80.7 per cent of those Europeans.

The periodical sector showed the largest proportion (55.6%), fairly evenly divided between sexes, from families where the main breadwinner was in *professional or managerial* employment. Women in this sector were less likely than men (12% to 26%) to come from a background of *manual, unskilled, or semi-skilled* work, or a *skilled trade*. There was also a notably large proportion of women periodical journalists (12% compared with 3% of men) from families in which the main breadwinner was employed in *journalism or other media*.

The predominance of women in this sector, particularly in the younger age groups, may account for some of these singularities but it is unlikely to be the cause of them all. It seems far more likely that a certain kind of journalist aspires to work in this sector, which encompasses a vast array of publications, including consumer orientated glossies and entertainment-led 'popsies', heavyweight business-to-business titles and trade and professional journals. An additional conclusion invited is that the specialisations some of these publications reflect may have offered a late career change for men and women who possessed certain experience or expertise that could be transmuted into journalism. The close links that the periodical sector maintains with advertisers or client industries may play a part in this process.

Late starters

An indicator of that likelihood is the large proportion of periodical journalists who came to the occupation comparatively late in life. The proportion of journalists in this sector who had a full-time job before becoming journalists

is 45 per cent, markedly higher than newspapers (29.6%) or

Table 76. At what age did you get your first regular PAID job in journalism?

	Broadcast	Periodical	Newspaper	All
Mean	23	24	21	22.6

broadcasting (36.2%). Those for whom that early job was *professional or managerial* or *other media (PR/advertising)* was higher still (27.4% against 8.3%

and 15% respectively).

Of women in

this category, 48 per cent had worked in *other media* compared to 22 per cent of the men, 45 per cent of whom had worked in *professional or managerial* compared to 18 per cent of the women.

Table 77. Q.59: At what age did you decide to become a journalist?

%	Broadcast	Periodical	Newspaper	All	MGN
Mean	19	20	18	19	17

Table 78. Did you have a full-time job in another occupation before becoming a journalist?

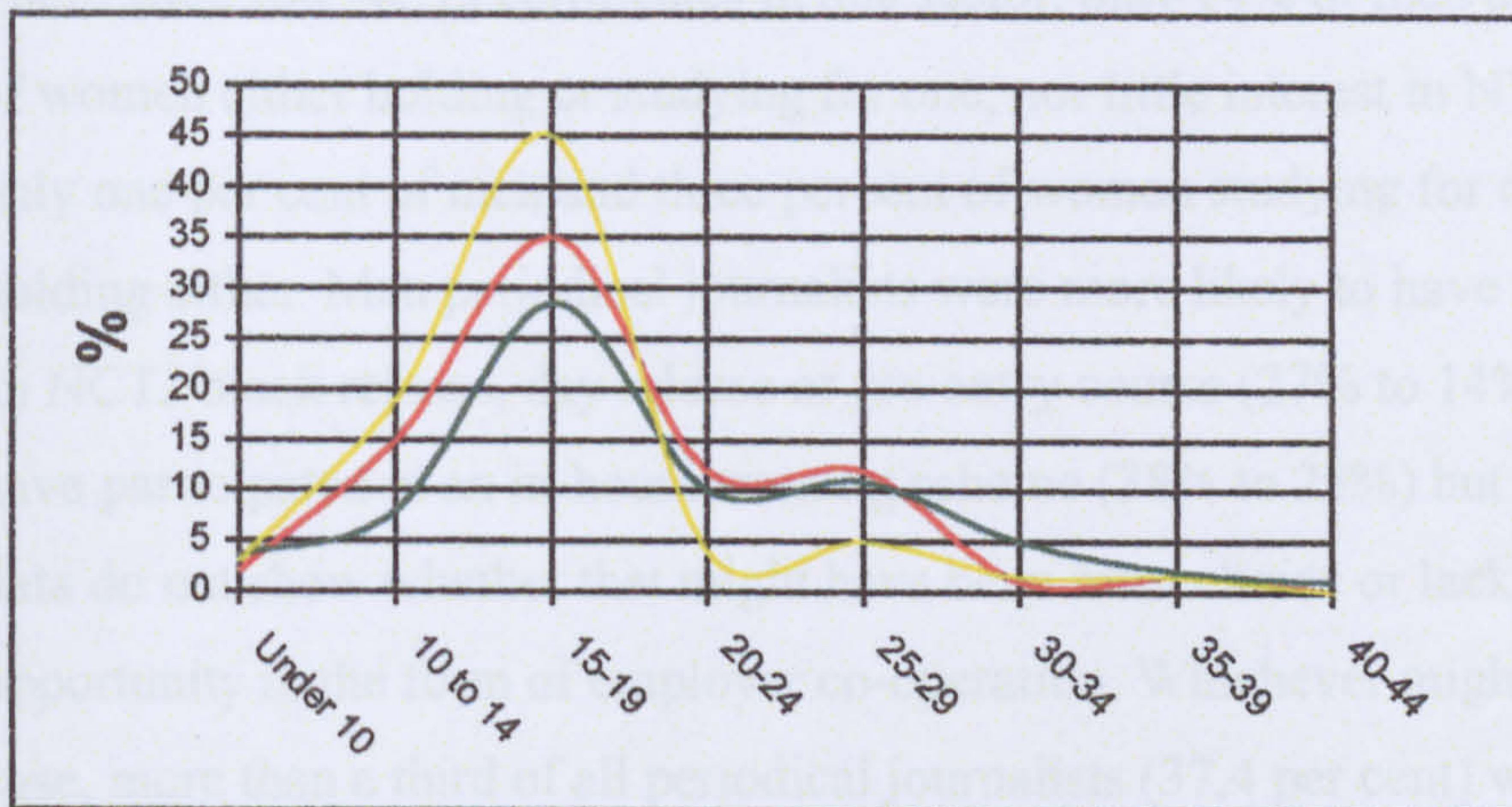
%	Broadcast	Periodical	Papers	All
No	63.8	54.9	70.4	63.0
Clerical/sales	14.4	13.5	12.4	13.4
Professional/managerial (teacher, executive)	9.8	13.1	6.8	9.9
Other media (PR/advertising)	5.2	14.3	1.5	7.0
Unskilled/semi-skilled	2.9	2.5	4.7	3.3
Skilled trade	2.9	0.4	2.3	1.8
Other	1.7	1.2	2.3	1.7
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

As Table 76 and Chart 26 show, a significant number of periodical journalists do not appear to have reached a career decision (or taken advantage of an opportunity) until notably later than their equivalents in the other 'nations'. Despite the relatively small difference in the mean ages at which those in the different sectors decided on a career, the tabulations reflects a significant time gap before those in the periodical sector actually applied themselves to journalism. That is also reflected in the mean length of experience among periodical journalists, shortest of all sectors at eight years.

Table 77 suggests that the Brethren, a previous generation of aspirants, developed their ambitions at an earlier age. In Chart 26 below, the

proportion of periodical journalists, particularly significant by comparison with newspapers, who did not commit themselves to a journalism career until after the age of 25 is apparent.

Chart 26. At what age did you decide to become a journalist?



Periodical journalists were slightly less likely than journalists in the other sectors to describe their occupation as a vocation (20%) but no more likely than the newspaper sector to see it as a profession (50.6%). As noted in Chapter 9, they were the least likely to enrol in an occupational organisation: only 27 per cent of men and 28 per cent of women belonged to the NUJ. Nevertheless, periodical journalists seem more secure in their jobs than those in other sectors, 75 per cent of them with unlimited contract status. The job change rate was lowest of all sectors at three. These factors may help explain why they are more *optimistic* than their counterparts in the other sectors about the future of journalism (67%), display the highest level of job satisfaction and are far more convinced (84% against 79% in newspapers and 78% of broadcast) that their particular publication or outlet rates as being *very good* or *good* in its function of informing the public.

Connections

The affinity with sources mentioned above suggests a likely reason for periodical journalists to be less worried than their colleagues in other sectors about spending too little time with sources (p.200) and for their

having the highest proportion of those with social contacts connected with journalism or the media (44%). It may also explain why the sector had the highest proportion acknowledging *higher than average* alcohol consumption, if not why it also had the highest proportion of teetotallers.

The sector's poor reputation for post-entry training appeared justified. There were few NCTJ certificates in this sector, only 14% of men and 11% of women either holding or studying for one, nor little interest in NVQs; only one per cent of men and three percent of women studying for or holding either. Men periodical journalists were more likely to have taken an NCTJ block release, day release or pre-entry course (27% to 14%) or to have participated in an in-house training scheme (38% to 25%) but the data do not show whether that might have been from choice or lack of opportunity in the form of employer co-operation. Whichever might be the case, more than a third of all periodical journalists (37.4 per cent) wished they had received more formal *off-the-job training or education in journalism*.

Income

It may come as a surprise to many journalists to discover that of those earning £40,000 a year and above in the periodical sector, 53 per cent were women. In the same income band in news journalism, 93 per cent were men. However, incomes are clustered lower in the scale in this sector, where that £40,000 or more is earned by only 12 per cent overall, compared to 24 per cent in the newspaper sector. It is important to recall that these figures represent incomes rather than salaries. Periodical journalists are inveterate moonlighters: 44 per cent of them earn additional income by contrast with 26 per cent of the broadcast and 34.4 per cent of the newspaper sectors.

Political awareness seemed to be at its lowest in this sector, manifesting itself in the large proportion of *don't know* in response to the question about which political party the respondent intended to vote for. It also registered the highest (5%) response for the Liberal Democrats and the only measurable response for the Green Party (1.0%).

The levels of late starting and career switching in the profile suggested by this data convey an impression of occupational nonchalance among periodical journalists. But those factors must be regarded in the light of the profuse mix of editorial values and readership targeting that the sector comprises. Interdependence of sources and audiences makes periodical journalism seem less *journalistic* in some ways than practice in the other sectors. Thirty-seven per cent believed that privacy laws *could be justified*, a margin of 12 points over broadcasters and 14 over newspaper journalists.

Section 2: Broadcasters

No comparable hint of opportunism or *faute de mieux* in entering their occupation emerges from the data concerning the broadcast sector, whose practitioners appear more closely focused on their function than their counterparts in the other sectors. The median age was significantly higher than the periodical sector at 36.2 years. The mean length of experience was 13.2 years and the rate of job changes highest at five. If the female proportion of 40.8 per cent suggested some support for Sebba's contentions about the growth of radio opening floodgates, it more strongly reinforced the idea of women who were already employed in some other capacity being converted into journalists. The 42 per cent of women broadcasters under the age of 35 could not be said to have benefited from the conditions of the 1900s and 1970s she described, except by the example of predecessors.

Early commitment was apparent in the high level of occupational qualifications found in this sector, reflecting the particular technical demands of broadcasting: 33.3 per cent held an NCTBJ/BJTC certificate or an NCE and another 36.6 per cent were preparing to obtain one or the other; 26.8 per cent possessed a postgraduate diploma. Broadcasters also showed the highest levels of ability in a foreign language and placed the greatest store on it as a professional asset (13.2%). They were much more likely than their counterparts in the other sectors to consider journalism a profession (57%) and the least likely to describe it as a craft or trade.

The lack of job security for which this sector is notorious is evident, with 27 per cent working on contracts of 12-24 months. This may explain why it has the highest NUJ membership, 77 per cent (by comparison with 60.4 % of newspaper journalists). The intensity of networking required to obtain and renew contracts may also be the reason that broadcasters acknowledged the highest proportion of *friends in the same organisation*: 25 per cent.

It seems improbable at first glance that the broadcast sector should emerge as the most *European*, racially, of these three nations—93.1 per cent—but this finding was distorted, even more than others in this area, by the sampling constraints that excluded ethnic-based editorial operations.¹ In its other demographic areas, the sector displayed the highest proportion of Roman Catholics (19%) and the lowest (49.5%) of Protestants of all kinds. It showed only a one-point lead in the spread of 58-56 per cent of *all* journalists who intended to vote Labour in the forthcoming election.

However, perhaps the most significant finding is the extent to which broadcasters reported *experiencing or being aware of improper managerial interference* in editorial operations—50 per cent and 54 per cent respectively. Radio and television are more subject to regulation than other media and the impression of what might constitute ‘interference’ is of necessity subjective. However, the ‘improper’ factor was stressed in the questionnaire and it must be assumed that journalists would appreciate the distinction between one form of restraint and another. The result suggests that broadcasters are subject to a much higher level of control or coercion in their day-to-day work than print journalists. Nevertheless, they score more than 11 points behind newspaper journalists in believing that privacy laws could *never be justified*.

The distinctive journalist profile that emerged from this sector was of a highly *professionalised* practitioner, in terms of acquired and applied skills, and one with a greater sense of organisation than their counterparts. There is also a sense of occupational independence.

Section 3: Newspapers

Of the three national populations, that of newspapers, remained the most resolutely traditional in the sense of continuing to reflect—if with diminishing brilliance—the pre-1970s values familiar from foregoing chapters. Its practitioners were also the oldest, with a median age of 39.4, which explains the high mean length of experience: 18.4 years. It also had the highest proportion of early beginners: 14 per cent in the 16-18 age band, and the highest proportion which regarded the occupation as a *vocation* (21.7%). Unsurprisingly, the sector contained the highest proportion of those who began on regional newspapers (71.2%) or directly on a national title (6.5%). Newspaper journalists were, naturally enough, most likely to hold an NCTJ/NCE certificate (40.7%).

The age median could also help explain the highest *married* rate (52.1%, which would not necessarily be aggregated into the highest cohabitation rate 72.3%); and the highest *divorced or separated* score at 5.6 per cent (as well as the highest *second* marriage rate, 4.7%). Newspaper journalists are the most resolutely opposed to the idea of privacy laws, 38.8 per cent saying their introduction could *never* be justified.

This is the least educated of the sectors: only two in three of its members went to university and nearly one in five (19%) was without any A levels; although it also concludes the highest proportion of journalists with doctoral degrees (0.7%). It had the lowest proportion of those who went to public schools (16.3%) and the highest to attend grammar schools (44.3%). It showed the largest proportion in all three sectors from an *unskilled or semi-skilled* household. Some of those factors may help explain why so few of its members (34.0%) were in favour of university degrees as a prerequisite for journalism and only slightly more (35.8%) in favour of Journalism degrees or diplomas; only 10.7 per cent held such qualifications themselves. Nevertheless, just over half of newspaper journalists (50.5%) believed they were practising a profession.

¹ In 2000 All major broadcasters joined in the a Cultural Diversity Network, pledging, among other objectives, to increase the ethnic component of their employees (to 10% in the case of the BBC; 13% in that of Channel

Multicultural

In a limited sense this is the most multicultural nation in journalism, including as it does the highest proportion of Scots (12.2%) and Welsh (7.3%). It is the most actively religious, 28.2 per cent reporting that they *observe a religion regularly*. That may reflect gratitude at appearing to be far more securely employed than journalists in the other sectors; only 14.7 per cent work on limited contracts. That in turn, together with the wider contacts implicit in newspaper work, may be responsible for the relatively low level of friendships within the same sector and the same organisation.

On newspapers, men and women are roughly equal in proportion in the central wage bands (between £20, 000 and £34, 999 per annum); differences become apparent at either end of the scale. The contrast becomes spectacular among journalists earning above £40, 000 per annum (just under one in four of the total). Of those high earners, 85 per cent were men. Money apart, responses to the questions about the difficulties faced by competent women journalists suggested a level of gender egalitarianism higher than other sectors. Sixty-two per cent had *no experience or knowledge of women being victims of prejudice*.

The totality of these factors did not portray the newspaper sector as a body of journalists at ease with their function or their occupation in general. It produced the highest score of those *very or somewhat dissatisfied* with their present job (18.7% against broadcast 15% and periodical 12%). Newspaper journalists were by far more likely to say that standards of journalism had *got worse* during their time in it (51.6% against broadcast 42.5% and periodical 32.9%) and to be pessimistic about its future (37.3% against broadcast 29.3% and periodical 24.3%). Although it included the highest proportion of 'hereditary' journalists (6.5%) those working in the sector were the least likely to advise their offspring or any other young person to choose journalism as a career.

5) and to make efforts to attract and train minority applicants.

Summary conclusions

The distinctions that the study established between journalists working in the three main editorial sectors are keenly relevant in regard to potential recruiting and training methods, particularly as it has been shown elsewhere that the frontiers between the 'nations' are rarely crossed. There is much in data on which this chapter is based to encourage supporters of separate training patterns for the periodical and broadcast sectors—which are already established—without discouraging those who argue for a common grounding for all journalists: the education 'for' ideal.

Chapter 12

Conclusions

*Journalism is not a profession. It is the exercise by occupation of the right to free expression available to every citizen. That right, being available to all, cannot in principle be withdrawn from a few by any system of licensing or professional registration.—Geoffrey Robertson QC, *People Against the Press*, 1983.*

There is no need to dwell on the difficulties that had to be surmounted in completing this project. Many publishers and broadcasters refused to cooperate in the surveys by disclosing the number of journalists they employed or their identities, an attitude that made the task of contacting and questioning a representative sample of journalists much longer and more tedious than it needed to have been. Suspicion and secrecy are widespread in British life, but there is much irony in the reluctance of organisations that supposedly live by disclosure declining to reveal details about their own operations; even more when the attitude is seen to extend to journalists themselves. (See Stephen Glover's observation at the opening of Chapter 3.) The proportion of journalists who refused to participate in the surveys was far higher than in the American and Australian surveys. Other journalists, however, kept the project afloat by unearthing and delivering the details that so many employers were unwilling to reveal.

The principal issue to be considered is whether the investigation has been justified. The wealth of data produced on the characteristics, personal and professional, of a generation of active journalists should place that beyond doubt. Charting the extent to which the journalist population of the United Kingdom has become youthful, feminised and at least nominally well-educated is a feat of major relevance. It fully supports the related

suppositions put forward at the beginning of the project: that within the span of a single working generation a) fewer journalists were entering the occupation by avenues that had become established in the earlier part of the period under study, and b) practitioners were being drawn from a narrowing socio-economic strata.

Most of the information the study has provided could, until now, only be speculated upon: the age, gender, race, education and socio-economic background of journalists working in the three separate editorial sectors which were identified and typified. Defining those sectors in terms of their inhabitants represents a valuable achievement in itself, but dependable information has also been collected about journalists' ethical and political outlook, attitudes to audiences, social status, professional function, and private behaviour. Precisely in what way the demographic or socio-economic traits of contemporary journalists might affect the nature of the media product for which they are responsible remains outside the scope of this study but there can be little doubt about their scholarly relevance. How might Manning White's 1950 benchmark gatekeeping study have been received if the personal characteristics of his real-life Mr Gates—parochial, pious, unread—that were disclosed by a later investigation could have been taken into consideration at the time that study was published?

Placing the findings in an historical context has allowed them to demonstrate the bifurcated and progress throughout the century towards the oppositional 'trade' or 'profession' and to show that eventually neither classification was definitively attained. Examining the roles of the NCTJ, the Newspaper Society and the editors' organisations shows how, well after the regional press had begun to lose its eminence as an entry point to British journalism, the interests of that single editorial sector became synchronised with those of the NUJ and a succession of maladroit state initiatives in a disjointed strategy to enforce 'trade' status.

The extent to which entrance has widened represents another important discovery, permitting many of the assumptions about appropriate pre- and post-entry training to be knowledgeably questioned. It can be seen that the

indifference of employers and journalists alike to pre-entry preparation and even to the post-entry training, which both groups advocated but did little to ensure, allowed the higher education sector to become, by default, the main site of preparation for journalism (and perhaps, incidentally, to encourage renewed pretensions to the status of 'profession'). An important clarification has also been achieved on the terms of employment enjoyed by journalists actually at work (rather than in training) and on the pivotal position of the genuine freelance.

Full circle

By coupling status to employer relations and the haphazard methods of training and education, it has been possible to show that throughout the twentieth century journalists travelled full circle, in social terms, moving upwards in their rating (particularly their self-rating), albeit as a current within a broader advancing stream. Systematically speaking, journalists appeared to have migrated across two of the Runciman classifications and thus in terms of occupational hierarchy raised themselves a rung (a conclusion implicitly reached by the Office of National Statistics in its 1998 revision of socio-economic categories (p.151).

The study suggests strongly that the place in the social (if not the economic) hierarchy which the majority of journalists appear to be staking out for themselves would appear to be mainly based on educational attainment and the 'lifestyle' values shared with their university coevals that were defined (via Bourdieu) by Turner (p. 38): the phenomenon of hierarchy that Cannadine believed had received insufficient attention from historians and sociologists because its individualistic connotations left them ill at ease (1998:18). Journalists seemed highly receptive to the notion put forward by Oleson and Whittaker (p.176) that in the postmodern world the definition of 'profession' was located in the eye of the beholder—if what an individual did for a living was taken by him or herself and their social equals to be a profession it was *ipso facto* a profession. An aspect of social reality illuminated by this reflection is the suspicion raised by the data that while so many journalists perceive

themselves to be engaged in a profession, they may have little idea of what, apart from prestige, that might imply. Contingently, the level of nonchalance and conformity that may be inferred from the data does not suggest that a majority of journalists (or aspirants) share the sense of importance with which audiences seem ready to regard their function. That the relatively new-found 'respectability' of journalists can be seen reflected in the eyes of others is perhaps an example of the phenomenon assessed by Stocking and Goss that as information (rather than knowledge) has become ever more sought after so have its providers gained prestige. (A more extreme version of this relationship might be observed in a drug supplier catering to a wealthy clientele.)

The profession-trade argument that receives so much attention in the earlier chapters of the thesis report is not merely one of semantics or sociological categorisation. If journalists had earlier gained unquestioned recognition as a profession it might have been an important step towards exercising control over ethical and other standards of practice independently of any requirements by employers. The issue of so many journalists' claim to belong to a profession cannot be separated from consideration of the ethical structure within which its practitioners operate.

Claiming to belong to a profession is not quite the same thing as organising one, accepting its strictures and imposing its deontological expectations on clients or employers. The level of complacency apparent from the study invites the inference that journalists remain content to allow the issues of ethics, regulation, prerogatives, levels of skill and conditions of employment and reward to be decided entirely by their employers. Thus, the conviction that their occupation *is* a profession held by so many journalists can only be taken as a claim based on some kind of socio-economic equivalence demonstrated in Chart 6 (p.162), particularly when the principal implication of such a desire is largely negated by the manifest disinclination to see journalism as a 'closed' profession. Geoffrey Robertson's declaration quoted at the beginning of this chapter represents a legal opinion but, as the study shows, few journalists would argue with it. Even the NUJ no longer advocates a closed shop and has declared that it

would regard 'qualification by licensing' as an attack on the freedom of speech. It seems that the one out of every two British journalists who, the study shows, arbitrarily assumed the mantle of a profession, wish to have, as it were, the gain without the pain; that like their nineteenth century predecessors, they see the status implied as an element of the lifestyle that journalism that has brought them: the niche in the 'cultural market-place' explored by Turner.

Comparisons

The profiles, principal and subsidiary, of journalists produced by the study also represent a major contribution to the effort being made by scholars around the world—Weaver and Wilhoit, Henningham, Donsbach and most recently Mark Deuze in the Netherlands—to classify journalists within a cross-national framework. Informative as many of the comparisons with American and Australian journalists were, particularly those concerning pre-entry preparation, education levels, gender distribution and income, it became difficult as the study progressed not to agree with Weaver that 'comparing journalists across national boundaries and cultures was a game of guesswork at best' (p.51). Differences between journalists of different countries must to some extent reflect the values of the society within which they function; their roles in those societies even more so. Aligning the variables necessary and devising a methodology that would ensure a valid research interface between countries—even those where the practice of journalism is as closely related as the countries concerned, in which journalists share so many characteristics—would be a task disproportionate to the value of its outcome.

One of the main objectives for seeking comparability with the United States was readily achieved: discovering the comparable level of university standard education among journalists in the two countries and establishing that Britain displayed a proportion more or less equal to that in America a decade earlier. The prevalence of *specialised* bachelor-level degrees was far from equal however, for reasons made clear in the foregoing chapters, and that factor may help explain why one of the

hypotheses formulated at the outset of fieldwork did not receive more support from the study data.

The idea that university-level education and pre-entry training (as in America) could lead to middle-class professionalisation which would be characterised by, among other things, a high degree of ethical awareness and self-regulation remains hypothetical, if the British responses that suggest a high degree of tolerance for certain questionable reporting practices and about ethics are to be accepted. This does not mean that British journalism may be any the worse off for that, merely that its practitioners were responding to real-world standards of operation rather than to abstract ideals acquired prior to entry. That in turn suggests, as does much other evidence, that a pragmatic newsroom culture continues to play a far more important part in shaping the contemporary British journalist than any other organisational influence, overwhelming and absorbing any compunctions that seem external to practice. Responses to the attitudinal questions in the surveys suggest that newsroom values which had evolved well before the arrival of the latest 'new wave' journalists were more powerful than any the newcomers might have acquired pre-entry. Even with the layer of influential elders largely removed, the 'traditional' outlook appears to have been acquired and preserved: a microcosm of occupational hegemony.

It also became apparent that just as the neglect of training on the part of British employers and their need for staff were combining to overcome much of the mistrust of graduates the hostility to specialised education for journalism displayed by an earlier journalism 'establishment', misgivings about the suitability of degree courses in journalism began to surface among journalism educators. In Britain, the prejudice against journalism degrees was partly grounded in the early experience of journalism education and partly on the traditionalist conviction, championed by the NCTJ that journalism could be taught only by journalists and learned only by those who had been appropriately selected—those with 'the right attitude' in the eyes of regional editors (p.124).

In the United States, where preparation for media employment had long been centred in university schools of journalism, the question had been raised of whether journalists were being distanced from their audiences by such specialised education and their subsequent isolation within an occupational environment (Burgoon et al 1986). The more recent cause for concern among both national groups was whether journalism education had been or would be engulfed by other academic disciplines, a prospect considerably enhanced in Britain by the adventitious subsumption of journalism in the higher education curriculum.

