This is the published version of a paper published in *Journalism Practice*.
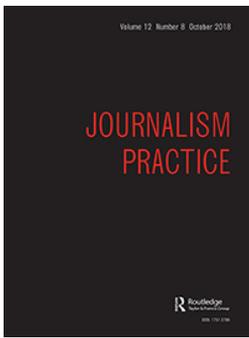
Access to the published version may require subscription.

N.B. When citing this work, cite the original published paper.

Permanent link to this version:
http://urn.kb.se/resolve?urn=urn:nbn:se:kau:diva-68590

Popular Criticism that Matters

David Cheruiyot

Published online: 10 Jul 2018.

Submit your article to this journal ↗

Article views: 950

View Crossmark data ↗

POPULAR CRITICISM THAT MATTERS
Journalists' perspectives of "quality" media critique

David Cheruiyot ⓘ

Popular criticism of legacy news media is argued to have the capacity to influence journalistic practice and subsequently keep journalists accountable. Scholars give prescriptions of the kinds of criticisms journalists need, if they are to be kept accountable to journalistic norms and values, but this has not been matched with perspectives of journalists. Following in-depth interviews with 24 practising journalists in Kenya and South Africa, the study found that although journalists treat fairness, facts and positiveness as "good" attributes of media critique, they are more inclined towards criticisms that show an understanding of news processes.

KEYWORDS journalistic accountability; journalism practice; media criticism; Kenya; social media; South Africa

Introduction

Despite the pressure from media critics, legacy news media is today touted as the last bastion of truth and hence a greater need for journalistic accountability in a post-factual age. Similarly, existing studies consider media criticism of traditional journalism as a strong mechanism of journalistic accountability, particularly critiques on social media today (Fengler et al. 2014). Critics raise legitimate journalistic issues (Cooper 2006) and their criticisms potentially have the effect of holding news professionals in check when it comes to fidelity to journalistic norms and values (Joseph 2011; Marzolf 1991; Pole, Gulyás, and Rehkopf 2012; Powell and Jempson 2014).

The transformative value of media criticism is derived from "quality" media critique— criticisms that evaluate journalistic practice and performance in a rational, informed and civil manner (Carey 1974; Lemert 1989). It is argued that to criticize journalism would imply knowledge of the practice as the media has to be understood in terms of its "own conventions, philosophies, professional codes, traditions, ethics and aesthetics" (Wyatt 2007, 194; Marzolf 1991).

Among the criticisms journalists receive—ranging from the corrective to the offensive—scholars offer varying criteria for "quality" or "good" criticism which includes, constructiveness, substantiable facts or "unemotional language" (Brown 1974; Carey 1974). Most descriptions of good criticism are based on abstractions or analyses of media-critical content (see Brown 1974; Cooper 2006; Lemert 1989). Existing studies have however not addressed journalists' perceptions of media critique, yet the views of news professionals could provide important insights into the viability of media criticism as an instrument of journalistic accountability.

Through qualitative interviews with 24 mainstream media journalists in Kenya and South Africa, this article interrogates their perceptions of the nature of criticisms they

read on social media. Responses suggest that largely journalists are more amenable to analytical criticism that shows understanding of journalism practice. They however question the legitimacy of most media critiques of news journalism mostly owing to uncivil language and distrust of critics' intentions.

This study contributes to the literature on media criticism and journalistic accountability by expanding the understanding of good/quality criticism of traditional journalism practice.

Literature Review

Media Criticism as Metajournalistic Discourse

Existing studies make a case for incorporating non-journalistic actors in criticism as a way of expanding the critical arena of journalism practice (Carey 1974; Carlson 2015; Powell and Jempson 2014). Criticism is thought to constitute an important component in metajournalistic discourse that either legitimizes or delegitimizes journalistic practice (Carlson 2015, 2017). Critics call out unethical behaviour of journalists or "pollutant mistakes" in media content (Silverman 2007), but also "act as a conscience, nagging the press to live up to higher standards, ideals, moral behaviour" (Marzolf 1991, 5).

