

THE NEWS JOURNALISTS' REPRESENTATIONS ON NEWS CONTENT: A PROFESSIONAL VISION OF INFORMATION SELECTION

MĂDĂLINA BĂLĂȘESCU*

ABSTRACT

The television news is not “innocent”. TV: has an impact at individual level (for personal needs, environment orientation, social link, catharsis, etc.) as well as at collective one (establishing a public agenda, promoting the social elites, etc.). Since decades, from a normative perspective, its very major role has been correlated with the professionalism of the news production in terms of norms, standards, procedures and the responsibility for the public information. From a critical perspective, there is a lot of place of subjectivism and interpretation during the information production process, especially in the main selection points: the sources choice, the subjects for the daily agenda and the definition of reality. Between the professionalism requirements of “most accurate information possible” for the public and the constructivism assumptions sustaining that reality is only a symbolic construction, there is a “place” for investigation of the “professional space” where the professionalism values, norms and standards meet the individual subjectivity. Related to the information selection process in newsrooms, the contradiction between objectivity and neutrality as main professional values, and constructivism as a subjectivity perspective is obvious. The basic question of the research is: the TV journalists' representations towards info selection in terms of professionalism values are dogmatic or realistic? The study gives answers about the vision of the news professionals at the level of the information selection (sources, subjects, reality) by building a professional grammar about the valoric background from professional culture perspective. Methodology: qualitative and quantitative (interview, content analysis). Academic background: journalism professionalism, mass communication sociology, constructivism.

Keywords: information, journalists, representations, professionalism, news.

* Senior Lecturer, Faculty of Journalism and Communication Studies, University of Bucharest, Romania. E-mail: madabala@gmail.com



THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Social, organizational, individual levels of mass-media analysis: as long as mass-communication field is a very complex one, the media studies are many and various. Media sociology is the most consistent research ground. Since decades especially on the American and West-European theoretical fields, the literature has analysed media at social level in its structural and functional dimensions: functions, models, effects, consumption especially highlighting the position of the media as a very important social actor (Severin and Tankard 2004). Organizational studies on mass-media have especially investigated the relation between the organizational culture and professional culture, underlying the factors that influence the media content at organizational level. Organizational studies on journalistic field are mostly American studies, focused especially on news production sociology (Schudson 2003), professional culture (Berkowitz-ed. 1997) and the organizational factors that affect the news content (Shoemaker and Reese 1996, Beam 1990). Within organizational context, journalists were also investigated under the constructivist perspective as self-universes (Accardo 1995). According to constructivist approach, the journalist cannot simply be a mediator between the facts and the meanings attribution of the public, being only a subjective filter of the information because of natural set-ups directly determined by their social and personal histories (Delforce 1996, 26). According to constructivist vision, the act of informing is only one act of individual construction. The idea that the social reality is only a theoretical/mental construction is also supported by the representations psychological approach (Popescu-Neveanu 2013, Cristea 2011, Zlate 2006). The constructivism approach is the basic ground of the studies that have focused on journalists cognitive schemes, on particular representations, on values, creeds, ideals, attitudes, etc. The significant literature is especially provided by USA academic field, noticing that most of the studies are counting as empirical data, 2 with non-generalizable results and having contextual validity (Weaver 1996).

The three mass-media analysis levels make distinctions and delimitations between the information selection process actors (journalists and media organizations) and the media content (media texts and meanings).

News selection process: the news selection process is considered as the most relevant part of the journalistic activity after the professional standards requirements. The literature upon it is relevant quantitatively and qualitatively especially on the American field research, developing various theoretical approaches. Two directions could be considered relevant in the context of the present study: the gate-keeping theory and the news as “economic goods”:

The gatekeeping studies, originated since 1950s, postulate the idea of the pronounced individual influence during the information selection process. From the first research of David Manning White until present (Berkowitz 1997, 63), the gatekeeping approach has confirmed the reconstructive intervention of the

journalists upon the event considered to become a mediatic product by filtering and rejecting information after personal criteria. More recent studies about the «gatekeepers» category claim the idea that filtering of information is a complex process. Also, multiple levels of reality selection and construction-deconstruction of meanings happen during information processing (Golding 1974, Fishman 1980, Mathien 1992, Bantz *et alii* 1997).

a) The news as organizational «goods»: put the accent on the idea that news process is, firstly, an organization process giving a more realistic perspective to understand news contents than the professional/ideological ones (Fishman 1980, Mathien 1992, Bantz 1997, Shoemaker 1997, Schudson 2003). From economical perspective, the media content production is a matter of organizational factors despite the individual ones. Many researches from last two decades describe media organization as the big frame where the professional culture happens but only to meet the management objectives. Thus, the news content is defined as «economic goods» whose production requires mostly bureaucratic factors than professional or personal ones (Schudson in Berkowitz 1997, 14).

The organizational approach put the accent on the organizational constraints, explains the professional behaviors through marketing-management perspective, including the way of defining the reality by journalists or the way of choosing topics for the news. The classical study of Molotch and Lester is relevant in this sense by identifying three major events categories selected by journalists in their daily routine: routine events, accidents and scandals (Molotch and Lester in Berkowitz 1997, 200-205). The study recalled one of the first studies that found that journalists select events from reality having in their minds the «planned/unplanned» criterion which is directly resulted from the organizational planning process. Also, the study brings in the front the idea of coding and packaging, suggesting that the news content production is a symbolic process of creating media events involving journalists, sources and organizations as well. Consequently, the study arguments also the lack of objectivity during the information process given so many reconstructive interventions on reality in many points of the process (Molotch and Lester in Berkowitz 1997, 193-207).

