PROFESSIONAL SELF-IMAGE OF THE CZECH JOURNALISTS: SELECTED ATTRIBUTES [1]

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ABSTRACT
Habits, professional standards, routines, as well as the opinions of "press people" can offer at least partial answers to questions dealing with journalists as a specific socio-professional community. The article is based upon a survey of Czech journalists performed between the years 2003 and 2005 and its aim is to trace the basic types of their "professional self-definition". The results suggest that along with traditional approaches of the journalistic profession (the "educational", "advocate/adversarial" and "neutral/objective" types of journalists), there is a subgroup stressing a distinctive "career/pragmatic" approach to the role of being a journalist. Journalism is understood as an individual development tool, as a "fast track" towards an individual career (not only within the journalistic profession) by this subgroup.

KEY WORDS
Czech journalists – journalistic profession – mass media – professionalization – professional values – professional self-image – professional self-definition

> In common with all demagogues (..)the journalist shares the fate of lacking a fixed social classification (..).The journalist belongs to a sort of pariah caste, which is always estimated by "society" in terms of its ethically lowest representative. Hence, the strangest notions about journalists and their work are abroad.
>
> Max Weber
> Politics as a Profession (1918/19)

Since establishing the independent Czechoslovak Republic, the social role of Czech journalists has been confronted with so many political power shifts and twists that, with certain overstatement, it is possible to describe the story of this group as a history of continuous attempts for professional emancipation, which always with inevitable regularity ended back at its beginning. There are only few professions whose professional cannons and rules have changed in the last seventy years so often as in the case of journalist profession's regular submission of the power-ideal "clean-up". Inevitably, the eras marked by the years 1939, 1945, 1948, and 1968 always brought inescapably "new" ideologically motivated

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redefinitions of the professional journalistic role. That role underwent its last transformation after 1989, when a dramatic institutional and professional change appeared, starting with the collapse of the media production organisation and its political control. The ownership structure of the media was newly reconstituted and the composition of the professional community of journalists was changed: many journalists left their profession, while others adapted to new circumstances. Furthermore, a large number of experience journalists returned to their profession after a twenty-year involuntary break, and a new generation of beginner journalists appeared.All of them were confronted with two key trends, which transcend into the frame of the Czech media domain – with the rapid arrival of new information and communication technology and the strengthening of economic and cultural globalization, which significantly accelerated the process of the commercialization of the entire media sector. Later modern journalists are today forced to combine their traditional crucial role as news reporters and interpreters of social phenomena with the technical requirements and possibilities, which were provided by new communication technology. The work of journalists continues to have less so the characteristic of personal testimony or witness. It is presented more and more as a filling merely an administrative role in an alienated system of global communication. One of the consequences of this trend is also a gradual de-intellectualization of the journalist profession in the historical process of its incomplete professionalization.

With such background, the professional self-image of Czech journalists was newly shaped; that is, their relationship to their own profession, notions of its role, sense of (ir-)responsibility to society, owners of the media and to professional colleagues.

The aim of this paper is to offer fundamental information about the present state of the process of seeking professional self-definition.

1. Journalism as a profession?

Having examined the relevant literature in detail, one may find that there is not a single, generally accepted definition delineating what the profession is and what the professionalization process requires. There are various criteria applied (e.g. Willenski 1964; (Friedson 1994). The term "profession" itself causes problems. Some critics legitimately point out the fact that it may not be used as a neutral analytical category, since it de facto contains in itself an appraising or affirmative designation of the given activity. Some critics legitimately point out the fact that it may not be used as a neutral analytical category, since it de facto contains in itself an appraising or affirmative designation of the given activity.[2]

The debate whether the journalistic activity may be considered as a professional activity with stable and settled rules shared by an overwhelming majority of journalists has been going on intensively at least for over the past century, when the *professionalism* criterion became perceived as an institutional instrument of its social prestige.[3] Similar-

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2   At the same time, especially in the last few years, there has been more criticism to the process of professionalization, and above all because it leads to the monopolization of the performance of certain activities and in this sense causes social closure, respectively social exclusion (Larson 1977), and last but not least, it supports a trend of blind dependence on expert knowledge (Beck 2004).

3   The first attempts to reflect on the question of the professionalization of journalists can be traced back already at the end of the nineteenth century (e.g. Pendleton 1890, Lawrence 1903, and MacDonagh 1913), or especially in the first third of the previous century (Carr-Saunders – Willson 1933, and Rosten 1937). The systematic scientific research of the subject became a given theme only at the end of the sixties and particularly in the seventies of the last century (Tunstall 1970, 1971, Boyd-Barrett 1970, Matejko 1970, Johnston 1971, or Johnston – Slawski – Bowman 1973, 1976). Gradually, in a number of countries, studies were carried out, reflecting more or less

ly to other professions, journalism has also demonstrated motivation to reach a professional status. Journalists – professionals can monitor their community boundaries more efficiently and at the same time, their legitimacy when setting public agenda is higher. What is essential is not the effort to enhance the quality of the working performance itself, but rather to increase the prestige of the given professional community, which also leads to a higher job position stability, the option to plan further career development, and last but not least, economic benefits. In case of thus journalists, it may thus be claimed that their professional status allows them to increase the value of certain information sources which they dispose of and which have, de facto, a commodity character. As a result, their expert status is strengthened, and simultaneously, their labour market value is increased. At the same time, however, it has been demonstrated that professionalization leads to monopolising the practice of this profession, which has, as a result, a character of professional "defence mechanism" legitimating the profession's existence through unquestioning dependence on a certain type of expert knowledge. Therefore, *professional ideology* gradually develops leading to more or less unreflected "administrative" fulfilment of professional standards.