Media criticism has therefore been understood as the "ongoing exchange of debate among members of the press and between the press and its audience over the role and performance of the press in a democratic society" (Wyatt 2007, 7). The basis for any media criticism is that it not only addresses journalists and media organizations but their audiences as well. As a "professional critic operating on behalf of the community" the media is not above criticisms itself and is expected to cultivate a culture of criticism (Carey 1974, 231–232). If the media is left uncriticized there is the risk that it could become complacent, inhibiting its watchdog role, hence attracting state regulation that is a threat to press freedom (Carey 1974).

In Wyatt's (2007) discursive framework, the media acknowledges its role as not only the principal critic of society, but as "platform for the exchange of criticisms" about the society and itself. But then again, the discursive approach to media criticism is a casualty of the contention over quality and types of media critique. On the one hand, new media scholars advocate for the legitimacy of all kinds of criticisms of legacy media regardless of the motives the critics. On the other hand, some scholars have argued for quality media critique that tackles the deficiencies of journalism practice if media criticism is to be effective in transforming the conduct of news professional and performance of legacy news media (Brown 1974; Carey 1974).

Today, media criticisms on platforms such as Twitter and Facebook are unaccounted for in existing studies yet they represent new genres of media critique that are not only instantaneous but are pervasive. There are a few studies so far that propose that the criticisms on social media raise important issues regarding the practice and their "effects are already visible" in traditional journalism (Powell and Jempson 2014, 126). These assertions have not been backed by empirical evidence.

In sum, there are three questions in the study of media criticism that are relevant today: its implication to journalism practice, journalistic authority, and participatory democracy (Carlson 2017; Cooper 2006); its viability as an instrument of journalistic accountability (Fengler et al. 2014), and; its effectiveness and quality of media critique (Brown 1974; Carey

1974), a question becoming increasingly relevant with the rise of critics on social media platforms.

Quality Criticism

Journalists of legacy media organizations receive wide-ranging media critique online some of which is argued to be transformative (Joseph 2011; Powell and Jempson 2014). There are however other kinds of criticisms that are offensive and do not address journalistic issues. In its analysis of online comments from its audiences, the *UK Guardian*, for example, describes the range of abusive comments targeted at journalists. They include taunts such as, "You are so unintelligent", "Call yourself a journalist?" or "Do you get paid for writing this?" as well as racist, sexist or homophobic epithets (Gardiner et al. 2016). The tag "fake news" in the Trump era has been used on social media to critique the mainstream media over perceived or imagined failures (see Lee and Quealy 2017).

On the basis of freedom of speech, all kinds of criticism are acknowledged as important in a democratic tradition (Hayes 2008; Silverman 2007). However, far fewer kinds are accepted as relevant and appropriate for journalistic practice and performance. The offensive criticisms are considered counterproductive to journalistic accountability as they attract journalists' contempt (Carey 1974). They further could have a chilling effect on journalists' exercise of press freedom or could be "obstructive" (Weissman 1962) to media's watchdog role. Most criteria of criticism, however, are based or abstractions and prescriptions based on analyses of critical content.

Attributes of "Good" Criticism

In the process of truth production, journalism is guided by a "language of description and observation" (Carey 1974, 229) against the background of accepted norms and values. According to Carey, the subject of critics should be this "journalism language". And if it is to be heeded, and to serve to transform journalism then it should not only address the language but the "pre-established values" of the practice (Brown 1974). Thus Carey (1974) concludes that "quality" media critique should contain "factual detail(s), unemotional language and articulate (journalistic) values" (231).

Criticisms from non-journalist are often rebuffed by news professionals on the pretext that the critic "doesn't know the business"—journalistic processes, past achievements and challenges (Lemert 1989, 20; Brown 1974). Marzolf (1991) argues that critics should not only have an understanding of journalistic processes and the practices of the "best practitioners in the field" but have a "thorough knowledge" of the history of journalism (209). It is argued that, on the basis of their understanding of the media, critics should then weigh journalistic values and principles against the content of the media.

