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# Becoming Journalists

## A Comparison of the Professional Attitudes and Values of British and Spanish Journalism Students

*Karen Sanders, Mark Hanna, María Rosa Berganza and José Javier Sánchez Aranda*

### ABSTRACT

■ This study discusses data from the most extensive survey of journalism students conducted in Britain, and similar data from Spanish journalism students, collected as they commence their studies in journalism. It shows that significant differences exist between these countries in students' motivations to be journalists, including 'public service' motives, and in their views on the social roles of news media. Yet, British and Spanish students exhibit similar views on journalism ethics. To consider effects of 'professionalization', students' responses are compared with those of experienced journalists previously surveyed in both countries. The findings suggest that distinct, national journalistic 'cultures' have influenced students before they arrive at university. ■

**Key Words** education, ethics, journalism, motivations, news roles

### Introduction

At the beginning of the 21st century, the training and education of future journalists is a thriving area of the higher education sector across Europe.

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Karen Sanders is professor at University CEU-San Pablo, Paseo Juan XXIII 10, 28040 Madrid, Spain [email: kbfsanders@googlemail.com]. Mark Hanna is a lecturer at the University of Sheffield, UK [email: m.hanna@sheffield.ac.uk]. María Rosa Berganza is senior lecturer at University Rey Juan Carlos, Madrid [email: mrberganza@yahoo.es]. José Javier Sánchez Aranda is professor at the University of Navarra, Pamplona [email: jsaranda@unav.es].

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This development has prompted scholarly interest in journalism education along two main lines of enquiry. First, researchers have begun to examine the history and structures of systems of national journalism education, to delineate factors influencing journalists' work. Stephenson and Mory's (1990) pioneering survey of journalism education institutions in EU member states formed the basis for work by Fröhlich and Holtz-Bacha (1993), who used both survey and interview data to map the state of European journalism education. Subsequently, a broader range of case studies noted the heterogeneity of European journalism education and the possibility that this indicated 'the heterogeneity of the role and functions ascribed to journalists in different countries' (Fröhlich and Holtz-Bacha, 2003: 319). The authors concluded that: 'The way journalists are educated influences their self-perception. Their self-perception and their role in society lead to differences in journalistic practice' (Fröhlich and Holtz-Bacha, 2003: 319). These strong assumptions are key to a second line of enquiry in such research, which examines journalism education's impact and ultimately the issue of whether journalism education matters (see Becker, 2003: xvi). This seemingly simple question requires a great deal of unpacking: journalism education, through its relationship to the formation of journalists' views and attitudes and their subsequent likely impact on journalism content, is just one among a myriad of possibly stronger influences on journalism output (see Zhu et al., 1997).

Caution is required in making claims about the influences and effects of journalism education, given the complexity and weight of other systemic factors including, for example, the employment opportunities open to students after graduation.<sup>1</sup> The lack of research in this field, particularly from a non-American perspective, means there are limited data available to aid reflection on curriculum design.

Establishing the influence of journalism education on journalism principles and practice requires various streams of evidence including, for example, the study of the views of journalism students themselves, comparison of data in a cross-national context and with results from surveys of journalists and, best of all, with data obtained from longitudinal studies. Oliver Boyd-Barrett (1970) initiated British study in this field with his research into journalism training and recruitment; Navas and Sánchez (1995) began similar work in Spain. The first systematic and comparative research was published by Splichal and Sparks in their 22-country study of journalism students, sampled in 1987 and 1988, to examine the 'motivations, expectations, and professionalization tendencies among first-year students of journalism in universities or equivalent institutions' (Splichal and Sparks, 1994: 1). But cross-national surveys of journalism students remain rare.<sup>2</sup> This is the

background to our study. It takes Britain and Spain as the comparative starting points for an examination of, first, who journalism students are; second, why they want to be journalists and of what kind; and third, their views of news media roles and ethics set in the context of what we know about each country's journalists' views of such matters.