In general, it may be claimed that the term "profession" assumes mastering certain expertise on the basis of specialised preparation and training, providing a higher level of professional autonomy and social prestige but being, at the same time, an instrument how to limit access to the practice of the give profession. "Professionalization" is thus a process within the framework of which specific work activities obtain a professional status. It may be simply defined as a process of accepting attributes which, on a general level, have (a) *structural* and (b) *attitude-related* character, i.e. on one hand, they include a certain formal education level and requirements defining the conditions for joining the profession, and on the other hand, they are created through one's own attitude to the profession or to what a professional considers as a core of their job.

A journalist's professional model consists of its "technical" dimension based on systematic knowledge acquired through long-term preparation, whereas it is also derived from the extent to which professionals adapt to the set of norms and rules of the given profession. They determine not only the content of the term labelled as "technical competence" but also the content of the "provided service ideal". This model's particularity is thus given by the implied ambiguity manifesting itself in typical professional discrepancies: between professional freedom and dependence, between ideological character of published contents and the effort to reflect them critically, between following private (particular) interests and public service, or between mechanical practice of their profession and creative freedom.

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upon the theme of the professionalization of journalists at the level of nation-state (Windahl – Rosengren 1978, Kepplinger – Vohl 1976, and Wilhoit – Weaver 1996). What is interesting in this sense, for instance, is the comparative study of Patterson, Donsbach (1996), who offer a comparison of American, British, Italian, German, and Swedish journalists and their professional approaches. In the countries of the former Eastern block, it is necessary to mention the research of Curry (1990) ("Polish journalist"), Brečková and Šrámek (1991), and Holina (1997) ("Slovak journalist") and the German research of Böckelmann and Mahle (1994) and Schneider, Schönbach a Stürzebecher (1994), who analyzed the situation of East German journalists after the unification of the two countries. The aforesaid listing is certainly not exhaustive and its aim is to imply that the given theme has been a relative scientific problem for a number of years in numerous countries. Attempts to reflect the position of Czech journalists appeared only in survey carried out in 1967 and 1991. Their methodological limitations, however, do not allow for the given data to be used for comparison with the situation abroad, nor with the research that we carried out during the years 2002-2004.

It was the classical text published by Penn Kimball (1965) that illustrated such tension: the author asks a question whether journalism is "an art, craft or profession". To some extent, Kimball anticipated the professional journalistic typology developed by John Merril (1977) in the late 1970s, distinguishing between "*scientific*" and "*artistic*" journalism, thus separating basic journalistic functions, i.e. neutral and analytical (interpretative).

The above mentioned discrepancies or ambiguities have resulted in the situation when a large number of scholars and journalists themselves tend to incline to the opinion that a journalist's job may be considered as a semi-profession only, with a typical feature being a very liberal attitude towards professional standards (Wilhoit, Weaver 1996; Hoyer-Epp 1994). In both cases, it may be argued that journalism does not meet most professionalization assumptions, or meets them only conditionally.[4]

2. Professional self-image: theoretical and research frame

Sociological research engaging in the typology of a professional role or the professional self-image of journalists is relatively abundant embodies many quantitative and qualitative studies Amongst the most important belongs the research of Johnston, Slawski and Bowman. (1976: 122-123) The authors distinguish two elemental professional types – "*neutrals*" and "*participants*".[5] The first pursue the "nothing-but-the-truth" criterion and consider their task to "*bring only news that can be verified and presented in the way that does not reflect the personal values of the writer (author)*". The second type journalists follow the "whole-truth" criterion and for them the typical pursuit is to "*seek all relevant news and prepare the coverage with sufficient care and thoroughness, so that all important information is presented*". According to this approach, journalists form their professional identity in relation to the first or second concept. After eleven years, Wilhoit and Weaver (1996) revised the original Johnston typology and came up with three types, which were labelled as "*disseminator*", "*interpreter*" and "*adversarial*". The first type corresponds to Johnston's "neutral" type, although there is greater emphasis on the speed of informing the broadest public. The second type is near to Johnston's "participant"; however, emphasizing the expository, interpretational role of journalists. The last one presents the professional self-image of journalists who prefer a critical view on government and political representatives and. Both studies agree though, that pure types are represented very rarely.

Besides these most commonly cited studies, one can come across a number of terminological variants of the given types and their explanation. As a whole, the existence of two typological variants stem from the research performed into journalists' professional self-image: the type who sees their role as a "mirror" reflecting reality and the type whose key task is considered to be an "interpretative" picture capturing all that is in the mirror. A more detailed analysis then shows that only a very small amount of journalists fit into "pure types". What is shown is that journalists are far more pluralist- orientated then any scale can encapsulate.

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4   It includes (1) skills based on theoretic knowledge, (2) completing specialized training and work experience, (3) formal validation of competence as a member of the profession, (4) existence of (professional) organization, (5) respecting the professional code of job activities, and (6) service altruism.

5   Janowitz uses a similar typology (1975), however, he distinguishes between a "neutral" a "processor", and instead of a "participant", he speaks of an "advocate", who advocates the rights of those who have no one to speak for them.

3. The research goal and data source

As indicated, the goal of this paper is to outline the basic contours of the professional self-image (self-images) of Czech journalists.[6] Thus, we will focus attention on Czech journalists' notion of their professional role, respectively of the value that they connect to it. Our aim is to offer to discussion at least a rough outline of "Czech journalists" relationship to their work, their social role, and significance.

