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A new ERA? The changing face of journalism research in Australia

ABSTRACT

In 2011, Michael Bromley and Regan Neal's survey of Australian journalism academics revealed low levels of critical research participation and productivity, and the under-realized potential of younger, female journalism academics. Nearly a decade on, our 2019 snapshot study, inspired by Bromley and Neal, explores the current state of journalism research and education in Australian universities. It examines the changing profile of journalism staff, their publishing productivity and the evaluation and funding of their research, as well as attitudes towards non-traditional research outputs (NTRs) and engagement and impact assessment. Our study indicates that early- and mid-career journalism researchers in Australia, particularly women, continue to need research training, mentoring and support in securing competitive external grants, as well as encouragement to collaborate and benchmark their research internationally. There is also a new imperative to help researchers and their institutions recognize excellence and

KEYWORDS

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research outputs

diversity in journalism NTROs and to understand measures of engagement and impact. Finally, we flag the importance of monitoring changes to the classification of journalism research following the Australian and New Zealand Standard Research Classification review of field of research codes.

INTRODUCTION

In the last decade, journalism work and journalism's capacity to provide work have changed radically in Australia, as elsewhere. Social media platforms have usurped the media's hold over advertising and information distribution (Martin and Dwyer 2019; Wilding et al. 2018) and there has been increasing competition to engage audiences' attention (Myllylahti 2019), combined with shifts in financing, business models and technologies (Flew et al. 2018) and the destabilization of the profession itself (Hanusch 2013; O'Donnell et al. 2016; Zion et al. 2016a). Yet, while there has been at least some local academic attention to the changing forms of journalism practice (Bonfiglioli and Cullen 2017; Bowd 2014; Carson et al. 2016; St Clair 2018; Stubbs 2018) and to journalism work (O'Donnell and Zion 2018; Zion et al. 2016b, 2019), there has been no research on how the careers of journalism academics might have altered during this upheaval.

This article explores the profile of journalism educators and researchers in Australia and how it has changed since 2011 when Michael Bromley and Regan Neal surveyed journalism academics about their productivity and publishing participation for this journal. Their study (Bromley and Neal 2011) was triggered by the advent of the Australian Research Council's (ARC) Excellence in Research for Australia (ERA) scheme and universities' increasing focus on research output as a measure of academic value. At the time, the implementation of the ERA scheme caused much angst for journalism scholars (Hanusch et al. 2011; Bacon 2012) as scholarship – which was often grounded in practice-based journalism – had not always been recognized within the academy. Indeed, as Emeritus Professor Graeme Turner claimed in his 2011 provocation to the field:

There is virtually no ongoing tradition of academic research within journalism studies in Australia. Yes, there are very small pockets of excellent critical and historical work, but mostly we have short-term commentary, a little bit of empirical data-gathering and some low-level activity in journalism education.

(Turner 2011: 6)

Bromley and Neal's article gives a clear account of why journalism and academia have long had an uneasy relationship. In summary, on one hand, journalism educators face academic suspicion that they are technicians and teachers rather than scholars, while on the other, they often hear from industry professionals that they are 'out of touch with industry realities' (Josephi 2016: n.pag.; see also Harcup 2011). While the latter criticism may be less applicable to those who have recently transitioned from industry into teaching positions (see Zion et al. 2019: 11, 18), such professionals often have little scholarly expertise.

In 2011, Bromley and Neal found that journalism academics' research participation and productivity, assessed through publications in peer-reviewed

1. journals, were relatively low. However, much has changed in the research
 2. field since that time. In 2020, universities are increasingly market-oriented,
 3. with public funding strongly influenced by teaching and employability agen-
 4. das alongside external research assessment exercises such as the ERA, and
 5. direct government funding providing only 34 per cent of research revenues
 6. (Whitchurch 2012; Norton and Cherastidtham 2018). Teaching revenues
 7. increasingly cross-subsidize research, placing pressure on academics to ensure
 8. the marketability of their courses, especially to full-fee paying international
 9. students (Norton and Cherastidtham 2018). Emphasis on course marketabil-
 10. ity and graduate employability places journalism academics in a challenging
 11. position as they are also teaching students who face increasingly precarious
 12. employment possibilities (O'Donnell et al. 2016); a problem that requires
 13. greater attention to work-integrated learning and entrepreneurship.

14. In the 2010s, research engagement and impact also became the new
 15. buzzwords for research achievement within universities here and in Europe
 16. (Australian Government 2015, 2018; Benneworth et al. 2016). This shift
 17. demands journalism academics provide evidence that they are interacting
 18. with experts and the public to ensure the development and transfer of knowl-
 19. edge about their research, and that they can report on its impact via evidence
 20. of societal benefits, research recognition, returns on investment and further
 21. funding, as evidenced in the Australian Research Council's (2019) Engagement
 22. and Impact Assessment exercise. Thus, rapid changes to both contemporary
 23. industry and academic environments have significantly affected the work of
 24. journalism educators and researchers, emphasizing their need to engage in
 25. further professional and research development in their field.

26. Our current research was commissioned by the Journalism Education and
 27. Research Association of Australia (JERAA) to ensure its work remains focused
 28. on the career development needs of its 80+ members and their research
 29. students. It updates Bromley and Neal's investigation of academic research
 30. profiles and publishing productivity, and further contextualizes the experiences
 31. of journalism researchers and educators within the contemporary academy, in
 32. the wake of JERAA's own diverse research development strategies. Centrally,
 33. we explore what has changed in the research lives of Australian journalists
 34. over the past decade, and what these transformations suggest for JERAA's
 35. research development agenda. One thing we did hypothesize we might find,
 36. given anecdotal reports of more women moving into the professoriate in the
 37. last ten years than in the previous period, was that women's research status
 38. and productivity would have improved. For that reason, our research explores
 39. gender-related issues that Bromley and Neal overlooked.

40. This article provides a brief overview of their seminal study, and then
 41. unpacks changes in the research environment that it triggered, sponsored by
 42. professional research associations. We then move to the rationale and meth-
 43. odology for our survey and its thematic findings. We have devised these in
 44. light of the Bromley and Neal's findings, considering the research capacity of
 45. women academics, as well the role of journalism as a field of scholarship, its
 46. outputs, funding and relevance to industry and the broader community.

47. **THE STORY SO FAR...**

48. As the first study of Australian journalism studies following the introduction
 49. of the ERA scheme in 2010, Bromley and Neal's research was influential in
 50. developing a picture of who journalism academics were and the kinds of work
 51. 52.

they were engaged in – although it was very focused on traditional scholarly outputs and did not consider non-traditional research outputs (NTRs) by journalism academics. Of their 53 survey respondents, 25 were lecturers, fourteen were senior lecturers, five were associate professors and six were full professors. The remaining three were two casual teachers and one person of unknown rank. The group was roughly gender-balanced – 24 male and 26 female (with three undeclared) – but only four were aged under 36 years, making the cohort distinctly middle-aged.

Overall, the study suggested that this group demonstrated a relatively low level of participation in peer-reviewed publishing and research productivity, with older male professors and associate professors with fifteen years or more experience in universities being more prolific publishers than younger female lecturers in teaching and research or teaching-focused roles, and with far less academic experience. For many journalism academics, research was being displaced by other activities such as teaching, administration and maintaining journalistic practice. The results suggested that low productivity had stalled the careers of senior lecturers and more established academics and limited the advancement of those new to the academy. Bromley and Neal's (2011) research also provided valuable demographic insight into journalism educators in Australia. A key area of concern for them was that women, younger academics, and those at the lecturer level demonstrated 'under-realised potential for undertaking critical research including holding and being enrolled in PhDs' (Bromley and Neal 2011: 66–67).

On the positive side, Bromley and Neal found evidence of an emerging professoriate offering research leadership, and increased importance placed on obtaining Ph.D. qualifications. They also argued that: '[f]or all groups, except TF [teaching-focused] staff, research training seemed to have a positive effect on research participation' (2011: 63). Bromley and Neal saw journalism in Australian universities showing:

signs of adaptation to external pressures with a newer, younger and more female population slowly becoming research active, while some other, somewhat more senior, colleagues had declining research careers, but with the PhD gaining greater prevalence and indicating higher levels of critical research activity.

(Bromley and Neal 2011: 67)

In a later work, Bromley (2013: 580) also argued that female journalism academics had a key role to play in the 'academization of journalism', a proposal we sought to explore in our study. However, the earlier study failed to report on the division of gender by job ranking, so did not provide a baseline for tracking the relative career trajectories of women and men over the decade.

JERAA'S RESPONSE TO BROMLEY AND NEAL

Bromley and Neal's research prompted a number of changes from within the field, including increased advocacy work from relevant professional associations. To improve the visibility and quality of journalism research, in 2011, the then Journalism Education Association of Australia (JEEA) introduced research awards to support mid-career academics' career development (with an emphasis on women), with the executive agreeing that they would

1. continue until there was evidence for significant numbers of members moving
 2. beyond senior lecturer level. In 2014, the JEAA added 'research' to its title to
 3. reflect that the field was evolving into a mature research discipline and, in
 4. 2015, after extensive consultation led by Johan Lidberg, developed a national
 5. statement about journalism as research that reads in part as follows:

6.
 7. Journalism as an academic discipline contributes to the body of scholarly
 8. knowledge about the contexts, tools, creation, distribution, consump-
 9. tion, impacts and social relations of journalism via journalism students
 10. and journalism practice.

11. (JERAA 2015: n.pag.)

12.
 13. Most recently, JERAA has changed its journal publisher, with Intellect now
 14. listing the full text of *Australian Journalism Review* articles; a move that has
 15. increased the journal's international discoverability and will enable it to be
 16. listed in major citation indexes such as Scopus.

17. JERAA's research awards have already given a marked boost to the careers
 18. of some recipients. Between 2011 and 2019, a total of twelve mid-career jour-
 19. nalism academics (nine female and three male) received an award, with three
 20. moving from senior lecturer into the professoriate after receiving the grant.
 21. Since 2014, a further six academics have been named the Anne Dunn Scholar,
 22. an award sponsored by the mother and siblings of the late former JEAA
 23. President Anne Dunn, and supported by JERAA and the Australia and New
 24. Zealand Communication Association (ANZCA). The award honours Dunn's
 25. commitment to critical research of a high academic standard, and recognizes
 26. excellence in communication and journalism research including, but not
 27. limited to, broadcast media for the public benefit. Four of the six Anne Dunn
 28. Scholars have been women. Since receiving the award, two of them have been
 29. promoted into the professoriate.

30. Evidence of the growing international standing of Australian journalism
 31. research can also be seen in at least seventeen Australian authored entries in
 32. the *International Encyclopedia of Journalism Studies* (Vos et al. 2019), three in
 33. the updated *Handbook of Journalism Studies* (Wahl-Jorgensen and Hanitzsch
 34. 2020) and a number in Stephen Ward's *Handbook of Global Media Ethics*
 35. (2020). Australians have also led or co-led an increasing number of interna-
 36. tional comparative studies – for example, Folker Hanusch's 30-country study
 37. *Journalism Students Across the Globe* (see Hanusch and Mellado 2014) and
 38. Julie Posetti's (2017) work on protection of sources, disinformation and online
 39. violence against women journalists for UNESCO. Locally, journalism scholars
 40. contributed substantially to Bridget Griffen-Foley's (2014) *A Companion to the*
 41. *Australian Media*; the first comprehensive study of Australia's press, broadcast-
 42. ing and new media sectors. Of the thirteen members of the editorial advisory
 43. board, four are past or present journalism academics.

44. Despite the increased focus of JERAA and its membership on research
 45. strategy, development and outputs, successive ERA rounds have not seen a
 46. consistent strengthening of submissions to the Australia Research Council's
 47. 1903 (Journalism and Professional Writing) Field of Research (FoR) code,
 48. which is used to classify journalism research outputs under the ERA scheme.
 49. To the contrary, from 2010 onwards, fewer and fewer universities submitted
 50. 1903 returns. During the same period, no university scored above a three
 51. rating ('at world standard') out of five ('well above world standard') for its
 52. 1903 research outputs in ERA institutional rankings (Vine et al. 2016).

In 2019, the then Vice President of Research for JERAA, Susan Forde, authored a submission to the Australian and New Zealand Standard Research Classification (ANZSRC) Fields of Research code review (ANZSRC 2019), on behalf of the Association, arguing for journalism as a field of study to be reclassified (Forde 2019). The submission outlined the strength of journalism research and scholarship in Australia, but argued it was not being reflected in the 1903 code, which received only one institutional return in the 2018 ERA round. Forde argued this was not due to a lack of quality journalism research, or a decrease in employment of journalism educators, but because universities were 'choosing to "group" their journalism research' into the 2001 Communication and Media Studies FoR code in order to boost their chances of an improved institutional ranking in that category (Forde 2019: n.pag.). Further, she noted, all other disciplinary groups in the top level 19 code, including 1901 Art Theory and Criticism, 'returned higher levels of NTROs than Journalism and Professional Writing' (Forde 2019: n.pag.), meaning that journalism researchers were either not submitting creative works to the ERA process or, alternatively, were not having them recognized as research by their universities – which would undermine the purpose of locating journalism in this FoR grouping.

The JERAA submission recommended that the 1903 code Journalism and Professional Writing be moved out of the 19, two-digit FoR, and that a new six-digit code be introduced under 2001 Communication and Media 'called "Journalism Studies" or something similar' (Forde 2019: n.pag.). Forde argued that this would ensure that journalism scholarship was more correctly surrounded and nurtured by the broader media and communication studies disciplines and that there would remain a distinct 'field' of Journalism Studies, ensuring that Australian journalism research would still be captured by FoR categorization and recognized by granting bodies. The submission proposed that a revised ANZSRC code would have the following benefits: a more accurate representation of how institutions 'see' journalism work within its broader communication and media studies context; better alignment with the international experience; and research-rich practical and creative work that creates new knowledge would still 'count' as NTROs under the 2001 code (Forde 2019).

Overall, then, significant work has been undertaken to improve the public profile and institutional standing of journalism in the Australian academy since the publication of Bromley and Neal's research. However, there has been little empirical work exploring the impacts on journalism academics – despite changes in the academy, the industry and the work of JERAA – making this study a timely and necessary project.

METHODOLOGY

Inspired by the work of Bromley and Neal (2011), we adopted their approach to surveying journalism academics and educators. We did not have access to Bromley and Neal's original survey, but drew our questions from what was reported in their journal article and built-in additional questions based upon perceived changes in the academy, with a greater focus on NTROs and engagement. Our survey, like theirs, was descriptive and cross-sectional, and used the statistical data as a source of evidence for inductive interpretation rather than for direct answers. Like Bromley and Neal, we also did not adopt a theoretical approach to analysis, but rather identified patterns and themes for exploration.

1. We followed Bromley and Neal's recruitment method by distributing the
 2. self-administered online survey to the Australian journalism educators' e-mail
 3. discussion list, which is now managed by RMIT University. The list is open to
 4. anyone with an interest in journalism education in Australia and, as of April
 5. 2020, includes 178 financial and non-financial members of JERAA, journal-
 6. ism educators in other parts of the world (including New Zealand, the Pacific,
 7. the United Kingdom and Ireland), industry representatives, union officials and
 8. people generally interested in the field. The list is also distributed to some
 9. university administration e-mail accounts. Like the Bromley and Neal's survey,
 10. the 2019 survey was anonymous as part of its ethical clearance from RMIT
 11. University. While this prevented us from pursuing follow-up interviews, space
 12. was provided at the end of the survey for additional comments to be provided
 13. by respondents.

14. The 2019 survey consisted of 41 questions, including 31 closed- and
 15. ten open-ended questions. Aside from demographic information, we asked
 16. questions about current job position and employment status, work history,
 17. concerns about industry change, promotion opportunities, research training
 18. and research outputs. As the JERAA executive is concerned about the rela-
 19. tively low levels of journalism NTROs submitted to ERA rounds, compared
 20. with other creative disciplines, the survey explored the types of works
 21. produced, whether they had been assessed by universities and how their
 22. quality is judged, whether they had ever been rejected and, if so, why. We
 23. also asked about funding outcomes, engagement and impact, and factors that
 24. affected promotions. The survey was first distributed to the e-mail discussion
 25. list at the beginning of October 2019 and closed in early December that same
 26. year to follow the timeline of Bromley and Neal's work.

27. Upon completion of the data collection period, there were 77 survey
 28. responses recorded, after the removal of eight incomplete surveys. This
 29. was two more than the 75 financial members of JERAA at the same period
 30. (December 2019) and favourably comparable to Bromley and Neal's response
 31. rate, which they assessed against that of Harcup's study (2011). Harcup
 32. yielded 65 responses from a total pool of 350 journalism academics from the
 33. United Kingdom and Ireland, while Bromley and Neal received 53 responses
 34. from a pool of 74 JEAA members. In pure number terms, our research yielded
 35. a better response rate than the 2011 Australian study. That said, clearly, such
 36. surveys have limitations and we agreed with Bromley and Neal's (2011)
 37. concerns about the predetermining and constraining nature of surveys and
 38. small sample size. Most significant among our concerns, however, was the
 39. reliance on self-reporting, which of course always increases the possibility of
 40. misrepresentation and prestige bias.

41. Future research could aim for more robust statistical data using a national
 42. random survey rather than self-selected and self-reporting responses. This
 43. would permit valid statistical predictions based on the data. However, it would
 44. require further funding to be available to ensure that a representative sample
 45. could be collected.

46. **FINDINGS OF THE SURVEY**

48. Of the 77 respondents, 50 said they were female, 26 were male, none indicated
 49. they were non-binary, and one preferred not to say. There were 25 lecturers,
 50. nineteen senior lecturers, eight associate professors, eleven professors, eight
 51. in either teaching or research sessional positions and six respondents in other
 52.

	Bromley and Neal		Wake, Backhaus and Martin	
	Count	% of total	Count	% of total
Lecturer	25	47	25	33
Senior lecturer	14	26	19	25
Associate professor	5	9	8	10
Professor	6	11	11	14
Other*	3*	7	14 [#]	18
Total	53	100	77	100

*Tutor, sessional and one who did not declare their rank.

[#]Includes sessional staff, emeritus professor, adjunct professor and honorary academic.

Table 1: Role comparison 2011 vs. 2019.

	Bromley and Neal		Wake, Backhaus and Martin	
	Count	% of total	Count	% of total
Teaching and research*	40	77	50	64.9
Teaching-focused	10	19	18	23.4
Research-focused	2	4	7	9.1
Industry-focused	-	-	1	1.3
No response	-	-	1	1.3
Total	52*	100	77	100

*2019 research included the additional category of teaching, research and industry-focused, which has been included in the teaching and research category for comparison purposes.

Table 2: Work profile comparison 2011 vs. 2019.

roles. A total of 50 participants were either in teaching and research, or teaching, research and industry-focused roles, compared with seven in research-only positions. Eighteen were in teaching-focused positions, and one in an industry-focused role. There was one who did not respond.

Table 1 presents the role comparison between the 2011 Bromley and Neal study and the 2019 one. Little has changed proportionally in the career status of those surveyed between the two studies except that there is a lower percentage of lecturers in our sample, and a significantly larger percentage of 'other' roles, notably fixed-term contract or sessional staff. The latter finding accords with research that suggests reductions in public funding of universities have led to increased use of 'contingent employment arrangements' to reduce academic labour costs (Ryan et al. 2017).

Table 2 presents a comparison of work profiles between the two studies. What we see here is a fairly steady figure for overall research-oriented roles (teaching and research, plus research-focused), but a trend towards increasing stratification, with the overall percentage of practical positions (teaching-focused, plus industry-focused) and research-focused roles increasing over the decade ($p=0.4438$).

In terms of employment status, most respondents were employed full-time ($n=62$), eleven respondents worked part-time and four were honorary.

Years in academy	Male	Female	Total
1–5	7	12	19
6–10	4	15	19
11–15	4	11	15
16–20	3	5	8
21–30	5	7	12
31–40	2	0	2
41+	1	0	1
Total	26	50	76*

*One respondent did not wish to declare their gender.

Table 3: Time in academy by gender.

The majority were employed on an ongoing basis ($n=55$), with a further eleven respondents employed on fixed-term contracts and nine employed as either a casual or sessional. Two respondents were in honorary positions. Forty-five per cent of respondents indicated that they were not worried about industry job losses affecting their positions, although 29% said they were concerned about this, 17% were not sure and 9% said it was too soon to tell.

Most had previously worked in journalism ($n=68$), with only nine indicating they had not. There was an even split between those respondents who continued to practise journalism and those who did not (38 respondents for each, one non-response). Of those still practising, all but one had previously worked in journalism. In response to a multiple-choice question about how they describe themselves, respondents were evenly divided between 'journalism academic' ($n=29$) and the more generic 'academic' ($n=27$), with eleven choosing the label 'journalist' and eight indicating they used a mix of these descriptors. Only one chose an alternative disciplinary title 'media historian'.

There was a relatively even spread across the amount of time spent in academia, as demonstrated in Table 3, with nineteen respondents having spent between one and five years in academia, nineteen between six and ten years and fifteen between eleven and fifteen years. Despite the greater number of women who had spent under fifteen years as academics, a chi-square test showed no significant connection (0.09931) between binary gender and duration of career (> or < sixteen years in the academy).

When asked via a multiple-choice question what barriers there were to promotion in their institution, 17% of respondents said there were no barriers and 22% said they were 'happy where they were'. Those who chose set options said their barriers were the lack of a Ph.D. (17%), lack of research funds (6%) or lack of publications (5%). 'Other' responses included a lack of mentoring and professional development opportunities; heavy workloads; lack of a Ph.D. or Ph.D. supervisions; lack of an ARC track record; no institutional recognition for practice-based work, or for journalism as an academic discipline; and childcare responsibilities. Of those respondents who indicated whether there were barriers to their promotion, 68% of women said 'yes', compared with 10% who indicated no barriers and 20% who were happy with their appointment level. In a later question, which asked respondents whether gender had played a role, at all, in their promotion within the academy, half replied, it had.

	Publishing	Non-publishing	Total
Total	66 (86%)	11 (14%)	77 (100%)
Lecturer	22 (88%)	3 (12%)	25 (100%)
Senior lecturer	15 (79%)	4 (21%)	19 (100%)
Associate professor	8 (100%)	0	8 (100%)
Professor	11 (100%)	0	11 (100%)
Other	10 (71%)	4 (29%)	14 (100%)
Female	43 (86%)	7 (14%)	50 (100%)
Male	22 (85%)	4 (15%)	26 (100%)
Teaching-focused	8 (44%)	10 (56%)	18 (100%)
Research-focused	7 (100%)	0	7 (100%)
Teaching and research	50 (98%)	1 (2%)	51 (100%)
Age: 26–35	7 (87.5%)	1 (12.5%)	8 (100%)
Age: 36–45	7 (100%)	0	7 (100%)
Age: 46–55	23 (79%)	6 (21%)	29 (100%)
Age: 56–65	24 (86%)	4 (14%)	28 (100%)
Age: 65+	5 (100%)	0	5 (100%)
Practising	31 (82%)	7 (18%)	38 (100%)
Non-practising	34 (89.5%)	4 (10.5%)	38 (100%)

Tables have been rounded and adjusted to account for anonymity, non-responses and uncategorisable responses.

Table 4: Journalist-academics' publishing productivity.

Family responsibilities, a factor not considered in the 2011 study, were cited as a promotion barrier by 25% of those respondents.

The majority of respondents reported that they had published peer-reviewed outputs in the past five years, with only fourteen per cent reporting that they had not published at all during this period (see Table 4). Local publications, including *Australian Journalism Review*, *Media International Australia* and *Asia-Pacific Media Educator*, remained important, as they were in 2011. While Bromley and Neal focused on questions about the Australian journals and *Pacific Journalism Review*, our survey prompted responses about a wider international range of publications. A promising finding was the number of academics who had been published in highly ranked, international journals such as *Journalism Studies* ($n=38$), *Journalism Practice* ($n=36$), *Journalism* ($n=32$) and *Digital Journalism* ($n=30$). Open responses to our survey suggest that journalism researchers need to undertake work that is 'internationally comparative' to boost their publication rates and 'to look more outwardly to international benchmarks and performance' in order to benchmark their research achievements.

The non-publishing group included those in a range of positions from sessional teaching academic through to senior lecturer, and a range of time spent working in the academy, from 1–5 through to 21–30 years. Two-thirds were female, but there was no relationship between gender and absence of

1. publications ($p=0.8707$). Notably, almost all of the non-publishing cohort were
 2. in self-described teaching-focused positions, with just one reporting being in
 3. a teaching, research and industry-focused position. Of this group, 80 per cent
 4. were former journalists and two-thirds still produced works of journalism.
 5. Two indicated that their creative works had not been assessed as NTROs by
 6. their universities, but the majority (63 per cent) were unsure. More than half
 7. of non-publishing respondents had not received any formal research training
 8. and the same number cited a lack of Ph.D. qualifications as a key barrier to
 9. being promoted.

10. Creative works, research reports for external bodies and portfolios of jour-
 11. nalism were the most popularly reported NTROs in the survey, although
 12. recorded works, curated works and live performances were also noted.
 13. Works that respondents classified as 'Other' included an interactive storytell-
 14. ing tool; a digital archive of oral history; and an updated textbook that did
 15. not count as research, despite a heavy research focus in the book. However,
 16. when asked whether their university acknowledged NTROs as publications
 17. for research purposes, a surprising 30% said 'no' or they did not know. Nearly
 18. 16% of respondents said their NTRO work had been rejected as research by
 19. their employer. Two suggested that the rejection was not an issue of quality,
 20. but rather because of their respective research offices' 'inexperience' in assess-
 21. ing NTROs. Two more said that journalism was not accepted as research or
 22. considered 'creative output'. Over 45% of respondents said their university's
 23. stance on research, including NTROs, influenced their publication decisions.

24. Our study found an almost even split between those who consider their
 25. work to fall into the 1903 Journalism and Professional Writing field and
 26. those who chose 2001 Communication and Media Studies as their primary
 27. FoR. Interestingly, the most prolific publishers (more than ten peer-reviewed
 28. traditional publications in the past five years) have overwhelmingly used the
 29. 2001 code instead of the journalism-specific one. In the group that had only
 30. published once in the past five years, the split between the two codes was
 31. more even. Of this group, those that had published books were more likely to
 32. have submitted into 2001 than 1903.

33. Conversely, all of the researchers in teaching-focused positions nominated
 34. their work in the 1903 code. Of the 1903 group, 60% had spent more than ten
 35. years working as journalists. Just one respondent in this group did not have
 36. a background in journalism practice. This contrasted with the 2001 group,
 37. of which nearly 20% had never worked as journalists. Ph.D. candidates or
 38. respondents who did not have a Ph.D. also made up 30% of the 1903 group.
 39. All respondents in the 2001 group either had a Ph.D. or were in the process of
 40. getting one (15%). A small number of scholars reported that they self-labelled
 41. their work as 1902 Film, Television and Digital Media, 1904 Performing Arts
 42. and Creative Writing or 2002 Cultural Studies (3%), 2005 Literary Studies or
 43. 2099 Other Language, Communication and Culture (1.5%).

44. We received patchy responses to the question, 'Have you completed any
 45. works classified as engagement or impact?', due to the limited options and
 46. sliding scale design of the survey. Forty per cent of respondents did comment
 47. on how else engagement is being measured at universities, with the major-
 48. ity giving diverse answers such as media attention, industry collaborations,
 49. community activities, consultancies, awards and public lectures. However, a
 50. fifth of this group was uncertain how it was measured.

51. One of the more problematic aspects of journalism research revealed by
 52. our survey was that the majority of journalism academics who responded have

Value (\$)	Category 1 (Australian competitive grants such as ARC)	Category 2 (Other public sector research income)	Category 3 (Industry and other research income)	Category 4 (CRC research income)	Scholarships	Internal university funds	Total
3000–6000	0% (0)	9.68% (3)	9.68% (3)	3.23% (1)	16.13% (5)	61.29% (19)	31
6001–10,000	0% (0)	30% (3)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	70% (7)	10
10,001–20,000	0% (0)	7.69% (1)	30.77% (4)	0% (0)	0% (0)	61.54% (8)	13
20,001–30,000	0% (0)	12.5% (2)	18.75% (3)	6.25% (1)	25% (4)	37.5% (6)	16
30,001–40,000	14.29% (1)	28.57% (2)	28.57% (2)	0% (0)	0% (0)	28.57% (2)	7
40,001–50,000	0% (0)	25% (2)	25% (2)	12.5% (1)	0% (0)	37.5% (3)	8
50,001–100,000	42.86% (3)	14.29% (1)	28.57% (2)	0% (0)	0% (0)	14.29% (1)	7
100,001–500,000	45.45% (5)	9.09% (1)	9.09% (1)	0% (0)	18.18% (2)	18.18% (2)	11
500,001–1,000,000	66.67% (2)	33.33% (1)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	3
1,000,001–2,000,000	0% (0)	100% (1)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	1
2,000,000+	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	100% (1)	0% (0)	1

Table 5: Industry funding, self-reported by journalism academics 2019.

received less than AUD 6000 funding in the past five years and, of those, nineteen received that from internal university grants. Just one journalism scholar reported bringing in more than AUD 2 million in funding, and that was for research scholarships, not in the Category 1 Australian competitive grants. Table 5 presents eleven self-reports of Category 1 funding (Australian competitive grants such as ARC), eleven for Category 2 (other public sector research funding), seventeen for Category 3 (industry and other research income), three for Category 4 (Cooperative Research Centre [CRC]), twelve for scholarships and 46 for internal university funds. Of the ten highest-earning respondents who had been awarded competitive external grants, seven were in the professoriate, with a median age of 46–55 and a median time in the academy of 16–20 years. Seven were female. There were also two female senior lecturers and one male lecturer in the highest-earning group, but their earnings were either from scholarships or internal grants.

Finally, the majority of respondents were not concerned that industry upheavals would affect their position in the academy, or were unsure whether they would. However, 29 per cent thought they would, with nine per cent saying it was ‘too soon to tell’. When we invited respondents to detail any concerns they had about the impacts of media or education industry change on the academic position of journalism, on the teaching front, they most commonly feared a decline in student numbers and the sustainability/status of journalism education; staff cuts and heavier workloads; difficulties keeping curricula and skills up-to-date; and the possible collapse of journalism and public relations/communications programmes, with a dilution of investigative skills. In research terms, respondents were worried about managers not recognizing the value of journalism in the academy, particularly journalism practice, and the difficulty of doing research while teaching and doing journalism.

KEY THEMES FOR DISCUSSION

'Under-realized potential'

Our figures continue to reflect Bromley and Neal's concern about 'part-time appointments, the competing demands of continuing to practise journalism and holding TF [teaching-focused] appointments as indicators of lower levels of both participation and productivity in publication' (2011: 63). However, we also sought to understand how this related to the current roles and status of female journalism academics. Were women still a key source of 'under-realized potential' in journalism research or had they, as we thought, started to become more productive and better recognized for their contributions?

While women were the majority of the non-publishing cohort, equally, they constituted two-thirds of the most prolific publishers (more than ten publications in the past five years) and 70 per cent of the top ten external grant holders. While this research suggests those in teaching-focused positions will fare poorly in publishing productivity, future studies need to investigate the factors supporting publishing success, including those suggested by respondents, such as access to mentoring, external grant income, peer collaboration and freedom from carer responsibilities.

Based on pure numbers, the glut of women at the senior lecturer level noted in the 2011 study appears to persist in 2020. In our cohort, there were more women than men at associate professor level, but there are apparent tensions surrounding women's opportunities for promotions. One respondent was emphatic about the need for family care to be recognized as a hurdle to research achievement:

As a woman in a family, I believe each child should attract a publication and research income 'credit' to be given legitimate consideration in ROPE [Research Opportunity and Performance Evidence] evaluations, promotion applications and so on. The personal is political.

These concerns are an important consideration for both institutions and the field of journalism. As has been noted at recent JERAA conferences, if female academics are to fully realize their potential, it is likely they will require more support in terms of mentoring, grant development and research leadership.

