
“Newspaper And Personal Life Of Journalist Women in Eastern Spain: The Professional Aspects Of The Incompatibility With Family Life”

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Abstract:

According to IFJ and UNESCO the principal obstacles of the journalism practice are: <1> the patriarchy model of the medias and <2> the family demands.

This paper aims to explore the professional aspects of incompatibility with a family life on journalism. It focus on the newspapers established in eastern Spain.

The results of this article is based on two set of information: <1> statistics and documentary revision (Census- 2001, Surveys of CIS) and <2> interviews in depth to journalist women. The work field has been doing from September to December of 2003. The analytic process of the grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1990) assists the comparative analysis.

The main results suggest actors, stereotypes, relations and practices in newspapers that affect personal life, for instance: dairy production, brief life of a new and/or vocational journalist. These characteristics are classified two groups: production process and professional practices.

Key words: Journalist women, Newspapers, family and professional conciliation, Spain.
1. Introduction

European Commission (1999) classifies the studies related to mass media from a gender perspective in three points: <1> Women and production in the media, <2> Images of men and women in the media contents and <3> Women in the media audience.

Although there are more exhaustive classifications (i.e. Carter, 1998), this study is tied with the first point, it means, the analysis of the production context. On it there are included, for example, the research about detection and explication of the women and men position in the journalists companies. Nevertheless, the revision of the studies and international and national papers (Spanish) about the journalist profession and its labor situation (i.e. Weaver, 1998; Fagoaga & Secanella, 1984; García, 1991; Gallego & Del Río, 1993; Abril, 1994; Wert, 1990; Diezhandino, Bezunartea & Coca, 1994; CIS nº 2306, 1998; Canel, Rodríguez & Sánchez, 2000; Institut Opina, 2000; Cantalapiedra, Coca, & Bezunartea, 2000; Merayo, 2001; López & Túñez, 2000) shows that only four of them mentioned the great difficulty that the journalists (women) found in the conciliation of her professional promotion and her private life (Ziamou, 2000; Peters, 2001; García de Cortázar & García de León, 2000; Ortega & Humanes, 2000).
In addition, of these four, the UNESCO report (Ziamou, 2000), the one of IFJ (International Federation of Journalists) and the Spanish study about the profession (García de Cortázar & García de León, 2000), suggest that exist not only structural aspects but normative ones that make difficult specially to journalist women the combination of their profession and her family life.

This article approaches to the analysis of the situation of women and men in journalism from professional aspects, and tries to do without labour ones. From this approach, of course, those professional elements that take part in the conciliation with family life are originated in a more general frame that responds to two big questions: <1> the function and meaning of the journalistic activity into the newspaper (dairy press, non free in this case) and <2> the professional status of the journalism into a country.

This way, and as answer to the first question, some authors consider that journalistic activity is a creative work (i.e. Zallo, 1988; Tallón, 1992; Echeverri, 1995). Besides, this activity is in constant change and needs a continuous attention due to the unforeseeable nature of news. It is a qualified work with a great part of professionalism and personification, that produces a great accomplishment and feeds self-esteem. As it is exposed in the
results, this characteristic of the journalist work will be an important element to take into account before taking any decision that will affect the professional and labor situation of the journalist.

About the second question (professional status of the journalism) the criteria of professionalization of Millerson (1964) and other authors concerned about these issues can be taken into account in order to determine the professionalization degree of journalism (i.e. Pizarroso, 1992; Canel, Rodríguez & Sánchez, 2000). Besides, professional documents may also be studied (for example, the Profession Statute) as they really represent the putting altogether of those who work in this profession. If the scientific literature and/or the professional documents are analysed, it is confirmed that Spanish journalism has gone through a growing professionalization from 1978 (year of the Spanish Constitution approval). This tendency is reflected in three aspects: <1> formalization of the required knowledge of candidates which admission and selection are based on objective tests, <2> elaboration of an ethical code and <3> creation of associations, organizations and professional schools. Thus, Spanish journalism has consolidated in the last quarter of the twenty century as a profession. Nowadays journalism enjoys a recognized social position as much in its formal structure (organizations, faculties,
communication companies, legislation and self regulation) as in its social prestige (Elgueta, 2003).

