Postface & Acknowledgements

Why do we need to know who the news people are? Because who these journalists are influences what gets reported. But it is not just the people we need to know about – because when and how does it matter whether you are a man or woman in journalism, making a national or local news product, working with showbiz celebrities or politicians, whether you are experienced or not?

This depends on the relationship between who journalists are, in which context they work, and how they give meaning to their work. In this book these three aspects of journalism are described based on a little over thousand interviews with journalists in The Netherlands. As no single journalist covers, selects, interprets nor reports the news in a vacuum, neither does a scholar. Not only do I change that what I observe because I observe it, that what I observe reflects and thus impacts back upon me. In acknowledging the people who I consider to be essential for this project, I therefore acknowledge those whose personal and professional input has encoded my research and interpretations as represented in this book.

First I have to mention the instrumental role the support of Lou Lichtenberg of the Netherlands Press Fund (Bedrijfsfonds voor de Pers), and Hans Verploeg of the national organization for journalists (Nederlandse Vereniging voor Journalisten; NVJ) has played in this project, for which I thank them – and their organizations. As a second step in acknowledging the people (the context), who have supported, helped, and guided me in 'getting here', I want to mention the journalists participating in this project. Of course this concerns the thousand and more respondents and interviewees – but I also have had the pleasure to interact with many reporters and editors in the course of researching, writing, and presenting my work. Acknowledging means excluding people – but I still want to single out Pieter Broertjes (De Volkskrant), who I thank for several inspiring conversations over the years, and for his time and effort to provide this book with a fitting entrée. Leo Enthoven (Wegener), Henk Blanken (De Volkskrant) and Froukje Santing (nrc Handelsblad) have been equally inspiring sources of ideas and challenges to my ways of thinking about (online) journalism. Talking about the Internet, I would like to thank the people of the Villamedia.nl- and Internetjournalist.nl-Websites, notably Ren de Vree and Erik van Heeswijk, who have allowed me to publish my random ramblings on their trade online. Thanks also to Frits Barend and Henk van Dorp (RTL), Andries Knevel (EO), and the people of 'Studio NL' (Wereldom-
'Cultuur en media' (NPS), Business Nieuws Radio as well as BNN for their efforts to make themselves as Dutch journalists in the context of my project part of their content. What has always struck me, is the fact that journalists are perfectly willing and able to engage in critical discussions about their work – but that this capacity for self-reflection does not often make it into the 'public sphere' of the media. This is why I doubly appreciate all the time journalists have spent in talking with my students and me – since they must have realized they were being critically scrutinized at the same time.

Scrutinizing journalism is what an increasing number of organizations and people within the media community in The Netherlands do, and I have been fortunate enough to be involved with several of such organizations and public debates in these last couple of years. Several people within this community have become friends, fellow researchers, and people I have come to know and respect as they share the same ideal: of always wanting to provide journalists with resources to facilitate and improve their work. I would like to mention some of these admirable people in particular: Bart Top and Monique Doppert of Migranten en Media; Farin Ramdjan of Mixed Media, Garjan Sterk of Meer van Anders, Victor Joseph of the Landelijk Bureau voor Racismebestrijding, Ed Klute of Stichting Omroep Allochtonen, the people of the network 'Beeldvorming', and the lurkers and posters of the online platform for debate on issues regarding journalism in The Netherlands, 'Journl'.