### Journalism education in Britain and Spain

Thirty-five years ago journalism training in Britain took place at six non-university centres on courses in basic journalism skills, accredited by the print industry-funded body, the National Council for the Training of Journalists (NCTJ). The view of many newspaper executives at the time was that academically educated recruits were not wanted in their newsrooms, because 'few graduates make satisfactory employees' (Boyd-Barrett, 1970: 192–3). Despite this, in 1970 Cardiff became the first British university since 1939 to teach journalism when it introduced a one-year postgraduate programme (Delano, 2001: 143).<sup>3</sup> By early 2006, such programmes were offered by 27 British universities. Undergraduate journalism programmes were launched in Britain in the mid-1990s. By early 2006, 38 universities offered journalism as a single subject first degree, and a further 27 offered first degrees combining some element of journalism with other subjects.<sup>4</sup>

Spanish journalism education has also undergone a transformation over the last 30 years. In the Spain of the 1970s of the Franco's regime continued to exercise nominal control over entry into journalism. The granting of state recognition to university journalism programmes in 1971 led to the establishment of Faculties of Ciencias de la Información at Madrid's Complutense University, the Autonomous University of Barcelona and the University of Navarra, which had pioneered university-based journalism education since 1958 (Navas and Sánchez, 1995). As in Britain, journalism and, more generally, media programmes in which students could specialize in print, broadcasting or advertising and public relations proved popular with students and therefore with university administrators. The growth in private universities also contributed to the sector's expansion in Spain: the number of university centres offering media degrees including journalism jumped from three in 1971 to over 30 at the beginning of the 21st century (Barrera and Vaz, 2003: 31). By 1999, 92 percent of Spanish journalists had a licentiate degree in journalism (Canel et al., 2000; see also García de Cortázar and García de León, 2000; Ortega and Humanes, 2000).

The rapid increase in university-based journalism programmes represents an important shift in the educational background of journalists and

may well, country by country, become an influential factor in any changes in journalism culture.

Why, apart from the intrinsic advantages of comparative research (see Blumler et al., 1992: 3–4), compare, in particular, journalism students from Britain and Spain? First, Weaver's (1998) data from journalists place these countries at the opposite extremes of some findings. His 21-country comparison of journalists' attitudes showed that the level of agreement about ethical norms within a country was highest in Spain and lowest in Britain. That research also showed that Britain was then the country with the lowest proportion of its workforce with a university-based journalism education – around 9 percent, as against the highest world figure of 87 percent for Spanish journalists (Henningham and Delano, 1998: 149; Weaver, 1998: 457; 2005: 47).

This and other research (discussed later) suggests some fundamental differences and similarities in national journalistic 'mindset'. For example, British journalists give greater importance to journalism's entertainment/relaxation function than do their Spanish counterparts. Also, Spanish journalists are much less inclined than the British to consider the reporting of private morality a suitable subject for political news (see Canel and Piqué, 1998; Henningham and Delano, 1998; Sanders, 2004). There are also similarities. Canel and Sanders (2006) found, for example, shared understandings of journalism's ethical imperative to expose wrongdoing. Also, journalists from both countries accord great importance to journalism's information transmission function (see Canel and Piqué, 1998; Henningham and Delano, 1998). Our study explores whether these differences and similarities in journalistic culture are already apparent in British and Spanish students' views and attitudes on or shortly after arrival on university journalism programmes, at which stage such journalism education has had no or very little direct influence on them.

Second, journalism education developed along quite different paths in both countries prompting the question as to whether the longer tradition in Spain of university-based journalism education, and its emphasis on discussion of journalism's wider role in society, has contributed to a wider cultural understanding emphasizing journalism's public service role and, if so, whether such emphasis can be discerned in the 'arrival' views of Spanish students, compared to those of British students.

Third, Hallin and Mancini (2004) argue that political, cultural, economic and social differences between northern and southern European countries have had consequences for their respective media cultures. They identified distinctive patterns of systemic relationships characterized as the Liberal Model for Anglo-American countries and the Polarized Plural Model

in the case of southern Europe (Hallin and Mancini, 2004: 11). In the latter the media culture is typically politicized, and journalism has more literary roots, is less professionalized and mixes facts and comment to a greater degree than in the other models. The Liberal Model's media culture is characterized by greater journalistic autonomy and professionalization, and by a less political and politicized kind of mass-market journalism (see Hallin and Mancini, 2004: 73–5; Mancini, 2005). Can differences of these kinds be detected in students' views about news media roles and journalism ethics, and in their reasons for wanting to be journalists?

### Methodological issues

This research is based on the results of a 46-question survey administered on arrival to two waves of a total of 653 British first-year undergraduate students in 2002 and 2003 and to one wave of a total of 196 Spanish undergraduates in 2002 commencing journalism studies. A combination of purposive and convenience sampling was used. Institutions were selected where staff were willing to help administer the survey, with undergraduate programmes that seek to prepare students for a journalism career by imparting vocational skills, within the academic, intellectual context of higher education. This produced a good geographical spread across Britain, at 10 universities.

The survey was administered in Spanish universities to a more limited student population, albeit one representing a sample drawn from the two principal types of institution – the private and public university – offering journalism education. One is a non-metropolitan university with the longest established journalism studies course in the country, and the other a relatively new metropolitan-based institution.<sup>5</sup>

The students were given an anonymous self-completion questionnaire during induction meetings, or within their programme's first few weeks. The response rate was approximately 79 percent in Britain and 75 percent in Spain. The survey questions cover a broad range of issues (media consumption, job expectations and aspirations, political views, etc.). This study examines the responses to a selection of these questions related to aspects of students' personal backgrounds, views on journalism roles and ethics and career motivations and expectations.

The survey makes use of two questionnaire formats in which journalists are asked to assign importance to various news media roles or state their ethical view on various methods used by journalists to obtain information.<sup>6</sup> These data are compared with those collected, using these formats, from British news journalists in what remains the most recent major

survey of this type (Delano and Henningham, 1995; Henningham and Delano, 1998) and with survey findings of the views of Spanish journalists (Canel and Piqué, 1998).<sup>7</sup>

## Comparing the students

### *Personal characteristics*

The questionnaire asked each student to state if they were sure they wanted to be a journalist, a career defined in the questionnaire as including 'fields such as newspapers, TV and radio production, news websites, magazines, public relations and working in press offices'. Around 1 percent of students from both countries replied that they definitely did not want to be journalists and so were excluded from samples analysed in this research.

In Britain, 90 percent of the total number of respondents were aged 20 or under compared to 73 percent in Spain.<sup>8</sup> The gender ratio among the Spanish students was 63 percent female, 37 percent male, compared to 58 percent female, 42 percent male in the British sample. The ratio in the British journalist workforce has been reported as 51 percent female, 49 percent male (Journalism Training Forum, 2002: 4) and as 37 percent female and 63 percent male among Spanish journalists (Soler, 2004). Sixty-five percent of the British students had a professional, managerial or technical family background as against 37 percent for the population as a whole. Eight percent of the British students described their family occupational background as partly skilled or unskilled. In Spain, 41 percent of students had a professional home background with significantly larger proportions of students than their British counterparts having skilled manual, partly skilled or unskilled home backgrounds. In the latter case, for example, 11 percent of Spanish students had unskilled family backgrounds as against 3 percent of British students.

The same proportion of students said they would vote for a specific political party, around 63 percent in both countries; 14 percent in Spain and 10 percent in Britain would vote for the main right-of-centre party, compared to 41 percent in Spain who would vote for the main left-of-centre party and 22 percent in Britain.<sup>9</sup> The major difference was in the level of support declared for third parties: 32 percent in the UK and 10 percent in Spain. The levels of students who did not know who they would vote for were similar: in Spain, 12 percent said they would not vote at all or register an invalid vote compared to 8 percent in Britain who said they would not vote.<sup>10</sup>

*Wanting to be journalists*<sup>11</sup>

The questionnaire asked the students an open question: What is the *main reason* you want to be a journalist? Replies were coded into six categories of motive (see Table 1). In both countries, the greatest proportion of students gave responses falling into category two – ‘journalism is the most desirable or suitable occupation for me’. Few students in either country gave a good income or good prospects as a main reason. Compared to British students, only a tiny proportion of Spanish students gave a ‘main reason’ falling into the non-routine category (category one) or the creative category (category three): 3 percent as against around 26 percent for category one and 2 percent