Further, critics are called upon to be constructive and offer genuine suggestions for improvement of journalistic performance and practice (Brown 1974, 17–20). Critics, particularly those interested in critical analysis of the journalism practice, may need to make their methods (substantiated claims) known to the public (Carey 1974; Lemert 1989). Carey summarizes the attributes of "good" criticism as follows:

> This criticism must be based upon precise observation, clear procedure, unemotional language, subject to the cooperative correction of others, and occurring in the public

forum where all affected by the institution can at least observe and comment on the critical process. (235)

Wyatt (2007) argues that media criticism involves making "noncynical" evaluation of the effectiveness of the news media in abiding by the universal journalistic principles such as accuracy, impartiality or fairness (6). Therefore criticisms should be free of personal attacks or statements that could "inflame passions" (Ferree et al. 2002, 294). Civility then implies that emotions are tamed, criticisms are rational and realistic and not based on trivial or holier-than-thou premises.

While many kinds of criticisms are argued to be important and necessary in a democratic tradition (Hayes 2008), there is tendency to favour the analytical type of criticism, which is seen as relevant and effective for journalistic accountability. However, despite the sober, articulate and constructive criticism online, there are criticisms that feature personal attacks, partisan rants or defamatory statements. Further, media critics sometimes "dream of journalistic worlds that do not and cannot exist" (Blanchard 1998, 373) and thus do not provide realistic and practical suggestions to journalists.

While scholars make propositions of what should constitute criticism that is useful to the practice, journalistic input has not often been taken into account. This study therefore aims to answer the following questions:

RQ1: What are the attributes of criticisms that journalists read on social media, and which ones do they prefer?

RQ2: Which kinds of criticisms do journalists perceive as useful in their daily practice?

Method

In this study, in-depth interviews as a method was chosen to explore perceptions of journalists as regards criticism of the mainstream media. Since in-depth interviews are unstructured, there are more opportunities to probe and further understand the phenomenon one is interrogating (Denscombe 2010). For this particular study, qualitative interviews provided detailed perspectives and experiences through which to build their understanding of nature of criticism on social media.

Twenty-four employed journalists in Kenya and South Africa—12 from each country were interviewed. Kenya and South Africa were selected because they are frequently studied as interesting cases in journalism studies in English-speaking Africa. The journalists were identified through strategic/purposeful sampling. From a pool of 38 journalists interviewed for a related project on media criticism, the 24 were selected because of their presence and activity on Twitter and Facebook. They represented seven outlets of mainstream media organizations in Kenya and South Africa that included: Times Media Group, Media 24, South Africa Broadcasting Corporation (SABC), Nation Media Group, Standard Media Group, Kenya Broadcasting Corporation (KBC) and Radio Africa Group. These outlets were chosen because they have extensively used online media platforms and therefore their content is widely available to critics for analysis and comment.

The range of experience of the respondents was 3 and 24 years. Among the informants were seven female journalists. The roles they took were defined as either reporter or editor. The interviews were conducted in Cape Town, Johannesburg and Nairobi

between July 2015 and April 2017. They took on average 61 minutes long each. All interviewees were anonymized as well as all published material resulting from this research.

The interviews interrogated the following issues: the nature of criticism journalists read on social media; the kinds of criticisms journalists dislike: the attributes of criticisms they consider as "good", and; the types of criticisms they perceive as addressing key issues of journalism. Among the questions asked were the following: How would you describe criticism you read on social media? What kinds of criticisms would you say are helpful to your work as a journalist?

Findings

This study derived the following types of criticisms from the themes drawn from the analysis: The offensive; The unreasonable; The unfounded; The instructive; The analytical. These are criticisms that either directly addressed journalistic issues, or were indirect responses to content, journalists as individuals, policy or perceived ideology of media as institutions. Although the categories described how journalists perceived and reacted to the criticism, there were notable overlaps. Some criticisms would, for example, raise reasonable concerns, but would be laced with offensive comments. In establishing the prevalence of the types of criticisms based on the perceptions of the journalists, it could be noted that, The unreasonable and The unfounded were seen as mostly common, The offensive was common, The instructive less common, while The analytical was rare. Table 1 shows the types of criticisms, its attributes and the prevalence, according to the respondents.