The sources selection is also important from organizational perspective. There is a consistent literature underlying the idea of a major effort that media organizations do in order to ensure the ongoing information flow determining the journalists to have networking strategies regarding the information sources. Other studies researching the journalists-sources relationship agree that authorities are considered by journalists as a major category of information (apud Schudson in Berkowitz 1997, 14). Along the authorities-journalists relationship there are some difficulties in communication and openness such as: limited access to information, the big quantity in public space of non-events because of PR actions or the suspicions that usually come up from authorities or journalists (Fishman 1980). Experts are seen also as a major category because they give a more in-depth

perspective and contextualization. In the imaginary of journalists, the literature notes, that the preferred sources of journalists are the cheapest ones and the most avoided category of sources is the “time consuming” ones. Researches also showed that organizational sources are preferred despite of the individual ones (Shoemaker and Reese 1996, 180–181). Another important aspect that usually comes up during the information process in organizational context is related to ownership issues. As social and economical elites, media owners could influence, directly or indirectly, the editorial policy (Schudson 1997, 12–13). By incorporating this influence in the body of the news content, the journalists contribute themselves to preserve the hegemonic status in the social order of a quite limited number of people, part of the elite. Many Western studies have contributed to this idea. Still, inside the normative routine of the relationship between journalists and their sources above synthetically mentioned, there is some place for journalists of acting unpredictable like when they are connecting on unofficial channels or they are receiving and using off the record/on deep-background information.

b) The professional perspective on the news put in front the idea of professionalism, a central concept of the journalistic paradigm. There are many studies focused on professionalism in journalism, most of them on the American research field that generated a few major directions for understanding the concept. The first direction analysed the professionalism of journalistic field under the sociological perspective of occupations, focusing on legal frame and on the activities of journalists. The literature of professions is relevant in this matter (Abbott 1988). The second major direction of academically approaching the journalism professionalism was the phenomenological field. This perspective is productive by providing an aprioric definition of a profession which applies to any occupational field. Within this perspective we can consider also those studies which indexed characteristics, attributes and functions for the occupations questioned as professions. The majority of the professionalism researches embraced the mentioned academic perspectives. Still, the newest one, the power approach, is also relevant because of the conceptualization of the profession in power terms (Beam 1990, 1–43).

As an occupational phenomenon or as an organizational one, the professionalism could be generally defined as the control of specific activity of the professional group. The professionalism degree is increasing at the same time with the professional activity control. The professional policies like norms, procedures, standards are established by the members of the professional group. Usually, in professional culture terms, there are a few categories of expectations related to who they are and how they should professionally act. The liberal model and the public service model of mass-media contain and explain those expectancies from mass-media as socio-professional group and system (Mc Quail 1987). The sets of expectancies are based on liberalism vision and values and have in the middle the “organic” relationship between journalists-political field/authorities-society. Thus,

the normative attributes of professionalism for journalist profile could be considered (Beam 1990, 10): liberal; well trained; facts oriented in producing the content; proofing impartiality, neutrality, veridicity etc. and non-ideological attitude towards the object of the news; permanently preoccupied to build, develop and maintain a sources network; servant of the public interest by practicing a constructive critic; promoter of the ideas exchange, of the social reforms; monitor for governmental actions. The professional projections on how journalists should be and should act are considered concrete indicators for the effort of the professional group for getting the control to the profession and to implement and circulate the model of a professional behaviour. The professionalism and the «right» professional model is the one who reaches as many indicators as possible. The professional culture is considered “a force who imposes itself by cultural practices and an professional ideology as the vision of the world of the professional group” (O’ Sullivan *et alii* 2001, 263). The values of professional culture that emerge from content represent the foundations of the idea of media as culture creator, which permanently participate in construction and deconstruction of the social reality.

The Research Question: production process of journalistic information is influenced by many variables, which interfere in unknown ways. Therefore, it can be considered as a dynamic process, subtle, difficult to be quantified (Shoemaker and Reese 1996). Close to this complex mix of influences which cannot be denied, there is the professional legitimation to defend by ideological positions when journalists need to reflect about their profession. Consequently, *the research question of the present study is to find out if the journalists representations about their professional exercise is dogmatic or realistic.*

Objectives: a) to access and to present the TV news journalists' individual representations in the main points of the information selection process organized around: sources (What information sources are journalists using?), subjects (What kind of subjects the journalists choose?), which is the reality definition (What is the journalists definition on reality?); b) to build a professional grammar composed by nouns, adjectives, verbs and adverbs, as explicitly expressed by journalists and the emerging values.

Methodological frame: the research is explanatory, qualitative and quantitative, focused on drawing more information for a more understanding upon the journalists' ways of perceiving the professional actions and general behavior. The methods used: structured interview (open questions) and qualitative/quantitative content analysis. For this research 60 structured interviews have been done. Out of the 60 interviews collected, 50 have been validated (a subject has been interviewed twice by different operators, 3 other did not work on news, 2 more did not have their profile info filled in, two interviews could not be done due to technical reasons and another two have been made outside the interview form). The data collect was made on January 2016 by interview operators (second

year Journalism students, especially trained for the project). The sample was represented by news journalists from local and central TV newsrooms. Sampling criteria: the journalists chosen had to be permanent employees of a television company and/or to have more than 5 years of experience in the field of TV news production. The interview form has been made to cover the news informational content in regards to the defining and selection aspects of information (sources, topics, reality). For space reasons, there were processed only the questions directly related to the investigated topics. The rest of the interview form questions referred mostly to general aspects of personality (work motivation, news attractiveness) or could be considered as valuable), useful to establish important inferences but producing a different set of data, indirectly related to the research objectives (weak info points, TV reliability and manipulation) that will be used in a further research. The 50 subjects were at the time of the interview part of 20 newsrooms (12 centrals – Prima TV, Realitatea TV, Digi 24, Antena 3, TVR, România TV, ProTV, B1 TV, DigiSport, DolceSport, Antena 1, Antena Stars; 7 locals - Nova TV Brasov, Logos TV, TV Buzău, Antena 1 Slobozia, Zingan TV, Digi 24 Constanta), one online TV agency (Evo TV) and 1 freelancer. Given the central/local editorial office criteria, 40 journalists were part of centrals, 8 were on locals, 1 was from the online agency and 1 was the above-mentioned freelancer. The professional positions stated by the 50 journalists were the following: 20 reporters, 11 anchors, 3 producers, 1 chief editor, 1 freelancer, 3 program creators, 1 commentator, 5 deskmen, 3 editors, 2 moderators. Given the age criteria, 5 journalists did not offer their details; however, age of the subjects went from 19 years old (the youngest) to 49 years old (the oldest). Age average: about 30 years.

The interview: as a collecting technique, it represents a method of getting much more detailed information from professionals who won't usually grant external access towards reflections upon their own activity. As a technique commonly used to scientifically define the socio-humane phenomenon, especially for the sociological research type, the interview's usage has various advantages such as: flexibility, ensuring the regularity of answering conditions, ensuring the control over the questions order, personal answers, conversation details identifying, a more complex topic study occasion and so on. The interview was limited in regards to: time costs, operator errors, not ensuring anonymity, difficulties when accessing the subjects included in the sampling etc. For the structured interview, there was no freedom on choosing topics, nor on rephrasing them or changing their order. The interview form was a list of questions/issues discussed during the verbal interaction, containing the essential issues that cannot be omitted. The used form as the open questions/structured interview was based on the idea that is commonly used in sociological and psychological researches to give journalists the opportunity to express themselves freely, to develop their ideas, their visions, inner world. Thus, the data obtained can be directed to psychological and sociological interpretations (Chelcea 2007, 296–303).

The qualitative content analysis: it can be considered a crossway method, an “exemplary” category that differs from a simple addition of a quantitative analysis along with its qualitative notes. P. Iluț (1997) defines content analysis as a method of a qualitative analysis on documents that highlights topics, attitudes, values, patterns, also called “the quantitative handle of a symbolic qualitative material”. On a particular level, from a qualitative perspective, the content analysis is more useful and interesting if the documents are seen as social texts or discourses. On the same matter, categories refer to classes; each category is a part of a category group; they have the role of defining and marking (allowing inferences between activities and persons) (Iluț 1997, 135–146). The content analysis is a well-used method for communication analysis for some of the following reasons (Massé 1992, 110–112): a) defines significations; b) uses essential categories for creating logic possibilities of declassification and quantification for content elements; c) applies values on content (wishes, needs, expectations); d) identifies the content players. Regarding its fidelity, it is important for a study to be replicated by other researches as well, whilst its validness is built on a relevant significance level in relation to the topic of the research.

For the present study were used all-encompassing categories (classifying the entire content) and on-target categories (related to the content and the objective of the research). On a qualitative level, knowledge notions understanding is emphasized; the premise is that facts are determined by certitudes; main idea is that regularities are vulnerable against a complex universe; the significations assigned to certain situations by the subjects are important; understanding the context in which the discourse is made is has also a main role; the reason of data analysis is preclusive; the attitude is one of a social empathy; the appropriateness of an approach comes from its fair point of being the only method of getting inside a phenomenon; data analysis presumes the discovery of connections between the facts obtained, significances identification, wording and classification; the significances applied to data are explained via a personal values system using a profoundly subjective insight; the type of observation is unique by not making generalizations possible; trust is offered once with the agreement between the researcher's and the subjects' point of view; the conclusions' understanding is important in other contexts as well, in relation to other research topics. The qualitative data processing can be considered as a multiple level interpretation process: the fluidity, interconnection and the global-synergy aspect of the empirical material represent major requests, even more relevant given their minimal processing and systematization. In order to enhance comparisons, to identify patterns or tendencies regarding the explanatory built theoretical models, counting and classification cannot be omitted. The qualitative development includes as well the quantitative analysis by establishing categories, counting and coding (Iluț 1997, 162–167).

On content analysis fundamentals, the interviews were read three times, proceeding to multiple selections given the keyword criteria assigned to the main topic (i.e. questions) or to anchor-sentences with an intense personal emphasis. By reducing the informational material successively, the most frequent keywords and ideas/concepts/notions applied showed up. Once the keywords were clear as “cognitive anchors”, those were organized in four categories: nouns, adjectives, verbs and adverbs corresponding to syntactic units of a general language enounce giving, at the end of “reductions” operated at content level, a professional grammar, language level, of the journalists who were investigated. This professional grammar is composed, for two topics investigated here (sources, subjects), of a “natural” number of words, issued and kept just because of their intensity, repetition, conceptual redundance, equivalence to the routine language and thinking or, on the contrary, being different from the professional norm. The general phrasing made out of the most important nouns, adjectives, verbs and adverbs, which conventionally was named as “professional grammar”, represents a manifest content level, assumed verbally, leading to a cognitive map of representations at latent content level that indicates the cognitive-valoric orientation of the journalists. Also, three categories issued from the journalists’ discourse about reality definition (the journalists; the public; the personal definition of reality) can be considered as relevant attributes of the professional stereotype.

