An Introduction to the Problem of Journalism

This book is about journalists and journalism in The Netherlands. Its purpose is twofold:

- to describe and explain the basic, occupational and professional characteristics of Dutch journalists and to analyze the findings in comparison with similar research projects in other Western democracies of recent years;
- to analyze the articulation of contemporary Dutch journalism and the multicultural society, infotainment and the Internet.

In this chapter the research purposes and questions of the project are explained in detail.

Journalism Studies
The project follows an international tradition of journalism survey research. Although surveys of journalists were conducted throughout the 20th century in, for example, Germany and the US, only after World War II and in particular the 1970s empirical journalism studies as a means to examine news media production processes became widely accepted among scholars internationally (Weischenberg and Scholl, 1998: 37). Some of the most influential studies of the time were conducted in the United States by Johnstone, Slawski and Bowman (1976), in Germany by Kepplinger (1979) and in Great Britain by Tunstall (1970). These projects focused on the characteristics of news workers, the organization of labor, and on journalists' role perceptions and goals in news making. Another theme which spurred attention to the professional group of journalists as a research population at the time was a perceived threat to press freedom posed by increased media concentration – which for example led to a specific survey in The Netherlands by Kempers and Wieten (1976). The first representative nationwide survey among journalists in the United States – carried out in 1971 and published as a book in 1976 by Johnstone, Slawski and Bowman – examined the group of media professionals from a distinct sociological perspective. The emphasis of this project was put on occupational standards and
context of journalists and editors, working in the mainstream news media. Starting in 1982, the American scholars Weaver and Wilhoit began to replicate and expand this survey, resulting in systematic decennial follow-ups that have become the international standard for nationwide surveys (Johnstone, Slawski and Bowman, 1976; Weaver and Wilhoit, 1996). During the 1990s Weaver solicited specific reports on journalism surveys from scholars in nations all over the world, resulting in a widely cited volume on 'the global journalist' with reports from 21 countries (Weaver, 1998). Although Weaver suggests in this edited collection of survey reports of 1998 that some tentative generalizations on the characteristics of journalists from countries such as Great Britain, Australia, Germany and the US can be made, he argues that the differences between countries are instrumental in studying a national news culture. The first research purpose of the project at hand therefore is to replicate and adapt the most recent nationwide representative survey among US journalists by Weaver and Wilhoit, as reported (including their questionnaire) in 1996. This will allow for both a comparison of 'national' particularities and a further assessment of more or less 'global' characteristics of journalists, as the Dutch data can be compared with survey results in other countries (as these are reported in the 1998 volume on journalism studies worldwide).

Comparing 21 countries, Weaver found support for claims that the demographics of journalists are to a large extent similar worldwide (1998:456). Generalizing across the field, one may conclude that the average journalist in Western democracies can be typified as a white man, working for a newspaper (from 53% in the US to 74% in Great Britain) between 30 and 40 years of age, with a Christian religious background, highly educated (college and up to graduate level), slightly left-leaning in terms of political alignment, choosing for journalism predominantly because of an "early love for writing" and considering professional aspects of the job such as autonomy, editorial policies and chances to develop and getting ahead as more important than for example general occupational concerns such as pay or fringe benefits. Comparing the demographic and occupational characteristics of German and US journalists, scholars found enough evidence to support their hypothesis: "... that the professional group of journalists is similar in industrial Western countries, regardless of the different political and social structures" (Weischenberg, Loeffelholz and Scholl, 1998:236).

Weaver however concludes there is too much disagreement on professional norms and values to claim an emergence of 'universal occupational standards' in journalism (1998:468). He suggests that the reasons for this widespread disagreement on values can be found in national differences in political systems rather than cultural, media organizational or individual differences and simi-
larities (in: Zhu, Weaver, Lo, Chen and Wu, 1997). One has to note though that the plurality of answers scholars like Weaver and Wilhoit indicate does not necessarily reflect disagreement among journalists on what the standards of journalism are, but rather a variety of views on how important certain universal standards are and what their meanings can be in (country-) specific circumstances and different cultural contexts. What these overall findings and conclusions therefore suggest, is that the dominant group of journalists in Western democracies (such as Germany, Australia, Great Britain and the US) share similar characteristics in the context of their daily work, and apply these characteristics in a wide variety of ways to give meaning to what they do. In the context of the project at hand the emphasis accordingly is put on the differences and similarities of a national population of journalists in a given international environment (cf. The Netherlands vis-à-vis other Western democracies). In the second chapter I will discuss and model the theoretical and methodological framework of this journalism study in detail. In this first chapter the similarities of 'global' journalism characteristics and the particularities of the Dutch setting are elaborated as an introduction to the study at hand.

The Global Picture of Journalism

It is suggested here that one can find a more or less 'universal' common ground in studies of professional communicators in the (Western) world. Splichal and Sparks (1989 and 1994) even suggest, based on a collection of surveys among journalism students in 21 countries, that such a common ground indicates a shared worldwide understanding of what journalism is – even though such a understanding may differ in relevance or operational definition between countries and cultures. Several authors build on similar arguments - even Weaver, who is particularly critical about Splichal and Sparks' argument, signals: "... a fairly universal desire for more freedom among journalists in various parts of the world..." (1998: 464). Evidence for this 'universal journalism' cannot, as Weaver contends as well, be found in a mere comparison of scores among media professionals in different countries of how important certain aspects of their individual work are. The implications of translating certain questions into different languages, the distinctly different media histories to take into account, the way a national media system is organized; these are all intervening factors which may or may not describe or explain differences and commonalities. Nevertheless, evidence of a more or less universal journalism can be found in a common 'belief' in what defines professional journalism; that is, what is considered to be ideal-typical in journalism in European, North American and Australian societies. One could speak in this respect of a dominant occupational ideology of journalism on which most news workers base their
professional perceptions, but which differs widely in terms of its practices and interpretations among individuals and peoples in journalism (Shoemaker and Reese, 1996: 11). Ideology is seen here as a (intellectual) process over time, through which the sum of ideas and views – notably on social and political issues – of a particular group like for example a profession is shaped, but also as a process by which some ideas and views are excluded or marginalized (Stevenson, 1995: 37-41; Van Ginneken, 1998: 73). Although the notion of a ‘dominant’ ideology (or ‘dominant discourses’ through which the ideology is perpetuated as in Dahlgren, 1992: 9) denotes a worldview of the powerful, the term is chosen here not in terms of a struggle, but in terms of a collection of values (also defined as strategies and formal codes characteristic of a profession) defining journalism and shared most widely by members of the profession (Hartley, 1994: 209-210; Croteau and Hoynes, 2000: 159).

References to a consensual occupational ideology can be found throughout the literature concerning journalism studies in the second half of the 20th century generally referred to as a dominant way in which ‘news people’ validate and give meaning to the context in which they work. This ideology has for example been analyzed as a ‘strategic ritual’ to position oneself in the profession vis-à-vis media critics and the public (Tuchman, 1971). Ideology has also been identified as an instrument in the hands of journalists and editors to ‘normalize’ the structure of the news organization or media corporation one works for (Soloski, 1990). Especially when faced with public criticism, ideological values like objectivity and autonomy are applied by journalists to legitimate or even ‘self-police’ the recurring self-similar selection and description of events and views in the media (Molotch and Lester, 1974; Golding and Elliott, 1979; Hall, 1982; Hallin, 1986; Reese, 1990; Zelizer, 1992).

With respect to the profession of journalism one can speak of an ideology of journalism in terms of what Schudson describes as: “The cultural knowledge that constitutes ‘news judgment’”, rooted deeply in the communicators’ consciousness (1996: 153) or what Hall sees as a ‘deep structure’ of news values – even sometimes invisible to the journalists themselves (1973: 181). On the practitioner’s level one could speak of what Matt Ekström describes as the range of “manifest ideals and claims of journalism” (1996: 130) like a “shared professional canon”, as Cottle puts it (2000: 24). Elliott (1988) and McMane (1993: 215) empirically addressed this notion in that journalists share some values as a ‘class spirit’. In other words: there seems to be a consensus among scholars in the field of journalism studies that what typifies the ‘global’ similarities in journalism can be defined as a shared occupational ideology among news workers, which consensus can be seen as empirically supported by surveys and content
analyses among journalists and journalism worldwide.

A history or rather: genealogy of the ideology of journalism is beyond the scope of this particular project. One has to note though the absence (in the literature) of a clear description of what the elements of this ideology are considered to be. The literature generally refers to an existing ideology without specifying what it is or where it came from, as journalism scholars tend not to venture much further than an acknowledgement that there exists a professional ideology and that it is not a 'set of things' but an active practice (O'Sullivan et al, 1994), or that it is 'continually negotiated' (Reese, 1990). In the context of the project the core characteristics of this ideology have therefore been identified as these can be located in the concept and historical development of journalism professionalism (Soloski, 1990: 208). The professionalization process in journalism emerged during the 20th century (Hallin, 1996: 244-246).

Although journalism cannot be seen as a 'profession' in the traditional sense, most authors agree that journalism has professionalized as such in the course of the last century – even though these authors are not all to happy about this development (see for example Singletary, 1982; Merrill, 1986; Beam, 1990). Daniel Hallin (1992) has dubbed this period of continuing professionalization and development of a shared ideology as a time of 'high modernism' in journalism. Hallin in particular mentions the sense of wholeness and seamlessness in the practitioner's vision of journalism in this period (roughly between the 1960s and 1990s) – a more or less ideological certainty, including apparent inconsistencies without clear-cut arguments to support this: "...belief in progress, rationality and universal truths or standards, as well as a conviction that it is possible to be part of the 'establishment', with wealth, access and prestige, and simultaneously independent – an avant-garde in art, a watchdog in the media" (1996: 246).