The Offensive

In this category are the foulest of criticisms and defamatory statements aimed at journalists. Most of the respondents interviewed considered these criticisms out-rightly offensive mostly because they were intended to demean and hurt feelings or reputations. As a respondent explained:

> I feel like people talk about the media the same way they talk about the police. It's like, "Oh, they don't do anything to help us, so f**k them!". Excuse my language, but you know what I mean. It's very dismissive. And I find that very disturbing. (Reporter, South Africa)

These criticisms were marked by uncivil language that rarely addressed any particular journalistic issues. The attributes of the criticisms received in this category included sexist, racist

TABLE 1
Types of criticisms according to journalists interviewed

Types of criticism	Attributes	Prominence
Offensive	Insults, abusive language, racist and sexist comments, provocative remarks	Common
Unreasonable	Emotional language, disrespectful remarks, personal attacks	Most common
Unfounded	Unsubstantiated claims, falsehoods	Most common
Instructive	Suggestions of "better practice", language and grammatical corrections	Less common
Analytical	Informed analysis of journalistic issue, dispassionate explanation of errors	Rare

or ethnic epithets or other kinds of insults. The reception to these kinds of criticisms was, according to most journalists, outright dismissal and hostility to the critic. According to all the 24 journalists interviewed, these criticisms were obnoxious and common on social plat-forms and thus journalists had to develop "thick skin". A respondent stated:

> I don't take them personally … (Recently) they told me I'm racist against white people which was … stupid. Yeah, so things like that, or like, "you are a horrible person". I am not going to take that on board because that is not actual criticism of my work. (Reporter, South Africa)

These criticisms, according to five respondents, were meant to demoralize and "demonise journalism" (editor, Kenya). However, some respondents regarded the offensive kinds of criticisms as useful in gauging their audiences' general feeling about particular stories or coverage, and predicting future reactions to similar reports.

Twenty-one journalists interviewed considered civility of language as key if critics were to be taken seriously (while three said they welcomed all manner of criticism as "beneficial"). They cited profanities and obscenities as reason for not directly responding to complaints by, for example, publishing a clarification or an apology over an erroneous news story.

The Unreasonable

In this category, which was considered very common, the attributes of the criticism received were cynical remarks, teasing or mockery. Even though these criticisms would raise concerns about news gathering, accuracy or framing of a story, they were seen as unfair. The criticisms disrespected journalists as humans, and as professionals, according to the respondents. Reference to journalists as "clueless" or "stupid" or "idiot", even though were mentioned in the context of a reasonable concern, were seen as unfair and frivolous:

> What I don't think is fair is taking somebody's way of talking, taking somebody's intellect and saying so and so could have done better. There are other ways of telling a person they can grow without criticising their character. (Reporter, South Africa)

Further, under this category were criticisms that focused on negativity. According to some respondents, these kinds of criticisms came from persistent critics who "never see anything positive" and "just criticise for the sake of it" (reporter, South Africa; editor, Kenya). Most journalists did not take time to "reason" with such critics as they were seen be disinterested in any kind of explanation, thus a respondent put it, "it is a waste of time" (editor, Kenya).

The Unfounded

These are criticism that journalists described as deserving attention, but lacking in merit. Critics either based their concerns on falsehoods or the wrong premise. They were criticism based on claims that are unsubstantiated. For example, claims that journalists received a bribe to cover a certain political party favourably.

Further in this category, there were critics who showed little understanding of "the trade" (journalism). One respondent described how critics would have little understanding of key roles in the newsroom:

> To him (the critic) the blame solely fell on the person he saw on the (TV) screen. The person he saw on the screen was a novice, he was bad, everything was terrible about the person. And that is his understanding of a TV program production … (Yet it) is a production that has different roles, and the person on the screen is just supposed to say things as they are, but if the whole 30 minutes is falling apart, there is only so much you can do. (Reporter, South Africa)

There are other criticisms in this category that did not show any understanding of news processes and were considered petty and shallow. As one respondent put it:

> There are also those who are not informed, some of them, especially Facebook guys, will only discuss the headline. They have not read the stories, so they don't know the context of the headline … Some of them are so shallow … they are just basing their arguments on a headline. (Editor, Kenya)

Eleven respondents agreed that they would take note of their criticism and only two would in some cases respond to such a critic by correcting them. What was noteworthy in most interviews with journalists was that the kind of reception to these kinds criticisms was generally positive.

