



Public journalism as a journalism of publics

Implications of the Habermas–Fraser debate for public journalism

■ **Tanni Haas**

Brooklyn College

■ **Linda Steiner**

Rutgers University

ABSTRACT

This article addresses the alleged gap between academic scholarship *on* the public sphere and journalistic work *in* the public sphere by demonstrating how Fraser's (1990) four-part critique of Habermas' (1989) theory of the public sphere bears on the theory and practice of public journalism. Fraser's work not only directs attention to theoretical issues regarding 'publicness' that have received too little attention, but also implies pragmatic guidelines for public journalism efforts – a means of evaluating the democratic viability of public journalism theory, and a normative basis for promoting public journalism practice. Some practical implications of each of Fraser's lines of criticism are illustrated in a discussion of the Akron [Ohio] *Beacon Journal's* Pulitzer Prize winning race-relations initiative, 'A Question of Color'. We show how Fraser's criticisms not only direct attention to problematic aspects of the campaign, but also indicate what the *Beacon Journal* could have done differently and better.

KEY WORDS ■ civic journalism ■ journalism theory ■ Juergen Habermas
■ Nancy Fraser ■ public journalism ■ public sphere

A leading public journalism advocate recently claimed that academics' 'fateful, if not fatal' linguistic choices rendered scholarship on the public sphere inaccessible and perhaps even inapplicable to journalistic work in the public sphere (Rosen, 1999a: 33). Jay Rosen called Juergen Habermas' (1989) influential theory of the public sphere too dense and technical to be readable by non-academics. Similarly, Rosen argued, Nancy Fraser (1990) remains so behind an academic fortress that only other critical theorists can engage with her work. As Rosen noted, 'Plenty of people know how to read and learn from Fraser's careful

and suggestive essay . . . But many others – including people who do practical work in the public sphere – do not’ (p. 34). Rosen (1999a: 43) speculated that to take Habermas and Fraser public would be at best a scholarly event.

This article accepts Rosen’s (1999a) invitation to apply to Habermas and especially to Fraser a ‘third language’, in between critical theory and journalistic discourse, in order to demonstrate how Fraser’s (1990) four-part critique of Habermas’ (1989) theory of the public sphere bears on the theory and practice of public journalism.¹ Fraser’s work not only directs attention to theoretical issues regarding ‘publicness’ that have received too little attention, but also implies pragmatic guidelines for public journalism efforts. It offers a means of evaluating the democratic viability of public journalism theory and a normative basis for promoting public journalism practice. To be sure, Fraser is not directly concerned with journalism. Nonetheless, ‘tough’ as it is, Fraser’s work can be ‘taken public’ journalistically. Given space limitations, we only outline our suggestions for applying Fraser’s criticisms of Habermas, without fully defending their operational practicality.² Still, we will show a role for theory in the social capital grounding public journalism practice. As Peters (1999: 100) notes, ‘An adventure in social experimentation deserves the guidance of ideas just as ideas deserve the test of practice.’ Thus, the various suggestions offered should be viewed less as prescriptions and more as potentially useful alternatives to conventional journalistic assumptions and practices.

Fraser’s (1990) notions about what is and what ought to be made public are especially relevant to public journalism, whose practitioners are committed to changing, somehow, the purpose as well as the practice of journalism, in order to reinvigorate civic life and to encourage people to participate in public affairs. Many critics ‘outside’ the media, such as Robert Putnam (1993), as well as ‘inside’ critics, such as James Fallows (1996), accuse the media, and the news media specifically, with weakening public life and alienating citizens.³ While public journalism advocates agree that civic life and civic bonds have been undermined, they maintain that the news media can help strengthen public life. Public journalism advocates agree that journalists do not merely transmit information and that the news media should do more than simply cover the news. They contend, as Glasser and Craft (1998: 204) formulate it, that the purpose of journalism is ‘to promote and indeed to improve, and not merely to report on or complain about, public or civic life’. To this end, and unlike conventional journalists, public journalism scholars and practitioners share an interest in helping citizens to participate more actively and meaningfully in democratic processes. Since the emergence of the public journalism movement about a decade ago, several hundred initiatives have been conducted in the United States. So far, these initiatives either have

sought to expand the scope of campaign coverage beyond candidates and the issues candidates consider important, or they have entailed grounding coverage of politics in the issues and perspectives of citizens. Generally, they conceive of 'citizen deliberation' in terms of face-to-face conversation, including through participation in local community forums. Sometimes the news media themselves organize these roundtable discussions.⁴ Furthermore, they assume that the outcomes of citizen deliberations, whether known as the 'citizen's agenda' (e.g. Rosen, 1996), the 'public agenda' (e.g. Charity, 1995; Fouhy, 1994), or the 'people's agenda' (e.g. Fishkin, 1991, 1995), should inform journalistic practice. Yet, the failure to theorize public journalism leaves the publicness of public journalism an unfinished project.

Fraser is useful because she avoids the 'more information' versus 'more communication' impasse by considering which social groups most need access to what kinds of participation and what sorts of conditions or shifts in power are necessary to produce democratically viable solutions. We argue that Fraser's (1990) criticisms of Habermas' (1989) theory of the public sphere direct attention to four inter-related questions of concern for public-minded journalists:

- 1 should journalists encourage citizens to transcend inequalities among social groups, or should citizens be encouraged to attend to social inequalities;
- 2 should journalists help create a single, unifying public sphere, or should the goal be to strengthen a public sphere composed of multiple discursive domains;
- 3 should journalists maintain sharp distinctions between issues of public interest and matters of private concern, or should the public/private dichotomy be challenged; and finally
- 4 should journalists' goal be to engage citizens in public opinion-formation, or should they also try to involve citizens in political decision-making.

Some practical implications of each question will be illustrated in a discussion of the *Akron [Ohio] Beacon Journal's* Pulitzer Prize-winning initiative, 'A Question of Color'. In early 1993, the *Beacon Journal* launched a 10-month long public journalism campaign to promote racial understanding and healing in Akron.⁵ We will show how Fraser's (1990) criticisms not only direct attention to problematic aspects of the campaign, but also indicate what the *Beacon Journal* could have done differently and better.

The problem of social inequality

Habermas (1989) wants citizens to interact as if they were social equals, by setting aside social inequalities. Fraser (1990) objects. She repudiates Habermas' assumption that social equality is not a precondition for participatory parity in the public sphere. Since such abstraction from social inequalities has

always functioned to privilege the interests of dominant social groups over those of subordinate social groups, Fraser concludes that citizens generally should not 'bracket' or abstract from social inequalities, but instead should explicitly 'thematize' or articulate them.

Fraser's (1990) preference for making social inequalities visible highlights a question that public journalism scholars rarely address: What kind of citizen deliberation should journalists help promote, given widespread social inequality? Habermas would call on journalists to encourage citizens to interact as if they were social equals playing on an even field, even if the field is not 'truly' level. Fraser would argue journalists should encourage citizens to acknowledge and articulate social inequalities.