**Table 1** What is your main reason for wanting to be a journalist?

		<i>Spanish students</i>		<i>British students</i>	
		2002	2002	2002	2003
Category one: non-routine, non-conventional, sociable	Count	6	72	96	
	%	3%	26%	25%	
Category two: most desirable/suitable occupation for me	Count	111	133	180	
	%	56%	48%	48%	
Category three: a creative occupation, love of writing, etc.	Count	3	80	97	
	%	2%	29%	25%	
Category four: scope for self-education	Count	8	18	22	
	%	4%	7%	6%	
Category five: good prospects, good income	Count	0	6	4	
	%	0%	2%	1%	
Category six: public service (generally expressed, excluding responses in category seven)	Count	15	27	34	
	%	29%	10%	9%	
Category seven: public service – to reform/change society, campaign, investigate	Count	3	18	30	
	%	2%	7%	8%	
Category eight: other	Count	4	8	9	
	%	2%	2%	3%	



as against 27 percent for category three. Public service motives coded in categories six and seven were more likely to be given by Spanish students: 31 percent as against 17 percent of British students.

One of the survey questions asked: ‘Which of the following jobs interest you most?’ A range of options was provided, varying slightly in each country to reflect national differences (see Table 2). The three options for British students – sport, news, features – were chosen to reflect findings in pilot studies that many male undergraduates wanted, on arrival, to be sports reporters rather than news reporters.

The percentage of those wishing to become sports journalists was similar in both countries. There was a much greater proportion wishing to be feature writers in Britain (around 37 percent) compared to Spain (10 percent). The similarity in the proportion of males – around 39 percent in both countries – wishing to be sports reporters was very striking. A much lower proportion of women expressed interest in this job: 10 percent in Spain, 5 percent in Britain.

The survey (see Table 3) showed that 26 percent of British students compared to 3 percent of Spanish students see the magazine sector to be their career goal. Radio proved to be a far more popular career goal for the Spanish students, 28 percent compared to only 6 percent of British students. There was great realism in both countries about the likelihood that the first job will be on a local or regional newspaper, and a similar consensus that this media sector is not an ultimate career goal. The Internet, PR or press office work are not popular options in either country.

**Table 2** Which of the following jobs interest you most?

	<i>Spanish students</i> 2002	<i>British students</i> 2002	<i>British students</i> 2003
News reporter	30%	24%	21%
Sports reporter	21%	21%	19%
Writing or producing features	10%	36%	38%
Columnist	20%	– <sup>a</sup>	– <sup>a</sup>
Other	34%	11%	13%
Don't know	5%	6%	5%
Circled more than one category	1%	2%	4%

<sup>a</sup> Response option not given to British students.

**Table 3** First job and career ambition

	<i>Spanish students</i> 2002		<i>British students</i> 2002		<i>British students</i> 2003	
	<i>First job</i>	<i>Career goal</i>	<i>First job</i>	<i>Career goal</i>	<i>First job</i>	<i>Career goal</i>
Television	7%	18%	2%	15%	3%	22%
Radio	11%	28%	5%	4%	10%	6%
Local/regional newspaper	45%	3%	61%	2%	47%	2%
National newspaper	3%	30%	4%	24%	2%	19%
Magazine	3%	3%	10%	30%	13%	26%
Internet	5%	0%	3%	2%	2%	0%
News agency	6%	4%	0%	0%	1%	1%
PR/press office	1%	3%	2%	3%	4%	3%
Other	0%	1%	0%	1%	0%	0%
I don't know yet	20%	11%	13%	17%	17%	16%

Respondents were asked: 'In what sector do you think your *first job* in journalism is likely to be? What media sector is your career goal, where you would want to work for the rest of your career?' (Students were asked to indicate only one sector).

### *News media roles*

Henningham and Delano (1998) found that British news journalists strongly supported the information-transmitting role (A in Table 4), the analytical/interpretative role (B) and the investigative role (D). That sample of British journalists, who had a median age of 38, were also considerably more inclined to support the adversarial roles (I and J) than were American or Australian journalists (Henningham and Delano, 1998: 152–3). Canel and Piqué's (1998) work suggested that older Spanish journalists from the 1970s' transition period from dictatorship to democracy tended to have a strong advocacy orientation in which the roles of influencing the public (L) and championing ideas and beliefs were accorded great importance. Yet these views decreased in younger Spanish journalists who had come of age in democracy. They tended to be more in favour of factual, impartial reporting rather than the more interpretative reporting of the older generation and were also more in favour of adversarial journalism. In all age groups the information-transmitting role was considered very important by Spanish journalists, with 93 percent giving it the highest importance.