The Instructive

This is the category of criticism that journalists welcomed, even if they did not necessarily act upon. Here the criticisms were factual and based on informed opinion. Such criticisms pointed out errors or weaknesses in news coverage and provided specific prescriptions. A respondent stated:

> … if you are criticizing my story, I expect you to tell me, "You should have used this. This story could have been better if you used this information, took this angle or interviewed an expert in this field (other) than just writing or trying to generalize the story". (Reporter, Kenya)

Although the respondents preferred instructive criticisms, they were less common because most critics on social media focused on the negative aspects of their work. Further, the constructive comments were considered apt appraisal of their journalism work, especially if the critic was positive and even in some cases, offered praise. As one respondent put it:

> It's funny because I think I would often learn more from constructive criticism than I would from some praise but as it is, I haven't really received much constructive criticism apart from my girlfriend, my editor, somebody who reads my stuff from that sort of perspective rather than somebody who doesn't know me. (Reporter, South Africa)

Five respondents preferred that these kinds of criticism be genuine, fair and not driven by ulterior motives. In this category were also accusations of bias and inaccuracies that the respondents would, in a few instances, admit but were generally ambivalent about the recommendations of the critics. Some reporters explained that some journalistic issues raised were institutional challenges that could not be addressed by an individual journalist's change of behaviour.

The Analytical

Here the criticisms were of two kinds: the ones that engaged journalists with their weaknesses, and; criticisms that showed an understanding of journalism practice. In this category were valid criticisms, for example, corrections of facts and grammatical errors. Here journalists found the criticism had merit, were fair and directly focused on specific journalistic issue.

All the respondents favoured these kinds of criticisms because they provided the basis to give an explanation or debate with the critic. (It is however important to note here that there was often a conflation of The instructive and The analytical criticisms, which required further probing in order to establish the respondents' understanding. In the analytical type of criticism, critics did not aim to just offer prescriptions to journalists, but reasoned with them.) A respondent put it this way:

> In expressing an opinion around journalism as it were, it would really be great if that opinion is an informed opinion. But in (situations) where it is not an informed opinion, you can engage with the person in order to assist them to understand what the facts are around something. And you can also agree to disagree. (Editor, Kenya)

Most respondents were of the view that such criticisms were rare and mostly came from their peers or former journalists. Criticisms here were rational, serious and civil. They did not necessarily point out what journalists should do, but explained the processes and pointed out weaknesses in for example reliability of the source, depth of a story or bias in coverage. A respondent summarized it as follows:

> The good criticism is the one that actually talks to the content of your article, the bad one is the one that talks around your article … talks generally about what's happening in the news, but not focusing on what you have written. If you're going to critique me personally, look at the work that I've done, and not generalize on the issues I write, because that doesn't help me as a writer. (Editor, South Africa)

Most respondents felt fact-checking and grammatical corrections by the public were helpful as long as they were expressed in a civil and rational manner. Beyond the criticisms were critics' sincerity and openness to engage, which also mattered to journalists. Further, there was a strong suggestion by most journalists (13) that actionable criticisms were analytical in nature, tempered and well-reasoned.

Even so, generally, the respondents expressed ambivalence over critic's intentions by, for instance, claims that former journalists being analytical were not driven by genuine motives to improve journalism.

Discussion and Conclusion

This article examined journalists' perspectives of the nature of criticisms they read on social media. The study found that journalists in Kenya and South Africa mostly received offensive, unreasonable and unfounded criticisms online, which they often rejected. Instead, journalists mostly preferred criticisms that were fair, civil, unemotional, reasoned and rational that mostly fell in two categories: The instructive and The analytical.

The findings suggest that the attributes of "good" criticisms desired by journalists mostly align with those scholars have prescribed, such as positiveness, reasoned

arguments, informed opinion, substantiated facts and unemotional language (Brown 1974; Carey 1974; Lemert 1989). While the study sought to diversify data collection but not take a comparative approach, some cross-national comparisons were noted. Overall, the way journalists perceived media criticism was mostly similar in both Kenya and South Africa, exemplified in their descriptions of the nature of criticism on social media. The differences were in the sources of criticism (preferred platforms and critics) and issues critics raised—dimensions that may require systematic studies in the future for comprehensive results.