Rosen (1996: 55) argues that 'emphasizing deliberation does not mean simply handing the microphone over to citizens; rather it holds citizens to a respectable standard of discourse'. There is reason to worry about 'respectable standards'. People often yell, hog the microphone, blabber. Yet, beyond calling on journalists to hold citizens to a 'respectable standard of discourse' in cultivating citizen deliberation, Rosen does not elaborate on what kind of deliberation journalists should help promote or clarify how journalists may cultivate such discourse. As Gitlin (1998: 169) notes, albeit for other purposes, 'If democracy requires deliberation, then equal access to the terms of deliberation becomes central to the entry of persons into the social world of democracy'. More to the point, what may appear to evoke universal(izing) values and the common good may merely advance narrow group interests.⁶

More specifically, public journalism scholars rarely consider how citizen deliberation may be affected by social inequality. In part, the problem of 'social inequality' itself remains undertheorized because 'the community' has been seen as a unified site, bounded by shared values and interests. By virtue of inhabiting a certain geographical territory, community members are assumed to confront 'common problems' and share an overarching vision of the 'common good' that enables them to reach consensual solutions to those problems.⁷ Merritt (1998: xiii), for example, describes public life in terms of 'common problems' and 'common goals'. Likewise, Rosen (1997: 20) equates positioning people as citizens with treating them 'as citizens of the whole, with shared interests'. This 'universalistic' view of community leads public journalism scholars to presume that citizens will be able to reach consensual solutions to common problems if only they treat one another with mutual understanding and respect. Charity (1996: 11), for example, assumes 'that if one conversant is courteous, the other will also be courteous; they'll speak in ways that focus on solutions rather than grievances'.

This notion of community and citizen deliberation, however, ignores how most US communities are fragmented into multiple social groups, situated in

what Fraser (1990: 66) calls 'relations of dominance and subordination', structured (or fractured) especially by race, class, and gender. Social heterogeneity (that is, inequality) may preclude emergence of a shared, overarching vision of the common good. Consensus may not even be the most appropriate or pre-eminent goal. As Hackett and Zhao (1998: 205) note, public journalism scholars 'overestimate the possibility . . . of community consensus, because [they] overlook the extent of conflicting interests and standpoints. Nor is an apparent consensus inherently desirable, if it means ratifying an unjust status quo or precluding further debate.'

Moreover, as the previous discussion implies, the language of public journalism also conflates 'face-to-face conversation' with 'mediated deliberation'. As Glasser and Craft (1998) note, following Thompson (1995), deliberation is not always dialogic; it does not even always require face-to-face conversation. Deliberative democracy need not necessarily begin, they point out, where direct participatory democracy begins. Instead of pushing for face-to-face conversation among citizens on behalf of consensual solutions to common problems, then, journalists might follow Fraser's (1990) lead, and try to help citizens consider their different, and potentially conflicting, interests. In part, this could be accomplished by making salient social inequalities the very subject matter (or focal point) of deliberation. That is, citizens need opportunities to articulate the particular social locations from which they view given issues and to reflect on how those social locations affect their sense of problems and solutions. Thus, public journalism could become a means through which citizens understand not only that they have different, and perhaps conflicting, interests, but also that some interests may be more in need of protection and promotion. To be blunt, Fraser says, subordinate social positions are what need social amelioration, not the positions of the already-powerful.

To encourage citizens to explore the grounds for conflicting perspectives would commit journalists to serious 'public listening', specifically listening for difference (see Anderson et al., 1994). Equally important, public journalism could encourage an acknowledgement (an acknowledgement largely absent from more conventional forms of journalism) that some social locations hinder, or even prevent, certain participants from speaking in public, from fully participating in citizen deliberation. That is, journalists need to listen for silences or near silences. Since the emphasis on transcendent communion may itself be silencing, may work against articulated citizen participation, public journalists should help citizens consider how social inequalities may harm some participants' ability to participate on an equal footing. Moreover, journalists themselves must be mindful of how some people are silenced, and actively seek out those people in terms, at times, in places, and on issues that

will permit their participation. This would serve Fraser's (1990: 68) goal of making visible 'the ways in which societal inequality infects formally inclusive existing public spheres and taints discursive interaction within them'.

This does not imply that journalists should essentialize, promote divisiveness or exaggerate the impact of minor differences. As the next section shows, journalists can help citizens distinguish between significant and trivial differences. Moreover, journalists should not mechanistically or reductively assume that single identifiers determine social perspective. That said, a sense of solidarity is more likely to emerge from mutual respect – which acknowledges difference – than from an abstract pursuit of commonality.

Some journalistic implications of this ideal of citizen deliberation are illustrated in a widely acclaimed public journalism initiative: the *Akron Beacon Journal's* 'A Question of Color' campaign. The five-part series was conceived as a relatively conventional newspaper campaign to document racism and racial inequality in Akron, an Ohio city with a long, tortured history of racial tension. The *Beacon Journal* began by applying several conventional information-gathering tools to explore the role of race in housing, education, employment and crime. One series of articles, revealing 'a huge and growing chasm between the economic and social realities experienced by blacks and whites' (Kirksey et al., 1993: A4), was based on census data and a 1992 telephone survey conducted by the University of Akron. Moreover, the *Beacon Journal* organized and reported at length on focus group discussions with white and black residents. Reporters also interviewed various experts on racial inequality, including local government officials and university professors.

While the *Akron Beacon Journal* continued to draw from these data, the scope of the campaign took an unexpected turn with its second installment. According to Dale Allen, one of the campaign's editors, the *Beacon Journal* was disappointed by the lack of public attention to the first installment (quoted in Charity, 1995: 140). The *Beacon Journal* wanted to go 'beyond consciousness raising', Dale Allen explained, to enable 'readers who wanted to be part of the solution to come together to set a community agenda' (quoted in Merritt, 1998: 99). In announcing the campaign's expansion (see Dotson and Allen, 1993: A1, A11), the *Beacon Journal* vowed to help involve Akron civic groups 'in the process of improving race relations' (p. A1). Editors asked members of local civic groups to contact the *Beacon Journal* if they were interested in signing up for 'multiracial partnerships that can work toward common goals' (p. A11). The *Beacon Journal* hired two part-time facilitators, a white retired minister and a black retired school principal, who became responsible for matching up groups with shared interests.

The *Akron Beacon Journal's* efforts are indeed laudable. Representatives of more than 200 local civic groups soon contacted the newspaper. As a result, in

1995 the *Beacon Journal* established a tax-exempt, non-profit organization. This 'Coming Together Project' currently has an executive director and four part-time employees, who organize various activities for member organizations, students, and the community-at-large. Among other prominent successes were the *Beacon Journal's* efforts to go beyond both conventional reportage and conventional opinion polling.⁸ Here the newspaper encouraged public speaking – and public listening – in the language of the group.

Nevertheless, among the campaign's weaknesses was its assumption that the root of the 'race problem' is lack of communication and that increased inter-racial interaction would lead to consensual solutions to common problems. This 'consensual' approach to citizen deliberation ignored how whites and blacks are likely to have (and in Akron indeed did have) vastly different views on and experiences with racism and racial inequality. In fact, the *Akron Beacon Journal's* reports on focus group discussions revealed that whites and blacks disagreed on virtually every issue.

Fraser (1990) suggests the advantage of encouraging white and black residents to explore the bases for these differences in perspective. The *Beacon Journal* might have better served both its public journalism goals and social goals by adopting a more 'conflictual' approach aimed at recovering underlying conflicts of interest and perspective. Debate need not disintegrate into shouting matches; conflict need not be framed as sensationalized controversy for its own sake. Highlighting the historical differences in power and status that give rise to conflicts and rank-ordering the salience of differing interests between the already-powerful and the relatively powerless could therefore have been useful.