Combining the data with fictional and autobiographical accounts, did indeed throw some light on what Weaver and Wilhoit called the 'complicated forces that attract people to journalistic life' and helped provide some insight into how that life has changed, in some respects if not in others. Technological evolution has provided younger journalists with skills that are of more immediate importance than the mere 'talent' of being able to write and report in the manner required by executives and proprietors and that are certainly more marketable than the ability to apply the critical and analytical faculties that should characterise an accomplished journalist. Deprived of the instructive 'back-up' of expertise along the editorial production line the new reporters and writers have come to be required not only to ensure that their copy is legally safe and factually sound, as sub-editors traditionally had been relied upon to do, but also to fit it to a layout or edit it for broadcast: tasks that require skills in artwork, layout and photography, sound and video. If an automated printing process or a transmitter were eventually to be perfected, journalists not printers or electricians would be responsible for operating it. The study data provides a sense that by comparison with the enquiring, iconoclastic reporter-figure (however idealised) of the past, today's journalist may be more of a *fonctionnaire* in outlook; content with processing and commentary rather than originating material.

Replication

In this respect as in most others, the detail harvested by this study is most important in its purely British application. There now exists a reliable array of quantitative and qualitative data locating journalists at work in the United Kingdom within a particular time-frame. Valuable as this material is in itself, it will become even more so if the study can be replicated within a reasonable period and the differences in responses over a significant period measured and assessed. A new questionnaire, while of necessity duplicating part of those used in this study should be tuned to some of the developments evident from the existing data. Far less attention, for instance, would need to be given to race or gender; far more to the career progress of journalists trained and educated by different methods so that some assessment may be made of the efficacy of journalism (and media studies) degrees.

Another important area to be revisited would be that of occupational socialisation in its functionalist and interactional phases. The continuity of attitude apparent from this study could be attributed to the influence—apparent to Parry and Evans a decade earlier—imported into the early college and university courses by the experienced journalists who delivered the practical subjects: 'instructors' as they were then called, to distinguish them from academic staff. Those subjects continued to be taught, in the main, by people who regarded themselves primarily as journalists but the majority of those, if they conformed to the profiles assembled by this study, would have been qualitatively distinct from their predecessors and may—or may not—have imparted a mutated scale of values.

The data on race presented here, scanty though it is, suggests caution in treating racial minorities as intrinsically different. The Wilson-Breed 'four fundamental forces' taken as sustaining the dominance of 'white' news values were meant to apply only to African-American journalists; they would not readily map on to the richer racial mix emerging in Britain. In a multiracial society, van Dijk's 'hegemonic whiteness' in newsrooms would seem likely to be of limited duration; continuing to treat journalists of

exotic background as curiosities would risk prolonging it. Whatever sensitivities might be attributed to minority journalists or the audience segment they might be taken to represent should be evident to *any* appropriately trained and experienced journalist. Similarly, women journalists (many of whom will also belong to a racial minority) may have ceased to be anomalous, except for the parenthood issue which, the survey responses imply, does not pre-occupy a majority of them. Nevertheless, an expanded sample frame should be wide enough to include ethnic and other discrete areas of journalistic employment as well as the emergent fourth 'nation' of web journalism which remains to be explored, along with its inhabitants and its effect on journalists from the other sectors who have acquired dual citizenship of this new territory.

Autonomy

In the early years covered by the study it was common for a reporter to let it be known that he could also 'work at case'. Not only could he write a story from shorthand notes but, much as a travelling actor might double in brass, he was able to set the type in which it was to be printed. Now that the technical developments of the last two decades have, by excluding craftsmen intermediaries, placed journalists in charge of virtually every aspect of production as well as the provision and processing of material to be printed or broadcast, such a tactically valuable synthesis of skills is once more to hand. However, there is little indication from the data gathered to suggest that journalists are aware of the potential for autonomy implied nor, in any case, inclined to take advantage of the empowerment that their skills might offer them to assert their professional independence. One of the crucial questions suggested by the study is: why have journalists not been able or willing to exert the influence *inside* their professional world that they are able to wield *outside* it? It has been impossible to avoid, as a major conclusion of this project, that for all the reasons discussed throughout the thesis report, British journalists, apparently indifferent to the opportunity for control of their professional fate offered by technology and unconcerned by drifting occupational

values, seem likely to continue into the twenty-first century beset by the problems that confronted them at its beginning: divided views on how their occupation might be organised and regulated and powerless to influence the increasing concentration of the media that employs them in the hands of omnipotent and indifferent controllers.

The moment in which journalists might have seized greater control over their activities seems to have passed and rather than continue to believe that they are likely to accept and act upon what it might really mean for them to function as a profession it is probably better to agree with Leggatt (p.32) that the idea of some occupations being professions and others not relates to 'a one-time period of Western development'. There must, however, be many journalists who, if they were willing to accept the term in its demotic sense, would be even more content to occupy the category defined—or rather left undefined—by Mr Justice Isaacs, of a profession *sui generis*. If they did, they would at least distance themselves from Harry Christian's chilling dismissal of them as 'employed professionals' whose lifestyle gave them a place in the middle of the general status scale but left them at the mercy, in hire-and-fire terms, of others no better qualified and thus dependent on a *status quo* social order (p.43). It would also permit them the satisfaction of being distinguished not by a structured professional paradigm of the German variant favoured by Donsbach but by the qualities that were identified by the anonymous but astute author of the 1928 IOL assessment: 'innate propensities and initial talent'.

Appendix A: Questionnaire

Journalists in the 1990s: a survey

Name

Numbers

Call-backs

ii) Sex

01. Male

02. Female

iv) Organisation type 01. national daily

02. national Sunday

03. regional daily

04. regional weekly

05. independent radio

06. independent TV

07. wire service

08. BBC TV

09. BBC radio

10. agency

11. freelance

12. free newspaper

13. Reuter/PA, other wireservice

Words in square brackets are designed for situations where clarification of a question is needed.

They should not normally be read out to the respondent.

Q1. How many years have you worked in journalism?

_____ years

Q2. At what age did you get your first regular paid job in journalism?

Q3. In what sort of organisation did you start your career in journalism? [Example:

regional daily newspaper...] (Circle whichever applies)

01. national daily
02. national Sunday
03. regional daily
04. regional weekly
05. independent radio
06. independent TV
07. wire service
08. BBC TV
09. BBC radio
10. agency
11. freelance
12. free newspaper
13. Reuter/PA, other wireservice
- 14 trade press
- 15 fringe publication (NOT student)
- 16 magazine

17 Other

8. transport worker

Q9. What was your main reason for choosing journalism as a career?

[Don't prompt, but possible responses are:]

- | | |
|---|-------------------------------|
| 1. exciting career, meet interesting people etc. | 5. suited ability |
| 2. good at writing, liked writing | 6. family influence |
| 3. interest in news, current affairs | 7. circumstantial, accidental |
| 4. service to public (e.g. crusading publicising important causes, "right to know") | 8. sense of self-worth |
| | 9. curiosity/inquisitiveness |
| | 10. other (specify) _____ |

Q10. What kind of work do you mainly do - for example, reporting, sub-editing?

(If combination, circle more than one)

- | | |
|--|-------------------------|
| 1. reporter | 7. editor/deputy editor |
| 2. sub-editor | 8. section editor/head |
| 3. feature writer | 9. leader writer |
| 4. producer (TV or radio) | 10. researcher |
| 5. senior executive/assistant editor/news director | 11. graphics/design |
| 6. chief sub-editor/back-bench | |

Q11. Do you have a particular speciality?

- | | |
|--|---------------------------|
| 01. no speciality | 14. medicine/health |
| 02. sports | 15. politics |
| 03. books | 16. crime |
| 04. consumer affairs | 17. farming |
| 05. courts | 18. science |
| 06. education | 19. shipping/aviation |
| 07. environment | 20. travel |
| 08. ethnic affairs | 21. arts culture |
| 09. finance, business, economics | 22. technology, computers |
| 10. foreign | 23. transport |
| 11. industrial relations/trade hall/unions | 24. women's issues |
| 12. local govt (council/town hall/city hall) | 25. fashion |
| 13. legal | 26. other (specify) _____ |

MISSING

PRINT

Q12. In addition to your full-time job, do you do any part-time or freelance work in journalism?

1. Yes

2. No

Q13. In the same medium as your main job or the "opposite"?

Same

Opposite

1 2

Q14. All things considered, how satisfied are you with your present job? Would you say very satisfied, fairly satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied, or very dissatisfied?

Very Satisfied

Fairly Satisfied

Somewhat
dissatisfied

Very dissatisfied

Don't know

4

3

2

1

9

Q15. Where do you intend to be working in five years from now

1. don't know

7. freelance

2. same medium

8. politics

3. out of media

9. script writing

4. larger organisation, same medium

10. book writing

5. 'opposite' medium

11. media education

6. smaller organisation, same medium

12. retirement

7. public relations/information

A FEW QUESTIONS HERE ASK FOR ANSWERS ON A SCALE

Q16. Overall, do you think the level of media freedom in Britain is very high, high, medium,

low or very low?

Very high

High

Medium

Low

Very low

Don't know

5

4

3

2

1

9

Q17. And do you think freedom of the press [freedom of the news media in general] is increasing,

decreasing or staying the same?

Increasing

Decreasing

Same

Don't know

1

2

3

9

Q23. Are you basically optimistic or pessimistic about the future of journalism in Britain?

Optimistic

Pessimistic

Not sure

1

2

9

Q24. How would you rate British journalism in terms of the overall honesty and ethical standards of its practitioners? Very high, high, medium, low or very low?

Very high

High

Medium

Low

Very low

Don't know

5

4

3

2

1

9

Q25. How strong do you think the influence of the media is on the formation of public opinion?

Please pick a number from zero to ten, where zero means no influence and ten means very

great influence.

No

influence _____ Very

ry great influence

00

01

02

03

04

05

06

07

08

09

10

Don't know . . . 99

Q26. And how strong do you think the influence of the media *should be* on public opinion?

Again please pick a number from zero to ten, where zero means no influence and ten means very great influence.

Q32. Do you think it is more difficult for capable journalists of ethnic or racial minorities to get

ahead in their careers?

Yes	No	Not sure
1	2	9

Q33. Have you had personal experience or knowledge of journalists from ethnic or racial minorities being the victims of prejudice in a newsroom?

Yes	No	Not sure
1	2	9

Q34. In general, what level of stress do you experience in your job? Would you say very high,

high, medium, low or very low?

Very high	High	Medium	Low	Very low	Not sure
5	4	3	2	1	9

Q35. Do you think stress levels in journalism are increasing or decreasing or remain constant?

Increasing	Decreasing	Same	Not sure
1	2	3	9

Q36. Overall, how cynical do you think journalists are, on average. Would you say a very high level of cynicism, high, medium, low, or very low?

Very high	High	Medium	Low	Very low	Not sure
5	4	3	2	1	9

Q37. And what level of cynicism do you feel yourself?

Very high	High	Medium	Low	Very low	Not sure
5	4	3	2	1	9

Q38. How good a job overall do you believe the British news media does in informing the public? Would you say very good, good, medium, poor or very poor?

Very good	Good	Medium	Poor	Very poor	Not sure
5	4	3	2	1	9

Q39. On the same scale, how good a job is your own newspaper/news service doing in informing the public?

Very good	Good	Medium	Poor	Very poor	Not Sure
5	4	3	2	1	9

Q40. Do you believe that a journalist could be considered fully trained without any of the following?

1. Word processing skills
2. Shorthand
3. Curiosity
4. A second language

Q41. Do you think that the technologies introduced to journalism in the last few years have,

in general, improved or reduced the quality of your own work?

Improved quality	Reduced quality	No difference	Not sure
1	2	3	9

Q42. Do you think present-level technologies save time for you or take up more of your time?

Save time	Take up more time	Not sure
-----------	-------------------	----------

1

2

9

Q43. In your experience do journalists of today spend too little time or too much time in direct contact with sources as they should?

Too little

Too much

Right amount

Not sure

1

2

3

9

Q44. Overall, which NATIONAL daily newspaper do you think serves its readers best?

[one only]

- | | |
|------------------------|------------------|
| 1. The Times | 7. Today |
| 2. The Daily Telegraph | 8. Daily Mirror |
| 3. The Independent | 9. The Sun |
| 4. The Guardian | 10. Daily Star |
| 5. Financial Times | 11. The Scotsman |
| 6. Daily Express | 12. Don't know |
| 7. Daily Mail | |

Q45. Which NATIONAL television news do you think provides the best service?

- | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. BBC Nine O'clock News | 5. GMTV |
| 2. BBC Six O'clock News | 6. Channel 4 News |
| 3. BBC Breakfast Time | 7. ITN 5.45 News |
| 4. News at Ten | 8. Other (specify) _____ |

Q46. Do you listen to any radio stations on a regular basis?

- | | |
|------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Radio 4 | 4. Radio 3 |
| 2. Radio 5 | 5. Other (specify) _____ |
| 3. Radio 1 | |

Q47. Have you ever personally experienced improper managerial interference with a story?

Yes

No

Not sure

1

2

9

Q48. Do you have personal knowledge of improper managerial interference with a story having occurred in your newsroom?

Yes	No	Not sure
1	2	9

Could I now ask how important a number of things are to you in judging jobs in journalism - not just your job but any job.

Q49. How much difference does *the pay* make in how you rate a job in journalism? For instance,

is pay very important, fairly important, or not too important?

	Very important	Fairly important	Not too important	Not sure
a) the pay?	3	2	1	9
b) fringe benefits?	3	2	1	9
c) freedom from supervision?	3	2	1	9
d) the chance to help people?	3	2	1	9
e) the editorial policies of the organisation?	3	2	1	9
f) job security?	3	2	1	9
g) the chance to develop a speciality?	3	2	1	9
h) the amount of autonomy you have?	3	2	1	9
i) chance to get ahead in organisation?	3	2	1	9
j) sense of identity.....	3	2	1	9

Q50. All things considered, how satisfied are you with your present job - would you say very satisfied,

fairly satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied, or very dissatisfied?

Very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Somewhat dissatisfied	Very dissatis
----------------	------------------	-----------------------	---------------

1

2

3

4

Q51. *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?

	May be justified	Would not approve	Unsure
a) paying people for confidential information	2		1
b) using confidential business or government documents without authorisation	2	1	9
c) claiming to be somebody else	2	1	9
d) agreeing to protect confidentiality and not doing so		2	
	1		9
e) badgering unwilling informants to get a story		2	
	1		9
f) making use of personal documents such as letters and photographs without permission		2	
	1		9
g) getting employed in a firm or organisation to gain inside information	2	1	9
h) using hidden microphones or cameras	2	1	9
i) disclosing names of to be victims			
j) using recreations or dramatisations of news by actors			2
	1		9

Q52. I'd now like to ask you how important you think a number of things are that the media do

or try to do today. For example, how important is it for the news media to get information

to the public quickly - is it extremely important, fairly important, a little important or not

really important?

		Ext imp	Fairly imp	A little imp	Not really imp	No opinion
a) get information to the public quickly?	4	3	2	1	9	
b) provide analysis and interpretation of complex problems?	4	3	2	1	9	
c) provide entertainment and relaxation?	4	3	2	1	9	
d) investigate claims and statements made by the government?	4	3	2	1	9	
e) stay away from stories where factual content cannot be verified	4	3	2	1	9	
f) concentrate on news which is of interest to the widest possible public?	4	3	2	1	9	
g) discuss national policy while it is still being developed?	4	3	2	1	9	
h) develop intellectual and cultural interests of the public?	4	3	2	1	9	

i) be an adversary of public officials by being constantly sceptical of their actions?							4	
	3	2	1				9	
j) be an adversary of businesses by being constantly sceptical of their actions?								
				4	3	2	1	9
k) to set the political agenda				4	3	2	1	9
l) give ordinary people a chance to express their views on public affairs								
	3	2	1				4	
							9	

Q53. When it comes to your readers/viewers/listeners [use whichever term is appropriate], how

well do you feel you “know” them - for example, their interests, wants, likes and dislikes

in relation to your newspaper/news service? Would you say you have a very high level of

knowledge of them, high, medium, low or very low level of knowledge of them?

Very high	High	Medium	Low	Very low	Don't know
5	4	3	2	1	9

Q54. What kind of opinion do you think most journalists have of their readers/viewers/listen-

ers? Very high etc.

Very high	High	Medium	Low	Very low	Don't know
5	4	3	2	1	9

Q55. How important are the following as sources of information for you *about your readers'*

[viewers'/listeners'] attitudes to your newspaper [programme]? Would you say extremely im-
portant, fairly important, a little important or unimportant?

	Ext imp	Fairly imp	A little imp	Unimp	No opinion
a) letters	4	3	2	1	9
b) phone calls	4	3	2	1	9
c) circulation or ratings figures	4	3	2	1	9
d) discussions with friends	4	3	2	1	9
e) discussions with family	4	3	2	1	9
f) discussions with colleagues	4	3	2	1	9
g) discussions with people you meet on social occasions		4	3	2	
	1				9
h) discussions with people you meet while doing stories			4	3	
	2	1			9
i) survey work or market research conducted by your company	4	3	2	1	9
j) your own intuition	4	3	2	1	9

Now, a few more questions about your own background. I remind

you that this survey is totally confidential, and results will appear only as grouped statistics.

Q56. Were you born in:

England Scotland Wales Northern Ireland, Republic of Ireland Channel Islands
Man, Orkneys etc

1 2 3 4 5 6

Q57. In what region?[Only if born in England]

- | | |
|---------------|--------------------|
| 1. North East | 4. East/South East |
| 2. North West | 5. West/South West |
| 3. Midlands | 6. Greater London |

Q58. [Only if NOT born in UK]

In which geographical area were you born?

- | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| 1. Australasia | 11. Canada |
| 2. India/Pakistan/Sri Lanka | 12. USA |
| 3. South Africa/Zambia/Zimbabwe | 13. West Indies |
| 4. Turkey/Middle East/Egypt/ North Africa | 14. Indian Ocean |
| 5. East Africa | 15. Central/South America/Mexico |
| 6. West Africa | 16. Israel |
| 7. Singapore/Malaysia/Burma/Indonesia | 17. Eastern Europe/ old Soviet Union |
| 8. Hong Kong | 18. West Indies Balkans (not Turkey) |
| 9. Indochina/China/Taiwan/Japan/Philippines | 19. Western Europe/Scandinavia |
| 10. Pacific Islands | |

Q59. [Only if NOT born in UK]

How old were you when you first came to the UK? _____

Q60. In what kind of environment did you grow up?

- | | |
|-----------------|---------------------------|
| 01. Large city | 03. Small town or village |
| 02. Medium city | 04. Country |

Q61. Do you now work in or near the same place?

- | | |
|--------|-------|
| 1. Yes | 2. No |
|--------|-------|

Q62. How do you classify yourself ethnically? The following categories have been recommended by the Commission for Racial Equality:

- | | |
|----------------------|----------------------|
| 1. European | 9. Pacific Islander |
| 2. Indian | 10. Malay/Indonesian |
| 3. Pakistani | 11. Japanese |
| 4. Bangladeshi | 2. Chinese |
| 5. Black - Caribbean | 13. Latin American |
| 6. Black - African | |

7. Black - other (specify) _____
8. Arab

Q63. Would you be able to conduct an interview or understand stories written in a language

other than English?

- | | |
|------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. No | 9. Japanese |
| 2. German | 10. Chinese (Cantonese or Mandarin) |
| 3. Dutch/Flemish | 11. Arabic |
| 4. French | 12. Greek |
| 5. Spanish | 13. Swahili |
| 6. Italian | 14. Hebrew |
| 7. Urdu | 15. Russian |
| 8. Hindi | 16. Farsi |
| 9. Bengali | 17. Other (specify) _____ |

Q64. When you were growing up, what kind of work did the main breadwinner in your house-

hold do?

1. clerical or sales work (e.g. shop assistant sales rep)
2. professional or managerial (e.g. lawyer, teacher, business executive)
3. journalist
4. other media (include PR/advertising)
5. unskilled or semi-skilled
6. skilled trade (e.g. carpenter, plumber)
7. armed service
8. transport worker
9. agricultural
10. minister of religion

Now, some rather detailed questions about training and education.

Q65. How old were you when you first decided to become a journalist?

_____ years

Q66. What kind of secondary school did you go to?

[If mixture of schools, please mark response for respondent's final year of secondary school.]

- | | |
|---------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Grammar school | 5. Religious school |
| 2. Secondary school | 6. Special (e.g. Lycee) |
| 3. Comprehensive | 7. Abroad |
| 4. Public school | 8. other (specify) _____ |

Q67. Which of the following do you have?

- | | | |
|--------------------------|-----------|---|
| O-levels: | 1 - 4 | 1 |
| | 5 - 8 | 2 |
| | 9 - 10 | 3 |
| A-levels: | 1 - 2 | 4 |
| | 3 or more | 5 |
| CSE Certificate | | 6 |
| GCSE Certificate | | 7 |
| City & Guild Certificate | | 8 |

Q68. Did you attend:

1. an NCTJ block-release course
2. an NCTJ day-release course
3. an NCTJ pre-entry course
4. an in-house training scheme

(e.g. Westminster Press, BBC, Thomson, old MGN scheme)

Q69. Do you hold:

1. National Vocational Qualification (NVQ)
2. NCTJ National Certificate

Q70. Did you attend a university or college of further education?

1. No

2. Scottish university

- | | |
|---|--------------------------------|
| 2. College of Higher or Further Education | 9. Fine arts college/institute |
| 3. "Redbrick" university | 10. Open University |
| 4. "new" university (pre-1991 Poly) | 11. College of Law |
| 5. Oxford/Cambridge | 12. Inn of Court |
| 6. Other "old" university | 13. Foreign university |
| 7. Polytechnic | |

Q71. Are you studying now for a degree or diploma?

- | | | | |
|----|---------|--------------|---------------|
| No | Diploma | First degree | Higher degree |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

[No to last two questions—skip to Q.76]

Q72. Have you received any of the following?

1. Postgraduate Diploma in Journalism
2. Postgraduate Diploma in Radio Journalism
3. Bachelor level degree in Journalism
4. Bachelor level degree in Journalism Studies
5. Bachelor level degree in Media Studies
6. Postgraduate Diploma in Media Studies

Q73. Do you have a Bachelor level degree in another discipline—BA, BSc, Scottish MA,

Oxford/Cambridge MA or LLB—and from what faculty or department?

- | | |
|----------------------|-----------------|
| 1. No | 6. Economics |
| 2. Science | 7. Engineering |
| 3. Medicine | 8. Fine Arts |
| 4. Arts | 9. Education |
| 5. Business/Commerce | 10. Law |
| 6. Economics | 11. Other _____ |

Q74. Did you practice student journalism?

- | | |
|-----|----|
| Yes | No |
| 1 | 2 |

Q75. Have you additional or postgraduate qualifications?

1. No
2. Post-graduate/professional diploma
3. Second Bachelor level degree
4. Masters degree
5. Doctor of Divinity
6. Doctor of Medicine
7. Second Masters
8. PhD/DPhil
9. Other _____

Q76. Do you wish you had received more formal off-the-job training or education in JOURNALISM?

Yes	No
1	2

Q77. Do you think it desirable that future recruits to journalism have a university degree?

Yes	No	Not sure
1	2	9

Q78. Do you think it desirable that future recruits to journalism have a degree or a diploma in

JOURNALISM?

Yes	No	Not sure
1	2	9

Q79. What percentage of the people you see socially are connected in some with journalism or the media? [If 100%, write 99] _____ per cent

Q80. And about what percentage of the people you see socially work for the same organisation as you do? _____ per cent

Q81 Do you believe that journalists deserve a social status at least equivalent to :
(multiple answer expected)

- | | |
|----------------|--------------------------|
| 1. accountants | 7. teachers |
| 2. Engineers | 8. barristers |
| 3. solicitors | 9. army officers |
| 4. nurses | 10. politicians |
| 5. actors | 11. university lecturers |
| 6. dentists | 12. surgeons |

I want to remind you that this questionnaire is completely confidential.

The answers to these questions will appear only as grouped statistics.

Q82. Are you a member of?

- | | | | |
|-----|--------------------------|---------------------------------------|------|
| NUJ | Institute of Journalists | British Association
of Journalists | None |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

Q83. In which, if any, religious denomination or belief were you brought up?

- | | |
|----------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Church of England | 8. Buddhist |
| 2. Other Protestant | 9. Hindu |
| 3. Roman Catholic | 10. Sikh |
| 4 Orthodox | 11. Jewish |
| 5. None | 12. Confucian/Tao |
| 6. Moslem | 13. Refused |

Q84. Do you observe a religion regularly now in any way [e.g. attending temple or

church meetings, praying etc.]

1. Yes

2. No

Q85. Where do you stand on smoking?

Smoker

Former smoker

Never smoked

1

2

3

Q86. Categorise your alcohol consumption.

01. Nil

04. Reformed alcoholic

02. Regular but moderate

05. Higher than average

03. Occasional

06. Excessive

Q87. What is your marital or partnership status?

1. Never married

2. Married once

3. Married twice

4. Married more than twice

5. Widowed

6. Divorced

7. Separated

8. Refused

Q88. Your domestic status?

1. Live alone or share accomodation

2. Live with spouse or partner of opposite sex

3. Live with partner of same sex

4. Live with parents or relatives

5. Refused

Q89. How many children? [None: skip next question]

1 2 3 4 4+

Q90. Do you have any children under 16?

1. Yes
2. No

Q91. Which political party are you inclined to vote for in the next general election.?

- | | |
|-----------------|------------------------------|
| 1. Conservative | 6. Socialist Labour |
| 2. Labour | 7. British Nationalist Party |
| 3. Lib-Dems | 8. Refused |
| 4. Don't know | 9. Other (specify) _____ |
| 5. Green | 10. None |
| 6. Communist | |

Q92. FROM ALL SOURCES in journalism, could you indicate your approximate annual salary before

tax? For example, is it in the 20 thousands, 30s, 40s, 50s, 60s etc.?

