

Female Educators and Male Craftsmen?

The Professional Ideals  
Among Swedish Journalists

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## 1. Introduction

In fiction journalists are often portrayed as tough guys, fighting against a corrupt environment to find the Truth (and nothing but the Truth) by using critical investigative, and often ruthless journalism. The journalists are modern Western heroes. There are also (Western) heroes in real life. Carl Bernstein and Bob Woodward were seen in such terms: two righteous young men, armed only with the Truth, that challenged the Power, and managed to make a president resign. They became modern Western heroes to the American people (Löwenberg, 1990:12; see also Thurén, 1988). And today, turning on the television, we see tough journalists dressed in bullet proof vests, reporting about the war in former Yugoslavia, with bullets flying over their heads. Western heroes? There is though little debate going on about the role of journalists in Bosnia, whereas a few years ago, during the Gulf war, when the television images of heroic war-correspondents were similar, a huge debate started about what journalists actually reported and about their role in the war. They were sometimes portrayed, not as tough, independent, investigative cowboys, but as rather corrupt marionettes.

If the image of journalists we are presented with, is either an investigative Western hero, or a dependent marionette<sup>1</sup>, a number of questions are brought to mind. Do journalists see themselves as cowboys or marionettes, and in that case, what are the implications of that for the news content? One would imagine that someone seeing herself as a cowboy would create rather a different journalistic product from someone seeing herself as a marionette. There is also a gender issue. Can a woman be a cowboy? Whether or not journalists' perceptions of themselves determines news-content, has been debated. For example, Swen Windahl (1975) is among those who see the role perception as a very important factor for the news product, whereas Håkan Hvitfelt (1989) argues that the effect on news content is limited. Other factors, e.g. organisational, are seen as more important (Cf. Schlesinger, 1978, Van Zoonen et al, 1988).

If the direct causes of news content is the purpose of the study, it would probably be better to study organisational factors or national culture. In my view though, self image, or journalist ideals are interesting in themselves, especially connected with such other factors as national identity, culture, gender and class. I believe that journalists self images are reflections of the journalist ideal of the culture to which they belong, whether it is a country's culture, class-, or even organisational culture. So although we might not get a clear explanation of different representations in the news by looking at journalist ideals, we will, I believe, get a better understanding of journalism.

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<sup>1</sup> This is of course an over-simplification. The images of journalists varies, and have done so over time. Though I would argue that there is a myth held in Western societies of the journalist as a tough, unafraid, rather ruthless investigative reporter.

In this paper I will discuss Swedish journalists image of themselves, i.e. what is their professional ideal(s). Two indicators of the professional ideal will be used, motives for becoming a journalist, and the perceived journalist ideal (how you should be as a journalist). I will show the similarities between the Swedish journalists, but also the differences — the different ideals in different groups. The focus will mainly be on gender and education.

The analysis and discussion are based on a survey done in the autumn of 1989. A large questionnaire (62 questions) were sent to 1500 Swedish journalists. The sample frame used, was the membership register of the Swedish journalist union (SJF), which enabled the sample to be randomly chosen. The response was 59 percent, which is a few percent lower than surveys involving the Swedish public at the time, i.e. an acceptable response rate. Given that the amount people actively refusing to answer was low, and that those that replied were not particularly skewed in comparison to the membership register, the representativity of the sample is quite good<sup>2</sup>. Unfortunately, questionnaire batteries is a very coarse and blunt instrument when studying self-images. The answers should therefore not be seen as exact, but rather as indications of ideals.

The disposition of this paper will follow the two main questions. In the first part, I will describe Swedish journalists perception of their professional ideal, focusing on similarities, and on the change that has taken place. In the second part the differences will be enhanced. Finally, in the conclusion, I will discuss the implications of gender, class and education. As a background to this, I will though start by describing Swedish journalists as a professional body.

## **2. Swedish journalists - a portrait**

The typical Swedish journalist is a 41 year old man brought up in a middle class family in a town. He is married, but does not have any children, and lives in a town flat. He votes for the Social Democrats. In his spare time, he keeps fit, reads novels, and works over-time. He has some kind of journalistic education and works as a reporter (generalist) in a small-town paper.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Journalists from Stockholm replied in a somewhat lesser degree than others, as did women. This is consistant with other Swedish surveys. The skewness is though not big enough to matter to the analyses. It is also worth noting that by using SJF:s membership register, the sample itself is representative of Swedish journalists, since a vast majority is union members.

<sup>3</sup> This section is based on the Journalist study from 1989, which has been presented in Weibull et al, 1990; Melin, forthcoming, and the comparisons are based on Journalistkåren i Sverige, 1970.

The portrait presented above is a generalised summary of the social structure of the Swedish journalist profession today. Twenty years ago the picture looked somewhat different. Since 1960 the amount of members of the SJF (and hence number of journalists) has tripled and has doubled since 1970. This increase of journalists has meant a change of the social structure (not so much in organisational terms)<sup>4</sup>. Journalists have become somewhat older: the profession is now dominated by what is sometimes named the 68-generation (born during the forties — a third of all journalists). The number of women journalists has increased dramatically since the sixties, and today 34 percent are women. A process of bourgeoisment has taken place, i.e. the majority of journalists are today from a middle class family. Furthermore, the level of education has increased. Today, seven out of ten journalists have some kind of university education. The main reason for this (and, I would say, for most of the above trends) is the start of journalist colleges, in 1967. Among those under forty, more than half has been to journalist colleges, and they are now the main path into the profession.

As we shall see later, these trends have had implications for the professional ideal. I will therefore make a summary of the structure of the Swedish journalist-profession, with two of factors as the starting point — gender and education.

Starting with education, mainly two different educational groups can be found, which is not particularly surprising. But what is interesting, is that there are some differences between those with a journalist education and those with some other university degree. The majority of those without any form of higher education are men, over 50, and from a working-class background. They mostly work for small-town papers as a non-specialist reporter or as a photographer. If they are specialists, it is more than others within "sports", "crime" or "family". They experience some problems with the management but feel a greater solidarity with their colleagues than others do. Journalists with higher education are mostly young, men (though in relative terms, more of the highly educated are women) from the middle classes. The younger generation has a higher educational level, which is also a general trend in Sweden. They work mostly in broadcast medium, or in big morning daily papers — those from journalist colleges also work more than others in tabloid papers. The latter group has hard core news (politics, finance, foreign affairs), or feature as their main specialist areas, whereas those with another kind of university degree work more within the areas of culture or comments. Among editors contra reporters no significant educational difference can be found.

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<sup>4</sup> There are some trends to within the media structure: the number of journalists working in broadcast media has increased, due to the expansion of mostly local radio in the 80-ies. Journalists have also become more specialised.

Some of the pattern is the same if the social structure is described from a gender point of view, since there is a significant social difference between male and female journalists, and that coincides with the social pattern of age, class and education. Women are younger, have a higher education, come to a higher degree from big cities and from an upper middle-class background (the share that come from upper middle-class is largest among women with a journalist degree). On the contrary, it is much more common for male journalists to be from a working class background (78 percent of those with working class background are men) and not to have any higher education. This can partly (but only partly) be explained by the fact that there are more men in the older generation. Men work mostly in the broadcast media or in big morning dailies, whereas women to a higher degree work within the popular press, tabloids, or as free-lancers. Women work, furthermore, to a higher extent as reporters or proof-readers and write mostly in areas such as education and culture, whereas most of the editors are men and they deal with hard-core news.

It is quite clear that although women have been successful in quantitative terms, their structural position has not changed since the sixties. They still work with in low status media (Cf. Weibull, 1990), are rarely in a managing position, and are confined to "softer" specialised news-topics, which among journalists are rated as having lower status<sup>5</sup>. These facts are noteworthy, although not very surprising. The same goes for the consequences of these structural differences. Women experience their work conditions more negatively than men: tough guidelines from the management, hard competition, and difficulty in getting response for their ideas. Working conditions are perceived most negatively by women within big daily newspapers, where number of women is the smallest (along with television). The reasons behind this can of course be that women play on men's conditions. The media organisation is a very masculine environment, which makes it harder for women to work as journalists (Lindberg, 1990; Weibull, 1991). Men are the tool-makers, and women the tool-users, to use Lana Rakow's (1988) terms. Put in other words, it means that men are the managers and can therefore follow their ideas through more easily, whilst women become frustrated for not being able to follow up stories, or write about what they want. So instead some of the women choose to work in media with more informal work culture, e.g. within the popular press. There are also relatively more women among free-lancers, so it seems like another way to avoid the masculine environment is to become a freelancer. Most free-lancers choose their way of working in order to be independent, and write about what they want, and for women it seems furthermore to be a way to write at all — despite children and family (Löfgren, 1991b). As free-lancers women are also more able to create their own space and conditions — and hence become more like tool-makers. Yet another alternative to find a calmer

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<sup>5</sup> It can though be discussed whether these areas have *in fact* low status. They do take up lots of space in papers, and are considered important by the public. See Löfgren-Nilsson, 1993.

work environment, is to leave journalism altogether and start a career within public relations, as press officers (Löfgren, 1991b; Emmanuelsson et al, 1991).

These structural and social changes and differences are important to bare in mind when looking at the perception of professional ideals among journalists, which will be discussed in the next sections of this paper.