Moreover, the *Akron Beacon Journal* could have encouraged white and black residents to reflect on how some social inequalities may damage certain participants' very ability, literally and affectively, to participate (at all, much less on an equal footing) in focus group discussions. The *Beacon Journal* reported, for example, that while more than 30 percent of Akron's blacks were below the poverty level, only 8 percent of whites were (see Kirksey et al., 1993: A4). Is it fair to ask poor blacks, who struggle on a daily basis to make ends meet, to participate in a discourse of consensus, counterfactually presented as color-free and abstract, with whites, who presumably understand and know much less about blacks than blacks know about them? That is, following Fraser (1990), as well as Sandra Harding (1991), Donna Haraway (1988) and other standpoint theorists, why should poor blacks be expected to yield equally to whites for the sake of consensus.

These suggestions do not presuppose a particular view of 'race' or (good) 'race relations'. Rather, they imply that the *Akron Beacon Journal* might usefully

have offered local residents opportunities to reflect on how racial self-understandings affect their sense of problems and solutions. Moreover, as the next section shows, the *Beacon Journal* could usefully have encouraged local residents to explore how their sense of problems and solutions were influenced by other interacting social signifiers, notably class and gender.

Finally, Fraser's (1990) admonition to thematize, rather than bracket, social identity also applies to journalists themselves. Importantly, the *Akron Beacon Journal's* 'A Question of Color' campaign revealed the danger of journalists pretending to occupy a privileged and uniquely neutral position above or detached from the community and its particular concerns. Toward the end of the campaign, the *Beacon Journal* invited 17 editors and reporters (nine white, eight black) to discuss the *Beacon Journal's* reporting on crime (see Dyer, 1993). Not surprisingly, the discussions exposed highly racialized tensions. As had Akron's black community more generally, the black journalists complained both that the *Beacon Journal* depicted black men primarily as criminals and that black criminals received more sensationalized front-page exposure than did white criminals. Conversely, white journalists complained that blacks 'not only are underplayed in negative stories but overplayed in positive stories' (Dyer, 1993: A6). More to the point, white journalists complained that the *Beacon Journal*, which then had and still has a black publisher and several black editors, 'is trying so hard to be perceived as nonracist that fairness and honesty have suffered, that the truth is sometimes sugar-coated in the name of sociological engineering' (p. A6). Even Bob Dyer, the white reporter who wrote the story about the in-house discussions, recently conceded that he and his colleagues were surprised by the tensions voiced in the newsroom: 'You know, we were like any other part of society. We didn't have a clue' (Canedy, 2000).⁹ While the *Beacon Journal* deserves applause for airing the story of the in-house discussions, those debates were apparently not entirely honest or candid (Dyer, 1993). More importantly, these in-house discussions were isolated, emotionally and journalistically, from the rest of the journalists' work and they isolated journalists from the people and problems they covered. This separation accommodates conventional journalistic norms but is inconsistent with public journalism theorizing, at least as understood here.

The structure of the public sphere

How can journalists help citizens articulate and reflect on the different social locations from which they view given issues? The question of what kind of public sphere journalists should help promote is a corollary of the question about whether social inequalities should be foregrounded or set aside – and

likewise has received little attention from public journalism scholars.¹⁰ Habermas (1989) calls for a single, unifying public sphere, as a means of focusing attention on issues of collective concern to all community members. As a means of focusing attention on issues of concern to different social groups within the community, Fraser (1990) advocates strengthening a public sphere composed of multiple discursive domains, organized around distinct bases of affinity and interest. Fraser would promote those institutional arrangements that 'best help narrow the gap in participatory parity between dominant and subordinate groups' (p. 66). Habermas' ideal of a single, unifying public sphere, Fraser argues, deprives subordinate social groups of venues for intra-group deliberation about their respective needs and interests, that is, not supervised and controlled by dominant social groups. Fraser favors a public sphere composed of multiple discursive domains, since, in socially stratified societies, 'arrangements that accommodate contestation among a plurality of publics better promote the ideal of participatory parity than does a single, comprehensive, overarching public' (p. 66).¹¹

Following Spivak (1988) and Felski (1989), Fraser (1990) calls for participation by 'subaltern counterpublics'. This requires discursive arenas where members of subordinate social groups can invent and circulate 'counterdiscourses' through which to formulate 'oppositional interpretations' of their identities, interests, and needs (p. 67). Ideally, Fraser notes, subaltern counterpublics function as spaces of withdrawal and regroupment. At the same time, they should function as bases and training grounds for agitational activities directed toward wider publics (p. 68). This dual function highlights the 'publicist', as opposed to 'isolationist', orientation of counterpublics. Fraser celebrates the emancipatory potential of the dialectic between these two functions; she sees this dialectic as enabling subaltern counterpublics to offset, although not able to eradicate, the unjust participatory privileges enjoyed by members of dominant social groups (p. 68).

Fraser's (1990) notion of a public sphere composed of multiple discursive domains should thus not be understood as an 'essentialist' model of publicness, which promotes 'isolationism' among participants. As Fraser emphasizes, 'the concept of a public presupposes a plurality of perspectives among those who participate within it, thereby allowing for internal differences and antagonisms, and likewise discouraging reified blocks' (p. 70). Similarly, Fraser emphasizes that 'the unbounded character and publicist orientation of publics allows for the fact that people participate in more than one public, and that the memberships of different publics may partially overlap' (p. 70). In sum, subaltern counterpublics represent publics whose interests have been excluded by dominant publics, and who therefore need and deserve opportunities to articulate alternative discursive norms and practices so as to expand the

discursive scope of the public sphere. Meanwhile, the reason for retaining Habermasian language is to mark the underlying idea that these publics do operate in the public sphere, that is, free from governmental, corporate and even familial control and in ways that allow for direct unfettered critique of other spheres – the governmental, corporate, and domestic spheres.

Again, Fraser's (1990) criticism challenges public journalism scholars and practitioners to conceive of communities as comprising multiple social groups with different, and potentially conflicting, interests. If subordinate social groups are to enjoy opportunities to articulate their particular interests to the extent that dominant social groups already do, public journalism initiatives should nurture a public sphere composed of multiple discursive domains in which subordinate social groups can formulate oppositional interpretations of their identities, interests, and needs (p. 67). Merely providing, especially on a short-term basis, 'separate-but-equal opportunity' may be inadequate, given that offering specific discursive domains to dominant social groups (whether this is done in the name of equality or neutrality) may ultimately consolidate the privilege of the dominant groups. After all, dominant social groups are already blessed with an array of institutional supports.¹² Applied to public journalism, then, this 'particularistic' model of publicness intensifies the news media's responsibility and dramatically undermines the claim that journalists must limit themselves to endorsing abstract, transcendent interests.

The question of journalistic 'neutrality' has been widely debated among public journalism scholars. Rosen (1999b) and Austin (1997) see journalists as responsible members of the community with a full stake in public life and thus 'concerned' with whether genuine citizen deliberation occurs when needed, and whether communities come to grips with their problems. On the other hand, Rosen sees journalists (including of the 'public' stripe) as different from other actors, including politicians, interest groups, and citizens. Therefore, he admonishes journalists to remain neutral vis-a-vis specific proposals, particular candidates, and agendas of interest groups (p. 76). Rosen demands this pledge to prevent journalists from dominating civic activity and to separate 'doing journalism' from 'doing politics' (p. 76). Coleman (2000: 59) likewise opposes journalists intervening in public life by partnering with politicians, government agencies, or interest groups. Coleman fears that if journalists join forces with such actors, 'even well-meaning ones', they will approach those issues, not as ordinary citizens do, but in the contrived or special direction urged by politicians and interest groups.¹³

Such warnings, however, turn what could be a potentially ambitious project into one with little substance and direction. Most problematically, this disinterest in how communities should work together and for what ends (e.g. the failure to theorize publicness), albeit in the name of political neutrality,

could leave journalism supporting the interests of dominant social groups over those of subordinate social groups. In looking toward transcendent community interests, as Coleman (2000) recommends, journalists may merely bolster the interests that manage to make themselves appear as if they represent the entire community. Adopting a stance of political neutrality, then, supports the status quo as much as does the conventional obsession with factual accuracy. Glasser blames public journalism's preoccupation with procedure for making it difficult for journalists to ally themselves with community groups associated with political or partisan interests: 'Unwittingly or not, public journalism's fear of advocacy isolates [journalists] from the very centers of power that are likely to make a difference locally, regionally, nationally, and even globally' (Glasser, 1999: 10).

Following Fraser (1990), the *Akron Beacon Journal's* 'A Question of Color' campaign could have promoted a 'particularistic' model of publicness, beginning with a commitment to offering specific discursive domains for white and black residents to deliberate among themselves before doing so jointly. This would have offered blacks opportunities to articulate their particular concerns prior to interacting with whites. More specifically, the *Beacon Journal* could have helped organize community forums modeled after, but larger than, its small-scale focus group discussions. The *Beacon Journal* could even have provided white and black residents with designated sections – distinctive discursive domains – in which to present their particular positions in their own words.¹⁴

The question of the public interest

Fraser raises an important question regarding what counts as 'public' or 'private'. Fraser's critique implies that journalists should not only attend more to issues of concern to subordinate social groups, but also help those groups challenge entrenched conceptions of what does or does not differentiate issues of public interest from private matters. Fraser disagrees with Habermas that citizen deliberation should be restricted to the pursuit of a higher order common good, thereby excluding private concerns. In the absence of a priori natural boundaries, Fraser (1990: 71) contends that what counts as a public issue should be decided through discursive contestation, so 'no topics should be ruled off limits in advance of such contestation'. Fraser concludes that democratic publicity requires opportunities for subordinate groups to convince dominant groups that what in the past had not been considered public (e.g. not seen as a matter of common concern) should now become so.

Fraser criticizes Habermas' notion of 'privacy' as functioning ideologically to delimit the boundaries of the public sphere in ways that disadvantage subordinate social groups. Fraser criticizes the notion of 'economic privacy' for excluding some issues from citizen deliberation by economizing them: 'the issues in question are here cast as impersonal market imperatives or as private ownership prerogatives or as technical problems for managers and planners, all in contradistinction to public, political matters' (p. 73). Fraser criticizes a parallel notion of 'domestic privacy' for shielding some issues from citizen deliberation by personalizing and/or familiarizing them: 'it casts these as private-domestic or personal-familial matters in contradistinction to public, political matters' (p. 73). Both ways of rendering certain issues off-limits to citizen deliberation advantage dominant social groups and disadvantage subordinate social groups.

The implication of this part of Fraser's critique is that journalists should help subordinate social groups challenge otherwise entrenched distinctions between public interests and private concerns. That is, in encouraging citizens to consider how their perspectives differ, journalists should also work to avoid 'essentializing' some social locations (e.g. enclaving certain problems as 'private' and therefore unaddressable in the public sphere). Instead of taking for granted internal divisions in terms of a few predetermined 'subject positions', journalists should offer citizens opportunities to decide themselves which 'subject positions' are salient.¹⁵ Such opportunities are at the heart of public journalism.

Returning to the 'Question of Color' campaign, while the *Akron Beacon Journal* examined in depth how white and black residents differ in their views on and experiences with racism and racial inequality in the workplace (e.g. 'economic privacy') and the home (e.g. 'domestic privacy'), the *Beacon Journal* failed to examine how such views/experiences could be influenced by other social signifiers, notably class and gender. These interacting subject positions were dismissed as uninteresting or irrelevant. This failure to articulate the inter-relations between race, class, and gender is odd, given that the *Beacon Journal's* own investigations revealed that lower-income, black women are most particularly vulnerable to discrimination. The campaign never broached the issue of class. Gender appeared only once, in an article describing a focus group discussion among black residents about why blacks end up in the criminal justice system more often than whites. According to the reporter:

As the group debated whether the disproportionate number of black arrests resulted from targeting blacks, Patty Conners [one of the participants] caught herself apologizing for her opinions. 'What the hell am I doing', she asked herself. Conners believes that addressing this problem and others involving race and crime requires people to remove their masks. 'Do blacks and whites get

treated equally in the justice system', she asked. 'No, I don't think so'. *But then, she suggested, neither do women. 'This country is ruled by . . . the white middle-class man', she said. 'If you don't fit that, you're used, abused and thrown out. Women get it too.'* (Love, 1993: A5, emphasis added)

Fraser's (1990) work implies an alternative: The *Akron Beacon Journal* could have encouraged local residents to consider how social signifiers besides race may influence their views on and experiences with racism and racial inequality.¹⁶ Moreover, the *Beacon Journal* could have ranged beyond what are conventionally regarded as public, political issues, accepting how the personal is (also) political. Some parties may have preferred leaving certain 'private' issues invisible, including especially relationships and in back stage areas. Nonetheless, the *Beacon Journal* could have redefined as relevant for citizen deliberation an array of relations – domestic, romantic, intra-office, neighborly. The primary goal of public journalism, to rephrase Glasser and Craft (1998), is not to ensure that all citizens get to speak, but rather to ensure that everything worthy of being said gets said. This may include some issues that otherwise are considered taboo. Moreover, departing from Habermas' enlightenment project, incorporating the intersection of race and gender – and sex – would have allowed for disruptions (in the positive sense) of emotion and passion.

The *Akron Beacon Journal* could also have experimented with alternative modes of framing, perhaps even producing multiple versions of the same article, each written from a specific perspective (defined by race, class, and gender but also along very different dimensions) and using different writing tools and styles. Including in the focus group discussions civil rights activists, politicians, academic experts, members of interest groups, staffs of non-governmental organizations, and so forth could help dissolve dichotomies that so plague conventional journalistic thinking and practice. Public journalism's critics have dismissed efforts to involve citizens in setting the news agenda as crass pandering. Yet, this could be seen as respecting readers as partners in problem-solving. Carey (1999) points out that treating readers merely as receptacles for information debases journalism. That is, instead of erecting an artificial boundary between ordinary citizens and political actors, the *Beacon Journal* could have let local residents actively debate other actors. Instead of being positioned as sources of 'complaint', able only to articulate problems, local residents could have been allowed to question experts directly and to propose and negotiate solutions. Instead of defining the public exclusively in terms of 'ordinary citizens', a 'macro' public may well embrace politicians and other interests – and even journalists themselves. Evidence already exists that blurring the expert/lay divide may highlight the public/private debate and broaden the notion of the public. According to Patterson (1993), 'ordinary callers' to call-in radio shows posed more 'problem-oriented'

questions to then-presidential candidate Bill Clinton than did conventional journalists, who cleaved to their obsession with strategy.

The reach of citizen involvement

Finally, if journalists are to help engage citizens more actively and meaningfully in democratic processes, how extensively should citizens be involved and why? Fraser challenges Habermas' argument that citizens should participate in public opinion formation, but not political decision-making. Rejecting a priori distinctions between 'weak' and 'strong' publics, Fraser proposes discovering instead which institutional arrangements best ensure the accountability of democratic decision-making bodies to their weak publics (p. 76). Some situations call for direct democratic arrangements, while representative forms may sometimes be more appropriate.¹⁷

However symbolically satisfying participation in citizen deliberation can be, this may not itself lead to systemic transformation. Therefore, a few public journalism scholars (but even fewer journalists) advocate initiatives that help citizens not only deliberate but also design and enact concrete solutions to their most pressing problems. The question, however, is when to push this ideal of 'strong' citizen involvement. Certainly, public journalism does not serve democracy by sugarcoating problems of political agency or exaggerating citizens' opportunities to act efficaciously. Indeed, several critics have warned that public journalism's emphasis on voluntary community intervention is likely to serve entrenched elite interests. Parisi (1997: 682), for example, argues that public journalism's emphasis on voluntary community intervention 'could be interpreted as evidence of an underlying alliance with dominant interests, and [public journalism] could thus be termed hegemonic – a means of accommodating the contradictions of current newsgathering without bringing about genuine change'. He adds, 'Public journalism's emphasis on personal power and responsibility and solving it ourselves merges comfortably into a political moment when the very idea of the public good as addressed by large-scale social programs faces systematic political challenge' (p. 682). Similarly, Glasser (1999: 10) worries that 'convening the community might bring about only the illusion of reform' or, worse, that public journalism may become 'a technique of co-optation or legitimation that creates a false sense of participatory involvement without challenging entrenched elite interests'.

Other critics (see Schudson, 1999) fear that public journalism's emphasis on voluntary community intervention will increase public cynicism toward government and politics, the very cynicism public journalism hoped to reduce, if not eliminate. Iggers (1998: 150) says: 'To encourage the public to

participate in public discussion in a context where there is little prospect that the conversation will have an impact runs the risk of deepening public cynicism and disaffection'. How can journalists conceive of citizen participation in democratic processes without serving entrenched elite interests and/or increasing public cynicism toward government and politics? Fraser (1990) implies a context-sensitive answer. That is, for problems (or aspects of problems) that can be resolved through voluntary community intervention, journalists should offer citizens opportunities to design and enact concrete solutions, by offering spaces for citizen deliberation and publicizing their applications for resources. Conversely, when more far-reaching, systemic interventions are required, journalists should encourage citizens to lobby relevant political actors and institutions, to 'speak directly' (e.g. to get publicity) to political actors. Perhaps consistent with journalism's history as local, it is local newspapers that most often embrace public journalism. Yet, as even Dewey recognized, major political problems 'are a curious mix of the local, the national, and the global' (Peters, 1999: 103). Some persistent community problems may require solutions at the national or even international level.

Cast this way, the focus shifts from how citizens can address given problems to what needs be done to resolve those problems. Here, far-reaching and controversial implications of Fraser's (1990) criticism for public journalism theory and practice become evident, implying as it does that the question of the proper reach of citizen involvement is intrinsically linked to the question of the proper reach of journalistic involvement. For if journalism is indeed an important social institution, it retains the responsibility to advocate measures appropriate to particular problems under investigation. The 'publicness' of public journalism, then, extends beyond offering citizens opportunities to participate in 'public deliberation' to journalism acting in the 'public interest'.

So far, the question of the proper reach of journalistic involvement has been cast as a question of whether journalists should be involved only with the 'processes', or also with the 'outcomes', of citizen deliberation, whether journalists should see themselves only as facilitators of democratic 'means' or also of democratic 'ends' (for this terminology, see Glasser 1999; Glasser and Craft, 1998). Charity (1995), Merritt (1998), and Rosen (1996) argue that journalists' exclusive concern should be whether outcomes resulted from fair deliberative processes. In contrast, Glasser (1999) and Schudson (1999) want journalists to be concerned with both processes and outcomes.¹⁸ This processes/outcomes distinction, however, defines the problem of journalistic involvement too narrowly. One implication of Fraser's criticism is that playing 'referee', as Merritt advocates, is inadequate for journalists. That role leaves the rules of deliberation off-limits for discussion and situates journalists externally

to democratic processes. Determining precisely when journalists have gone too far in advocating specific solutions is difficult, and certainly journalists should not render citizen deliberation moot. Journalists need to offer citizens opportunities to debate measures advocated by various institutions (including journalists themselves), to pose alternatives, and to reflect on whether solutions at the national or even international level may not be more appropriate than community-based interventions.

Again, the journalistic implications of Fraser's (1990) critique are illustrated at the *Akron Beacon Journal*. One of the most problematic aspects of the newspaper's campaign may be the incongruity between the *Beacon Journal's* investigations of racism and racial inequality and its efforts to involve local residents in problem-solving. Consider, as illustration, its coverage of why white students generally outperform black students in Akron's public schools. Several experts had attributed educational inequalities, at least in part, to racial segregation. According to the *Beacon Journal's* experts and statistics, increasing segregation of neighborhoods was eroding the property tax base needed to finance public schools. Yet, instead of advocating systemic measures aimed at ameliorating such problems, the *Beacon Journal's* follow-up campaign, the 'Coming Together Project', merely brought local white and black students together to discuss racism. The problem was not lack of mutual understanding and respect between white and black students, however, but lack of equal educational opportunities. Instead of engaging in such 'feel-good' efforts that, at best, would only partially address the symptoms of educational inequality,¹⁹ the *Beacon Journal* could usefully have facilitated debate between local residents and policy-makers. If the system for financing local public schools was responsible for educational inequalities, then the *Beacon Journal* should have investigated what could be done to correct the property tax problem. Would offering blacks financial incentives to move to traditionally white neighborhoods work? Could proportionally more tax money be distributed to predominantly black neighborhoods?

The *Akron Beacon Journal* could have facilitated debate among local white and black residents about the real problems at stake and measures needed to resolve those problems. Then, if it found local residents unwilling or unable to debate such measures, the *Beacon Journal* could have explored the pros and cons of various alternatives, and vigorously pushed for measures it regarded as most viable, including aggressively pushing political actors and institutions. Moreover, the *Beacon Journal* could have endorsed political actors or candidates who in its view advocated the most viable courses of action. Finally, the *Beacon Journal* could have challenged the measures of success themselves. Are SAT scores or grade-point averages the best way to assess and compare student performance?

These suggestions do not imply that the *Akron Beacon Journal* should have covered racialized educational inequalities at the expense of other important problems, or that the *Beacon Journal* should have endorsed/rejected political actors and candidates solely on the basis of their stands on such problems. Rather, they imply that the *Beacon Journal* should have stimulated serious, sustained, community-wide deliberations about various race-related problems instead of merely engaging local residents in efforts to describe surface-level manifestations of those problems.

Conclusion

Since 1988, when the *Columbus (Georgia) Ledger-Inquirer* launched the first public journalism initiative (Rosen, 1991), more than 300 public journalism campaigns have been conducted across the United States (Austin, 1997). The number is growing.²⁰ Yet, despite the increasing influence of public journalism on news media, advocates of public journalism have failed to articulate clearly how public journalism is public. As a result, while public journalism advocates offer many good ideas on how to improve journalism, the lack of a coherent public philosophy renders them unable to defend those ideas.

One possible reason for public journalism advocates' reluctance to work out a coherent public philosophy may be their preference for applied modes of analysis that generate easily applied techniques. Public journalism has primarily been defined in terms of how it manifests in practice, or, more rarely, in the belief systems of its practitioners (see Bare, 1998). This descriptive approach may have been necessary during the movement's early years, when advocates were criticized for even tentatively distinguishing public from conventional journalism. More to the point, precisely because public journalism emerged as a reaction to perceived flaws in conventional journalistic practices, its advocates hesitated to propose more radical ideals.

Letting theory follow practice, rather than the reverse, also makes criticizing and improving the practice of public journalism difficult. To assess the democratic viability of public journalism practice, and to stipulate what could be done differently and better, requires normative standards – something to measure actual performance against. If public journalism is to emerge as a fully developed journalistic theory and practice, public journalism advocates must therefore take their point of departure in understandings of publicness, public life, politics, and citizenship. Public journalism practice needs a coherent, guiding public philosophy.

Fraser's (1990) four-part critique of Habermas' (1989) theory of the public sphere offers a democratically viable public philosophy for journalists working

in communities marked by widespread social inequality. It implies that journalists should help citizens articulate and reflect on social inequalities by making the particular social locations from which they view given issues the very focus of citizen deliberation. Moreover, useful citizen deliberation is promoted when journalists nurture a public sphere composed of multiple discursive domains. Subordinate social groups need to be able to deliberate about their particular interests to a degree equivalent to what dominant social groups already enjoy and to be able to challenge the public/private dichotomy. Finally, Fraser's model of publicness implies that the reach of citizen involvement in democratic processes should depend on the specific problems in question and the measures needed to resolve those problems. Given an expanded (as earlier) definition of the public interest, and an acknowledgement that journalism inevitably involves more than neutral information transfer, we call on journalists to put a premium on ensuring that the interests of subordinate social groups are articulated – and heard. Occasionally, this may require journalists to foreground specific proposals, candidates, or agendas. Rather than remaining, as Rosen (1996: 62) argues, 'detached from all causes no matter how civic-minded or well-intentioned', journalists should occasionally support marginalized causes and social groups. By facilitating the development of a public sphere composed of multiple discursive domains, with potential participatory parity for dominant and subordinate social groups, public journalism will indeed invigorate public life.

To avoid fracturing communities into 'discursive ghettos', we acknowledge the need to highlight points of overlap between various publics. Gitlin (1998: 173) may be right that a proliferation of multiple publics mitigates against the creation of *a* public, 'an active democratic encounter of citizens who reach across their social and ideological differences to establish a common agenda of concern and to debate rival approaches'. On the other hand, 'particularistic media are not always instruments of secession' (Dayan, 1998: 110). Dayan notes that, even given isolated ambitions, 'micro public spheres [cannot] remain sealed to the public sphere at large' (p. 110).

Public journalism is an ideal, but then the ideal of public life that presumably is the end goal is itself a counterfactual ideal. Indeed, this entire discussion presumes that, whatever the faults of public journalism, its advocates are, at a minimum, sincere and well-intentioned, and not motivated by profit and merely pushing happy talk or 'good news'.²¹ If Fraser (1990) teaches us anything, it is that social problems are stubborn. Racism, exploitation of workers, and sexism, among other tragedies, are quite intractable. One need not be a cynic to call for vigilance and persistence. Sugarcoating, community boosterism, and national chauvinism can promote cynicism and disengagement as much as negativity and suspiciousness. Neither produces

better government, or even increased voting. But this more turbulent version of a 'public' approach to journalism may be a way of cultivating a more encompassing public sphere in which rival interests can be debated. By incorporating a 'journalism of publics', this notion of a 'public journalism proper' may make for a strong, vibrant democracy.

Notes

- 1 Public journalism scholars rely heavily on political philosophers, notably John Dewey, Hannah Arendt, and Juergen Habermas, whom Lambeth (1998: 21) correctly calls public journalism's 'philosophical patron saint'. Another attempt to generate public journalism practice from theory is Lambeth's own use of Charles Anderson's (1990) pragmatic liberalism. The relevance of Fraser's (1990) critique of Habermas' (1989) theory of the public sphere for public journalism has been noted by Compton (2000), Glasser (1999), and Glasser and Craft (1996, 1997, 1998).
- 2 Ironically, although the public journalism movement is primarily an American idea and may seem merely sentimental, if not implausible, outside the United States, an anonymous reviewer correctly notes that some of the practices we suggest are already routine in Western Europe.
- 3 McGerr (1986) is one of those scholars who instead traces Americans' disinterest in political processes to late 19th century reforms to rationalize and professionalize politics. Newspaper editors may have supported this attempt to sanitize politics and may have undertaken parallel efforts to redefine journalism as producing impartial, scientific information (for rational, educated readers), but, in this view, are not directly to blame for citizens' political apathy.
- 4 For different scholarly takes on the relative importance of stimulating 'reflection' and 'conversation' among citizens, see Chaffee and McDevitt (1999), Glasser and Craft (1998), Haas (1999, 2000), Peters (1999), and Schroll (1999).
- 5 The *Akron Beacon Journal*, with a daily circulation of 140,000, won the 1994 Pulitzer Prize for public-service journalism for its 1993 'A Question of Color' campaign. Several scholars have discussed the campaign (see Charity, 1995; Haas, 1999, 2000; Merritt, 1998; Rosen, 1999b; Waddell, 1997). The five 'Question of Color' installments appeared 28 February – 2 March, 2 May – 4 May, 22 August – 24 August, 31 October – 2 November, 26 December – 29 December.
- 6 Studying two town meetings, Mendelberg and Oleske (2000) saw little evidence for the ideals of deliberation. They found that deliberation at a white/segregated meeting maintained consensus among whites, who merely encoded their agenda in properly civic-sounding rhetoric. The integrated meeting's audience interpreted as racist the rhetoric that appeared universal to whites.
- 7 Schudson (1999: 127) mocks public journalism's equation of 'community' with geographical territory, specifically the 'neighborhood', arguing that in the public journalism literature, 'community seems only to conjure up local, territory-based, grass-roots organization'.
- 8 As Glasser and Craft (1998) and Herbst (1994) note, conventional opinion polling confuses the 'opinions of individuals' (including expressions of mere

- preference and prejudice) with the 'opinions of publics', which would be Fraser's (1990) goal. Polling individuals, even many individuals, distorts opinion and suppresses critical thinking.
- 9 In 1999, Bob Dyer, now a columnist, argued in print with a fellow black columnist over the word 'niggardly', creating a furor that again polarized the *Beacon Journal* (Canedy, 2000).
 - 10 Glasser and Craft (1998: 209) likewise criticize public journalism scholars for not making clear whether journalists are being urged to support a republican common dialogue or a diversity of groups, each with its own concerns and dialogue.
 - 11 Calhoun (1995), Garnham (1992), Hallin (1994), and Sparks (2000) urge journalists to help create a single, unifying public sphere. Keane (1995), Robbins (1993), Schlesinger (1999), and Verstraeten (1996) prefer a public sphere composed of multiple discursive domains. Curran (2000) and Dahlgren (1995) try to integrate these two models of publicness within a restructured news media system.
 - 12 Sexual minorities, who continue to be openly victimized and unfairly stereotyped, do not even benefit from educational, religious, and governmental supports provided to some racial and ethnic minorities.
 - 13 Public journalism's emphasis on 'average citizens' has been challenged. Levine (1998: 25), for example, worries that emphasizing 'folks in the middle may cause [public journalism] to exclude or denigrate people at the political or cultural margins. These people may be too outnumbered and disrespected, or their views may be too radical to be discussed calmly in a citizen's panel'. Levine warns that 'if public journalism becomes the dominant philosophy, people who actually were implacable enemies might find their views ignored, in favor of citizens who happen to be politically moderate enough that they can deliberate together' (p. 25).
 - 14 This idea will horrify conventional journalists, although editors have long understood that a good way of attracting, for example, women or teenage readers is to hire female or teenaged columnists. But, in covering a 1996 vote on a proposed increase in property taxes for local public schools, the *Colorado Springs Gazette* published several versions of the same story, each written from the perspective of a certain key public (parents of public school children, teachers, students, and recent graduates, and local residents without children in public schools). Eschewing the conventional story balancing pro and con, the editor merely prefaced each version with a note explaining from whose perspective the story was written (see Rosen, 1999b: 118–27).
 - 15 For a discussion of the journalistic relevance of standpoint epistemology, see Durham (1998).
 - 16 Ironically, although the *Beacon Journal* said it deliberately selected the focus group participants to represent a 'diverse' cross-sample of local residents, the vast majority of those quoted (judging from their job descriptions and first names) were middle-class men.
 - 17 Fraser's (1990) strong/weak distinction parallels Barber's (1984) distinction between 'strong' and 'weak' forms of democracy. According to Barber (1984: 151), strong democracy involves self-government, rather than representative government, in the name of citizens. Citizens of strong democracies govern 'not necessarily at every level and in every instance, but frequently enough and

