

authors like Davis Merrit, Jay Rosen and James Fallows have called for a revision in journalistic practices in order to promote community through civic or public journalism has challenged the way responsible media report on and relate to the communities they serve.<sup>153</sup> As Dennis and Merrill put it, "The new communitarians are waging a rhetorical war against Enlightenment liberalism--against individualism and libertarianism."<sup>154</sup> More specifically, Christians argues that journalists should discard the liberal politics of rights, which "rests on unsupportable foundations," and that such rights should be "given up for a politics of the common good."<sup>155</sup> In response, critics of this approach argue that it "confuses journalism with community organization, a social work concept" and are concerned that if journalists become activists and take positions on community issues, they would lose "any claim to impartiality and would sacrifice credibility."<sup>156</sup>

The purpose in ending this paper with a review of the points of this particular debate is not to suggest that some dramatic changes are about to take place in the practice of journalism in the United States, but rather to call attention to the fact that some basic foundations of law and journalistic practice are being challenged in very significant ways by credible practitioners and scholars. This is all part of the important ongoing discussions on both sides of the border about how to appropriately balance the freedoms of the press and other media of communication against the larger interests of society, and about how to frame the practice of journalism in the best way possible to serve the democratic process. And it is my belief that these discussions can be improved by looking beyond our own borders to see how these issues are being considered against the backdrop of different traditions, practices, values and beliefs.

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<sup>153</sup> See *supra* note 5 for complete citations.

<sup>154</sup> Everett E. Dennis and John C. Merrill, "The New Communitarianism and Public Journalism," in *Media Debates: Issues in Mass Communications*, Second Edition (White Plains, N.Y.: Longman Publishers, 1996), at 156.

<sup>155</sup> Clifford Christians, John Ferre, and P. Mark Fackler, *Good News: Social Ethics and the Press* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), at 45.

<sup>156</sup> Dennis and Merrill, *supra* note 154, at 163.