Whereas a common approach to professionalism would focus on whether or not an occupational group shares certain attributes with other professions, an alternative route could be an understanding of professionalism as measurable by certain 'traits' or characteristics of its practitioners. Such key characteristics can be summarized as a number of discursively constructed ideal-typical values, of which members of the occupational group implicitly or explicitly feel define what they do. When examining the literature, in which 20th century debates on professionalism are (critically) summarized, one can identify the claims of so-called 'true values' or elements of journalism's occupational ideology as for example Golding and Elliott (1979) and more recently Kovach and Rostentiel (2001) describe these as:
Journalists provide a **public service** (as watchdogs or 'newshounds', active collectors and disseminators of information);
- journalists are impartial, neutral, **objective**, fair and (thus) credible;
- journalists must be **autonomous**, free and independent in their work;
- journalists have a sense of immediacy and **speed**;
- journalists have a sense of **ethics**, validity and legitimacy.

These characteristics can be traced throughout the journalism research literature, be it implicitly or explicitly. General works on the ideology, professionalization or discourses of journalism explain and historicize one or more of these ideals in detail, although most authors admit to the fact that – as noted earlier – conclusions on these values are commonly based on narrowly defined or theoretically not very well-developed empirical projects (see overviews and general arguments in for example: Nordenstreng, 1989; Schudson, 1996; Shoemaker and Reese, 1996; Weischenberg, 1997; Winch, 1997; Morgan, 1998; Cottle, 2000a; Loeffelholz, 2000). Results from the most recent surveys in Western democracies like Germany, Great Britain, France, Australia, and the US – all more or less following the study design, definition of journalists and questionnaire of the Weaver and Wilhoit projects – indicate strong support for the predominance of these five (categories of) ideals. Even though several authors have indicated wide varieties of values among (groups of) journalists, the common ground found in the recognition of certain ideals of journalism among professional communicators worldwide prevails in the literature (recent examples can be found in Randall, 2000; Kovach and Rostenstiel, 2001; Reese, 2001).

Having established the key elements of the global ideology of journalism, one may turn to the topic of the project at hand: journalism and journalists in The Netherlands. The ideology of journalism will be set against the developments and characteristics of journalism in The Netherlands, which argument leads to the formulation of research questions subsequent to the main research purposes formulated at the beginning of this chapter. In doing so, this introductory chapter seeks to address the two main considerations of the project: a study to describe and explain the characteristics of Dutch journalists (which requires a more or less 'universal' or global approach to journalism studies, as outlined above), and an analysis of the ways contemporary challenges are articulated to Dutch journalists (which presupposes a particular approach to journalism in The Netherlands).

**Journalism in The Netherlands**

When one discusses the particularities of journalism and journalists in The Netherlands, one must consider the specifics, developments and trends in the
social system of Dutch society in terms of its cultures, politics and economics – and the ways these are articulated to its media (see also recent essays in: Bar-doel, Vos, Van Vree and Wijffjes, 2002). A brief overview follows of the overall cultural and historical developments and their impact on the Dutch media, as well as an assessment of these developments as these may or may not reflect the existence of a consensual professional ideology among journalists in The Netherlands. For this purpose earlier (survey) studies into Dutch journalism have been analyzed.\textsuperscript{14}

**DUTCH MEDIA AND SOCIETY.** The social and political developments in The Netherlands from the end of the 19th century right up to today can be understood best in terms of the *verzuiling* or ‘pillarization’ of Dutch society (Brants and McQuail, 1997: 154). In this complex process social movements, educational and communication systems, voluntary associations and political parties organized themselves vertically along religious and ideological lines. This resulted in four quite distinct so-called ‘pillars’ of society: a catholic, protestant, liberal and a socialist pillar (although the argument in the historical literature is that the liberal pillar did not have the same formalized organized structure as the other pillars). These pillars lost their formal structure and form of control over their components after World War II, with events in the period during the 1960s and early 1970s to be characterized as the catalyst of the depillarization period (Andeweg and Irwin, 1993). The media both orchestrated as well as actively deconstructed the pillars, making the press and later on the broadcasting system in The Netherlands primary movers or definer s of change of Dutch society (Semetko, 1998: 140; Bar-doel and Bierhoff, 1997). The pillars each had their own ‘mouthpiece’ in the national press, next to several existing more or less ‘neutral’ papers (Van de Plasse, 1999: 31).

Right up until the early 60s of the 20th century about half of the country’s press can be considered to have been ‘pillar-neutral’ (Van Zoonen, 1991: 105). This neutrality does not mean that these papers were not strongly biased in any way, though – even the oldest and most popular national daily newspaper in The Netherlands, *De Telegraaf*, was politically speaking quite conservative (Hemels, 1997). Dutch broadcasting – starting with radio in the 1920s and television from the 1950s – was soon ‘colonized’ by the pillars as well, following legislation in which only broadcasting corporations strongly tied to these *maatschappelijke stromingen* (i.e. segments in society) were allowed on the air; in 1930 for radio and in 1956 for television such decisions on transmitting licenses were made (De Goede, 1999: 320). Each pillar got its own broadcasting corporation, with one more or less ‘neutral’ commercially organized corporation in place: the AVRO. One could say that this system still forms the basis for
Dutch broadcasting policy today (Buurke, 1999). For journalism this meant interlocking directorships of both press and broadcasting media with political parties and for example parliamentary reporters covering only the meetings and news of their pillar's political party (Brants, 1985).

Since the 1960s The Netherlands were doing economically quite well, especially in terms of trade relations – until the worldwide economical crisis of the early 1980s. During this period of economic success and shift towards a post-industrial society the previously highly organized pillarized structures started to break down (Van den Brink, 1987: 295). The automation of the workplace, the start of national television in the 1950s and its breakthrough as a family medium in the 1960s, secularization and decline in political party membership and so on lead authors to classify this period as one of 'depillarization'. After the economy recovered from the monetary and oil crisis of the early 1980s the trend towards fragmentation and individualization continued. The Dutch much-lauded 'polder model' of a cooperative consensual framework with employers' organizations, trade unions and coalition governments towards a social contract contributed to a culture of (perceived) stability. Some have argued that the Netherlands has been among the world's most politically stable democracies for centuries (Semetko, 1998). One might extend this argument to the relatively stable Dutch economy as well.

The governments of recent years are made up of a formerly unlikely combination of a right-wing liberal party, a social-democratic labor party and a left-wing liberal party – so-called 'purple' coalition cabinets. These governments adopted the trends of the time and were generally in favor of a laissez faire-attitude towards society, the market – and the media, where decentralization and deregulation are the key terms in public policy (De Goede, 1999). There exists one distinct exception to this rule: the strong role the government aims to play to support pluriformity in the media. This means that the function of the media in society is seen as a mirror of that particular society as well as allowing equal access of existing views and ideas of different peoples to the media (Van Cuilenburg, Scholten and Noomen, 1992: 330).

Dutch media policy can thus be summarized as a combination of a social responsibility model with libertarian elements. This libertarian trend towards deregulation has opened up the Dutch media market – in particular after the introduction of commercial television in 1989, when RTL started broadcasting Dutch programming from Luxembourg. In the last decade new commercial media outlets – in particular in the magazine and broadcasting markets – have appeared (and disappeared). Commercial and satellite broadcasting have brought the world onto everyone's doorstep and Holland was among the first
countries in Europe to get connected to the Internet (in 1992). Prosperity has also brought a steady flow of migrant laborers (and their families) to the country. Migrants arrived especially during the economic booming years of the 1970s (and later on in the 1990s) and have eventually settled in – making the Netherlands a society which is ever since generally referred to in the literature and media as a multicultural or 'polyethnic' society – over fifteen million people live together in a single country, where in some of the larger cities almost half of the people have a non-Dutch ethnic heritage (against 15 percent in society as a whole).

In some of the literature it has been argued that contemporary Dutch society should also be described as 'repillarized' because so many of its components – including the media – are still more or less identified with the old pillarized structures (Hoogenboom, 1996). Ethnic diversity is also sometimes used as an argument supporting for example specialized education (schools based on the Islam), associations ('Turkish' or 'Moroccan' sport clubs) and so on – which in fact could be seen as some form of 'repillarization' along ethnic lines (Schumacher, 1987; Sterk, 2000). Discussion of these trends and their potential impacts on journalism will follow in detail in chapter IV (on journalism in the multicultural society).

**Journalists in the Netherlands.** Representative survey research among journalists in the Netherlands has not been on the top of the academic and professional agenda. One of the consequences is a general lack of data to assess to what extent the developments as sketched in the previous section – in short: (de-/re-) pillarization, deregulation, political and economic stability, commercialization and the rise of the multicultural society – have had their influences on the professionalization and characteristics of journalists in the Netherlands. This problem will be addressed in the third chapter of this book, where the characteristics of Dutch journalists are compared with colleagues elsewhere. As noted in the main research purposes, the elements for comparison consist of journalists' basic, occupational and professional characteristics (taken and adapted from Weaver and Wilhoit, 1996: 255-277). Basic characteristics have been defined in this project as socio-demographic variables. With basic characteristics one should understand: age, gender, ethnic origins, religion, personal status, political views, media use, education and training. Occupational characteristics are related to the direct working environment of the communicator: his or her newsroom and media organization, medium type and genre, employer and previous employers (if any), income and so on. Occupational characteristics are in general: employment patterns, job conditions (as in years of experience in journalism, job profiles, perceived autonomy, size
of organization, the extent of communication with others, and images of the audience, as well as commitment to journalism). The third category, professional characteristics, consists of those elements of the profession and the journalistic system that have to do with the way in which the individual journalist sees him- or herself and the profession as such. These characteristics are therefore more abstract and can be seen as indicative of the aforementioned professional ideology of journalists in The Netherlands: role perceptions, ethics (of newsgathering methods) and perceived social responsibilities.