- in particular when basic policies are being decided and when significant power is being deployed'. As a result, Barber concludes, 'self-government is carried on through institutions designed to facilitate on-going civic participation in agenda-setting, deliberation, legislation, and policy implementation' (p. 151).
- 18 Charity (1995: 144–6) says, 'Public journalism has a golden rule – an ethical line – every bit as sharp as mainstream journalism's rule and just as easy to elaborate into a codebook of professional conduct: Journalists should advocate democracy without advocating particular solutions'. Merritt (1998: 97) emphasizes that journalists 'must exhibit no partisan interest in the specific outcome [of citizen deliberation] other than it is arrived at under the democratic process'. Rosen's (1996: 13–15) sense of 'proactive neutrality' is that journalists may occasionally intervene in the service of broad public values, but without prescribing a particular solution or party or taking over the process. Glasser (1999) criticizes this procedural view for ignoring the predicament journalists confront when communities act intolerantly, such as when the community consensus calls for a book burning. Journalists who adopt a purely procedural stance, Glasser concludes, may be forced into the paradoxical situation of having 'to separate their editorial agenda from their news agenda by condemning on one page the very activity or outcome they facilitated and now describe on another page' (p. 9). Schudson (1999: 131) agrees that proceduralists cannot specify how journalists should act in the face of colliding or illiberal community values: 'Is segregation okay when it has been traditional for generations? Or are anti-sodomy laws acceptable when they express dominant community values?'
- 19 Surprisingly, while most scholarly observers have ignored this aspect of the 'Coming Together Project', no less than President Clinton raised similar concerns during his town-hall meeting (his first) in Akron. Clinton (1997: 1959) asked how the *Beacon Journal* project was changing people's lives: 'How does it result in less discrimination in the workplace or in the school, or people helping reach other to succeed in school or at work? Can you give me any examples about what it's done other than make people feel good for an hour or so on Sunday or some other church event?'
- 20 Public journalism recently moved beyond project-based initiatives by small and medium-sized newspapers. More than 60 percent of daily newspapers of all sizes are currently incorporating some public journalism practices (Arant and Meyer, 1998). Some of public journalism's historically most vocal critics, such as *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post*, are also experimenting with public journalism, notably in their election coverage (Cunningham, 1999; see also Schaeffer, 2000).
- 21 This assumption differs from, but is not in opposition to, Glasser and Craft's (1998) criticism that public journalism scholars lack sensitivity to fundamental problems of profit and corporate colonization of journalism.

Acknowledgement

This work was supported by a grant from the City University of New York PSC-CUNY Research Award Program to the first author.

References

- Anderson, Charles (1990) *Pragmatic Liberalism*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Anderson, Rob, Robert Dardenne and George Killenberg (1994) *The Conversation of Journalism: Communication, Community, and News*. Westport, CT: Praeger.
- Arant, David and Philip Meyer (1998) 'Public Journalism and Traditional Journalism: A Shift in Values?', *Journal of Mass Media Ethics* 13: 205–18.
- Austin, Lisa (1997) 'Public Journalism in the Newsroom: Putting Ideas into Practice', in Jay Rosen, Davis Merritt and Lisa Austin (eds) *Public Journalism: Lessons from Experience*, pp. 36–47. Dayton, OH: Kettering Foundation.
- Barber, Benjamin (1984) *Strong Democracy: Participatory Politics for a New Age*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Bare, John (1998) 'A New Strategy', in Edmund Lambeth, Philip Meyer and Esther Thorson (eds) *Assessing Public Journalism*, pp. 83–108. Columbia: University of Missouri Press.
- Calhoun, Craig (1995) *Critical Social Theory: Culture, History, and the Challenge of Difference*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Canedy, Dana (2000) 'Between the Lines, A Measure of Hurt', *The New York Times* (29 June): A1, A22–23.
- Carey, James (1999) 'In Defense of Public Journalism', in Theodore Glasser (ed.) *The Idea of Public Journalism*, pp. 49–66. New York: Guilford Press.
- Chaffee, Steven and Michael McDevitt (1999) 'On Evaluating Public Journalism', in Theodore Glasser (ed.) *The Idea of Public Journalism*, pp. 175–96. New York: Guilford Press.
- Charity, Arthur (1995) *Doing Public Journalism*. New York: Guilford Press.
- Charity, Arthur (1996) 'Public Journalism for People', *National Civic Review* 85: 7–13.
- Clinton, William J. (1997) 'Remarks in a Roundtable Discussion on Race in Akron', *Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents* 33: 1959.
- Coleman, Renita (2000) 'The Ethical Context for Public Journalism: As an Ethical Foundation for Public Journalism, Communitarian Philosophy Provides Principles for Practitioners to Apply to Real World Problems', *Journal of Communication Inquiry* 24: 41–66.
- Compton, James (2000) 'Communicative Politics and Public Journalism', *Journalism Studies* 1: 449–467.
- Cunningham, Brent (1999) 'For a New Century, New Approaches', *Columbia Journalism Review* (Nov./Dec.): 27–8, 32.
- Curran, James (2000) 'Rethinking Media and Democracy', in James Curran and Michael Gurevitch (eds) *Mass Media and Society*, pp. 120–54. London: Edward Arnold.
- Dahlgren, Peter (1995) *Television and the Public Sphere: Citizenship, Democracy and the Media*. London: Sage.
- Dayan, Daniel (1998) 'Particularistic Media and Diasporic Communications', in Tamar Liebes and James Curran (eds) *Media, Ritual and Identity*, pp. 103–13. London: Routledge.
- Dotson, John and Dale Allen (1993) 'You're Invited to Help Promote Racial Harmony', *Akron Beacon Journal* (2 May): A1, A11.