- | | | |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| 00. Up to 9,999 | 05. 30,000 - 34,999 | 10. 55,000 - 59,999 |
| 01. 10,000 - 14,999 | 06. 35,000 - 39,999 | 11. 60,000+ |
| 02. 15,000 - 19,999 | 07. 40,000 - 44,999 | 12. 70,000+ |
| 03. 20,000 - 24,999 | 08. 45,000 - 49,999 | 13. 80,000+ |
| 04. 25,000 - 29,999 | 09. 50,000 - 54,999 | 99. Refused |

ANNEX A2

FOR FREELANCES ONLY

Q. 90 If you previously had a staff or contract job in journalism, when did you leave it?

- .-+ Never had +within 12 months +2-5 years ago +3-5 years +6-10

Q.91 Why did you leave?

+Voluntary Redundancy+Involuntary redundancy +Domestic pressure +Career decision +Fired—no payoff

Q.92 Would you prefer a staff or contract job for the same income you have now?

+Yes +No

ALL CASES These questions were included as a service to Women in Journalism.

Q.93 How many hours a week do you work in your office? + -24 +30-36 +37-40 +41-45 +46-50 +50 plus

Q. 94 Have considerations of career or livelihood made you decide +Not to have a child at a certain time? + Not to have a child at all? + Have not been an influence

0.95 If you-left a job in journalism to have a child, were you able to return to your employer on the terms you had previously enjoyed or were they better or worse?

+As before +Unable to return +Better +Worse +NA

0.96 Does your present employer offer any of the following? +Contractual maternity/paternity leave +Informal maternity/paternity leave +Childcare facilities

+Flexitime working hours

+Outworking from home

- Q.97 Within the last five years has moving to your present job or moving within the Organisation increased your
 +Responsibilities +Salary +Both +Neither
- 0.98 Do you feel optimistic about promotion or increased salary within a reasonable time in your present job?
 +Yes +No
- Q.99 To achieve promotion or an increase in salary, would you be prepared to work longer hours or antisocial hours?
 +Yes + No
- Q.1 00 Would you be able to achieve comparable professional results if your working pattern could be arranged to suit your personal needs?
 +Yes +No

Appendix B: The sample frame

Although the term British is used for convenience, the surveys on which this investigation was founded encompassed the United Kingdom; that is England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, together with the Crown Dependencies of the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man. The method devised to deal with a population of news journalists so widely scattered geographically and distributed through so many media sectors was a combination of stratification, systematic random sampling and. The first step was to estimate the number of journalists employed in each media segment and total them to establish the size of the population (Table 1). The second was to select the number in each category to be interviewed in order accurately to reflect the percentage of the whole population that segment represented. The total qualifying as news journalists eventually arrived at was 15,175, or about 38 per cent of the people in Britain who might be eligible for membership of the National Union of Journalists.

The task of establishing these numbers was impeded by the attitude of many managements—and editors—who, despite the most extensive assurances of confidentiality, declined to provide details of their staff. Whereas in the most recent American survey 90 per cent of employers approached readily offered lists of the journalists on their payrolls, fewer than 50 per cent of British employers were willing to do so. Conspicuous among those refusing were the largest employers of journalists in Britain, the BBC, Reuter, the Press Association and two of the largest provincial newspaper groups, Westminster Press and Reed International.

National organisations, however, presented little problem. Where managements were unhelpful, staff lists were readily obtained through contacts. National newspapers were grouped into their socio-economic categories and a random sample of journalists drawn in proportion to the number of staff. A similar procedure was followed with the BBC and ITN. The BBC employs nearly 3000 people with the job description of journalist in its various departments but the random sample was drawn only from those belonging to the News and Current Affairs division in London or the Regions and local stations.

Far greater difficulties were encountered with regional newspapers and, to a certain extent, with the, regional broadcasters. The Newspaper Society, which represents most regional newspapers has never been able to persuade all of its members to

reveal the number of journalists they employ. But the extrapolated responses from 214 companies to a 1994 enquiry by the Society suggested that 6000 were employed in the daily and 2000 in the weekly sectors in England (broken down into regions), Wales and Northern Ireland. When subsequent research established that photographers constituted, on average, 12 per cent of editorial staff on regional papers, that proportion was deducted.

The equivalent Scottish organisations—one for dailies, another for weeklies—could provide no staff figures at all. Nor could the Independent Television Commission nor the Radio Authority which were responsible for the regulation of those media. In the case of Scotland and of ITV and the independent radio franchises, numbers (and subsequently proportions of the population) were calculated by applying averages based on those regional staffing figures that could be accurately established.

In an effort to confirm the conclusions reached about the regional newspaper sector a comparison was made between the Newspaper Society estimate and NUJ membership figures (applying the union's own 50 per cent membership estimate referred to in the Pag00 footnote, and the 12 per cent photographer quotient among print journalists accepted by the McGregor Commission). The resulting 7040:6713 represents a 95.35 per cent match. Using the same formula to compare the overall newspaper figures reached in the survey gave 11,422: 11,454, or a 99.7 per cent match.

Names.

Identifying individual journalists also presented problems. Using the 1994 and 1995 *Media Guide*, *Willings Press Guide*, *Benn's Media Directory* and the *Hollis Press and PR Annual*, a list was compiled of all the relevant broadcasters and publishers, a total of nearly 400. All were written to, explaining the objectives and methods of the surveys and asking for staff lists. When, despite frequently protracted negotiations, the outcome was negative, journalists within the organisations concerned were prevailed upon to supply the details necessary for a random sample to be drawn. Those obtained from newspapers were sorted into the geographical and daily/weekly categories which had been used by the Newspaper Society; those from broadcasters into the ITV regions. The list of newsagencies approached was compiled from the

reference sources above and from the membership list of the National Association of Press Agencies.

Churn

Despite the disparities in the three populations it was decided to aim for a sample comparable in size to that used by Weaver and Wilhoit and Henningham (1250:51,000 and 1068:4200 respectively). The original British sample drawn of 1219 had to be reduced when preliminary approaches showed that 209 of the journalists were no longer employed at the organisations which had listed them. Since it could not be established how many of those had been replaced, or taken a job elsewhere, the only significance that can be attributed to this figure is of a 17 per cent 'churn' in media employment during the 12 months separating the beginning of the fieldwork and the interviews.

The sample of 1010 that was eventually assembled represented some 6.6 per cent of the estimated population of 15,175 news journalists. Each journalist listed in the sample was sent a letter to explain the objectives of the survey and its methods, how he or she had come to be selected, and to ask for their co-operation in an interview to be conducted by On-Line Telephone Surveys, a subsidiary of MORI, which was expected to take 25 minutes. The majority of journalists who responded to the demanding questionnaire did so unstintingly, many of them submitting to repeated callbacks and telephone appointments. Interviews frequently extended to 40 minutes.

Periodical. Assessing the size of the periodical sector universe was challenging. In many cases the same publisher produces a number of titles and journalists are frequently required to work across a range of publications or to move from one to another in a 'stable'. Because journalists often worked on more than one publication at a time and because the volatility of the magazine market meant that many of those publications were ephemeral, it was sometimes difficult to map individuals to particular titles. Preliminary soundings were based on the calculation that 7700 titles¹ identified during the fieldwork period provided about 9000 full or part-time staff jobs. This was the figure used to devise the proportions shown in Table A on which the sample frame was based.

The eventual data gathered, together with later research by others, suggests that this may have been an under-estimate, although Niblock calculated that the total of staff

employed in the sector in the research time frame was 20,000, of whom a quarter were writers and editors (1996:83). It is also likely that the universe expanded considerably in the late 1990s. Research published in 1996 by the Periodical Training Council, based on the number and function of personnel employed by publishers of varying size, suggested that the total of full-time and part-time *editorial staff* in the sector was 15,520.¹ But since many jobs in the sector are loosely defined, it seemed improbable that such a number could realistically be described as journalists. The NUJ 1997 annual report listed 2077 members in the magazine branch. If that were an accurate figure and the 24.4 per cent of periodical journalists responding to the survey who acknowledged NUJ membership an accurate statistic, the total would be 8547. Since the sector offers few staff jobs to photographers, the 12 per cent factor subtracted from newspaper staff figures to exclude them would not apply. Rounded down to maintain a conservative estimate, the number taken into the global figure for this study was 8500.

The broadcast figure is more open to dispute than those calculated for the other sectors because of widespread casual, even occasional, employment and the resort of many practitioners to secondary or primary roles outside broadcasting, a pattern reminiscent of the acting profession from which many of the earliest broadcasters were drawn.

The BBC is the largest single employer of journalists in the United Kingdom, although many of those whose jobs are thus described work in publishing or public relations areas. However, most of those included in *The News Breed* were employed in the News and Current Affairs division or the World Service as correspondents, reporters, editors, sub-editors, news producers and graphic designers.

Niblock believed there were 5000 broadcast journalists, of whom 2000 were in television (1996:111). The 1995/96 Skillset survey of journalists employed in the *broadcasting, film or video industry* estimated the number at 7300, 56 per cent of whom (4088) were in radio. This conclusion must be open to reduction because of the breadth of its scope. Application of the NUJ membership formula to the estimated population, using the response rate to the membership question of 77 per cent, would produce a total of 4985. It is possible, also, that some freelances and

¹ Editorial employment: a management report on research into editorial employment levels and related issues, PTC,

casuals, inclusion of whom would raise that figure, are members of the freelance branch of the union rather than the broadcasting branch.

Preliminary fieldwork estimated the broadcast journalist universe at approximately 6000. The news element of these, totalling 2053, is accounted for in the *News Breed* figures and another 1900 were attributed to the 'non-news' element of the BBC. Thus another 2047 would have been distributed throughout independent television and radio operations. Since that last figure, unlike the others, was not taken to include a casual or freelance quotient, it could be augmented by (at least) 10 per cent, making it 2251, giving a total of 6204. This was the number taken into the global calculation.

Refusals.

The 1994-95 period in which the fieldwork was carried out was, as the churn figure confirms, one of great turmoil in the British media industries with widespread re-staffing and de-staffing. Nevertheless, there is much irony in the reluctance of organisations which live by disclosure declining to reveal details about their own operations; and even more when the attitude is seen to extend to journalists.

A number of the journalists selected in the sample were plainly horrified at the idea of answering questions-about themselves and begged to be spared the ordeal. One senior BBC correspondent in a field which depends more than most on the publication of statistical data replied in outraged terms to the invitation to participate in the survey—without even seeing the questionnaire.

The proportion of British journalists included in the sample who refused to participate appears far higher than in the surveys with which some of the results of this investigation are compared and higher still if the British journalists who remained 'unavailable' are included. In Australia, outright refusals formed only 9.45 per cent of the sample.¹ Weaver and Wilhoit did not appear to distinguish between 'refusals' and 'unavailables', but record an overall response rate of 80 per cent.²

With the net sample reduced to 1010, the 174 British journalists who declined to be interviewed represent a proportion of 17.22 per cent and the 110 subsequently found to be not available a proportion of 10.89 per cent. Taking the two together makes the proportion 28.11 per cent—a response rate of 71.89 per cent. If 'unavailables' were

¹ Henningham, J. *Preliminary Results*, December 1992.

factored out, the net sample would become 900 and the refusals 19.33 per cent—a response rate 80.67 per cent.

Whichever of these proportions is considered, the refusal by so many British journalists to participate in this research, coupled with the indifference and hostility of so many managements, seems bound to disappoint anyone engaged in the study of journalism or who wishes to see journalists regard their occupation in an analytical light.

Table A. *News Breed* sample frame

Sector	Leads	Achieved	Refused	Unavailable
National Newspapers	336	222 [66.0%]	72 [21.42%]	41 [12.20%]
Regional Newspapers England & Wales	295	230 [77.9%]	63 [21.35%]	2 [0.67%]
Ulster Newspapers	36	18 [50.0%]	1 [2.77%]	16 [44.44%]
Scottish Newspapers	112	79 [70.53%]	13 [11.6%]	20 [17.85%]
Independent TV & Radio	93	71 [76.3%]	5 [5.37%]	17 [18.27%]
Ulster TV	5	3 [60.0%]	-- [0.0%]	2 [40%]
Reuter/PA/other wireservices	39	25 [64.0%]	8 [20.51%]	6 [15.38%]
BBC-TV & BBC Radio (National/Regional)	63	48 [90.5%]	11 [17.46%]	4 [6.34%]
Newsagencies	29	28 [96.55%]	1 [3.44%]	-- [0.0%]
Channel Islands	4	2 [50.0%]	-- [0.0%]	2 [50.0%]
TOTALS	1010	726 [71.0%]	174 [17.2%]	110 [10.89%]

Appendix C

1. 1893. Institute of Journalists proposed examinations.
2. 1908. Professor Churton Collins's Syllabus for a Postgraduate Course.
3. 1938. University of London Journalism scholarships examination.

INSTITUTE OF JOURNALISTS

Revised Scheme for Examinations

1893

1. Division 1: For the Pupil-associateship

2. The examination of candidates for admission to the class of Pupil-associates shall be as follows:

- (a) English History
- (b) English Literature
- (c) Arithmetic .up to and including vulgar and decimal fractions; with easy questions in algebra and the First Book of Euclid
- (d)Geography, .especially of England and the British Empire
- (e) Latin, or French, or German at the choice of the candidate, by translation of an easy passage into English
- (f) A paper of not less than 500 words on one of six general topics
- (g) Correction of 12 inaccurately constructed sentences
- (h) To condense a report of 1,000 words into a report of from 200 to 300 words; and to write paragraphs upon three incidents briefly narrated by the examiner
- (i) General knowledge

The examiners may test, and take into consideration, any candidate's knowledge of shorthand. But examination in the subject shall be optional.

3. Division 2: For The membership

Candidates for admission to the class of Members shall show a proficiency in the following subjects:-

- (a) The English Language (c)English Constitution
and
- (b) English Literature - Political History
- (d) Political and Physical Geography

a sufficient.knowledge of-

- (e)Latin
- (f)French or German.at the choice of the candidate
- (g)Natural Science or Mathematics;and an acquaintance with
- (h) General History
- Political Economy

NOTES-

1. Candidates had to satisfy examiners of mastery in précis writing, composition, and aptitude at condensation to be regarded as proficient.

2. Papers were to be prepared up to the standard of Oxford or Cambridge Senior Local Examinations or equivalent.

(continued)

3. The candidates shall be examined also in:

- (j) The Principles and practice of the Law of Newspaper Libel and Copyright; and

- (k) Means shall be taken by paper, or by viva voce examination to test the candidates general information

Division IIa. For Special Certificptes

4. For general Reporters there shall be an optional Examination in:-

- (a) Verbatim 'Reporting
- (b) Condensation
- (e) Descriptive Writing
- (d) The conduct of the best known branches of public and legal business.

Candidates passing this test shall be awarded special certificates.

Exemption,etc

Any candidate for the Pupil-associateship who has passed the Oxford or Cambridge Junior Local or any equivalent examination recognised by the Institute shall be exmpt,from the examination for the class of Pupil-associate;provided that he shall produce a certificate from two Members or Fellows of the Institute, to the effect that, in their opinion, his general intelligence, character, and natural aptitude justify the expectation that he will succeed in and do credit to his profession

SOURCE:

Institute of Journalists Proceedings,1893(adapted.).

Professor Churton Collins's Syllabus for a Postgraduate Course

1908 ▼

1. MODERN ENGLISH HISTORY, since the Reform Bill of 1832 with special reference to the development of democratic social legislation and history of British institutions.
2. MODERN EUROPEAN HISTORY, during the last 50 years...
still chiefly occupying the attention of the leading countries, politically, socially, economically...leading facts about institutions, territory, population.
3. COLONIAL AFFAIRS, modern history; practical information about their present state, geography etc.
4. POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY, Burke, de Tocqueville, Bentham, Mill, Bagehot, and modern authors, such works as treat of the practical duties of citizenship, as in series edited by Sir Henry Craik.
5. POLITICAL ECONOMY, English industrial development and economic problems of current interest.
6. FINANCE, national and municipal, taxation, public life, debts, tariffs, and budget.
7. ENGLISH LITERATURE, especially modern English Literature and principles of Criticism.
8. TWO MODERN LANGUAGES, French and German, studied practically...for conversation and reading.

Four or five of these eight subjects to be taken if postgraduate, with the possibility of substituting one or more, of the following for the arts subjects:

- (1) Natural philosophy, elements of physics or mechanics
- (2) Physiology
- (3) Chemistry
- (4) Bacteriology
- (5) Elemental Biology
- (6) Geology and Geography
- (7) Metallurgy

(8) Fundamental Principles of Engineering.

SPECIFIC TRAINING IN TECHNIQUES OF JOURNALISM:

- I. Descriptive article writing: encouragement to acquire miscellaneous information obtained from visits to galleries University scientific and technical departments
2. Leading article writing: leaderettes and notes
3. Shorthand: not compulsory, encouraged to acquire
 4. Practical instruction: in make-up of a newspaper, the management of paragraphs, deciphering, and presenting telegrams, and the law of copyright and libel.
 - 5.

▲ Published in *Nineteenth Century*, February, 1908.

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UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

JOURNALISM SCHOLARSHIPS EXAMINATION:

1938

GENERAL KNOWLEDGE AND AFFAIRS OF TODAY

TUESDAY, May 24—Morning, 10 to 1

[*Questions 1, 2 and 5 must be answered, and not more than THREE others.*]

1. What would be your ideal newspaper and why would you like to work for it?
(300 words.)
2. Name *three* events of major news importance since the beginning of this year.
(Give brief reasons for your selection.)
3. Write paragraphs of 130 words each about any three of the following. Who are they? What have they done of interest lately?—Mr. Neville Chamberlain, General Franco, M. Daladier, Herr von Ribbentrop, Sir Samuel Hoare, Don Bradman, Lord Hewart, C. R. Attlee, Raymond Massey, Philip Gibbs, Walt Disney, Duchess of Atholl, Winston Churchill.
4. Write a summary of the political state of Europe today under the heading, “Dictatorships and Democracies.”
5. Write *not more than 300* words about any *two* of the following subjects—
 - (i) Television.
 - (ii) Air Raid Precautions.
 - (iii) Czecho-Slovakia.
 - (iv) British Agriculture.
 - (v) Books of Today.
 - (vi) Cricket.
6. Name three principal Cabinet -Ministers and describe their functions.
7. Name the chief cities of (Great Britain. Describe any one you have visited.

8. Write a description of any recent event you have personally witnessed recently, e.g, a fire, an accident, a sports meeting, departure of a liner, or an exhibition.
Use third person, past tense, and not the pronoun "I."
9. Who are, in your opinion, the four most talked of men in the world, and why?

TOM CLARKE

Appendix D

Structured interview script 21/5/97

You were kind enough to take part in a survey a little while ago of MGN Training Scheme graduates. That survey was part of another, larger, study about journalists, one aim of which is to assess the ways in which today's journalists have been educated, trained and otherwise shaped.

One of the findings of the national surveys--there were two--was that a remarkably high proportion of today's journalists are graduates--about 64 per cent (nearly two thirds). And yet, when in surveys of both the Plymouth Brethren and journalists chosen at random all over Britain were asked *Do you think it desirable that future recruits to journalism have a university degree?* only about one-third said Yes.

The proportion which thought any kind of degree desirable was virtually the same in two national surveys and in a very large sampling of MGN veterans-- 8 percent and 31 per cent respectively.

This seems such an unexpected response--even a perverse one from the Brethren, among whom the proportion of graduates is 77 per cent--that it calls for some clarification. You were one of those who said that a degree was not desirable and I hope you won't mind answering a couple more questions on this particular aspect. If the questions seem a little stilted it is because I am reading from a script. I'm interviewing about a dozen people and I want to be sure to ask the same set of questions of everyone.

1. Was there a single or a simple reason underlying your response to the question about the value of degrees in journalism?
2. Is there a question of class involved?
3. Do you think that you would have got a start in journalism without a degree?
4. What differences have you noticed between journalists with degrees and those without?
5. Has your degree helped you in the actual practice of journalism?
6. Do you have a child who hopes for a career in journalism?

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No Sign of a Better Job: 100 years of British journalism

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ABSTRACT *Journalism has changed radically in Britain since the early part of the 20th century when Mencken described it as “a craft to be mastered in four days and abandoned at the first sign of a better job”. Delano summarizes findings from his long-standing research concern to chart the many developments in journalism by exploring: the burgeoning numbers of journalists; the impact of new technology on journalism; the shifting age, gender and ethnic minority composition of journalists; as well as the changing patterns of education and training for journalists and the emergence of journalism as a graduate profession. In some respects, the position of journalists has changed little across the last 100 years. At the end of the twentieth century journalists face similar problems to those that confronted them at its beginning: divided views on how their occupation might be organized and regulated and powerless to influence the increasing concentration of the media that employs them in the hands of omnipotent and indifferent controllers.*

KEY WORDS: *Age, Education, Ethnic Minority, Gender, Journalism Training, Print Journalism*

No intellectual occupation defies sociological categories of professionalisation as robustly as journalism (Weaver and Wilhoit, 1991, p. 104).

At the end of the twentieth century journalists had attained a prominence in society greater than at any time since the occupation was defined. Their function was more diverse than ever and more visible. “Across the world, top newsreaders, anchorpersons, and newspaper columnists acquire the glamour of movie stars and exert the influence of politicians”, aspirants were told (McNair, 1994, p. 3). The activities of journalists, their publications and their programmes were legitimized as newsworthy in themselves: all five British national broadsheet dailies offered weekly “media” sections, editors

were treated as celebrities, even by rival newspapers.

How this came about is difficult to explain. Its relevance to the professional activity of journalists is even more difficult to assess. However, a number of previously unidentified factors, which help in both instances, have been isolated by my own research studies conducted throughout the 1990s.

Few academics have ever shown an interest in the significance of journalists as social and political actors. At the midpoint of the century Howard Strick, founding director of the UK national training scheme which lingers on vestigially in the National Council for the Training of Journalists (NCTJ), observed that journalists held the power—“at least equally with any other power in the state”—to determine

whether a democracy was given "the inspiration and the information" essential to it (1957, p. 2). Another pioneer journalism educator, Norman Cattanch, pronounced journalists "an important body of people through whose ears and eyes and minds, the news of the world is projected" (1978, p. 4). The communication scholar Anthony Smith became convinced that for many people journalists had come to represent a "kind of substitute government" (1978, p. 179).

Since Smith's observation an increasing number of journalists have shifted into the government itself, or at least into the Palace of Westminster, Downing Street and the principal party headquarters. At least 30 members of the 1997 parliament held National Union of Journalism cards.¹ Fame as a television correspondent rather than any political stance won one of them, Martin Bell, his parliamentary seat, just as prominence as a tabloid political journalist qualified the Prime minister's press secretary, Alastair Campbell, for a position at the centre of power. Journalism could once again be seen to be functioning as a bridging occupation to politics, for which it had been renowned in the nineteenth century.

Journeymen reporters and even editors might question whether McNair's newsreaders, anchors and columnists, "stars" though they might well be, should be regarded as journalists in the same way as themselves, but in the national electronic village of the 1990s even a local sports reporter could become transformed into a television celebrity and the grandest of newspapers routinely bestowed by-lines on junior reporters. Even when they worked at the less scrupulous end of the occupational spectrum or in the most menial of jobs, journalists came to be seen by many as privileged and powerful beings who possessed knowledge denied to others. They were

granted access to areas of life from which ordinary citizens are excluded; able to influence events, often by their presence alone.

In certain circumstances this impression may be a valid one, but for many people it became dominant, constantly reinforced by complementary media, particularly film and television. The marauding, free-spending reporter, the overbearing editor pandering to the demands of proprietor or politician, appear as protagonists of large- and small-screen drama as regularly as the private eye or police inspector (and are just as improbably portrayed). Whether looked at as a way of life, or merely a way of earning a living, journalism in the late 1990s seems a far cry from H. L. Mencken's description of it at the beginning of the century as "a craft to be mastered in four days and abandoned at the first sign of a better job".

Numbers

Jeremy Tunstall, the doyen of media sociologists, doubted that the sprinkling of stardust affected many journalists. He showed a keen awareness of how few of them genuinely exuded "glamour", comparing the journalistic hierarchy of the 1990s to that of professional sport or show business: "a small layer of stars and a huge following oversupply of eager seekers after fame, fortune and stardom" (1996, p. 136).

One reason journalists increasingly attracted attention was the startling rise in their number and in the number of outlets that employed them. By the 1990s it had become common for journalists (augmented by technicians) to outnumber any other group of participants in news events. The 1994 D-Day anniversary celebrations attracted 4000 journalists (only 558 participated in the 1944 event that was being com-

memorated). The 1995 O.-J. Simpson trial in Los Angeles was covered by more than 50 news organizations. When the first NATO peacekeeping force entered Kosovo in 1999 it was outnumbered (and impeded) by the 2500 journalists who had been accredited.

. By the year 2000 at least 30,000 men and women in the United Kingdom earned a full-time living from journalism, compared to 7000 in 1928 when, by most accounts of that time, workaday journalism was not seen as a particularly desirable or distinguished calling.² The relatively new-found conviction that there was status, charisma and an enviable income to be had from journalism nourished the ambitions of an ever-increasing number of aspirants. In the late 1990s in the United Kingdom some 3000 young men and women were enrolled in journalism training courses or vocationally orientated degrees each year, a figure that represented only a small proportion of those who applied to them.³ Even warnings as sharp and authoritative as that delivered by a former managing director of the BBC World Service could not deter the hopeful ...

journalism is not a career if that means an orderly progression up a hierarchy of responsibility and reward. It is not a way of making money ... It is hardly secure, increasingly casualised ... If it is a profession, it is pretty lax about establishing consistent standards of work, conduct and behaviour among its members (Tusa, 1991).