Compared to the British journalists, the British students expressed similar strong levels of support for the information-transmission role (A),

**Table 4** News media roles

	<i>Percentages of respondents answering 'extremely important'</i>			
	<i>Spanish students 2002 N = 196</i>	<i>British students 2002 N = 275</i>	<i>British students 2003 N = 378</i>	<i>British journalists 1994–5 N = 726</i>
A: Get information to the public quickly	62%	85%	87%	88%
B: Provide analysis and interpretation of complex problems	44%	51%	51%	83%
C: Provide entertainment and relaxation	9%	17%	27%	47%
D: Investigate claims and statements made by the government	45%	63%	64%	88%
E: Stay away from stories where factual content cannot be verified	31%	18%	24%	30%
F: Concentrate on news which is of interest to the widest possible audience	21%	31%	37%	45%
G: Discuss national policy while it is being developed	36%	39%	30%	64%
H: Develop intellectual and cultural interests of the public	55%	34%	36%	30%
I: Be an adversary to public officials by being constantly sceptical of their actions	28%	14%	9%	51%
J: Be an adversary of businesses by being constantly sceptical of their actions	22%	12%	9%	45%
K: To set the political agenda	17%	10%	10%	13%
L: Influence public opinion	19%	15%	12%	— <sup>a</sup>
M: Give ordinary people a chance to express their views on public affairs	36%	54%	54%	56%

Respondents were asked: 'The list below describes some of the things that the news media do or try to do. How important do you think each of these things is?'

'British journalists' are those surveyed in 1994 and 1995 by Henningham and Delano (1998).

<sup>a</sup>A question on this news role (L) was not included in Delano and Henningham's survey.

but lower levels for the analytical/interpretative role (B), the investigative role (D) and the policy discussion role (G). The Spanish students expressed even lower levels of support for the analytical/interpretative (B) and investigative (D) roles, but a similar level to that of British students in support for the policy discussion role (G). The data from British students show they were much less likely than British journalists to support the adversarial roles I and J, with only 11 percent and 10 percent of students considering these roles to be 'extremely important' as compared to the journalists' scores of 51 percent and 45 percent respectively. Spanish students, scoring 28 percent and 22 percent respectively, were rather more supportive of the adversarial roles (I and J) than British students. British students are apparently more puritan than British journalists as regards the entertainment role (C), only 23 percent regarding it as extremely important as compared to 47 percent of the journalists. However, the difference with the Spanish students, of whom only 9 percent thought it extremely important, was even greater.

The populist-mobilizer function,<sup>12</sup> as defined by more likely support for roles C, H, K and M, was most clearly supported by British journalists in the cases of roles C and M and by Spanish students in the case of role H – 'Develop intellectual and cultural interests of the public' – with 55 percent saying it is extremely important compared to 35 percent of British students and 30 percent of British journalists.

### *Journalism ethics*

As reported in earlier work (Ball et al., 2006), British students were more likely than British journalists to grant potential approval (see Table 5) for payment of sources (method 1), using hidden cameras or microphones (method 8), the use of actors in TV news recreations (method 10) and, in particular, claiming to be someone other than a journalist in order to obtain information (method 3 – 70 percent of British students indicated approval for such misrepresentation as against 47 percent of British journalists). Methods 3, 7 and 8 are frequently used by the British popular newspapers, and with method 10, frequently feature in investigative programmes on British television. Therefore, many students would have realized, prior to arrival at university, that an ethical licence exists for such methods. Similarly, it is common knowledge in Britain that the popular press pays for stories. In cases where the level of the British students' approval for such methods exceeded that of the British journalists, this may be a result of their youth and lack of professionalization. Weaver and Wilhoit (1996: 167) noted of American journalists that older, more

experienced practitioners ‘were slightly more likely [than younger journalists] to be cautious about the various reporting practices’.

As regards claiming to be someone other than a journalist, Spanish students were even more ‘gung ho’, with 80 percent saying that this method might be justified. But they were significantly more cautious than British students about approving using hidden cameras or microphones, and markedly more so about agreeing that the use of actors in TV news recreations may be justified: 21 percent of Spanish students thought this might be justified as against 84 percent of British students.

