

both media laws and self-regulation of journalists — even if we see that Asian elements are just anti-European, rather than culturally divergent.

Regarding Chapter 5, it was, evidently, planned as the one to put up the the agenda for future research. But the author's economic determinism shows up again, making this chapter perhaps less strong than it might have been otherwise. For Vartanova, the main conflict in the Russian media system is the clash between news and entertainment — or, rather, between the content and business models oriented to public interest and profitable entertainment content that ensures the survival of the industry. But the very text of the book suggests at least several other issues of the same fundamental nature. First, it is media autonomy on the systemic level, which so far looks like a lose-lose choice between dependence upon either authorities or media owners. Second, it is the extent and modes of performing the watchdog function in the absence of such a tradition and within a transitional drawback. Third, it is the deliberative potential of media in the fundamentally fragmented society where TV-oldies vs. internet aborigines not only consume different media but also protest against each other on the streets.

But, of course, one cannot expect that quarter of a century of media development can be described in full detail in one book, even if the book is outstanding. *Post-Soviet Transformations of Russian Media and Journalism* is a milestone — the first thorough review of the Russian case since the appearance of Hallin and Mancini's comparative framework, well grounded in both theory and empirical data. This book is already becoming a starting point for practically any research project in the area of Russian media and journalism studies, and we hope to see it translated into other languages, for the international scholarly community to benefit from it just as well.

Svetlana Bodrunova

ST. PETERSBURG STATE UNIVERSITY, RUSSIA

**Silvio Waisbord (2013). *Reinventing Professionalism. Journalism and News in a Global Perspective*. Cambridge: Polity Press, pp. 280, ISBN: 978-07-456-5192-7.**

Journalism is not only a type of media content. It is also an occupation where you receive a salary, a profession with standards and for some also a mission of life. To discuss journalism as a profession is to navigate in the tension between seeing journalists as a social group and normative assumptions about quality in journalism. Professionalization is a way for journalists to gain autonomy to defend the common standards of quality.

This is the main argument in the book *Reinventing professionalism* by Silvio Waisbord. He is a professor at George Washington University, but the inspiration

for the book came from five years outside the academy in training journalists in Asia, Africa and Latin America. This experience made him think about similarities and differences in journalism in different parts of the world, about common occupational practices on the surface but also different values when it comes to ethics and professional roles.

To be a professional is in daily life a kind of guarantee for high quality in work. But Silvio Waisbord focuses on the other perspective of the notion “professional” — journalism as a social institution, occupational identities, autonomy in relation to other fields and a special journalistic logic that separate journalists from other occupational groups. The profession guards the boundaries to keep control — and this strong position can make it possible for the profession to keep the common standards and values of the profession. In the final analysis — quality and a service of the common good in society, a public service orientation that has developed in the professionalization of journalism.

This is the ideal model of professionalization. Waisbord describes the two paths to professionalization in the Western world — the “market path” developed in the US and the “public path” developed in Europe with a strong public service in radio and TV (like the BBC). Professionalization of occupations has also been a strong area in sociology, and Waisbord uses classics like Abbott and Freidson to place journalism beside other professions developed in modern society in the process of labor division, knowledge monopoly and certification, expanding higher education and the public sector.

But — there are two big *but*s in these theories on professionalization. First: Are they valid also outside the traditional Western world? Second: Can professions survive in a network society where knowledge is more equally distributed, especially in media, when everybody can publish in their own blog or website? Silvio Waisbord discusses the challenges for journalism as a profession, and he acknowledges that the perception of journalism as an autonomous profession is a kind of western invention. Even if journalism in many ways becomes more similar on the surface globally, there are still huge differences when it comes to the position and autonomy of journalists in relation to political and commercial power in society. Waisbord returns many times in the book to this key question — the control over work and the strength of the profession to keep a degree of autonomy in relation to other social fields (Waisbord also uses Bourdieu). This professional autonomy is necessary for journalists to defend the standards and values of journalism — in the service of society and the right of citizens to know. Even if basic values like objectivity and detachment differs, and some journalistic cultures have a strong tradition of advocacy and partisan journalism, the journalistic community still needs autonomy in relation to political and commercial power to be regarded as professional. Waisbord labels this as “hybrid professional cultures” developing in different parts of the world where professionalization is a process of interaction between journalism and national institutions.