Journalists become what they are partly because of the kind of training they have enjoyed, and because of the kind of teachers or mentors that have provided them with insight, skills and standards for their work. Over the years, and in particular through my work at the Utrecht School for Journalism, I have benefited from many colleagues involved in journalism and media education in The Netherlands and abroad. Singling out my thanks to some of them: Gerard Smit, Peter Verwey, and Peter Vasterman (Utrecht), for offering me a chance to put my ideas into teaching practice; Wiel Schmetz, Toon Rennen and Huub Evers (Tilburg), for always being interested and supportive; Nico Drok and Wijnand Aalderink (Zwolle), Ruud Vos and Johan Snel (Ede) for giving me the idea that this kind of research matters; Eric Smulders (Rotterdam), Hans Renders and Sanna Buurke (Groningen) have also been great sparring partners for discussion and course development. Such partners are also present on the mailing list 'NewsViews', which I have moderated since October 1998. Its 200+ members – mostly journalists, educators, scholars and students of the news from all over the world – have at times been truly excellent sources of insight and reference in my work. Talking about educators, one automatically talks about their students; what is a good teacher without excellent students who offer him or her the chance to excel? In this respect I
have to mention the first group of online journalism students 'under my reign' in Utrecht (in 1999), most of whom are still online and interconnected through the 'HetNetwerk' mailing list. While dwelling on the topic of colleagues and students, I would like to remain for a while on the site of colleagues and students in the scholarly community. It is this community which has allowed me to move beyond my 'there is One Truth' way of looking at the world, and therefore this amazing group of people cannot be thanked enough in this book. Of course I would like to mention all of them, but that is unfortunately impossible here. So here goes: first I want to (still) thank Cobus Ferreira (Pretoria) and Henning van Aswegen (Johannesburg) for inspiring me, setting me on the right track. If the reader wants to blame anyone for me choosing to write this book – go see Cobus and Henning, please. In between my time in South Africa and The Netherlands two people kept my 'scholarly' aspirations alive: Brian Shoesmith (plus his wonderful family in Perth) and Teun van Dijk. At the University of Amsterdam a vast (and growing) number of colleagues have been there to offer guidance. In particular I would like to thank the supervising 'team' in my first year of this project: Holli Semetko, Kees Brants, and Jan Wieten for often confusing, but always open-minded discussions. I have been privileged to have had Klaus Schoenbach stepping in as second promotor of my project when he joined the Department of Communication in Amsterdam, and greatly benefited from his vast experience and knowledge of the field of journalism studies, and in particular his great support during difficult times. Jo Bardoeil has been an ongoing source of ideas and friendship, both as a colleague now, and as the author of the ‘Media in Nederland’-books I had to read when learning to be a journalist back in the 1980s. Thanks also for many inspirational and fun discussions to colleagues more or less elsewhere in The Netherlands: Jan Bierhoff, Leen d'Haenens, Nick Jankowski, Martine van Selm, Alexander Pleijter, Loet Leydesdorff, Jaap van Ginneken, Jaap van Donselaar, and Andra Leurdijk. Abroad I have been honored by regular discussions and meetings with esteemed colleagues, of whom I would like to thank David Weaver (Indiana School for Journalism) and Armin Scholl (University of Muenster) in particular. Right from the beginning of the project they have been there with unconditional advice, comments, and friendly support for me and my work here in Amsterdam. David and Armin are definitely examples of the kind of academic, I would aspire to become when given the chance. Furthermore I would like to thank Jane Singer, Mindy McAdams, Anthony Delano, John Henningham, Robert Stewart, Colin Sparks, Ari Heinonen, Denis McQuail, Steve Paulussen, Christopher Neuberger, Stefan Weber, and Arnold de Beer for the time they have taken to at times share their thoughts and advice on the project.
I have tried to acknowledge the significant role students have played in the project throughout the notes and references in this book. As students go, I would like to mention my fellow ASCoR-PhD students; especially the first group of 'ascorians' (class of 1997): Marjolein, Hans, Thom, Tijs, Sudeep. Six such different people working together in one room – definitely this has shaped my way of thinking forever. Ever since vast numbers of graduate students have been pouring into the E-wing of the Department of Communications' building in the center of Amsterdam. I thank all of them for allowing me not to participate in group socials, and still giving me the feeling of acceptance and respect. With respect I also thank Randi, Nassy, Lara, Silvia, Annemarie, Jop, Ramon, Daphna, Christina, Sara, Humphrey, Tamara, and Kilian, all of whom I met as (fellow) students, and parted with as friends. Furthermore thanks to the members of – and now I will cite the acknowledgments section of a dissertation by Jeroen de Kloet – the cultural studies discussion group, with whom I share "a love for the banal, for the trivial", and the notion that academic research is but a 'methodological illusion' (Jeroen), a 'detour to knowledge' (Sudeep), imposing 'oppressive order' (Frank) on social complexity. These remarks also allow me to mention one colleague and fellow member of the cultural studies group, who has single-handedly been responsible for much of my academic and personal development and enlightenment in the last year of writing this book, and has become an invaluable friend in the process: Joost de Bruin. It is safe to say that without his advice and friendship I would have never made it beyond chapter III.

This comment brings me to the closing paragraphs of this part of the book, the most difficult ones, as these words concern friends, loved ones – those who have been there and made the effort of taking me to the curb (as Henry Rollins would say), and at times show me what kind of nonsense I was (and still am) making. As I strongly believe that the personal is the professional and vice versa at all times, the people I mention here should be seen as co-authors of the upcoming pages – and they are. Where to begin? Let me start with the people who I fondly refer to as the 'Vrienden van het Zaklopen' (and I won't even begin to try to translate that): Margot, Jennemiek, Roy, Jeroen, Ilse, and Elles. These people rule. Secondly (counting presumes hierarchical order, but this is not what I intend to do here) thanks to Laurens, for doing a truly amazing job designing the lay-out of this book. Thanks also to all the friends who have been so kind to stop by occasionally for a 'cheese and wine' – you know who you are (which in retrospect is quite a far-fetched assumption to make of yourself, let alone others). My parents are the backbone of my life – without them, I would be (as David Sylvian would
say), guilty of stealing every word I own as what I hold to be right and wrong is their voice speaking through me.

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I hope you will have fun reading this book. If not, go see all the people mentioned above, and e-mail me with your thoughts at: mark.deuze@reporters.net.

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