In view of this context, this paper aims to explore the professional aspects of incompatibility with a family life on journalism, from Journalist Spanish women experience. The analysis focuses on the local and national newspapers established in eastern Spain (Comunidad Valenciana). As a consequence, the approach of the article move away of the debate around journalism professionalization. In fact, formally journalism fulfills legal definition of profession. Although, the conception of journalism and profession, that this paper tries to show, takes into account those other aspects that are not officially reflected. That is to say, this paper approaches this profession from a revealing point of view to understand those decisions taken about labour career and family life.

2. Metodology
This research is based on standpoint epistemology (Smith, 1987, 1990). This methodology understands that the object of study must be analysed from lived experience of subordinated group, beside of the dominant vision is known.
The results of this article have been extracted from the thesis ‘Conciliación de la vida familiar y laboral en la prensa diaria de la Comunidad Valenciana: El “punto de vista” de las mujeres’ (exposed the 16th of December of the 2004 in the University of Alicante, Spain). The methodology consists of a design multi-method which is based on three strategies: <1> statistics and documentary revision (Census- 2001, Surveys of CIS), <2> survey to the professionals of journalism in press and <3> interviews in depth. The results that are engaged in here are removed from the secondary sources and the interviews to journalist women.

The selection of the population is based on the definition of theoretical sample of Glaser and Strauss (1967). The work field you have been done from September to December of 2003. It was contacted with the interviewed people by means of the technique of the snow ball. Finally, and according to the saturation criterion of the information, 38 women who were or had been working in the daily press of the Comunidad Valenciana were interviewed (Comunidad Valenciana is an area located to the East of Spain that has a total population of 4,162,776 inhabitants - Census 2001). All the interviews were recorded and transcribed in their totality to be analysed and the analytic process of the grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, Strauss & Corbin, 1990) assists the comparative analysis between them.
So, two perspectives orient the analysis of interviews: gender approach and biographic one. The first one is represented in the use of the theoretical frame to interpret data non-standardized. The second one is including in the script of the interviews. In this sense, the script of the interviews contains a biographical frame that is defined by the most important vital events of change, according to specialized literature. In concrete the script includes: independence like departure point of the personal projects, coexistence with the pair and the maternity. From the labour scene, the departure point is the insertion in the labour market or the first job that the interviewed person considers journalistic.

3. Results
The main aspects of professional nature, that are described in the interviews, are classified by two questions which have already mentioned before: <1> the main characteristics of journalistic activity and professional level and <2> the meaning of journalistic work.

3.1. Characteristics of the journalistic activity and the professional level:
The work process that are relative to the writing are formed according to publishing contents. These contents are nourished of the news. The news is leitmotiv of the journalistic activity. But, in addition, in the case of the continuous edition, journalist develops this activity for an industry whose product is elaborated daily. Consequently, the daily elaboration of the product (and the news) constitutes the frame of the daily organization of journalists.

Thus, three characteristics related to the news and that affect indirectly to the conciliation with the private and familiar life are detected: on the one hand, its fleeting and unforeseeable nature and, on the other hand, being susceptible of valuation. The two first characteristics are associated to the availability, that is an aspect that negatively affects the conciliation. The third one is one of the aspects that define professionalism, through location of news in the newspaper. Professionalism, a priori, would have to facilitate the conciliation, although this affirmation will be clarified later.

In this sense, and according to the interviewed women, several valuation criteria take part in the definition of professionalism. At least two criterions are detected: <1> rigor and <2> honesty like ethical principle. Rigor in data processing is made up as well of
two properties: precision in the message and contrast of the information. Rigor provides quality to news.

Two phases of developing of work in daily press emerge in relation to these components of rigor. First stage of the work is searching information, and second it is writing. The first one normally takes place outside the newspaper in contrast to the second one. This disposition of working hours also make difficult the combination of the paid work with other extra-labour activities. And although this aspect is of labour nature, it is closely related to those that characterize journalism like profession.

Journalists must go to sources for obtaining data of an event. So, the relationship with sources is the base of journalistic activity. In addition, collection of information in journalism is understood an active task, like a result of a state of continuous monitoring and in which proximity is not only positive but also necessary value. Proximity is active journalism, that is associated to properties like dynamism and youth, it is ‘street journalism’.