The transformation of the image and status of the journalist first became apparent in America during the 1960s, an era vigorously explored by the impressionistic and interventionist "New Journalism" that was personified by Tom

Wolfe and other writers in Clay Felker's *New York* magazine. This fresh wave of "New Journalists" (there had been several earlier ones in this and previous centuries) were following signposts similar to those that at about the same time were guiding the early exponents of British Cultural Studies. Their extensive exposure to higher education (Wolfe left Harvard with a Masters degree in American Studies) imbued those innovative American journalists with a keen appetite for distilling high culture out of low; high, at any rate, as the readers of *New York* and its advertisers saw things.

More traditional journalism—investigation, exposure, explanation, re-investigation—was brought vividly back into focus in America a few years later when, by exposing the machinations of the Watergate scandal in the *Washington Post*, the partnership of Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein lit a beacon that attracted young Americans to journalism in unprecedented numbers.⁴ The effect of these developments leapt the Atlantic at a time when crops of graduates from an expanded number of new British universities (none of which at that time included journalism in its curricula) coincided with a broadened demand for journalists. National and regional newspapers were expanding in an economic boom and bright young graduates could readily persuade editors to give them a trial, particularly if they had experience on student publications. Independent Television News (ITN), established to provide news services for the new outlets created by the introduction of commercial television, recruited heavily from print and radio journalists as well as directly from the universities. The gaps in the plundered ranks needed to be filled. Whether they were admitted directly to the "mainstream" or diverted temporarily to the regions by the restrictive policies of the National Union

of Journalists (NUJ), the newcomers of the 1960s brought about the first fundamental shift in the configuration of the British journalist since the 1890s. The raw material from which the greater number of journalists had been shaped over nearly three-quarters of a century of commercialized news output became different in background, attitudes and expectations.

The industrialization of newspapers in the late 1800s and the subsequent organization of the majority of reporters and sub-editors as trade unionists on the model of their editorial alter egos, the printers, had categorized journalists as tradesmen or craftsmen, trained by apprenticeship, acquiring their skills by emulation. Even more than the academic preparation for journalism that was eventually to develop, this process was susceptible to "complex and subtle" connections with media ownership which ensured a "passive" media liable to uphold the *status quo*; the structuralist view, widely held among communication scholars such as Chomsky (McBarnet, 1979, p. 193).

Concurrently, the social status of journalists suffered. Strick spoke of the "condescension" shown to them in the 1950s by people on the "right" side of what was perhaps "the only real social dividing line left in this country": occupations that required university preparation. He listed lawyers, doctors, civil servants, teachers and university lecturers, industrial executives. More than 60 years later, the first national surveys of journalists ever carried out in Britain (Delano and Henningham, 1995; Delano, 1997) have established that today's practitioners, nearly four out of five of them university graduates, regard themselves as being firmly installed on the *same* side as most of the occupations Strick mentioned and their own equivalent in social standing. A majority of British journalists now believe that their occupation is a pro-

fession rather than a trade or a craft although over half of them—well over half, except in the periodical sector—belong to the NUJ.

Training however, whether formal or informal, pre- or post-entry has never been the only gateway to the occupation. Despite the expansion of training courses and of higher education awards in journalism, anyone may still embark on this enticing career with no credentials whatever. As an American researcher was told: "You become a journalist when you declare that you are one, and you remain a journalist as long as you keep declaring you are one." The journalist who was being interviewed at the time wondered if there could be another occupation of comparable importance to society that exercised so little formal control over itself—no entrance requirement, no explicit code of ethics, no system for weeding out "the incompetents and the scoundrels" (Goldstein, 1985, p. 157).

Even when the incompetents and scoundrels and the spurious fictional image are disregarded there remains a problem of perception concerning "this elusive bureaucracy ... the salaried men and women, anonymous, limited in responsibility, safe from criticism who buy and sell and try to make and unmake opinions" (Hasluck, 1958, p. 13). Much of the manifest public disapproval of media concentration on the Royal Family which followed the death of Diana, Princess of Wales was deflected from the *paparazzi* originally implicated to the client editors who encouraged their behaviour. A public survey had already acknowledged the nexus between journalists and politicians in a way flattering to neither. Invited to rank occupations according to the level of "respect" felt for them, respondents awarded members of parliament and journalists a minus score, respectively, of -32 and -33, which

put journalists only a notch above real estate agents.⁵

More focused disquiet concerning the influence of journalists could be observed. An American communication scholar has called the influence attributed to journalists one of the "outstanding conundrums of contemporary public discourse", blaming her fellow academics for "the public's inability to grasp fully the power of journalists" and scolding them for failing satisfactorily to explain "the persistent presence of journalists as arbiters of events of the real world" (Zelizer, 1993, p. 80).

Some thoughtful journalists share the misgivings of academic critics such as Zelizer, McBarnet and others. They are fully cognizant of the extent to which professionalism, in the sense of techniques applied to the manufacturing of media product, affects the gathering and reporting of news and thus, as Soloski argued, makes "the use of discretion predictable" in the construction of journalistic accounts (1989, p. 209). They worry openly about the obstacles that media structures place in the way of dealing with issues of public relevance; of the danger that the journalistic process could become the primary, sometimes the sole, means of access to "knowledge, understanding and taste" (Adair, 1993). They fear, as my study reflects, that increasing concentration of the ownership of media outlets could eventually affect the way they would prefer to carry out their work; even whether they could be sure of having their work published or broadcast at all if it did not conform to a narrow and increasingly banal set of editorial values. They lament that the "individuality" that had once been seen as an important factor in the appeal of journalism as a way of life—and one on which its latent claim to recognition as a profession partly rested—appears diminished.

Revolution

All but the youngest journalists working in Britain today experienced an industrial revolution which brought great changes to the functioning of their occupation. The march of technology transformed newsrooms and broadcasting studios into "lean, mean and eerily silent places" where the computer seems as much in charge as the editors (Hayward, 1995, p. 22). Newspaper and magazine journalists found themselves taking over tasks that for centuries had been the responsibility—the prerogative—of printers. They were compelled to acquire skills ranging far beyond the mere "talent" of being able to write and report in the manner required by executives and proprietors. The introduction the 1970s and 1980s of "new technology" to print media offices in the form of direct input of copy to editorial computer systems by reporters and other writers, and the concurrent requirement that sub-editors and page designers process the resulting text on screen, produced consequences far beyond the savings that had been anticipated in the labour of technological intermediaries.

Managers had intended a reduction in editorial personnel as well as the elimination of mechanical typesetting and manual compositing, but no one foresaw the extent to which the new procedures would eradicate much of the higher age stratum of experienced journalists who had been trained and conditioned in ways that began to disappear. Often, newspaper sub-editors, usually men of 50 or over, could not cope with the transition from typewriter, pencil and ruler to computers and welcomed, or at least accepted, redundancy. Others were given no choice by managements that saw them simply as more expensive than the younger computer-literate replacements that were

becoming available. Then, before the first impact of technological change had completed its effect on journalistic practice the Internet expanded with bewildering speed into a new editorial medium which suggested that an even more extensive reworking would be required of the techniques by which news is delivered as well as gathered and produced. At the same time there seemed less opportunity for them to deploy their critical and analytical faculties or to observe events at first hand. Hi-tech newsrooms were often located in low-rent areas distant from city centres.

So the news is gathered on the telephone and from the television screen, the background filled in from the databank, and a new generation of journalists interview and write about people they never meet (Knightley, 1997, p. 262).

Without the "back-up" of supporting expertise further along the editorial production line, the newer journalists came to be required not only to fit in to a layout or a page plan and prepare the entire package for press, tasks that required skill in artwork, layout and photography (PTC, 1996, p. 9) but to ensure that their copy was legally safe and factually sound, as experienced sub-editors traditionally had done.

Much the same effect could be seen in broadcasting (it is now accepted that a BBC journalist's career ends at 50⁶) with the result that new recruits could no longer depend on finding experienced colleagues at whose hands they could be "easily nurtured, coaxed and sometimes bullied" into shape (Wilson, 1996). A new "mixed economy" of television and radio demanded "multi-skilled" journalists who could edit video- or audio-tape as well as record on it and be responsible for effects

which had hitherto been added by technicians.⁷

Socialization

The disappearance of a generation of elders, together with their accumulated professional "wisdom" and skills which would have been emulated by their natural successors, also interrupted the process of socialization that had been observed in the training of journalists. At the same time that the powerful bonding influence of an older generation of journalists was diluted their numerical replacements were emerging from a different mould: increasingly they were university graduates; increasingly they were likely to be female. If they had received any preparation for journalism at all it was unlikely to have been in the form of a lengthy and socializing apprenticeship.

Just what that kind of "shape", to use Wilson's term, the newer journalists might have been by now had the technological upheaval not occurred is impossible to establish. But the shape of journalists in practice today has been thoroughly assessed. Journalists at work during these transitions would frequently try to relate the changes in personnel and practice they could observe to growing doubts about the continuing effectiveness of once-dependable editorial methods and techniques. Their attention usually centred on the redistribution throughout the journalism population of basic factors, the dimensions of which could only be speculated upon or assessed anecdotally but which have now been placed beyond surmise for the first time: age, education, class, gender. The coarse brushstrokes provided by the data for my study portray the archetypal British journalist of the mid-1990s as a 36-year-old androgynous but heterosexual, white, Protestant,

university-educated, *Radio 4* listener, *Daily Telegraph* or *Guardian* reader living in, or within commuting distance of, London, who voted for the Labour Party at the last election; a non-smoker and moderate drinker who is co-habiting, has less than one child and earns as much or even more than someone he or she might regard as a social equivalent: a parameter of white-collar "middleness" that approaches caricature.

Age

In the mid-1990s the median age of all journalists was 37. The figure for newspaper journalists (rather than broadcasters or those in the periodical sector) was 39, nearly 4 years older than the median established by the 1977 Royal Commission; but the average age at which the 1990s journalist had obtained his or her first job was 21 rather than, as would have been likely 40 years earlier, between 15 and 18. This fact alone would invite the assertion from veterans that such a workforce simply lacked the conditioned "know-how" to cater to a wide spectrum of consumers, particularly in the absence of the pattern of occupational socialization once structured into apprenticeships that might be characterized as the hegemony of the newsroom.

Education

Four out of five journalists now at work are university or college graduates and a similar proportion is reflected in the intake of formal trainees.⁸ In 1957 graduates had formed only 10 per cent of a year's intake of provincial newspaper trainees and a negligible proportion of senior journalists. Even among the specialists and foreign correspondents

studied by Tunstall 10 years later the proportion of graduates was only 30 per cent and only 12 per cent of regional newspaper recruits had degrees. Tunstall later estimated that it would take until 2025 before 50 per cent of British journalists would be graduates (1977, p. 335). The rate at which graduate entry to journalism accelerated must be considered in relation to the increase in the national university population from 50,000 in 1938 to 750,000 by 1992⁹ but it has to be seen as the most significant element in the profile of the present-day British journalist, suggesting as it does that for the first time in at least 100 years journalists are better educated than most of their readers or viewers.

The "privileged" background—as it was often perceived—of the new generation of journalists and the attitudes it might engender were open to more complex interpretation. Less than 20 years earlier the NCTJ had argued that no graduate "would readily accept the canon of the popular press" and thus would be unlikely to want to work for it (NCTJ, 1975, p. 4). Sparks reversed that perspective but raised much the same question: since so many of the new generation of British journalists were likely to be graduates with career objectives and social situations quite different from those of their readers they might be "unsuitable candidates" to administer some popular editorial styles (1992, p. 31). Each of these viewpoints raised the question of whether the professional values that had been consensually developed throughout the century by proprietors and journalists could any longer be depended on as canonical by those employed to administer them. If they could not, then the misgivings of those who saw graduates as being "potentially subversive" because they were less susceptible to socialization than their less well-educated but

putatively more highly motivated conferees, might be justified (Boyd-Barrett, 1980, p. 316).

There was a further consideration. Much of the journalism "establishment" had, by the 1990s, overcome its mistrust of graduates but remained suspicious of the idea of specialized education for journalism. This prejudice had some grounding in the early British experience of journalism education, although some support could have been found in the United States, where preparation for media employment had long been centred in university schools of journalism. There, the complaint had been raised—although from a different point of view—that journalists were being distanced from their audiences by such specialized education and their subsequent isolation within an occupational environment (Burgoon *et al.*, 1981; see also the essay by Reese and Cohen, this issue).

At the beginning of the century journalists had largely rejected the possibility of becoming a chartered profession, with the autonomy over membership, ethics and standards of competence that such a status implied, content with the craft/trade status that ensued from their preference for seeing themselves as, in Parry's apt comparison, "mechanics rather than mechanical engineers". For a significant minority a craving for professional status persisted, evinced by the survival of the Chartered Institute of Journalists from which the founders of the NUJ broke away.

However, even at the height of the Institute's influence in the 1930s, it had been recognized that an essential factor continuing to exclude journalists from the status of an established profession was their failure to gain a "monopoly of a technique indispensable to the proprietors, who are in a position to go their own ways, whether or not existing journalists are willing to

work for them" (Carr-Saunders and Wilson, 1933, p. 269).

If a significant proportion of journalists had come, in the 1990s, to see themselves as "professionals" in the occupational sense, this view was not shared by the government nor by an important segment of employers, the regional newspaper publishers represented by the Newspaper Society, which sponsors the NCTJ. In attempting a codification of standards of journalist training, the government accepted the vocation/craft/trade apprenticeship model favoured for most of the century by employers and conservative practitioners. Thus, rather than qualifying aspiring journalists to enter the occupation by attaining a certain level of education, he or she is assumed to receive the most valuable preparation after being selected for inclusion, while at the same time being exposed to a high level of occupational socialization.

By the mid-1990s someone seeking a pre-entry credential could set out to acquire any of the following in Journalism (or in Communication or Media Studies): a Bachelor level degree, a Higher National Diploma (HND), a General National Vocational Qualification (GNVQ) or a Business and Technician Educational Certificate (BTEC) certificate. If already graduates, they could take a Masters level degree or a postgraduate diploma or certificate. They could sign on at a private school or an employer-endorsed training scheme to obtain a diploma or certificate issued by that particular institution. In many cases, these awards would be aimed towards a particular media sector such as broadcast or periodicals and any of them might impress an employer sufficiently to gain the holder a job or a contract. In none of these cases, however, would the aspirant automatically merit the NCTJ National Certificate or a National Vocation Qualification. Those could be

obtained only if the candidate was already employed as a journalist. In a very few instances, employers would subsidize or sponsor courses; but in the vast majority of cases, the journalists of the future were being trained and educated at no cost to the industry in which they would eventually work.

Although the NUJ sometimes describes itself as a professional organization it has shown only intermittent interest in the standards of journalists and journalism: its ethics committee has rarely been convened. Much of its activity throughout the 1990s was concerned to try to win back the rights of representation of which it had been stripped by the trade union curbs of the Thatcher era. Among the consequences of NUJ weakness inferred by many journalists was a dilution of the workforce by freelances and casuals. That impression has been challenged, in part at least, by the discovery that only one in five (20 per cent) journalists in the news sector chose the description of freelance. The NUJ's own 1994 survey showed 70 per cent of the membership in "secure" jobs. A significant observation concerned the emergence in the 1990s of the *professional* freelance, versatile, accomplished, self-employed by choice, usually earning more than could be expected from a staff job: the very model of the independent, self-employed practitioner once to be seen in established professions.

Women

After education the next most significant factor in identifying shifts in the journalist population is the proliferation—predominance, in the periodical sector—of women. The prejudicial barriers that for much of the century impeded the entry of women to the mainstream of journalism and limited

the prospects of those who did gain admission began to crumble in the 1960s and by the mid-1990s had largely been dismantled. The focus of discontent among women journalists moved from entry to advancement and an insistence on equality gave way to claims, seemingly based on sexual identity, to higher executive placements and an acknowledgement by employers and colleagues of the particular familial responsibilities of women.

There are many indications, however, that few other occupations are as accommodating to the egalitarian expectations. The proportion of women journalists grew steadily as the post-1945 population expansion matured. Few early figures are available but in 1984 the organization Women in Media made the following estimates of the ratio of women reporters to men (female sub-editors and executives were still a novelty) on national newspaper general reporting staffs: *Guardian* 9:35, *Daily Mirror* 3:32, *Sun* 3:40, *Sunday Times* 0:9. Since then the proportion of women employed in such news operations has risen to 25 per cent from 10 per cent in 1976 (Smith, 1978). The female proportion of the entire journalist population is 40 per cent; the ratio in the periodical sector 55.6 per cent.

In the 1990s eight women became editors of national Sunday newspapers (by 1998 all had been replaced). Only one woman has become the editor of a national daily, although several titles have a female deputy editor.¹⁰ The prospects of female recruits and mature practitioners alike has changed out of all recognition since newspapers—as late as the 1960s—refused to employ them as sub-editors because they might have to work late at night; or since one of them could recommend journalism to others in these terms:

She may land Gregory Peck like the

French girl reporter, or President Kennedy like Jacqueline Onassis ... most unfair of all she may rise from the top editor's bed into Fleet Street, with hardly any qualifications at all, as I did myself, and as I know some of my colleagues also did (Franklin, 1936, p. 27).

Despite the rate at which they have spread through the occupation, outnumbering men in the periodical sector, women could still claim to be under-represented in national daily newspapers. They could also, with justification, claim to be paid less, by an average factor of 20 per cent, than men of comparable age and experience performing similar duties.

Income

Although not necessarily the most significant factor in establishing either status or class, salary determines the market value of a journalist. Journalism has no generally accepted pay grades and no hierarchical pay scale. While men and women are roughly equal in proportion in the central wage bands (between £20,000 and £34,999 per annum), differences become apparent at either end. The contrast becomes spectacular among journalists earning above £40,000 per annum (just over one in five of the total). Of these high earners, 85 per cent are men.

Salaries are most equitably distributed among the sexes in the periodical sector. Of journalists earning £40,000 and above in periodical journalism, 53 per cent are women and 47 per cent are men. However, salaries are clustered lower in the scale in periodical journalism, where only 12 per cent overall earn £40,000 or more

per annum, compared to 24 per cent in news journalism.

The highest income levels were found among journalists employed by national papers, where there was a median level of income (from all sources) of £37,500 a year. In the regional newspaper sector the figure was £17,500.

Ethnic Minorities

There is a widespread empirically and anecdotally based impression that journalism is racially exclusive but in reality the journalism population may accommodate, in proportion, more ethnic elements than the general working population of the United Kingdom. The term "white" was not used in fieldwork but overall 10 per cent of journalist respondents chose not to classify themselves *ethnically* as European. Even among news journalists the proportion was 7 per cent. The proportion of individuals of working age in the general population who classified themselves as other than "white" in the 1991 Census was between 4.0 per cent and 4.5 per cent.¹¹ The problems in reaching satisfactory conclusions in this area are manifold. In addition to the common mismatch of variables, the difficulty of establishing numbers and proportions is compounded by sensitive responses, the confusion inherent in a racial mix and the oversimplification of terms. "Asian" and "black" are no more satisfactory categorizations than "white" or "European". Whatever the present situation, there is little room to doubt that hardly any ethnic minorities were represented in the early training courses (or in operational newsrooms up to the 1980s)¹² but as those groups gained a firmer foothold in British life their representa-

tive numbers increased. A typical 2000 graduating class of BA and HND journalism students includes 5 per cent black British and 5 percent British Asians.¹³

New values

One of the hypotheses explored in the research was that the British journalist of the twentieth century might be expected to develop attitudes comparable to those evident among journalists in America. University-calibre education and pre-entry training in independent establishments, it was surmised, would lead to middle-class professionalization characterized by, among other things, a high degree of ethical awareness and self-regulation at personal level.

If an affinity with the American model of journalist in particular could be demonstrated, a considerable divergence would be implied between the values with which "new" British journalists were equipped and those that had been imposed on their older colleagues by the organizational requirements of earlier journalistic practice. Little could be found in the fieldwork data to support this contention.

If journalists could be said to have a common ethos, there appears to be no widespread inclination to shape it for themselves. They show even less inclination to organize themselves as an occupation than at other times throughout the century. They seem content to allow the issues of ethics, regulation, prerogatives, levels of skill and conditions of employment and reward to be decided entirely by their employers. One of the crucial questions remains: why have journalists not been able or willing to exert the influence *inside* their professional world that they are able to wield *outside* it?

If, within a generation, the type of young person who became a journalist

in Britain had altered radically might they not be expected to bring a fresh set of career expectations, notions of status, political convictions and professional attitudes to the occupation. At the end of the twentieth century, with trade union influence exhausted and an expanded array of abilities required of them, might journalists not be expected to turn back to an earlier ideal, perhaps in convergence with other communication media sectors which were also seeking some sort of control over the use to which they and their product were put? In key areas such as news, might journalists even come to favour a form of accreditation under which certain roles required professional peer endorsement? Could the dormant ideal of the Institute of Journalism which viewed journalism as an autonomous profession able to organize and rank its members, regulate their ethical conduct and determine certain conditions of their employment be revived? Most unlikely, if the fieldwork data are anything to go by.

In the early years covered by this study it was common for a reporter to let it be known that he could also "work at case". Not only could he write a story from shorthand notes but, much as a travelling actor might "double in brass", he was able to set the type in which it was to be printed (Butler, 1955, p. 2). Now that the technical developments of the last two decades have, by excluding craftsmen intermediaries, placed journalists in charge of virtually every aspect of production as well as the provision and processing of material to be printed or broadcast, such a tactically valuable synthesis of skills is once more to hand; but there seems little inclination to apply the leverage (or to accept the responsibility) implied. British journalists, apparently indifferent to the opportunity for control of their professional fate offered by technology and unconcerned by drifting occu-

pational values, seem likely to end the twentieth century beset by the major problems that confronted them at its beginning: divided views on how their occupation might be organized and

regulated and powerless to influence the increasing concentration of the media that employs them in the hands of omnipotent and indifferent controllers.

Notes

- ¹ NUJ records
- ² ILO, 1928.
- ³ 1998 National Union of Teachers Survey showed 25 per cent of sixth-formers preferring career in media/public relations.
- ⁴ In 1971 enrolment in colleges offering degrees in mass communications or journalism was 36,697. By 1982, 304 colleges were offering such courses and in a survey of only 216 of those, enrolments had risen to 91,016 (Weaver & Wilhoit, 1991, p. 44).
- ⁵ British Social Attitudes, 1995. MORI surveying 2000 adults.
- ⁶ Letter to *Press Gazette* 6 June 1997 from C. Underwood, secretary, Institute of Journalists.
- ⁷ The director of technology at ITN coined the term "journotech" for the operators of the digital newsrooms already coming onstream which would require fewer technicians. "About 90 per cent of editing is fairly straightforward and journalists will do it. ITN has 40 picture editors; that figure will probably come down to six or eight."
- ⁸ Guild of Editors Survey 1994 reported 68 per cent of trainees already working in journalism had "university education".
- ⁹ Council for Industry and Higher Education, 1995, *Post-18 Education*, London: CIHE.
- ¹⁰ Rosie Boycott, *The Express*.
- ¹¹ Tables 1.8, 6. Some stratae include ages 16-18 and 65+. Northern Ireland excluded.
- ¹² Guild of Editors 1995 survey: 97.3 per cent "white".
- ¹³ LCP records.

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“This proved a timely investigation. Political changes in employment policies during the 1970s and 1980s appeared to many to have destabilised the journalistic workforce. By the 1990s the National Union of Journalists had been widely derecognised by employers. Largely by-passed in wage negotiations and stripped of the power to decide who might work as a journalist, the NUJ lost nearly half its membership and barely managed to retain a presence in many newsrooms. By 1995 its numbers had begun to rise again but by then it was apparent to many journalists that not only had the methods of recruitment to journalism changed but the nature of recruits”

The Research

Fieldwork to establish the survey population and compile the sample frame, stratified by media and region, was carried out between April 1994 and December 1995. Interviews lasting 25-35 minutes were conducted in February and March 1995 with 726 respondents (4.8% of the estimated national population of news journalists) by the MORI subsidiary On-Line Telephone Surveys. The journalists questioned represented a response rate of 81% from a sample drawn by random selection. Estimated sampling error at the 95% level of confidence: 3.6%.

The Researchers

Anthony Delano M Bus (Communication), former Fleet Street journalist, Senior Research Fellow at the School of Media, London College of Printing and Distributive Trades.

Professor John Henningham PhD, Department of Journalism, University of Queensland, who conducted the 1994 survey of Australian journalists.

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The project could never have been launched without the enthusiastic support of Stuart Bartholomew, Dean of the School of Media at the LCPDT, who recognised the importance of the research from the beginning and supported it unwaveringly. That is no less true of Bruce Grundy, Head of the Department of Journalism at the University of Queensland, and his right-hand woman Val Hornby. For resources unstintingly provided we are beholden to the London Institute, which substantially funded the research. In addition, our thanks go to Godfrey Hodgson and Rosemary Allan of the Reuter Foundation, John Short of Trinity and All Saints College, Leeds; and for invaluable assistance unobtainable elsewhere, Malcolm Goodson of the National Union of Journalists.

Liz Graham of On-Line deserves special thanks for suffering our ever-changing demands with such patience, as does Anouk Guest for her keyboard skills and Andrew Owen for assistance with the graphics.

Finally, we must acknowledge the generosity of David Weaver of the University of Indiana, in providing yet unpublished data from his latest American study.

Preface

These are the preliminary findings of the first survey ever to be completed of the British journalists in both print and broadcasting who gather and process the nation's news. Stripped of newsroom myth and the romanticising of scriptwriters, the modern British journalist can now be seen in all his or her quantitative candour: white, mainstream, middle-class-and verging on middle age.

The median age of 38 for journalists working on news is slightly older than in America and notably so when compared to their Australian counterparts. National newspaper journalists appear to be even older than 20 years ago when the average age was 34.5 (Royal Commission on the Press 1977).

That may be one-but only one-reason why, rather than behaving like the hell-raising muckraker of fiction, British journalists of the 1990s drink carefully, smoke hardly at all and marry and divorce with restraint. By the standards of many of the people they write about, their mating habits seem quite moderate. Only one in a hundred, for instance, lives with a partner of the same sex.