**Table 5** Journalism ethics

	<i>Percentages of respondents answering ‘may be justified’</i>			
	<i>Spanish students 2002</i>	<i>British students 2002</i>	<i>British students 2003</i>	<i>British journalists 1994–5</i>
1. Paying sources for information	70%	80%	75%	65%
2. Using confidential business/or government documents without authorization	44%	44%	30%	86%
3. Claiming to be someone other than a journalist in order to obtain information	88%	77%	65%	47%
4. Agreeing to protect confidentiality and not doing so	8%	9%	5%	9%
5. Badgering unwilling informants in order to get a story	51%	44%	43%	59%
6. Using personal documents such as letters and photographs without permission	— <sup>a</sup>	29%	21%	49%
7. Becoming employed in a firm or organization in order to gain inside information	73%	80%	77%	80%
8. Using hidden microphones or cameras	66%	89%	82%	73%
9. Disclosing names of rape victims	8%	7%	7%	11%
10. In television journalism, using actors in recreations or dramatizations of news events	20%	85%	83%	78%

<sup>a</sup>A question on this method (6) was not included in the Spanish survey.

It is noticeable that for certain practices – using confidential business or government documents without authorization (method 2), and badgering unwilling informants in order to get a story (method 5) – students from both countries recorded lower levels of approval than those of the British journalists, especially as regards method 2. Similarly, British students recorded a lower level of approval than British journalists for using personal documents such as letters and photographs without permission (method 6).

Protection of sources and non-disclosure of the names of rape victims appear to have quasi-canonical status among both Spanish and British students with British journalists showing a slightly more liberal attitude regarding the latter: 11 percent thought it may be justified to reveal the names of rape victims compared to 8 percent of Spanish students and 7 percent of British students.

## Discussion

### *Journalism students' backgrounds*

Spanish journalism students were slightly more likely to be female, and were from a wider range of social backgrounds than their British counterparts. This may be in part due to the longer tradition of wide access to higher education in Spain. In Britain improving access for underrepresented social groups is a main plank of Labour government education policy but, judging from this study, has not yet been realized in journalism studies.

Supporters of right-of-centre parties were minorities in both countries. Support for the main left-of-centre party was higher in Spain than in Britain. There was more support for third parties in Britain. These findings have to be placed in the political context of the survey years. In Britain, Labour was in power and in 2003 had embarked, with Conservative party support, on a controversial war in Iraq, which many young people opposed. This may have increased support for the Liberal Democrat party, the third force in British politics, which condemned the war. In Spain, the conservative Partido Popular was the governing party in 2002 and had already made plain its backing for Bush's Iraqi policies despite overwhelming public disapproval. The modest level of support for Spanish third parties probably owes much to the geographical scope of the Spanish sample, which did not include universities in Catalonia or the Basque heartland, where support for separatist parties is greater.

*Career ambitions and motivations*

Comparing students' career ambitions and motivations produces some interesting differences between the two national groups. A 'soft news' style characterized by a preference for feature writing, magazine journalism and a wish to channel creative energies into a sociable, non-routine career is more strongly associated with British students. Spanish students were more likely to opt for a 'hard news' career, with the broadcast sectors figuring prominently among their career goals, and almost double the number, compared to British students, gave a public service motive as being their main reason for wanting to be a journalist. However, there were also strong similarities. Neither group was motivated by material gain or attracted to jobs in the new media sector.

*News media roles and ethics*

Examining views about news media roles in relation to Weaver and Wilhoit's analysis of attitudinal clusters shows that Spanish students were somewhat more adversarial in outlook than the British students were. It may be that this difference reflects the fact that Spain, until the 1970s, had no democracy, and that a deeper distrust exists in Spain – with its strong regional identities – of a centralized officialdom, whereas the British political climate, over the timescale in which British students have been old enough to be aware of it, has (apart from the controversy over the 2003 Iraq invasion) been generally without fierce polarization within the populace over key policies and freedoms. Tony Blair and his 'New Labour' dominated much of the centre ground of British politics, creating, for much of this time, a broad consensus.

It may be that for both Spanish and British students, professionalization, within their journalism education and, for those who become journalists, later within newsrooms, will make their attitudes more adversarial as they experience the frustrations of dealing with officialdom and corporate spokespeople.