### 3. Bloodhounds and Educators

In most studies similar to this, the concept of "role" is used<sup>6</sup>. In social psychology the concept is defined as a pattern of expectations tied to a certain position and the behaviour of the person having the position. That means the person adapts to what is expected of her. The allegory often used is that of a role on a theatre stage (Cf. Downie, 1971; Mead, 1956). I find this definition both too static and too much of an unrealistic academic construction. So I prefer the term "professional ideal" rather than "professional role". An "ideal" is a desirable phenomenon, an often unachievable model worth aiming for, hence a professional ideal is the ideal image of a profession, i.e. it is journalists' perception of what their profession — and themselves — ought to be. It is *not* how they actually are. That means that I have *not* studied journalists' behaviour (e.g. news products), I have asked them about their attitudes.

On an empirical level I have used a number of indicators. The central one, is the perception of the journalist-ideal, which is perceptions of how journalists ought to be (collectively and individually). I will also discuss the motives for becoming journalists, which is a reflection of the ideal image held of the profession. Furthermore, both indicators quite likely reflect myths about journalists and the profession, held by the surrounding culture. Connections between journalist motives and ideals have been done in a number of studies (Cf. Köcher, 1985; Windahl, 1976; Lichter, 1986).

My starting point is a typology of the journalist ideal, derived from previous studies on the subject<sup>7</sup>. The ideal consists of different dimensions. There is an *active-passive dimension* concerning the news-gathering process. Journalists could actively create news-products by personally searching for, and working on information (e.g. interviews), or passively receive it from sources and only pass it on, or channel it to the audience (e.g. using press releases). The other dimension, a *participant-neutral*, concerns journalists' relation to the news-content. In one end of the scale, the journalist is commi-

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<sup>6</sup> For the use of professional role see Köcher, 1985. Other concepts used in these kind of studies are "professional ideology" (Puik, 1990) and self-image (Windahl, 1975).

<sup>7</sup> I analysed and compared the descriptions of ideals (roles) found in different studies. See for example Fjaestad et al, 19775; Klausen, 1986; Köcher, 1985, 1986; Lichter, 1986; Thurén, 1988; Windahl, 1975.

tted to the message, and tries to influence the audience in different ways. The opposite is journalists that consider themselves neutral, and therefore can pass on information and mirror events, without interpreting or changing the content in any way. From these two dimensions springs four ideal roles (figure 1).

**Figure 1. The relationship between the two dimensions of the journalist ideal, and two of its explanatory factors.**

		Relation to the newsgathering process	
		Active	Passive
Relation to the message	Participant	<b>Educator</b>	<b>Spokesman</b>
	Neutral	<b>Bloodhound</b>	<b>Craftsman</b>

One ideal is *the Bloodhound*: choosing to be a journalist to enlighten unsatisfactory conditions in society, and thinking that a journalist should critically scrutinise injustices, and the elite in society. The Bloodhound is often portrayed as a tough, unafraid and rather ruthless in his (it is often a man) search for the Truth. This is the modern Western-hero. Another ideal is *the Educator*, choosing the profession to express herself, and/or to be able to influence others, and thinking journalists should give the audience new experiences, thoughts and ideas, by explaining events simply. Although showing concern, the Educator is quite distant to her audience. Teachers and advocates have been used to illustrate this ideal, and they are portrayed as knowledgeable, empathetic, and very active. The third ideal is *The Craftsman*, whose motive for becoming a journalist was a wish to work with news. She thinks that journalists should be neutral reporters, and simply mirror events and opinions. She has a good view of her audience, and regards her colleagues highly. This is a very stressed journalist, because her high ethic does not go well with short time-limits. Therefore an article should be "hammered" together as quick as possible, e.g. by using telegrams, press-releases, and press-conferences as the main source. The fourth ideal is *The Spokesperson*, which means being a spokesperson and a mirror



for opinions. As every one else she became a journalist to have an exciting and free job, but also to avoid a theoretical education. The Spokesperson wants to influence the audience, at the same time as she is part of it - possibly more avant-garde and therefore able to enlighten the path for others. This is a journalist who listens to her superior, and is used as a tool by, mainly, political parties.

It is important to remember that there is no pure ideal type, a journalist can have parts of all four, but has to a *higher degree* a certain approach (Cf. Melin, 1991; forthcoming).

### **An Active Ideal**

Looking at the actual response (table 1) we can see that a large majority think that they ought to be scrutinisers of the elite in society and be able to explain events simply. A minority, on the other hand, think they ought to be neutral reporters, mirrors or spokespersons for opinions. Though, it must be said that most journalists agree with most of the items, which is sign of the questionnaire being a blunt instrument for these kind of questions, but also that Swedish journalists have indeed a very homogenous professional ideal.