Funding

The poor journalism research funding figures revealed by our study demand further investigation and action, to help develop early- and mid-career researchers' capacity to apply for large external grants, and to promote collaboration between journalism researchers. Further exploration of how funding falls into FoR divisions comes from ARC funding figures for competitive grants from 2001 to 2019 (Australian Research Council 2019). This report shows seventeen grants tagged with the 1903 code, only seven of which indicated that the FoR for journalism was 50 per cent or more of the project. In the same period, grants in the 2001 six-digit codes showed seventeen coded 'Communication', 80 coded 'Communication and Digital Media', 62 coded 'Media Studies', ten coded 'Communication and Media Studies not elsewhere classified', five coded 'Organisational, Interpersonal and Intercultural Communication' and three as 'International Communication and Development'. While there are some overlaps between the 1903 journalism projects and those in FoR 2001, the latter

field is clearly dominant, and specific journalism research has a much smaller percentage of that. But as one scholar noted in the survey responses:

As far as I can see the field has developed substantially in the past decade or so. Two decades ago, it was rare for a journalism academic to apply for, let alone win, an ARC grant. Two decades ago, I doubt whether journalism academics with a PhD were in the majority of full-time staff members in universities. Now they are.

In the past decade, the ARC's statistics suggest journalism researchers are securing ARC funding at a steady rate (see Australian Research Council 2019), with two 1903-coded journalism grants awarded in 2011 and 2012, four in 2013, three in 2014 and 2015, three in 2016 and three in 2019. However, there has been no evidence of a more continuous upward trajectory in Category 1 funding to 1903-coded projects, which would indicate the maturation and consolidation of the discipline's research capacity – an issue possibly due to coding of journalism-related research into FoR 2001.

Journalism FoR

The results of the survey also highlighted the ongoing tensions and disagreement over FoR codes and journalism research. Nash goes some way towards explaining the contentiousness of this issue, stating that 'at issue here is the fundamental question about the status and nature of journalism as a discrete research practice within the academy' (2013: 125). What becomes clear from our survey is the significant division in the field, both conceptually and in career trajectories, between those who submit research outputs to FoR 1903 and those who favour FoR 2001. One of the key areas of debate is what Hirst (2010: 92) described as the 'false dichotomy' of theory and practice in journalism education and research, which is 'very real' among Australian journalism researchers. Another is journalism practitioners' strong allegiance to creative research, their justifiable concerns about the academic value accorded this work and their need to better argue for its scholarly worth.

Possibly the biggest change for journalism scholarship since Bromley and Neal's (2011) study is the increasing importance of NTRO assessment within the academy. The critical issue revealed by this study is the need for JERAA to address the knowledge deficit about NTRO assessment processes among members and their lack of trust in local assessment procedures, as well as a perceived institutional lack of understanding about what constitutes excellence in journalism as research. One academic with a clear love of writing explained why we must address this tension between institutional ambivalence for our field, and the drive to creative practice:

The literacy in my school about what constitutes an NTRO in the journalism and communications field is not well developed, especially when compared to knowledge in the school about other areas, such as art and performance, and writing and literature. What this means is that the journalistic work I do, which is mainly writing feature articles [...] is not valued as much as I would like. The 2000 to 4000-word articles I do [...] require a good deal of research and I enjoy – and make good use of, I hope – the freedom the publication gives me to write in an engaging and creative way. By contrast, academic journals are both prescriptive

1. and restrictive in the writing they will publish. In short, if I was confined
2. to writing for academic publications, I'd slowly suffocate.

3.
4. As this article was being written, the ARC, the Australian Bureau of Statistics
5. (ABS), Stats NZ and the New Zealand Ministry of Business, Innovation and
6. Employment (MBIE) were jointly reviewing the ANZSRC codes. Submissions
7. from JERAA, the Australian Academy of the Humanities and the Council of
8. Deans of Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities, among others, argue there is
9. a case for 1903 to be relocated (as a new six-digit code) within the four-digit
10. 2001 Communication and Media Studies code. Submissions to the review
11. closed on 10 February 2020, but it is likely that this proposal will be imple-
12. mented. Others have made the case that there still needs to be a designated
13. FoR code for creative journalism outputs, arguing for it to be included in a
14. new 1907 Professional Writing and Journalism code. Regardless of the reclas-
15. sification schema, defining what constitutes research excellence for NTROs
16. will be critical for the large group of journalism scholars for whom 1903 was
17. their preferred disciplinary home.

19. ***The role of journalism in the academy***

20. The final key theme for discussion relates to perceptions of the role of journal-
21. ism within the academy. There were three interrelated aspects of this area: (1)
22. the challenges of balancing journalism teaching and research; (2) of ensuring
23. institutional recognition for journalism as a critical, thriving discipline; and (3)
24. a narrow institutional view of what constitutes valuable research outputs.

25. Our study found, like Bromley and Neal, that the majority of respond-
26. ents were in dual teaching and research roles, where they sometimes struggle
27. to simultaneously teach leading-edge industry practice, produce innovative
28. creative work and conduct high-quality research. At the same time, many
29. respondents related perceptions of instability and precarity in the workforce
30. to decreasing student numbers, and declining managerial support for journal-
31. ism programmes. One succinctly explained the effects of this: '[f]ewer under-
32. graduate students, leading to fewer resources all round, with flow-on impact
33. on research opportunities and interest in funding journalism research'. Other
34. respondents critiqued their institution's short-sighted views of journalism
35. education with one explaining that 'journalism education is as dynamic as the
36. industry it observes' and another critiquing the 'lack of innovation in the way
37. we teach it'.

38. A further area of frustration for journalism academics was the lack of
39. weighting given to publishing activities that are important to the discipline
40. and society, but not necessarily recognized as research outputs by their
41. universities or formally by the ARC. Many respondents said they regularly
42. contribute to *The Conversation*, *Inside Story* and Harvard University's Nieman
43. Lab publications, as well as writing reports for government and international
44. organizations such as UNESCO, and presenting submissions to parliamentary
45. inquiries. All of these activities can now be recognized as important forms
46. of research engagement, which can bring attention, prestige and sometimes
47. even income to universities.