The second “but” is more difficult to discuss, and Waisbord touches on it only briefly. In Western countries where professionalization of journalism developed, this is now also questioned by media development. The knowledge monopoly of journalists is broken when everybody can publish and call themselves journalists, the borders between journalism and PR/marketing are increasingly blurred, journalistic institutions are losing influence and journalists is no longer a privileged group but a “flexible workforce” crossing professional boundaries regularly. Media users have become “prod-users” and journalists are challenged as a profession. Other researchers (for example Singer & Quandt, 2009) ask if journalists have to give up part of their privileged position to meet the new active audience on a more equal level.

Different kinds of semi-professional journalism develops in, for example, community media, “citizen journalism” where people without any education or professional belonging produce journalism for society. Are they to be regarded as professionals or amateurs? Or perhaps it is the content we should discuss, and not the formal status of those producing it? In these border areas, theories about professions gives us little help and we need to realize that journalism in the media world of today is not limited to big traditional media but can flourish in broader spheres.

This also means that journalism as a profession has to be less detached, less separated from the audience so journalism can still remain relevant. On the other hand journalism is also threatened as a profession in this “late modernity” by commercialization and managerialism ruling media companies. Waisbord still gives professionalism a strong support in this changing society:

Professionalism offers a refuge to protect news from being vulnerable to government and markets uninterested in the pursuit of critical rationality, accountability and transparency. Professionalism is necessary for journalism to be a counterweight to power. Professionalism is needed to nurture an occupational culture committed to democratic goals. (pp. 225–226)

There is a strong normative basis in Waisbord’s book — journalism is not *any* profession, journalism is necessary as a profession and institution in all societies struggling for democracy. With this normative basis, Waisbord gives many good arguments for professionalization of journalism and he shows how the professional logic can be a tool in the struggle for press freedom in many authoritarian countries.

But can we use theories about professions as media researchers, as tools or lenses to research and describe journalism in different societies? Yes, with the help of theories of professions and also sociological “field theory” from Bourdieu we can analyze the position of journalism in relation to different kinds of power in society. But we also need a critical mind to remember the limits of professionalization, the relations to active audiences and different forms of semi-professional journalism.

The great advantage of this book is that Silvio Waisbord brings this (sometimes forgotten) tool back into journalism research. With these theories, the current dis-

cussions about “boundaries” of journalism becomes relevant to follow and to study. They make it possible to discuss the role of journalism both within media companies and in society. Finally theories on professionalism make it possible to discuss what differs journalism from production of any soap.

*Gunnar Nygren*

SODERTORN UNIVERSITY, SWEDEN

**Dorota Piontek, Bartosz Hordecki, Szymon Ossowski (2013). *Tabloidyzacja dyskursu politycznego w polskich mediach* [Tabloidization of Political Discourse in Poland]. Poznań: Wydawnictwo Naukowe WNPiD UAM, pp. 170, ISBN: 978-83-62907-44-1.**

The book provides scientific knowledge and many observations about the tabloidization of political discourse in Polish media. There is a change in the way of conducting political discourse, in which the leading role is played both by journalists and politicians. The quality of the media offer is changing. It is visible in the selection of topics in news programs, the process of reporting events by journalists and behavior of hosts and their guests. Mediatization of politics is always accompanied by tabloidization of political discourse being a result of media’s tabloidization. The authors aimed to collect the data allowing verification, using political and communication science tools, of the notion of trivialization of political discourse. They start with the premise that communication studies as a young discipline should use methodological and epistemological achievements of many other fields. They sought therefore roots of tabloidization research in various currents of reflection on discourse. The book is an attempt to describe the process of tabloidization, mainly affecting the media system, but which also influences the political and social system as a whole. Then, the process of tabloidization is understood by the authors broadly — not only as the change in journalistic standards, but also as a change in the public space.

The monograph was created by Piontek, Hordecki and Ossowski. It consists of four coherent chapters which fall into place. The first chapter starts with the basic knowledge about tabloidization, the second takes up the problem of multifaceted tabloidization research, the next is dedicated to changes in journalistic standards and the last one presents empirical data about tabloidization of political discourse in Polish news programs and main conclusions.

The opening chapter is the shortest one, which defines tabloidization and presents a short description of the development of research in this area. It also indicates the influence of tabloidization on political debate and the factors which conduce tabloidization, like for instance commercialization and technological progress.