It should be noted too that the British journalists surveyed by Henningham and Delano became adults during the fiercely polarized British political climate of the late 1960s, 1970s and 1980s, a time of radical protest, and economic and social upheaval, and that their higher level of support for the adversarial roles may reflect this.

As regards the investigative role, there does not seem an obvious explanation for this lower level of support among the Spanish students, though the British tradition of investigative reporting possibly has, because of Britain's longer democratic tradition, its decades of highly competitive

national newspapers (see later) and regular use of investigative techniques on television, greater cultural prominence. It may be, too, that some Spanish students' resistance to the idea of the importance of journalistic 'interpretation' is in part because of the term's association with the filtered and censored journalism of the Franco era, in which case our study may have detected in Spain the same generational shift discovered by Canel and Piqué (1998) among younger journalists.

Spanish students were also less supportive than British students of the populist/mobilizer function. This last cluster can be further disaggregated to create a 'populist' cluster consisting of roles C (provide entertainment/relaxation) and M (give ordinary people a chance to express their views on public affairs). Here a clear difference is distinguishable: the British – journalism students and journalists – were more likely to be populists whereas the Spanish would appear to have a more high-minded view of journalism's role. There may be cultural factors at work here: perhaps, having enjoyed stable democracy for longer, the British are more willing to acknowledge that journalism can embrace entertainment as well as its more 'serious' roles. Structural factors may well be a distinct influence, in which the market realities of each country's media produces journalism that influences the attitudes of students aiming to join the industry (and indeed, may attract some types of personality, more than others, as potential recruits to such journalism). British national newspapers dominate the country's news agenda, and are highly competitive (Tunstall, 1996), and therefore keen to claim 'exclusive' investigative stories. Britain has a lively, mass circulation populist newspaper sector in which opinions and sensationalized news stories, including many about celebrities, are often expressed with great vigour, little restraint or subtlety, and often – as regards its targets – with ridicule laced with humour. This is in contrast to Spain's much smaller and more high-brow newspaper market, which, according to Barrera and Vaz (2003: 39), is considered to have had a significant role in 'the construction of a peaceful democratic system in the post-Franco era', one factor contributing to the social esteem enjoyed by Spanish print journalists as compared to their British counterparts (see European Commission, 2004). For more recent Spanish generations, this impression may have been reinforced by newspapers' roles in uncovering political scandal in the 1990s, though the British press too has a track record in this field (see Sanders and Canel, 2006).

As regards journalism ethics, the Spanish students were considerably more cautious than the British students in relation to the use of actors in TV recreations and of those particular tools of investigative journalism, hidden microphones and cameras. As we note earlier, differences in the journalistic



cultures of these countries may explain some such differences. Yet overall our research shows a similarity in British and Spanish students' views, as regards the support accorded to most of the reporting practices listed. Where their levels of responses differ from that of the British journalists, some of this similarity between Spanish and British students can, we feel, be attributed to their shared youth and lack of professionalization. But there remains the possibility that those university students, in both these countries, who become journalists will continue to view news media roles and ethics differently from the older, British generations of journalists.

### Conclusions

This study's findings on Spanish and British students' views on news media roles and ethics and their career ambitions and motivations suggest that the mix of the influences at work on students' outlooks include the particular generational political and national culture, the structure of and perceived practices of each country's media industry, and the students' lack of professional experience and their youth – because the changed outlooks that come with age can be deemed to be a general, worldly influence distinct from professionalization. Spanish students were more adversarial than their British counterparts and less supportive of the importance of providing entertainment and relaxation. This 'serious' Spanish conception of journalism is confirmed elsewhere in our data, in that Spanish students were, compared to the British students, more likely to express a motive of public service and much less likely to express a motive linked to the variety/sociability of the career, or to a love of writing. The latter motive was the second largest category in the responses of British students.

The greater public service orientation of Spanish students compared to their British counterparts corresponds with the findings for each country's journalists. This and other related findings suggest that, within each nation, shared cultural understandings of journalism's roles and practices are already significantly influential before students embark on their education. The effects of these cultural understandings of journalism, together with real-life experience of the media, may in fact be far more powerful in shaping attitudes and aspirations of future journalists than journalism education.

This tentative conclusion is supported by the fact that the students' mindsets already reflect characteristics of the southern European and 'Anglo-American' models of journalism delineated by Hallin and Mancini (2004). They point to the literary origins of European journalism influential today – particularly in relation to print journalism – in four specific respects: orientation to an elite audience; news selection privileging high culture and politics;

polished language in which factual reporting is interlaced with comment and interpretation; and the professional aspiration to be more than a simple reporter and form part of the intellectual world. For example, it is clear from our research that, even before journalism education begins, Spanish and British students have different views about the 'populist' role of the media, echoing aspects of the Hallin–Mancini typology. Journalism, in the Spanish view, is more about public service and education than public entertainment and representation. However, our findings also indicate disparities with the southern European/Anglo-American models. For example, Spanish students gave less importance to the interpretative function of journalists than UK journalists and students, despite its alleged importance in the southern European journalism model; this, together with the significant level of consensus about journalism ethics, suggests converging understandings of journalism's roles and practices among those who aspire to be journalists in Spain and Britain. Further research will be necessary to see whether this contributes to the convergence of the southern European and Anglo-American models of journalism.

In conclusion, the close similarities between the responses of the two British 'waves' of students to most of the questions on news media roles and journalism ethics indicate that the survey questionnaire used can robustly measure such views in each generation of arriving undergraduates, though qualitative work is needed to explore this more fully and survey research in other cultural contexts is needed too.

Future work, surveying the views and attitudes of these student cohorts shortly before they complete their journalism programmes, is being undertaken to see if data thus gained can help measure any effect of that education. This study is the first step in a wider comparative and longitudinal project aiming to understand the role of journalism education in the matrix of factors influencing the development and practice of journalism.

## Notes

1. Evidence from the universities in our study suggests a similar pattern between Spain and Britain as regards 'entry' jobs: journalism graduates generally find their first job in local and regional media.
2. Apart from our study of British and Spanish students, cross-national research into journalism students in Nordic countries has recently been conducted by the 'the Hovdabrekka group', see Bjørnsen et al. (2007).
3. From 1919 to 1939, the University of London ran a pioneering, diploma programme in journalism. It was suspended because of the Second World War and was not subsequently relaunched.
4. There is no centralized record of British postgraduate programmes. Our statistics derive from searches made in January 2006 of university websites, the

Association for Journalism Education site ([www.ajeuk.org](http://www.ajeuk.org)) and websites of accrediting organizations. Statistics on the number of British undergraduate degrees derive from searches made on 4 January 2006 of the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service website ([www.ucas.co.uk](http://www.ucas.co.uk)).

5. The British institutions were Bournemouth, Central England, Cumbria Institute of the Arts, Liverpool John Moores, London College of Communication, Napier, Nottingham Trent, Sheffield, Sunderland and Surrey Institute. The Spanish universities were Carlos III of Madrid and the University of Navarra. We are grateful to staff at these institutions.
6. These are based respectively on the format used in the US (pioneered by Johnstone et al., 1976) and that by Donsbach (1983) and Kocher (1986) in Germany and Britain.
7. Two methodological differences should be noted: first, Henningham and Delano's survey was a telephone not postal survey; second, Canel and Piqué (1998) did not use the same format as Henningham and Delano, therefore their data are not directly comparable and are not included in the tables.
8. In the Spanish sample, 20 percent of students had begun their journalism studies after either having completed the first two years of their licentiate degree on a different programme or having previously completed a degree.
9. The Partido Popular and the Conservative Party are the main conservative parties and PSOE (the Spanish Socialist Workers' Party) and the Labour Party the main left-wing ones.
10. This question was left blank by 5 percent of Spanish students and 12 percent of British students. Spanish pre-tests showed that a number of students considered the question to be excessively personal.
11. When alluding to the survey response percentages for the British students we have, for simplicity, used the response rates derived from treating the 2002 and 2003 'waves' as one sample (of 653 students). The data in the tables, to ensure transparency, continue to display them as two samples, and therefore the response rates in them differ slightly from those in the text.
12. Weaver and Wilhoit (1996: 125–76) discerned attitudinal clusters in their sample and termed these:
  - The *interpretative/investigative* function – journalists more likely to attribute importance to roles B, D and G.
  - The *populist-mobilizer* function – more likely to support roles C, H, K and M.
  - The *disseminator* function – more likely to support A and E.
  - The *adversarial* function – more likely to support I and J.

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