Despite the varying perceptions of the nature of criticisms on social media, there was a marked ambivalence over the critiques, the critics themselves and their perceived intentions. Journalists expected a critic to be knowledgeable of news processes and at the same time understand the pressure to get accurate, balanced and fair stories against a fast-paced news cycle, a common trait of news workers (Lemert 1989).

While constructiveness was a desired attribute of the criticisms, journalists did not perceive suggestions from critics as worth acting upon. While solution-focused criticism was appreciated, majority of the journalists admitted they did not give it consideration in their work. However, the analytical kind of criticism was perceived as beneficial as journalists found the basis to engage and reason with the critics in some instances. Journalists' preference for analytical criticism suggests that the most preferable candidate for a critic would be a fellow journalist who has practical and insider knowledge of the news practice.

There are several implications to this finding. Firstly, journalists see non-journalists as perhaps illegitimate appraisers of their work. This confirms the arguments that journalists engage in boundary work, and seek to maintain their professional autonomy (Carlson and Lewis 2015; Vos 2011). The journalists did not only claim the criticisms were unreasoned, unsubstantiated, offensive, emotional or defamatory, but they rejected them even if in some cases the criticisms raised pertinent journalistic issues. Indeed critics may raise questions about objectivity, accuracy or fairness therefore "championing traditional norms rather than challenging them" (Vos, Craft, and Ashley 2012). The critics employ journalistic norms and values as "frames of references" when evaluating journalism practice but they do not necessarily aim to "transform journalism" (Cheruiyot 2017; Vos, Craft, and Ashley 2012).

Secondly, journalistic accountability calls upon news professionals to give an account of editorial decisions, explain journalistic processes to their audiences, or offer remedies such as corrections, apologies or clarifications (Fengler et al. 2014). The fact that journalists question legitimacy of the critics and their criticisms and further do not respond to them, puts to question the viability of media criticism as an accountability mechanism. Therefore, the claim that criticism from their audiences on social media has an impact on conduct and behaviour of journalists (see Joseph 2011; Pole, Gulyás, and Rehkopf 2012) has to be interrogated further, especially in relation to criticism as a metajournalistic discourse. Relatedly, it might be useful to weigh the results against recent studies showing a stronger voice of the audience in editorial decisions mainly through social media analytics (Ferrer-Conill and Tandoc 2018).

Finally, while the types of criticism identified in this study may not be exhaustive, they would hopefully serve as the basis for more systematic and quantitative studies into their prevalence. Further, future research could investigate the journalistic issues critics raise, the extent to which the criteria for quality criticisms matter to journalists as well as the underlying motivations of the critics.

DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

REFERENCES

Blanchard, Margaret A. 1998. "Reclaiming Freedom of the Press: A Hutchins Commission Dream or Nightmare?" *Communication Law and Policy* 3 (3): 371–387. doi:10.1080/10811689809368656.

Brown, Lee. 1974. *The Reluctant Reformation: On Criticizing the Press in America*. New York: D. McKay.

Carey, James. 1974. "Journalism and Criticism: The Case of an Undeveloped Profession." *The Review of Politics* 36 (2): 227–249. doi:10.1017/S0034670500022579.

Carlson, Matt. 2015. "Metajournalistic Discourse and the Meanings of Journalism: Definitional Control, Boundary Work, and Legitimation." *Communication Theory*. doi:10.1111/comt.12088.

Carlson, Matt. 2017. *Journalistic Authority: Legitimating News in the Digital era*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Carlson, Matt, and Seth C. Lewis. 2015. *Boundaries of Journalism: Professionalism, Practices and Participation, Shaping Inquiry in Culture, Communication and Media Studies*. London: Routledge.

Cheruiyot, David. 2017. "Do Bloggers Who Criticize the Press Ultimately Matter? (Re)Defining Media Accountability in the Age of Citizen Participation." *Comunicació: Revista de Recerca i d'Anàlisi [Societat Catalana de Comunicació]* 34 (1): 107–121. doi:10.2436/20.3008.01.157.