So what is the ideal? By using correlations a rather obvious pattern emerges (figure 2). There are two distinct groups, and they fit into the dimensions previously discussed. All the statements in the larger group demand an *active* approach to news gathering, whereas the smaller group does not. To be a mirror or a spokesperson, does not necessarily mean having to search for news material personally. So, it is quite clear that the ideal held by the majority of Swedish journalists is an active ideal.

Looking closer at the correlations, other groups can be found, that also fit into the typology. One is journalists who want to scrutinise and criticise the elite and injustices, and want to explain this simply to the audience. An other one somewhat similar is a journalist who thinks she should stimulate new thoughts and ideas and give her audience experiences plus explain events to them. The difference is that the former has a neutral ideal, and the latter a participant — it is the Bloodhound- and Educator ideal. Also the passive ideal contains two groups, although they are not as easy to distinguish. One is the Craftsman, the neutral reporter and mirror of opinions. The other, the Spokesperson, is a mirror and spokesperson for opinions. Unfor-

Unfortunately the construction of the questions were not mutually exclusive, which means that it is hard to distinguish between the two passive ideal<sup>8</sup>.

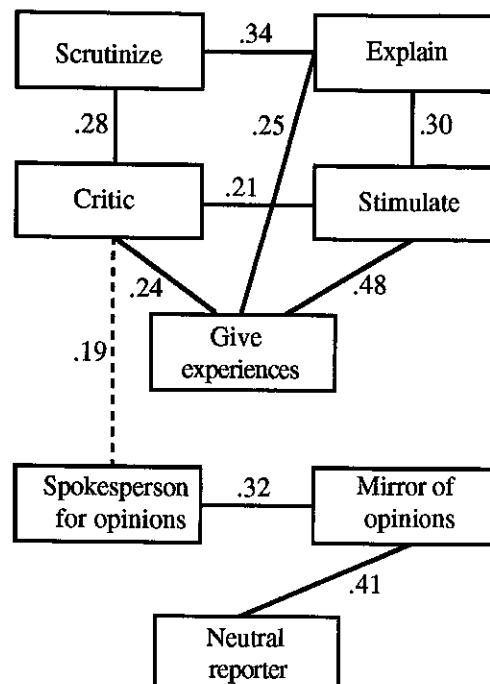
**Table 1. Swedish journalists' perception of their journalist ideal (percent).**

Journalist ideal	Agree totally	Agree partly	Hardly agree	Don't agree at all	No opinion	Totally	Number of replies
Scrutiniser of the elite in society	70	28	2	0	0	100	836
Able to explain events simply	65	30	3	2	1	101	835
Stimulates new thoughts and ideas	46	45	6	1	2	100	834
Critic of injustices in society	44	45	7	3	1	100	836
Able to give people experiences	43	47	6	2	1	99	835
Neutral reporter of what happens in society	29	44	18	7	1	99	838
Mirror of public opinion	22	47	18	12	1	100	832
Spokesperson for local opinion	19	43	19	16	3	100	827

**Legend:** The question was: "Here follows a number of statements about journalists' professional role. Which is your opinion about each of them? A journalist should view her/himself as...".

<sup>8</sup> Factor analyses (PC, Varimax rotation) shows that the best fit is three, not four factors: The Bloodhound, Educator, and one passive ideal. If the two problematic items, "mirror ..." and "explain events..." are removed from the analysis, a four factor model has the best fit.

**Figure 2. The connections between the different journalist ideals (Pearson's r).**



**Legend.** The correlations are significant on a 99 percent level. Only those relations over .20 (with one exemption) are shown in the figure.

### High ideals

Apart from actually asking journalists about their ideal, another way to measure professional ideal is to ask journalists of their motives for wanting to join the profession. This is though not unproblematic. First of all, a standardised questionnaire is limited, which means that we will not get an understanding of the exact motives, but rather general tendencies and approaches. Another problem is the motive per se. I am sure very few of us can remember the exact reason we chose the profession we have — if we were ever aware of any specific reason. Therefore, the responses given can hardly be assumed to be the actual motives people once had. Instead the "motives" should be seen as an approach to the profession, and a reflection of the professional ideal journalists have.

Nine out of ten Swedish journalists chose journalism to have a free job and because they were interested in expressing themselves (table 2). A large majority of them say they were also interested in working with news, that the job seemed exciting, and not a nine-to-five job. About six out of ten also wanted to enlighten injustices in society. Very few chose the profession because they knew someone who was a journalist, or to avoid long theoretical education. These motives are hardly surprising. The view held by

the majority, could well be a job-description for an expressive, free-spirited cowboy. It is though interesting to turn the figures around: every seventh journalist said they were *not* interested in expressing themselves, and every fourth said they *did not* want to work with news, or thought the job seemed exciting.