Another reason may be that they cannot afford too good a time. Journalists may be better educated than ever but they are not particularly well paid. The proportion of them that go to university or college has increased enormously in the last 20 years to 69% (although by no means all of them graduate). Among aspirants, six times as many are graduates than 40 years ago.¹ For the majority, though, their earnings are not commensurate with the professional status that one out of every two of them have come to feel is their due.

Historically, journalists have mostly regarded themselves-in line with the trade-union outlook of the National Union of Journalists-as practising a trade or craft. Now more than half (51%) see themselves as belonging to a profession.

Few journalists (2%) earn less than £10,000 but only 20% earn £35,000 or more. The two largest earning bands (16% each) are £15-20,000 and £20-25,000. A solicitor of comparable age and experience could expect £44,000 (Law Society 1994); a chartered engineer £36,000 (Engineering Council 1995). Despite this, most journalists are 'very' or 'fairly' happy in their chosen career and would recommend it to their children-should they have any. Half of them are childless.

Far more journalists are women than 25 years ago when only 17% of newspaper journalists were female. A 1994 National Union of Journalists survey indicated that women comprised 37% of its members². But the present survey suggests that in Britain news remains a male-dominated sphere. The proportion of women working in news as opposed to periodical and other 'soft' journalism is only 25%-well below the proportions shown in the USA (33.8%) or Australia (33%).

Frustratingly, no precise comparison can be made with the number of women working in news, say, 10 years ago. Nor can it be said with certainty that the proportion of journalists of black or Asian origin was once higher or lower than the 2% registered by this pioneer project. There are no comprehensive British statistics with which to align these 1995 findings. To try to measure change, trends and development the data from the present survey can be compared only with the partial studies that have been carried out in Britain from time to time, none of them recently. [See Appendix One Earlier Surveys]

Past attempts to pin British journalists down to a statistical profile foundered either for lack of funding or because of resistance from the NUJ, when its influence was stronger. Much academic research on the effect of the media and its products has been carried out, but little published research on the men and women who work in it. Investigations that did succeed in plotting some social locations and orientations, such as Professor Jeremy Tunstall's admirable 1971 assessment of specialist journalists, were deliberately narrow in focus.

The data may be compared, however, with those from similar investigations in the United States and Australia, where researchers have been much more active, and to this end the survey was restricted to journalists on national and regional newspapers, television and radio and in wire services and news agencies. Photographers were excluded.

It is certainly arguable that 'news' is the most widely relevant sector. News journalists undoubtedly provide, in the words of an American researcher, the raw material for their fellow citizens' view of the world. But limiting the enquiry excluded about half Britain's journalist population, principally those working in magazines and periodicals. The authors hope that changing methods of newsgathering and concepts of news will mean that future studies-for which this one will now act as benchmark-will embrace all journalists.

[See Appendix Two Sample and Methodology]

Nonetheless, this proved a timely investigation. Political changes in employment policies during the 1970s and 1980s appeared to many to have destabilised the journalistic workforce. Until the 1960s a pragmatic grasp of the requirements was often all that was required to become a journalist. Then, for as long as the NUJ was able to enforce it, a loose form of apprenticeship, or at least of structured entry, prevailed. In both these eras people from a wide range of social and educational backgrounds and differing experience found their niche within the journalistic structure.

By the 1990s the NUJ had been widely 'derecognised' by employers. Largely by-passed in wage negotiations and stripped of the power to decide who might work as a journalist, it lost nearly half its membership and barely managed to retain a presence in many newsrooms. This, together with a shortage of advertising due to economic recession, and rising newsprint and equipment costs, caused disarray in media job markets. Widespread restaffing and destaffing brought about an employment 'churn' of 17% in 1994-1995 and yet there was no discernible overall reduction in the number of journalists employed (NUJ 1995).

By 1995 NUJ numbers had begun to rise again, but by then it was apparent to many journalists that not only had the methods of recruitment to journalism changed but the nature of recruits.

Among the consequences of NUJ weakness inferred by many journalists was a dilution of the workforce by freelances and casuals. That impression has been challenged, in part at least, by the discovery that only one in five (20%) news journalists in offices describe themselves as freelance, that only a similar proportion work under a short-term contract and that most (56%) expect to be in the same or a similar job five years hence. The NUJ's own 1994 survey showed 70% of the membership in 'secure' jobs.

Another inference based on empirical observations was that in the absence of agreed or enforceable standards of performance or entry, the abundance of aspirants trained, at least partly, in the college and university journalism courses that have become widespread only recently, assists employers to replace seasoned but costly employees with younger, cheaper personnel. There is nothing in the data to dispel this impression.

This study was not easy to complete. Many companies flatly refused to co-operate by disclosing the number and identities of journalists they employed, an attitude that made the task of contacting and questioning a representative sample of journalists twice as long and tedious as it needed to have been. Suspicion and secrecy are commonplace in British life, but there is much irony in the reluctance of organisations which live by disclosure declining to reveal details about their own operations; and even more when the attitude is seen to extend to journalists. The proportion of British journalists who refused to participate was far higher than in the surveys with which the results of this investigation are to be compared. A number of the journalists selected were plainly horrified at the idea of answering questions about themselves and begged to be spared the ordeal. A senior BBC correspondent in a field which depends more than most on the publication of statistical data replied in outraged terms to the invitation to participate in the survey-without even seeing the questionnaire.

Journalists, however, kept the project afloat by unearthing and delivering the details that so many employers were reluctant to reveal. Of the sample of journalists eventually interviewed, one-third were employed by national newspapers-30% by national dailies and 4% by national Sundays. The largest employers were regional dailies 34%; regional weeklies employed 10%. One in six journalists were in broadcasting-BBC-TV 6%, BBC radio 1%, independent television 8%, independent radio 1%. Three per cent worked for wire services (Reuter, Press Association etc) and 4% for private newsagencies.

Fred Hunter, whose studies shed much light on what was considered a suitable educational preparation for journalism in the earlier part of the century, observed that the reason the occupation had attracted few substantial contributions from scholars was that it had only recently become an academic discipline in itself (Hunter 1982). More than a decade later, the authors of this study hope that the results they have produced may help alter that assumption and demonstrate that the producers and processors of the basic information that informs and reflects our society are at least as worthy of scholarly attention as the product.



General characteristics of British journalists

News journalist population. Although the term British is used for convenience, the study encompassed the United Kingdom together with the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man. To deal with a population of news journalists so widely scattered geographically and distributed through so many media sectors a combination of systematic random sampling and stratification was applied.

The sample eventually assembled represented some 6.6% of the estimated population of 15,175 British news journalists.

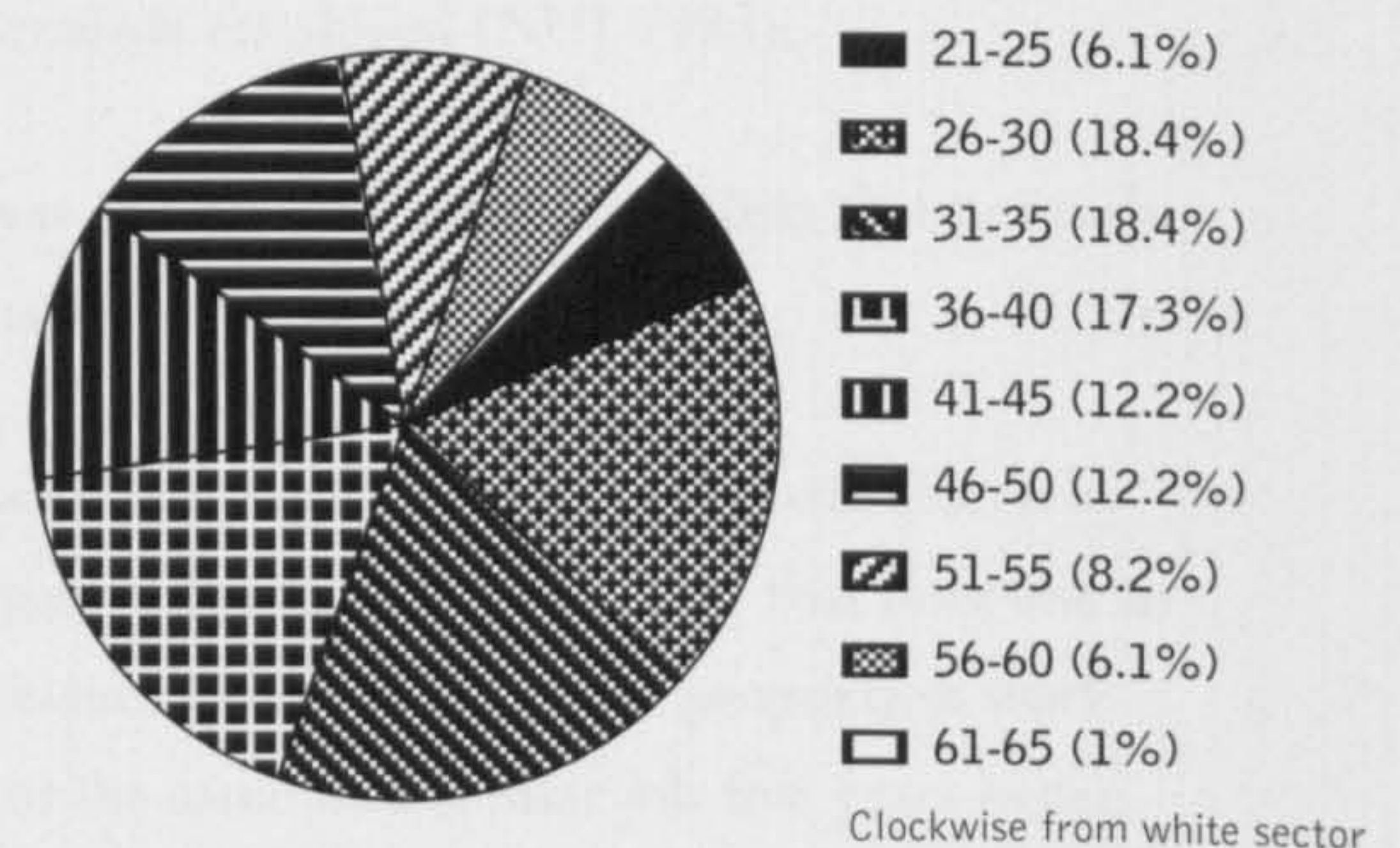
Reflecting the relative maturity of journalists working in news, more than half the respondents were aged 26-40. None was aged less than 21. Only 1% were 61 or over.

The median age of a journalist in Britain is 38. But the median disguises a great variety within and between media types. Newspaper journalists, especially those with the nationals, tend to be older than broadcast journalists. The most youthful group are those with independent radio, of whom more than 60% are aged under 30. Regional weeklies are also heavily staffed by under-30s (42%). The biggest single group working for national Sundays are '30-something' (47%).

TABLE 1 Percentage of journalists aged...

	30 & under	31-41	41-50	over 50	No. in sample who answered this question
All journalists	24	35	24	15	719
National dailies	11.6	41.8	27.5	19.1	215
National Sundays	21.4	46.5	25	7.1	28
Regional dailies	28.9	30.6	22.3	18.3	242
Regional weeklies	41.8	30.3	18	18	67
Independent radio	62.5	12.5	12.5	12.5	8
Independent TV	36.4	40	20	3.6	55
BBC	32.7	44.9	18.4	0	49
Agencies	10	26.6	30	33.4	30
Wire Services	16.7	41.7	33.4	8.3	24

Graph 1 Percentage of journalists in each age group



Ethnic Origins. Overwhelmingly (93%) British journalists are native-born and 90% describe themselves ethnically as European. These responses cannot entirely be reconciled with others concerning national origin and religion. However, only 1% chose to be classified as Indian or Pakistani and fewer than 1% as black Caribbean or black African.

Of those born abroad, the Republic of Ireland, the rest of Western Europe, North America, Southern Africa and Australasia each accounted for 1%. Smaller proportions recorded birthplaces all over the globe. The median age at which they had arrived in Britain was 15.5 years but 44% were 12 or under.

The tiny percentage of journalists of black or Arab background all believed it was harder for minority ethnic journalists to get ahead in their careers, while journalists of Indian background were divided almost equally on the question. About 50% of black, Arab or Indian journalists (compared with only 19% of European journalists) said they had experienced or observed racial prejudice.

Although only 19% of all journalists had any personal knowledge or experience of ethnic prejudice in the newsroom, most (55%) believed it would be more difficult for minority journalists to get ahead.

Of those journalists born in Britain, 78% were English, 12% Scots, 7% Welsh and 4% Northern Irish. Among the English, 25% came from the east and south east and another 18% from Greater London. Otherwise:

North West	20%
North East	18%
Midlands	14%
West/South West	6%

Irrespective of origin, only 19% grew up in a capital city. The largest proportion (36%) were from small towns or villages. Only 28% still lived in the place where they had been brought up.

Gender. The small (25%) proportion of women revealed in the survey reflects the gender distribution in news work. Women journalists are significantly younger on average than their male colleagues: 67% are aged under 35, compared with 36% of males. The median age for female journalists is 33, five years younger than the male median. Fewer than one in five female journalists are aged over 40 compared with 46% of male journalists. Women are particularly under-represented in national daily newspapers (especially tabloids). The highest proportions of women are in independent television and radio, and in Sunday newspapers (broadsheet and tabloid).

TABLE 2 Sex by age

	Under 30	30-40	40-50	50+	No. in sample who answered this question
Male	19.6	33.7	27.5	19.2	537
Female	40.6	40.7	12.0	6.6	182

Graph 2 Percentage of journalists in each age category by sex

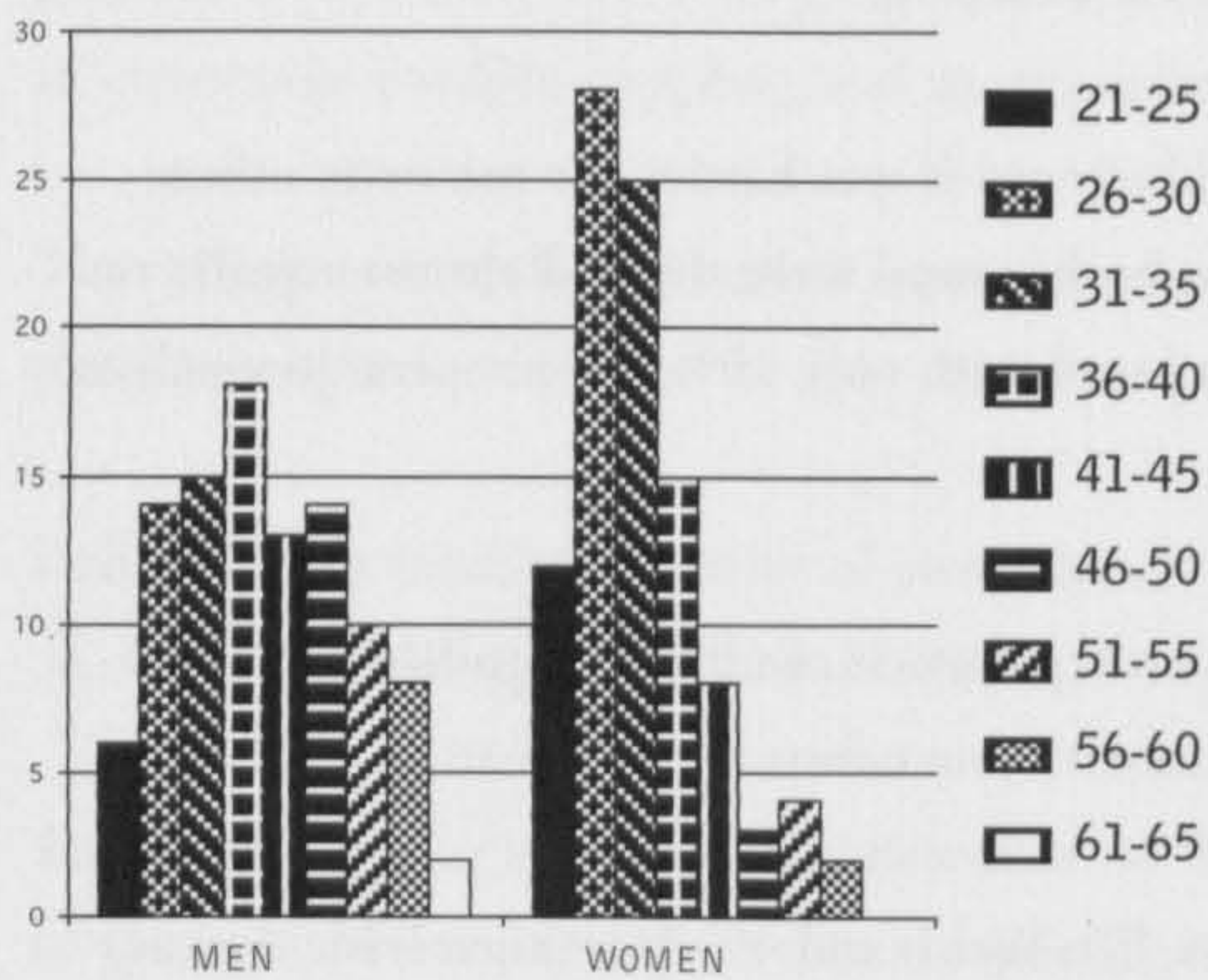
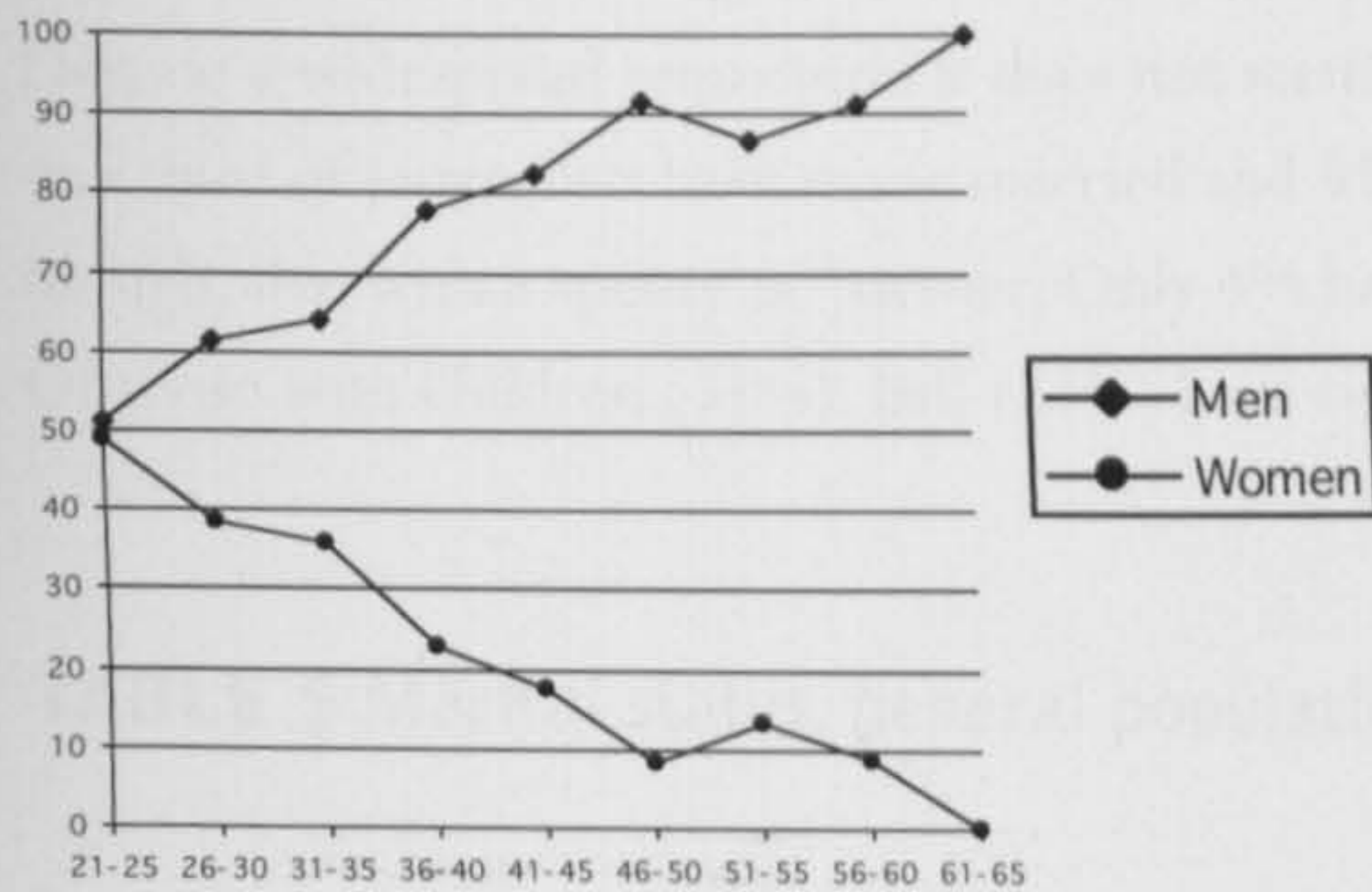


TABLE 3 Sex by type of organisation

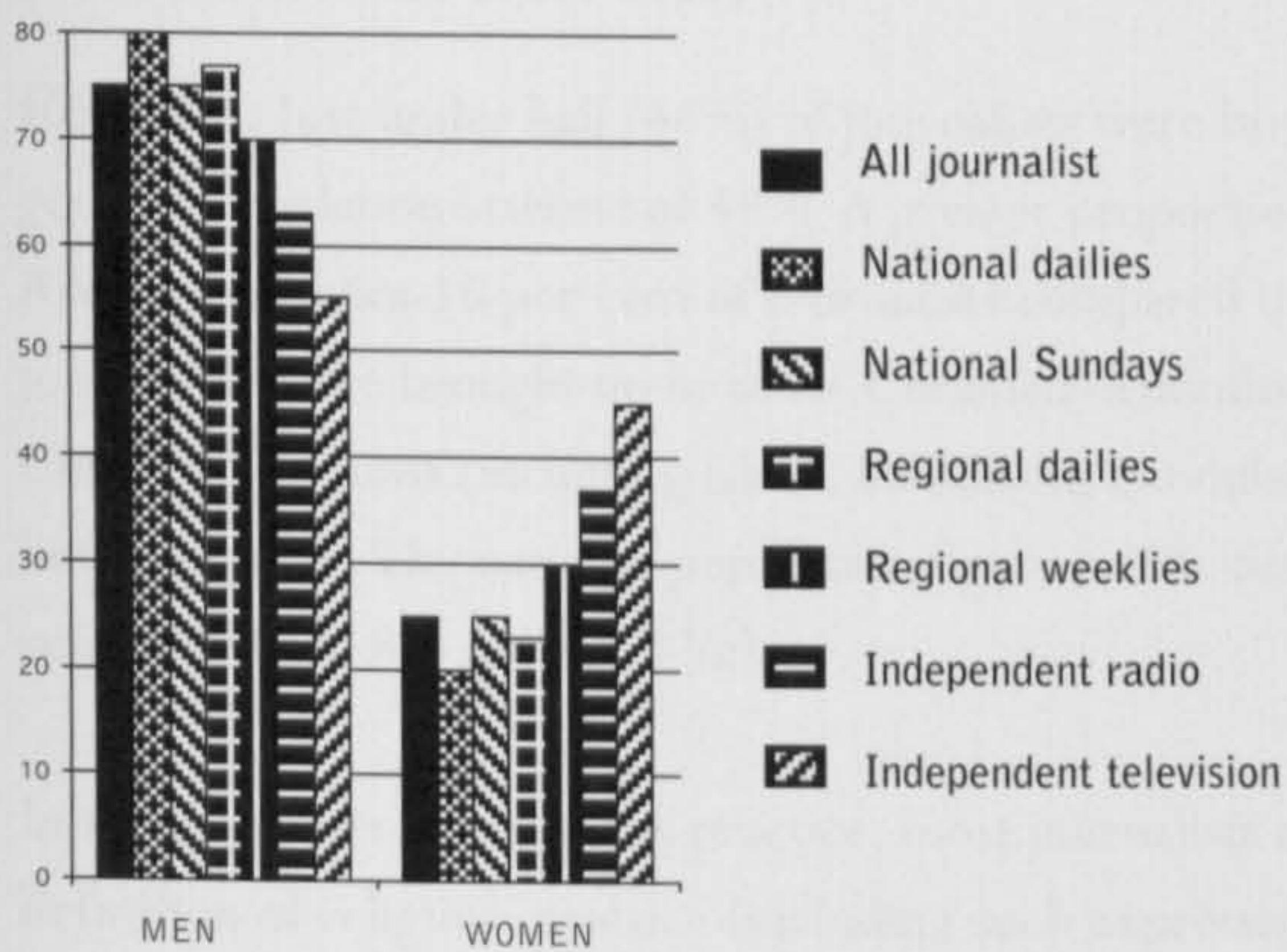
	Male%	Female%	No.
All journalists	75	25	
National dailies	80.6	19.4	217
National Sundays	75	25	28
Regional dailies	77	23	244
Regional weeklies	69.6	30.4	69
Independent radio	62.5	37.5	8
Independent TV	56.4	43.6	55
BBC	63.1	36.7	49
Agencies	74.2	25.8	31
Wire services	80	20	25

Graph 3 Proportions of men and women in each age group



Perceptions of newsroom sexism are very much a function of respondents' gender, with almost twice as many women (66%) than men (36%) believing it is more difficult for capable women journalists to get ahead in their careers. Moreover, 60% of women say they have personal experience or knowledge of women being victims of prejudice in the newsroom. Of men, only 31% had observed such prejudice.

Graph 4 Sex by organisation type



Status. The proportion of journalists who regard their occupation as a profession (51%) is higher than that reflected in earlier partial surveys in Britain. If those who preferred to call it a vocation (21%) are added they far outweigh those who see it as a trade (10%) or craft (16%). Nevertheless, 62% are members of the National Union of Journalists, which has always cultivated a trade union ethos. Only 1% belong either to the Institute of Journalists or the British Association of Journalists.