- Durham, Meenakshi G. (1998) 'On the Relevance of Standpoint Epistemology to the Practice of Journalism: The Case for Strong Objectivity', *Communication Theory* 8: 117–40.
- Dyer, Bob (1993) 'The Struggle for Balance', *Akron Beacon Journal* (29 December): A1, A6–A7.
- Fallows, James (1996) *Breaking the News: How the Media Undermine American Democracy*. New York: Pantheon Books.
- Felski, Rita (1989) *Beyond Feminist Aesthetics*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Fishkin, James (1991) *Democracy and Deliberation: New Directions for Political Reform*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Fishkin, James (1995) *The Voice of the People: Public Opinion and Democracy*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Fouhy, Ed (1994) 'The Dawn of Public Journalism', *National Civic Review* 83: 259–66.
- Fraser, Nancy (1990) 'Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy', *Social Text* 25/26: 56–80.
- Garnham, Nicholas (1992) 'The Media and the Public Sphere', in Craig Calhoun (ed.) *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, pp. 359–76. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Gitlin, Todd (1998) 'Public Sphere or Public Sphericules?', in Tamar Liebes and James Curran (eds) *Media, Ritual and Identity*, pp. 168–74. London: Routledge.
- Glasser, Theodore (1999) 'The Idea of Public Journalism', in Theodore Glasser (ed.) *The Idea of Public Journalism*, pp. 3–18. New York: Guilford Press.
- Glasser, Theodore and Stephanie Craft (1996) 'Public Journalism and the Prospects for Press Accountability', *Journal of Mass Media Ethics* 11: 152–8.
- Glasser, Theodore and Stephanie Craft (1997) 'Public Journalism and the Prospects for Press Accountability', in Jay Black (ed.) *The Public/Civic/Communitarian Journalism Debate*, pp. 120–34. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Glasser, Theodore and Stephanie Craft (1998) 'Public Journalism and the Search for Democratic Ideals', in Tamar Liebes and James Curran (eds) *Media, Ritual and Identity*, pp. 203–18. London: Routledge.
- Haas, Tanni (1999) 'What's "Public" about Public Journalism? Public Journalism and the Lack of a Coherent Public Philosophy', *Communication Theory* 9: 346–64.
- Haas, Tanni (2000) 'Public Journalism Challenges to Curriculum and Instruction', *Journalism & Mass Communication Educator* 55: 27–41.
- Habermas, Juergen (1989) *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, trans. Thomas Burger. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Hackett, Robert and Yuezhi Zhao (1998) *Sustaining Democracy? Journalism and the Politics of Objectivity*. Toronto: Garamond Press.
- Hallin, Daniel (1994) *We Keep America on Top of the World: Television Journalism and the Public Sphere*. New York: Routledge.
- Haraway, Donna (1988) 'Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective', *Feminist Studies* 14: 575–99.
- Harding, Sandra (1991) *Whose Science? Whose Knowledge? Thinking from Women's Lives*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Herbst, Susan (1994) *Politics at the Margin: Historical Studies of Public Expression Outside the Mainstream*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

- Iggers, Jeremy (1998) *Good News, Bad News: Journalism Ethics and the Public Interest*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- Keane, John (1995) 'Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere', *The Communication Review* 1: 1–22.
- Kirksey, Ron, Michael Holley and Bob Paynter (1993) 'Disparity Between the Races Growing in Almost all Facets', *Akron Beacon Journal* (1 March): A1, A4-A5.
- Lambeth, Edmund (1998) 'Public Journalism as a Democratic Practice', in Edmund Lambeth, Philip Meyer and Esther Thorson (eds) *Assessing Public Journalism*, pp. 15–35. Columbia: University of Missouri Press.
- Levine, Peter (1998) 'The Press in a Deliberative Democracy: On Public Journalism and its Critics', paper presented at 'Public Journalism: A Critical Forum', Second Annual Conference of the Center for Mass Communications Research, University of South Carolina, Columbia, SC October.
- Love, Steve (1993) 'Both Sides of the Story', *Akron Beacon Journal* (28 December): A1, A4–A5.
- McGerr, Michael E (1986) *The Decline of Popular Politics: The American North, 1865–1928*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Mendelberg, Tali and John Oleske (2000) 'Race and Public Deliberation', *Political Communication* 17: 169–91.
- Merritt, Davis (1998) *Public Journalism and Public Life: Why Telling the News is Not Enough*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Parisi, Peter (1997) 'Toward a Philosophy of Framing: News Narratives for Public Journalism', *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly* 74: 673–86.
- Patterson, Thomas (1993) *Out of Order*. New York: Vintage Books.
- Peters, John (1999) 'Public Journalism and Democratic Theory: Four Challenges', in Theodore Glasser (ed.) *The Idea of Public Journalism*, pp. 99–117. New York: Guilford Press.
- Putnam, Robert (1993) *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Robbins, Bruce (1993) *The Phantom Public Sphere*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Rosen, Jay (1991) 'Making Things More Public', *Communication* 12: 267–84.
- Rosen, Jay (1996) *Getting the Connections Right: Public Journalism and the Troubles in the Press*. New York: Twentieth Century Fund Press.
- Rosen, Jay (1997) 'Public Journalism as a Democratic Art', in Jay Rosen, Davis Merritt and Lisa Austin (eds) *Public Journalism: Lessons from Experience*, pp. 3–34. Dayton: Kettering Foundation.
- Rosen, Jay (1999a) 'The Action of the Idea: Public Journalism in Built Form', in Theodore Glasser (ed.) *The Idea of Public Journalism*, pp. 21–48. New York: Guilford Press.
- Rosen, Jay (1999b) *What Are Journalists For?* New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Schaeffer, Jan (2000) 'Linking Civic and Conventional Journalists', *Civic Catalyst* (Winter): 2.
- Schlesinger, Philip (1999) 'Changing Spaces of Political Communication: The Case of the European Union', *Political Communication* 16: 263–79.
- Schroll, Christopher (1999) 'Theorizing the Flip Side of Civic Journalism: Democratic Citizenship and Ethical Readership', *Communication Theory* 9: 321–45.

- Schudson, Michael (1999) 'What Public Journalism Knows about Journalism, but Doesn't Know about the Public', in Theodore Glasser (ed.) *The Idea of Public Journalism*, pp. 118–33. New York: Guilford Press.
- Sparks, Colin (2000) 'The Internet and the Global Public Sphere', in W. Lance Bennett and Robert Entman (eds) *Mediated Politics: Communication in the Future of Democracy*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Spivak, Gayatri (1988) 'Can the Subaltern Speak?', in Cary Nelson and Larry Grossberg (eds) *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, pp. 271–313. Chicago: University of Illinois Press.
- Thompson, John (1995) *The Media and Modernity: A Social Theory of the Media*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Verstraeten, Hans (1996) 'The Media and the Transformation of the Public Sphere', *European Journal of Communication* 11: 347–70.
- Waddell, Lynn (1997) 'Adding Color to Public Journalism', in Jay Black (ed.) *The Public/Civic/Communitarian Journalism Debate*, pp. 160–1. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Biographical notes

Tanni Haas is Assistant Professor in the Department of Speech Communication Arts & Sciences at Brooklyn College. His research on the theory and practice of public journalism has appeared in *Communication Theory*, *Journalism & Mass Communication Educator* and *Newspaper Research Journal*.

Address: Department of Speech Communication Arts & Sciences, Brooklyn College, 3439 Boylan Hall, Brooklyn, New York 11210–2889.

[email: thaas@brooklyn.cuny.edu]

Linda Steiner is Associate Professor and Chair of the Department of Journalism and Media Studies at Rutgers University (New Brunswick). She has published in *Critical Studies in Mass Communication*, *Journalism Monographs*, *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, *Journalism History*, and *American Journalism*.

Address: Department of Journalism and Media Studies, 4 Huntington Street, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, New Jersey 08901–1071

[email: lsteiner@scils.rutgers.edu]