**Table 2. Journalists' motive for their choice of profession (percent).**

Motive for choice of profession	Agree totally	Agree partly	Hardly agree	Don't agree at all	Totally	Number of replies
A free profession	47	42	7	3	100	814
Interested in expressing myself	48	38	10	4	100	806
Interested in working with news	33	42	18	7	100	798
An exciting job	20	53	16	11	100	795
Not a 9-5 job	29	42	15	14	100	797
Be able to enlighten injustices in society	23	43	23	11	100	783
To have possibility to influence other people	18	45	27	11	101	787
Knew people who were journalists	10	21	16	54	100	796
There was no need for many years of theoretical education	7	18	24	51	100	783

**Legend:** The question was: "Was there any particular reason to why you wanted to be a journalist?"

It is important to remember that most journalists seven out of the nine reasons for choosing journalism as a job. It is not so strange. There is rarely *one* reason for choosing a profession. Taking a closer look at the different statements, some do though seem more like each other than others. Using correlations (Pearson's R) three main groups of motives can be distinguished. One group concerns *freedom and excitement*, which means wanting an exciting, free and not a nine-to-five job. Another group reflects the possibilities in journalism for *creativity* and reaching the public: wanting to express yourself, work with news, enlighten injustices in society, and influence people. The pattern is though quite unclear. The third group contains the motives not wanting a theoretical education and knowing someone that was a journalist. I call it *passive* since they are not

motives that have to do with journalism per se, but a reason to avoid something, or merely following the examples of others.

Looking at correlations between journalists perceptions of their ideal and motives, the hypothesis that the choice of profession is tied to the professional ideal is supported, although the three motive-groups do not match the three (four) ideals. The freedom and excitement-motives have no strong connections with either of the journalist ideals, which means that they are motives held by most journalists regardless of other values. There is though a clear distinction between the different creative motives, and this is probably the reason why the pattern of motives is somewhat unclear. Wanting to work with news is tied to a neutral approach to journalism, i.e. to the Craftsman-ideal. This reinforces the picture of the Craftsman as someone that always tries to be impartial by only channelling facts and mirror events, and that was driven by the motive of wanting to work with news *per se*, rather than having grandiose objectives of changing the world, or at least the audience. The other creative motive, of wanting to express oneself, is clearly tied to a participant approach to journalism - to the Educator-ideal. The educator was though also said to have a strong emphasis on the audience, and there is quite strong correlations between the Educator ideal and wanting to influence others. Wanting to enlighten injustices is also linked to an active approach to news gathering, but it is closer to the Bloodhound ideal.

So, to conclude, there are three clear ideal among Swedish journalists, two more common than the other, and these fit well with the model based on descriptions of ideal found in previous studies — in Sweden and other countries.

**Figure 3. The relationships between the perceptions of journalist ideals and motives.**

<i>Ideal</i>	<i>Want to...</i>	<i>Ought to...</i>
Educator	Express oneself Influence others	Stimulate new thoughts and ideas Give people experiences Explain events simply
Bloodhound	Enlighten injustices	Scrutinise the elite in society Criticise injustices in society
Craftsman	Work with news	Neutral reporter of events Mirror of public opinion

## A Changes of Ideals

Of what has been presented above, one important finding is that Swedish journalists is a very homogenous group. A similar homogeneity was found among British and (West) German journalists (Köcher, 1985; 1986). She explains the homogeneity and the clear differences between the role perception in the two countries, with their different historical backgrounds. So because the cultures in different countries varies, journalist roles will innately vary. According to Denis McQuail (1987) there are though similarities in the role perception among Western journalists. Neutrality and objectivity is emphasised, and that is a sign of "new journalism".

Comparing British, German and Swedish journalists, although such a comparison is difficult, and can only be made tentatively<sup>9</sup>, Swedes seem to stress neutrality far less than the others. So why is neutrality less of an ideal in Sweden? There has been two studies done previously about journalist ideals in Sweden. Both were made in the beginning of the seventies, and both show that the vast majority of Swedish journalists had a neutral ideal (Windahl, 1975; Fjaestad et al, 1974), and one of them that the passive-neutral role was the most common (Windahl, 1975). This means, with other words, that there has been an important change of values among Swedish journalists the past twenty years — from a passive to an active ideal. This change might be the reason why Swedish journalists apparently differ from those in other countries<sup>10</sup>.