The shift of views in the ancient controversy over classifying the occupation makes no immediate difference since 67% do not appear to believe journalism could be organised as a profession, even a semi-profession such as architecture or accountancy. Just the same, a clear majority of journalists regard their social status as equal to that of accountants, engineers, solicitors, teachers and university lecturers, although not of dentists, barristers or surgeons.

TABLE 4

Do you believe that journalists deserve a social status at least equivalent to any of the following?

Total	726
Accountants	456 63%
Engineers	416 57%
Solicitors	440 61%
Nurses	342 47%
Actors	416 57%
Dentists	342 47%
Teachers	443 61%
Barristers	307 42%
Army Officers	348 48%
Politicians	372 51%
University Lecturers	371 51%
Surgeons	158 22%
None of these	139 19%

Class. Journalists with professional or managerial family backgrounds outnumber those whose parents are in the clerical, semi-skilled or unskilled group. Only 5% of journalists had a parent who had worked in the media.

Social attitudes. The widespread impression that journalists mix and mate predominantly with their own kind is partly sustained by the survey—29% had spouses or partners in the media. Fewer than half (40%) said that a majority of the people they mingled with socially were also connected with the media. Only 15% thought that half or more of their social contacts worked in the same organisation as themselves.

Some 55% of journalists are married, similar to the U.S. figure of 60%. But there is considerable difference in marital status between men and women journalists: while most male journalists are married, most women are not.

Male journalists have much the same marriage rate as males in the British population, but female journalists are much more likely to be single than are women in the general population.

Despite a widespread impression it does not seem that journalism as a career is hard on marriages. More than one third of journalists have never married and 51% have married only once. Nearly three quarters of them, though, live with a spouse or partner. Only 4% have been married a second time and less than 1% a third time. Of those with children (51%), half (24%) have two. Only 12% have three children or more.

TABLE 5 Marital status, general population (aged 20-65) and journalists

	Males% (n=16.35m)	Females% (n=16.68m)	Male J-lists% (n=542)	Female j-lists% (n=184)
Single	28.5	21.2	30.8	53.3
Married	64.1	66.6	61.9	39.1
Widowed	1.0	3.8	0.4	1.1
Divorced	6.4	8.4	6.7	6.5

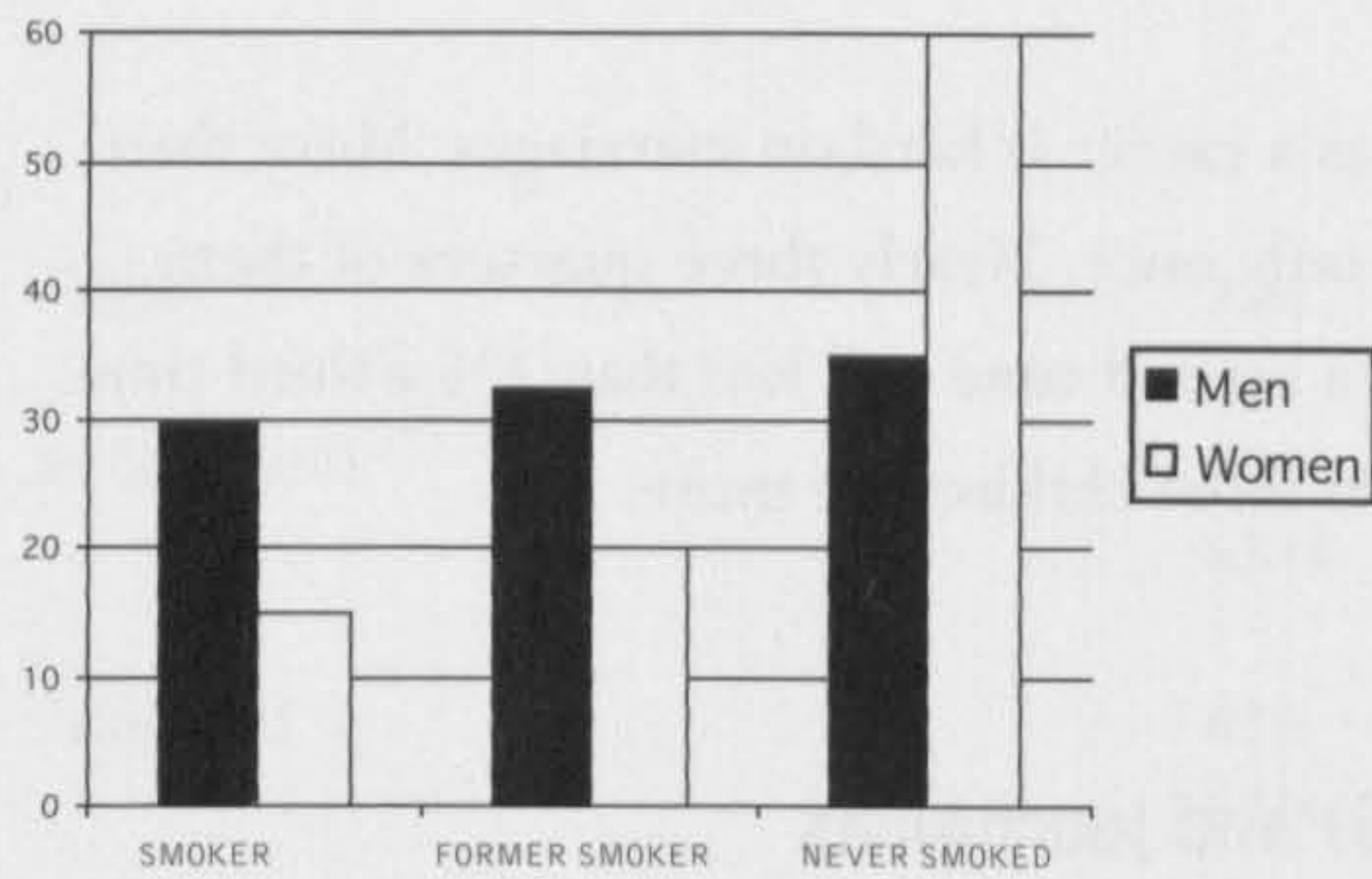
(Central Statistical Office 1993)

Religion. Just under half (46%) of journalists were brought up in the Church of England, which reflects the general population statistic of 48%. A greater proportion of journalists than the population were brought up as Roman Catholics-16 per cent of journalists compared to 7.6% for the general population. Ten per cent of journalists were brought up in other Christian denominations. Only 1% of the sample were Jewish. Other non-Christian religions (including Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism and Sikhism) accounted for only 1% of the sample between them. The national population figure is 7%. Seventeen per cent said they had been brought up in no religion, while 8% indicated 'other'.

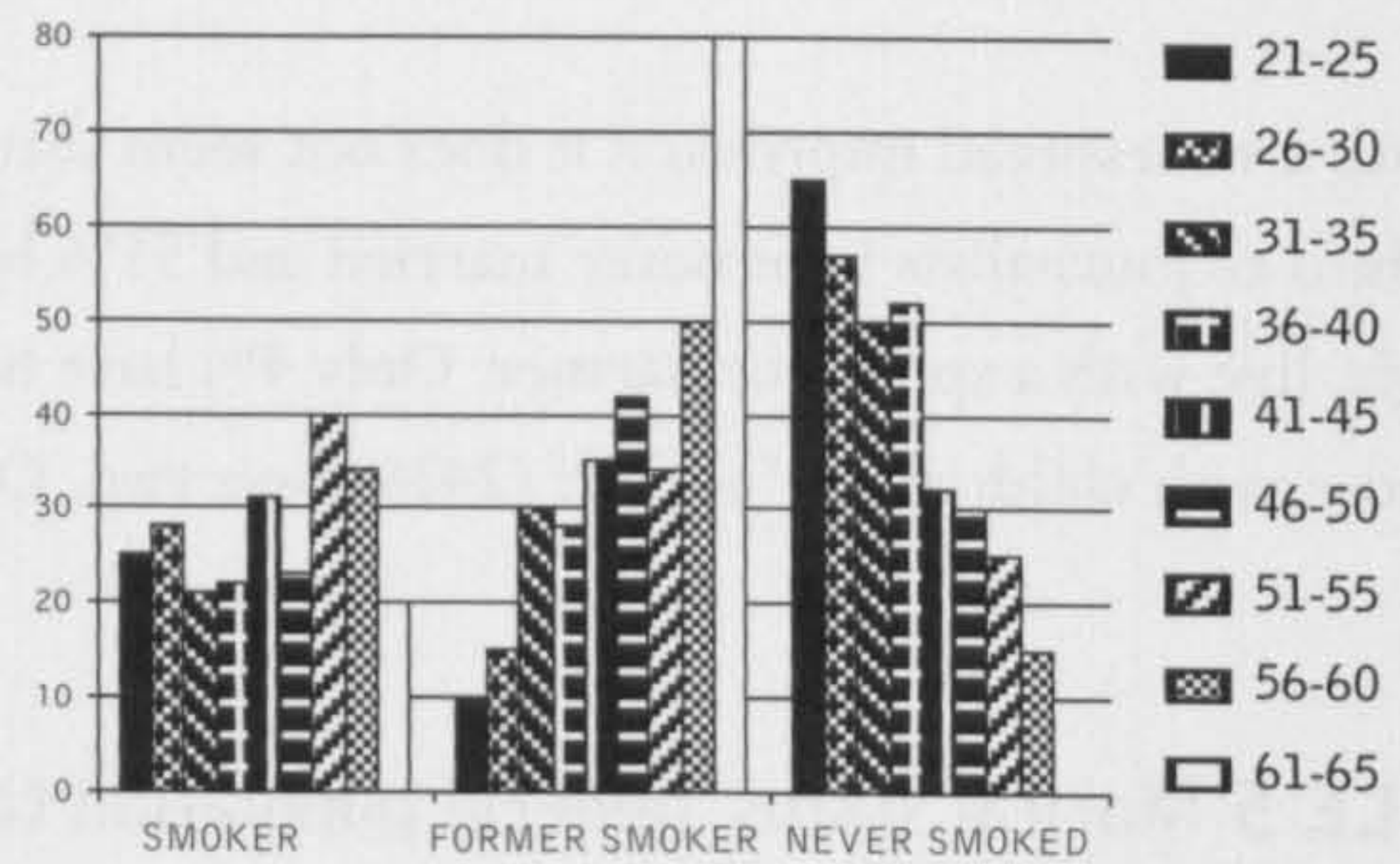
In terms of current religious practice, most journalists are not now religious in any sense. Even with a broad definition of religious practice (including such expressions as attendance at religious services or praying), 72% of journalists said they did not now practise a religion.

Smoking. Men journalists are much more likely to be smokers; than are women. Six out of 10 women (compared with four out of 10 men) have never smoked. There is no great difference between types of media organisation in terms of proportions of journalists who smoke, although broadcast journalists (both BBC and independent) appear to have cleaner lungs: most of them have never smoked. Most journalists over 40 have been smokers; an increasing number of older journalists are reformed smokers.

Graph 5 Smoking by sex



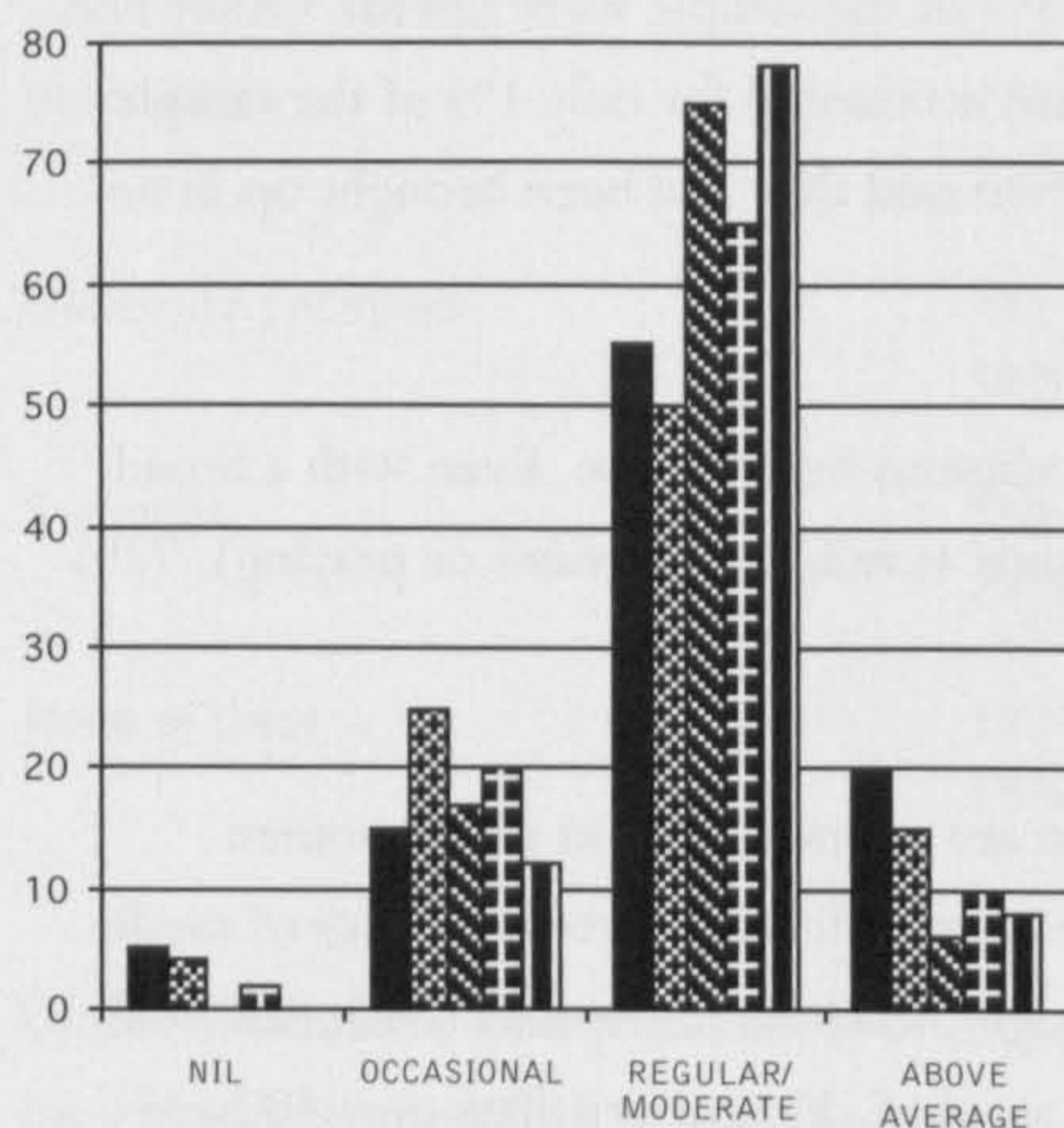
Graph 6 Smoking by age



Drinking. Very few journalists of either sex abstain from drinking alcohol, but those who drink more than average are more likely to be male. An equal proportion of men and women journalists-six out of 10-are regular but moderate drinkers. Those most inclined towards drink are in their late 40s, their late 30s or are aged 55 or over. Journalists in their 20s are relatively abstemious.

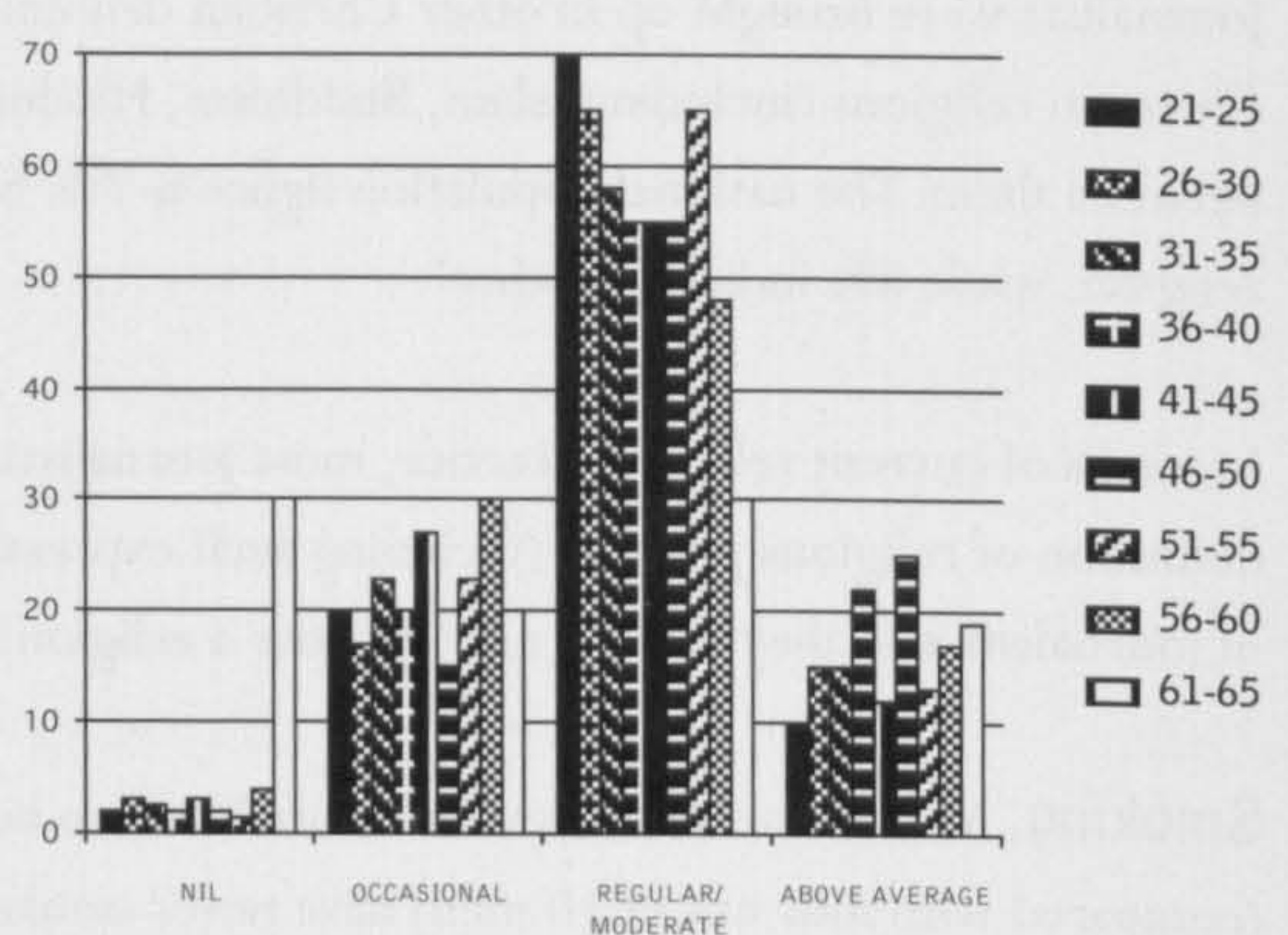
Above average drinking is more common in a newspaper environment than in broadcast media -especially among chief sub-editors, 'back-bench' staff and section editors. National newspapers employ the highest proportion of heavy drinkers, followed by provincial newspapers. However, newspaper feature writers are the most abstemious of journalists.

Graph 7 Drinking by organisation type

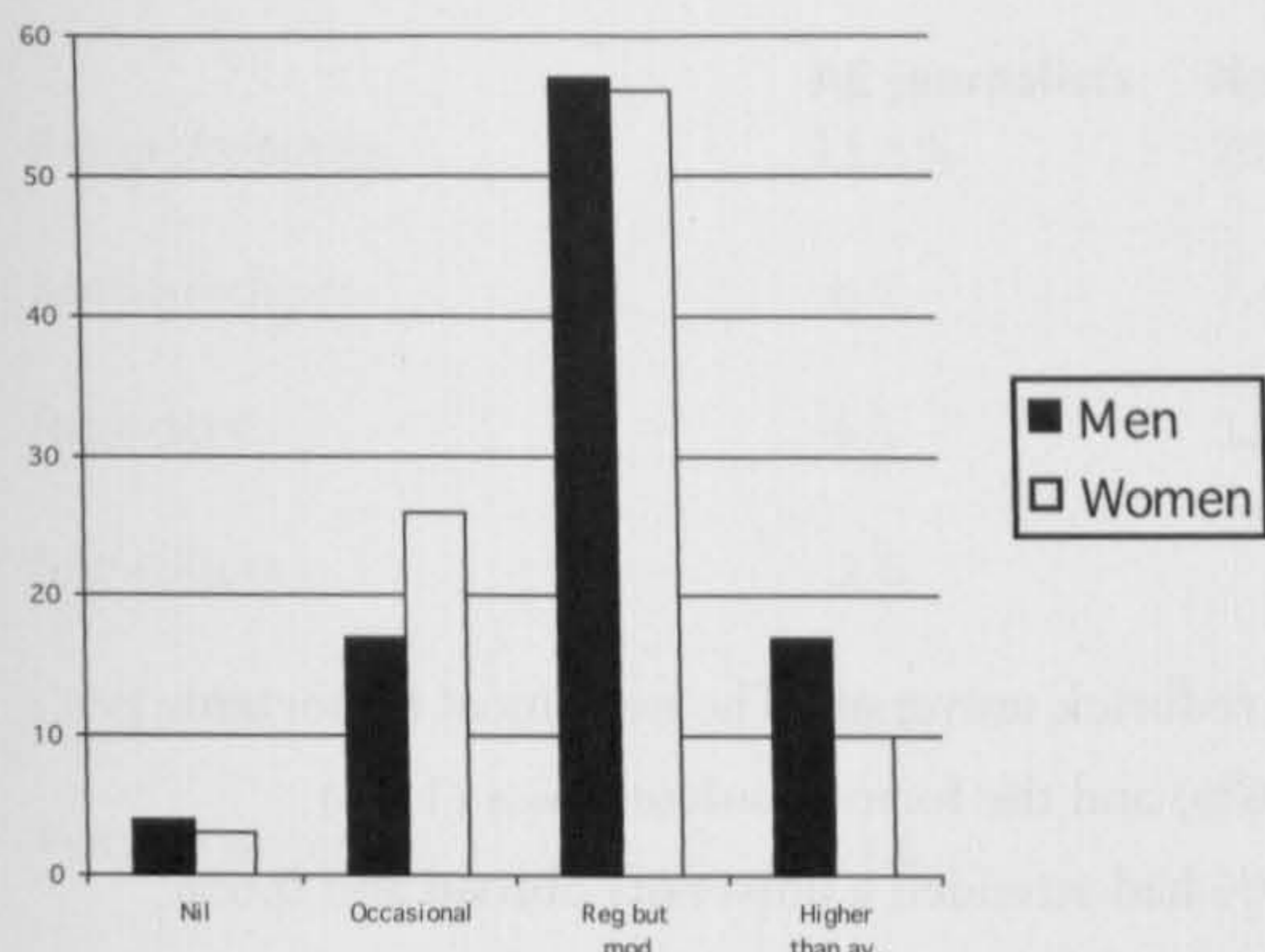


- National newspaper
- ▣ Regional newspaper
- ▤ Independent TV/radio
- ▥ Wire service/agency
- ▧ BBC

Graph 8 Drinking by age



Graph 9 Drinking by sex



Frequency of drinking alcohol

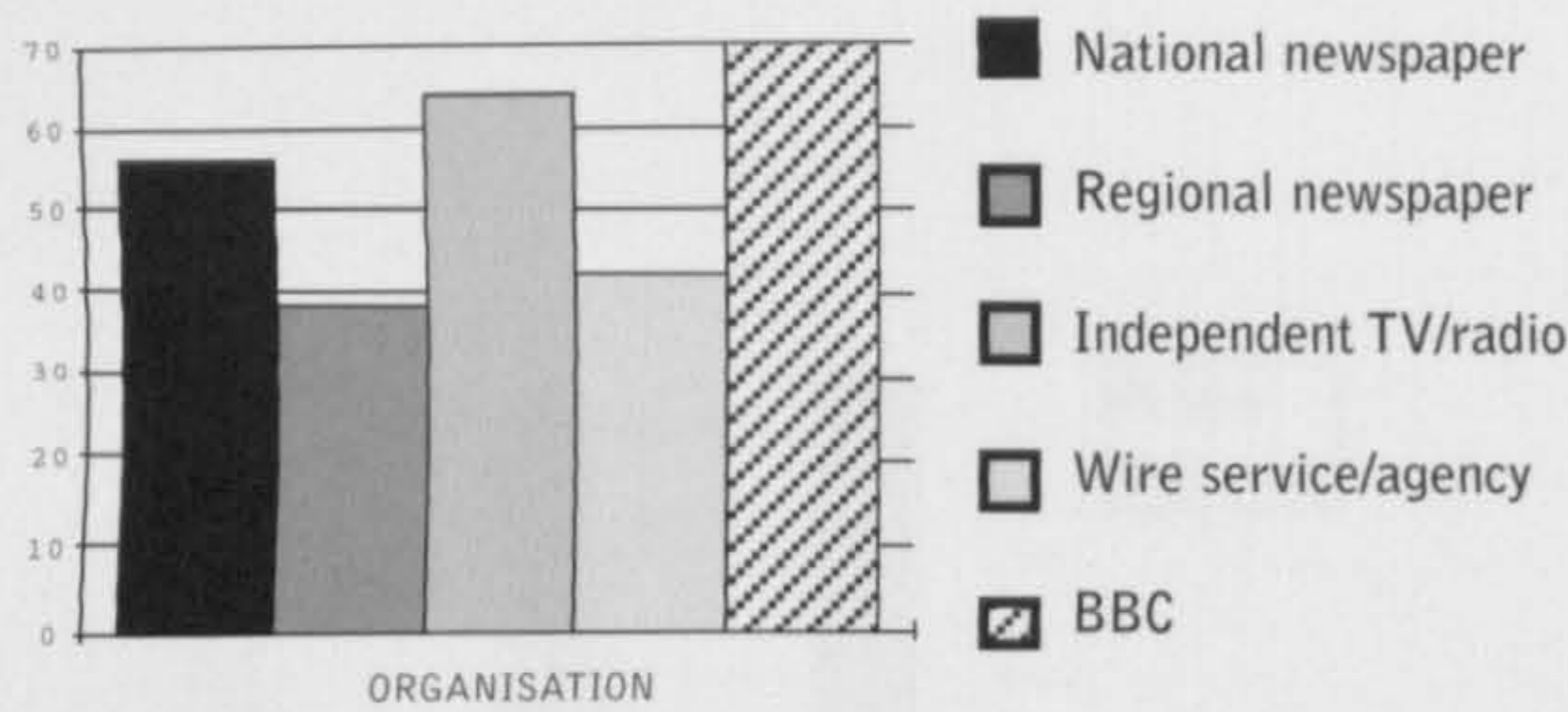
Politics. A clear majority (57%) of journalists intend to vote Labour in the next election and only 6% Conservative. Given the refusals to answer (6%) and the 'don't knows' (13%) the proportion could easily increase, although journalists' attitudes to a wide range of issues seemed robustly pragmatic, showing some reserve about outright socialism (67%). Most were in favour of free enterprise (88%) and competition (95%) business profit (83%) and free trade (90%) but also of a minimum wage (78%) trade unions (90%) and public housing (97%).