In constructing the category *professional self-image* of journalists, we proceeded in part from the aforementioned studies, and we utilized some batteries of questions which are regularly used in identifying categories of professional roles. Subsequently, we attempted, in the qualitative section of the research, to take into account that present-day Czech journalism is to a certain degree formulated both through the experience and conception of journalism before the fall of the "old regime" and the transformative experiences in journalists' work in the 1990s, characterized above all by taking over the professional values accentuating the conceptions of journalists' work as a marketing tool designed to capture attention. The journalist's professional self-image is thus perceived as a complex web of subjective and intersubjective attitudes, motivated by both professional experience and life projections, and a sense of historical professional context.

The main research question, posed in this sense, concerns both the *relationship of Czech journalists to the selected attributes of their professional activities, thus testing indirectly to what degree domestic journalists accept the selected professional assumptions, and at the same time, it aims to seek to what degree Czech journalists differ in the selected aspects from their international colleagues.*

Since in the Czech Republic, there has not been any reliable database outlining basic information about the socio-demographic structure of domestic journalists, we had to define the basic sample separately. In order to define the sample, we utilized the database of Czech printed and audio-visual media on the national and regional level. The selected criteria were a marked share in the media in current reporting-publication production for the general public.[7] The category of journalists as a basic unity of analysis was defined according to the majority conception indicated in international studies as an *editorial member, who directly shares in the formulation of the editorial agenda as their full-time or part-time work.* The basic sample, defined as described, consisted of 2,585 journalists (see tables 1 and, 2).

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6   The analyzed data are a part of a broader project "The Czech Journalist", which includes: a) survey amongst journalists (the collection of data was carried out during the period June – September 2003), b) survey amongst adult population, and c) in-depth interviews with selected journalists.

7   The basic sample consisted of 109 editorial offices, or mass media. The authors excluded life style magazines and minor periodicals (bi-monthly and monthly), leisure-time magazines and titles / stations with an explicit interest or genre orientation (such as music radio stations and so forth). On the basis of this generated list, the authors addressed in writing individual editorial offices and invited them to fill out a screening questionnaire which included information about basic socio-demographic characteristics of journalists working in the given media. The following indicators were observed: a) number of members in the editorial office, b) sex, c) education, d) age, e) work position, and f) number of contributors without employee relations.

table 1: The Structure of the basic sample from the viewpoint of socio-demographic characteristics

Sex	%	N	Age	%	N	Education	%	N
Male	60%	1510	18–29 yrs	34.8%	900	University degree	47.9%	1238
Female	40%	1075	30–39 yrs	30.9%	799	University degree unfinished	3.8%	135
			40–49 yrs	18.8%	486	Studying at university	5.2%	99
			50–59 yrs	13.0%	336	High School	40.9%	1057
			60 +	2.5%	64	Basic Education	2.2%	56
Total	100%	2585		100%	2585		100%	2585

table 2: Representation of journalists in the basic sample from the viewpoint of organizational and technical criteria

Work position	%	N	Type of media	%	N	Coverage of the media	%	N
Management position	19%	491	Printed	63%	1603	Nationwide	71%	1835
Employee	81%	2094	Audiovisual	37%	982	Regional and local	29%	750
Total	100%	2585		100%	2585		100%	2585

In the third phase we formed – using a projection from the basic sample – a structure of potential respondents who, according to the basic socio-demographic characteristics (sex, education, and age), type (print/audiovisual) and range (nationwide and regional) of media, represented as a whole the basic sample (see Charts 3 and 4). 406 journalists were questioned.[8]

table 3: Structure of the probability sample from the viewpoint of chosen socio-demographic characteristics (projection created on the basis of the structure of the population)

Sex	%	N	Age	%	N	Education	%	N
Male	60%	243	18–29 yrs	37%	149	University	48%	192
Female	40%	163	30–39 yrs	30%	122	High School	50%	206
			40–49 yrs	20%	81	Basic	2%	8
			50–59 yrs	11%	46			
			60 +	2%	8			
Total	100%	406		100%	406		100%	406

table 4: Representation of journalists in the probability sample from the viewpoint of organizational and technical criteria (projection created on the basis of the structure of the population)

Work Position	%	N	Type of media	%	N	Scope of media	%	N
Management position	19%	79	Printed	63%	257	Nationwide	71%	287
Employee	81%	327	Audiovisual	37%	149	Regional and local	29%	119
Total	100%	406		100%	406		100%	406

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8   The survey itself was carried out by well-trained interviewers, who addressed individual respondents according to the quota lists comprising the above-mentioned indicators. The questioning was mostly carried out in the editorial offices and the average length of the interview did not exceed sixty minutes.

4. Professional self-image: basic factors

What results from the above-mentioned discussion (or rather dispute) is that each definition measuring the professionalization of journalist's occupation is only provisional. In other words, it always concerns a relative measure of a given journalist group, at a given time and in relation to the most used communicative technology. Thus, in our study we do not speak of some firmly standing corpus of professional criteria, rather about a professional self-image or self-definition, which is indicative of the relation journalists have to selected professional attributes. These were selected such that they enabled a comparison with similar foreign research and concurrently set up a way for following the transformations of this professional self-definition.

In general, it can be claimed that Czech journalists do not over-idealize their profession. As indicated in the semantic differentials (see table 5) and in in-depth interviews, domestic journalists have some doubts, especially in regards to maintaining the ethical standards of journalistic activities (more in graph 1).

table 5: Which of the following characteristics comes to your mind when you imagine the average Czech journalist?[9]

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Useful	13%	36%	29%	15%	4%	3%	0%	**Useless**
Important	14%	36%	27%	16%	6%	3%	0%	**Unnecessary**
Educated	6%	26%	32%	18%	13%	5%	1%	**Uneducated**
Responsible	7%	24%	26%	22%	15%	6%	0%	**Irresponsible**
Moral	5%	17%	31%	32%	10%	6%	0%*	**Immoral**
Politically unengaged	9%	27%	16%	32%	12%	5%	0%*	**Politically engaged**
Independent	8%	20%	21%	30%	13%	8%	1%	**Dependent**
Politically independent	6%	20%	20%	33%	14%	6%	1%	**Politically dependent**
Incorruptible	6%	16%	19%	34%	16%	9%	1%	**Corruptible**

*N = 1

graph 1: Which of the following characteristics comes to your mind when you imagine the average Czech journalist? (mean values)

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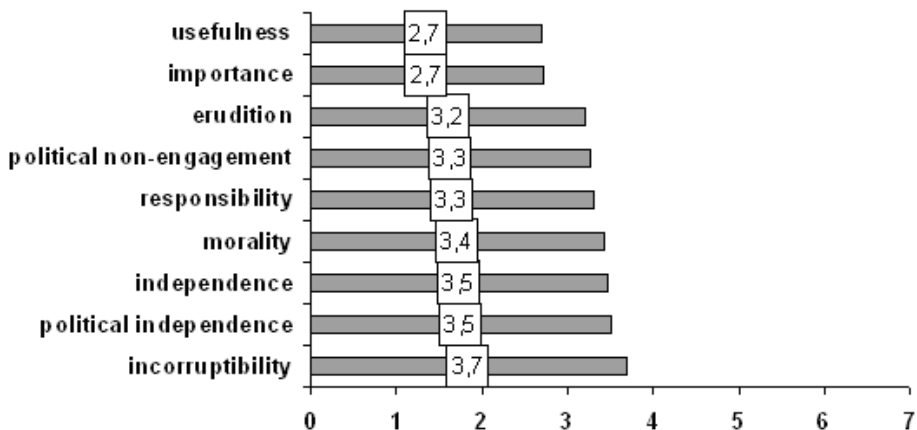
9   At the end of the interview, the technique of a semantic differential was used. The respondents were asked to attempt to associate selected characteristics with the average Czech journalist.

The mentioned doubts are also implied even in the distribution in the response to the question "*what kind of influence should journalists have on the formation of public opinion.*" A large majority of the respondents considered the actual role of journalists as formers of public opinion as strong (85%); however, only half of the journalists agreed with this (51%). (See table 6.)

table 6: Real and ideal influence of journalists on the formation of public opinion (N=406)

	Very strong								Very weak		Ø
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
What is the influence of journalists on the formation of public opinion	18%	28%	27%	12%	8%	4%	1%	1%	0%	0%	2,9
What influence should journalists have on the formation of public opinion	4%	12%	18%	17%	26%	9%	6%	6%	1%	0%	4,4

The quantitative image of *professional self-image* was measured with the help of a slightly modified range of variables, which were modelled earlier by Wilhoit and Weaver (1996) (see table 7). Moreover, they continue to be used in a number of other research projects and allow for an international comparison. The interviewed journalists were thus evaluated on a four-point scale of selected significant professional attributes that were operationalized so that they represented the mentioned fundamental attitudes towards the role of journalists: (a) "*neutral*" (the journalist as a "mirror"), (b) "*activist*" (the journalist as an "interpreter" caught in the frame of media mirror). The last set of variables-indicators focused on (somewhat overlooked in research) the conception of the journalist's role, which accented the (c) *instrumental or pragmatic approach to performance in the profession* (as a consequence of the commodification of the media and the commercialization of its content).

graph 2: How important to you are the following aspects of your work as a journalist?[10]
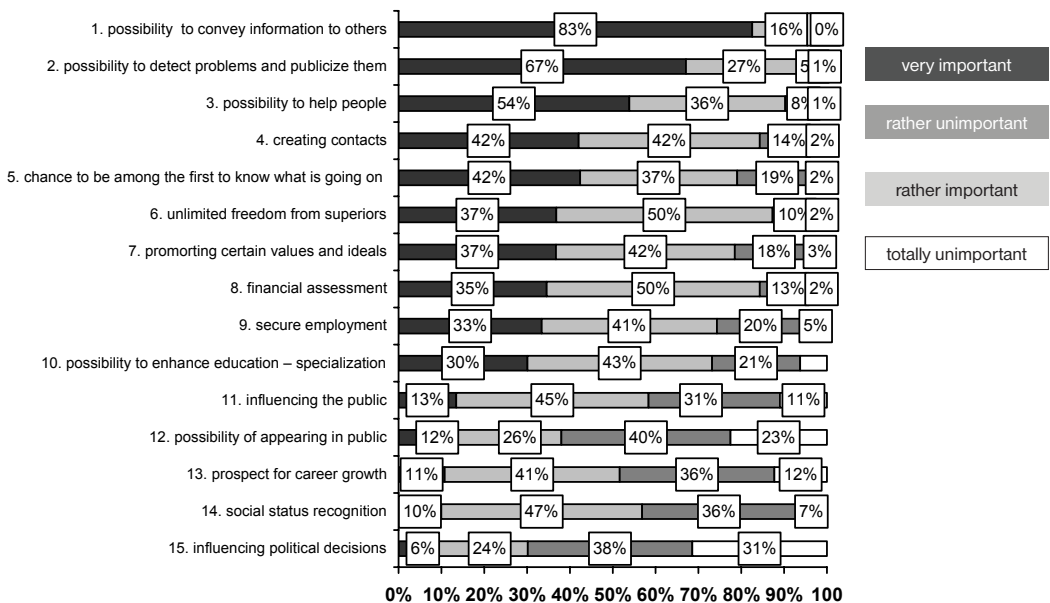
10 The analysis enabled us to interpret only some of the following relations as statistically significant:

a) The importance of the possibility to enforce certain values and ideas increases with age. This aspect is most important for journalists of the age group of 40-49 (91%) Cr. V = 0.29 (p ‹ .001).

As shown in graph 2, the distribution of the responses (in the categories very – rather important) indicates that the interviewed journalists most identified with their role "weak defender", who endeavours to help others motivate to seeking the problem, the so-called "investigator-advocate" function (entries 1, 2, 3, and 5).They identify somewhat less so with the approach to the performance of the journalistic profession as a *"means to individual career"* (entries 4, 6, 8, 9, 12, 13, and 14). They identified relatively the least with the professional role as *"formers of public opinion"* or *"educators"*(7, 11, 12, and 15).

The presented data provided however only basic information. Therefore, we attempted to elaborate the analysis by *factor analysis procedure*.[11] The results indicated that the assumption that there are three basic factors of professional self-image was correct (see table 7).

table 7: Factor analysis – factors of professional self-image [12]

Entries	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3
1. possibility to convey information to others	0.012	0.017	0.672
2. possibility to detect problems and publicize them	0.014	0.215	0.796
3. possibility to help people	0.002	0.291	0.602
5. possibility of being amongst the first who know what is going on	0.261	0.148	0.470
7. promoting certain values and ideals	0.070	0.645	0.213
12. possibility of appearing in public	0.229	0.690	0.068
15. influencing political decisions	-0.106	0.596	0.149
11. influencing the public	-0.016	0.740	0.133
8. financial assessment	0.514	-0.033	-0.018
4. creating contacts	0.465	0.117	0.320
6. unlimited freedom from superiors	0.543	-0.021	0.170
9. secure employment	0.686	0.084	-0.038
13. prospect for career growth	0.739	0.154	0.010
10. possibility to enhance education – specialization	0.499	-0.113	0.321
14. social recognition	0.502	0.250	-0.111

Factor 1 saturates those variables the most, which indicate filling the priority of individual needs connected to career and self-realization (varibles number 13, 9, 6, 8, 14, 10, and 4). The strongest motivating factor is the *professional career potential* (variable number 13). It is associated with both high financial remuneration and a certain level of professional

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b/) The importance of career progress decreases with age. It is most important for the youngest age group of 17-24 (74%) Cr. V = 0.28 (p ‹ .001).

c) The importance of the financial aspect is highest among journalists working for private media (87%), lowest among those working for institutional media (50%) Cr. V = 0.25 (p ‹ .001).

d) The importance of a chance to expand one's education decreases with age. It is highest in the age group of 17-29 (86%) Cr. V = 0.25 (p ‹ .001).

e) In contrast, the importance of public appreciation increases with age. This aspect is most appreciated by journalists over fifty years of age – 51+ (71%) Cr. V = 0.27 (p ‹ .001).

11 Factor analysis solution – varimax rotation was used.

12 Factor volumes over 0.45 are marked in bold. The abovementioned three factors explain 54% of the dispersion.
Reliability of the first factor – Cronbach Alfa 0.686.
Reliability of the second factor – Cronbach Alfa 0.654.
Reliability of the third factor – Cronbach Alfa 0.610.

freedom. The self-realization nature of this factor is underpinned by variables 10 and 4, which accentuate the possibility of further training and establishing social contacts. As it is shown below, this approach is typical as a view taken by incipient journalists (as well as the view of incipient journalists themselves).

Factor 2, emphasizes those aspects of work performance that relate to the possibility to present in public one's own opinions and, at the same time, use them to form public opinion (variables number 11 , 12, 7, and 15). The mass media are perceived here as a grandstand for presenting one's own values. The highest value in the factor components is shown by the possibility to *"influence the public"* (the strongest motivating factor). The journalists identified with this factor want to reflect reality only, but form actual public opinion. This professional self-image is close to the approach referred to as "participant" (Johnston, Slawski, Bowman 1976), "interpreter" (Wilhoit, Weaver 1996), "reporter-activist" (Argyris 1974), or "partner in shaping politics" (Dunn 1969).

Factor 3 indicates the professional motivation to expose social issues as a service to the public. The motivation of "helping others" is accompanied by the need to disseminate information in a timely manner (the strongest motivating factor – variable number 2 „to detect problems and publicize them). It is interesting that this factor represents a professional mix from the viewpoint of the above research. One factor incorporates two aspects that are close to the concepts of Wilhoit and Weaver (1996): the approach referred to as "adversarial" and the approach accentuating the neutral role of information "disseminator". We attempt to explain this seeming inconsistency further with the help of a more detailed analysis of socio-demographical and evaluative characteristics determining the individual professional self-image.