Earlier research among journalists allows for some cautious hypotheses regarding the pattern or profile emerging regarding the mentioned characteristics in The Netherlands. Such a pattern may be used to further explore the (temporal) dimensions along which a profile of Dutch journalists is emerging and developing. Previous surveys in The Netherlands show an indicative overall picture of the characteristics of Dutch journalists as:

**Basic:** more men than women, most journalists in the age group between 30 and 40 (closer to 40), no information on ethnic diversity in the newsrooms nor on differences and commonalities between the different media types and genres (goes for all characteristics), left-leaning political attitudes without a corresponding preference for 'social-progressive' news values;

**Occupational:** less women at the top of the media hierarchy, a static employment pattern with most journalists working full-time (with a large number among them that stand positive towards part-time employment);

**Professional:** both a positive and negative image of audience, strong emphasis on both a neutral disseminator and an interpretative role perception coupled with an optimistic view on the level of influence the individual journalist on his or her public, colleagues and medium.
JOURNALISTS PROVIDE A PUBLIC SERVICE. The public-service ideal can be seen as a powerful component of journalism’s ideology. Journalists share a sense of ‘doing it for the public’, of working as some kind of representative watchdog of the status quo in the name of people, who ‘vote with their wallets’ for their services (by buying a newspaper, watching a newscast, visiting a news site). One may find evidence of such a value by specifically examining journalists’ images of their audience, and by looking at their views on what they do and how their work may affect (intended) publics.

A nationwide survey project was conducted in 1989 with the specific aim to look at Dutch newspaper journalists’ image of their audience (Kaiser and Wermuth, 1989). Results showed that journalists working for (local and) regional newspapers shared a much more negative view of their readers than their colleagues of the national dailies did. These regional journalists were also of the opinion that they exerted actual influence on the audience. The general conclusion of the authors pointed out the paradox that practically all journalists thought their audience to be intolerant, prejudiced and not very critical – while at the same time 90% of journalists stated that they took criticism, for example coming from readers’ surveys, very seriously indeed. The researchers admitted that they did not find a satisfactory explanation for this conclusion.

A later project by the Dutch Institute for Strategic Communication (ISK) also solely focused on newspaper journalists and their relationship with readers (ISK, 1994). Of 256 respondents 95% indicated an awareness of a public responsibility as journalists – and when asked did not seem to have any problems with that. Such a high and unequivocal score on the responsibilities of journalists in society cannot be seen as something ‘typical’ for the 1990s. The earliest of nationwide journalism surveys in The Netherlands – a project among 911 journalists in 1968 – showed that 83% of respondents attributed more social responsibility to journalism in comparison with other professions in society (Muskens, 1968: 82). The same respondents did not expect the public to agree with such a conclusion, though.

Role perceptions like influencing and educating the public, indicating a ‘mobilizer’ preference among journalists as Weaver and Wilhoit (1996: 140) describe it, are supported in The Netherlands by the findings of a recent survey among regional newspaper journalists (De Jongh, 1999). These reporters even seemed quite optimistic about actually succeeding therein. What is striking here is the absence of broadcast journalists in surveys – which is particularly strange when one considers the dual system of broadcasting in The Netherlands and the corresponding powerful public service ideology guiding public policy therein. Historical overviews of broadcast organizations and media in
The Netherlands however do indicate the powerful notion of a 'public mission', felt throughout the organizations and (later on) commercial companies involved (see Wijfjes, 1994: 59-60 in particular; also: Knulst, 1994). One of the few projects specifically involving and including professionals in the television sector focused on their views regarding ethnic minorities and related issues in programs and talkshows (Leurdijk, 1997 and 1999). The program-makers interviewed felt predominantly that journalists have to either educate or confront people regarding the problematic situation of minorities in The Netherlands.

In general one may conclude that these findings indicate a strong sense of the public service ideal in journalism among the reporters interviewed, whether set against a negative image of audience or against a social responsibility of reporting on the deeper problematic issues in society. This powerful public orientation has been given renewed impetus by a recent conference and book by journalism educators Drok and Jansen (2001), calling for and strongly endorsing a form of Dutch 'public' or 'civic' journalism, similar to the developments in the last decade in the United States to that effect (Black, 1997; Rosen, 1999).

**Journalists are neutral, objective, fair and (thus) credible.**

The notion of objectivity has been discussed earlier in this chapter, as most notably American authors (see for example of recent scholarship on the issue: Schudson, 2001) have identified this value as the key element of the professional self-perception of journalists. Although objectivity has a problematic status in current thinking about the impossibility of being value-neutral, authors and journalists alike still adopt more or less synonymous concepts like 'fairness', 'professional distance' or 'impartiality' to define what media practitioners do. Objectivity may not be possible but that does not mean one should not strive for it, contemporary authors like Kovach and Rostenstiel (2001) like to argue.

The perceived neutrality or distanced attitude of journalists can be traced throughout surveys in the 20th century. Even in a series of in-depth interviews with journalists who specialize in covering extreme right-wing movements the respondents emphasized their neutral stance when reporting on related issues, although they themselves were disgusted with the people involved (Donselaar and Tanja, 2000: 87). A survey among journalists in 1976 showed that 26% of 1,485 respondents said to be members of a political party and all journalists indicated specific party preferences at the time, which situation illustrates the 'fresh' heritage of the pillarized structure of Dutch society (Kempers and Wieteren, 1976: 14-15). This nationwide survey of 1976 offered little information on professional characteristics of the journalists involved, let alone a group com-
position along statements on the topic of which task in society the journalists saw for themselves. It followed that "(objectively) disseminating information" was a first choice of almost 85% of the respondents (Kempers and Wieten, 1976). For the respondents being a member of, or preferring a certain political party did not seem to be of any influence on their shared value of objective reporting. The 1976 and the earlier mentioned 1968 survey were conducted among members of the national organization for journalists, the NVJ. The NVJ represented about 70 to 80% of all journalists at that time; a representation figure that has been said to be around 60% in 1999 (source: written statement from the NVJ secretariat in personal communication, June 1999).

Coupling the 'popularity' of objectivity with the strong party-political affiliations of the reporters involved these findings can be seen as evidence in support of the 'seamlessness' of seemingly paradoxical values as Hallin (1992) observed among American journalists (see also for the use of objectivity as an 'emblem' or 'strategic ritual' by journalists: Schudson, 1978; Tuchman, 1971). Another example of this paradoxical plurality can be found in the results of a recent mail survey, in early 1999, among 55 political journalists of regional dailies, which showed that the Dutch reporter sees no problems incorporating both a neutral disseminator role and an interpreter / adversary role; both perceptions scored more or less equally on a number of variables (De Jongh, 1999).

Objectivity as the ideal in the 1970s or fairness and neutrality in the 1990s; Dutch journalists seem to identify themselves, like their colleagues elsewhere, easily with the ideal of professional distance or 'dispassion', as Schudson describes it (1996:150). Perceived impartiality functions as an essential trait of journalism, and contemporary notions of quality in critical overviews of professional journalism in The Netherlands invariably contain references to fairness and impartiality (which claims go hand in hand with calls for critical involvement and increased sensitivity towards publics; see Bardoe, 2000; Van Vree, 2000; Costera Meijer, 2001). The support for this particular value does not seem to have diminished over time, nor challenged by equally strong support for more 'involved' perceptions like party preferences and political views in the 1970s or an interpretative adversary stance in the 1990s.

**Journalists must enjoy editorial autonomy, freedom and independence.** As noted before, one of the few values that scored equally across all countries included in the book on journalism surveys worldwide edited by Weaver (1998) was: freedom. Reporters across the globe feel that their work can only thrive and flourish in a society that protects its media from censorship, in a company that saves its journalists from the marketers, in a newsroom where journalists are not merely the lackeys of their editors.
Editorial freedom was operationalized by Muskens in a 1968 survey as the freedom to come and go as the journalist pleased; as to what extent stories had been refused because of company policy and as the freedom to choose and use informants for stories (1968: 42). About half of the respondents – in particular editors, column writers and correspondents – said to enjoy full freedom of movement. 18% of respondents indicated that their work was sometimes refused; these journalists were more often working in television or had been employed less than 5 years. Up to 92% of journalists felt completely free in choosing how to work and with choosing what kind of sources to work with, leading Muskens to conclude that freedom in Dutch journalism was ‘clearly present’, although the extent of perceived autonomy depended on occupational activity (1968: 43).

The 1976 survey project dealt primarily with the topic and perceived effects of press concentration (Kempers and Wieten, 1976). Most journalists (more than 75%) at the time strongly opposed the fact that media organizations were supposed to make a profit – seen by the mostly politically left-leaning journalists as the cause of press concentration. Commercialism was seen as making inroads to the professional autonomy of journalists. The perceived danger of commercialism was reflected almost two decades later in the answers of a vast majority of 256 interviewed newspaper journalists in The Netherlands (ISK, 1994). These news workers felt their reliability as journalists strongly correlated with the protection of their autonomy by for example the editor-in-chief from commercial and business interests. The journalists also reflected on their relationships with the ‘establishment’ in society, on which the report concluded that journalists claimed to enjoy some form of ‘power’ through their work and contacts with the establishment, with more than half of the respondents mentioning sometimes “using” this power.