Education. Formal education clearly distinguishes British from American journalists. While 82% of U.S. journalists have a degree, the British figure is 48.6%. Even so, there has been a considerable increase in tertiary education among British journalists. Tunstall (1971) found that only 30% of specialist reporters were graduates, while 20 years ago only 17% of print editors had a degree. In 1985 35% of national newspaper editors had a degree; by 1995 the proportion had risen to 55% (*Royal Commission 1977*) (*The Guardian 1995*).

In 1995 more than two-thirds (69%) of British journalists have attended university or college, even though fewer than that graduated. Only 4% of journalists had no standard secondary education qualification. In 1955-56 this proportion was 25% (NCTJ). The greater proportion of today's journalists received their secondary education in grammar schools (42%) and comprehensives (28%). Only 17% went to public schools. A Levels in varying number were held by 83%; O Levels by 93 %.

A fundamental paradox becomes apparent in journalists' attitude to higher education. Although so many of them went to university or college only 22% are convinced that a degree is desirable for future recruits to journalism. Of those, more than half favoured a degree in a subject other than journalism. However, overall, 32% are in favour of either a degree or a diploma in journalism.

Graph 10 Graduate journalists by media type



Of graduates, by far the largest proportion (47%) attended a redbrick university. The next most important institutions were colleges of higher or further education (13.6%) and the former polytechnics (11%). Some 6.2% were graduates of Scottish universities, while 5.9% had attended a university abroad and 0.6% the Open University. Oxford and Cambridge accounted for 15% of graduates.

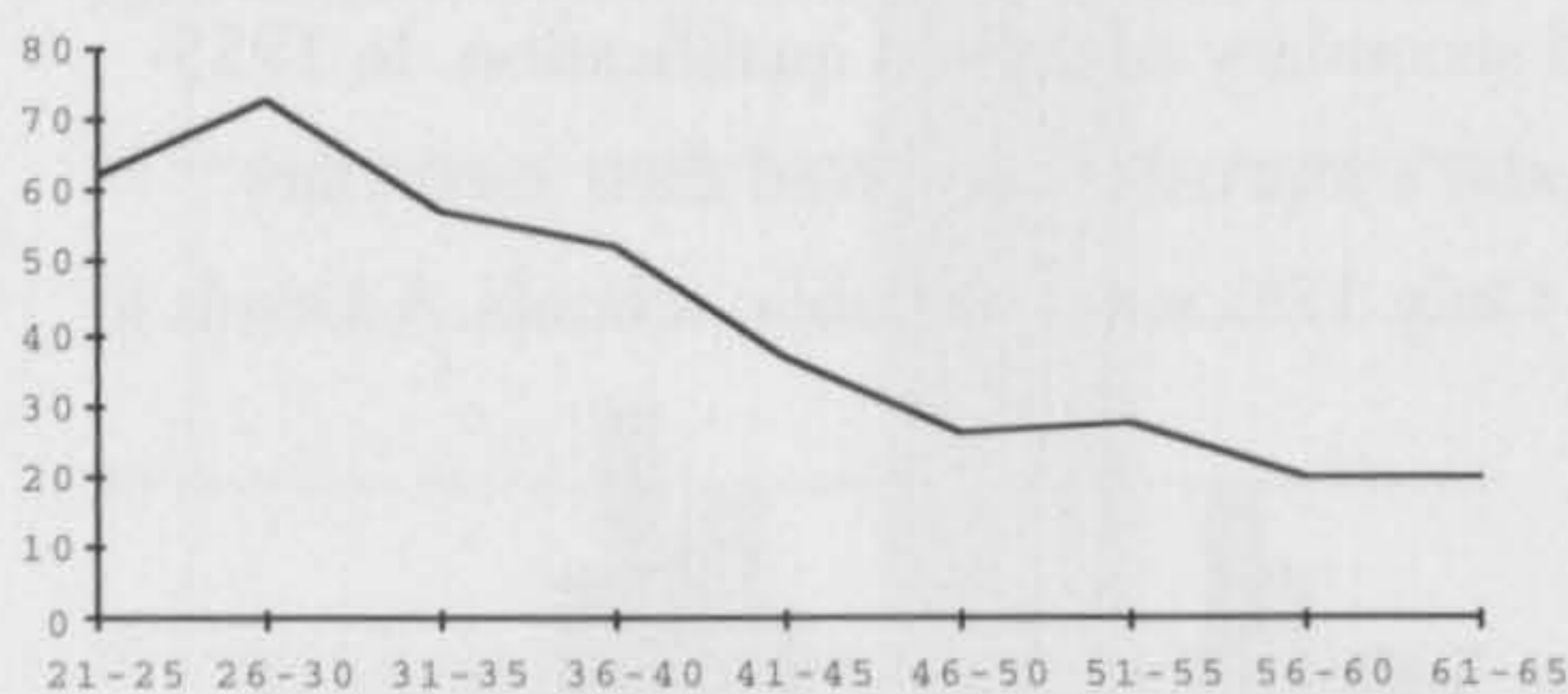
Degree holders were split by gender 45%-55%, women predominating.

Almost half the graduate journalists had taken an Arts degree (47.9%), while 11.3% had studied Economics. Other specialities included Science (5.1%) Business\Commerce (2.8%), Engineering (2.3%), Law (1.7%) and Fine Arts (1.7%).

Of all graduates, 13% had taken a postgraduate diploma in journalism and 4% a postgraduate diploma in radio journalism. Only 2% of the graduates had a bachelors level degree in journalism. Of the graduates, 1.7% had a bachelors degree in media studies and 1.4% had a postgraduate diploma in this area.

A total of 8% of graduates had a masters degree and 1% a doctoral degree.

Graph 11 Graduate journalists within each age category



In view of the recurring debate over the advantages stemming from an 'elite' education such as that supposedly provided by the universities of Oxford and Cambridge, it is instructive to compare the cross-tabulations of 'Oxbridge' and job descriptions. The widely held conviction among journalists that broadcasting is heavily populated by both 'Oxbridge' graduates does not seem justified: 9.8% compared to the general 15%. But a higher proportion than in print appear further up the executive ladder. They represent: 30% of editors/deputy editors.

Table 6 Percentage of journalists who attended Oxford or Cambridge

	All journalists	National dailies	TV & radio (BBC & ITV)
Editors/deputies	11.5%	20.8	30
Section editors	6.1	7.4	
Reporters	6.1	12	10
Sub-editors	3.8		
Chief subs	10.5		
Feature writers	13.6		
News producers	21.1		16.7
Senior editors/news directors	4.8		

The relevance of student journalism in guiding graduates towards a career seems questionable. Of those who had attended university or college only 51% had practised it. Only 12% of all journalists believed it necessary to be able to conduct an interview or read a story written in a foreign language and 51% would not be able to. The principal languages in which proficiency was claimed were:

French	41%
German	8%
Spanish	6%

Training. Two thirds of journalists had received some form of in-house or National Council of Training for Journalism training but surprisingly few (40%) held an NCTJ certificate.³ There seemed little interest in the parallel National Vocational Qualification, with only 3% holding or studying for one. All but 31% believed they had received a sufficient level of 'off-the-job' training.

Shorthand remains a valued prerequisite. More than half (56%) believed that without it a journalist could not be considered fully trained and much the same proportion (49%) thought word processing skills essential. But almost unanimously (94%) respondents singled out one quality indispensable in a journalist: curiosity.

Career. The largest proportion (43%) had decided by the age of 19 that they wanted to be journalists and most (70%) achieved their ambition without having to work at something else first. Seven per cent had switched careers from a profession, 12% from a lower status white-collar occupation and 6% from manual work or a trade. Only 2% came from public relations or advertising and 1% from the armed forces.

Despite widespread de-recognition of the NUJ and by employers and much staff 'rationalisation', 82 % of journalists appeared to be securely employed on an open-ended basis. Only 5% had contracts of 12 months or less and another 7% of one or two years. However, 5% of journalists in offices described themselves as freelance.

The average age of beginning paid work as a journalist was 21.4. 'Bulges' at 18 and 21-23 appear to reflect the non-graduate and graduate entry streams. Only 14% started work at 16-17 and 22% at 24 or later. Being good

at writing (29%), seeing journalism as an exciting career (23%), and having an interest in news (14%) provided the motivation for 66% to choose their careers. Ten per cent claimed to have become journalists more or less by accident. Five per cent cited family influence-the same proportion with a parent in the media.

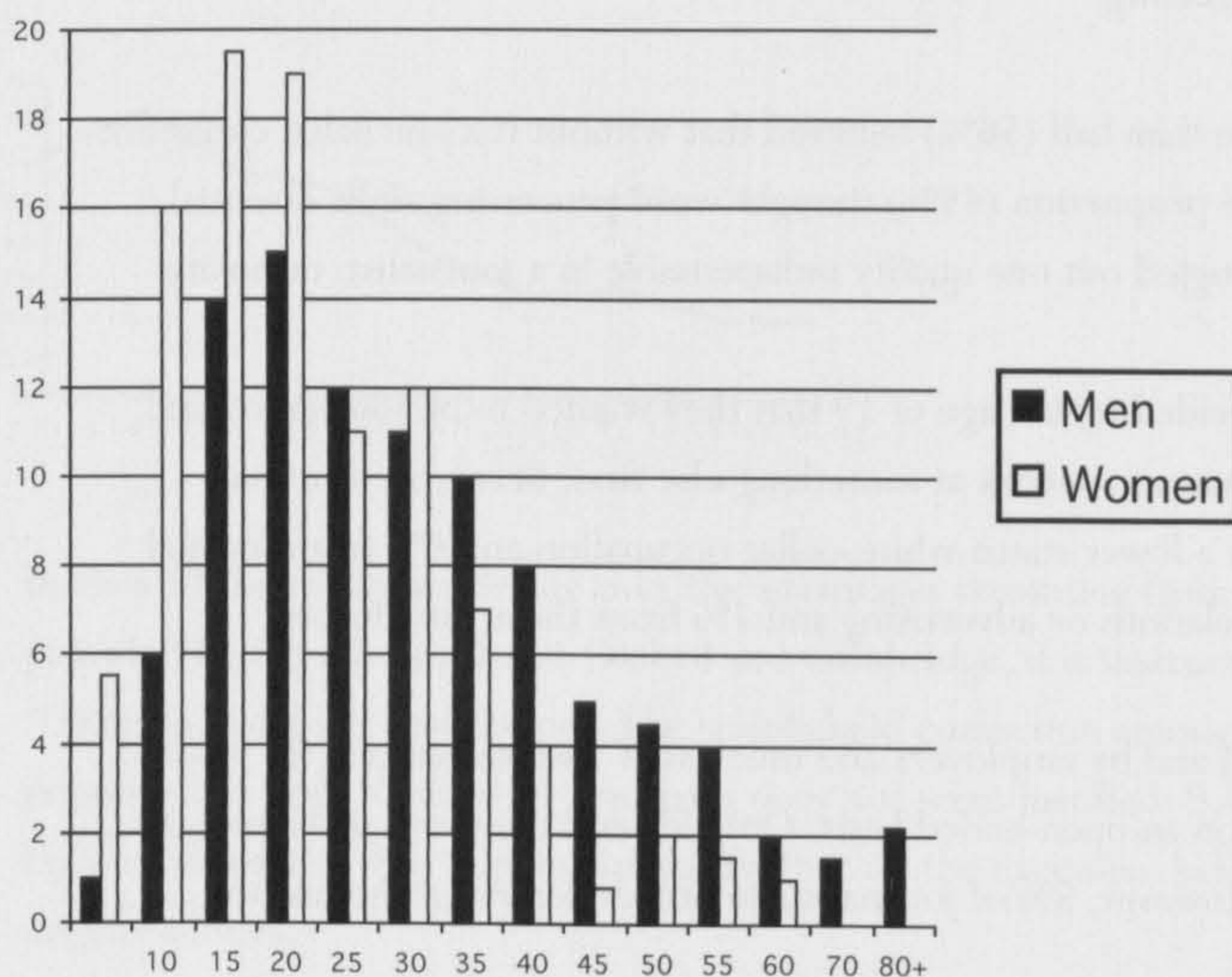
The study emphasised the continuing importance of the provincial press as a recruiting ground: 44% began their careers with a regional weekly newspaper and 21% with a regional daily. Only 6% began on a national daily. The BBC was the first employer for only 6% of journalists (one-third in television), while independent broadcasting gave a start to only 4%. Six per cent began on magazines. Only 3% got their first jobs in the trade press.

By the time they reached the median age of 38, journalists had changed jobs, on average, 4.2 times. But 50% changed no more than three times. Only 6% had had ten or more jobs. Once their careers are established, journalists do not readily switch media. Only 3% aimed to be working in another medium five years hence. Forty-two per cent expected to be with the same organisation, another 14% in a larger organisation within the same medium and 1% in a smaller one. One per cent planned to be writing books. Fewer than 5% wanted to go into public relations.

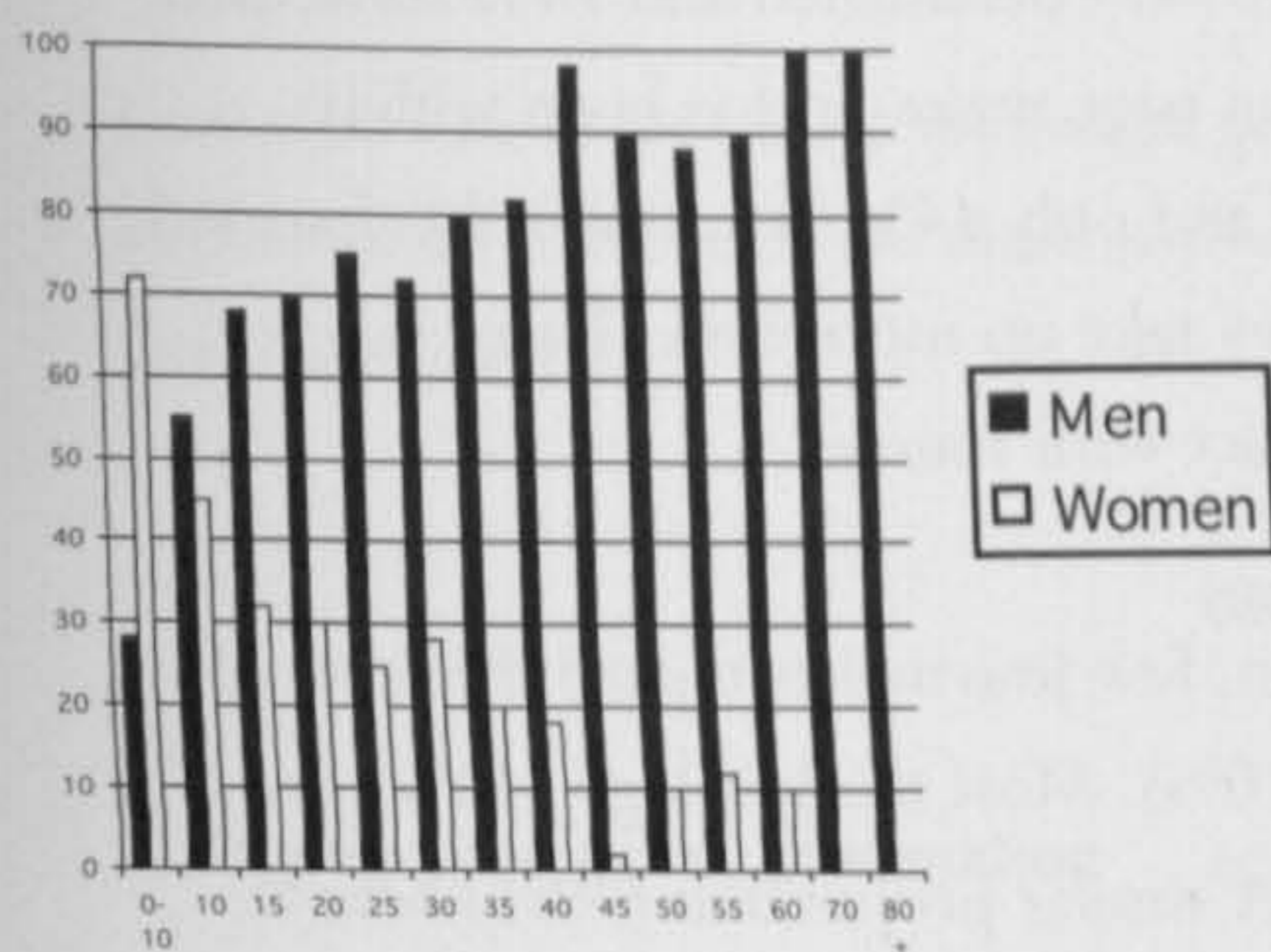
Nearly half of all journalists (46%) pursued a speciality with sport (13%), business and finance (6%) predominating. More (4%) were concerned with arts and culture than with politics (3%). One third freelanced in addition to holding a fulltime job, most of them for print outlets.

Income. Journalists employed by national papers have the highest incomes, with a median salary level from all sources of £37,500. Those with the BBC, wire services and agencies have a median income of £32,500. The median income for journalists with independent radio and television is £27,500, for regional newspaper journalists £17,500. The wide difference between earnings of men and women journalists is partly explained by the fact that women journalists are younger. For men, the median income is £32,500, for women £22,500.

Graph 12 Salary by sex (£ ,000s)



Graph 13 Men and women in each salary bracket



In the newsroom. Journalists can be bought-although not by anyone. Only 9% regard the editorial policies of the organisation hiring them as unimportant. For the majority, editorial attitudes were very (56%) or fairly (35%) important. Money, though, was the largest single factor in being tempted away from the present job; only 2% regarded it as not too important. Fringe benefits were very or fairly important to 59%. And journalists can sometimes be sold out. A high proportion had personal experience (44%) of 'improper managerial interference' with stories or personal knowledge (45%) of it occurring.

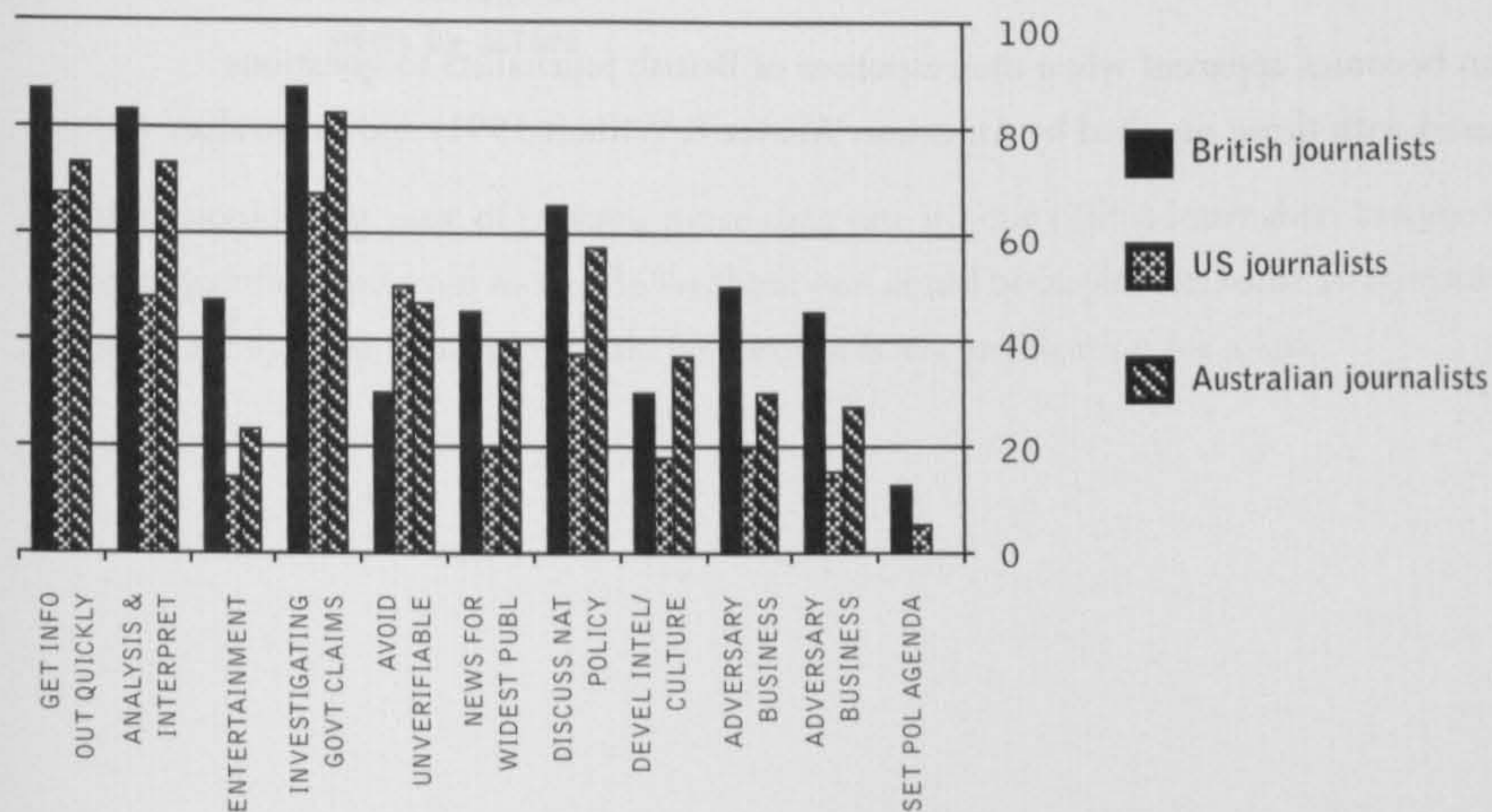
This may explain why journalists see themselves as a cynical lot. Only 1% believed the level of cynicism among their colleagues was low, rather than high or very high (84%). Estimates of their personal level of cynicism were less harsh, only 61% placing themselves in the high categories.

The question of what journalists believe their most important functions to be is of obvious importance and nearly all (98%) felt an urgency about delivering information to the public as quickly as possible. Most also put a high value on scrutinising government claims and statements (88%) and providing analysis and interpretation of complex problems (83%). Most thought it important to discuss national policy as it was being developed but fewer saw it as a duty of the media to set the political agenda. More (56%) felt strongly in favour of giving ordinary people a chance to express their views on public affairs.

Most journalists accept that the provision of entertainment and relaxation is a very (47%) or fairly (44%) important part of their function. Fewer think it very important for the media to adopt the role of public adversary and be constantly sceptical of officials (51%) or businesses (45%).

Graph 14 News media roles international comparisons

% who say "very important"



Perceived levels of stress are high (51%) or very high (24%) and rising (87%). Just the same, by far the greatest number (82%) of journalists seemed happy in their work. Only 4% were very dissatisfied and 14% somewhat so. The once controversial 'new' technology of direct input and on-screen page make-up has been widely accepted, with 72% convinced it has improved the quality of their work and only 14% believing it has harmed it. Most (68%) think electronic systems saved time although 25% say they take up more time. There is a widespread conviction (75%) that reporters spent too little time in contact with sources.

Despite the many restrictions on newsgathering and publication in Britain, few journalists regard the level of media freedom here as low (7%), very low (1%) - nor indeed very high (10%). Most think it high (42%) or medium (39%). But nearly half (49%) fear media freedom is decreasing. A similar proportion (49%) believe that standards of journalism have deteriorated within their career span; only 18% that they have improved. Nevertheless, a clear majority is optimistic (57%) rather than pessimistic (35%) about the future of journalism.

More than three-quarters of journalists (77%) want the government to prevent greater concentration of ownership in print media. Even more (80%) feel the same about radio and television (including satellite and cable). But only 51% oppose greater cross-ownership between newspapers and electronic media.

In general, the British media are rated as serving their consumers well. Seventy-five per cent of journalists think that the job it does of informing the public was good or very good. This jumps to 89% when they judge the performance of their own paper or outlet. Only 5% think the overall media record poor' or very poor and only 4% feel the same about their own.

Few think highly of the tabloid press. Most admire the Daily Telegraph (26%) and the Guardian (20%). Only 1% believe that the Daily Mirror, once regarded as a paragon of populist communication, serves its readers well. Some (14%) believe the Daily Mail and (10%) the Sun do so.

Which national television new provides the best service?

Most responses split between the BBC's Nine O'Clock News (30%), News at Ten (20%) and Channel Four News (19%). Breakfast-time programmes barely scored. When listening to radio, a high proportion (38%) apparently prefer local or regional stations. Of the national services, Radio 4 is favourite (53%) with Radio 5 second (23%).

Ethics. Journalists' opinions on the honesty and ethical standards of themselves and their colleagues seldom (7%) reached very high, centring on high and medium. But only 2% think them very low.

A high level of pragmatism becomes apparent when the responses of British journalists to questions about methods are compared with those supplied by American Weaver & Wilhoit 1991) and Australian (Henningham 1996).