The mentioned factor solution stands de facto on the one hand an imaginary scale of the second and third factors, which constitute an approach oriented on "service to society/public"; whereas the first is orientated on "service to oneself". It concerns two peripheral situations defined in the range of attitudes from the one extreme "socio-centric", to the other extreme of "ego-centric".

diagram 1: Quantitative representation of particular factors according to the category "very important"[13]

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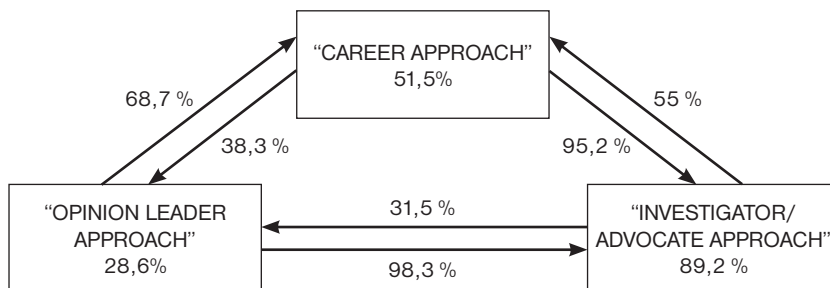
13 Almost ninety percent (89.2%) of the surveyed journalist professed the "investigator-advocate approach". However, 55% of them at the same time consider as very important the "career approach" and almost one-third (31.5%) the possibility to "formulate public opinion". Half (51.5%) of the surveyed journalists professed the "career approach". The overwhelming majority (95.2%) of those espoused the "investigator-advocate approach". More than a third (38.3%) at the same time then espoused the possibility to "formulate public opinion". Fewest journalists (28.6%) opted for the "producing opinion approach". At the same time, the overwhelming majority of them professed the "investigator-advocate orientation" and two-thirds (68.7%) the "career approach".

It is necessary to mention the very low representation of so-called "absolute types". Although diagram 1 shows that majority of surveyed journalists (89.2%) professed the "*investigator-advocate*" conception, while the least popular was the option of "*formers of public opinion*" (28.6%); however, a large portion of them combined elements of all three perspectives. Thus, we can speak about an "absolute" professional conception which is perceived as very significant to a third of journalists (31.8%), nevertheless without registering to other approaches (see diagram 2).

diagram 2: Quantitative representation of particular factors – absolute types
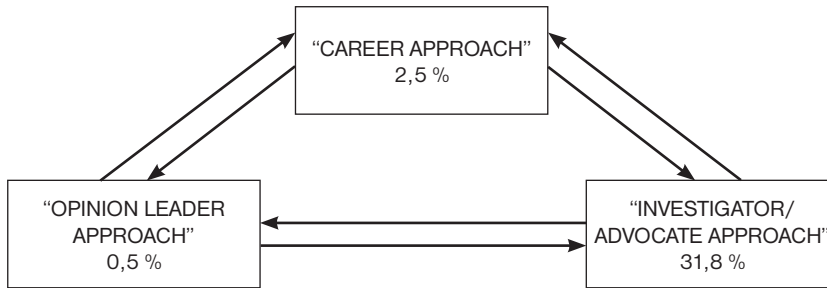
4.1. Determinants to professional self-image

In the second part of the analysis, we tried to extend the characteristics in the given three professional self-images. A quantitative correlation analysis was used, which was complemented and broadened with qualitative data gathered from the in-depth interviews.

The majority of sociologists dealing with professionalization, or professional socialization (for example Moore 1969, Friedson 1994), consider that the birth of a professional is determined by a range of variables or a series of them. It concerns following socio-demographic components (family position, age, education), specific professional characteristics (the length of professional career, standing of work position or amount of responsibility) and lastly about basic framework of value orientation, which plays a significant role in so-called intellectual professions. For the purpose of the analysis, we selected the six components relating to the concept of professional self-image:

1/ lineage position
2/ physical and professional age
3/ extent and type of education
4/ characteristic of media
5/ nature of actual work activities
6/ general value orientation (political orientation)

Subsequently, for operation purposes, these socio-demographic components were transformed into twelve independent variables (see table 8).[14] Although the values of some predictors are low, the overall predictors explain 61% of the variability of the professional approach I, and 34% of the variability of professional approaches II and III.

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14 The above mentioned findings may only be considered as approximate and general, since the values of individual coefficients are low. In order to be able to compare further the data, we proceeded in a similar way to Johnston, Slawski and Bowman (1976), who worked with correlational coefficients whose values exceeded 060 (–.060) and were statistically different from zero to 95% on the significance level. Interestingly, the values in our research are slightly higher than the afore-mentioned American study that continues to belong to the most cited research in relation to the given topic.

table 8: Determinants of professional self-conception (Pearson's correlation coefficient)[15]

	I. PROFESSIONAL APPROACH ACCENTUATING INDIVIDUAL CAREER	II. PROFESSIONAL APPROACH ACCENTUATING THE FORMATION OF PUBLIC OPINION	III. PROFESSIONAL APPROACH ACCENTUATING INVESTIGATOR-ADVOCATE VALUES
I. Lineage Position			
Sex (female)	,065	,009	–,016
II. Physical and professional age			
Respondent's age (lowest)	,097	–,175	,069
Professional age (lowest)	,080	–,098	,086
III. Education			
High school education	,063	–,083	,077
Specialization (non-journalism fields)	,024	–,097	,064
IV. Media			
Nationwide media	,083	,017	–,098
Print media	–,080	–,045	,063
V. Job responsibility and work load			
Position in the upper-level of management	,239	,015	,027
Number of media for which the journalist works (one)	–,087	–,021	,075
Work (time) load (lowest)	–,061	–,026	–,155
VI. Value orientation			
Left-wing political orientation	–,112	,061	–,099
Liberal political orientation	–,022	,100	,061

The best relative differentiator among the specific professional approaches is the *physical and professional age.*[16] The relatively high values of both variables indicate a higher probability of inclination toward a professional self-image accentuating the "*opinion-forming or educating*" role of the journalist. Conversely, a lower age determines inclination toward the other two self-images.[17]

Education[18] (both university and special journalist training) primarily determines the inclination toward professional values relating to "*forming public opinion*". In the case

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15 So as to be able to work further with the particular factors as with variables, the authors selected the variables highly saturated by individual factors and subsequently, for each respondent, the score of these three factors was calculated, being defined as a mean of the respondent's answers to the relevant variables.