Another related threat to the freedom and independence of journalists is the relationship they develop with their sources – particularly the ones with members of the elite such as politicians and business leaders (see for a Dutch appraisal of this issue: Rennen, 2000). Sometimes such relationships stand in the way of ‘true’ journalism, as the literature claims (see for example an essay on the ‘impossibility’ of independence in Dutch sport journalism by Van der Lee, 1999). This problem showed in the results of two general survey projects in the early 1980s on the different status and characteristics of women and men in journalism (Van Zoonen, 1985; Diekerhof et al, 1986). On several occasions the reports on these two surveys signaled the strong interrelationships of journalists with each other and with (official) sources, indicating a perceived independent role among journalists, even if they were closely connected with a particular group of news sources. This situation was further reflected in a report
on the ‘on the job’ experiences of female journalists, where the respondents were very positive about their autonomy, but at the same indicating quite a few constraints on this freedom all more or less related to informal social network issues (or lack thereof; see Van Zoonen, 1989). The same issue arose in two other surveys on the specific relationships between parliamentary journalists and politicians in The Netherlands in 1985 (Kaiser) and in 1999 (by sociologists Van Schuur and Vis). Both studies signal a strong personal as well as professional relationship between (80% male) journalists and politicians, although these relations and the topics around which such contacts are organized did not correlate with the journalists’ party preference, which can be characterized as being almost exclusively left-leaning (Van Schuur and Vis, 1999 and 2000).

Particularly the apprehension journalists have felt throughout the 20th century towards commercialism as a threat to their perceived editorial autonomy reveals the dominant role the ideal of a ‘press freedom’ enjoys within the professional group – even if 54% of all parliamentary journalists in 1999 said they did not know the content of Article 7 in the Dutch Constitution; it is the Article on freedom of speech and press freedom (Van Schuur and Vis, 2000: 219).

Journalists have a sense of immediacy. According to journalists, their work is: reporting the news. This term is an ‘immediate’ concept, in that it stresses the novelty of information as its defining principle. This suggests that working as a journalist connects with notions of speed, fast decision-making, being 'hasty', working in ‘real-time’, as science reporter James Gleick writes in his book called “Faster” (2000). This value is mirrored in the traditional journalism survey questionnaires of Johnstone, Slawski and Bowman and Weaver and Wilhoit, where they specifically ask respondents how important it is to them to deliver the news “as quickly as possible.”

The Dutch 1976 survey showed a strong preference among journalists for the traditional role perception of disseminating news, of getting the information ‘out there’ as soon as possible (Kempers and Wieten, 1976). Getting the news fast was popular among regional journalists more than twenty years later as well, even though explaining to the public what this news means received more support (De Jongh, 1999). The difference lies in the fact that in 1976 this traditional role had no ‘competition’ for its top seat on the importance scale, whereas the 1999 survey revealed a mix of candidates for first place: offering information objectively, simplifying complex issues, being a watchdog of government and offering backgrounds to the news all scored more or less equal as popular role perceptions. Other general journalism studies did not specifically ask for an awareness of immediacy. But in two instances, the ‘hastiness’ of the job came up as a specific factor of discontent for some journalists: a study
among women journalists in the early 1980s revealed that they felt the (increasingly) fast-paced nature of the job makes for shallow reporting – a source of worry generally not shared by their male colleagues (Diekerhof et al., 1986). A report in 1996 on the failure of a project, intended to train and retain ethnic minority journalists at Dutch newspapers, showed that the 'quicksilver-like' nature of on-the-job communication and the speed- and deadline oriented news culture functioned as significant hurdles for effective integration into the team (Koerts, 1996; Ramdjan, 2001; see also Allan, 1999). Both reports did not critically address the overall sense of immediacy, and merely stated that it sometimes creates problems for (certain) journalists. This suggests that immediacy still survives as an essential value in contemporary journalism, even though it is – like the notion of objectivity – not unproblematized in the professional and scholarly literature.

Journalists have a sense of ethics and legitimacy. Parallel to the history of 20th century professionalization of journalism runs the history of professional codes of ethics – especially since the adoption of the so-called Code of Bordeaux by the International Federation of Journalists in 1956. Although journalists worldwide do not seem to agree on whether a code of ethical conduct should be in place or not, all of them seem to share a sense of ethics – as being ethical also legitimizes journalists' claims to the position as (free and fair) watchdogs of society.

A mail survey among 141 newspaper journalists in 1994 was meant as an appendix to a book on Dutch journalism ethics (results reported in: Brouwers, 1994: 145-162). The average journalist turned out to be a professional, whose ethical decisions seemed to be influenced primarily by his social environment (family and friends), and the daily working routine within the newsroom. These findings are in line with case studies on journalists' ethical decision making elsewhere (see for example Voakes, 1997).

Although other surveys did not address the ethics of journalists directly, the work of Dutch media ethics expert Huub Evers has to be mentioned in this context. Evers analyzed all of the verdicts of the Dutch Press Council between 1960 (its founding year) and 1985. The Council deals with complaints about the professional conduct of journalists and passes judgment, although it has no formal legal power. Evers concluded that initially the council took as its norm whether a certain practice was harmful to the dignity and standing of Dutch journalists. In the course of the 1970s that criterion changed. Since then the council's standard of judgment has been whether the journalist has exceeded, given the journalist's responsibility in society, the limits of what is acceptable in society at large (Evers, 1987: 297). Although Evers contends that a code of
conduct for journalists is not generally endorsed within the Dutch media, he does show that the council has received and still receives strong support from for example the Dutch union of journalists (Nederlandse Vereniging voor Journalisten; NVJ), trade journal De Journalist (in which all verdicts of the council are published) and the society of newspaper and magazine editors (Genootschap van Hoofdredacteuren; GvH), in particular since the 1980s until today (Evers, 1998). The consensus among journalists in The Netherlands therefore seems to be that a reporter must have developed a sense of ethics – but not necessarily a legally enforced one, which finding is similar to studies in other countries (Nordenstreng, 1995; Evers, 1997).

This brief report on earlier survey research in The Netherlands shows that the only more or less representative studies into characteristics of Dutch journalists from all sides and corners of the media have been the projects by Muskens in 1968 – intended as a sociological ‘state of the art’ of the profession at the time – and by Kempers and Wieten of 1976 – a project intended to shed light on the effects of press concentration on the professional journalist. Two later projects – one regarding the position of women in journalism (Meier and Van den Berg, 1991), and one commissioned by the council for Dutch schools for journalism (Van Gaalen-Oordijk et al, 1993), can also be considered as general projects, but with too narrow a focus to be included as representative studies on (emergent consensual norms and values among) the population of Dutch journalists. Beyond such scholarly research one can also turn to ‘popular’ publications about and by journalists on (Dutch) journalism; examples thereof are collections of interviews with journalists (Van der Linden, 1984), collections of essays by journalists on journalism (Drok and Roeters, 1986; “Het gouden pennetje”, 1999; Drok and Jansen, 2001) or biographies and memoirs by people in the media (Hagen, 2002).

The overview of journalism studies in The Netherlands suggests that one may assume that a more or less shared ideology regarding journalism exists among Dutch news workers. In particular during and after the period of depillarization the Dutch media adopted the foremost ideal-typical values of modern journalism as a way of defining themselves against the constraints of party politics and ideology, as well as religious doctrine – which is not to say that Dutch journalists did not share certain professional values before that time. It is telling that the first journalism studies in The Netherlands were published during the ‘heyday’ of depillarization, which period some authors describe as the time in which Dutch journalism wrestled itself free and embraced professionalization within the context of freedom of expression and media pluriformity ideals (Evers, 1987: 64-67; Bardoel, 1999: 9). The purposes of the project at hand
must therefore be seen in the context of whether or not journalists in The Netherlands adhere to the same (definitions of) occupational ideology as their colleagues elsewhere, and what the elements of this ideology particularly mean in the Dutch context.

When Hallin (1992) described the period of 'high modernism' in journalism, he referred to the period of the 1930s to the late 1960s. Ever since, Hallin says, "all of this was beginning to change [...] substantially" (Hallin, 1992: 18). The American scholar mentions the collapse of political consensus and the increased commercialization of news as the prime movers of these changes. Some contemporary authors refer to these supposed changes or threats to journalism as 'postmodernism' (McQuail, 1994: 59-60) or 'liquid modernity' (Bauman, 2000), terms generally - and loosely - used in the literature to summarize or describe views emerging throughout the 20th century, challenging notions (such as 'progress' and 'truth') associated with the modernity of industrialized late 19th and early 20th societies. Underlying the discussion of the dominant ideology of journalism such challenges to 'high modernism' can be summarized as a rejection of one universal style or (professional) ideology in favor of a more 'fluid' understanding as Dahlgren claims (1992: 14), criticism towards (normative) modernism in terms of rationality, objectivity and 'truth', as well as a general disposition towards the 'modern' West as Gitlin (1995) describes it (see also Ekström, 1996; Grosswiler, 1998). The second purpose of the project at hand refers explicitly to these developments in terms of a discussion of contemporary Dutch journalism with respect to potential changes and challenges posed by the Internet, infotainment and the multicultural society. In this study I do not intend to argue dialectically, that one 'dominant theme' (cf. postmodernism) has replaced another (cf. modernism) as an explanatory framework for understanding journalism. But this project does follow up on the suggestion that the global picture of journalism is changing to such an extent that one has to analyze and discuss the main attributes of such (potential) changes in order to successfully study, describe and explain contemporary (Western) journalism.