So what caused this change? One way to explain this is to look at the media structure (Cf. Köcher, 1985; Gans, 1979), and there *has* been some fundamental changes in Sweden since the sixties. "The great newspaper death" in the sixties (i.e. a lot of small-town news papers went bankrupt and ceased to exist) lead to a big debate over the function of the press in Sweden. It was followed by a near collapse of the party-press system in the seventies (i.e. a strive for impartiality from political parties by the news papers and journalists). The political ties became weaker, news papers called themselves "independent" (as aposed to e.g. "liberal"), and journalists tried to make news pages impartial. At the same time, primarily the tabloids and the new television news-rooms looked towards Anglo-Saxon journalism, and imported the investigative journalist ideal (which was enhanced after Watergate). Seen in this light, the new media structure brought journalism towards professionalisation (Cf. Windahl, 1975; Puijk, 1990; Klausen, 1986). Journalism got a much better reputation and status in society, and journalists became more powerful as a professional group (e.g. professional codes were written). So, the

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<sup>9</sup> The questions in the Swedish questionair were based on those Renate Köcher (1985) asked the West German and British journalists.

<sup>10</sup> This is though only a speculation, since it is hard to compare secondary data, especially having to take different survey design, the time factor, and different culturaleal interpretations into account.

changed ideal could be a result of a changed view of journalism in Sweden, which stems from a changed media system.

As was seen in the first section of this paper, there has been major social changes among Swedish journalists, a trend towards bourgeoisment, higher educational level, and more equal gender structure. Seeing the change from this perspective, it would be caused by the new kinds of people that entered the profession, i.e. the middle-class highly educated women. There is of course a connection with general structural change. Journalism getting higher status, journalists being seen as heroes (as in Watergate) and new opportunities for a degree in journalism (the start of journalism colleges in 1967) probably meant that the job became attractive to new groups of people — with pre-existing values. Lichter et al (1986) talks about such a trend among American journalists. The increasing number of middle class people lead to a middle class journalist ideals, because these journalists had different motives for entering the profession. Though, interestingly, whereas there has been a dramatic change in the perception of journalist ideals in Sweden the motives for becoming journalists have not changed. In the end of the sixties freedom and excitement were the most common motives, followed by wanting to influence opinion, i.e. the same as today.

There is unfortunately no way to proof any of these explanations, since this study is only made at one point in time. I will though follow two of the ideas up in the next section, namely to look at the influence of gender and education on journalists ideals.

#### **4. Different ideals in different groups**

The reason I have chosen to look at gender and education as determinant factors for the professional ideal in this paper is twofold. First of all it is of theoretical interest. Since the main reason for an increased level of education among Swedish journalist, and I would argue, a major reason for new kinds of people being attracted to the profession, is the start of journalist colleges, it would be interesting to see if they have played any part in shaping the ideal among their students. With other words, to see if those who have been to journalist colleges differ in values to other journalists. Further more, most studies of this nature have not taken gender into account, although those who have (Cf. Zilliakus-Tikkanen, 1990; Van Zoonen et al, 1988) has shown that there is a tendency that women journalists differ in values compared to their male colleagues. Exploring professional ideals as a gender issue is therefore of interest — and importance.

There is also an empirical reason for choosing these two factors for the analyses. I have shown (Melin, forthcoming) that among both individual and organisational factors<sup>11</sup> education and gender are the two strongest factors, i.e. those that explain the most why different journalists have different ideals.

There are significant differences in professional ideal between journalists with different educational backgrounds (see tables 3 and 4). To sum these differences up, the main distinction line is university education. Those journalists that do not have any form of higher education want, as everyone else, a free and exiting job, but they also want to work with news more than others. They chose the profession to a relatively high degree because they knew journalists and to avoid long theoretical education. In terms of relation to the news-gathering process, their ideal is more passive, i.e. both the Craftsman- and the Spokesperson ideal is relatively strong in this group.

The other group is that with some form of higher education. Those journalists chose the profession, far more than others to be able to express themselves, and to influence others. Their ideal relation to news gathering is definitely very active. There are though differences within the group. Those with other university degree than journalism, tried more than others to avoid a nine-to-five job, and have more of an Educator-ideal. Those that went to journalist colleges, have a far clearer ideal than others — and it is the Bloodhound-ideal. They feel they ought to scrutinise and criticise the elite and injustices in society, and it was also for that reason they, more than others, chose the job.

Baring in mind the social differences between the genders, the differences between men's and women's ideals will not come as a surprise. Women had mostly expressive motives for becoming journalists, but they also wanted to achieve something in society (to influence and enlighten injustices. Their journalist ideal is very strong, and they have mostly a participant ideal. Men, on the other hand wanted mostly a free job, where they could work with news. Their ideal is not very specific, but they do have a much more neutral approach to news than women do. The only ideal that is stronger among men, in relative terms, is the Craftsman (although they dominate all four ideals in actual numbers).

As was mentioned previously, the general trends of these results will not change, regardless of what other factor that is controlled for<sup>12</sup>. Perhaps the most interesting

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<sup>11</sup> Individual factors being: social background, geographical upbringing, age, education and gender. Organisational factors: position within organisation, type of journalist, type of speciality, media, and organisational culture.

<sup>12</sup> There are a number of exceptions from this, for example men without any higher education working in television, that have a very strong Educator-ideal. For a more explicit analysis and discussion of this see Melin, forthcoming.



results show up when both gender and education are taken into account. The trends are the same, with one main exemption: women with other university degree than journalism have more a neutral ideal than men with the same education. Otherwise the different education and gender groups form a very clear pattern. Women with university degrees (apart from journalism) have the strongest Educator-ideal. Women without any higher education make very little distinction between the different ideals, and they are all equally strong. In relative terms though, they have definitely the strongest Spokesperson ideal. (It should thought be observed that they are a very small group). The Craftsman ideal is the strongest among men, mainly without any higher education. The Bloodhound-ideal is strongest among women with journalist education.

**Table 3. Motives for choosing journalist profession with regard to gender and education (percent)**

Motives for becoming a journalist	Total	Gender		Education			
		Women	Men	Compulsory school	Senior secondary school / folk high-school	Journalist colleges	Other university degree
Free job	90	89	90	94	90	91	88
Exiting profession	73	74	72	79	74	76	66
Not a 9-5 job	71	68	72	79	69	70	72
Want to express yourself	86	92	83	73	83	88	88
Enlighten injustices in society	67	72	63	46	59	76	63
Possibility to influence people	62	68	60	53	51	66	67
Work with news	75	64	80	83	84	72	70
Knew journalists	31	27	33	55	41	22	31
Not a long theoretical education	25	24	26	57	42	19	17

**Table 4. The perceived journalists ideal with regard to gender and education (percent).**

Statements about the journalist ideal	Total	Gender		Education			
		Women	Men	Compulsory school	Senior secondary school / folk high-school	Journalist colleges	Other university degree
Stimulate new thoughts and ideas	46	58	41	39	30	49	55
Critic of injustices in society	44	54	40	43	38	50	41
Neutral reporter of what happens in society	29	28	30	46	35	22	30
Spokesperson for local opinion	19	22	18	34	23	17	16

## 5. Conclusions

To conclude, Swedish journalists are socially a very homogenous group, and so are their values. Most of them became journalists because they wanted a free and exciting job, and their journalist ideal is that of the Bloodhound or the Educator. There has though been a considerable change in values since the beginning of the seventies, a change from a more passive ideal to an active. Although homogenous as a professional group, there are clear differences in values between different groups of journalists. Apart from the Bloodhound ideal, these groups follow the general distinction-lines of education (active-passive ideal) and gender (participant-neutral ideal).

So, is an active approach something you learn at university, and is belief in the Principle of neutrality a gender issue? I would say it is hard to argue for either of these questions. It seems though that women have a different approach to the profession than men. First of all the reasons for becoming journalists varies, although both genders wanted freedom and excitement. Wanting to "express yourself" as a reason for joining a profession, is surely a reflection of expressing self, i.e. your own thoughts and ideas. Wanting to "work with news" seems to be a question of expressing news, i.e. facts or events, rather than yourself. So it seems that the creative motive for male journalists is connected to the profession, whereas for women journalists it has to do with their person. They want to achieve something in society for their audience. This is also

reflected in their participant approach to news (Cf. Löfgren-Nilsson, 1993). These ideas get some support from other studies done. In a study of Finnish women radio-journalists, Henrika Zilliakus-Tikkanen (1990) argues that women allow themselves to be engaged in their shows, to be present in them, and to have a more emotional grip. Van Zoonen et al (1988) show in an secondary analysis of British and German journalists from a gender perspective, that women have a stronger Advocacy-role, and that British women journalists feel more obliged to help and educate the audience. This does, however, not fit in with the fact that one of the neutral ideals, the Bloodhound, is strongest among women. Though a closer look (and using correlations for men and women) shows that although women think that journalists ought to be a scrutiniser and critic of injustices in society more than men do, they think less than men that they should be neutral reporters. (The pattern is even clearer for women with journalist education.) This seems to indicate that the Bloodhound ideal is more participant in its character for women, but neutral for men

What is perhaps the most interesting aspect of the professional ideal, when looking at it from an educational perspective, is the strong Bloodhound-ideal among those that went to journalist colleges. Those with a journalist education seem to have both stronger, and somewhat different values from their colleagues<sup>13</sup>. This seems to indicate that journalist colleges are strong socialising agents, and actually socialise students into certain professional ideals even before they have become journalists. Colleges and universities are *supposed to* socialise students into certain ways of thinking, or values. The question is of course *what values?* Should the education reflect or challenge prevailing values in society?