16 The average age of Czech journalists is 36 (the median is 34). Journalists have on average worked in their current profession for 11.5 years (median is 9 years).

17 Although there is a strong relation between both variables (r=0.811), physical age is considered to be a more relevant predictor.

18 In view of the overall distribution, education was dichotomized to (a) primary and secondary, (b) university education. The selected sample group included nearly one-half of university graduates (48%), exactly one-half of the journalists had secondary education, and 2% of them only had primary education. As to the second

of the first and the third factors, the situation is quite the reverse. The influence of secondary education is evident, in particular, with the third professional approach (investigator and advocate role).

It may be said that the first and third professional approaches are somewhat better differentiated with *medium reach*. While *"career values"* showed more frequently in nationwide and electronic media, what may be encountered is the concept of a journalist as an *"investigating advocate"* more frequently in printed media on the regional and local levels.

Job responsibility or position proves to be the strongest predictor, but only with respect to *"career orientation"*. In this case, the key aspect is the management position,[19] specifically that of the person aspiring to professional growth. The values are not statistically significant for the remaining factors. It is interesting that *"career orientation"* in nationwide media is typically accompanied with a higher number of jobs,[20] while for *"investigating advocates"* working in the "periphery" in small media, the determining factor is a high workload[21] in one media. In the case of *"career orientation"*, this probably includes young journalists working in bigger cities, which offer more job opportunities in journalism than provincial areas for local and regional journalists.

The value, or specifically *political preferences*, confirmed the rather right-wing orientation of Czech journalists.[22] They determine the inclination both to "*career orientation*" and to the "*investigator-advocate role*". Conversely, with journalists relating their professional self-image to the possibility to "*form public opinion*", a slight split in their approach could be established. On the one hand, they showed a very slight left-wing determination; on the other hand, they inclined more significantly to liberal values.

In order to supplement and extend this quantified picture of specific professional self-images, the method of in-depth interviews[23] was used. All interviewed journalists were presented, for evaluation and spontaneous comments, with identically formulated model professional self-images of journalists. In their specific modifications, the self-images included the above-mentioned possible types of professional self-image, created on the basis

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variable indicating professional specialization, the study fields were dichotomized to (a) with no special journalistic education, (b) majored in journalism. Only less than one-fifth of the journalists (19%) majored in this field.

19 The variable includes journalists who are responsible for the professional performance of their team members (editors, heads of issue/columns/section) and those who work as journalists as well as managers (some deputy chief editors), and finally, those who de facto had to resign from regular journalism work (chief editors).

20 This is a variable that measures the number of full-time and part-time jobs.

21 This is a variable that measures the number of hours that the journalist spends every week in his/her journalistic profession.

22 The "political orientation" measures the self-assessment of journalists on a left-to-right-wing axis. More than one-half of them selected at least the value of 7 (median 7, mean 6.54, mode 8) on a ten-point scale (1 left/10 right-wing). A more differentiated view shows that 56% of respondents see themselves purely right-wing (values of 7-10); nearly one-fifth (17%) declared themselves to be left-center oriented (value of 5), and 15% were purely left-wing oriented (values of 1-4). 12% of the journalists opted for right-center (value of 6).

23 The group of 38 respondents included journalists in various positions and with different professional experience. The first sub-group included journalists in management positions, i.e. editors-in-chief or associate editors, chief editors, or issue editors, who make decisions on work organization in the editorial office and form the editorial agenda (their quotes are marked with "M"). The second sub-group included "journalist celebrities", i.e. major professional journalists who present the Czech journalistic profession to the public, are visible in the media, and their opinions are perceived as authoritative (marked with "C"). Finally, incipient journalists are still looking for or forming their attitude to the journalistic profession. This sub-group (marked "F") could indicate what ideas of this profession the upcoming generation has. Interviews were held with journalists working in nationwide and regional media.

of analysis of the assumed historical and political conditionality of approaches to the profession of journalism: (1) responsibility to the entire nation, (2) responsibility to social justice, (3) responsibility to strengthening democratic principles, and (4) responsibility to the prosperity of the publisher/broadcaster. The response analysis was then related to the above four professional self-images, and attributes signifying each of the types were looked for.

In comparing the above-mentioned quantitative analysis with qualitative data, or seeking indications of recurring patterns in defining the relation to particular models of self-images, it affirms and further develops the fundamental professional contours that the factor analysis indicated.

Professional career orientation proved to be the strongest motive demonstrated by incipient journalists. The journalists explained the pragmatism present in this professional self-image by the media production pressure, which eliminates potential idealistic ideas. The key argument mentioned in this respect was a reference to the ongoing commercialization of journalistic work: *"…I think the absolute majority of journalists do it for a living. They didn't join the newspaper for this reason, but they take it as a way to make a living …"* (M7), or *"…the primary function is to participate in acquiring and retaining those readers who are of importance to the publisher or broadcaster and to the editorial office, which is, of course, a business-like statement. And I have a problem with this at times since it can't always be consistent with what I perceive as a sort of reason why it exists. In my opinion, it's a conflict that can hardly be resolved…"* (M13). Sometimes, the journalists explicitly rejected the traditional "educating-activating" concept, and added an exonerating statement incorporating the implicit idea that readers are independent in forming their own attitudes and opinions: *"I don't think my purpose here is so much to co-educate my fellow citizens or to improve their cultural level; I believe my task is to ask questions… and not to suggest ready-made solutions to them…"* (C7). *"… I disagree completely with the statement that the journalist has a special position in society and tries to change the world; it's not good when a journalist acts like this …"* (M3).