Although journalism is a profession which (also because of its nature as being 'new' and 'fast') undergoes changes constantly, specific developments in society can be singled out because these can be seen as impacting upon all aspects of the media: its ideal-typical values, its organization, its means of production and distribution, its reception by audiences, and its news culture (see Stevenson, 1995; Van Ginneken, 1997; Allan, 1999). In this project the developments regarding digitalization and the Internet, commercialization and infotainment and the role of the media in the multicultural society have been defined
as such. There are two main reasons to do so. First, the scholarly literature suggests that digitalization, infotainmentization (also known as: tabloidization) and multiculturalism have been – or in some case: should be – on the forefront of changes and challenges to contemporary media, especially since the late 1980s. These developments share some similar characteristics: they change the way journalism gets done (through technology, education, competition, and staffing issues for example), they change the way journalism is received (through disintermediative options, popular wants and needs, and fragmentation of publics for example), and therefore they have the potential to fundamentally challenge journalism. A second reason is particular to the Dutch context, as these three issues have been on the forefront of public debates within and about journalism in The Netherlands in recent years. As the following paragraphs will show, all three elements are part of the immediate practical consciousness of Dutch media professionals. Journalism on the Internet for example was acknowledged as a key development by the national union of journalists, the NVJ, in early 2000 when they started a specific division for online reporters. Infotainment is cause for prime concern, especially because commercial television has only entered the Dutch media market in full force during the early 1990s (and commercial television news started even later) – which makes the debate about possible ‘market-driven’ journalism in The Netherlands quite fresh, regardless of the fact that infotaining media have been around since the earliest days of journalism (see also: Brants and Neijens, 1998). After decades of rather sporadic or incidental attention, the role of the media in the Dutch multicultural society has been a topic of great attention and concern since the 1990s. Concluding it should be noted that a description and analysis of the characteristics of journalists in The Netherlands should take into account the processes and developments potentially changing or challenging Dutch journalism. In doing so, the project can be positioned more successfully in contemporary society beyond its limitations of being a study of a particular moment, ‘frozen in time’. As existing scholarly work in The Netherlands does not share the benefits of for example the American situation – where representative surveys among journalists have been conducted every ten years or so since the 1970s – an interpretative framework in terms of changes and challenges to (the ideal-typical values of) journalism should be seen as a crucial and distinctive element of the project at hand.

The main attributes of change or challenge in The Netherlands can thus been identified as the role of journalism in the multicultural society, the impact and effects of new media technologies such as the Internet on journalism, and the rise and establishment of infotainment journalism. The sections hereafter of-
fer an analysis of the main arguments of the discussion in the Dutch context and explore the ways whether and how these developments are related to the core values of the dominant journalism ideology. The discussion section of this chapter summarizes the relevance of these discussions to the research questions in the study at hand.

The Multicultural Society
The Netherlands, like practically all countries in the world today, is by definition a multicultural society or rather: a poly-ethnic state, where cultural diversity can be seen as the result of individual or family immigration (Kymlicka, 1996). Since the 1940s and 1950s people from the previously Dutch colony of Indonesia arrived, in the 1970s a steady flow of migrant laborers (and later on their families) from countries such as Turkey and Morocco came together with people from another Dutch colony turned independent (in 1975): Surinam. Since the 80s also an increasing number of asylum seekers have entered Dutch society, starting with people from the Tamil population of Sri Lanka and nowadays from countries like Ghana (considered the largest group of either legal or illegal asylum seekers in recent years; see for example Knipscheer and Kleber, 1998), Somalia and Iraq.

The multicultural society can be considered to be affecting journalism in The Netherlands; the aim of the project at hand is to explore this impact in terms of how multiculturalism is articulated to Dutch journalism and to the global picture and ideology of journalism as described earlier. Examples of such articulations are the pressure from national government and special interest groups in Dutch society on media organizations to include more professional members of diverse ethnic backgrounds; the emphasis put by policymakers in The Netherlands on pluriformity and representation regarding the media; and the ongoing debate on the ways in which reporting on minorities in the media affect race relations in the country. The literature suggests that the (Western) news media's coverage of ethnic minorities has become a particular issue under debate during the final quarter of the 20th century (Campbell, 1998). Hallin for example describes the increased consciousness among journalists and media organizations of diversity in the newsroom and portrayals of minorities as particularly challenging the notion of professional neutrality (1996: 255).

The discussion in The Netherlands about the media and ethnic minorities centers around a taxonomy of three core concepts: the knowledge of journalists about other cultures and ethnicities, issues of representation (i.e. pluriformity, diversity) and the social responsibility of journalists (Deuze, 2002).
PROFESSIONAL KNOWLEDGE. The knowledge issue has been put on the professional agenda in particular by special interest groups such as the foundation for ethnic minority local broadcasters (Stichting Omroep Allochtonen; STOA), the Forum institute for multicultural development (Forum) and the division for migrants and the media of the national union of journalists (Werkgroep Migranten en Media; MenM). These organizations argue in a number of publications and public discussions that Dutch journalists in general do not attempt to learn about other cultures and therefore fail to either 'de-stereotype' migrant groups or reach new readers (and thus potential new colleagues) with different ethnic backgrounds (see for example Suudi and Burgemeestre, 1991; Brants et al, 1998). An example of a 'countermeasure' as put forward by MenM and STOA is the publication of a booklet – Deskundigengids (1998) – filled with names and addresses of ethnic minority experts on a wide range of issues relevant for journalists. Three of the four schools of journalism in The Netherlands do not have compulsory courses or programs on issues related to the multicultural society, nor do the three existing university programs of journalism, which gap in journalism education could be seen to contribute to a lack of professional knowledge of Dutch journalists as suggested by STOA, Forum and MenM (Deuze, 2001c). It is important to note here a distinction between a lack of formal as well as experiential knowledge; Dutch journalism educators in the field for example suggest that their students have almost no experience with ethnic minorities as in living in the same neighborhood or having 'cross-cultural' friendships (opinions as voiced during a meeting on multicultural journalism education at the Nieuwsport Center in The Hague, July 2001).

REPRESENTATION. In The Netherlands all companies with 35 or more employees are urged (not: required) by the government to seek equal representation of minorities on the work floor; it is generally believed few companies in fact achieve such a 'mirror' representation of the multicultural society, which conclusion particularly goes for media companies (Ouaj, 1999). The developments towards multiculturalism have stimulated discussion on the access of migrant-interest groups to the media and the hiring of ethnic minority journalists (Ramdjan, 2001). This issue has not been a topic within the broader field of journalism survey research as sketched before, although Weaver and Wilhoit did include an oversample and separate chapter on ethnic minorities in their 1996 publication. The demographics of the Johnstone, Slawski and Bowman (1976) and Weaver and Wilhoit studies showed no relative increase of ethnic minorities in journalism; the authors indicated that the dominant 'white' culture of the newsroom may have made it more difficult for ethnic minorities to enter or even stay in the profession (Weaver and Wilhoit, 1996: 213-214). This
conclusion has been supported by studies on the hiring patterns in both US and Dutch newsrooms (Becker et al, 1999; Koerts, 1996). Another conclusion from the surveys in the US on this topic was that the researchers found it impossible to generalize accurately about minority journalists—even within such a small group they found a wide variety of answers given on all levels of the survey questionnaire.

Little is known about the representation of ethnic minorities in the newsrooms in The Netherlands—and if they are there, in which sectors of the media they can be found. The assumption underlying the discussion on multiculturalism in the (Dutch) media is that an increased number of minority journalists in the newsroom would equal more diversity in reporting. This assumption mirrors the discussion about women in journalism of the 1970s and 1980s, when a number of studies addressed the experiences and labor situation of women journalists in The Netherlands (Diekerhof et al, 1985; Van Zoonen, 1989 and 1991). The discussion raises the issue of whether the personal background of a journalist—gender, ethnicity—predominantly influences news values and decision-making processes. Hallin (1996) for example suggests that women in journalism have contributed to the blurring of the lines between public and private domains, i.e. the feminist notion that ‘the personal is political’. The same conclusion is drawn by authors in The Netherlands, which is used to support the argument for more minority journalists in newsrooms (Sterk, 2000: 95).

One more element in the discussion on representation is the sociology of sources and networks used and maintained by professional journalists (see for example Cottle, 1997). Journalism studies worldwide have claimed that journalists tend to lean heavily on official or elite sources—a network of sources which is predominantly white and exclusive to (groups of) minorities (Gans, 1979: 116; Schudson, 1996: 147-148; Van Ginneken, 1998: 67). These conclusions are mirrored in The Netherlands (Brants et al, 1998: 16; Sterk, 2000: 101-103). Counterarguments focus on the generally undifferentiated nature of the ‘elites’ these studies refer to (Schlesinger, 1990), or on the fact that researchers are sometimes blind to the significant efforts newsrooms make to ‘mainstream’ minorities (Campbell, 1998: 96-100).