Cooper, Stephen D. 2006. *Watching the Watchdog: Bloggers as the Fifth Estate*. Spokane, WA: Marquette Books.

Denscombe, Martyn. 2010. *The Good Research Guide: For Small-Scale Social Research Projects*. 4th ed., *Open UP Study Skills*. Maidenhead: McGraw-Hill/Open University Press.

Fengler, Susanne, Tobias Eberwein, Gianpietro Mazzoleni, Colin Porlezza, and Stephan Russ-Mohl. 2014. *Journalists and Media Accountability: An International Study of News People in the Digital age, Mass Communication and Journalism*. New York: Peter Lang.

Ferree, Myra Marx, William A. Gamson, J. Gerhards, and Dieter Rucht. 2002. "Four Models of the Public Sphere in Modern Democracies." *Theory and Society* 31 (3): 289–324.

Ferrer-Conill, Raul, and Edson C. Tandoc, Jr. 2018. "The Audience-Oriented Editor: Making Sense of the Audience in the Newsroom." *Digital Journalism* 6 (4): 436–453. doi:10.1080/21670811.2018.1440972.

Gardiner, Becky, Mahana Mansfield, Ian Anderson, Holder Josh, Louter Daan, and Monica Ulmanu. 2016. "The Dark Side of Guardian Comments." *UK Guardian*, Last Modified Tue April 12 00:00:00 GMT+0200, 2016. Accessed April 12. https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2016/apr/12/the-dark-side-of-guardian-comments.

Hayes, Arthur S. 2008. *Press Critics Are the Fifth Estate: Media Watchdogs in America, Democracy and the News*. Westport, CT: Praeger.

Joseph, Nicole L. 2011. "Correcting the Record: The Impact of the Digital News Age on the Performance of Press Accountability." *Journalism Practice* 5 (6): 704–718.

Lee, Jasmine, and Kevin Qualy. 2017. "The 363 People, Places and Things Donald Trump Has Insulted on Twitter: A Complete list." *New York Times*. Accessed August 25. https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2016/01/28/upshot/donald-trump-twitter-insults.html.

Lemert, James B. 1989. *Criticizing the Media: Empirical Approaches, Sage Commtext Series*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Marzolf, Marion. 1991. *Civilizing Voices: American Press Criticism, 1880-1950, Communications*. New York: Longman.

Pole, K., A. Gulyás, and F. Rehkopf. 2012. *Journalists Views and Use of Social Media: Cision Social Journalism Study 2012 Global Report*. Edited by Cision Germany. Frankfurt: Canterbury Christ Church University.

Powell, Wayn, and Mike Jempson. 2014. "More Accountability in the Digital Age? The Influence of New Technologies." In *Journalists and Media Accountability: An International Study of News People in the Digital Age*, edited by Fengler Susanne, Eberwein Tobias, Mazzoleni Gianpietro, Porlezza Colin, and Russ-Mohl Stephan, 115–128. New York: Peter Lang.

Silverman, Craig. 2007. *Regret the Error: How Media Mistakes Pollute the Press and Imperil Free Speech*. New York: Union Square Press.

Vos, Tim P. 2011. "New Media, Old Criticism: Bloggers' Press Criticism and the Journalistic Field." *Journalism* 13 (7). doi:10.1177/1464884911421705.

Vos, Tim P, Stephanie Craft, and Seth Ashley. 2012. "New Media, Old Criticism: Bloggers' Press Criticism and the Journalistic Field." *Journalism* 13 (7): 850–868. doi:10.1177/1464884911421705.

Weissman, P. 1962. "The Psychology of the Critic and Psychological Criticism." *The Psychology of the Critic and Psychological Criticism*. doi:10.1177/000306516201000408.

Wyatt, Wendy N. 2007. *Critical Conversations: A Theory of Press Criticism, The Hampton Press Communication Series Mass Communication and Journalism*. Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press.

David Cheruiyot, Department of Geography, Media and Communication, Karlstad University, Sweden. E-mail: david.cheruiyot@kau.se. Web: https://www.kau.se/en/researchers/david-cheruiyot. ORCID http://orcid.org/0000-0002-4774-4643