TABLE 7 Ethical situations. % of journalists who say 'may be justified' to the question:

Journalists have to use various methods to get information. If it was an important story, which of the methods that I read out do you think may be justified on occasion, and which would you not approve under any circumstances?.

	UK	USA	AUST
Paying sources for information	65	20	31
Using confidential business or government documents without authorisation	86	81	79
Claiming to be someone other than a journalist in order to obtain information	47	22	13
Agreeing to protect confidentiality and not doing so	9	5	4
Badgering unwilling informants in order to get a story	59	49	55
Using personal documents such as letters and photographs without permission	49	47	39
Becoming employed in a firm or organisation in order to gain inside information	80	63	46
Using hidden microphones or cameras	73	63	
Disclosing names of rape victims	11	43	
Using recreations or dramatisations of news by actors	78	28	

On the smouldering issue of privacy, more than one in four (26%) journalists believe that a law to protect it could be justified and even more (36%) think one could be applied in some circumstances. Only just over one in three (37%) insist that there could be absolutely no justification for a law.

Preliminary conclusions

It will be evident that the limited possibility of comparison means that some of the conclusions suggested by this ground-breaking study must remain tentative until measured against data to be gathered in future surveys. Nevertheless, the response frequencies of the present study and their earliest cross-tabulations provide much invaluable information, particularly about the extent to which journalism has become a thoroughly middle class occupation. Classified by the standards used by advertisers to classify readers and listeners, most journalists would be in the upper brackets of ABC1.⁴

British journalism is also an exclusive occupation. The 2% of black and Asian people in it appears disproportionately low, whether compared to the general population, in which those categories represent 5.26%, or the relevant age bands of that population.⁵

Despite there being no formal barriers to entry into journalism or career progress, the near-preponderance of graduates suggests that a higher education qualification has become a de facto prerequisite. Present-day journalists (and employers) may say that they do not regard any educational or vocational credentials as essential but the evidence suggests that within the span of a single working generation journalism has come to offer fewer opportunities to anyone with a limited or unconventional education. Its practitioners seem to be drawn from narrowing socio-economic strata and, notwithstanding the increasing enrolment of women, to be overwhelmingly white, male, and-although largely non-practising-Christian.

The fast-rising educational-as opposed to training-standards displayed by British journalists has to be considered in relation to the increase in the national university population from 50,000 in 1938 to 750,000 by 1992 (CIHI, 1995:2) but it must be seen as the most significant element in the profile of the present-day British news journalist.⁶

Since specific degrees and postgraduate diplomas in journalism have been so recently introduced in Britain it is understandable that only 10% of the mature mainstream-graduates working in news would hold one or the other. But given the emphasis since 1965 by both employers and the NUJ on the (essentially vocational) standards for trainees established by the National Council for the Training of Journalists, a body supported by part of the newspaper industry, the discovery that only 40% of news journalists held NCTJ certificates may dismay advocates of this credential.

A number of the findings of the survey invite further investigation. The data suggest several hypotheses about developments in the way in which British journalists are now recruited and trained that deserve examination:

Because the recruitment base has been shifted up the socio-economic ladder, a working class background will become less usual among journalists and a broadly middle-class one the norm. As on-the-job training become less available, formation will increasingly be sited outside the arena of professional practice journalists of the future are less likely to be socialised within their occupation and to retain their middle-class values, attitudes and expectations.

Since the majority of future journalists are likely to compare themselves socially to their contemporaries engaged in occupations that have traditionally enjoyed higher status than journalism, they will strive to raise the status of their own occupation. The question of status may combine considerations of class, economic

⁴Two thirds of trainee respondents in 1994 Guild of Editors Survey described themselves as middle class.

Only 24% of those who took pre-entry training had been able to fund it with a grant. Complained an editor: 'Where are the council estate kids who know their patch because they've been brought up there.'

⁵1991 census

⁶NCTJ entrants (reporters only) 1964: Graduates 5%, A Levels 35%; 1974: Graduates 22%, A Levels 66%.

reward and power with the wish to establish recognised technical and ethical standards. It could produce pressure for attitudinal change toward the practice of journalism and in its organisation.

The upturn in education levels that which took place in America in the 1970s undoubtedly did much to make journalists more aware of their power and their responsibilities. But there is a view that the homogenising effect of the ubiquitous undergraduate journalism schools created a culture of journalism that not only produced publications that were bland and earnest to the point of boredom but was 'rooted in a deep and abiding cynicism, a reflexive suspicion of face-value explanations, an inclination to ascribe ignoble motives to people in public life' (Starobin 1995). The survey responses do not indicate that either of these observations would be true in Britain, even though a traditional journalistic assertiveness appears undiminished.

This is evident in the responses to the ethical questions (*Table 7*). Except for the question about breaking confidences, the 'may be justified' answer is seen to be 'less ethical'.

In evaluating the responses, however, it is important to consider the wording of the main question: Journalists have to use various methods to get information. If it was an important story, which of the methods that I read out do you think may be justified on occasion, and which would you not approve under any circumstances?

Clearly, journalists will make a judgement about each situation. The key words, 'if it was an important story', would obviously help prepare a defence for work practices involving deceit which would not be suitable for more mundane stories.

However, there are some remarkable differences in the group responses of journalists in different countries. In particular, British journalists are far more inclined to support paying sources for information, with two-thirds accepting this practice in comparison with only a fifth of American journalists and a third of the Australians.

A consequence of the measurable changes in the nature of the British journalist could be a revival of the dormant notion of journalism as an autonomous occupation, able to regulate and organise its members and determine their conditions of employment. It might, lead to a convergence of interests with other communication media sectors. At the beginning of this century journalists turned away from the opportunity to become a chartered profession, preferring organisation on the trade union model and common cause with printers and other artisans. With trade union influence in decline--at the very time that an expanded array of skill is being demanded in editorial work--they may come to think of turning back.

Both Tunstall (1973:190) and Weaver and Wilhoit (1991: 218) dismiss the idea of journalism ever being accepted as a profession in the generally accepted sense. But the idea of professionalism these authorities were discussing--which once concerned so many sociologists--may now be moot; the distinction blurred. Organisational policies in both public and private sectors, together with market-place reality have eroded the autonomy that was once a key element in professional status. Most members of professions are--like most journalists--employees. Journalists are increasingly able to display another defining requirement of professional standing: education and specialised training. The body of theory that is generally regarded as indispensable to a profession may now be at least partly discerned--thanks to the media sociologists who paid so much attention to journalistic output. Yet another parameter, a comprehensive code of ethical practice, which in the professional mode would be internally enforceable, could well be welcomed by many journalists. That would leave only the crucial matter of entry to the occupation and the professional organisation that would decide upon it.

At this point, journalists appear to hesitate. The implications are too far-reaching. Only legislation could compel an employer to engage no one but a 'professional' journalist; legislation that would create, in effect, licenced practitioners.

There is, in any case, a manifest disinclination among journalists to see journalism as a 'closed' profession (as distinct from a closed shop). But do today's journalists have to accept that their occupation is incapable of unification? Do they have to acknowledge the structure defined by Tunstall in his earlier studies and recently re-presented (1995:58) of a pyramid of nonetities topped by an 'elite' of a couple of hundred editors, writers, and broadcasters--akin, in this concept, to the stars of show business or sport? Will the growing mass of journalists who have been educated and trained in all the requirements of an increasingly complex occupation be prepared to share their job description with someone deploying a single marketable skill as, say, a columnist?

Other topics are certain to suggest themselves as the survey data continues to be combed for trends. The results will be made available as soon as possible, initially in the British Journalism Review. Meanwhile, it is the authors' modest hope that the results of their efforts will be received as a worthy addition to the pioneering studies in this new field, as well as an important and timely contribution in its own right.

APPENDIX ONE

Earlier surveys

The empirical research tradition which dominates media research in the United States has resulted in hundreds of published studies of journalists. The first appeared in the 1960s, after several decades of communication research dominated by content analyses and audience surveys. Communication scholars' belated discovery of journalists as a viable focus of research has yielded books, theses, monographs and journal articles using the survey method. Given the sheer quantity of the studies, many have inevitably been of uneven quality, often involving small samples and suffering from low response rates.

Many studies have, however, developed useful insights into such issues as journalists' work-related attitudes and values. For example, McLeod and Hawley (1964) initiated a flood of articles on journalists' 'professional orientations', based on a scale of questions about journalists' levels of commitment to job opportunities. Other types of studies have concentrated on specific specialisms in journalism, such as political journalists, or on journalists in particular regions.

When Jeremy Tunstall began his research in 1965 there was no 'single social science study of any aspect of British journalism', no study of recruitment to the occupation nor, of all the partial histories of Fleet Street, none that 'could satisfy a sociologist or a social or economic historian' (1971:5).

Tunstall's own investigations, published in 1971 as *Journalists At Work*, explored the careers, goals and roles of specialist journalists, relating these to their employer's goals (such as maximising advertising revenue or audience revenue), or else pursuing non-revenue goals (such as influence and prestige). He found that such diverse factors as socio-economic background and autonomy were related to organisational goals.

These and other findings were based on a variety of research methods, including newsroom observation and open-ended interviews with several hundred journalists. In addition, 207 specialist reporters (a response rate of 70%) completed a detailed questionnaire.

The first comprehensive national study of US journalists was conducted by sociologists Johnstone, Slawski and Bowman in 1971. Their study *The News People* (1976) sampled 1313 journalists from print and broadcast media throughout the country. Questions put to journalists (which have become standard in later surveys, including this one) included geographic and socio-economic backgrounds, levels of education, employment histories, income levels, types of work undertaken, job satisfaction, professional affiliations and ratings of media performance.

Johnstone and his colleagues identified a journalism workforce which was largely male (80% compared with the general male workforce at the time of 66%), aged on average in the late 30s, of Caucasian ethnicity, of middle-class origin and well-educated (86% had degrees).

The Johnstone team analysed journalists' commitment to what they called 'participant' versus 'neutral' functions of journalism. This was related to the questions starting to be raised in the late 1960s about objectivity as a journalistic value which, it was argued, could function to obscure rather than reveal the truth. The researchers found that most journalists endorsed values associated with both the neutral and participant functions, but those with higher levels of education were more strongly participant.

There has been no comprehensive national study of British journalists on the Johnstone model. However, in 1980 some comparative research on British and German journalists was conducted jointly by the Centre for Mass Communication Research at the University of Leicester and the Institut für Publizistik at the University of Mainz. Although not based on random samples, and therefore statistically weak, large numbers of journalists from all news media were questioned: 405 in Britain, 450 in Germany.

An important innovation in the Leicester and Mainz studies was a set of questions on journalists' ethical positions. These asked journalists whether or not they would approve such practices as using leaked government documents, chequebook journalism, assuming a false identity and breaching promises of confidentiality. In general British journalists were far less concerned with ethical niceties than were their German counterparts.

In a midway position were United States journalists, who were asked the same questions in a repeat of the Johnstone study by two journalism professors from Indiana University, David Weaver and Cleveland Wilhoit. Weaver and Wilhoit inherited Johnstone's mantle as the prime authorities on the characteristics of US journalists, on the basis of major surveys funded by the Gannett Foundation (now the Freedom Forum) in 1982-3 and 1992. Results of the earlier study were first published in 1986 as *The American Journalist*. A second edition in 1991 included chapters on women in journalism, as well as on journalists' evaluation of their 'best work'.

In the 1992 study, 1156 randomly sampled journalists were interviewed, as well as an additional 254 'minority' journalists. The same core of questions from the earlier studies were used, together with new items concentrating on effects of technology in newsrooms.

Detailed results have yet to be published, but reports outlining key findings have been made available (e.g. "The American journalist in the 1990s"), and presented at international conferences (e.g. the International Communication Association conferences in Washington in 1993 and Sydney in 1994). Some of the conclusions: a decline in the size of the journalism workforce; a levelling out in the proportion of women in journalism which jumped from 20 to 34 % between 1971 and 1982, but remains at 34 %), a decline in job satisfaction.

Another major US study, concentrating on newspaper journalists, was conducted by the American Society of Newspaper Editors in 1988. This sampled 1200 journalists from US dailies. The published report, *The Changing Face of the Newsroom*, is interesting in the way in which an industry body has made use of an academic approach (for example, many of the items on media functions and ethics from the Johnstone et al and Weaver & Wilhoit books are included), while presenting the results in a non-academic, "user-friendly" way, drawing particular attention to implications for newsrooms.

The research processes initiated by Johnstone and his colleagues and developed by Weaver and Wilhoit have established a method which successfully yields a great variety of data about journalists and their values. Sampling occurs in two stages- firstly of newspapers and other organisations, and secondly of journalists chosen at random from staff lists supplied by the originally sampled media. Co-operation in supplying staff names seems to have been very high in the US. Subsequently, letters are written to journalists chosen for interview, and they are then telephoned by interviewers from a market research firm. Participation from journalists in the USA has been very high-ranging between 80% and 85%.

It is clear that most journalists have little objection to being interviewed as part of a research project, as long as they are approached professionally, given advance notice, and are fully briefed on the purpose and methods of

the research. Studies which depend upon journalists replying to written questionnaires have normally been far less successful. A low participation rate always opens surveys to charges of being unrepresentative of journalists' views in general. This was the problem faced in research undertaken for the 1977 Royal Commission on the Press. A survey of editors resulted in a response rate of 63%-low but perhaps just acceptable. For rank-and-file journalists, however, the response rate was only 43%, which as the researchers made clear, was far from adequate.

A survey of Australian television newsrooms in the early 1980s used the method of hand delivering questionnaires to journalists and collecting the several days later. This yielded a reasonably satisfactory response rate of 71% (Henningham 1988). However in conducting a national survey of Australian journalists in 1992 with financial support from the Australian Research Council the methods employed by were similar to those of the major US researchers. Journalists were interviewed by a market research firm after being sent an explanatory letter.

Other recent major studies of journalists include the research of Schoenbach and Schneider in Germany, McMane in France, Lealand in New Zealand, Chan, Lee & Lee in Hong Kong and Layton in the Pacific Island nations.

Some relevant research on British journalists remains unpublished, at least in detail, although Christian recast much of the material in his 1977 doctoral thesis on trade unionism and professionalism in published papers. Strick's 1957 investigation of British newspaper journalism 1900-1956 covered some of the same ground and in his PhD thesis 'Grub Street and Academia: the Relationship Between Journalism and Education 1880-1940', Fred Hunter (1982) provided a fascinating glimpse of the type of education that in that was thought appropriate for a career in journalism.

Most recently a study commissioned by the Guild of Editors analysed the characteristics of entrants to journalism training schemes in Britain. Another, by Beulah Ainley, examined the minute percentage of black or Asian entrants accepted in the schemes.

APPENDIX TWO

Sample plan and methodology

One of the objectives of this survey of British news journalists was to elicit data that could be compared with those produced by similar investigations in the United States and Australia. Thus, interviews were restricted to journalists in categories as closely equivalent as possible to the ones used in the other territories. Although the term British is used for convenience, the study encompassed the United Kingdom; that is England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, together with the Crown Dependencies of the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man.

Weaver and Wilhoit (1984) followed Johnstone (1971) in defining the population they studied as 'the full-time editorial manpower responsible for the information content of English-language mass communications...' and with the least possible modification, we followed them, as Henningham had done in Australia (1992). We also accepted the American narrow view of 'information content' by limiting the enquiry to employees of daily and weekly newspapers, the news services of radio and television stations and general news agencies within the territory 'who have editorial responsibility for the preparation or transmission of news stories or other information—all full-time reporters, writers, correspondents, columnists, newsmen, and editors'.

Since an equally important aim of the survey was to gather data relevant to British news journalism, the practices of which cannot be aligned precisely with those of the other territories, some variations were introduced. Confining the sample to full-time news journalists would have been inappropriate in Britain, where part-time engagements and the use of freelances has become widespread, even in the mainstream. Also, technological developments since the American and Australian surveys has brought about new functions and procedures. In consideration of these factors, picture desk staff were included in the British survey. So were graphics operators and broadcast news producers, both relatively new breeds with, nevertheless, a discernible impact on the analysis and presentation of news.

Neither the survey population nor the sample drawn from it was established without difficulty. The means by which news is gathered and distributed throughout Britain, and therefore the patterns in which journalists are employed and deployed, had to be considered:

Television. The publicly funded British Broadcasting Corporation provides television news broadcasts throughout the whole area as networked programmes on the national channels BBC-1 and BBC-2 and locally from the 18 television stations of the BBC's six Regional divisions.

Channel Three is the national outlet dedicated to the 'independent' or 'commercial' television companies which hold franchises for the 16 regions (or, in London, time slots) into which the area is divided. This ITV network carries news programmes fed to the regional broadcasters from London by the agency Independent Television News. In addition, all the ITV companies have news operations of varying magnitude.

Channel Four is a separate commercial national network on which news is a blend of ITN feeds and footage from other sources. In Wales, Channel Four is known as SC4 and carries the Welsh language service Sianel Pedwar Cymn.

Radio. BBC radio news is networked on five national stations—Radio One to Radio Five—supplemented by 56 regional and local stations. All but the smallest of these have some input into the overall newsflow.

The Independent National Radio network consists of the national stations INR-1, INR-2 and INR-3 (occupied at present by Classic FM, Virgin 1215 and Talk Radio UK), augmented by about 160 regional and local stations, many of which are linked by group ownership. Larger commercial stations have some news staff and generate their own programmes but all depend heavily on material supplied from London by Independent Radio News, an ITN subsidiary, and links to centralised newsrooms.

Satellite and Cable. Sky Television is the only satellite service originating and disseminating news within the area. Several cable companies, notably Channel One in London, have incipient news operations.

Newspapers. If the Edinburgh-based Scotsman is included, and Sunday Sport and the Communist Party Morning Star excluded, 13 daily newspapers and nine Sunday newspapers circulate throughout the United Kingdom. There is also the mid-weekly European. These national publications may be classified, according to the dominant socio-economic status of their targeted readership, into broadsheets, blue-top mid-market tabloids and red-top tabloids.

Regional and local newspapers within the area are less easy to classify or even to count, being more prone than the national titles to closure, merger, retitling and mutation into localised editions. During the fieldwork period 91 apparently separate daily titles were logged throughout the various regions and ten Sunday titles (one of which has since closed). There were also 1138 weekly titles, 666 of them freesheets.

At the local level, one small company or an alliance of mutually managed companies will frequently produce a mixture of free and paid-for titles. Production and editorial facilities are pooled with the result that journalists are often required to service several titles of each category. Centralisation may intensify at the next level of ownership, where the local titles or groups usually become linked into publishing chains throughout which editorial material is shared or exchanged. Six of these large chains own or control some 80% of local and regional titles in the United Kingdom and four of those also own -or are owned by-groups that publish national titles.

Agencies. 'Newsagency' is used in Britain both as the equivalent of the American 'wire service' and to describe independent newsgathering operations that are usually small and often regionally based. Since the latter form an important part of the British newsgathering apparatus the term was reserved for them and 'wire service' applied to the national 'wholesalers' of news which are dealt with below. Like the populous corps of freelance journalists, these newsagencies represent a distinctive media sector in Britain. Agencies range in size and function from well-manned offices specialising in fields such as finance or sport to one-person businesses or partnerships offering general coverage of districts. Although the larger ones may have salaried staff, many maintain a freelance ethos.

Wire services. Dominant among these for international news is Reuter and for domestic news the Press Association. Neither, though, enjoys a monopoly. Reuter, which supplies television footage as well as text, must compete with Associated Press, United Press International and other foreign-owned services. PA is rivalled by a relatively new domestic venture, UK News.

Restricting the field of research to the guidelines adopted from the American survey excluded foreign language newspapers and such relatively specialised daily publications as Sporting Life, Lloyd's List, the latter concerned with the insurance market. Specialisation also ruled out the Economist, the only British title with pretensions to the category-so important in America -of newsmagazines.

Table 8 Population of news journalists**Proportionately assembled for England, Scotland, Wales, NI by region or, in the case of national newspapers, by class of readership**

STRATA	ESTIMATE	%	SAMPLE	%
National Daily Newspapers (+Scotsman)	2462	16.22	167	23.00
National Weekly Newspapers (+European, -S.Sport)	820	5.40	55	7.57
Regional Daily Newspapers	6105	40.23	247	34.02
Regional Weekly Newspapers	2035	13.41	82	11.29
Independent TV & Radio (Nat/Reg.)	1015	6.68	74	10.19
Reuter/PA/other wireservices	1000	6.58	25	3.44
BBC-TV & BBC radio (Nat/Reg)	1038	6.84	48	6.61
Newsagencies	600	3.95	28	3.85
TOTALS	15,175	99.31	726	99.97

The Sample

Numbers. The method devised to deal with a population of news journalists so widely scattered geographically and distributed through so many media sectors was a combination of systematic random sampling and stratification. The first step was to estimate the number of journalists employed in each media segment and total them to establish the size of the population (Table 8). The second was to select the number in each category to be interviewed in order accurately to reflect the percentage of the whole population that segment represented. The total qualifying as news journalists eventually arrived at was 15,175.

The task of establishing these numbers was impeded by the attitude of many managements -- and editors -- who, despite the most extensive assurances of confidentiality, declined to provide details of their staff. Whereas in the most recent American survey 90% of employers approached readily offered lists of the journalists on their payrolls, fewer than 50% of British employers were willing to do so. Conspicuous among those refusing were the largest employers of journalists in Britain, the BBC, Reuter, the Press Association and two of the largest provincial newspaper groups, Westminster Press and Reed International

National organisations, however, presented little problem. Where managements were unhelpful, staff lists were readily obtained through contacts among journalists. National newspapers were grouped into their socio-economic categories and a random sample of journalists drawn in proportion to the number of staff. Similarly with the BBC and ITN. The BBC employs nearly 3000 people in its various departments with the job description of journalist but most work in 'feature' or 'magazine' style programmes. Our random sample was drawn only from those belonging to the News and Current Affairs division in London, the Regions or local stations.

Far greater difficulties were encountered with regional newspapers and, to a certain extent, with the regional broadcasters. Even the Newspaper Society, which represents most regional newspapers at proprietorial level, has never been able to persuade all its members to reveal the number of journalists they employ. But the extrapolated responses from 214 companies to a 1994 enquiry by the Society suggested that 6000 were employed in the daily and 2000 in the weekly sectors in England (broken down into regions), Wales and Northern Ireland. When our subsequent research established that photographers constituted, on average, 12 per cent of editorial staff on regional papers, that proportion was deducted.

The equivalent Scottish organisations -- one for dailies, another for weeklies -- could provide no staffing figures at all. Nor could the Independent Television Commission nor the Radio Authority which are responsible for the regulation of those media. In the case of Scotland and the ITV and independent radio franchises, numbers, and subsequently proportions of the population, were calculated by applying averages based on those regional staffing figures that could be established accurately.

In an effort to confirm the conclusions reached about the difficult regional newspaper sector a comparison was made between the Newspaper Society estimate of its members staff numbers and NUJ membership figures (applying the 50% estimate referred to in Footnote 2 and the 12% photographer factor). The resulting 7040:6713 represented a 95.35 per cent match. Using the same formula to compare the overall newspaper figures reached in the survey gave 11,422: 11,454, or a 99.7 % match.

Names. Identifying individual journalists required even more time and effort. Using the 1994 and 1995 Media Guide, Willings Press Guide, Benn's Media Directory and the Hollis Press and PR Annual a list was compiled of

all the relevant broadcasters and publishers, a total of nearly 400. The list of newsagencies approached was compiled from the reference sources above and from the membership list of the National Association of Press Agencies. A letter was sent to every operation explaining the objectives and methods of the survey and asking for staff lists. When, despite frequently protracted negotiations, the outcome was negative, journalists within the organisations concerned were prevailed upon to supply the details necessary for a random sample to be drawn. Names obtained from newspapers were sorted into the geographical and daily/weekly categories which had been used by the Newspaper Society; those from broadcasters into the ITV regions.

Churn. Despite the disparities in the three populations it was decided to aim for a sample comparable in size to that used by Weaver and Wilhoit and Henningham (1250:51,000 and 1068:4200 respectively). The original British sample drawn of 1219 had to be reduced when preliminary approaches showed that 209 of the journalists were no longer employed at the organisation which had listed them. Since it could not be established how many of those had been replaced, or taken a job elsewhere, the only significance that can be attributed to this figure is of a 17% 'churn' in media employment during the months separating the beginning of the fieldwork and the interviews.

The sample of 1010 that was eventually assembled represents some 6.6 per cent of the estimated population of 15,175 news journalists. Each journalist listed in the sample was sent a letter to explain the objectives of the survey and its methods, how they had come to be selected and to ask for their co-operation in an interview to be conducted by On-Line Telephone Surveys, a subsidiary of MORI, which was expected to take 25 minutes (*Table 9*).

The proportion of the sample who refused to participate when approached was 17.22%. In Australia it had been only 9.45%. This attitude coupled with the indifference and hostility of so many managements would have been less than encouraging to researchers wishing to see journalists regard their occupation in an analytical light had it not been that the majority of journalists who responded to the demanding questionnaire did so unstintingly, many of them submitting to repeated callbacks and telephone appointments. Interviews frequently extended to 40 minutes.

Table 9 Responses

Sector	Leads	Achieved	Refused	Unavailable
National newspapers	336	222 66%	72 21.42%	41 12.2%
Regional newspapers England & Wales	295	230 77.9%	63 21.35%	2 0.67%
NI Newspapers	36	18 50.0%	1 2.77%	16 44.44%
Scottish newspapers	112	70 70.53%	13 11.6%	20 17.85%
Independent TV & Radio	93	71 76.3%	5 5.37%	17 18.27%
NI TV	5	3 60%	- 0.0%	2 40.0%
Reuter /PA/other wire service	39	25 64%	8 20.51%	6 15.38%
BBC-TV & radio, national/regional	63	48 90.5%	11 17.46%	4 6.34%
Newsagencies	29	28 96.55%	1 3.44%	- 0.0%
Channel Islands	4	2 50%	- 0.00%	2 50%
Averages		70.17%	10.39	20.44%
Totals	1010	726 71.0%	174 17.2%	110 10.89

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