Social Responsibility. Issues concerning the multicultural context of Dutch society are topics of ongoing debate in The Netherlands, in particular regarding the social responsibility of journalists and the media (Evers, 1987: 64). Questions as to how the media should deal with migrant cultures, with extreme right-wing groups and politicians and the danger of biased reporting in general are all highly sensitive and much debated upon (Brants et al, 1998). In-
ternationally the literature more or less consistently suggests that the media tend to reflect the dominant (white) culture and power structures in society, effectively excluding (ethnic) minorities in the news in for example Western Europe, the US, Israel and Australia (see the work of the Glasgow Media Group in this respect, also in: Jakubowicz, Goodall, Marin, Michell and Seneviratne, 1994; Campbell, 1995; Van Dijk, 1996; Entman and Rojecki, 2000, Avraham, Wolfsfeld and Aburaiya, 2000). In Holland the work of Teun van Dijk has rocked many boats – especially the ones of journalists themselves. In 1983 Van Dijk published a seminal book on the Dutch media coverage of minorities, concluding that the media in fact reflect a systemic racist and discriminatory tendency in Dutch journalism, which argument led many reporters of the time to fiercely attack Van Dijk for his supposed lack of knowledge on how the media work (Van Dijk, 1983; Top, 2000:18). Van Dijk later on repeated his conclusion with similar work in other countries like Great Britain (Van Dijk, 1991). Recently journalists covering the multicultural society in broadcasting and in the press have been interviewed on their rationales and views on the topic (Leurdijk, 1999 on television producers; Van Donselaar and Tanja, 2000 on print journalists). Although such studies will be analyzed in detail in chapter IV (on journalism in the multicultural society), one conclusion from these studies to be mentioned in this introductory context, is that TV journalists felt strongly about breaking the 'taboo' on the problems of ethnic minorities in Dutch society in their programs. Their colleagues in the press on the other hand made it clear that any effect of their reporting was unintended and that they considered their prime task to be signaling of events and creating awareness of for example racist tendencies in society. The differences in visions and the plurality of role perceptions show that the multicultural society can be seen as an arena wherein several notions of professional journalism compete.

This sketch of the ways in which the multicultural society is articulated to journalism in The Netherlands shows that it is one of the foremost areas in the Dutch media where journalists are confronted with their professional ideology, their social responsibilities and (in-) direct influences by outside parties like special interest groups, politics and government. These issues have for example led to the publication of a book on journalism and the multicultural society in June 2000, where several authors – including journalists – called for more social and 'ethnic' awareness among media professionals in The Netherlands (Sterk, 2000). The discussions on professional knowledge, representation and social responsibility in The Netherlands show that multiculturalism potentially affects at least three of the five values in the ideology of journalism. The public service ideal can be seen as the arena where different notions of journalism clash with respect to the social responsibility of journalists in a
multicultural society. Hallin has indicated the challenge the notion of diversity poses to a professional ideal of being neutral, which claim also bears upon the autonomy and freedom of reporters in terms of 'political correct' reporting (showing sensitivity towards the position of minorities in society) and the pressure on journalists to reconstruct their networks or on media to modify existing hiring patterns.

Internet
A second contextual note has to be made on the developments in The Netherlands on the technological front and the ways in which these developments are making inroads into our understanding of journalism. Computerization in all sectors of society has taken place (in The Netherlands as well as internationally), which process of new media integration is considered to have profound effects on the way the economy and society operates (Fidler, 1997; Castells, 2000). Practically all companies in The Netherlands have switched to computer network systems; electronic communication traffic and the 'paperless office' are topics of debate in management circles; and the convergence of media as well as the fact that the television set, video player and personal computer have found their way into most – if not all – Dutch households are signs of the high impact of technology on all aspects of life. The Internet as it can be considered to be affecting journalism in general and the professional ideology of journalism in particular will be discussed here in two ways:

- how it has made inroads into newsrooms and desktops of Dutch journalists working for all media types in terms of Computer-Assisted Reporting (CAR); and
- how it has created a new type of journalism: online journalism.

Computer-Assisted Reporting. The Internet had a fast start in The Netherlands, although initially there were not many available electronic public resources. Due to the strict copyright legislation and distrust among Dutch companies and the media industry in particular, using the Internet did not seem to make a lot of sense when one was looking for Dutch sources of information. This has changed in recent years. The first news media online started in 1995, most notably the World Wide Web (the graphic interface of the Internet) sites of Dutch regional daily Eindhovens Dagblad and national daily NRC Handelsblad (Van Eijk, 1997). At the time of writing nearly all newspapers, national magazines and broadcasters have their own Websites up and running. Online activity has also spurred public use of the Internet. To give some examples: in April 2000 two Dutch research institutes published figures – one through a phone survey, the other using a Web survey – showing that use of the
Internet in the Netherlands is widespread: 6 million people have Internet connections at home or at work and roughly 3 million people claim to be online daily (Internet Databureau, 2000; ProActive, 2000). This places the country well inside the top-ten worldwide in terms of consumer Net access (NUA Internet Surveys, 2000). These numbers in combination with the fast growth of Internet startup companies and Internet Service Providers (ISPs) makes The Netherlands one of the forerunners with respect to the Internet in Europe – some research firms even indicate that the Dutch 'e-business' environment ranks first place worldwide (source: reports by The Economist Intelligence Unit, 2000 and 2001).

In terms of use and availability of searchable archives, databases or news sources on the Internet by journalists the Dutch developments are still in their infancy as compared to for example the US (Paul, 1999; Verwey, 2000). The last two years have seen a tremendous increase of the use of the Internet by traditional media, with radio and TV programs for example referring to the addresses of Websites (cf. URLs: Universal Resource Locators) and newspapers putting up archives and infographics online for their readers (see Bierhoff, Deuze and De Vreese, 2000 for a European overview of related developments).

This prompted some subscribers to complain: one wonders what you miss when you do not have (or: want) access to the Internet and your paper redirects you to a Website for more information.

The three main Schools for Journalism of Utrecht, Zwolle and Tilburg are investing heavily in training programs in Computer-Assisted Reporting (CAR): using the Internet as a reporting tool (Utrecht: Verwey and Vasterman, 2000; Tilburg: Schmetz, 2000; Zwolle: Aalderink, 2000). All Dutch newsrooms have Internet connections now. Although this development often started as one computer with desktop Internet access per newsroom, all media have been switching to universal desktop access in recent years and additionally sent their reporters on one- or two-day courses in CAR at further training institutes like Forum, based at the Utrecht School for Journalism (Bierhoff et al, 2000).

The fast-paced developments regarding the Internet in today's newsroom has not made everybody happy; research in the US and Canada revealed that many reporters and editors of newspapers felt nervous and concerned about the 'omnipresence' of the Internet in their work (Singer, 1997a and 1997b; Paul, 1999). The journalists questioned by Singer all reported seeing the Internet as shifting the concept of what is information, who provides it and what can be done with it (1997a: 16). Most media companies in The Netherlands employ documentalists specialized in researching online resources, who are not all too enthusiastic about individual journalists finding their own way online – lamenting the lack of skills and the loss of time better spent on reporting in-
volved (De Vree, 1998). Research at the BBC also revealed the unrest new media technolo-
gies have created in the newsroom; journalists reported lack of time to adequ-
ately use and master the technology, feeling stressed because of the
‘immediate’ nature of the Internet (Cottle, 1999). Another aspect related to CAR
which affects all journalists is how to deal with e-mail, newsgroups and Inter-
net Relay Chat (IRC) in an environment where the verification of information
is extremely difficult due to the often anonymous, fast-paced communication
involved (Reddick and King, 2001; Garrison, 2000). Here one can attribute CAR
to the impact so-called ‘liberating’ new media technologies such as the Inter-
net may have on journalism with regard to its claims to credibility, legitimac-
y and validity, and the challenges ICTS bring to established newsroom cultures.

**ONLINE JOURNALISM.** The Internet has created its own kind, fourth kind of
journalism: online journalism – which differs in its skills and standards from
traditional types of journalism (Deuze, 1999). The main differences can be
summarized using the key concepts of the online environment: hypertextual-
ity, interactivity and multimedia (Newhagen and Rafaeli, 1996; Singer, 1998;
Bardoeel and Deuze, 2001). The online journalist has to make decisions on
which media formats best tell a certain story (multimedia), has to allow
room for options for the public to respond, interact or even customize certain
stories (interactivity) and must consider ways to connect the story to other sto-
ries, archives, resources and so on through hyperlinks (hypertextuality). This is
the ‘ideal-typical’ form of online journalism, as professed by an increasing
number of professionals and academics worldwide (in the US see Reddick and
King, 1996; Pavlik, 1999; in Germany see Friedrichsen, Ehe, Janneck and Wys-
terski, 1999: 139-143; in The Netherlands see Stielstra, 1999; Jager and Van Twisk,
2001). Studies among or about populations of online journalists are rare. Ex-
amples thereof are the work of American academic Jane Singer on the man-
agement of online newsrooms (Singer, 1999). Also in Belgium, Germany and
Finland attempts were made to typify the journalist who has chosen the World
Wide Web – the graphic interface of the Internet – as his or her preferred work-
ing environment in terms of their social-demographics and professional role
perceptions (see Paulussen, 2001; Neuberger, 2000; Heinonen, 1999). The
scholars involved in such studies generally conclude that the reporter online
certainly differs in some characteristics – for example technological knowl-
edge and public service orientation – from his or her colleagues elsewhere in
the news media.

The consensus among the online media professionals internationally, such
as it is voiced at gatherings like the NetMedia Conference in Great Britain or
the Editor & Publisher Interactive Conference in the US, is that online journal-
ism is definitely “a breed apart” (Meek, 2000).22 On the other hand, online journalism is still seen by many members of the profession of journalism as something ‘outside’ of journalism, which claim is often legitimized by the fact that most news sites do not produce original content (that is: editorial content which is exclusively produced for the online environment), or that most of these sites do not make any money. Examples of failed recognition by the industry are the reluctance of the Pulitzer Prize foundation in the US to allow online news stories to be submitted for recognition or the problems online journalists recently had in obtaining press accreditation at the European Soccer Championships (June 2001) in Belgium and The Netherlands.

This claim against online journalism by traditional journalism has been described by critics of the new media as a fear of technological determinism or even ‘de-professionalization’ in journalism (Porteman, 1999: 15). Authors refer to the fact that anyone can be a journalist online, hence further blurring the distinction between reliable, objective information offered by a professional and ‘going tabloid’ such as for example the infamous Matt Drudge, whose Website The Drudge Report in 1998 originally broke the news of President Clinton’s affair with Monica Lewinsky (see for example: Hume, 1995; Nielsen and Morkes, 1998; Fallows, 1999). Specifically the lack of ‘institutional credibility’ of online journalism and in particular ‘Net-native’ journalism, which does not have a corresponding traditional ‘mother-medium’, is cited as endangering the core values of professional journalism (Singer, 1997b: 80; Gahran, 1998). In The Netherlands the rise of online journalism as a distinct professional realm was acknowledged by the national union of journalists, the NVJ, in March 2000 with the start of a new branch catering only for ‘Internet journalists’, which development was widely applauded by online journalists at the time (Van der Have, 2000). The only Dutch general journalism trade journal, De Journalist, went even further that month by appointing the online editor of daily NRC Handelsblad, Froukje Santing (also director of the NVJ online branch) as one of its regular column writers. Online journalism is further criticized for its lack of professional standards or ethics (Deuze and Yeshua, 2000), its unclear distinction between commercial and editorial content (Van Dusseldorp, Scullion and Bierhoff, 1999), its catering to increasingly smaller publics referred to as ‘Balkanization’ of news (Schudson, 1996), and its reliance on ‘tertiary’ sources: after news agencies, print or broadcast editors come the online editors who select and edit the news of an event (Friedrichsen et al, 1999: 137).

The Internet as a reporting tool and as the arena for a new kind of journalism particularly challenges professionals ideals of credibility, reliability and objectivity, since the information and sources obtained through the worldwide network of computers is considered to be too ‘immediate’ and hard to
verify to use by journalists. Yet the pressure to do so is rising throughout the field of journalism. The traditional values of factuality and validity corresponding with the ideal of quickly delivering the news are also challenged by the ‘24/7’-element of online news. Several authors additionally have questioned the way in which journalists cope with ethical dilemmas on the Internet; whether using CAR and deciding which information to use (for example e-mails, chats or private Homepages) or working as an online journalist and linking to external sites or copying parts of original sources into the news site itself (Mann, 1997; Cooper, 1998). This leaves the concerns voiced about the lack of clear standards for distinguishing commercial from editorial content online (Arrant and Anderson, 2000). Recently new media technologies such as news delivery via mobile phones (cf. WAP: Wireless Application Protocol or its third generation-successor ‘Bluetooth’) further fueled this debate. Chapter v examines and empirically tests this claim and explores the wider context and impact of new media technologies on different journalism in The Netherlands.

Infotainment

Contemporary media critics and scholars agree: one of the most powerful forces behind the culture industry is commercialism – a force which is becoming more powerful mainly because of the convergence of the culture and entertainment industries (see for example Hallin, 1992; Dahlgren and Sparks, 1992; Greco, 2000). Regardless of whether critics applaud or loathe commercialization of the media – that is to say, most authors are cynical about the effects of the development – the impact thereof on journalism and news media in particular is cause for great concern (see for example: Fiske, 1992; McManus, 1994; Van Vree, 2000). Two developments in journalism that follow directly from increased commercial interests and competition in the media market can be signaled out for discussion since they are equally valid in most media-savvy (Western) societies: media concentration and tabloidization or: infotainment. Although the ongoing process of media concentration – both in The Netherlands and elsewhere – warrants a discussion on its own as it affects the organization and stratification of the media in a given society, it will be treated here as subsequent to the role infotainment plays in the news media. This is done because of the fact that the scholarly literature generally attributes (an increase in) entertainment elements in journalism to increased commercial pressures on journalists, which are then explained by looking at media concentration (see for example McChesney, 1999; Bagdikian, 2000). A second reason is that media concentration in the Dutch context has worked differently from for example the United States or Australia; Dutch media are generally
concentrated vertically (like publishing house Wegener buying into almost all regional newspapers), whereas Anglo-American media tend to concentrate horizontally (such as the America Online/Time Warner merger, cross-cutting all media types, including Internet access). The concerns regarding commercialization, commodification of news, tabloidization, and infotainment further connect on a theoretical level to the blurring of the distinctions between information which is public (i.e. political, economical, 'hard' news), and that what is considered private (i.e. culture, lifestyle, 'soft' news), as mainstream journalism increasingly tend to apply themes, issues and values related to the private lives of public people as elements of the news (Hallin, 1996; Winch, 1997).

Media Concentration. As noted earlier, one of the first comprehensive surveys among Dutch journalists (carried out in 1974, reported in 1976) was inspired by perceived threats to press freedom because of a ‘wave’ of media mergers at the time. The concentration and proliferation of (media) companies for commercial reasons can be said to be something that has been a feature of media history in general (Baldasty, 1992). But the mergers in particularly the final decades of the 20th century – mergers of companies creating media content with industries providing infrastructure in particular – have renewed interest and apprehension in the journalism community (see in particular the work of Bagdikian, 2000). In The Netherlands people have also been aware of the perceived dangers of media concentrations (Kempers and Wieten, 1976; Van Cuilenburg et al., 1992: 351-357). Researchers have concluded that although the number of independent newspapers in The Netherlands fell from 45 in 1950 to 24 in 1988, a further decline in these numbers was in fact prevented by media concentration – but caused by slowed down audience concentration (Van Cuilenburg, Kleinnijenhuis and De Ridder, 1988). In recent years, trends on the Dutch media market has developed toward cooperation and even convergence of traditional public and commercial media organizations and the number of independent newspapers, periodicals, magazines and broadcast media offerings in general remains the same or has been growing in the last decade. In terms of content the trend on the media market has been towards developing more special interest and popular niche publications and programs to come to terms with the concentration and fragmentation of audiences. The Dutch media market as a whole and the role of the government therein is developing towards one of 'more players, fewer rules', which trend some critics signal as developing hand-in-hand with increased commercialization and popularization of the media (see Van Cuilenburg et al, 1992: 378-379; Bardoel, 1998).
In the existing recent literature on journalism surveys worldwide most journalists complain about this development, seeing the need for profit as a threat to their profession (Weaver, 1998). The 1976 survey in The Netherlands also revealed that only 10% of journalists felt that press concentration would result in a better press and therefore may improve democracy (Kempers and Wieten, 1976: 56). Findings of a 1994 survey of Dutch newspaper journalists showed that two-thirds of respondents were dissatisfied with the ways in which their editorial and marketing departments worked together (ISK, 1994). One third of participating reporters even indicated they wanted to get more involved in the marketing process. The anxiousness about commercial interests among journalists seems to have increased. Recent mergers and acquisitions in The Netherlands met with extensive media attention and protests by the journalists involved; contemporary examples are the sale in 1999 of the vnu regional newspapers to market leader Wegener and the merger of major commercial broadcasters rtl and Veronica in 1995 (Veronica stepped out again in 2001). The market at the time of writing can be summarized as media supplier concentrated, with publishing company PCM since 1995 owning 4 out of 5 national mainstream daily newspapers, Wegener publishing or participating in 8 out of the 11 largest regional daily newspapers (with a circulation of over 100,000), VNU almost monopolizing the special interest and glossy magazine market. In broadcasting this situation is similar, as a dual broadcasting system of public service organizations has developed on one hand and several channels owned by two major corporations – HMG and SBS – on the other hand (Bakker and Scholten, 1999). As mentioned earlier: this media market is full, but also relatively stable.

**Infotainment.** One of the key characteristics of the Dutch media market is the fact that there are no tabloids. The market does have its fair share of weekly celebrity magazines, daytime tv lifestyle talk shows and lifestyle sections in newspapers. Especially on commercial television – which (modestly) started in The Netherlands in 1989 – such programs, styles and genres have caused concern in the journalism community. Even Joop van den Ende, foremost producer of entertainment tv genres in The Netherlands (and elsewhere in Europe), expressed concern about the lack of quality standards in 10 years of commercial broadcasting in an interview with daily De Volkskrant of September 1999. The literature refers to these kinds of programs or styles of presentation as infotainment – in terms of print media as tabloidization. Both terms – infotainment will be used here – refer to a process which Dutch scholar Brants described as a mix of political and information elements in entertainment media and the introduction of entertainment characteristics in traditional 'hard' news media (Brants, 1998: 13). Infotainment as a concept causes plenty of con-
cern and debate in both academic and journalistic circles. Areas of unrest are specifically the development of new genres (like docusoaps and reality TV), journalistic styles of representation ('intimate journalism') and topics coming from the field of entertainment or popular culture becoming prime time or front-page news items (Schudson, 1995: 179-181; Brookes, 1998). Dutch TV journalist Cees Grimbergen described infotainment as 'semi-journalism' without the routines and professionalism of 'serious' journalism (quoted in Van Liempt, 1997).