In contrast to the previous self-image approach, the self-image accentuating possibility to form public opinion is determined by a higher age and greater professional experience and, in particular, by a university education with a major in journalism. Journalists declaring this orientation see the purpose of their work in "changing the world", yet they are not quite certain about this approach in the given situation in society, so they partially "hide" behind liberal-neutral professional ideology (a relatively strong predictor indicating an inclination to liberal values). The presence of left-wing feelings is somehow traceable, too. Here at the same time there is even traceable presence of leftist feelings. It is obvious that "educational" focus, higher age, and professional experience are not simply expiable with a dominating liberal-neutral concept of the journalist's role. Here, we come across an example of value division, which concerns in particular the older generation of Czech journalists. They were socialized to a professional code, which fundamentally had a traditional model of a journalist has "the voice of the public, who should form social values". It is thus not surprising that they are unable to free themselves from the traditional notion in given cultural circles, the key conception of journalists as a *mission.* On the other hand, these journalists more or less consciously connect this conception with a strong ideologically contaminated view of journalism, in a period of so-called building the real socialism. Thus, adhering to liberal values, transferred professionally as liberal-*neutral* stance, can be understood as escapism against the right-left division of the world, which in a number

of the older journalists constitutes an integral portion of their professional preparation and part of their career (as if under their "liberal mimicry" flashed an "activist" conception of journalism, as a profession that should "change the world"). To a certain degree, there is a contradiction, or an anti-pole of career orientation.

These journalists feel a clear conflict between what they consider as the "real status of matters" (career approach self-image, according to them, prevails in the present community of journalists) and what they consider as a "desired status of matters" (which professional self-image should, in their opinion, prevail in the present community of journalists).They dismiss this tension by referring to a kind of natural or common part of the journalist's job: "…*creates public opinion, which journalists do, in a way. They try to change the world, point out mistakes, or point out immoral behaviour that happens in society. I feel that the mission is simply there*." (C1) *"I, for example, say that the journalist has a kind of special mission in society… in the way he offers a different view of the world, a certain perspective of values…*" (C4). Those respondents who explain (and thus defend) the effects of journalism as a "natural" part tend to define the object of the sensed influence of journalists' activities in abstract terms ("*society*", "*public opinion*", "*world*").

The second argument defending the "educator" professional self-image points to the marginal real impact of such effort: *"Even though many of us think we're trying to change the world… since if we said that the texts we write don't change things and the world, then we would actually deny why we try to point out certain iniquities*…" (C6). This rationalizing strategy (virtually based on the principle of denying responsibility for the potential consequences of one's activities) stems obviously from the declared liberal concept of journalism, which massively permeated the Czech media environment in the early 1990s (as the ideological and ethical foundation for the ongoing privatization and commercialization of the Czech media). It is worth noting that the "natural" influence of journalism was primarily defended by "celebrities" among journalists – perhaps in their effort to reconcile the sense of their actual authority with the sense that this influence contradicts the simplified version of the liberal-neutral concept of journalism, which has undertaken the Czech environment.

The third concept of the journalist's role of "investigator/advocate" is declared in particular by journalists with a lower (secondary) education working in the "periphery" of regional or local media. Since these people are de facto self-taught journalists with a low formal (secondary) education, this concept can rather be understood as an intuitive idea of what the journalistic profession requires (and it is apparently supported by their closer contact with recipients, i.e. by the more direct feedback to their production). They also show slightly more right-wing and liberal orientation, which however does not prevent them from approaching their profession from the position of defending the weak. The concept of journalism as a service to the public is evident here even more than in the previous type, with the service aiming at providing materially correct, verified, and unprejudiced information, or at searching actively for social iniquities.

5. Conclusion

Over the last fifty years the original ideal of professional journalists, independent of formal control and self-regulating its behaviour primarily in its relation to the professional association and codes, has become largely problematic, especially in connection to the expanding dictates of economic and technological rationality. In this sense, the professional

socialization of Czech journalists has become even more complicated. Besides latent rather than manifested clashes between older and entering journalistic generation, the entire decade of the 1990s was characterized by more or less unreflected quest for a new professional definition. The result is a marked unsteadiness in journalistic professional self-image. The majority of Czech journalists, in this sense, resist being enclosed into one professional-value paradigm, which is similar to their foreign colleagues. (Weaver 1998) The only approach which is more distinct is the one connecting the "*investigator*" and "*advocate*" *values*, which in principle complies with the dominant liberal professional ideology.

In the domestic conditions, the "*career*" approach also appears besides these so-called traditional professional self-images, stressing in particular personal work advancement, while concurrently emphasising the resignation on the concept of journalistic work as an agent of social change. The stated professional self-image of journalists accenting this approach entirely displaced traditional journalistic trauma filled with conflict between pressure on increasing the marketability of the media and the normative social function of journalists.

Physical age was shown as the strongest predictor differentiating single professional approaches. In this respect, Czech journalists differ from (for instance) their American colleagues, whose professional self-image depends largely on their formal education. (Wilhoit and Weaver 1996) As also indicated in the in-depth interviews, the Czech environment might be characterized by a latent generational-professional conflict. At the same time, it is important to keep in mind that it is professional-role plurality which is defining for Czech journalists as a whole Although it may appear that it has resulted from the emergence of a new professional undefined generation of journalists, it is still a matter of fact that similar professional features have been confirmed even in research carried out in countries where the journalist profession developed without significant disruptions and ideological transformations. Therefore, it seems that it is a question of a certain professional constant reflecting not only post-modern plural dictates, but also the character of the work of journalism, which requires a high degree of professional flexibility, and at the same time, it is not over-regulated.

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