THE RESULTS: PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETING

The most significant thematic indicators of the journalists’ vision are considered: the sources, the subject selection and the ideas about reality representing the key-moments within information process. The journalists gave elaborated answers about sources categories they used during their professional routine. Operating with selections on the content level through keywords and sentences with the same meaning out of each answer, the following nouns, adjectives, verbs and adverbs resulted as used mostly. The values are considered as “cohesion factors” (Ilut 1995) representing anchors that give indications about the inner drivers of the news professional.

Sources

Nouns	a) People: The least significant people, People alone, Natural person, Viewers, Vox, The people you work with, The man, The man on the street, Ordinary person, Any man met, Human sources; b) Experts, Specialist, Opinion point, International institutions-Public international institutions, NATO; c) Journalists: Colleagues, Correspondents, Reporters, Chief editors, Tolontan; d) Event participants: Witnesses, Bystanders, Participants, The main character; e) International and national press: News agencies, Foreign agencies, Editorials, Monitoring
-------	---

	services, Newspapers, Articles; f) Official sources: Authorities, Institutions, Deputy Chamber, Committees, DNA, DNA Prosecutor, Public officer, Government, Local institutions, ISU, Ministry, Minister, Diplomat, People with positions, Politicians, State Secretary; g) Social and professional players: Hospital managers, Lawsuits, Law officers, Football professionals, Driver, Paramedic, Patrolman, Cop, Security officer, Clerk; h) Communication services: Press offices, Info Centre, Official statements, Spokesmen, PR services, Professional Services; i) Written sources: Archives, Books, Documents, Materials, Law projects; j) Political sources: Politicians, Politicians' employees; k) Technology: SMS, Phones, Facebook, Google, Blogs, Site, Twitter, Emails; l) Interpersonal relations: Family, Friends, Neighbours; m) NGO; n) From sources.
Adjectives	a) Access: Direct, Prime, Main, Fast, At hand, Fresh; b) Competence: Authorized, Competent, Relevant, Involved; c) Credibility: formal (Confirmed, Known, Public, Open), checked (Trustworthy, Checked, Serious, Safe); d) Informal: Unofficial, Personal, Ownership, Private.
Verbs	a) Info lookout (I Search, Consult, Contact, Interact); b) Costs (it costs); c) credibility (To document, I Check- the most frequent, I Filter, I Translate, I Confirm/Invalidate).
Adverbs	a) Credibility versus implausibility (three-sources rule, safeness, veracity, credibility, trust, I swear on my word, Assigning, See for yourself, Firsthand, To be the first, Accuracy, Event, No unmasked, No TV, Doubting Thomas, False identity, Fake info, Second hand sources); b) journalistic genre: Investigation; c) costs: Advantages, Something in return, Stake, Risks; d) context: Curiosity, Experience, Gentlemen's agreement, Instinct, Laws, Direct observation, Reporter's talent, Field, Doors, Gates; e) Relations, Network, Discussions, Friendship; f) Technology; g) Store, Pastry, Hospital, Street.

Some interesting observations could be made about the sources representations. There are presented various categories present at the social system level. Catalin Tolontan's definition as a source is also interesting after he launched investigations which had an impact upon the political scene. Also, the "technology" category is a category in itself, giving clues about professional change on an information collecting level with multiple consequences on work rules when it comes to the type of credibility values, etc. The main qualities of the sources highlighted by most answers are related to: access, competency, credibility (through their notoriety, public acknowledgement or veracity), and personal network. The results are "classic" in comparison to the usual behavior of journalists when selecting the criteria by which a source is considered to be "worth" their choice. The three categories are directly related to actions of information gathering focused on credibility value. The information collecting circumstances were various and could be organized by criteria of information quality in relation to the value standards of the professional culture which is credibility *versus* implausibility (a), referring also to the "top" chosen journalistic genre: investigation (b), involving certain costs (c), emphasizing the informal relations, interpersonal (d), via technology (f), from public, "open" or limited-access places (g). The values noted here: Competency, Communication, Credibility, Informal, People, Participant, Press, System, Technology.

The routine of sources is mostly built around the professional model. The journalists are aware about the idea that they are servants of the public and their contract with the public is built around the “accurate” information act. The findings showed that the professional “coverage” interval is a large one and can be placed in different areas of the society: political field, street place, strategic external institutions, etc. The authorities are not the first source category preferred by journalists according to the professional model. The journalists are strongly oriented during information gathering process towards recognized social actors from well-defined professions and occupations selected for qualities like predictability and normality. The preoccupation for a personal network remains a major one in professional performance and the personal ability of the journalist to connect and interact is an expected feature as a professional of information. The value of the source is related to the value of credibility, which is one of the greatest qualities of the news information. The technology is the most frequent element that was correlated with daily routine. This is a significant result with implications for the professional paradigm if one considers technology as influencing the access to the information or the immediacy of the data transmission. The presence of various social sources in journalists’ imaginary emphasizes, once again, the “classic” idea of media as social mirror. Still, comparative to the normative liberal model in which mass-media is the watch-dog for authorities, the professional stereotype issued from this study is different: the authorities lost the first place in journalists’ preferences. Other interesting result of the study indicates a strong correlation between the source categories and the personal abilities of the journalists for developing personal networks of sources.

Topics

Nouns	a) authorities, administration, public system (the Economy Ministry, the Finances Ministry, The European Funds Ministry, Transportation Ministry, ANR, Ciolos, The Workforce County Agency, The Retirement House, Brasov county institutions, DNA); b) general activity fields (judiciary, politics, sports, administration) and specialty subfield activities (transportations, highways, roads, railways, projects, airports, EU funds, EU projects); c) economics (money, tax system, budget); d) special events (Colectiv, Breaking news, Nice, Paris); e) PR info (Press Conferences, Journalists meetings, Press releases, Spokesmen); f) subjects referring to the dandyish and lifestyle (Celebrities, Beauty, Lifestyle, Travel, Art, Star Wars); g) main or investigation subjects; h) usual subjects (people, social cases, charitable, soul stories, consumer topics, daily events, fun topics, sports and fitness, holidays topics, topics that pursue the human side of sportsmen); i) specialty fields topics (air safety, air communication, procedures and protocols; judiciary subjects, trials, the problems in the Romanian judiciary system that people encounter; consumer protection; politic parties congresses; party meeting, public administration, the political life of the city, foreign policy; international affairs; international law; football matches; medical campaigns; exhibitions; fairs); j) nation-wide subjects.
Adjectives	a) open topics (attractive); b) author’s notes; c) breaking news; d) interesting topics (interesting, attractive, popular); e) new topics; f) routine topics; g) “fun” topics (making people smile).

Verbs	a) to affect (TV influences; depends on our lives; there are hundreds of people that manage to live through our news work, reportages; help through news sharing the society, a child/a man/a family; b) to organize the workload, to evaluate the information (daily learning, structuring work, to process, to choose news from whatever field, to choose the right news for the editorial policy, to choose personally, to move and cover, to find the news behind the news, to check if the things forwarded through that information are trustworthy and to prove them somehow; you can't allow yourself to the second; to be able to get a firsthand and primetime information; we never hung up; we never had free weekends; depends on each broadcast format; I risked my position, a price that you pay; to write for the passion of it); c) to value (build trust, it matters greatly how are you tagged as a journalist, to be original, I managed to crowd fund for the people in need of surgeries, I managed to change the laws of the Health Ministry, I managed to hit their heads against the walls).
Adverbs	a) situations: adrenaline rush, special circumstance, when needed, trustworthy details, it's not a routine, backup, "bomb" topics bring a plus, news dynamic, news variety, the characters involved make routine to be almost invisible; b) costs: it implies resources, bill, taxes, tolls; c) communication: how many acquaintances, people with certain positions; to guard the doors, the gates, to wait and try to get from the one interviewed more than he wants to say; d) interest tendencies: social field; e) public: personal aspects that viewers can relate to/public's interests/ if people could realize their own power/ curious people/rating is very important/ people need to relax/we encourage people to do sports activities; f) work organizing: departments, brainstorming, colleagues meetings, each season with its filmmaking; g) professional culture: investigation/reportage/stories about people who do nice things/ campaigns/documentaries/portraits, stories, nice topics, points of view, non-routine means real journalist work, the more accurate the more correct, we can have audience by respecting some journalistic principles; investigation work.

The economical issues, the public system areas and the general social themes represent the most frequent references named by journalists for their topics after the criterion of "general interest". The information evaluation and selection aspects circumstances as well as the work organizing is closely related to the work values and the satisfaction aspects. We can remark at this point the informational abundance and a number of points of view that show how different are the contexts, action conditions and types of professional activities required by the job. We shall take notice of the fact that the journalists' representations describe a large field of conditions, methods, professional practice evaluations, such as: personal communication and networking skills, the personal emphasis on special situations, pragmatic time as an organizational request, the restraints space and resources, the pressures of work organizing, the subconscious value directives of the professional culture. The most accurate values observed regarding the topics: Accessibility, Up-to-date, Communication/Relation, Costs, Professional culture, Entertainment, Event, Interest, Lifestyle, Needs, Originality, Resources, System, Topics.

The large interval of the topics named by journalists could be interpreted as a "revealing paper" for the social system issues. Consequently, they choose subjects with large impact potential. It is interesting the "mirroring" made by media inside

the society showing the weakest or the greatest point of the society. The “classical” categories of topics packaged by journalists as “hard” and “soft” could be found also within the study findings. The majority of the topics were named from institutional areas suggesting an accomplished mission towards that the social expectance associated to the professional role.

Many interviewed journalists pointed out the idea of some big weakness of the system. Consequently, the journalists perceived themselves in missionary role, even heroes as long as their interventions saved human lives. They also make the distinction between real journalistic topics that would be the ones which deserve to be investigated despite all the opposition and some easy subjects, also desirable to do as long as they are cheap to produce. The professional model implies the neutrality and impartiality values. The journalists’ vision about information selection was definitely constructivist, journalists being realistic and not claiming about reporting of “pure” reality. The selection of the topics is driven by organizational requirements but the impression after the interviews was that the journalists are perfectly aware about how to manage the compromise between economic and professional in order to reach a bigger or, at least, a more selective and more paying attention audience. Related to topics selection, journalists agreed about a common vision of spending fewer resources at the same time with getting the biggest result possible. In this matter, we consider that the professional behavior is strongly motivated by the quantity of energy involved in the production process, bringing to attention an interesting energetic element within representational model.

I. Reality

Three main categories clearly issued on the first reading of the material containing answers for a better understanding of the reality definition: a) the journalist role; b) the public expectations; c) the journalist attitude. Given these three categories, in order to correlate the content for finding significations, it was selected from each interview the most resonant phrase with the most accurate meaning.

The Journalists

“they are everywhere” (2);
 “bring reality as it is in people’s homes [...] compiles the most important information for those at home and presents it to them” (3);
 “journalists no longer bring reality in people’s homes because they’re poorly prepared” (7);
 “journalists kill attitudes and ideas by not knowing and not being trained” (9);
 “press is just as subjective as other domains [...] it follows certain interests much like other fields” (11);
 “while speaking about myself and my colleagues, we all want the same thing: to put reality on display with everything that we see on the field [...] our bosses ask of us these things too” (18); “to owe it only to the public and to his own consciousness” (27);

“the journalist is not detached” (28);
 “we wish to put reality on display but unfortunately the press’ tendency lies towards tabloids” (36);
 “he wants all attention on him and that’s hard enough to present the event in an objective manner” (38);
 “journalist’s mission is to gather all the relevant points of view for the said subject so that the viewer will have access to the whole picture and not to just a part of it” (46);
 “don’ t know just how do journalists bring reality in people’s homes or how do they try to make people realize certain realities” (19).

The attributes of journalists role stereotype: selective, significant, observative, prepared, detached, subjective/objective manner, didactic/teaching.

The Audience

“the people to whom this information gets cannot process them correctly” (1);
 “the things that those at home are interested in” (2);
 “a lot of them want to hear comments. Why? How? What’s behind the hot water break? From there start a lot of personal opinions” (14);
 “the audience wakes up and chastise things, it won’t wait for too long to be lied to especially when so obviously” (33);
 “I bring reality in people’s homes because I want them to look at me next time too. This guy gave me the right information. If one or two hours later it is proven that the information was fake, they’ll say that we’re losers and won’t watch us anymore” (36);
 “the viewer must feel through us the topic itself with its breadth. Many times we turn into the gate between these two worlds, the one in which another world is offered to the viewers” (41).

The attributes of the audience expectations stereotype: interested, non-critical, tabloid oriented, analytic, client behavior.

Reality is/ I related to reality

“the world we live in, the situations we encounter on a daily basis, in the street, at work, when in line at some institution” (3); “exactly what happened there” (42); “the television is the reality that we want to show you” (5); “it is deformed or shaded depending on interests [...] today, on the entire Earth and not just in Romania there are many interests around the news institutions” (10); “just present what happens, don’t alter, don’t translate, just say what you see, what you observe and find out” (12); “what we see with our eyes, without filtering it through our personal feelings” (15); “reality implies detachment” (16); “the rightful journalist is the one giving the news as they are, without personally filtering it” (17); “the event right as it happens” (20); “it’s a marketing strategy” (21); “our televisions are a political game and by far will not bring any reality into the people’s homes” (22); “there are professional journalism isles where reality is brought the closest to its own image, but there are also areas where it is filtered, altered depending on that television company’s interests. The reality is the gross news, objective, but also good to analyze” (23); “the pulse of the events is so fast taken in real time [...] it’s not about manipulation, but about that Big Brother that we read about back in 1985 where everything was on clear sight” (24); “let’s be serious, we all do a subjective work” (25); “the reality television companies bosses wish for” (26); “your only chance is to pray to God or when you pick the editorial office to go in, to choose an ownership that would at least show you what is this business, how to work on it, to have principles that you can adhere to and a decent negotiation” (27); “filtered through a personal view, as I understood it, hoping that I am a conscious man” (28); “at our ProTV news broadcast, there cannot be something else than reality. No. Reality means truth, and the

sole truth is known by no one. You realize that after 23 years in the press” (29); “there are multiple realities” (30); “let’s think about the interests behind these realities too” (31); “there’s always a dose of personal view in your broadcasted news because we’re talking about the reporter’s and the journalist’s views” (33); “there are only points of view and various world’s renderings [...] it should mean assuming certain political, economic and social presuppositions” (34); “there is no more one hundred percent” (36); “there could be also a different reality, from one news office to another” (37); “it’s like truth [...] depends on how you see it” (38); “the news passes through a few hands before it gets published: the reporter’s, the deskman’s, the producer’s, the anchor’s” (39); “the journalists are trying to present the reality just as it is, but only those certified morally” (40); “there will be always a perspective from which we see an event, no matter how impartial or detached we might want to be” (41); “just what happened at the scene [...] presenting a subject in a manner closer to what we see and feel at the scene” (42); “there is no absolute objectivity [...] there is the angle from which you see the things” (43); “while receiving information, reality looks in a certain way. After more info, it looks different” (44); “what I see, but reality can be sometimes altered and presented like an <<ideal reality>> [...] it’s not true” (45); “the things are as they are and must be reflected as they are. It’s a different matter that every subject can be approached from more points of view” (46); “subjective, especially when there are things happening in real time and you have to take the information from more witnesses, from authorities” (47).

The values map: To see, Truth, Taking responsibility, Attitude, The scene, Filter, Journalists present, training, consciousness, Perspective, Assumptions, The public: acceptance, Processing, acknowledgement Reality-journalist attitude stereotype: body senses, all places, filters, subjective, assumptions, angle, witnesses, truth, morality, media company, view, world. The most frequent position adopted by journalists in relationship with their public was the interface position. We can consider the journalists vision as a “public awakening” mission, without ignoring the constraint factors affecting the work. Regarding the “audience, the journalists’ representations are referring either to an aware public, judgemental, selective, advised or to a public considered in a derogatory manner, through which it is not able to judge properly and understand the most out of the information given by journalists. The “defining reality/relation with it” category brought up some important ideas: the press is either positivist (all those claiming that it shows reality as it is), or constructivist (all those subscribing to the theory that reality is a social construction); the elements that affect the objectivity are: the ownership and the organizational interests, the psychological profile of the journalist, the “philosophical” inability to define reality actually, along with the specific work conditions reasoning (time pressure mainly, information broadcast synchronization, etc.). One important attribute of the professional stereotype was the mental flexibility, an important quality required from journalists seen as creators of meaning. As regarding the public, the journalistic vision is about: a “docile” public (childperspective), sometimes analytic (critical perspective), showing an interest to the media speech but ready to change the information provider if something is not as expected (clientperspective). About reality, in fact exactly the “transactional object” between the journalists and the public, the journalists have had a very general idea, thinking about reality in general terms of

“whole world”, from open streets to closed institutions (“fisherman” perspective), getting with instruments of body senses, cognitive&emotional angles, mental assumptions, company interests (flashlight perspective) under the norms of objectivity and the truth of the ethical professionalism (the umbrella perspective).

The attributes of the journalists, of the public and of the reality definition a more general vision related to reality topic as follows:

Journalist	Qualities for Professional Role Accomplishment: Cognitive abilities (Flexibility, Receptivity, Critical Understanding), Physical Mobility, Teacher Skills To Reality: Fisherman, Director, Philosopher
Public	Information dispositions: Child/Adult/Client

According to the results, the general professional stereotype of the investigated journalists could be described as: The most important representations on the TV news professional role are organized about the ideas of social missionary by providing social information to the public and of teaching the audience about the world. For accomplishing that mission, journalists argue that a number of qualities are required such as: communication skills, the ability to create and to use a network, the ability to build and develop social influence channels, a socio-political culture, the knowledge about the structural and functional aspects of the social system, etc. The professional projection towards journalistic profession is referring to ethical-philosophical standards (responsibility, freedom, conscience, truth) as well to personality factors that would affect the professional routine (position and attitude). By these findings, the research question achieved a consistent answer through the professional grammar which gives a great idea about the cognitive map of journalists representations. The general image of the TV journalists is a realistic one, well argued (professional perspective) and well balanced (language and attitude).

CONCLUSIONS

The study's results are mostly expected if they are compared to relevant literature about journalistic professional culture. Despite the Internet “revolution”, that explicitly appeared as the newest interesting characteristics of the journalistic work, the TV news still represents a social content of large impact. The social role of the newsmen has remained the same since decades: their major role is supervising the institutional system in the public's best informational interest. The practice aspects of the information production, from the relation with the sources to the professionalism standards, are generally the same from the aspects related to the economical pressure, the organizational restraints to the professional ones (dead-lines, time, etc). The vision contains also elements from individual,

organizational and systemic levels, not clearly delimited, influencing each other, the idea which arguments, once again, the complexity of the circumstances of work for journalistic universe.

Still, on the big common ground on the normative of the journalistic professions, there were interesting features of the journalists discourse on the professional practice having been noticed as different regarding: the attitude to investigative research: “easiness” to open up to an academic investigation: the majority of journalists took the opportunity to talk freely and honestly about “delicate” topics from their professional lives. Traditionally, the journalists are perceived as non-receptive when it comes to reflect on a critic manner over their professional activity, being also far less permissive with their “backstage” revealings of the representational universe for various reasons, from lack of time to the point where they might consider the auto-revealing exercise a waste of time. For the study, the journalists’ attitudes and speeches were organized in order to provide arguments for defending their profession and to deliver causal explanations for a deeper understanding of the journalism credibility crisis. Hence, we can remark in the present research context an open attitude and a generous discourse in order to obtain relevant, non-dogmatic information and to get into the mental background behind the professional clichés rumored by the audience in the mass-media.

The results:

Journalists realistic to criticize attitude towards professional practice. Generally, journalists have a dogmatic discourse, through which they justify their professional activity on behalf of an audience they respect profoundly. In the present study, there are no cliché representational “routes” whereas the speech, through its details, evaluation types etc. is honest, more like self-critic, almost explanatory, exculpatory. The reason behind may come from the idea’s guesswork that reputation and the professional credibility meet the audience and the influence; we can remark also the idea that we’re dealing with a heterogeneous professional body, unequal in its values, principles, skills, professional and editorial positions, etc., a body in which are several categories: the “good men”, those who have embraced and respected the professional desideratum so far; the “handymen”, those who gave up on their professional standards for material advantages and status privileges; the “compromisers”, representing those trying to maintain a balance between their own professional values and the organizational/ editorial context;

The study has directed to a coherent professional vision with a lot of agreement of the journalists points of view to some common practices and work principles. Within this more likely common vision and representational universe, a few ideas showed up as significant: under the microscope the news producing laboratory reveals a daily symbolical “fight” of the journalists for survival, in which they need to work on a sustenance level of the resources; on a general level,

there was observed a critic attitude towards colleagues and media brands whose practices are debatable under ethics perspective or choose to skip or avoid good practice of journalism only for audiences and competition reasons, putting in bad and negative light all journalists given the generalization tendency of the public to label mass-media. Also, there was an interesting presence of the idea of the professional 28 consciousness, many journalists having in their minds the idea of a responsibility self-assumed towards public interests despite the great capacity and ability of the media to dissimulate or influence the public scene. In this matter, the compromise between good practices and media owners interests was explicitly recognized and assumed by many journalists, finding that in a disfunctional social system, is much more preferred to have a bigger possibility to change the social disfunctional world despite the organizational compromise that should be made. Thus, related to the system, the journalists perceived themselves as missionaries, heroes, investigative agents whose main role is to mirror the weaknesses of the social system and to fix some pathology daily met by them. The assumed ideas of no objectivity and of the multiple pressures that influence the news content are also significant for the study. Also, an interesting finding of the study is the clear energetic motivation in sources selection process discussed by majority of journalists.

The professional model emerged from the interviews is largely correlating with the classical one, meaning that norms, standards and values related to information selection proved significant elements of universal journalistic thinking. Still, the information provided by journalists arguments the idea of a big change in professional paradigm determined by technology factor. The "technology" factor detached easily as the most important newest factor already integrated in professional daily routine from searching ordinary information to use GPS for locating places to report from. Thus, this particular factor became an integral part of the information gathering routine both personally and on an organizational level. According to their answers, the journalists' references on the world are organically related to Internet, Facebook, the mobile phones, etc. The points of view about the technology factor focusing on daily use and on a great importance in content production are indicators about the changing professional world. The technology use and implementation and the effects of this remind us about the 80s-90s period, when the computers were integrated in the Occidental editorial offices leading to changes in professional paradigm and contributing also to transform the professional culture at that evolution point. Historically, these years when technology achieved more and more ground in personal and professional lives could be considered as a "turning point" within the journalistic paradigm.

Implications: the stereotypes above described bring a relatively known field of news comprehension. Through the "professional grammar" and the valoric meanings, we gained a generous access towards an intriguing professional imaginary placed right in the point of meeting of the overwhelming social impact. Still, there are plenty of unknown aspects regarding the content making, especially

when talking about individuals, who change permanently both as humans and professionals. As long as the personal vision has such an important role during the selection information process but it is so less scientifically researched, maybe, in further studies, perhaps the investigation of the journalists, individual level, psychological, emotional etc. should be more focused on.

REFERENCES

- ABBOTT, A. (1988). *The System of Professions-An Essay on the Division of Expert Labor*. Chicago-London: The University of Chicago Press, 1–31, 35–58.
- ACCARDO, A. (1995). «Pour une socio-analyse des pratiques journalistiques» in *Journalistes au quotidien*. Bordeaux: Editions Le Mascaret.
- ALLISON, M. (1986). “A Literature Review of Approaches to the Professionalism of Journalists” in *Journal of Mass Media Ethics*. vol. 1, nr. 2, 5–19.
- BANTZ, Ch. (1997). News Organization, Conflict as a Crafted Cultural Norm, “The News Factory” in BERKOWITZ, D.-ed., *Social Meaning of News*. Sage Publications Inc. 123–135.
- BEAM, A. R. (1990). *Journalism Professionalism as an Organizational-Level Concept*, AEJMC: 1–43.
- BERKOWITZ, D. (1997). Professionalizing News, News as Journalists Norms and Routines in BERKOWITZ, D.-ed. *Social Meaning of News*, Sage Publications Inc.: 169–171.
- CHELCEA, S (2007). *Sociological methodology research. Quantitative and qualitative methods*. Bucharest: The Economic Publisher, 296–303.
- CRISTEA, D (2011). *Social Psychology Treatise*, Bucharest: Renaissance, 47–104.
- CUILENBURG at alii. (1998). *The Communication Science*. Bucharest: Humanitas.
- DELFORCE, B (1996). „La responsabilité sociale des journalistes: donner du sens” in *Le journaliste, acteur de société-Les Cahiers du journalisme*, nr. 2, 16–3, Lille.
- FISHMAN, M. (1980). *Manufacturing the news*. Austin: University of Texas Press.
- FISKE, J. (1987). *Television Culture*. London: Methuen.
- GANS, H. (1979). *Deciding What’s News*. New York: Vintage Books-Random House.
- GOLDING, P. (1974). *The Mass-Media*. London: Longman.
- HARTLEY, J (1999). *News discourse*. Iasi: Polirom.
- ILUȚ, P. (1997). *The qualitative approach of socio-human field*. Iasi: Polirom, 135–146, 162–167.
- MANNING WHITE, D. (1997). “The Gate Keeper” in BERKOWITZ, D.-ed. *Social Meaning of News*. Sage Publications Inc.
- MASSÉ, P. (1992). *Methodes de collecte et d’analyse de donnés en communication*, Quebec: Presses de L’Université du Quebec.
- MATHIEN, M. (1992). *Les journalistes et le système médiatique*. Paris: Hachette, 110–112.
- McQUAIL, D (1987). *Mass-Communication Theory*. London: Sage Publications.
- MOLOTOCH, H., LESTER, M. (1997). News as Purposive Behaviour, On the Strategic Use of Routine Events, Accidents and Scandals in BERKOWITZ, D.-ed., *Social Meaning of News*. Sage Publications Inc. 193–207.
- O’SULLIVAN, T. et alii. (2001). *Basic concepts in communication sciences and cultural studies*. Iasi: Polirom.
- PALMER, M., RUELLAN, D (2002). *The journalists-stars, scribes or deskmen*. Bucharest: Tritonic.
- POPESCU-NEVEANU, P. (2013). *Tratat de psihologie generală*. București: Trei, 252–273, 280–341.
- RIEFFEL, R. (2008). *The public space sociology*. Iasi: Polirom.
- SCHUDSON, M. (1997). “The Sociology of News Production” in BERKOWITZ, D.-ed., *Social Meaning of News*. Sage Publications Inc. 7–22.
- SCHUDSON, M. (2003). *The Sociology of News*. New York, London: W.W. Norton&Company.

- SEVERIN, W. J., TANKARD, J. W. (2004). *Perspectives upon the mass communication theories*. Iasi: Polirom.
- SHOEMAKER, P. (1997). "A New Gatekeeping Model" in BERKOWITZ, D.-ed., *Social Meaning of News*. Sage Publications Inc. 57–62.
- SHOEMAKER, P. J., REESE, S. D. (1996). *Mediating the message: Theories of influences on mass media content* (2nd ed.). White Plains: N.Y.: Longman.
- STUART, A. (1999). *News Culture*. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- TUCHMAN, G. (1997). Making News by Doing Work, Routinizing the Unexpected in BERKOWITZ, D.-ed., *Social Meaning of News*. Sage Publications Inc. 173–189.
- WEAVER, D. (1996). Journalists in Comparative Perspective-Background and Professionalism in *The Global Journalist Book*, vol. 3, nr. 4, 83–91.
- ZAMFIR, C. (2007). System change in ZAMFIR, C., ȘTEFĂNESCU, S.-coord., *The social development encyclopedia*. Iasi: Polirom, 523–525.