48. O'Donnell and Van Heekeren's (2015: 3) call for JERAA members to
49. 'rejuvenate' the Association's public profile, directing greater attention to its
50. research activities, has certainly borne fruit, with JERAA contributing written
51. and verbal evidence to public inquiries including the:
52.

- 2015 Inquiry into the Australian Broadcasting Corporation Amendment (Rural and Regional Advocacy) Bill
- 2017 Senate Select Committee on the Future of Public Interest Journalism
- 2018 Review of Australian Broadcasting Services in the Asia Pacific
- 2019 Parliamentary Inquiry into Political Interference in the ABC
- 2019 Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security.

Other journalism academics have provided individual submissions to some of the above inquiries and others within their field of expertise. The enthusiasm with which journalism academics have taken on a greater public profile has grown markedly since the 2012 *Report of the Independent Inquiry into the Media and Media Regulation* by The Hon R Finkelstein QC, assisted by journalism academic and former JERAA president (now AJR co-editor), Professor Matthew Ricketson.

Despite this high-profile engagement, however, there is a little recognition or incentive at the institutional level – aside from promotion – for journalism academics to undertake this kind of work. This points to the need for journalism scholars to better understand how they can build such engagement into their funded research activities, and to collaborate better to produce timely policy responses to issues in media industries.

Engagement/impact

One area in which journalist-academics should be excelling, given their media training and capacity for socially significant investigation, is research engagement and impact. In terms of measuring the field's achievements, it is too early to determine how journalism projects are faring in making their case for societal benefit and return on investment. ERA's first engagement and impact exercise shows only one impact study of a high rating with journalism as a keyword, under the two-digit 19 code 'Studies in Creative Arts and Writing' (Australian Research Council 2020a). However, this initial exercise has seen individual universities measuring these factors in different ways, with the coding so broad as to not provide much insight into diverse fields of research or the national benefit of these projects (Sawczak 2019). The scholars surveyed for this study mostly claimed industry reports as evidence of their engagement, although textbooks and exhibitions were also popular. As one academic rightly reported, 'it's an evolving space'. This said, the lack of diversity in survey responses suggests journalism researchers require further professional development in these concepts in order to boost their performance in any future internal or external assessments of engagement and impact.

CONCLUSION

This survey of Australian journalism academics indicates some predictable changes in the last decade: an increase in sessional and contract staff, and greater stratification of roles between those teaching and those who are research-focused. In 2019, as the majority of respondents had, or were studying for, a Ph.D., our study suggests that those without this qualification could struggle to move beyond a teaching career in universities.

This study suggests we do have role models for research achievement and critical research in journalism studies in Australia, and a distinct categorical location within communication and media studies. However, the field still

1. suffers from a tendency to focus on practice over research, and a lack of understanding of how to meld the two in high engagement and impact practice-based research and NTROs. What is needed now is a comprehensive push in mentoring and research development – targeting both early career academics and practitioners transitioning into academe – further work on external grant applications, and greater advocacy and education of our own members and others on the value of journalism as NTROs. The need to support female academics, specifically, remains unchanged.

9. There also remain a significant number of academics in a bottleneck of teaching-focused roles, particularly in journalism practice and production. It is not clear from the survey if they are actually unhappy with such work, but they clearly will not advance through the academy without research training. Ensuring mentoring and support for the largely female group of academics in this position, particularly those who are transitioning from industry rather than coming through a traditional higher-degree route, therefore, must remain a focus of JERAA. Indeed, responses to our open survey questions indicate mentoring more broadly is key to helping journalism academics coming from industry or post-Ph.D. to build their track records, secure competitive grants and help build recognition of journalism as a discipline.

20. Given the plateauing of success demonstrated in 1903-coded ARC grants, it is imperative that journalism academics further develop their ability to win external competitive funding, rather than just internal university awards. One scholar we surveyed suggested that more emphasis was needed on getting academics from different universities to research together, and to collaborate more on competitive grant applications. We could venture the same for any discipline and so these problems are not peculiar to journalism studies, but they are exacerbated by the historic tendency for journalism scholars to displace research work with teaching and practice-based activities.

29. With the latter in mind, we argue it is essential that JERAA support research into better understanding and recognizing the excellence of NTROs; producing a report much like that already published by our colleagues in screen production (see ASPERA 2018), which can be used by members to promote the research value of their creative work. Our survey suggests journalism scholars at universities are taking advantage of NTRO submissions to ERA rounds, but are not clear on how their work is being assessed. Additionally, those who produce NTROs and those who work on public-facing and socially significant work, such as parliamentary inquiries, do not yet believe this work is given appropriate credit within the academy. A lack of institutional support for important forms of practice and policy-based engagement could have a negative impact on society, with scholars minimizing the effort they put into practice-based research or avoiding providing input into matters that impact on public interest journalism. Given the increasing importance that universities are placing on engagement and impact, it will be important for JERAA to explore how the discipline can best respond to these demands in a way that raises its public profile.

46. This type of professional development research is essential as our study clearly outlines a division between academics who are more teaching and practice-based, and those who are more traditionally research-focused. If the ANZSRC review results in the expected changes to FoR classifications, further research must be done on the types of journalism work being reported in both two-digit 19 and 20 'disciplinary' codes to determine if the specificity, distinctiveness and significance of journalism research is still being captured. That

said, this is not a time to be too distracted by sectarianism or methodological monism. With the ARC increasingly encouraging academics to collaborate on interdisciplinary work (Australian Research Council 2020b), it is also important that we start to imagine and demonstrate what journalism researchers can bring to larger humanities projects – to the critical research on climate change, crisis communications and sustainable living – that will shape our lives into the next decade and beyond.

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