A literary analysis of the course literature at the Journalist college in Göteborg (Melin, 1993) showed that there is *only one ideal* described and discussed — the Bloodhound. It is therefore not surprising to find that the students change their perception of the journalist ideal. Third year students have a much stronger Bloodhound-ideal and much weaker Craftsman ideal than first year students<sup>14</sup>.

Following this line of thoughts, this could be the explanation to why Swedish journalists' ideal have changed since the seventies. The colleges have become the major way into journalism, and the values are put across to more and more students. With other words, journalist colleges have made Swedish journalists more homogenous in their values. On the other hand, looking at the teaching objectives for the colleges over the years, they have also changed from a more passive ideal to a very clear Bloodhound-ideal. The indication of that is that the colleges merely reflect the view of journalists held

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<sup>13</sup> For a discussion about the difference in perceptions of professional codes, see Löfgren, 1991.

<sup>14</sup> This data is from a non published study of the values among students at the Journalist college in Sweden.

by society (the middle class in particular). That is also supported by the fact that journalist colleges are today the most popular program, along with medicine, and almost straight "A's" are needed to be accepted. Furthermore, the number of journalists from a middle class background is higher among those with a journalist education, than within any other group.

The discussion about journalist colleges can hardly be done without taking gender into account, since the Bloodhound-ideal is so much stronger among women who have been to these colleges. Previously I discussed media organisations as a male construction, a male dominated "tool". The concept can though be expanded, and it would be of interest to see male "tools" or technology as a value system, where women are excluded or constrained. To survive in a world run by that system, a woman would have to adapt to it (Cf. Rakow, 1988; Frissen, 1992). In this case both journalist colleges and journalist professional ideals could be seen as male "tools", i.e. a value system. I would argue that the Bloodhound-ideal has a masculine character, in the sense that it is portrayed in terms similar to traits and behaviour often associated with men. And it is always a man that is portrayed as being a Bloodhound — or a Cowboy (Melin, 1993). Does this mean that female journalist-students are taught to be masculine Cowboys? Or is it female Cowboys that want to be journalists, and apply to journalist colleges?

For a start, there is in general a certain type of women that apply to the colleges. To give a somewhat crude picture, they are middle class girls, with high grades and a bit radical views. They have very high ideals, more or less want to change the world, or at least their audience, with the help of journalism. During the time at the college they tend to change their views, to a higher extent than male students, towards a Bloodhound-ideal<sup>15</sup>. The latter fact could be seen as proof of the socialisation idea. They are taught a masculine value system, and to cope within the system, without actually having constructed the "tools" (Cf. Rakow, 1988). When they start their work as journalists — in a masculine organisation — they realise they do not have the opportunities to work according to the way they have been taught. They feel their ideas are not listened to, and they experience a gap between their ideal and everyday work in the news-room. They become frustrated and try to leave the situation in different ways, as previously discussed (Cf. Melin, 1991; forthcoming).

A different perspective of this, is to see journalist colleges not as a strong socialising agent, but as an institution that reflects the values of society, and particularly the values of these middle class women that apply, and then confirm these views. According to Lichter et al (1986) through the Watergate-scandal journalism got a higher

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<sup>15</sup> This data is from a non published study of the values among students at the Journalist college in Sweden.

status in America, and therefore attracted middle-class people, that brought their middle-class ideals into the profession. Other studies show that also in Sweden journalist colleges are an attractive alternative to more "profitable" education, e.g. Schools of Business and Economics, for young Swedish women from a cultural middle-class. They often chose journalism to develop their personalities, and as a cultural strategy (Palme, 1990). This indicates that it is the pre-existing values that makes journalist students confirming and developing the ideal they will have later on as journalists. Van Zoonen (1988) argues, along these lines, that it is not necessarily an improvement for the women's cause that more women become journalists, since this is often a result of privileged middle class women enter the profession, with the only aim to get on in a man's world. The fact that women actually get a stronger Bloodhound ideal could be seen in this light. They want to make a career, and knows that the only way to get on in a man's world is to be better than men. That means that mererly the increased rate of women can not be seen as the cause of change of the journalist ideal in Sweden. On the other hand, as was previously said, women with a journalist education, seem to have a more participant Bloodhound-ideal. That could mean that they learn and accept a masculine Bloodhound-ideal, and turn it into an ideal which feels better for them.

Part of the picture portrayed above is not very empowering, but unfortunately there is, I believe, a degree of truth in it. Whatever the causes and consequences are, I can only tentatively discuss them, since my existing data do not allow anything else. So my final conclusion is that more work need to be done on journalists and their ideal from a gender perspective — and preferably as an international comparison.

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