The mix of entertainment and information in journalistic products is not something new – several authors argue that such a mix has always been an intrinsic element of the concept of news (Iggers, 1998: 41). Right from the 19th century newspapers in the US and Western Europe were made with a specific entertainment element (Bauwens and Vandenbrande, 1998; Renger, 1998). Some researchers even have noted elements of tabloid-style sensationalism in the first newspapers of the 17th century (Willke, 1999). The Netherlands were no exception, even if one considers the relatively late introduction of the 'prime example' of infotainment journalism: commercial television or the fact that Dutch media sector has not known the other infotainment archetype: tabloid papers. Although scholars like Dahlgren have convincingly argued that television journalism has changed considerably and has become popularized since the early days (the 1950s and 1960s), others have duly noted that all existing 'popular' entertainment formats like talk shows already existed on Dutch national television as early as the 1960s (Dahlgren, 1995: 53; versus Manschot, 1994: 185). The Dutch press also featured 'typical' infotainment products in the 19th century such as lifestyle and human-interest magazines (Blokker, 1989). A recent content analysis of 'serious' political news programs on Dutch television revealed that all genres and styles had some elements of infotainment in them (Brants and Neijens, 1998). The historical trend is mirrored in neighboring countries such as Germany and Great Britain. (Schoenbach, 1997; Esser, 1999).

The blurring of the lines between information and entertainment in the newsmedia of recent years and the growing concern about this development show that, although infotainment can be seen as a historical feature of journalism, for journalists it used to be clear which realms of journalism could be considered to be entertaining – i.e. lifestyle, gossip and human interest genres – and which were seen as in the 'public interest' (Van Zoonen, 1998b). Journalism and its news media are therefore not surprisingly on the forefront of (theoretical) debates on transformations, shifts and convergence of public and private spheres of the way society organizes itself (see the work of Juergen Habermas in this respect; also in: Marcinowski, 1993; Winch, 1997; Schudson, 1998). With the rise of new (mass) media such as TV in the 1960s and the Internet in
the 1990s this distinction has blurred beyond the simple demarcations of the past (Dahlgren and Sparks, 1992; Dahlgren, 1996; Bardoel, 1997).

The concerns about media concentration and the rise and establishment of infotainment in contemporary journalism shows that further commercialization potentially affects several values related to the dominant ideology of journalism. The importance attributed to commercial interests is commonly seen as a threat to the editorial freedom and independence of a journalist. A corresponding shift from ‘hard’ news – politics, government, economy – to ‘soft’ news – human interest, private lives, lifestyle – is seen as making inroads to the professional ideal of objectivity (Bauwens and Van den Brande, 1998; Peck, 1998). As Van Zoonen notes, the blurring of the former simple distinctions between what is ‘public’ and what is ‘private’ in journalism also conflicts with the journalists’ sense of autonomy and professional self-perception (1998b: 114). The same author also indicates a general contempt and suspicion in journalism about the perceived lack of ethical standards or moral code in genres that focus on private lives – the British tabloids serving as the archetypical example thereof. The literature also reveals a broader discussion among academics whether publics are served or threatened by ‘infotainmentization’ of the news media. People are considered to be less informed by for example details on the private affairs of politicians which are deemed to be not socially relevant, on the other hand this kind of journalism may reach people (cf. the electorate) who otherwise would not care to watch or read about politics and government (Fiske, 1992; Hallin, 1996; Brants and Neijens, 1998; Gripsrud, 2000). Chapter VI attempts to delve deeper into these issues and aims to empirically address issues of differences and commonalties between journalists on different levels on the infotainment scale, and the ways in which the developments in infotainment can be traced in the self-perceptions of the journalists involved.

Following the thematic considerations regarding multiculturalism, infotainment and the Internet, the project at hand aims to employ a wider operational definition of journalists than the earlier mentioned ‘classical’ one in survey research. Our approach corresponds with calls in the literature for a broader and wider notion of journalism – in other words: a call for a more ‘catholic’ definition of journalism (Sparks, 1991: 67; see also Scholl, 1996 and 1997). The main consideration underlying the call for a wider definition of journalism is the ‘exclusive’ nature of definitions used particularly in survey projects like the ones by Weaver and Wilhoit, focusing solely on a narrow conception of news reporters in mainstream media, whereas contemporary journalism appears to be much wider both in terms of what news is and what kind of reporting is being done (see Fiske, 1989; Dahlgren, 1992; Cottle, 2000a). Other scholars more or less replicating the Weaver and Wilhoit design have to some extent aimed
to address this problem by including freelancers in their population, but in general journalism research tends to equate 'journalism' with 'hard' (or 'classical') news journalism, which seems particular misleading in the light of recent trends in television and online (e.g. Internet) journalism (Ekström, 1996: 129; Heinonen, 1998; Deuze, 1998 and 2001d). On the other hand, by adopting similar – though narrow – definitions, cross-national comparisons are made possible (see Weischenberg and Sievert, 1998: 397-399). By widening the definitional horizon the current changes and challenges to journalism are incorporated into the research design, as well as allowing for selected comparisons with earlier findings.

**Conclusion**

Dutch journalism and its multiculturalism, infotainment, and digitalization is the focus of this particular project. The overviews on these issues in this chapter have shown that the selected themes affect all journalism in The Netherlands and thus can be considered to impact upon the (dominant) professional ideology of journalism. The multicultural society is reflected not only within the 'Home Affairs' beat; the Internet does not only make inroads into the work of the Net-native reporter, nor can popularization and entertainment elements be seen as 'outside' of certain journalistic domains. The empirical starting point of the project is the individual journalist. In the first phase the characteristics of Dutch journalists are set against data of journalism surveys in comparable media systems (Germany, Great Britain, Australia and the US) in order provide a 'Dutch' profile of journalists in The Netherlands. The second phase examines the ways in which the professional ideology and the challenges to this ideology regarding multiculturalism, infotainment and the Internet are reflected in the journalists' basic, occupational and professional characteristics (details on definitions and operationalizations follow in the next chapter). With basic characteristics the social-demographics of journalists are referred to; occupational characteristics relate to the working situation, conditions and environment of journalists while professional characteristics are considered to be norms and values related to the profession of journalism (i.e. role perceptions and ethics).

The argument as presented in this introduction is a media-centric one, following the model of McQuail (1994: 3), directing the focus of attention to the media's sphere of activity and change. When one briefly considers the argument from the 'opposite' perspective, as in a society-centric view, one can see that there is one key development which reflects in all areas discussed here: fragmentation of media publics. The debate about journalism in the multicultural society can therefore also be seen as one about gaining (or: losing) a
growing audience consisting of ethnic minority groups. Commercialization and infotainmentization developments reflect the need for news media to make a profit, to cope with audience fragmentation, and to reach people who are harder to reach than ever before in an overcrowded and 'demassified' media market place. Journalism on the Internet emphasizes public service notions of community building and interactivity as a way to regain the individual 'active user' instead of the mass of 'passive consumers' of news, as well as to counter the potential of 'disintermediation' which the Internet poses to journalism as so-called Do-It-Yourself (DIY) surfers on the World Wide Web directly connect to primary sources of information (Rushkoff, 1997). This project accepts social change as a given and considers the influences on changes in the attitudes and behaviors of both journalists and their publics as a dialectic between media and society. The study at hand will therefore aim to retrieve, describe and analyze these developments as challenges in, and to, contemporary Dutch journalism.

This chapter has introduced the dual nature of the project at hand, as it both addresses the global nature of journalism's occupational ideology and the particularities of journalists in The Netherlands. Both considerations lead to a series of research questions particular to the goals of this project – beyond the profile of Dutch journalists it aims to provide. These questions can be summarized in four sections, each of which will be explored and discussed in a separate chapter.

**CHAPTER III: Journalism in contemporary Dutch society as compared to other Western democracies.**

What are the basic, occupational and professional characteristics of journalists in The Netherlands, what are the specifically Dutch characteristics as compared to their colleagues in other Western democracies, and how can the differences and commonalities be explained?

**CHAPTER IV: The articulation of the multicultural society to Dutch journalists and journalism.**

How is the multicultural society articulated with journalism in The Netherlands, in particular with respect to the basic, occupational and professional characteristics of journalists coming from the migrant groups, and the professional knowledge and views of Dutch journalists on issues concerning the multicultural society?

**CHAPTER V: Dutch journalists and the use and impact of new information and communication technologies.**

What is the meaning and relevance of new information and communication technologies in Dutch journalism, in particular with respect to the
use of electronic resources in Dutch newsrooms (cf. CAR) and the basic, occupational and professional characteristics of online journalists?

**CHAPTER VI: The articulation of infotainment to Dutch journalists and journalism.**

How is infotainment articulated with Dutch journalism, in particular with respect to the basic, occupational and professional characteristics of journalists working for specific infotainment genres, and the professional knowledge and views of these journalists on their work?

Building on these research questions we may venture ahead, where chapter II will discuss the conceptual and methodological underpinnings of the project at hand. The main problem which has to be solved there is the operational connection between the two purposes of the study: to provide a framework for profiling Dutch journalists (set against journalists elsewhere, which necessitates using a replicated research design) in particular, as well as to assess the ways in which the more or less ‘universal’ ideology may or may not be redefined regarding key changes and challenges to relationships between journalists, journalism, and contemporary society.