This type of journalism is associated to be at the beginning of the career. After years, and from lived experience, the ‘street journalism’ will be rejected by the interviewed women, although they continue valuing it positively like part of the journalist’
stereotype. The level of professionalism of journalist is reflected in these two phases but, in addition, the objective is to write news (one or more than one to the day). So, the journalist must get good results in the minimum time, that is to say, she must be efficient. Efficiency, along with rigor and honesty, is the third criterion of professionalism. This third criterion will be practically forgotten by other aspects that are exposed next.

3.2. The meaning of journalistic work

Journalism is not only an occupation, that certainly is it, but it also is a profession. The interviewed people emphasize advantages of their situation within the newspaper. They value it by elements that are not exclusively instrumental. There is not doubt journalism is work with meaning. It produces a great personal accomplishment. In fact, it contains the functionality of remunerated work, and it provides great satisfaction, because "they are lucky" to practise their profession in a difficult labour market. This meaning of the job explains some of the taken decisions and routines acquired that affect their familiar and personal life by the journalists.

In addition, under this meaning, a feeling of property to the professional group exists. Practising journalism starts up second socialization (Berger & Luckmann, 1967), that is to say, the interviewed people do not work in journalism, but they are journalists. This implies that the journalist have to respond to what
it is expected of a journalist. And what it is expected of a journalist, it is defined by prototype or model of journalist. In this sense, along with the ‘street journalist’ and its opposing (journalist of table), a third model is detected: the vocational one.

The vocational journalist is valued very positively by the group. Its main characteristic is the total dedication (Ortega & Humanes, 2000). This type of professionalism negatively affect to conciliation. In addition, this is a comparative criterion (between companions) that punishes (to who goes away to house when the formal work day is finished) by means of professional loss of prestige. Consequently, the young people who are beginning in the profession (within a newspaper), many of them without labour contract, prolong the time of work and are supported by the model of the ‘vocational journalist’. They are a source of pressure and competition.

Finally, the profession provides a social circle that can replace the extra-labour social relations. It offers a new manner to occupy the time by means of which some interviewed person calls ‘social commitments’. These ‘commitments’ (hybrid between business and leisure) are opportunities to obtain data by means of the establishment of a confidence relation with the source, but they are celebrated outside the habitual time of work day. So, taking
care these ‘commitments’ is part of the total dedication that is expected of a vocational journalist. And this may be a source of conflict for the interviewed person whom it has to take care personal and familiar demands or, simply, want to live outside newspaper. In fact, some interviewed people affirm to feel that journalism fills its life, but they are those whose personal space would be empty if they did not have those relations that are provided by the profession. Nevertheless, others perceive that journalism invades its personal or private life, because of having another life, and not exclusively the professional one.

4. **Key Concluding Points:**

5. The main results are classified in two main groups: production process and professional practices that difficult the conciliation among personal-familiar life.

6. In the first group (production process) are included: dairy frequency of the production, autonomy in the production process, the fleeting and unforeseeable nature of news that contributes to the lack of control of the journalist on their hours of work day and the disposition of the tasks.

7. In the second group (professional practices), the possibility of valuing the importance of news allows the professional circle to evaluate the professionalism of the journalist.
Certainly, when a journalist is in learning stage, this learning demands greater dedication than when the journalist has a contact agenda. Consequently, professionalism is unfavourable for improving conciliation when journalists are in the first phase of their career (learning stage and creating agenda). Nevertheless, professional activity is characterized by an stereotyped image of the vocational journalist which implied availability. This image is fomented and transmitted by the newspaper and the colleagues.

8. These results suggest actors, stereotypes, relations and practices in newspapers that affect personal life. The solution is provided by the interviewed women whom feel that journalism invades its private life. They emphasize the yield and fulfilment in the work like positive values that define a professional over others. Thus, they propose strengthened criteria of recognition in the journalistic activity and efficiency, these criteria must be as valid as the journalist who participates in this other type of practices.

9. Although solution seems simple, implementation of measures to collapse the incompatibility is not it. It implies a change in enterprise philosophy and professional culture (that are two symbolic aspects strongly rooted in the identity of newspapers and the profession). Nevertheless, this
transformation would conclude in more economic, competitive, familiarly and socially responsible companies that clearly bet by equality of opportunities and quality of life in work.

10. References:


