

Eira Martens-Edwards

## Journalism Education in the Context of Development and Digital Transformation

A Cross-National Comparative Analysis of Academic  
Journalism Degree Programs in Cambodia and Vietnam



University  
of Bamberg  
Press

## **18** Bamberger Beiträge zur Kommunikationswissenschaft

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hg. von Markus Behmer, Olaf Hoffjann, Rudolf Stöber  
und Carsten Wunsch



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of Bamberg  
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Journalism schools play a critical role in ensuring that students are equipped to dance with the uncertainties around the future of the profession.

**Ferrier, M.B. (2012), p. 238**



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## Abbreviations

A4ID	Advocates for International Development
AEJMC	Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication
AJC	Academy of Journalism and Communication
ASEAN	Association of South-East Asian Nations
BBC	British Broadcasting Company
BBG	Broadcasting Board of Governors
BRIC	Brazil, Russia, India, China
C4D	Communication for Development
C4SC	Communication for Social Change
CamboJA	Cambodian Journalists Alliance Association
CCIM	Cambodian Center for Independent Media
CCI	Cambodian Communication Institute
CCJ	Club of Cambodian Journalists
CDU	Christlich Demokratische Union Deutschlands (Christian Democratic Party of Germany)
CFJ	Centre de Formation des Journalistes (Center for the Training of Journalists)
CIMA	Center for International Media Assistance
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CMP	Centre for Media Practice
CNN	Cable News Network
CNRP	Cambodian National Rescue Party
COVID	Coronavirus Disease
CP	Credit Points



<b>CPP</b>	<b>Cambodian People’s Party</b>
<b>CPV</b>	<b>Communist Party of Vietnam</b>
<b>DAAD</b>	<b>Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst (German Academic Exchange Service)</b>
<b>DAI</b>	<b>Digital Adoption Index</b>
<b>DIE</b>	<b>Deutsches Institut für Entwicklungspolitik</b>
<b>DW</b>	<b>Deutsche Welle</b>
<b>EC</b>	<b>European Commission</b>
<b>ECCC</b>	<b>Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia</b>
<b>ECDPM</b>	<b>European Centre for Development Policy Management</b>
<b>ECREA</b>	<b>European Communication Research and Education Association</b>
<b>ESJ</b>	<b>École Supérieure de Journalisme de Lille (Superior School of Journalism Lille)</b>
<b>EU</b>	<b>European Union</b>
<b>FUNCINPE</b>	<b>Front Uni National Pour Un Cambodge Indépendant (National United Front for an Independent, Neutral, Peaceful and Cooperative Cambodia)</b>
<b>GDP</b>	<b>Gross Domestic Product</b>
<b>GIZ</b>	<b>Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (German Agency for International Cooperation)</b>
<b>HDI</b>	<b>Human Development Index</b>
<b>IAMCR</b>	<b>International Association for Media and Communication Research</b>
<b>ICA</b>	<b>International Communication Association</b>
<b>ICT</b>	<b>Information and Communications Technology</b>
<b>ICT4D</b>	<b>Information and Communication for Development</b>
<b>IDI</b>	<b>ICT Development Index</b>

<b>IFJ</b>	<b>International Federation of Journalists</b>
<b>IHDI</b>	<b>Inequality-adjusted Human Development Index</b>
<b>IJAVN</b>	<b>Independent Journalists Association of Vietnam</b>
<b>IJES</b>	<b>International Journalism Education Standards</b>
<b>ISP</b>	<b>Internet Service Providers</b>
<b>ITU</b>	<b>International Telecommunication Union</b>
<b>IUT</b>	<b>Institut Universitaire de Technologie (University Institute of Technology)</b>
<b>KAS</b>	<b>Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (Konrad Adenauer Foundation)</b>
<b>LDC</b>	<b>Least Developed Countries</b>
<b>M4D</b>	<b>Media for Development</b>
<b>MDG</b>	<b>Millennium Development Goals</b>
<b>MDI</b>	<b>Media Development Indicators</b>
<b>MoET</b>	<b>Ministry of Education and Training (Vietnam)</b>
<b>MoEYS</b>	<b>Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (Cambodia)</b>
<b>NLF</b>	<b>Vietnamese National Liberation Front</b>
<b>ODI</b>	<b>Overseas Development Institute</b>
<b>OECD</b>	<b>Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development</b>
<b>RFI</b>	<b>Radio France Internationale</b>
<b>RQ</b>	<b>Research Question</b>
<b>RWB</b>	<b>Reporters Without Borders</b>
<b>SDG</b>	<b>Sustainable Development Goals</b>
<b>U.K.</b>	<b>United Kingdom</b>
<b>UN</b>	<b>United Nations</b>
<b>UNESCO</b>	<b>United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization</b>

<b>UNDP</b>	<b>United Nations Development Programme</b>
<b>U.S./U.S.A</b>	<b>United States of America</b>
<b>USSH</b>	<b>University of Social Sciences and Humanities</b>
<b>VJA</b>	<b>Vietnam Journalism Association</b>
<b>VNU</b>	<b>Vietnam National University</b>
<b>WHO</b>	<b>World Health Organization</b>
<b>WJEC</b>	<b>World Journalism Education Council</b>
<b>WWI</b>	<b>World War I</b>
<b>WWII</b>	<b>World War II</b>
<b>ZFD</b>	<b>Zentraler Friedensdienst (Civil Peace Service)</b>

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Topic and Relevance

In response to the global COVID-19<sup>1</sup> pandemic, the World Health Organization (WHO) adopted the term ‘infodemic’<sup>2</sup> to draw attention to the disastrous impact of misinformation and disinformation, which during an international health crisis, could lead to increased risk-taking behavior and thus the further spread of the virus. In so doing, they were drawing on a concept, which combines the words ‘information’ and ‘pandemic’ or ‘epidemic,’ coined in 2008 by David Rothkopf, a columnist at the *Washington Post*.<sup>3</sup> Undoubtedly, media professionals and organizations play a vital role in combating the global spread of the disease by providing unbiased information and verified content to the public. During his time in office, former U.S. President Donald Trump similarly reignited the issue of ‘fake news’ – another term that was not new, but suddenly gained new relevance as Trump attacked journalists and the institutions behind them with a level of boldness and brutality that was unprecedented in a democratic country such as the United States in the twenty-first century.<sup>4</sup>

The debate surrounding the role and responsibilities journalists hold in society, however, has a much longer history. From its very beginnings, journalism as a profession has been queried and scrutinized. The digital age only continues to introduce new fundamental challenges and demands radical changes to journalistic work. Global financial crises and ever-changing market conditions have led media organizations to lose

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<sup>1</sup> COVID-19 stands for the Coronavirus disease which began to spread around the world in late 2019: Cf. WHO – World Health Organization (n.d.-a). Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) Pandemic: <https://www.euro.who.int/en/health-topics/health-emergencies/coronavirus-covid-19/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov> [Last retrieved 8/1/2021].

<sup>2</sup> WHO (n.d.-b). Infodemic: [https://www.who.int/health-topics/infodemic-tab=tab\\_1](https://www.who.int/health-topics/infodemic-tab=tab_1) [Last retrieved 8/1/2021].

<sup>3</sup> Merriam Webster (n.d.). Words We’re Watching: ‘Infodemic’: <https://www.merriam-webster.com/words-at-play/words-were-watching-infodemic-meaning> [Last retrieved 8/1/2021].

<sup>4</sup> Mackintosh, E. (2020 October, 25). No Matter Who Wins the US Election, the World’s ‘Fake News’ Problem is Here to Stay. CNN: [https://edition.cnn.com/2020/10/25/world/trump-fake-news-legacy-intl/index.html?utm\\_content=2020-10-25T20%3A16%3A05&utm\\_source=twCNN&utm\\_medium=social&utm\\_term=link](https://edition.cnn.com/2020/10/25/world/trump-fake-news-legacy-intl/index.html?utm_content=2020-10-25T20%3A16%3A05&utm_source=twCNN&utm_medium=social&utm_term=link) [Last retrieved 8/1/2021].

advertising revenue and long-term audiences. As quality journalism is forced to identify new business models and survival strategies, issues such as media management and entrepreneurial journalism are increasingly shaping the discussion, closely linked to the training and education of the next generation of journalists, around the journalistic profession and its future.

Researchers argue that there is an absence of systematic forms of education and training, and a concomitant lack of theoretical foundations, specialized journalistic knowledge, and practical skills. International scholars and practitioners alike have called for the implementation of international standards of journalism education to secure the survival of quality journalism around the globe. The World Journalism Education Council's (WJEC) *Declaration of Principles* underscores the consensus around the vital role of independent media in supporting human development. It stems from the basic assumption that a 'free' media can contribute significantly to positive social change. A pluralistic media system enables citizens to make informed decisions and develop independent opinions, thereby shaping public discourse, all of which is a prerequisite for political participation and democracy. However, a diverse media landscape does not equal a plurality of opinions. The lack of quality and independent journalism can represent a major obstacle in this process, as it maintains a critical function in the societies of developing nations.

Although the Millennium Development Goals<sup>5</sup> (MDG) were realized to a large extent, significant socio-economic differences prevail between the Global North and the South, in particular in regards to infant and maternal mortality and HIV prevention, but also the environment and education.<sup>6</sup> In the post-2015 framework of the Sustainable Development Goals<sup>7</sup> (SDG), media freedom and freedom of opinion represent a central field of action which underlines the relevance of not only mass media, but also

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<sup>5</sup> Cf. UN – United Nations (n.d.-b). *We Can End Poverty. Millennium Development Goals and Beyond 2015*: <https://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/> [Last retrieved 8/1/2021].

<sup>6</sup> Cf. UN (2013). *The MDG Report 2013*. New York, United States of America (U.S.A.): <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/pdf/report-2013/mdg-report-2013-english.pdf> [Last retrieved 8/1/2021].

<sup>7</sup> Cf. UNDESA – United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (n.d.-b). *Sustainable Development. The 17 Goals*: <https://sdgs.un.org/goals> [Last retrieved 8/1/2021].

the journalistic profession for processes of development and democratic transformation.<sup>8</sup> This study has a specific focus on developing countries with the aim to contribute to inclusive theoretical approaches that can replace the frequently deplored Western bias in global journalism education.

Across the globe, a wide variety of pathways and programs to becoming a professional journalist co-exists. Yet, a common trend emerges: In the 1990s, Splichal and Sparks identified a significant global trend toward the ‘graduatization’<sup>9</sup> of journalism. Various studies showed an increase in the number of journalists who completed an academic journalism education program. Today, an academic title or degree is a key requirement in many countries to entering the journalistic job market. This rise of academic journalism education represents a decisive factor in the professionalization of journalism.

Since the turn of the twenty-first century, the journalistic profession and its functions have become the center of attention of international journalism research. Nonetheless, the pathways toward the profession, determined at least partly by journalism education, rarely come to the fore. The heterogeneous research findings on the journalistic profession highlights that the discussion surrounding the journalistic profession and its professionalization is outdated and urgently requires new academic perspectives and research approaches. The increase in journalism degrees serves as a starting point for empirical research that promises to produce valuable insights for academia and journalism as a practical field. In-depth and contextual research that goes beyond merely descriptive and normative analyses is direly needed – in particular for the developing world.

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<sup>8</sup> Cf. Lublinski, J., Deselears, P., Berner, P. (2013). *Post 2015-MDGs: Freedom of Expression and the Media. Discussion Paper*. Bonn, Germany: Deutsche Welle: <https://m.dw.com/downloads/28538059/post-2015-mdgs-freedom-of-expression-and-the-media-pdf.pdf> [Last retrieved 8/1/2021].

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Splichal, S., Sparks, C. (1994). *Journalists for the 21st Century*. Norwood, U.S.A.: Ablex Publishing.

## 1.2 Research Aim and Questions

This doctoral research has three objectives: First, it describes journalism education within the historical context and current societal and media systems of the two developing countries selected: Cambodia and Vietnam.

Second, it analyzes in detail, based on empirical data how specific journalistic competencies are transferred to students enrolled in public journalism degree programs. The research provides a cross-national and cross-institutional comparison by identifying similarities and differences of journalism education programs at public universities in the selected countries. As a result, this study engages in the field of comparative journalism studies by exploring the existing research gap on journalism education.

As a third and final goal, this theory-based empirical work aims to develop a model approach, which adapts and expands existing Western perspectives and concepts to local contexts in the Global South. This new approach allows for a systematic assessment of academic journalism education within the context of digitalization and development. In doing so, this project not only intends to contribute to international comparative journalism research, but also provides useful approaches to practitioners in the field of journalism training and education in the Global South.

Through a multi-level approach, the aim is to explore academic journalism education and to identify key influencing factors in the two selected Southeast Asian countries, Vietnam and Cambodia, in the context of digitalization and development. The empirical study examines the following **research questions** (RQ), with a focus public academic journalism education programs:

- **RQ 1:** What are relevant historical and current socio-economic, political and cultural framework conditions of journalism education in Vietnam and Cambodia? (macro level)
- **RQ 2:** What are the main similarities and differences regarding the individual, program content and institutional level of public journalism degrees in the two countries? (micro and meso level)
- **RQ 3:** To what extent and in which form do existing public journalism degree programs include digital, media management and

specialized journalistic skills and competencies in their curricula? (meso level)

- **RQ 4:** Which key factors influencing public academic journalism education can be identified concerning program, institutional and country level? (meso and macro level)

RQ 1 is centered on the macro level of the given national context. RQ 2 pays special attention to micro perspectives with a focus on the teaching environment and conditions for students. RQ 2, 3 and 4 include the meso level, that is institutional and curricular aspects. For RQ 3, further sub-questions with regard to digital, media management and specialized reporting skills and competencies, are defined in Chapter 4.1. RQ 4 assesses societal factors impacting on journalism education as well as influences on the program and institutional level.

All aspects defined in the research questions will be compared for Vietnam and Cambodia with the clear intention of identifying the main differences and similarities. The final objective of this empirical research is to fill the existing research gap on journalism education in developing countries, based on an encompassing conceptual framework combining theoretical approaches from global media and journalism studies with practice-oriented international journalism education standards and models. The quantitative and qualitative research results in the two countries and their systematic cross-national comparative analysis includes a micro, meso and macro level analysis of academic journalism education programs, allowing for the development of a new model approach that supports the adequate assessment of journalistic degree programs in developing countries in their given historical and societal context.

### 1.3 Methodology

The methodological approach of this research is based on an inclusive definition of academic journalism programs, which comprises not only traditional journalism degrees, but also other academic programs within the field of media and communication studies that have the declared intention to prepare students for the journalistic profession.



## Intra-Regional Approach and Country Selection Criteria

This intra-regional research focuses on academic journalism degree programs at public universities – that is, fully or partially state-funded schools – in Vietnam and Cambodia. The region, which, apart from Cambodia and Vietnam, includes Laos, Myanmar and Thailand, can be described as highly heterogeneous with respect to its historical, cultural and political and socio-economic characteristics. In order to represent the diversity of Southeast Asia as a region and to identify key influencing factors on the micro, meso and macro level of journalism degree programs, the two neighboring countries of Vietnam and Cambodia were selected based on a “most different system design.”<sup>10</sup>

Whereas Vietnam is a communist country, the political system of Cambodia is based – at least still at the time of data collection – on a multi-party, democratic model of the division of powers. In 2016, when the field research for this study took place, Vietnam counted 92 million inhabitants and Cambodia just over 15 million.<sup>11</sup> Furthermore, the two countries demonstrate significant historical and cultural differences.

In terms of socio-economic development<sup>12</sup> and media and press freedom,<sup>13</sup> the two countries were selected based on high levels of similarity, which allowed for the assessment of their media development context as a more or less constant, independent variable. The level of digitalization is also comparable in both countries, with Cambodia and Vietnam demonstrating the greatest similarity in the region.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Hanitzsch, T. et al (2011). Mapping Journalism Cultures Across Nations. A Comparative Study of 18 Nations. *Journalism Studies*, 12(3), 273-293.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. O'Neill A. (2021, June 16). Total population of the ASEAN countries from 2011 to 2021. *Statista*: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/796222/total-population-of-the-asean-countries/> [Last retrieved 9/22/2021].

<sup>12</sup> UNDP – United Nations Development Programme (n.d.-a). *Human Development Index (HDI)*: <http://hdr.undp.org/en/statistics/hdi> [Last retrieved 9/22/2021]; UNDP (n.d.-b). *Human Development Reports. Inequality-adjusted Human Development Index (IHDI)*.: <http://hdr.undp.org/en/statistics/ihdi> [Last retrieved 8/1/2021].

<sup>13</sup> Deutsche Welle (n.d.). *Media Freedom Navigator*: <http://akademie.dw.de/navigator> [Last retrieved 8/1/2021].

<sup>14</sup> World Bank (n.d.-a). Digital Adoption Index: <https://www.worldbank.org/en/publication/wdr2016/Digital-Adoption-Index> [Last retrieved 8/1/2021].

On the basis of the selection criteria (in terms of the historical, political and cultural differences and the similarities in development and digitalization indicators), the study has the potential to be a pilot for further, worldwide comparative research on journalism education in developing and transition countries.

The empirical study is based on a mixed-method approach combining qualitative and quantitative research instruments for data collection. Data collection took place primarily in the field in Cambodia and Vietnam and consisted of the following elements:

- Curricula analysis of journalism degree programs at public universities
- Quantitative, standardized pen-and-paper survey with current students of journalism degree programs
- Qualitative, semi-structured focus interviews with local and international experts in journalism education
- Qualitative alumni survey and focus group discussion with journalism graduates

International and local experts include representatives of universities, journalism association and media and development organizations, who are familiar with journalism education in the respective country. International experts especially provide a country-specific, yet wholistic perspective on the journalism education system. Management and teaching staff at the selected universities were classified as local experts as they can offer detailed insights into the journalism education programs. Combined with the analysis of available curricular documentation and the survey of current journalism students, the data promises in-depth assessment of the program content of the journalism degrees. Due to limited availability of data and information, and a lack of relevant academic literature for the two selected countries – and for developing countries more generally – the expert interviews serve as an exploration of the *status quo* apart from generating targeted information on all three analytical levels. This includes the teaching environment and the conditions for students, as well as institutional aspects and program content.

As the primary target group of the journalism schools, the survey considers the students' evaluation of the degree programs. The questionnaire

has a clear focus on the students' assessment of the overall curriculum, its concrete elements and learning outcomes, but also captures their overall attitudes to the profession, including initial educational motivation, journalistic self-perception and future professional perspectives. It was designed as a pen-and-paper questionnaire for students to fill out in the classroom. Furthermore, the intention was to also include alumni perspectives. It was anticipated that this would be a hard-to-reach target group, having exited the program and potentially cut ties with their respective university programs after their graduation. Therefore, alumni data were considered complementary to the information derived from the student survey and expert interviews.

The documentation on the structure and content of the curricula is combined with a statistical analysis of the survey results. Qualitative content analysis of interview data is based on Mayring<sup>15</sup> and Kuckartz<sup>16</sup> and supported by MAXQDA<sup>17</sup>, a data analysis software package. This combination of manual and software-supported data analysis allows for the systematic identification of specific categories, the analysis of key influencing factors and reflections on the potential causal links between relevant variables. The standardized research approach including data collection and analysis is applied in both focus countries and, thus, allows for an intra-regional, cross-national and cross-institutional comparison based on Esser's "principle of equivalence" (Äquivalenzprinzip).<sup>18</sup>

## 1.4 Content Overview

**Chapter 2** presents the state of the field and relevance of international journalism education research. As an interdisciplinary study, it can be linked to a wide range of academic topics and fields. The focus of the first sub-chapter (2.1) focuses on global comparative journalism research, its

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<sup>15</sup> Mayring, P. (2010). *Qualitative Inhaltsanalyse: Grundlagen und Techniken* (11<sup>th</sup> edition). Basel, Switzerland: Beltz Verlag.

<sup>16</sup> Kuckartz, U. (2014-b). *Qualitative Text Analysis*. London, U.K.: SAGE Publications.

<sup>17</sup> MAXQDA: <https://www.maxqda.com> [Last retrieved 8/1/2021].

<sup>18</sup> Esser, F. (2004). Journalismus vergleichen. Komparative Forschung und Theoriebildung. In Löffelholz, M. (eds.) *Theorien des Journalismus. Ein diskursives Handbuch* (2nd edition). Wiesbaden, Germany: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, pp. 156/157

historical emergence and current research trends, including the issue of journalism cultures. The second sub-chapter (2.2) is dedicated in particular to the field of journalism education research, a classification of the relevant types of literature and current research needs.

The theoretical and conceptual framework of the study is described in **Chapter 3**. This chapter provides an overview of the relevant definitions and approaches to journalism and journalism education. First, I take on a functional perspective to explore the interrelation between journalism as a profession and journalism education (3.1). In a second step, structural and historical approaches to the topic are employed to investigate the origins, evolution, and typologies of academic and non-academic journalism education in Western countries (3.2). Finally, this chapter identifies analytical dimensions and indicators for journalism education based on existing normative concepts, including theoretical competence model as well as practice-oriented international standards, and model curricula (3.3).

**Chapter 4** considers the context of journalism education in Cambodia and Vietnam in the digital age. In the first part of this bridging chapter, I explore digital, entrepreneurial and development journalism as under-researched concepts of major relevance (4.1). The second sub-chapter sheds light on the regional and local context of journalism education in Vietnam and Cambodia from various perspectives, including their level of human development and digitalization, the level of press freedom in the national media landscape and the history and current state of journalism education in both countries (4.2).

**Chapter 5** further describes the methodological approach and research design of this project, including the theoretical concepts undergirding the comparative analysis with its specific strengths and limitations. Based on a mixed-method approach, the different qualitative and quantitative data collection methods are described, as are the selection procedures and the criteria for interviewee and survey participant selection. This chapter also includes a detailed description of the interview guidelines and survey questions.

**Chapter 6** consists of a detailed empirical data analysis. The description of qualitative and quantitative research results encompasses the curricula

analysis, the statistical student survey as well as the qualitative content analysis of expert interviews and alumni data.

**Chapter 7** comprises the final comparative analysis and the discussion of the overall study's results including its limitations and recommendations for future investigations. As a major outcome of this study, sub-chapter 7.3 presents a new model approach for assessing journalism degree programs in developing countries including a proposed system of indicators.

**Chapter 8** (the conclusion) summarizes the main findings of the project and provides an outlook onto the future of the academic and practical field of journalism education research.

## **2. State and Relevance of International Journalism Education Research**

The first section (2.1) of the following review of the relevant research on journalism education focuses on global journalism studies. Sub-chapter 2.2 then concretizes the state of the field in international comparative journalism education studies in order to identify gaps in the research as well as to make recommendations.

### **2.1 Global Journalism Studies**

Journalism studies can be defined as the academic study of journalism and its application on journalistic practice, in particular in the form of journalism education and training.<sup>19</sup> Within the academic field of media and communications studies, journalism studies fall under the sub-discipline of communicator research, alongside other research fields such as media content, media use and media effects.<sup>20</sup>

In the following, I describe the origins and evolution of journalism studies up to present (sub-chapter 2.1.1) and focus on an assessment of global comparative journalism research, which represents a long-standing trend in journalism studies (sub-chapter 2.1.2). Before shifting to journalism education research as a specific sub-discipline of journalism studies, I elaborate on the status and relevance of the study of international

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<sup>19</sup> Reflecting on scholarly attempts to situate ‘journalism studies’ (German: ‘Journalistik’) as a scholarly field, Weischenberg argues that a consensus has only recently been achieved: “daß es sich dabei um die Wissenschaft vom Journalismus und die Anwendung ihrer Erkenntnisse auf journalistische Praxis handelt, und zwar vor allem als Journalistenausbildung.” See Weischenberg, S. (2004). *Journalistik. Theorie und Praxis aktueller Medienkommunikation*. Band 1: Mediensysteme, Medienethik, Medieninstitutionen. (3rd edition). Wiesbaden, Germany: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, p. 13.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. Meier, K. (2011). *Journalistik* (2nd edition). Konstanz, Germany: UVK; cf. Wyss, V., Pühringer, K., Meier, W.A. (2005) *Journalismusforschung*. In Bonfadelli, H., Jarren, O., Siegert, G.: *Einführung in die Publizistikwissenschaft* (2nd edition). (pp. 297-330). Bern, Switzerland: Haupt UTB; cf. Donsbach, W. (2009). *Journalist*. In Noelle-Neumann, E., Wilke, J., Schulz, W. (eds.) *Fischer Lexikon. Publizistik. Massenkommunikation* (pp. 81-128). Frankfurt am Main, Germany: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag.

journalism culture, which has a long tradition as an independent research strand (sub-chapter 2.1.3). The cultural dimension, as it is understood within the discipline of journalism studies, is especially relevant to the present study, as it aims to contribute to the internationalization and de-Westernization of academic research by focusing on two developing countries and their journalism education standards and practices.

### 2.1.1 Origins and Historical Development of Journalism Studies

According to Wahl-Jorgensen and Hanitzsch, it is possible to distinguish four historical phases of journalism studies: one, the normative phase; two, the empirical phase; three, the sociological phase; and four, the global comparative phase.<sup>21</sup>

The **normative phase**, the initial stage of journalism studies, dates back to the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and has its origins in Germany. According to Löffelholz, most German theorists initially looked at journalism through a historical and normative lens, based on the understanding that journalism was a craft engaged in by more or less talented individuals.<sup>22</sup> German thinkers – among the most prominent were Karl Marx and Max Weber – as well as American scholars established the long-lasting foundations for future research during this period by developing specific normative approaches to the study of journalism. This early normative research considered journalism from the macro level, with a focus on its theoretical function and societal role, rather than on its practices and production processes. Löffelholz broadly sketches the historical development of journalism theory, beginning at the end of the eighteenth century, which did not pay attention to “societal and organizational aspects, such as political constraints and the editorial work process.”<sup>23</sup> German journalism research remained limited to theoretical perspectives for a

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<sup>21</sup> Cf. Wahl-Jorgensen, K., Hanitzsch, T. (2009-b). Introduction: On Why and How We Should Do Journalism Studies. In Wahl-Jorgensen, K., Hanitzsch, T. (eds.) *Handbook of Journalism Studies* (pp. 3-16). Oxon, U.K.: Routledge.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. Löffelholz, M. (2008). Heterogenous – Multidimensional – Competing. Theoretical Approaches to Journalism. An Overview. In Löffelholz, M., Weaver, D. H. (eds.) *Global Journalism Research: Theories, Methods, Findings, Future* (pp. 15-27). Malden, U.S.A.: Blackwell.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 16.

long time, despite the fact that Weber called for empirical studies as early as the beginning of the twentieth century.

Interest in journalism training and education ultimately arose with the **empirical turn**. In the 1920s, journalism educators, especially those in the United States, started to build and share research-based knowledge about journalistic work. Wahl-Jorgensen and Hanitzsch describe this phase as “a new age of journalism scholarship which took journalism seriously both as a practical endeavor and an object of study.”<sup>24</sup> In the U.S., new doctoral research programs emerged within political science and sociology departments.<sup>25</sup> In Northern European countries such as Denmark and the United Kingdom, journalism education was traditionally located outside of the universities. As a result, social science and humanities departments adopted journalism studies as one field of interest among many. These developments presumably added to the interdisciplinary nature of journalism studies at this early stage.

From the mid-twentieth century onwards, journalism studies were heavily influenced by the research into mass communications. While initially dominated by early media effects and audience research, attention soon shifted to the communicators. Up until the end of World War I (WWI), mass communication pioneers such as Lasswell and Lazarsfeld focused on media effects and media content without exploring the origins of media messages. Early journalism studies were anecdotal descriptions and historical accounts of the press, as well as biographical depictions of publishers and editors.<sup>26</sup>

According to Weaver and Löffelholz, more systematic analyses of the historical development of journalism and journalists began to be conducted in the United States in the 1930s. These investigations looked at the societal factors influencing media organizations and journalists.

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<sup>24</sup> Wahl-Jorgensen, K., Hanitzsch, T. (2009-b), p. 5.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. Singer, J.B. (2008). Journalism Research in the United States. In Löffelholz, M., Weaver, D. H. (eds.) *Global Journalism Research: Theories, Methods, Findings, Future*. Malden, U.S.A.: Blackwell, p. 146.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. Weaver, D.H., Löffelholz, M. (2008). Questioning National, Cultural, and Disciplinary Boundaries: A Call for Global Journalism Research. In Löffelholz, M., Weaver, D.H., Schwarz, A. (eds.) *Global Journalism Research: Theories, Methods, Findings, Future* (pp. 3-12). Malden, U.S.A.: Blackwell.



Communication scientists contributed new ideas to the repertoire of research methods, including psychological, political, and sociological approaches. This allowed journalism researchers to dig deeper into the world of journalistic work. Among the most groundbreaking works of empirical research produced during this period were Schramm's 1957 *Twenty Years of Journalism Research*,<sup>27</sup> a study of journalists abroad, McComb and Shaw's 1972 concept of news values,<sup>28</sup> and White's 1950 study on journalistic gatekeepers.<sup>29</sup> All three sparked important theoretical traditions that are still relevant today. Löffelholz considers these emerging conceptual approaches to be middle-range theories – that is, concepts that stem from and are explained by empirical data that represented a significant shift away from normative approaches.<sup>30</sup> Since then, researchers have continued to elaborate and adapt these approaches to contemporary journalism studies in the digital age. To name but one example, framing theory and priming theory are outcomes of this agenda-setting research tradition.<sup>31</sup>

Until the later decades of the twentieth century, the number of academic studies focusing on communicator research remained relatively small compared to those dedicated to media effects and media use. Weaver and Löffelholz point to two main reasons why: Firstly, journalists and newsrooms were difficult to access as research subjects, making production processes and the factors influencing them hard to determine. Secondly, research often directly relied on industry funding, and media organizations were themselves primarily interested in the impact of media content

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<sup>27</sup> Cf. Schramm, W. (1957). *Twenty Years of Journalism Research*. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 21(1), 91-107.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. McComb, M.E., Shaw, D.L. (1972). The Agenda-Setting Function of Mass Media. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 36(2), 176-187.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. White, D.M. (1950). The "Gate Keeper": A Case Study in the Selection of News. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, 27(4), 383-390.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. Löffelholz, M. (2008), pp. 18ff; The concept of middle-range theories was developed by Robert K. Merton in the mid 20th century. The following landmark publication for the social sciences was first published in 1957 and extended in the 1960s: Merton, R.K. (1968). *Social Theory and Social Structure* (enlarged edition). New York, U.S.A.: Free Press, pp. 39-72.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. Weaver, D.H. (2007). Thoughts on Agenda Setting, Framing and Priming. *Journal of Communication*, 57, 142-147.

on their audiences and the behaviors and preferences of the recipients of media content.<sup>32</sup>

Although a lack of theoretical foundations remained until the end of the twentieth century, Johnstone, Slawski and Bowman (at the University of Illinois)<sup>33</sup> and Rühl<sup>34</sup> (in Germany) pioneered new approaches to communicator research in the 1960s and 1970s. Johnstone and his fellow scholars conducted the first study that encompassed journalists working for a range of different media organizations across the United States. Rühl initiated a new research tradition in Germany, which developed a societal approach by investigating journalism as a sub-system within a greater societal system, rather than limiting research to journalists as individuals.

In the 1970s and 1980s, **sociological approaches** and anthropological concepts gained further significance within journalism studies. Scholars scrutinized journalistic practices, including professional principles and news production protocols. They also started to critically assess theories surrounding framing and news narratives. In addition, they turned their attention to news culture and entertainment, which Wahl-Jorgensen and Hanitzsch call “the popular in the news.”<sup>35</sup> During this phase, influential researchers were situated within sociology and cultural studies, and as a result, increasingly applied qualitative research methods such as ethnography and discourse analysis.

The next stage was marked by McLeod and Rush, who established the field of cross-cultural journalism research. Although their milestone comparative study of journalistic professionalization in Latin America and the United States was published in 1969,<sup>36</sup> and the wider relevance of journalism research was increasingly being debated among scholars in the United States in the 1970s, the number of such studies only began to grow

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<sup>32</sup> Cf. Weaver, D.H, Löffelholz, M. (2008), pp. 4-6; cf. Löffelholz, M. (2008), p. 23.

<sup>33</sup> Cf. Johnstone, J, Slawski, E, Bowman, W. (1976). *The News People*. Illinois, U.S.A.: University of Illinois Press.

<sup>34</sup> Cf. Rühl, M. (1969). *Die Zeitungsredaktion als organisiertes soziales System*, Gesellschaft und Kommunikation 1. Bielefeld, Germany: Bertelsmann Universitätsverlag.

<sup>35</sup> Wahl-Jorgensen, K., Hanitzsch, T. (2009-b), p. 6.

<sup>36</sup> Cf. McLeod, J, Rush, R. R. (1969-a). Professionalization of Latin American and U.S. Journalists. *Journalism Quarterly*, 46(3), 583–590; cf. McLeod, J, Rush, R. R. (1969-b). Professionalization of Latin American and U.S. Journalists: Part II. *Journalism Quarterly*, 46(4), 784–789.

in the 1990s. By the turn of the century, journalism research had finally become more cross-national and comparative. Due to its significance and recency, this phase of global comparative research and its implications for current research shall be explored in greater detail in the subsequent subchapter.

### **2.1.2 Global Comparative Journalism Research**

The upsurge in global comparative research reflects the need for journalism studies to expand its perspectives beyond national borders, in terms of both its theoretical and methodological approaches.<sup>37</sup> Wahl-Jorgensen and Hanitzsch connect this new wave of global comparative research, which emerged in the late twentieth century, to the rise in both digitalization and globalization. They describe the consequences for scholars dedicated to journalism studies as follows:

New communication technologies have triggered the rise of institutionalized global networks of scientists, while it has become much easier to acquire funding for international studies. As journalism itself is an increasingly global phenomenon, its study is becoming an international and collaborative endeavor.<sup>38</sup>

Zelizer adds to this train of thought by arguing that the interdisciplinary and diverse nature of journalism studies stems from the fact that the field has been influenced by a wide range of national research traditions and a variety of social science and humanities perspectives.<sup>39</sup> Building on this, Wahl-Jorgensen and Hanitzsch explored specific national influences and traditions of worldwide journalism studies: They found that journalism studies in Germany draws heavily on a social science tradition, with an emphasis on macro level approaches and system theory. Conversely, British and Australian journalism researchers build on a tradition of critical thinking from within cultural studies, whereas empirical and quantitative research approaches are dominant in American journalism studies. French scholars, in contrast, base their work on structural approaches and

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<sup>37</sup> Cf. Weaver, D.H, Löffelholz, M. (2008), p. 8

<sup>38</sup> Wahl-Jorgensen, K., Hanitzsch, T. (2009-b), p. 6

<sup>39</sup> Cf. Zelizer, B. (2004). *Taking Journalism Seriously: News and the Academy*. Thousand Oaks, U.S.A.: SAGE Publications.

semiology, and are far less influential than their Anglo-American counterparts in the field of global journalism studies. Overall, the influence of Anglo-American scholars stands out, even if the quantity of international contributions is continuously growing, according to Cushion.<sup>40</sup>

Looking beyond the Western world, it is worth highlighting that Asian scholars, many of whom trained at universities in the United States, often take on North American approaches, while Latin American journalism researchers, in an attempt to emancipate themselves from the American academy, have begun to look at academic traditions in Southern Europe including France, Spain and Italy. Wahl-Jorgensen and Hanitzsch conclude that the geographical focus of extant research is determined primarily by the country of origin of its authors. As a consequence, despite the abundance of studies on media systems, news organizations, newsrooms, media content and journalistic practices in North America and Europe, we still have only limited knowledge about the same phenomena in the national and cultural contexts of the Global South.<sup>41</sup>

As Steensen and Ahva highlight, various publications contributed to building a global academic culture in the first decade of the 2000s, by collecting and sharing theoretical and methodological knowledge of journalism research across the world. These include two books, the already cited *Handbook of Journalism Studies*<sup>42</sup> and *Global Journalism Research*,<sup>43</sup> co-edited by the German scholars Hanitzsch (2009) and Löffelholz (2008) together with other European researchers. A range of publications from the United Kingdom, such as Franklin et al's *Key Concepts in Journalism Studies* (2005),<sup>44</sup> Conboy's *Journalism Studies* (2013)<sup>45</sup> and Tumber's four-

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<sup>40</sup> Cf. Cushion, S. A. (2008). Truly international? A Content Analysis of Journalism: Theory, Practice and Criticism and Journalism Studies. *Journalism Practice*, 2(2), 280–293.

<sup>41</sup> Cf. Wahl-Jorgensen, K., Hanitzsch, T. (2009-b).

<sup>42</sup> Cf. Wahl-Jorgensen, K., Hanitzsch, T. (2009-a). *Handbook of Journalism Studies*. Oxon, U.K.: Routledge.

<sup>43</sup> Löffelholz, M., Weaver, D.H. (2008). *Global Journalism Research: Theories, Methods, Findings, Future*. Malden, U.S.A.: Blackwell.

<sup>44</sup> Cf. Franklin, B., Hamer, M., Hanna, M., Richardson, J. E. (2005). *Key Concepts in Journalism Studies*. London, U.K.: SAGE Publications.

<sup>45</sup> Cf. Conboy, M. (2013). *Journalism Studies: The Basics*. London, U.K.: Routledge.

volume *Journalism* (2008),<sup>46</sup> were equally vital to strengthening journalism studies as a field of academic research.

In line with Becher and Trowler's<sup>47</sup> understanding of academic disciplines, Steensen and Ahva describe journalism studies as a maturing field that still faces major obstacles: While, on the one hand, the structural framework of journalism studies has manifested itself in the rise of higher education programs around the globe and the number of conferences and internationally acknowledged academic journals on journalism studies. On the other hand, journalism studies lack a specific academic culture. As an inherently interdisciplinary field, it builds on a vast array of academic disciplines, from political sciences and sociology to cultural studies, history and linguistics. From a global perspective, there is consequently no shared body of knowledge or common set of theoretical and methodological approaches that can be considered essential to the field.<sup>48</sup>

In the context of this study, it is important to note that, despite aiming to provide a common theoretical perspective, the aforementioned books are rather Western-centric. For the most part, they do not include views and conceptual approaches developed by scholars in the Global South, representing a significant shortcoming in academic research writ large and in the field of global journalism studies specifically.

To a certain degree, the volume *Global Journalism Research* fills this gap. It provides insights into both the theoretical foundations of and empirical approaches to journalism studies as an academic field. In addition, it pays specific attention to comparative research in the context of globalization, by presenting relevant methodological concepts and research instruments as well as research paradigms and their outcomes in selected countries across all world regions, including Africa, Asia, and Latin America. The book focuses on globalization as a driving force and provides valuable perspectives on the future of international journalism research.

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<sup>46</sup> Cf. Tumber, H. (2008). *Journalism. Critical Concepts in Media and Cultural Studies*. London, U.K.: Routledge.

<sup>47</sup> Cf. Becher, T, Trowler, P. (2001). *Academic Tribes and Territories: Intellectual Enquiry and the Culture of Disciplines* (2nd edition) Buckingham, U.K.: Open University Press.

<sup>48</sup> Cf. Steensen, S., Ahva, L. (2015). Introduction – Theories of Journalism in a Digital Age. *An Exploration and Introduction. Digital Journalism*, 3(1), 2-5.

The aforementioned *Handbook of Journalism Studies* also includes country cases from the Global South; they are, however, limited to South Africa and Singapore and thus to countries that are more socio-economically developed than their poorer and under-developed neighbors – although, in terms of media freedom and overall human rights, these countries certainly fall back in the global development rankings in the wider sense (see also Chapter 4.2).

Looking at the discipline as a whole, Wasserman and de Beer underscore the continuous Westernization of journalism studies through the imbalanced distribution of funding and, consequently, the domination of research topics and results by Western scholars.<sup>49</sup> In a similar vein, Hanitzsch stresses that there is a dire need for global comparative journalism research in order to make journalism studies truly international. The author further points out the lack of common heuristic models, theories and empirical methods that could provide researchers with plenty of room for exploration.<sup>50</sup> The importance of global cooperation for both the theoretical and methodological advancement of the field can be summarized as follows: “Western bias and lack of universally applicable concepts, as well as problems of establishing equivalence and case selection can only be resolved by internationally collaborative research.”<sup>51</sup>

While some scholars claim that, due to the lack of universal concepts that apply to both the Global North and South, global journalism studies does not classify as an academic discipline in and of itself, Löffelholz and Weaver argue that global journalism studies has become increasingly institutionalized, as indicated by the establishment of two new journals in the early 2000s, *Journalism Studies* and *Journalism: Theory, Practice and Criticism*. Moreover, they highlight that the International Communication Association (ICA)<sup>52</sup> and the European Communication Research and

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<sup>49</sup> Cf. Wassermann, H., de Beer, H.S. (2009). Towards De-Westernizing Journalism Studies. In Wahl-Jorgensen, K., Hanitzsch, T. (eds.) *Handbook of Journalism Studies* (pp. 428 - 438). New York, U.S.A. / London, U.K.: Routledge.

<sup>50</sup> Cf. Hanitzsch, T. (2009). Comparing Journalism Studies. In Wahl-Jorgensen, K., Hanitzsch, T. (eds). *Handbook of Journalism Studies* (pp. 413 - 427). Oxon, U.K.: Routledge.

<sup>51</sup> Wahl-Jorgensen, K., Hanitzsch, T. (2009-b), p. 11.

<sup>52</sup> ICA – International Communication Association: <https://www.icahdq.org/> [Last retrieved 8/1/2021].

Education Association (ECREA)<sup>53</sup> have increased their institutional support for comparative journalism research that crosses national boundaries and challenges Western paradigms.<sup>54</sup>

### 2.1.3 Journalism Cultures and Research Trends in the Digital Age

Since the turn of the century, journals from non-Western regions such as Brazil, Africa and the Pacific have emerged, as evinced by the list of all non-English language e-journals on the website of the International Association for Media and Communication Research (IAMCR). In 2009, there were only around 60 non-English publications available, which represented less than 50% of all e-journals.<sup>55</sup> At present, the number has risen to over 200 open access journals in other languages.<sup>56</sup>

Not all scholars are optimistic about the evolution of journalism studies as an international and autonomous field of academic research. While some argue that journalism has been losing in legitimacy and purpose, others underline the crucial function of journalism in democratic societies and conclude that research into journalism as a profession is even more necessary than ever to shed light on the global contexts of our modern, digital age. Stressing the significance of journalism for society and social development, Wahl-Jorgensen and Hanitzsch emphasize the fact that historical investigations and other observations of a certain period in time are frequently based on an analysis of journalistic articles about specific events and their effect on society.<sup>57</sup>

As a result of their analysis of the abstracts of fourteen international journals volumes on journalism studies, Steensen and Ahva found that concepts from political science and sociology predominated, whereas approaches from other disciplines such as economics, law and philosophy ranked much lower. Notably, sociological approaches – with a clear concentration on professional norms and practices – outweighed all other

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<sup>53</sup> ECREA – European Communication Research and Education Association: <https://ecrea.eu/> [Last retrieved 8/19/21].

<sup>54</sup> Cf. Weaver, D.H., Löffelholz, M. (2008), p. 3.

<sup>55</sup> Wang, G. (2011). *De-Westernizing Communication Research. Altering Questions and Changing Frameworks*. London, U.K.: Routledge, p. 1.

<sup>56</sup> IAMCR – International Association for Media and Communication Research: <https://iamcr.org/open-access-journals> [Last retrieved 8/1/2021].

<sup>57</sup> Cf. Wahl-Jorgensen, K., Hanitzsch, T. (2009-b), pp. 4/5.

perspectives, although technological and economic perspectives did increase by 4% each between 2002 and 2012.<sup>58</sup>

Similarly, Löffelholz argues that we have entered a **new phase of theoretical pluralism**: Today, journalism studies are a pluralistic, differentiated, and dynamic field of research in the broader area of communication science. The current theoretical discourse on journalism is heterogenous, multidimensional, and full of competing ideas.<sup>59</sup> The author outlines that the value of cultural studies, in particular, stems from its open terminology and concepts, which provide a variety of potential approaches that, in times of globalization, allow for a broad investigation into the factors influencing media production processes. He argues that ‘culture’ as a concept is becoming ever more relevant, as, “in a globalized world, what separates people also connects them: the possibility of perceiving oneself as culturally distinct.”<sup>60</sup> Furthermore, the strength of cultural approaches lies in their multi-disciplinary and multidimensional perspectives. With its origins in the intersections between Marxism, behavioral science, linguistic and critical theory, cultural studies provide a contextual view for examining the interrelations of the media and culture, as well as the economic and political power relations within society – all critically important to the study to journalism cultures.

**Journalism culture research** is closely linked to both global comparative journalism studies and international journalism education research. In fact, some scholars claim that “journalism culture is an area of study with one of the longest research traditions in the larger field of communication and research.”<sup>61</sup> McLeod’s comparison of American and Latin American journalists, a pioneering study in the field of cross-cultural journalism research, has already been mentioned. Despite the long research tradition and broad acknowledgment of the importance of cultural dimensions to journalism studies, Hanitzsch points out that a divergence between extant conceptual approaches in this particular area of international journalism

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<sup>58</sup> Cf. Steensen, S., Ahva, L. (2015), pp. 10/11

<sup>59</sup> Löffelholz, M. (2008), p. 15.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., p. 23.

<sup>61</sup> Hanitzsch, T., Donsbach, W. (2012). Comparing Journalism Cultures. In: Esser, F, Hanitzsch, T. (eds.) *The Handbook of Comparative Communication Research*. New York, U.S.A.: Routledge, p. 262.



research remains. This lack of terminological clarity has led to a lack of comparative research. As a consequence, the field of journalism culture research stands as an example for the importance of a common theoretical foundation for understanding the complex and multidimensional concept of ‘journalism culture.’<sup>62</sup>

Hanitzsch and Donsbach define ‘journalism culture’ as a collection of attitudes and routines that provide the basis for a journalist’s legitimization of their function and responsibility in society. According to the authors, journalism culture expresses itself in at least three concrete dimensions: “as sets of ideas (values, attitudes, beliefs), as practices (of reporting and editing), and artefacts (news content).”<sup>63</sup> Based on this definition, three corresponding levels of journalism cultures can be distinguished:

1. *Journalistic milieus*: individual and group-based journalism cultures
2. *Organizational journalism cultures*: closely linked to newsrooms and media institutions
3. *National journalism cultures*: country-specific manifestations that reflect the historical context of journalism in that country.

This and other definitions imply that journalism is determined by professional and cultural conventions that are, to a great extent, invisible to individual journalists. Nevertheless, as a system of collective knowledge, these symbolic rules and routines enable or restrict journalistic action. They manifest themselves in three different dimensions or schemes:

1. Cognitive schemes regulate journalistic perception and interpretation (e.g., of events as newsworthy or relevant)
2. Evaluative schemes determine assessments in a professional context as reflected through professional ideologies and worldviews (e.g., of unbiased journalism, investigative journalism, role perceptions)

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<sup>62</sup> Cf. Hanitzsch, T. (2007-b). Journalismuskulturen. In Thomaß, B. (eds.) *Mediensysteme im internationalen Vergleich*. Stuttgart, Germany: UVK, p. 173.

<sup>63</sup> Hanitzsch, T., Donsbach, W. (2012), p. 262.

3. Performative schemes reveal themselves in the practical implementation of cognitive and evaluative schemes (e.g., journalistic research methods)<sup>64</sup>

All three dimensions are relevant for journalism education, or *vice versa*: journalism education shapes cognitive, evaluative, and performative abilities and competencies.

Hanitzsch and Donsbach claim that although cross-national comparative studies are the dominant approach, journalism cultures should be compared on all three levels, as well as individually and institutionally. In this context, they also highlight that national boundaries do not always go hand in hand with cultural boundaries, which is particularly true in the era of globalization: Instead, a variety of cultural identities that impact journalism cultures and sub-cultures, can appear within one country. Still, choosing countries as research units is often the most practical and feasible option for researchers conducting comparative analyses. While this can be viewed as a limitation of the research on journalism culture, it nonetheless remains relevant to study journalism and journalism cultures by comparing their national expressions. As Hanitzsch and Donsbach rightly highlight, a focus on local news still holds true today: “News production is still strongly geared toward news agendas that prioritize domestic news. Media coverage primarily features national actors and interests, and journalists speak to national or local audiences.”<sup>65</sup>

Overall, the concept of journalism cultures remains vague. Hahn and Schröder highlight the relevance of country-level contextual factors by defining ‘journalism culture’ as journalistic practices, professional standards, and ethical aspects. Different journalism cultures have historically developed in different countries, influenced by different political, economic, legal, historical, social, anthropological, cultural, linguistic, and distributive framework conditions. In terms of international journalism research, the authors call for an open debate about whether a universal global journalism culture exists at all and what the relevant developments

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<sup>64</sup> Cf. Hanitzsch, T. (2007-b), pp. 164/165.

<sup>65</sup> Hanitzsch, T., Donsbach, W. (2012). p. 263.

in that direction might be.<sup>66</sup> As Golding illustrated as early as the 1970s, it is of course debatable whether a universal, homogenized journalism culture is a concept or reality that we should strive for, especially in the context of globalization.<sup>67</sup> According to Prinzing in a discussion of European journalism cultures, globalization – rather than cultural homogenization – could potentially lead to a cultural openness based on the promotion of dialogue.<sup>68</sup>

While there is a consensus on the contextual factors shaping journalism cultures in specific countries or cases, the conceptual approaches available for their study are rather heterogeneous. In line with the three dimensions of journalism culture, Hanitzsch and Donsbach identify three strands of research, distinguishing between studies that investigate news decisions, news cultures, and professional orientations:

**News decision** research explores the role of journalists as political actors, which holds particularly true for journalists working for German newspapers aligned with specific political parties, as Donsbach demonstrated in 1982.<sup>69</sup> Köcher pioneered comparative research in this field by looking at the differences in role perceptions between German and British journalists.<sup>70</sup> A survey conducted in the 1990s by Donsbach, together with Patterson, partly confirmed Köcher's findings and highlighted that

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<sup>66</sup> Cf. Hahn, O, Schröder, R, Dietrich, S. (2008). Journalistische Kulturen. Forschungstypologie und Aufriss. In Hahn, O, Schröder R. (eds.) *Journalistische Kulturen. Internationale und interdisziplinäre Theoriebausteine*, Cologne, Germany: Herbert von Halem Verlag, p. 7.

<sup>67</sup> Cf. Golding, P. (1997). Media Professionalism in the Third World. In Curran, J. M., Gurevitch, M., Wollacott, J.(eds.) *Mass Communication and Society* (pp. 291-308). London, U.K.: Open University.

<sup>68</sup> Cf. Prinzing, M. (2008). Spurensuche zu einer hybridisierten Weltkultur des Journalismus. Europäisierung, Globalisierung und gegenläufige Tendenzen. In Hahn, O, Schröder H, Dietrich, S. (eds.) *Journalistische Kulturen. Internationale und interdisziplinäre Theoriebausteine*. (pp. 168-181). Cologne, Germany: Herbert von Halem Verlag.

<sup>69</sup> Cf. Donsbach, W. (1982). Legitimacy Through Competence Rather Than Value Judgments: The Concept of Journalistic Professionalization Reconsidered. *Gazette*, 27(1), 47-67.

<sup>70</sup> Cf. Köcher, R. (1986). Bloodhounds or Missionaries: Role Definitions of German and British Journalists. *European Journal of Communication*, 1(1), 43-64.

partisanship was more influential on news decisions in a country like Germany than in the United States, or other European countries such as Sweden.<sup>71</sup>

Regarding *news cultures*, Hanitzsch and Donsbach maintain that the academic study of journalism cultures has traditionally adopted the perspective of individual journalists, and their professional values and norms, whereas this strand of the comparative research on journalism cultures draws attention to media and communication cultures by adopting a macro level view on its media and political systems. In addition to this broader, less subjective focus away from individual journalistic attitudes and beliefs, a news culture perspective also includes research into media content and journalistic practices. The authors refer to Chalaby's famous study of the development of French journalism from the 1830s to 1920s, which he compared to Anglo-American news culture, wherein he argues that, for various reasons, journalism developed faster in the United States and Great Britain, and that Anglo-American journalists were thus the inventors of modern news journalism. Chalaby identified several factors that determined the powerful role of American and British news journalism: the distinction of press and literature, the political independence of news journalists, the financial viability of newspapers (based on sales and advertising revenue), and last but not least, the linguistic and geo-political advantage of English and British journalists.<sup>72</sup>

Hallin and Mancini joined this line of thought by emphasizing that differences in national journalistic cultures are rooted in the given political systems. Accordingly, they developed three models for media systems<sup>73</sup> in Western Europe and Northern America, characterized by media

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<sup>71</sup> Cf. Donsbach, W, Patterson, T.E. (2004). Political News Journalists: Partisanship, Professionalism, and Political Roles in Five Countries. In Esser, E, Pfetsch, B. (eds.) *Comparing Political Communication: Theories, Cases, Challenges* (pp. 251-270). New York, U.S.A.: Cambridge University Press.

<sup>72</sup> Cf. Chalaby, J. (1996). Journalism as an Anglo-American Invention: A Comparison of the Development of French and Anglo-American Journalism, 1830s-1920s. *European Journal of Communication*, 11(3), 303-326.

<sup>73</sup> North Atlantic/liberal, Northern European/democratic corporatist and Mediterranean/polarized pluralist model

markets, political parallelism, professionalization, and state intervention.<sup>74</sup> Hanitzsch and Donsbach claim that each of these four dimensions, responsible for the most significant differences of national media systems, equally impact journalism cultures in a country.<sup>75</sup>

The results of newer research suggest a convergence of national news cultures and the emergence of transnational news cultures. To give but one example for such converging news cultures, Esser's research on political reporting in Western countries investigated patterns of political news cultures in Germany, the United States, the United Kingdom and France, building on previous research by Chalaby, Hallin and Mancini, among others. Through an empirical analysis of TV election reporting, Esser proposed three types of political news cultures: 1. a highly interventionist, American, approach, 2. a moderate, Anglo-German, interventionism and 3. a non-interventionist,<sup>76</sup> French, political news culture.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> Cf. Hallin, D. Mancini, P. (2004). *Comparing Media Systems. Three Models of Media and Politics*. Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press.

<sup>75</sup> Hallin and Mancini have been criticized for not including developing countries in their modular approach. In response to that, they published an anthology including perspectives on and from the Global South: Hallin, D. Mancini, P. (2012). *Comparing Media Systems Beyond the Western World*. Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press. There have been other valid efforts to include a more diverse range of national political, socio-economic and cultural framework conditions shaping media systems and thereby news cultures and journalistic practices. A detailed discussion of different model approaches to political and media systems shaping country-based journalistic cultures would exceed the scope of this thesis. Yet, I will touch again on the topic in Chapter 4.2. when outlining the national context of media, journalism and journalism education in Vietnam and Cambodia. In particular, I will refer to Blum's (2014) comparative approach and Meyen's (2018) typology of mass media systems as two of the most recent attempts including developing countries and contexts: Cf. Blum, R. (2014). *Lautsprecher und Widersprecher. Ein Ansatz zum Vergleich der Mediensysteme*. Cologne, Germany: Herbert von Halem Verlag; cf. Meyen, M. (2018). Journalists' Autonomy around the Globe: A Typology of 46 Mass Media Systems. *Global Media Journal. German Edition*, 8(1), 1-23.

<sup>76</sup> In this context, 'interventionism' can be defined as the level of subjective reporting on political campaigns, i.e. journalists using their own formulations and evaluations. The concept also takes into consideration whether and to what extent journalists allow (or do not allow) politicians to present themselves in their reports. Cf. Hanitzsch, T., Donsbach, W. (2012), pp. 268f.

<sup>77</sup> Cf. Esser, F. (2008). Dimensions of Political News Cultures: Sound Bite and Image Bite News in France, Germany, Great Britain, and the United States. *The International Journal of Press/Politics*. 13(4), 401-428.

Although it goes beyond the scope of this study to include the state of media content research with respect to journalism cultures here, it is worth highlighting that this strand of research has many connections to media content research. A comparative media content analysis by Shoemaker and Cohen, for example, investigated 32,000 news items from ten countries across world regions, from Germany and Australia to emerging economies such as South Africa and India and revealed a common understanding of what the news should consist of. This universal or transnational news culture stands in contrast to the significant differences visible with national media systems.<sup>78</sup> However, apart from the BRIC<sup>79</sup> nations, Shoemaker's and Cohen's selection of countries did not include Least Developed Countries (LDC),<sup>80</sup> where other factors may be influential. In these parts of the world, news cultures might express themselves differently than in developed countries.

Studies on *professional orientation* form the third field of journalism culture research that is closely linked to journalism education. They focus primarily on role perceptions and the ethics of journalists. As mentioned earlier, even though McLeod and Rush published the first cross-cultural study of American and Latin American journalists in the 1960s, comparative studies of journalism cultures only received serious academic attention 30 years later. Among the most important is the groundbreaking 2012 anthology *The Global Journalist in the 21st Century*, edited by Weaver and Willnat. It showcases an outstanding range of country-specific empirical studies, with an impressive diversity in their research designs.<sup>81</sup> It is debatable to what extent these national studies are comparable to one another, or whether they should be viewed as a kaleidoscope of individual case studies. While this is certainly a strength of the volume, the project

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<sup>78</sup> Cf. Shoemaker, P. J., Cohen, A. A. (2006). *News Around the World. Content, Practitioners, and the Public*. New York, U.S.A.: Routledge.

<sup>79</sup> BRIC – Brazil, Russia, India, China.

<sup>80</sup> In this publication, I primarily use the term 'developing countries' for readability reasons referring to LDC countries as defined by the United Nations: "Least developed countries (LDCs) are low-income countries confronting severe structural impediments to sustainable development. They are highly vulnerable to economic and environmental shocks and have low levels of human assets."; cf. UNDESA (n.d.-c). *Our Work. Least Developed Countries*: <https://www.un.org/development/desa/dpad/our-work.html> [Last retrieved 8/1/2021].

<sup>81</sup> Weaver, D.H., Willnat, L. (2012). *The Global Journalist in the 21st Century*. New York, U.S.A.: Routledge.

lacks a common theoretical and contextual basis or the application of similar research methods across different countries. As such, not all conclusions derived from this compilation are likely to remain valid.

Similarly, Sparks' and Splichal's milestone research exploring the professional motivation and role perceptions of journalism students in 22 countries falls reveals significant intra-country variability in the self-perception of journalists, although similarities in professional orientations outweigh the differences.<sup>82</sup> As this study was particularly groundbreaking for the sub-discipline of journalism education research, it is discussed in detail in Chapter 2.2.2. Here, it is important to note that the study sparked a debate about the universality of professional orientations.

Initiated by Zhu et al<sup>83</sup> in the late 1990s, the number of cross-national studies focusing on ethical views and their relevance for journalistic practices in different world regions beyond Europe and North America increased.<sup>84</sup> Latin American researchers followed this trend, comparing countries from a particular geographical region.<sup>85</sup>

In this context, the empirical Worlds of Journalism<sup>86</sup> study (WJS), which began in 2007 and initially included 21 countries, must be highlighted. It was built upon a common conceptual roadmap of journalism culture from the very beginning, and thus provides a solid theoretical foundation for a systematic comparison. The research project focuses on the different ways in which journalists around the globe perceive their professional role and responsibilities in society through a multi-level contextual approach that considers individual, organizational, and societal influences. In an ongoing iterative process in a steadily growing number of countries,

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<sup>82</sup> Cf. Splichal, S, Sparks, C. (1994).

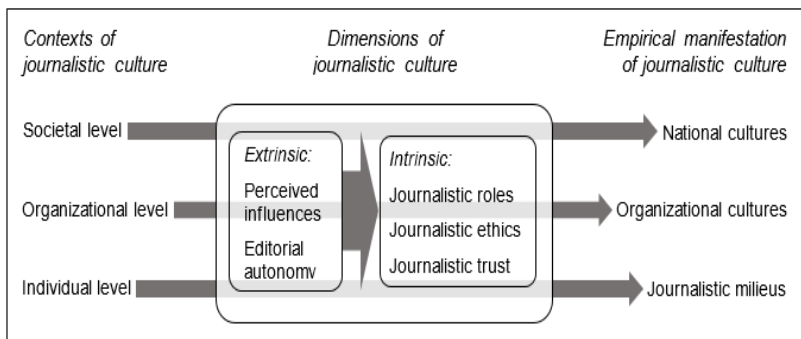
<sup>83</sup> Cf. Zhu, J, Weaver, D.H, Lo, V, Wei Wu C.C. (1997). Individual, organizational, and societal influences on media role perceptions: A comparative study of journalists in China, Taiwan, and the United States. *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly*, 74(1), 84-96.

<sup>84</sup> Cf. Lo, V, Man Chan, J, Pan, Z. (2005). Ethical Attitudes and Perceived Practice: A Comparative Study of Journalists in China, Hong Kong and Taiwan. *Asian Journal of Communication*, 2(2), 154-172.

<sup>85</sup> Cf. Mellado, C, Lagos, C, Moreiva, S.V, Hernández, M. (2012). Comparing Journalism Cultures in Latin America: The Case of Chile, Brazil and Mexico. *International Communication Gazette*, 74(1), 60-77.

<sup>86</sup> Worlds of Journalism: [www.worldsofjournalism.org](http://www.worldsofjournalism.org) [Last retrieved 8/1/2021]; cf. Hanitzsch, T., Hanusch, F., de Beer, A.S. (2019). *Worlds of Journalism: Journalistic Cultures Around the Globe*. New York: Columbia University Press.

different dimensions of journalism culture, including both intrinsic and extrinsic factors, have been defined. These, in turn, have been conceptualized as empirical manifestations of journalism culture on the micro, meso and macro level (see Figure 1).



**Figure 1: Conceptual Roadmap for the Comparative Study of Journalistic Cultures<sup>87</sup>**

Based on a network of researchers from all around the globe, data from over 27,500 journalists in 67 countries has thus far been collected as part of this landmark study. One key result of the first wave of research (WJS1: 2007 to 2011) is the identification of four types of professional roles: the populist disseminator, the detached watchdog, the critical change agent, and the opportunist facilitator.<sup>88</sup> This classification has been used as a conceptual framework for further studies and research projects on journalism cultures around the globe.<sup>89</sup> Thus far, the WJS has provided the most substantial and sophisticated accounts of different journalistic practices and role perceptions in different parts of the world and in different cultural contexts. The latest wave of research (WJS3: 2021 to 2023)

<sup>87</sup> Worlds of Journalism (n.d.-a). *Conceptual Framework. The WJC 2012-2016*: <https://worldsofjournalism.org/the-wjs-2012-2016-study-conceptual-framework/>. [Last retrieved 8/1/2021].

<sup>88</sup> Hanitzsch, T. (2011). Populist Disseminators, Detached Watchdogs, Critical Change Agents and Opportunist Facilitators: Professional Milieus, the Journalistic Field and Autonomy in 18 Countries. *International Communication Gazette*, 73(6), 477–494.

<sup>89</sup> Worlds of Journalism (n.d.-b). *Publications*: <https://worldsofjournalism.org/publications/> [Last retrieved 8/1/2021].



promises further and even more specific insights into the sources and forms of risks as experienced by journalists around the globe.<sup>90</sup>

To sum up, research into journalistic roles and self-perceptions, functions and professional practices are at the center of international journalism studies. Due to the wide variety of conceptual and methodological approaches to journalism as a profession and the consequent heterogeneity of research results, Josephi deems the academic debate about journalistic professionalism and professionalization to be inadequate. Given the ubiquitous graduatization of journalism, she has urgently called for new perspectives and research initiatives focusing on – or at least paying greater attention to – journalism training and education.<sup>91</sup> Despite its relevance as a formative process and a pathway that shapes both how future journalists perceive their societal role and responsibilities and how they put these norms, values and beliefs into practice in the newsroom, theory-driven empirical research that allows for systematic comparative studies on journalism education in and across national contexts remains a rare undertaking.<sup>92</sup>

Furthermore, journalists' perception of their roles has the potential to influence organizational and national news cultures beyond the individual level. Weaver and Löffelholz criticize that “there are relatively few studies until today that try to link the characteristics and attitudes of journalists, the attributes of news organizations, and societal influences with the kinds of messages journalists produce.”<sup>93</sup> The authors underline the value of interconnecting individual journalistic profiles with the content they produce. On a national level, they argue, studies analyzing the professional attitudes and characteristics of journalists often remain descriptions rather than providing predictions or explanatory concepts. In terms of cross-national comparative studies, Weaver and Löffelholz make some

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<sup>90</sup> Hanusch, F., Hanitzsch, T. (2017). Comparing Journalistic Cultures Across Nations: What We Can Learn from the Worlds of Journalism, *Journalism Studies*, 18(5), 525-535; cf. Worlds of Journalism (n.d.-c). WJS3: 2021 – 223: <https://worldsofjournalism.org/wjs3-2021-2023/> [Last retrieved 8/1/2021]; cf. Hanitzsch, T., Hanusch, F., de Beer, A.S. (2019).

<sup>91</sup> Cf. Josephi, B. (2009-b). Journalists: International Profiles. In: Löffelholz, M., Weaver, D.H. (eds.) *Global Journalism Research. Theories, Methods, Findings, Future*. Singapore, Republic of Singapore: Blackwell Publishing, p. 151.

<sup>92</sup> Cf. Wahl-Jorgensen, K., Hanitzsch, T. (2009-a); cf. Hanitzsch, T. (2009).

<sup>93</sup> Weaver, D.H., Löffelholz, M. (2008), p. 6.

promising attempts to create a connection between the individual and the societal level, although their contributions to advancements on the theoretical level remain limited. Descriptions of journalists, their profession and organizational set-up do not “contribute very much to explaining why news coverage is the way it is and why journalists do their work as they do.”<sup>94</sup>

Weaver and Löffelholz emphasize the importance of looking at the organizational level in order to explore the reciprocal effects between individual journalists and media institutions as a whole. In addition, they believe that macro level conditions such as the influence of political and socio-economic factors must be taken into consideration. While journalism studies have been criticized for being unfocused, it can be argued that the field is inherently heterogeneous and interdisciplinary. Inevitably, researchers studying journalism need to remain open to the multitude of competing perspectives.<sup>95</sup>

Löffelholz also explores the significance of digitalization for journalism studies (see also sub-chapter 4.1), especially the rise of the internet, which has led to changes on various levels from the socio-economic and the organizational, to the working lives of individual journalists and their audiences. Boundaries between these spheres, as well as between countries and national cultures, have begun to blur in response to globalization, engendering both positive and negative effects. In terms of its implications on journalism research, Löffelholz posits:

Given these challenges, journalism will have to adapt to the new situation. This means that theoretical work in journalism may also change, although this is not necessarily the case. A social theory of communication might not be directly influenced by a change in technology, for example. However, if the change in technology corresponds to a change in the social embedding of communication, the theory must consider this.<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> Ibid., p. 7.

<sup>95</sup> Cf. Löffelholz, M. (2008).

<sup>96</sup> Löffelholz, M. (2008), p. 24.

On the one hand, many traditional theories fall short in adequately reflecting the changes that globalization and technological advances have wrought. On the other hand, alongside cultural studies, empirical approaches have the potential to generate new models for communication studies, and functional approaches, system theories and theories of action are able to adapt to these transformative processes. Normative approaches, in contrast, are too inflexible and have become increasingly irrelevant for journalism studies.<sup>97</sup> As a rule, the aim, according to Löffelholz, should not be to replace older theories by newer ones, but to increase complexity by modifying extant perspectives and creating new conceptual approaches.<sup>98</sup>

With respect to this digital transformation, Steensen and Ahva see a new wave of journalism research in the digital age. The academic debate – previously centered around the role of digitalization and whether it brought significant or insignificant changes to the profession – has now shifted, as journalism researchers have begun to challenge the traditional concept of journalism and investigate the very constitution of journalism as a topic unto itself. The authors thus believe that this is a reaction to the need for a greater variety of theoretical approaches in the academic field of journalism studies – a call voiced by many journalism scholars since the turn of the last century.<sup>99</sup> This current phase of theoretical pluralism in response to the transformations wrought by digitalization is closely linked to the global comparative phase of journalism “marked by increasing cooperation and networking among scholars with an ascending international research agenda reflecting the global and the digital nature of information systems.”<sup>100</sup> In this environment, traditional theoretical approaches to journalism might lose their validity. While this does not mean that established theories have become obsolete and must be replaced, various scholars argue that extant concepts and models should be modified, complemented, or refined by new theoretical approaches.<sup>101</sup>

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<sup>97</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, p. 25.

<sup>98</sup> Cf. Steensen, S., Ahva, L. (2015).

<sup>99</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 1/2.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4.

<sup>101</sup> Cf. Löffelholz, M. (2008); cf. Zelizer, B. (2013). On the Shelf Life of Democracy in Journalism Scholarship. *Journalism*, 14(4), 459- 473.

Steensen and Ahva note that, in 2013, a new journal called *Digital Journalism* was launched.<sup>102</sup> The second decade of the new millennium has seen the publication of a wide range of additional literature on digital media and journalism. Some key reference books include *Digital Journalism*,<sup>103</sup> Bradshaw's *The Online Journalism Handbook*,<sup>104</sup> *The SAGE Handbook of Digital Journalism*,<sup>105</sup> *The Routledge Handbook of Developments in Digital Journalism Studies*,<sup>106</sup> and, most recently, Steensen's 2020 *What is Digital Journalism Studies?*<sup>107</sup> Notably, several of these books are edited by the same scholars who had previously published handbooks and anthologies on journalism studies with the intent to contribute to a shared set of perspectives on journalism as an academic discipline with specific sub-disciplines or theoretical and methodical approaches. It would exceed the limitations of this chapter to provide a comprehensive list and discussion of the literature on digital journalism, but sub-chapter 4.1 outlines the concept of digital transformation and its implications for journalism education.

## 2.2 International Journalism Education Research

Before presenting and evaluating the most relevant global research on journalism education and training (sub-chapter 2.2.2), sub-chapter 2.2.1 categorizes the extant literature on international journalism education research with a focus on academic programs and pathways. As a conclusion to this section, sub-chapter 2.2.3 identifies concrete research gaps and needs.

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<sup>102</sup> Cf. Steensen, S., Ahva, L. (2015), p. 10.

<sup>103</sup> Cf. Jones, J. Salter, L. (2012). *Digital Journalism*. London, U.K.: SAGE Publications.

<sup>104</sup> Cf. Bradshaw, P, Rohumaa, L. (2011). *The Online Journalism Handbook. Skills to Survive and Thrive in the Digital Age*. London, U.K.: Routledge.

<sup>105</sup> Cf. Witschge, T, Anderson, C.W, Domingo, D, Hermida, A. (2016). *The SAGE Handbook of Digital Journalism*. London, U.K.: SAGE Publications.

<sup>106</sup> Cf. Eldridge II, S, Franklin, B. (2019). *The Routledge Handbook of Developments in Digital Journalism Studies*. London, U.K.: Routledge.

<sup>107</sup> Cf. Steensen, S., Westlund, O. (2020). *What is Digital Journalism Studies?* London, U.K.: Routledge.

## 2.2.1 Academic Context and Relevant Literature

Journalism education research is situated within international journalism studies, which can be seen as a sub-discipline of media and communication sciences. As such, journalism education appears as a sub-topic in various anthologies and handbooks on journalism studies, such as the *Handbook of Journalism Studies*<sup>108</sup> and *Global Journalism Research*.<sup>109</sup> Certain scholars also present it as a sub-topic in their analyses of media systems and media cultures in specific national or regional contexts.

In addition to journalism studies and media studies, international higher education research is also a neighboring area of research relevant to academic journalism education. While a closer analysis of the state of international research on higher education would exceed the scope of this dissertation, Weiler's meta-analysis of extant cross-national comparative studies of post-secondary education provides a frame of reference for the assessment of the current state and quality of research on international academic journalism education.<sup>110</sup>

In terms of international higher education, three strands of the literature can be distinguished: one, policy-oriented, prescriptive works; two, edited volumes and anthologies and, three, baseline statistical data. Within the discipline, there has been a marked increase in **policy-oriented publications** prescribing the goals and norms of higher education. Here too, the dominance of Western models has been criticized:

The knowledge base of these models poorly fits the cultural traditions and identities of non-Western societies, unduly constrains the international discourse on higher education and knowledge creation and underestimates the significance of non-Western contributions to the worldwide discourse on knowledge.<sup>111</sup>

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<sup>108</sup> Wahl-Jorgensen, K., Hanitzsch, T. (2009-a).

<sup>109</sup> Löffelholz, M., Weaver, D. H. (2008). *Global Journalism Research: Theories, Methods, Findings, Future*. Malden, U.S.A.: Blackwell.

<sup>110</sup> Cf. Weiler, H.N. (2008). Keyword: International Research on Higher Education. Scholarship Between Policy and Science. *Zeitschrift für Erziehungswissenschaft*, 11(4), 516-541.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid., p. 5.

The second body of literature consists of **edited volumes**, anthologies and handbooks that provide an overview of higher education on a national, region or global level. These publications are not always systematic or empirical, but often insightful, according to Weiler. The third type of literature is particularly relevant for a global comparative study on tertiary education research: **Statistical baseline studies**, often produced by international organizations and associations such as the OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development), the World Bank and UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization), deliver important data and information that can be invaluable for the comparative analysis of higher education across countries.

Considering the state of research, both the number of comparative studies and the quantity of researched countries has increased since the turn of the century. According to Weiler, this indicates not only a growing interest in higher education research as an academic field of study, but also its internationalization. Empirical studies no longer focus exclusively on North America, Western Europe, and Australia, but also include Southern and Eastern Europe, Africa, the Middle East, Asia and Latin America. However, there is still a lack of visibility for studies “outside the ‘center’ of the international knowledge system.”<sup>112</sup> Furthermore, Weiler identifies significant analytical and methodological weaknesses in the extant comparative studies. Compared to other disciplines such as political science, there is a lack of research designs that allow for comparative analyses which, in turn, would enable the formulation of theoretical conclusions useful to the field as a whole. He is also critical of the tribal nature of researchers, who do not know of each other, but instead form secluded groups or communities researching in isolation from one another. Weiler argues that “in the long run, research is only as good as the depth of critical reflection on its own epistemological and methodological premises.”<sup>113</sup> As a result of these deficiencies, there is a need for greater self-reflection in the field of higher education research.

In the following, I will assess the state of academic journalism education research. Based on Weiler’s suggestion to categorize the literature on

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<sup>112</sup> Ibid., p. 3.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid., p. 8.

higher education research in order to assess the state-of-the-art and to identify relevant conceptual approaches, the publications discussed here are divided into the following three groups:

1. Global anthologies and comparative studies
2. Statistical data
3. Practice-oriented, standard-setting publications

The primary aim of the following sub-chapter is to give a general overview of the types of research that exist in the field of international journalism education. While this research project focuses on university-level journalism degree programs, it is important to highlight that this literature review also includes studies on both academic journalism education and the non-academic training of journalists.

### 2.2.2 Global Research on Journalism Education and Training

This sub-chapter provides an overview of the most relevant anthologies and global comparative works on journalism education and training. Moreover, it will outline the statistical data made available by the World Journalism Education Council (WJEC).<sup>114</sup> It is worth mentioning here that only very few academic journals dedicated to journalism education and training have emerged thus far, among them *Journalism and Mass Communication Educator*<sup>115</sup> (formerly *Journalism Educator*), established in 1967, and more recently – and with relevance to the regional focus of this study – the *Asia Pacific Media Educator*,<sup>116</sup> the first issue of which was published in June 2012.

#### Statistical Data

Statistical baseline data and databases for journalism education are also very limited. The WJEC initiated a census in 2007,<sup>117</sup> during which the University of Oklahoma identified almost 3,000 university degrees and

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<sup>114</sup> WJEC – World Journalism Education Council: <https://wjec.net/> [Last retrieved 8/1/2021].

<sup>115</sup> *Journalism and Mass Communication Educator*: <https://journals.sagepub.com/loi/jmcb?%20-%201969> [Last retrieved 8/1/2021].

<sup>116</sup> *Asia Pacific Media Educator*: <https://journals.sagepub.com/loi/amea?%20-%202019> [Last retrieved 8/1/2021].

<sup>117</sup> Cf. World Journalism Education Census (n.d.). In *Facebook (Fan page)*: <https://www.facebook.com/wjecensus/> [Last retrieved 8/20/21]; cf. WJEC (n.d.-a). *About WJEC*: [https://wjec.net/?page\\_id=1](https://wjec.net/?page_id=1) [Last retrieved 8/1/2021].

estimated that another 1,000 existed globally at the time.<sup>118</sup> As a result of the three-year census project, the WJEC registered 2,338 journalism programs in their database by 2010.<sup>119</sup>

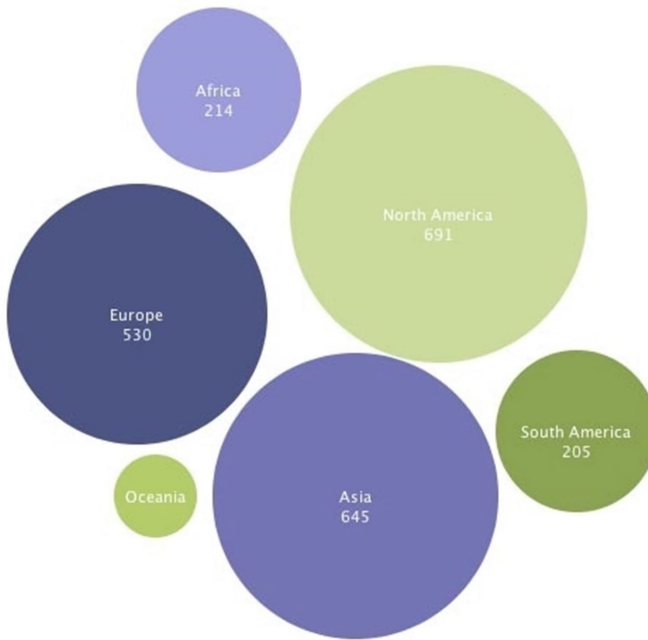
As Figure 2 shows, almost a third (29.56%) of all programs were offered in North America (691), followed by Asia (645) and Europe (530). The number of registered journalism education programs in Latin America and Africa was significantly smaller, with less than 10% each. Oceania is at the end of the spectrum with even fewer journalism training institutions. The informational value of these statistics, however, remains limited as there no further information on, for instance, the number of students enrolled in these programs. In addition, it would be worthwhile to connect the numbers with the local media landscape or at least the total population of a given region. Unfortunately, since 2007 no further census projects have been conducted. Consequently, recent numbers on world-wide journalism education programs are not available.

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<sup>118</sup> Foote, J. (2007). World Journalism Education Congress. Its Importance to ASJC Administrators. *ASJMC Insights, Fall 2007*: <http://asjmc.org/publications/insights/fall2007.pdf> [Last retrieved 8/1/2021].

<sup>119</sup> Cf. Oliver, L. (2010, July 5). *Census Charts the World's Journalism Education Programmes*: <https://www.journalism.co.uk/news/census-charts-the-world-039-s-journalism-education-programmes/s2/a539479/> [Last retrieved 8/1/2021].





**Figure 2: Journalism Education Programs and Education Centers<sup>120</sup>**

### **Global Anthologies and Comparative Studies**

Academic research on journalism education systems has been dominated by case studies of Western countries and regions. Gaunt, Splichal and Sparks published the first groundbreaking volumes on journalism education and training around the world in the 1990s.<sup>121</sup> In 1998, Esser conducted a milestone bi-national study, contrasting German and British journalism, which included an analysis of the journalism education systems in both countries.<sup>122</sup> Even though this study was limited to a comparison of two Western European nations, it remains relevant not only for

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<sup>120</sup> Source: Oliver, L. (2010, July 5)

<sup>121</sup> Cf. Gaunt, P. (1992). *Making the Newsmakers. International Handbook on Journalism Training*. Westport, U.S.A.: Greenwood Press; cf. Splichal, S, Sparks, C. (1994).

<sup>122</sup> Esser, F. (1998). *Die Kräfte hinter den Schlagzeilen*. Freiburg/Munich, Germany: Verlag Karl Albert.

the overall field of journalism studies, but also for its conceptual approaches to journalism education in particular (see Chapter 3).<sup>123</sup>

The beginning of the new millennium was dominated by Eurocentric studies and comparative analyses of European and North American countries, including those conducted by Fröhlich and Holtz-Bacha, Terzis, and Harnischmacher.<sup>124</sup> Notably, there were attempts to engage in worldwide comparative research, including Beer and Merrill's 300-page volume on global journalism, wherein they dedicated significant attention to the topic of journalism education around the world.<sup>125</sup> However, the book lacks a concise comparative approach and thereby provides only a description of journalism education and training in different world regions. It took another decade until the next substantial international comparative study on journalism education and training was published by Josephi in 2010, who compared countries with limited media freedom.<sup>126</sup> In addition, Schmidt contributed to the internationalization of the field by investigating and comparing the journalism education systems of Columbia, Myanmar, Egypt, and Kenya.<sup>127</sup>

In the following, I outline the most relevant findings and limitations of the international comparative studies in chronological order. With *Making the Newsmaker*, Philip Gaunt published one of the first handbooks of international journalism training in 1992.<sup>128</sup> This directory of journalistic training in over 60 countries covers all world regions including the Global South, drawing conclusions on the challenges and opportunities for both

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<sup>123</sup> Esser derives his typology of journalism education systems from Fröhlich and Holtzbacha's four types of journalism education systems first presented in an article in 1993.

<sup>124</sup> Cf. Terzis, G. (2009). *European Journalism Education*. Bristol, U.K.: Intellect; cf. Fröhlich, R, Holtz-Bacha, C. (2003). *Journalism Education in Europe and North America. An International Comparison*. Cresskill, U.S.A.: Hampton Press; cf. Harnischmacher, M. (2010). *Journalistenausbildung im Umbruch. Zwischen Medienwandel und Hochschulreform: Deutschland und U.S.A. im Vergleich*. Konstanz, Germany: UVK.

<sup>125</sup> Cf. de Beer, A.S, Merrill, J.C. (2009). *Global Journalism. Topical Issues and Media Systems* (5<sup>th</sup> edition). Boston, U.S.A.: Pearson Education.

<sup>126</sup> Cf. Josephi, B. (2010). *Journalism Education in Countries with Limited Media Freedom*. New York, U.S.A.: Peter Lang Publishing.

<sup>127</sup> Schmidt, C. (2015). *Journalism Education Standards. An International Comparative Study in the Context of Media Development. Edition International Media Studies, DW Akademie, Band 7*, Berlin, Germany: Vistas Verlag

<sup>128</sup> Cf. Gaunt, P. (1992).

industrialized and developing nations. The study consists of a rather substantial theoretical section, especially when compared to other anthologies, which outlines key concepts and approaches relevant to journalism education around the world. The author defines training needs with reference to the given political and economic influences and presents a typology of training structures. Notably, Gaunt differentiates between major industrial democracies, smaller industrialized countries and developing countries. He distinguishes between at least three sub-categories of developing nations, which primarily mirror their socio-economic contexts: larger, relatively stable economies which have established national journalism training programs and/or organizations; developing nations that send their journalism students to other countries in the region as there are no national training institutions; and national economies that send students to journalism schools and training centers outside their region, often to Western countries. In terms of training structures, Gaunt stresses two main influencing factors:

Firstly, the perception of a journalist's role and function, and secondly, the relations between journalism educators and the media industry. He concludes that, "taken together, these two factors help to shape what is taught, how it is taught and where it is taught, as well as who teaches it and who studies it." <sup>129</sup>

He furthermore emphasizes that, compared to industrialized countries and established democracies, developing nations are more susceptible to external influences. Especially journalism students who come from countries without national training institutions and thus opt to study abroad often face clashes between the cultural values, political views, and economic circumstances prevalent in their own countries and those outside their national or regional borders. Developing nations that provide journalism training at home may be less vulnerable to such external factors but are nonetheless also subject to outside influences. As Gaunt outlines, "many national training centers were originally set up by former colonial powers or are still staffed by educators who were trained in Western centers." <sup>130</sup> In order to make themselves more independent from Western

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<sup>129</sup> Ibid., p. 24.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid., p. 26.

influences and under pressure from local governments, journalism schools have developed their own non-Western educational programs and concepts – a development that, according to Gaunt, has not always had a positive outcome.

A strength of the study lies in the accentuation of economic dependency as another type of external influence that is sometimes related to or indeed resurrects the colonial past of a given country. The provision of technological infrastructure and equipment can certainly be useful, but also dangerous since it can result in continuous dependencies even after colonization has officially ended. The main limitation of this research is that the country chapters, which are relatively short, provide only a superficial overview, and thus lack substantial, in-depth analysis. In addition, or in consequence, the study is unable to provide comprehensive comparative conclusions.

Splichal and Sparks pioneered the field of international comparative research on academic journalism education. Their study included 1,855 students at 47 journalism schools in 22 countries.<sup>131</sup> They explored the challenges to journalism as a profession by assessing the attitudes and motives of first-year university journalism students. The authors stress that at the time the relevance of news media on modern society was undoubtedly becoming increasingly obvious and therefore gained greater attention from researchers. However, as Splichal and Sparks put it, “one of the startling omissions in this debate has been the lack of any serious attention to the people who actually produce the vast floods of news material: the journalists themselves.”<sup>132</sup> According to the authors, this serious deficit in the scholarly discourse is caused by the dominance of research on journalistic content, as well as the socio-economic and political ramifications of national and global power structures.<sup>133</sup> Splichal and Sparks underscore the importance of studying journalism as a profession:

The people who actually carry out the role of news processing, their origins and social positions, their beliefs and values, their

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<sup>131</sup> Cf. Splichal, S, Sparks, C. (1994), pp. 65-68.

<sup>132</sup> Ibid., p. 1.

<sup>133</sup> Cf. Wahl-Jorgensen, K., Hanitzsch, T. (2009-a), p. 7; cf. Weaver, D.H, Löffelholz, M. (2008), p. 4.

assessment of the world and their assessment of themselves, are links in the chain of circumstances which brings us the news we actually get.<sup>134</sup>

Their cross-national study emphasized the value of focusing on similarities rather than differences between the perceptions and attitudes of first-year journalism students aiming to fulfill similar professional functions as future journalists. Notably, the survey encompassed several African and Latin American countries, although India was the only Asian country included. The goal of the empirical research was to uncover whether a trend toward professionalization and homogenization of journalists could be discerned across different countries. Consequently, the overall objective of the study was to check whether journalism students around the world shared common perceptions and attitudes toward their professional career as journalists. In case that their initial hypothesis was verified, the researchers could conclude that national contexts, including socio-economic, political, and ideological factors, were not influential.<sup>135</sup>

With regard to the results, Splichal and Spark note that the younger generation has increasingly taken up journalism as an occupation. In line with this trend, in addition to the tendency toward the ‘graduatization’ (or degree-ification) of journalism, they also discuss the ‘feminization’ of journalism as a profession.<sup>136</sup> Their data also demonstrated how journalism education takes place in a variety of different types of institutions: “In a number of cases these institutional characteristics were found [...] to correlate significantly with students’ motives, values, and attitudes”<sup>137</sup> including their motivation to become journalists, their perception of what or who makes a good journalist, and whether journalism is a profession. Ultimately, Splichal and Sparks’s research revealed that socio-economic framework conditions on a national level do *not* significantly impact the motivation and mindset of first-year journalism students. In fact, the survey participants showed similar attitudes despite considerable demographic differences and differences in journalism programs. Moreover,

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<sup>134</sup> Splichal, S, Sparks, C. (1994), p. 1.

<sup>135</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 57/58.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 105/108.

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.* p. 180.

the authors emphasize that independent and autonomous journalism seemed deeply important to a great majority of the students across countries and continents.<sup>138</sup>

In terms of similarities, students from different nations and institutions perceived the same key obstacles to independent journalistic practice, namely, media ownership and concentration. The study, however, also revealed differences both across countries and within the same national contexts. The researchers highlight that intra-national differences are often significant, and therefore conclude that “the heterogeneity within all countries suggests that there could exist some explanatory variables below the ‘national’ level.”<sup>139</sup> Potential systemic factors include the type of journalism school and the entry requirements or specializations, which could influence student perspectives on the journalistic profession. Moreover, they speculate that common sociodemographic features could also play a role.

Josephi’s edited volume was the first to concentrate on *Journalism Education in Countries with Limited Media Freedom*<sup>140</sup> across world regions, asking whether national journalism education systems reveal parallels to the level of media freedom and the general characteristics of the media system in a given country. The editor aims to respond to the disconnect between, on the one hand, journalism as the fourth estate in democracies, and the reality of teaching journalism in countries under authoritarian rule and, consequently, restricted press freedom, on the other. The selection of twelve country case studies aims to shift the focus to partly free and non-free media systems (based on their Freedom House ranking), covering authoritarian countries and emerging democracies with limited media freedom around the globe, as well the transitional economies of Brazil, China, and Russia. Even though the book lacks a systematic comparative approach based on theoretical concepts that are applied empirically in each country, Josephi’s volume includes not only countries with restricted media freedom, but also aims to leave the classroom perspective by considering the “challenging environment”<sup>141</sup> in which journalists are

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<sup>138</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, p. 179.

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 182.

<sup>140</sup> Cf. Josephi, B. (2010).

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

trained. This includes media laws and ownership, as well as the linkages between the media and governmental bodies, and the newsroom cultures in which journalism graduates start their professional practice. It is certainly true that

only by being aware of how much an undemocratic or semi-democratic government sees media credibility as an asset, or prefers journalistic skills turned into a propaganda tool, can we understand the role journalism education is assigned in countries with partly free or not free status.<sup>142</sup>

The volume includes a chapter on Cambodia, where Western models of journalism education were imported by international aid organizations in an effort to support the country's post-Khmer Rouge transition. As a main finding for the other two Asian countries under investigation, Singapore, and China, Josephi's conclusion highlights "the effectiveness and effortlessness with which cooptation and management have worked in lieu of suppression"<sup>143</sup> particularly in terms of professionalization. This phenomenon also holds true for journalism education in non-democratic media systems in other parts of the world. She also posits that journalism education cannot be considered an indicator of how free or unfree the media system of a particular country is, as "journalism education and media systems are not linked in any systematic way."<sup>144</sup> Josephi stresses that this missing connection is not confined to the developing world but has already been shown in cross- and transnational studies on journalism education in Western democracies.

Instead, historical developments – especially a history of colonialism – and political framework conditions play a much more significant role in shaping journalism education. Overall, the national context has a much weaker influence on journalism education than on journalism practice. In fact, Josephi claims that building blocks of journalism education are becoming more and more universal, especially with respect to the teaching of practical journalistic skills and competencies, but also regarding the

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<sup>142</sup> Ibid., p. 4.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid., p. 4.

<sup>144</sup> Ibid., p. 254.

“Western paradigm of a media informing citizens, acting as a watchdog of government and commenting on societal affairs,”<sup>145</sup> primarily due to the rise in international relationships and exchange programs between journalism schools and their Western counterparts. In addition, the influence of NGOs from the Global North in developing countries has played a key role in shaping the curricula, particularly since the last decade of the twentieth century. Josephi herself outlines that this unifying pattern “corresponds with Splichal’s and Spark’s earlier study of first-year journalism students on their views of professionalization and professional autonomy.”<sup>146</sup>

Correspondingly, Splichal and Sparks found that similarities across national contexts outweigh the significant variances in students’ perceptions of the role of journalists. Their research also identified a universal demand for independent and autonomous journalism which, in turn, manifests itself in a demand for journalism education that accounts for this aspiration. Josephi concludes that the trend toward Westernization in journalism education does not “mask the complex realities of each country and the gradations in critical journalism interaction fostered there.”<sup>147</sup> For example, the quality standards of journalism education in countries with severely restricted media freedom, such as Singapore and Russia, are comparable to those in Western nations, underlining Josephi’s argument that journalism education is not related to media freedom. In this context, the skillful calibration of political coercion must be highlighted, wherein governments allow journalistic independence in certain defined and easily monitored areas, without risking their authoritarian rule.

The case studies further illustrate a division between more affluent nations and those countries dependent on international funding. In Southeast Asia (including Cambodia), Africa and post-communist Europe, journalism education has been deeply influenced and even directly taught by foreign NGOs. Wealthier nations like Russia, Singapore, and Brazil, in contrast, define and design their own journalism education programs and curricula. However, the “pervasiveness of Western-style journalism

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<sup>145</sup> Ibid., p. 254.

<sup>146</sup> Ibid., p. 254.

<sup>147</sup> Ibid., p. 254.



education”<sup>148</sup> in most countries points to a global capitalist media system in which audiences are perceived first as consumers. Future journalists in such countries require training in accordance with these parameters in order to live up to industry standards.

Altogether, the country case studies in this edited volume contribute to the demarcation of journalistic professionalism and professionalization (see also chapter 3). The examples from developing countries reveal that professionalism based on journalistic skills training can increase professionalization in theory, as well as in practice. In China, for instance, professionalism has given journalists not only greater confidence, but also “a legitimate tool to circumvent ideological control.”<sup>149</sup> By contrast, professionalism can also lead to the demise of professional norms and values, especially for journalists in authoritarian countries in terms of their orientation toward public service and journalistic autonomy.

Josephi’s study further reveals that the growing number of journalism graduates does not automatically entail an equal increase in journalistic job opportunities. She expresses concern that a large number of journalism students find jobs in related professional fields such as public relations, which is based on the political or commercial goals of profit-making and persuasion. Again, this trend is not limited to countries with restricted media freedom, and is certainly also highly relevant for Western democracies. Apart from non-journalistic employment in the wider media and communications industry, the non-governmental sector and governmental institutions hire a significant share of journalism graduates. Interestingly, Ibrahim Saleh, author of the chapter on Egypt, claims that local government authorities have made attempts to change the curriculum in order to turn journalism education programs into PR courses; this may also be true for other countries.

In the conclusion, Josephi states that “there are no hard and fast rules as to the role professionalism plays in countries with a not-free status, making it difficult to give a clear answer as to whether and when journalism education is an agent of change.”<sup>150</sup> Not only in the case of Egypt, but

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<sup>148</sup> Ibid., p. 255.

<sup>149</sup> Ibid., p. 256.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid., p. 257.

across the national case studies, there is a stark difference between journalists trained at universities owned or managed by Western organizations, which emphasize the public service function of journalism, and at government-run schools, which are organized according to the interests of the state and the owners of media outlets. Josephi call this the “war between ideologies,”<sup>151</sup> which is also reflected in newsrooms. While journalism education programs certainly bear the potential to become agents of change and transparency, the clash between theory and practice, or ideals and reality, can lead to daily dilemmas, if not considerable disappointment, among journalism graduates entering the workforce. Moreover, several authors in the volume point to the low salaries and bad working conditions in various countries as a further obstacle. Finally, Josephi argues that idealism can put the lives of journalists at risk, when they engage in activities such as promoting participatory debates in order to hold the government accountable.

The case studies presented in the book explicitly illustrate that journalistic freedom is often significantly limited by governments and the owners of media outlets. Josephi is thus convinced that “any purely normative discourse about journalism education in countries with partly free or not-free media, which does not take this power relationship into account, misses an absolutely essential point in the discussion.”<sup>152</sup> Despite the justified critique of the Western paradigm, journalism education programs shaped by the ideal of journalistic autonomy which predominates in the Global North carry the potential to contribute to an awareness of journalistic norms and values which “help journalists to play an active role in media transitions if and when political and legal circumstances permit.”<sup>153</sup>

Regarding the research on individual country cases, it is also worth pointing out that all chapter authors can be described as reform-oriented journalism educators that participate in conversations about journalism training and education beyond the borders of their own country through exchange programs or conference participation. Josephi’s reliance on local

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<sup>151</sup> Ibid., p. 258.

<sup>152</sup> Ibid., p. 258.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid., p. 259.

experts with exposure to regional and international perspectives adds to the quality of the study and sets the benchmark for further research.

Schmidt's comparative study on International Journalism Education Standards (IJES), published in 2015, represents another response to the lack of academic research into journalism education and training in the Global South.<sup>154</sup> Four developing countries from different geographical regions were selected for the analysis: Myanmar, Egypt, Kenya and Colombia. Notably, the IJES study was based on a common conceptual framework and research design. In terms of its theoretical approach, the research project used the WJEC's 11 principles for journalism education, the only available set of global standards (see Chapter 3), as an analytical framework. As the study was commissioned by the academic research section of Deutsche Welle (DW) Akademie, the leading German organization for media development cooperation, it drew particular attention to human rights as a topic in journalism education in developing countries. Freedom of expression and access to information is considered a key objective of projects and programs in the field of media development cooperation.<sup>155</sup> As such, the researchers were interested in whether and how different institutions, including universities, non-academic journalism schools, media organizations and other local training centers integrated human rights into their journalism education curricula.

Methodologically, it is worth highlighting that the team of international researchers jointly developed selection criteria for interviewees and a guideline for semi-standardized expert interviews.<sup>156</sup> The objective of the IJES study was to explore similarities and differences in journalism education between the four countries selected based on desk research and semi-structured expert interviews. Five aspects were of particular interest: the typical journalism education programs and pathways; institutional collaborations; the overall educational goals; the intended learning

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<sup>154</sup> Cf. Schmidt, C. (2015).

<sup>155</sup> Cf. DW Akademie (n.d.) *About Us*: <https://www.dw.com/en/dw-akademie/about-us/s-9519> [Last retrieved 8/1/2021].

<sup>156</sup> The author of this PhD study coordinated the research project on International Journalism Education Standards (IJES) and contributed to the concerted effort of the research team to develop a common conceptual and methodological approach for the country case studies and consequent comparative analysis. To a certain degree, the research can be seen as an exploratory study for this dissertation.

outcomes; and teaching. In total, 43 interviews were conducted by a team of researchers with regional expertise. The transcripts were systematically analyzed using the same set of categories as for the qualitative content analysis. Based on this standardized conceptual approach and research design, the IJES study provides the methodological comparability that several other publications lack (see Chapter 5).

Regarding the outcomes of the study, Schmidt concludes that “university education is of particular importance in developing and transitional countries”<sup>157</sup> for future journalists. More specifically, the research results revealed a consensus among the experts interviewed that entrepreneurship, media management and media economics are deeply relevant to journalism education today. The study identified a concrete demand for “classes of entrepreneurship and new business model ideas in order to give students employment alternatives in a highly competitive labor market.”<sup>158</sup> Depending on the country, media management and economics as a subject are more or less integrated into the curricula. Similar to Josephi’s edited volume, this study identifies challenges related to the labor market and poor remuneration after graduation. Various experts in different countries also highlighted the problems of nepotism and political interference into journalistic content. Furthermore, the interviewees believed that journalism students must develop digital and social media skills as part of their training or degree program. The conceptualization and integration of adequate course content in this rapidly changing field poses greater challenges in some countries than in others, often because instructors do not have the necessary qualifications or because technical infrastructure is missing.

Closely linked to the lack of equipment, the study accentuates another issue negatively impacting journalism education in developing countries: Many training programs and institutes remain dependent on financial and material resources from Western countries. This lack of self-determination is exacerbated by Western-based and thus Western-biased curricula which is often irrelevant to the historical, cultural and social landscape of developing countries and their media systems. Relevant local

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<sup>157</sup> Schmidt, C. (2015), p. 238.

<sup>158</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 241.

framework conditions must be identified and integrated into the research designs and discussion of results.

In a further key finding of the IJES study, journalism education experts underlined that professional values must be at the core of journalism education and that journalism graduates must acquire a clear sense of responsibility with respect to their role and function as journalists in society. The study thus stressed the relevance of “background knowledge in diverse subjects in order to analyze local and [...] global and report about them,”<sup>159</sup> as well as “specialized knowledge”<sup>160</sup> in journalism education. However, the difference between background knowledge and specialized knowledge remains unclear. This lack of clear definition is one of the weaknesses of the study, which subsumes a range of specific reporting skills and areas of journalistic (as well as media and communications) knowledge, including PR, radio and broadcast journalism, as well as design and layout under the latter term.

The researchers identified the limited qualifications of journalism instructors (both university lecturers and trainers), as another obstacle. Furthermore, Schmidt highlights the dominance of theoretical knowledge over practical skills in journalism curricula, a theme taken up by various international journalism scholars (see also sub-chapter 3.1). A clear strength and concrete contribution of the IJES study to international journalism research is that it sheds light on this major problem in developing and transitional countries, which remain chronically underrepresented in academic research. Yet, the findings of the country studies are not sufficiently contextualized, despite the fact that each country chapter begins with a focus on specific historical, geographical, and political factors as well as the local media system. Furthermore, the national comparisons remain rather descriptive and limited to the initial categorizations.

Although the comparison lacks sufficient depth, the study achieved its goal to provide a qualitative, exploratory approach to the issue. The team of authors did not intend to develop a theoretical model for journalism education in developing countries; nonetheless, the conceptual framework and systematic methodological approach lays the groundwork for

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<sup>159</sup> Ibid., p. 239.

<sup>160</sup> Ibid., p. 241.

further research. Moreover, the conclusions contain several relevant take-aways for practitioners in the field of journalism education and media development.

Unfortunately, only after the theoretical and methodological approach of the IJES study was finalized and the data collected, Goodman and Steyn edited a new handbook on *Global Journalism Education in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*.<sup>161</sup> This 2018 volume consists of ten case studies with only very few representing the Global South: While Egypt can be considered a developing country under authoritarian rule, South Africa and Chile should be rather described as transitional economies with limited media freedom. Even though the publication does not apply a clear comparative research design, the editors claim that it contributes to cross-national journalism education research as each chapter follow the same structure, consisting of identical sub-headings and, thus, sub-topics. In addition, tables provide a good overview of the given journalism education systems for each country.

The later chapters of the book contribute to the field of journalism education research by discussing concrete contemporary challenges without losing sight of the specific cultural and political framework conditions in each country. Furthermore, the authors of the individual chapters identify a clear need for innovation and collaboration in the field of journalism education, especially surrounding issues such as digitalization and entrepreneurship. Goodman and Steyn's conclusions are in line with Josephi's and, to some degree with Splichal's and Spark's – in particular, their emphasis on the influence of Western ideas and institutions on journalism education in most of the countries under investigation. They argue that country-specific characteristics and problems within journalism education should not be underestimated and must be more comprehensively researched in the future.<sup>162</sup>

In 2020, Dernbach and Illg edited an anthology on journalism education that centered on developing countries. Emphasizing that “never before

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<sup>161</sup> Goodman, R.S, Steyn, E. (2018). *Global Journalism Education in the 21st Century*. Austin, U.S.A.: Knight Center for Journalism, University of Texas.

<sup>162</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, p. 449

has freedom of the press been so suppressed,”<sup>163</sup> they underline the ever-growing relevance of journalism studies in a world of continuous conflicts and authoritarian rule. While journalists continue to struggle through numerous political and financial crises, there is “a consensus that journalism and media play a very important role in democracies, but above all, in democratization processes in transforming countries and young democracies.”<sup>164</sup> Accordingly, there is no doubt about the relevance of journalism education. In order to fulfill their crucial role, journalists must have access to sufficient training and education to develop the necessary skills and knowledge to adequately analyze the social, economic, political, and cultural structures and processes of the news stories they report on. Rather than focusing on particular countries, the publication consists of reflections on journalism education in the context of democratization and digitalization across different regions such as Brazil, Asia, Africa and the Arab world. Notably, the section on journalism education in Asian countries takes up the largest part of the book.<sup>165</sup>

While it was not possible to integrate the concepts and recommendations outlined in the most recent volumes on international journalism education outlined above into the research design of this present study, the main ideas were included in the interpretation and discussion of the results (chapter 7).

### **Practice-Oriented, Standard-Setting Publications**

The third body of work are publications with a focus on international standards of journalism education and training, which will be covered in sub-chapter 3.3. As the relevant publications were produced by international bodies such as UNESCO and the WJEC, some of this literature is primarily practice rather than research oriented. Due to the normative approach used to formulate their conceptual frameworks and indicators for

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<sup>163</sup> Dernbach, B., Illg, B. (2020). *Journalism and Journalism Education in Developing Countries*. Manipal, India: Manipal Universal Press, p. 1.

<sup>164</sup> Ibid., p. 2.

<sup>165</sup> The anthology includes a Chapter (2.2.) presenting preliminary results of this dissertation with a focus on the history and current state of journalism education in Cambodia and Vietnam: Martens-Edwards, E. (2020). Historical Development and Current Challenges of Academic Journalism Education in Vietnam and Cambodia. In Dernbach, B, Illg, B. (eds.) *Journalism and Journalism Education in Developing Countries* (pp. 92-101). Manipal, India: Manipal Universal Press.

quality journalism education, the selected publications have special relevance for the theoretical approach of this research project, and thus go beyond the aim of this discussion on the state of the research.

### 2.2.3 Research Gaps and Recommendations

To summarize the relevance of the research on academic journalism education programs, Splichal and Sparks rightly state that, “even where the problems of professionalization and journalism formation systems have been subject to investigations, they were usually limited to national or regional rather than international empirical research and to normative rather than theoretical discussions.”<sup>166</sup> Given their identification of the worldwide trend toward the graduatization of journalism, their findings underline the need for further research on journalism education, and in particular on academic programs. Systematic and comparative analyses of program structures and content will enhance our understanding of the foundations of journalistic professionalism and role perceptions.

As this review of the relevant literature on global comparative journalism studies and journalism education has shown, a significant number of publications lack systematic comparative approaches based on concise, theory-based conceptualizations. Within the empirical research, there is also a lack of comparability between research questions and, accordingly, the operationalization of research topics. In many studies, the selection criteria for the country case studies is unclear or has not been defined at all. As a consequence, research instruments and the methodologies are frequently not discussed. Furthermore, research in developing countries is often defined by a lack of access and funding. Nonetheless, strictly speaking, each of these requirements must be fulfilled in order to craft valid conclusions of empirical value. While pragmatism is certainly useful when studying the Global South, these *sine qua non* conditions must be understood not only as the standard for quality academic research but also, even more importantly, as limiting factors and structural challenges for studies that aim to contribute to an internationalized scholarly debate.<sup>167</sup>

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<sup>166</sup> Splichal, S, Sparks, C. (1994), p. 2.

<sup>167</sup> For more insight into this debate: Cf. Curran, J, Park, M.-J. (2000). *De-Westernizing Media Studies*. London, U.K.: Routledge.



From a more practical perspective, in order to counterbalance journalism education research dominated by Western scholars and case studies, researchers must continue to increase the number of non-Western case studies and include a greater number of scholarly perspectives from the Global South.<sup>168</sup> Josephi's anthology represents a significant contribution in that direction, even if its theoretical and conceptual weaknesses limit the comparative value of the volume's conclusions. Similarly, the IJES study was conducted by a team of researchers with local expertise, which provided for a solid theoretical approach and greater methodological comparability. Even though its comparative analysis of a small number of case studies remain rather descriptive, the study identified several thematic areas that need further investigation, including the role of media management and entrepreneurial, digital and specialized journalistic skills and competencies in global journalism education.

In order to adequately examine the integration of specialized topics and competencies in journalism education, a clearer conceptual approach to different types of journalistic competencies is necessary. As such, journalistic competencies must be definitionally separated from those of other professions in the realm of media and communications, including marketing, advertising, and PR. Moreover, it is evident that organizational issues within journalism education institutions – that is, meso level aspects – play a significant role in shaping the training of future journalists. Josephi's volume and other earlier publications leave no doubt that framework conditions, especially political and historical context, impact journalism and journalism education in a given country. More research is needed to further assess the complexities of these factors and to untangle which ones are most likely responsible for variations across national and intra-national boundaries.

Taking Schmidt's research as starting point, it is advisable to take on a mixed-method approach by generating quantitative data, for instance, through surveys of the recipients of journalism education. In order to

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<sup>168</sup> Cf. Deuze, M. (2006). Global Journalism Education. A Conceptual Approach. *Journalism Studies*, 7(1), 19-34; cf. Harnischmacher, M. (2019). Internationale Perspektive. In Gossel, B. M., Konyen, K. (eds.) *Quo Vadis Journalistenausbildung? Befunde und Konzepte für eine zeitgemäße Journalistenausbildung* (pp. 81-89). Wiesbaden, Germany: Springer VS.

deepen the empirical analysis, it is vital to widen the selection of interview partners to include the perspectives of journalism educators, in particular teachers and trainers, to better understand the meso and micro level of journalism education institutions and the programs on offer. In order to draw conclusions that allow for a refinement of extant Western-centered theoretical concepts and international normative frameworks, the data needs to be situated in the concrete context of developing countries.

In addition, even though digitalization has certainly been discussed on a normative and curricular level both in the Global North and South, the topic has been widely neglected in recent studies on journalism education. While the wider field of journalism studies has long identified this overarching trend, receiving increasing attention in handbooks and academic journals, the repercussions of digitalization for journalism education have not been empirically conceptualized thus far. For that reason, the topic will receive particular attention in this research project.

In order to actively contribute to the identified needs for further research, sub-chapter 3.3 on normative approaches to journalism education includes a discussion of ‘specialization’ in journalism, an important element of various competence models in the extant literature. The more recent concept of ‘digitalization’ and its transformative impact on media and journalism, the under-researched fields of ‘media management’ and ‘entrepreneurial journalism,’ and the relevant aspects of ‘development’ and ‘development journalism’ are defined in sub-chapter (4.1). Chapter 4 is dedicated to providing greater context for the research project as a whole, including the framework conditions of the media and journalism education systems in Cambodia and Vietnam. These considerations are vital to understanding the empirical research design (chapter 5), data analysis (chapter 6) and discussion of the results (chapter 7).



### **3. Theoretical and Conceptual Approaches to Journalism Education**

The disparity between the large number of empirical studies and the lack of qualitative theory-based analyses in the field of journalism research has been widely critiqued. As Esser emphasizes, although empirical findings are *sine qua non* for scientific research, they must be based on adequate theoretical analyses in order to develop a sound basis for new conceptual approaches and theories.<sup>169</sup>

Sub-chapters 3.1 and 3.2 explore theories of journalism and journalism education relevant to the empirical study of academic journalism education: Sub-chapter 3.1.1 provides insights into functional approaches to journalism, with a particular focus on Esser's multi-level model of journalism, which represents a robust theoretical framework for this study, as it allows for a functional classification of journalism education within a given society and media system. Sub-chapter 3.1.2 outlines the debate around journalism as a profession and the process of professionalization. Taking a structural approach to journalism education programs and institutions, sub-chapter 3.2.1 explores the historical origins and evolution of tertiary journalism education in Western democracies. The sub-chapter 3.2.2 presents existing typologies and classifications of academic and non-academic journalism education. The potential structural advantages of journalism education at universities will be illustrated together with the frequently discussed dichotomies between academia and industry, theory, and practice (sub-chapter 3.2.3).

Sub-chapter 3.3 looks at the relevant normative concepts and international standards of journalism education. First, I discuss and analyze competence models that emerged in the German scholarship in the 1990s and have since been developed and debated further (sub-chapter 3.3.1). To counterbalance these Western-dominated views and provide for a more inclusive perspective that could also apply to developing and transition countries, existing international standards (sub-chapter 3.3.2) and model curricula for journalism education in the Global South (sub-chapter 3.3.3)

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<sup>169</sup> Esser, F. (1998), p. 22.

will be reviewed in detail. Sub-chapter 3.3.4 presents the relevant analytical dimensions and indicators for quality journalism education.

Building on these model approaches as well as the state of empirical research (see Chapter 2), the aim of this section is to provide a cohesive conceptual framework for the empirical study in the specific context of digital transformation and developing countries (see Chapter 4).

### **3.1 Functional Approaches to Journalism and Journalism Education**

This theoretical chapter lays the groundwork for the conceptualization of the larger study by outlining the relevant *functional approaches* to and multi-level perspectives on journalism and journalism education. The following sub-chapter describes the interrelationships between the journalistic profession and educational pathways and programs, including the key issue of whether access to the profession – and thereby to the process of journalistic professionalization – should be restricted or not.

#### **3.1.1 Functional Classifications and Multi-Level Model of Journalism**

While a universally valid, general definition of ‘journalism’ is difficult to provide, the information and public service functions of journalism are frequently highlighted as inherent features.<sup>170</sup> For instance, the American Press Institute, with reference to the Committee of Concerned Journalists, provides the following definition of journalism:

The purpose of journalism is [...]. to provide citizens with the information they need to make the best possible decisions about their lives, their communities, their societies, and their governments.<sup>171</sup>

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<sup>170</sup> Cf. Mast, C. (2008). ABC des Journalismus. Cologne, Germany: Herbert von Halem Verlag, p. 110; Donsbach, W, Fiedler, T. (10/2008). Journalism School Curriculum Enrichment. A Midterm Report of the Carnegie-Knight Initiative on the Future of Journalism Education. Joan Shorenstein Center on the Press, Politics and Public Policy/Harvard University, p. 4: [http://shorensteincenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/journalism\\_school\\_curriculum\\_enrichment\\_2008.pdf](http://shorensteincenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/journalism_school_curriculum_enrichment_2008.pdf) [Last retrieved 8/1/2021].

<sup>171</sup> American Press Institute (n.d.) Journalism Essentials. What is the Purpose of Journalism: <https://www.americanpressinstitute.org/journalism-essentials/what-is-journalism/purpose-journalism/> [Last retrieved 8/1/2021].

In assessing relevant theoretical approaches to the field of journalism studies, it is worth noting that there is also no universal definition of *who* a journalist is or should be. Donsbach suggests a distinction between three groups of definitions: normative, functional (empirically determined) and structural.<sup>172</sup>

*Normative definitions* reflect an ideal scenario and focus on the professional values and ethics of journalistic practice. There is an abundance of codes of conduct and professional standards rooted in specific cultural and historical contexts (see sub-chapter 2.2). Codes of conduct are usually issued by journalism associations and national media organizations. Moreover, there have also been global attempts at codification, such as the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) development of a universal charter for the conduct of journalists.<sup>173</sup> While a further analysis of international approaches to journalistic ethics goes beyond the scope of this study, it is important to note that normative theories often stress the societal function of journalism in democratic political systems. The term ‘fourth estate’ was first coined by Edmund Burke in 1787 and highlights the responsibility of journalism to frame the public and political debate. In today’s era of fake news, misinformation and disinformation, journalism is widely perceived as an ever more important ‘watchdog,’ a role closely related to its traditional function of providing information to the public, but now combined with additional service functions such as investigative reporting and fact-checking.<sup>174</sup>

Furthermore, journalism can and is frequently defined by the *structural characteristics* of the ‘profession.’ In Germany, for example, journalism has traditionally been defined through a plethora of professional activities and job titles. However, the great variety of journalistic job titles shows that this definition is unable to systematically describe the complexity of

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<sup>172</sup> Cf. Donsbach, W. (2009). Journalist. In Noelle-Neumann, E, Wilke, J, Schulz, W. (eds.) Fischer Lexikon. Publizistik. Massenkommunikation. Frankfurt am Main, Germany: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, p. 82.

<sup>173</sup> Cf. IFJ – International Federation of Journalists (n.d.-b) Global Charter of Ethics for Journalists: <https://www.ifj.org/who/rules-and-policy/global-charter-of-ethics-for-journalists.html> [Last retrieved 8/1/2021].

<sup>174</sup> Cf. Berger, G. (2000) Grave New World? Democratic Journalism Enters the Global Twenty-first Century. *Journalism Studies*, 1(1), 81-99; Hanitzsch, T. (2007-a) Deconstructing Journalism Culture: Toward a Universal Theory, *Communication Theory*, 17(4), 367-385.

‘journalism’ as it sets the agenda for and provides the content of public debate. As Weischenberg stresses, journalism depends directly on its social and historical context and a variety of influencing factors.<sup>175</sup> Similarly, Dernbach and Loosen, based on their recent analysis of concepts, methods and examples of journalism education in Germany, come to the conclusion that such educational programs form an integral part of a complex and continuously evolving system of political, economic, legal, technological and cultural framework conditions. They further highlight that academic journalism degrees are specifically rooted in both their higher education systems and the media sector.<sup>176</sup>

*Functional approaches*, in turn, are based on empirical accounts of the role of journalism within larger societal and media systems, such as Luhmann’s system theory and Rühl’s perception of newsrooms as organized, autonomous social systems, rather on the activities of individual journalists.<sup>177</sup> Based on Esser’s theoretical multi-level approach to journalism as a societal sub-system, this study takes on a holistic perspective and provides a classification of journalism education within its societal and media systems. The integrated model is a combination of structural and functional approaches. It suggests that journalistic work is influenced on multiple levels by different factors, which form the contextual framework through which journalism can be analyzed comprehensively and systematically.<sup>178</sup> Notably, Esser’s multi-level approach is derived from earlier theoretical models including Weischenberg’s onion metaphor,<sup>179</sup> Donsbach’s sphere model,<sup>180</sup> Schimank’s integrated system, institution and

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<sup>175</sup> Cf. Weischenberg, S. (2004).

<sup>176</sup> Dernbach, B, Loosen, W. (2012). *Didaktik der Journalistik. Konzepte, Methoden und Beispiele aus der Journalistenausbildung*. Wiesbaden, Germany: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, p. 13.

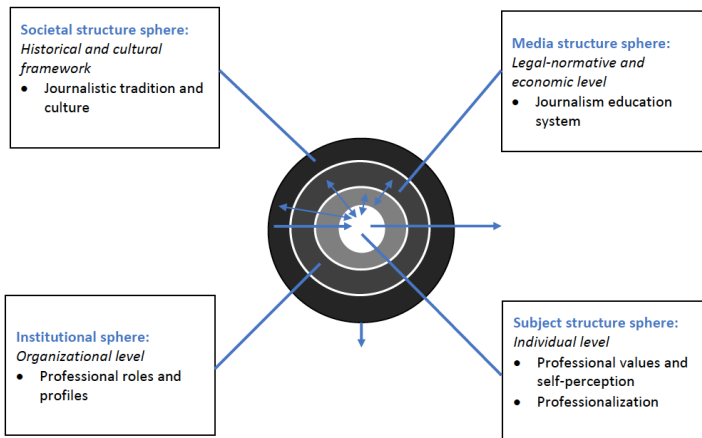
<sup>177</sup> Cf. Luhmann, N. (1995). *Die Realität der Massenmedien*. Opladen, Germany: Westdeutscher Verlag; cf. Rühl, M. (1969).

<sup>178</sup> Cf. Esser, F. (1998), pp. 26/27.

<sup>179</sup> Cf. Weischenberg, S. (2004), p. 68.

<sup>180</sup> Cf. Donsbach, W. (1987). Journalismusforschung in der Bundesrepublik: Offene Fragen trotz Forschungsboom. In J. Wilke (ed.) *Zwischenbilanz der Journalistenausbildung. Schriftenreihe der Deutschen Gesellschaft für Publizistik- und Kommunikationswissenschaft*, 14, p. 112. (Sammelband oder Journalartikel?)

actor analysis,<sup>181</sup> and Glaser and Strauss's principles of empirically-based theory development.<sup>182</sup> Accordingly, the details of the model are built upon the comparative results of international journalism research, in particular newsroom and communicator research.<sup>183</sup>



**Figure 3: Functional, Multi-level Model of Journalism and Journalism Education**<sup>184</sup>

As Figure 3 illustrates, this model delineates four spheres: 1. societal structure, 2. institutional structure, 3. media structure, and 4. the individual, subject structure sphere. The outer level represents the historical and cultural context of a given society. The text boxes highlight the most relevant aspects shaping journalism education on all four levels. Whereas the complete model includes more factors, this figure only presents the most important influencing factors for journalism education.

<sup>181</sup> Schimank, U. (1996). *Theorien gesellschaftlicher Differenzierung*. Opladen, Germany: Leske + Budrich.

<sup>182</sup> Cf. Esser, F. (1998), p. 25; cf. Glaser, B. G., Strauss, A. L. (1967). *The Discovery of Grounded Theory. Strategies for Qualitative Research*. Chicago, U.S.A.: Aldine.

<sup>183</sup> Cf. Esser, F. (1998), pp. 28ff.

<sup>184</sup> Translated from Esser, F. (1998), p 27.



In addition to journalistic tradition and culture, the **societal structure level** also includes media and press freedom, the historical development and societal role of the media, and political culture and socio-political framework conditions. Journalism training and education itself is located within the **media structure level**, which can be described as the legal-normative and economic orientation necessary for journalistic decisions and actions. Beyond the journalism education system, the media structure is determined by media market conditions, media law, professional ethics, and self-regulation and journalism associations and unions.

The **institutional structure level** represents the organizational context and structures that shape the professional profiles and functional divisions, roles, and responsibilities that have particular significance for journalism education. Furthermore, the institutional level consists of editorial workflows and newsroom technologies. The inner layer is the **subject structure level** which reflects those individual professional values and self-perceptions, as well as the process of journalistic professionalization, that are closely linked to journalism education. This sphere also consists of personal values and political attitudes, as well as the socio-demographic characteristics of the journalist.

All four spheres both interact with other societal sub-systems and are interconnected with each other in multiple and complex ways. In particular, factors from the societal sphere have an impact on professional identity and journalistic activity at the center of the model. Conversely, subjective values and attitudes cannot translate into media content directly and must first pass through the filtering process the outer layer provides.

Due to its holistic, in-depth approach, Esser's integrated model of journalism provides a valuable basis for the description of country-specific framework conditions for journalism and journalism education. It also allows for a systematic, theory-based analysis of the empirical findings on journalism education and the factors that influence it on all four levels. Apart from the journalism education system, which forms part of the media landscape, structural aspects such as market conditions and socio-political factors are also considered (media structure sphere), with the following aspects receiving particular attention due to their direct implications for journalism education:

- Journalistic culture and traditions including the historical origins of journalism and journalism education (societal sphere)
- Professional roles and profiles (institutional sphere)
- Professional values and self-perceptions (individual sphere)

As Esser's model illustrates, theoretical approaches to journalism education are closely linked to larger debates – within the profession, relevant institutions and society – surrounding the question of professional identity and role perceptions.<sup>185</sup> As a result, journalism as a profession and journalism education cannot be considered in isolation from each other.

### **3.1.2 Interrelationship Between Journalism as a Profession and Journalism Education**

Journalism education is not only defined by the same societal framework conditions as the journalistic profession, but also constructs reality based on the same context. Weischenberg views journalism education as a self-sufficient field, since it re-constructs and guides the construction of reality – no more, but also no less.<sup>186</sup>

To understand the interrelations of journalism and the role of journalism education in the process of journalistic professionalization, it is important to explore the notion of journalism as a profession: First of all, journalism as field is defined by an exceptional level of openness, both in terms of entering the work force and conducting journalistic work. Acknowledging the dependency of the journalistic profession on certain political and economic settings, Hallin and Mancini highlight the lack of a common knowledge base as a central characteristic of journalism. In contrast to journalists, professionals such as lawyers, architects, doctors, or engineers must refer to a repertoire of specialist know-how and expertise.<sup>187</sup> Kepplinger, however, argues that if journalism is a profession, it must be based on specialized knowledge and a shared theoretical framework. Furthermore, entry into the profession should thus be regulated through

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<sup>185</sup> Cf. Dernbach, B. Loosen, W. (2012), p. 11.

<sup>186</sup> Translation of original quote: "Sie (die Journalismusausbildung) re-konstruiert und leitet zur Konstruktion an – nicht mehr, aber auch nicht weniger.", Weischenberg, S. (1998), pp. 17/18.

<sup>187</sup> Cf. Hallin, D.C., Mancini, P. (2004). Comparing Media Systems. Three Models of Media and Politics. Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, p. 33.

established methods of examination and, above all, systematic education, and training.<sup>188</sup> In addition, it is often rightly observed that journalistic work is characterized by a significant level of personal accountability and professional ethics while being exercised in accordance with social norms and values. Journalists are also represented by journalistic associations and other organizations and possess a relative autonomy from systems of regulation controlled by lay persons, that is, those outside the profession.<sup>189</sup>

Hallin and Mancini point to three related criteria that define journalism: autonomy, professional norms and a public service orientation. Yet, they believe that the autonomy of journalists is limited by the institutions they work for, especially in comparison to other academically trained professionals.<sup>190</sup> There are certainly considerable differences as to how and to what degree independent journalism has established itself within specific media systems. As Hallin and Mancini phrase it, “journalists’ claim to autonomy and authority is dependent to a particularly great extent on their claim to serve the public interest.”<sup>191</sup>

Limited theoretical foundations and a lack of specialized knowledge combined with a dearth of formal education and training has traditionally called journalism’s designation as a profession into question. In fact, the debate about whether journalism is – or should be – a trade, a craft, or a profession remains unresolved. Kepplinger and Köcher argue that journalism exhibits characteristics that can be considered outcomes of ‘professionalization,’ however, it does not fulfill the criteria to define it as a ‘profession.’ They argue that journalism as a profession is shaped and understood based on local historical developments and social structures including legal and editorial framework conditions.<sup>192</sup> For example, in Germany, journalism has historically been based on individual talent. Article 5 of the German Constitution (‘Grundgesetz’) guarantees unrestricted

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<sup>188</sup> Cf. Kepplinger, H.M. (2011). *Journalismus als Beruf*. Wiesbaden, Germany: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, pp. 228/229.

<sup>189</sup> German term ‘Laienkontrolle’: Cf. Kepplinger, H.M. (2011), pp. 228/229.

<sup>190</sup> Cf. Hallin, D.C., Mancini, P. (2004), pp. 35ff.

<sup>191</sup> Hallin, D.C., Mancini, P. (2004), p. 37.

<sup>192</sup> Cf. Kepplinger, H.M., Köcher, R. (1990). Professionalism in the Media World? *European Journal of Communication*, 5(2), 285-311.

access to the journalistic ‘profession.’ The limitation or regulation of free access to the field could be understood an impediment to press freedom, based on the assumption that a plurality of ideas and ideologies about the societal role of journalists is a key element of democratic systems and processes.<sup>193</sup>

Apart from a lack of systematic, theoretical approaches to professional training and education, the ability and willingness to take responsibility for the consequences of journalistic action on the one hand, and the absence of control systems from outside the profession (‘Freiheit von Laienkontrolle’) on the other, are key criteria for the designation of a ‘profession’ and a prerequisite for journalism to enable democratic processes based on the flow of independent information and a diversity of opinions and perspectives. Moreover, the complexity of journalistic work and its role and responsibility in democratic societies calls into question whether ‘professionalization’ is truly such a desirable goal. This would include concerted decisions surrounding future generations of journalists, that is, common standards for quality journalism education. As Donsbach concludes, ‘professionalization’ would have the benefit of a common professional identity and shared values, but would also impose restrictions on inter-occupational mobility.<sup>194</sup>

Mast illustrates three consequences of unrestricted access to the journalistic profession: Firstly, journalism unions and associations have developed professional profiles (‘Berufsbilder’) to provide a structural framework and orientation for journalistic practice. Nonetheless, a variety of definitions of journalistic roles and functions continues to exist; that is, the openness of the profession is not limited to the ease with which it is possible to become a journalist, but also includes the actual daily activities of journalistic practice. For instance, some journalism associations consider only those who work full-time as journalists as possible members, while others also recruit individuals who work in public relations or corporate communications.<sup>195</sup>

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<sup>193</sup> Cf. Mast, C. (1996). *Handbuch der Journalistenausbildung*. Remagen-Rolandseck: Rommerskirchen, p.12; cf. Donsbach, W. (2009), p. 98.

<sup>194</sup> Cf. Donsbach, W. (2009), p. 98.

<sup>195</sup> Cf. Mast, C. (1996), p.13.

Secondly, free access to the journalistic profession results in the development of different recruitment strategies and hiring principles. Employers expect prospective staff to bring a combination of educational profiles and to complete different forms of training, which is still true in the German context.<sup>196</sup> According to Mast, the diversity of educational pathways and providers has significant advantages: The competition between a wide range of journalism education institutions in Germany forces certain institutions to engage in the internal monitoring of their practical relevance and success rates. Others, however, rely on the abundance of applicants to their programs and do not invest in the evaluation of program content or the career paths of graduates.<sup>197</sup>

In this context, Josephi proclaims that journalism education has a dual function as both “a preparation for and corrective to journalism,”<sup>198</sup> presenting both an opportunity and an obstacle. While many journalism programs stress independence as a precondition for quality journalism and, therefore, teach that the profession bears a significant level of social responsibility, such concepts often conflict with the expectations of potential employers. As a consequence, media corporations and commercial players try to actively influence journalism education programs and pathways.<sup>199</sup> Banda points out the potential risks attached to the commercial influence on journalism education, with particular reference to the Global South:

In many regions worldwide, and especially in developing countries, commercial entities have entered the fray, although this emerging type of journalism education has sometimes been

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<sup>196</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, p. 16.

<sup>197</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, p. 17.

<sup>198</sup> Josephi, B. (2009-a). Journalism Education. In Wahl-Jorgensen, K., Hanitzsch, T. (eds.) *Handbook of Journalism Studies* (pp. 42-56). Oxon, U.K.: Routledge, p. 52.

<sup>199</sup> Cf. Deuze, M. (2009). Journalism Education in an Era of Globalization. In de Beer, A.S, Merrill, J.C. (eds.) *Global Journalism. Topical Issues and Media Systems* (5th edition). Boston, U.S.A.: Pearson Education, p. 269.

susceptible to criticism based on quality issues and the possible exploitation of students.<sup>200</sup>

As a third outcome, Mast highlights that there is no singular path to becoming a journalist, but many different educational pathways and programs that continue to grow and spread without major restrictions or boundaries – a reality that is certainly not only true for the German context.<sup>201</sup>

Deuze takes the debate about tighter restrictions on the training and education of journalists to a global level: While some argue that journalism should be regarded as a trade, which may only require vocational training, others maintain that journalism is a profession which demands a comprehensive academic education and a sound theoretical foundation. According to Deuze, “the delicate balance between practical and contextual knowledge has always been the main area of attention within journalism programs worldwide.”<sup>202</sup> This apparent dichotomy between theory and practice will be discussed further from a structural point of view when looking at tertiary journalism education, located between academia and the media industry, in sub-chapter 3.2. Until today, this perceived conflict and potential strength of university-level journalism education is reflected in the debate and development of competence models, educational standards, and curricula, which will be presented in sub-chapter 3.3.

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<sup>200</sup> Banda, F. (2013, March). Overview. In UNESCO – United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (eds). *Teaching Journalism in Developing Countries and Emerging Democracies: The Case of UNESCO's Model Curricula*, p. 8: [http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/CI/CI/pdf/news/unesco\\_model\\_curricula\\_report\\_final.pdf](http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/CI/CI/pdf/news/unesco_model_curricula_report_final.pdf) [Last retrieved 8/1/2021].

<sup>201</sup> Cf. Mast, C. (1996), pp. 13-15.

<sup>202</sup> Deuze, M. (2006). *Global Journalism Education. A Conceptual Approach*. *Journalism Studies*, 7(1), p. 23.

## 3.2 Structural and Historical Approaches to Journalism Education

Before examining the relevant normative concepts, including journalism education competence models<sup>203</sup> and curricula<sup>204</sup>, it is crucial to consider the existing typologies of academic and non-academic journalism education, which will provide adequate structural approaches for classifying the journalism education pathways, programs, and institutions in the selected countries. In doing so, it is important to outline the historical origins of tertiary journalism education in the United States and Germany (and other European countries), as Western perspectives continue to significantly shape the normative debate.

### 3.2.1 Origins and Evolution of Tertiary Journalism Education Programs in Western Countries

Weischenberg believes that the characteristics of both journalism and journalism education are primarily determined by their institutionalization, namely the regulatory context and the objectives of journalism education and its available resources. For example, organizational characteristics, learning outcomes defined through curricula and the availability of equipment and other resources have a strong influence on journalism and journalism education actors. Conversely, the actors themselves also determine the structures of the overall journalism education system.<sup>205</sup> According to Schimank's theory of societal differentiation, to sufficiently assess institutional characteristics and processes, the historical development and current state of journalism education must be taken into account.<sup>206</sup>

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<sup>203</sup> Based on the meaning of the word provided by Cambridge Dictionary 'competency' is defined as "an important skill to do a job. The terms 'ability' and 'capacity' will be used as synonyms to conceptualize and discuss relevant competencies for journalism education: Cf. Cambridge Dictionary (n.d.-a). Competency: <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/de/worterbuch/englisch/competency> [Last retrieved 8/1/2021].

<sup>204</sup> 'Curriculum' can be defined as "the subjects studies in a school, college, etc. and what each subject includes": Cf. Cambridge Dictionary (n.d.-b). Curriculum: <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/de/worterbuch/englisch/curriculum> [Last retrieved 8/1/2021].

<sup>205</sup> Cf. Weischenberg, S, Kleinstüber, H.J, Pörksen, W. (2005). *Handbuch Journalismus und Medien*. Konstanz, Germany: UVK Verlagsgesellschaft, p. 14.

<sup>206</sup> Cf. Schimank, U. (1996).

The following thus outlines the historical emergence of university journalism education in the Western world, with a focus on Germany. The German example, which represents the country of origin of the author of this study, shall be given particular attention as the competence models of journalism education, which provide the conceptual framework for this study (see sub-chapter 3.3), originated in Germany and continue to be discussed and developed further by German scholars. The current global debate, and thus the history of journalistic professionalization based on tertiary education in these countries, is shaped by the debates over journalism education in the United States, perspectives from other Anglophone countries such as the United Kingdom, as well as other European perspectives. Some scholars even argue that journalism as we know it is an Anglo-American intervention (see sub-chapter 2.1.3).<sup>207</sup>

In 1994, Splichal and Sparks identified a significant global trend toward the graduatization of journalism, as journalism education became recognized as an academic subject internationally.<sup>208</sup> As outlined in chapter 2, the number of journalists that have completed an academic journalism degree continued to increase worldwide in the first decade of the twenty-first century. In many countries today, an academic title or degree is a key requirement for entering the journalistic job market. As the state of research has also shown, current and historical accounts of the emergence of academic journalism education exist primarily for the Western world.<sup>209</sup>

It has frequently been claimed that tertiary journalism education has its origins in the **United States of America** where the first academic journalism training courses were established at Kansas State College and Cornell University in the 1870s. The first journalism school was founded at the University of Missouri in 1908.<sup>210</sup> Yet, Donsbach and Fiedler point out

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<sup>207</sup> Cf. Chalaby, J. (1996), pp. 303-326

<sup>208</sup> Cf. Splichal, S, Sparks, C. (1994)

<sup>209</sup> Cf. Deuze, M. (2009); cf. Josephi, B. (2009-b). Journalists: International Profiles. In: Löffelholz, M., Weaver, D.H. (eds.) *Global Journalism Research. Theories, Methods, Findings, Future*. Singapore, Republic of Singapore: Blackwell Publishing, pp. 143-152; Weaver, D.H., Willnat, L. (2012). *The Global Journalist in the 21st Century*. New York, U.S.A.: Routledge, pp. 529-551.

<sup>210</sup> Cf. Gaunt, P. (1992), p. 29; cf. Donsbach, W, Fiedler, T. (10/2008), p. 1.



that the focus of these programs was on practical skills rather than theoretical journalistic knowledge. This is at least partly due to the strong support for tertiary journalism education in the United States shown by the media industry, specifically newspapers such as the New York Daily, which founded the Pulitzer School of Journalism at Columbia University in 1912, to name but one famous example. Gaunt highlights that “the strong relationship that has developed between the media, the newspaper industry in particular, and the universities has virtually eliminated any influence by unions and government agencies.”<sup>211</sup>

Today, the demand from potential employers for university graduates presents a key influencing factor, in addition to demands by students themselves for academic degrees.<sup>212</sup> Josephi identifies three models of university journalism education in the United States: independent journalism schools, journalism studies institutes within liberal arts or social science faculties, and communication studies departments.<sup>213</sup> Until the 1990s, journalism studies in the United States were part of liberal arts and social science faculties and departments. Over time, communication studies gained dominance over journalism studies, which focused primarily on vocational subjects and training, and therefore struggled with academic recognition. As a result, “this left journalism education in the uneasy spot between practical and academic studies where it finds itself” still.<sup>214</sup> The percentage of professional journalists with an academic degree was still below 50% at the turn of the century, rising only slowly since the 1970s. Donsbach and Fiedler attribute the continuous rise of academic journalism education to the growing TV industry in the United States. Currently, a university education is undoubtedly the preferred pathway to becoming a journalist in North America, with almost all entry-level employees holding a degree in journalism.

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<sup>211</sup> Gaunt, P. (1992), p. 30.

<sup>212</sup> Cf. Donsbach, W., Fiedler, T. (10/2008), p. 3.

<sup>213</sup> Cf. Josephi, B. (2009-a), p. 45.

<sup>214</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, p. 45; cf. Reese, S.D. (1999). The Progressive Potential of Journalism Education. *Recasting the Academic versus the Professional Debate*. *Press/Politics* 4(4), p. 72; cf. Zelizer, B. (2009). Journalism and the Academy. In Wahl-Jorgensen, K./Hanitzsch, T. (eds.) *Handbook of Journalism Studies* (pp. 29-41). Oxon, U.K.: Routledge.

Throughout the twentieth century, journalism institutes and schools were founded in different European countries in growing numbers. In contrast to tertiary journalism education in the United States which has produced a large number of university graduates, journalism education in the **United Kingdom** has a long non-academic history, traditionally driven by industry. Paradoxically, it has not met the demands of the labor market for most of the last century. Gaunt notes that the system has been “heavily controlled by the National Union of Journalists and [is]. still firmly attached to the apprenticeship model.”<sup>215</sup> Despite attempts in the first half of the twentieth century to establish tertiary journalism education programs at the University of London, formal journalism education was started only in 1952. Journalism training is organized by the government through the National Council for the Training of Journalists (NCTJ), which concentrates on newspaper journalism, with course taking place at technology colleges or within media organizations.

In **France**, the École Supérieure de Journalisme was established in 1899 and became part of the École de Haute Études en Sciences Sociales shortly after that. While the school emphasized communication studies rather than practical journalistic skills training, the renowned École Supérieure de Journalisme de Lille (ESJ), which was founded almost three decades later in 1924, had a focus on the professional and ethical values of journalism. The Centre de Formation des Journalistes (CFJ) in Paris has only existed since 1946 and is also more practice oriented. Today, there are several other practice oriented, accredited journalism institutes located within universities focusing on theoretical rather than practice-oriented approaches to journalism studies. In addition, French universities commonly have University Institutes of Technology (IUTs) that ostensibly offer training for careers in media and information. However, the majority of them actually provide training for media professionals other than journalists, such as librarians or public relations experts. Today, the CFJ and the ESJ remain the most renowned academic journalism education programs in the country. In total, there are three types of journalism education in France: journalism schools; non-accredited, private institutions offering journalism education; and institutes of media and communication

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<sup>215</sup> Gaunt, P. (1992), p. 45.

studies.<sup>216</sup> It is worth noting that, next to the prestigious journalism schools that are accredited and integrated into university programs, private journalism schools offer diplomas without academic accreditation. Although journalism studies within media and communication departments have a long tradition as an academic field, they are less relevant for journalism education in France. More relevant, however, is the historical connection of French journalism to literature departments.<sup>217</sup> In terms of the more recent past, Gaunt's argues that at the end of 1996 there was a similar or even increasing graduatization of journalism education compared to the United States, with "new programs springing up both inside and outside the universities to meet the growing demand for trained personnel, particularly in the field of broadcasting."<sup>218</sup>

In terms of the evolution of journalism education in **Germany**, it is worth highlighting what Weischenberg describes as a radical demythologization of journalism as a 'job of talent,' which was initiated and spearheaded by Richard Wrede as early as the early twentieth century. Wrede established the first journalism school in Germany in Berlin in 1899 – the same year as the first French journalism institute. Pioneering the field with the first handbook of journalism studies, he challenged the myth that one could be born a journalist, an idea strongly supported by publishers who had long been calling for systematic vocational training for journalists. Debating the process of professionalization, Wrede argued that, as for any other profession such as medicine, law, the priesthood, or circus acrobatics, natural talent was a useful precondition for journalistic work. Yet, the job also required specific professional training and education.<sup>219</sup>

Two decades later, in 1916, the economist Karl Bücher followed the example of Wrede's journalism school in the German capital and established the first press institute at the University of Leipzig. Bücher called for journalism to be defined as a reproductive activity which adheres to the rules ('Regelhaftigkeit') of the social sciences and could therefore be learned

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<sup>216</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, p. 46.

<sup>217</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, p. 45.

<sup>218</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 45.

<sup>219</sup> Cf. Weischenberg, S. (1990). *Journalismus und Kompetenz. Qualifizierung und Rekrutierung der Medienberufe*. Opladen, Germany: Westdeutscher Verlag, pp. 11/12.

through exercises and instruction.<sup>220</sup> However, the principles of such practice-oriented academic journalism education were not formalized before WWI. The journalistic association ‘Reichsverband der deutschen Presse’ missed the opportunity at its national assembly in Düsseldorf in 1917 to institutionalize the systematic interplay between theoretical and practical journalism education. As a consequence, the notion of journalistic talent and the belief that journalism cannot be learned remained influential and still shapes controversial debates between journalistic practitioners and academic educators today.<sup>221</sup>

Weischenberg describes the development of journalism education in the first half of the twentieth century in Germany as the ‘Echternach principle,’ referring to a traditional ceremonial procession in the eponymous town, where moving three steps ahead was followed by two steps back. In fact, the establishment of journalism schools and university institutes was overrun by purely practical traineeships (‘Volontariat’). This form of on-the-job training has been, and still remains, a defining and popular educational pathway for journalists in Germany. Elitist notions about journalism as a vocation (‘Berufung’) rather than a profession (‘Beruf’) that could be learned and where specific competencies could be acquired, received renewed interest. By contrast, the successes of systematic and structured journalism training in North America were greatly ignored.<sup>222</sup>

Overall, the relevance of journalism education was continuously neglected in Germany until the 1960s, when journalistic unions and the German Press Council initiated new discussions on the profession and its standards. Due to the focus on re-establishing the independence of the media landscape after the end of Nazi regime, there was a lamentable lack of development in the journalism education system, given the significance of the profession and the professionalization of journalists. In the 1970s, however, the debate reached a new level as part of the euphoria surrounding social liberal educational reforms, which challenged once more the prevailing wisdom of journalism as a profession of ‘free access’ based on talent and on-the-job training rather than systematic and

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<sup>220</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, p. 12.

<sup>221</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 12/13.

<sup>222</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, p. 13.

institutionalized knowledge. After World War II (WWII), Weischenberg highlights, it became more and more apparent that the profession consisted, to a large extent, of routine activities and, simultaneously, demanded increasingly theoretical journalistic knowledge and an understanding of the complex realities and responsibilities of journalists. By then, the call for academic journalism education, which allows for a systematic and structured transfer of core competencies to new generations, had become loud and clear. Notably, the expectations for what this new discipline could achieve were high, and included the transmission of professional values such as internal press freedom and an awareness of the societal role and functions of journalism. As a result, the Federal Republic of Germany was confronted by a wave of newly established journalism education institutes and curricula for journalism studies. The first journalism degree programs emerged in the 1970s in Mainz, Hamburg, and Stuttgart. Within two decades, three different types of journalism degree programs were developed: full-time journalism studies (with a minor in another discipline), partial journalism programs (with a major in a different discipline) and postgraduate studies (after having completed an undergraduate in a different discipline).<sup>223</sup>

In the following decades, various scholars have noted a quantitative expansion and qualitative diversification of the available journalism education programs and pathways that put traditional in-house journalism training system under market pressure.<sup>224</sup> Similar to the developments in the United States, Donsbach identifies the rise of mass media in general and the emergence of television in particular in Germany in the 1960s and 1970s as an important instigator for the growing interest among young people in journalism. The political effects and reach of TV during the time of the student movement led to increasing numbers of applicants beyond the limited number of journalism degree programs at the time. Whereas, in the United States, tertiary journalism education remains the

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<sup>223</sup> Cf. Weischenberg, S. et al (2005), pp. 143ff, Weischenberg, S. (1990), pp. 13ff.

<sup>224</sup> Cf. Esser, F. (1998); cf. Harnischmacher, M. (2010); cf. Mast, C. (1996); cf. Nowak, E. (2007). Qualitätsmodell für die Journalistenausbildung. PhD Thesis, TU University. Dortmund, Germany: <https://eldorado.tu-dortmund.de/bitstream/2003/24721/2/Dissertation.pdf> [Last retrieved 8/1/2021]; cf. Weischenberg, S, Altmeyden, D, Löffelholz, M. (1994). Die Zukunft des Journalismus: technologische, ökonomische und redaktionelle Trends. Opladen, Germany: Westdeutscher Verlag.

preferred way to become a journalist, in Germany, the number of journalism graduates with a degree in communications, publishing ('Publizistik') or newspaper studies ('Zeitungswissenschaften') only reached one out of five by the 1970s. At the turn of the century, it had still only reached approximately 30%, including journalism studies ('Journalistik') as a new academic degree.<sup>225</sup>

In retrospect, academic journalism programs in Germany have long been dominated by theoretical approaches to media and communication studies, rather than integrating practical concepts. Today, the journalism education landscape remains rather heterogeneous with a wide range of degree programs within and outside of media and communication studies (which eventually began to include practical components in their curricula).<sup>226</sup> Apart from these degree programs, three other types of journalism education co-exist: classic journalism degree programs ('Journalistik'), journalism schools, 'Volontariat' or traineeships, and other academic degree programs within and outside of communication studies.<sup>227</sup>

It is worth stressing that beyond classic journalism studies at universities and other degrees, the classic 'Volontariat' and independent journalism schools also survived. Furthermore, journalism education programs and pathways in Germany continue to grow without regulation. Attempts to regulate journalism education and the journalistic profession are regularly blocked by the aforementioned notion that free access to information must be guaranteed according to the German constitution. The high demand for journalism education has also led to the foundation of new degree programs including at Universities of Applied Sciences ('technische Hochschule,' former 'Fachhochschulen') with a strong practical orientation and the selling point of a faster exit, i.e., reduced study duration. Nonetheless, the classic non-academic traineeship at renowned journalism institutes in Hamburg, Berlin and Munich remains the favored way of becoming a journalist by both students and prospective employers.<sup>228</sup> Notably, these programs are attached to large media organization such as

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<sup>225</sup> Cf. Donsbach, W. (2012), p. 32.

<sup>226</sup> Cf. Donsbach, W. (2012), p. 32.

<sup>227</sup> Cf. Weischenberg, S. (1990), pp. 14/15.

<sup>228</sup> Cf. Weischenberg, S. et al (2005), pp. 144/145.

Axel Springer, Burda and Bauer Media Group. In Germany, different media organization expect potential staff to hold a mix of educational degrees and professional experience. The ‘Volontariat’ is usually combined with either a tertiary degree or vocational training.<sup>229</sup>

In Germany and many other countries, traditional approaches have maintained a stronger continuity and prevalence than progressive and innovative developments. As a result, journalism education in Germany continues to be characterized by a variety of educational programs and career pathways, the integration of theory and practice, and a consensus on journalistic competencies. Among the international debate over false information and news, and the changing roles and responsibilities of journalists, Weischenberg speculates that this continuity could represent a core strength and important opportunity for the successful future of journalism. He doubts, however, that journalism education based on 50-year-old assumptions can provide journalists with the adequate qualifications to meet the increased requirements of the profession.<sup>230</sup> It is debatable whether journalism education institutions and their proposed curricula are innovative enough to safeguard quality journalism in a rapidly changing media landscape in the midst of digital transformation. As another consequence, the acclaimed ‘routine activities’ of journalistic work, which Weischenberg pointed to as an argument in favor of the formalization of academic journalism education, are also under scrutiny.

Zelizer documents the emergence of journalism as a craft entering the academic field in American, Latin American, and German universities, especially humanities and social science departments. There are some common global trends which the author describes as, “journalism educators were [...] caught in the tensions between the humanities and social sciences as to which type of inquiry could best teach journalists to be journalists.”<sup>231</sup> According to Zelizer, journalism was downgraded by academia, as journalism educators lost sight of their field as a complex discipline based on a wide range of competencies including historical knowledge, self-reflection and critical thinking. Despite its foray into

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<sup>229</sup> Cf. Mast, C. (2008), p. 125.

<sup>230</sup> Cf. Weischenberg, S. et al (2005), p. 146.

<sup>231</sup> Zelizer, B. (2009), p. 33.

tertiary education, journalism was still viewed as a craft serving the technological production of different media formats. As a result, social scientists once again reduced the profession to “a tool for channeling public opinion but not important in and of itself.”<sup>232</sup> To the detriment of the profession, humanists came to view it as a vernacular, which in its essence made it ‘non-academic’ by its very nature.<sup>233</sup>

Against this historical backdrop, I will further explore the ‘academic’ versus the ‘non-academic’ aspects of journalism education from a structural point of view in the following two sub-chapters.

### **3.2.2 Typologies of Academic and Non-Academic Journalism Education**

Taking a global perspective on the current state of both academic and non-academic programs and pathways to becoming a professional journalist, Deuze distinguishes five types of journalism education:

1. Training at the university level
2. Mixed systems of stand-alone and university-level training
3. Stand-alone journalism schools
4. On-the-job training
5. Mixed forms and other models<sup>234</sup>

Within Donsbach’s distinction between normative, functional, and structural approaches to journalism as an academic discipline, this typology can be classified as a structural attempt to contribute to journalism education theory. Deuze claims that “most if not all systems of journalism education are moving toward the first or second model, indicating increasing levels of professionalization, formalization, and standardization worldwide.”<sup>235</sup> University journalism education is, however, sometimes avoided by African and Latin American educators who criticize this model as neo-colonial due to the persistent dependency on Western instructors. In many African countries, stand-alone journalism institutes are the dominant mode of education, whereas the Anglo-Saxon model of in-house training is typical in Australia, Japan, and

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<sup>232</sup> Zelizer, B. (2009), p. 34.

<sup>233</sup> Cf. Zelizer, B. (2009), p. 34.

<sup>234</sup> Cf. Deuze, M. (2009), p. 270.

<sup>235</sup> Deuze, M. (2009), p. 270.



Austria. Mixed forms can include commercialized university training, and in-house training through publishing houses, labor unions and government bodies.

Harnischmacher also takes an international perspective and reduces the existing types of journalism education to only three forms. Although this typology was published after the research in the present study was conducted, it is outlined here as it follows the same logic as Deuze and aims to provide a structural understanding of journalism education programs and pathways, based on their level of institutionalization:

1. Academic journalism education ('hochschulgebundene')
2. Company-based journalism training ('betriebsgebundene')
3. Non-institutionalized educational pathways ('uninstitutionalisierte')

Whereas the first two types are institutionalized educational programs, the third option is characterized by access to the profession without an institutionalized formal education. Academic journalism education includes journalism degree programs and journalism schools attached to universities. Company-based journalism training programs, such as the German 'Volontariat,' take place within media organizations.<sup>236</sup>

Another analytical framework of academic journalism education is Meier's typology of university degree programs in journalism. Although his model stems from the German context, it allows for a broader classification of tertiary journalism education programs based on the degree of specialization. Meier groups the variety of options for students interested in gaining specialized skills and knowledge into three types of educational programs. Whereas the traditional German model of journalism studies ('Journalistik'), based on programs that were established in the 1970s and 1980s, was aimed at providing students with comprehensive competencies in all media formats, more recent degree programs allow for a greater degree of specialization. Meier stresses that journalism as a profession increasingly requires specific skill sets and a diverse range of knowledge. Students therefore tend to choose their own thematic focus through their choice of electives, and/or specialize in a sub-field by gaining practical

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<sup>236</sup> Cf. Harnischmacher, M. (2019), p. 84.

experiences on and off campus in specific media. As a reaction to these changing demands, new journalism degrees emerged with the following types of specializations:

1. Media-based specialization
2. Thematic/subject specialization
3. Degrees in media management and economics

Media-specific degrees expected to impart journalistic competencies in one specific type of media (e.g., broadcast or online journalism); thematic journalism degrees allow students to specialize in a topic, field or subject such as business, science, sports, culture or technology. The third form of specialization is based on the direct study of media management and media economics. Relevant degrees are called, for example, a Master of Media Management.<sup>237</sup>

Based on Deuze's and Harnischmacher's typologies, academic journalism education is defined, for the purpose of this research, as **institutionalized, university-level journalism education**, in contrast to stand-alone, non-academic journalism schools, company-based programs and pathways, or other non-institutionalized and mixed forms of journalism education and training. As this study aims to assess journalistic specialization as part of journalism education and professionalization, Meier's three-fold differentiation of academic degrees was employed to further develop a conceptual framework for empirical research, allowing for the examination of classic journalism degrees and academic journalism schools, as well as other university degrees within and outside media and communication studies departments, including media-based degrees in broadcast, online or print journalism, or academic programs in media economics and management.

### 3.2.3 Dichotomy or Structural Advantage of Academic Journalism Education

Gaunt describes the variety of journalism education and training in Western democracies (sub-chapter 3.2.2) as "a continuum between on-the-job skills training on one end and communications-oriented university-based

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<sup>237</sup> Cf. Meier, K. (2011). *Journalistik* (2<sup>nd</sup> edition). Konstanz, Germany: UVK, pp. 224/225.

media studies on the other.”<sup>238</sup> This spectrum is often perceived as a dichotomy and continues to shape the debate between academics and practitioners. As Zelizer argues, it is necessary to take into account the negative effects of journalism entering the academic realm,<sup>239</sup> including an overemphasis on theory over practical approaches. However, it can also be argued that the potential of tertiary journalism education to connect those seemingly opposing spheres – theory and practice – might also be a structural advantage, as I outline in the following.<sup>240</sup>

To begin, some semantic reflections must be considered to illustrate the polysemy of ‘theory’ versus ‘practice,’ including its significance and potential for controversy in conceptualizing journalism education. Both ‘theory’ and ‘praxis’<sup>241</sup> have ancient Greek roots: ‘theoria’ means contemplation, speculation, a looking at things,<sup>242</sup> whereas ‘praxis’ means action, activity or practice.<sup>243</sup> Streitbörger explores the terminological complexity of journalistic ‘practice’ in the context of journalism education,<sup>244</sup> emphasizes the close interplay between praxis and theory:

From an analytical perspective there is no separation possible between the conventional term ‘praxis,’ as various universities aim to convey it in editorial training courses, and ‘theory’ because any practice also includes theory. Those who write, edit, interview and

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<sup>238</sup> Gaunt, P. (1992), p. 41.

<sup>239</sup> Cf. Zelizer, B. (2009).

<sup>240</sup> Cf. Weischenberg, S. (1990), pp. 28ff.

<sup>241</sup> The German term ‘Praxis’ can be translated into the English word ‘practice’ or ‘praxis’ in technical language. This study will use the terms as synonyms, but primarily use ‘practice’. Cf. Cambridge Dictionary (n.d.-c). *Praxis*: <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/german-english/praxis> [Last retrieved 8/1/2021].

<sup>242</sup> Cf. Wiktionary (n.d.-a). *Theoria*: <https://de.wiktionary.org/wiki/theoria> [Last retrieved 8/1/2021].

<sup>243</sup> Cf. Wiktionary (n.d.-b). *Praxis*: <https://de.wiktionary.org/wiki/Praxis> [Last retrieved 8/1/2021].

<sup>244</sup> Streitbörger, W. (2014). *Grundbegriffe für Journalistenausbildung: Theorie, Praxis und Techniken als berufliche Techniken*. Wiesbaden, Germany: Springer VS.

organize never do this without thinking, but always based on knowledge, that is, supported by some kind of theory.<sup>245</sup>

Streitbürger stresses that the semantic confusion between ‘theory’ and ‘praxis’ undermines the capacity of journalism programs to define themselves and provide the means to shield themselves against attacks on their resources and general existence.<sup>246</sup> The author therefore clarifies the semantic nuances of these terms by looking at translations of ‘practice’ from German into English, which are specifically relevant for this study: while the term ‘practice’ is commonly used in English in academia, it has two meanings that lead to semantic confusion: it both stands for ‘trying out’ or ‘practicing,’ and ‘carrying out an action.’<sup>247</sup>

Blöbaum<sup>248</sup> addresses the polysemy of these terms by critiquing the wide range of topics and features that are subsumed under them and providing a detailed semantic differentiation between ‘theory’ and ‘practice’ in tertiary education in general and in journalism education in particular. However, his detailed definition of the terms referring to different analytical levels within academia and journalism education does not fill the remaining gap between the two spheres. Blöbaum tries to break up the dichotomy of the seemingly opposing terms of ‘theory’ and ‘praxis’ by presenting a third dimension: Subject knowledge (‘Sachwissen’), which is added to the theoretical dimension of social and communication studies and the practical field of journalistic action. Streitbürger argues, however, that the German term ‘Sachwissen’ is vague, and can be misunderstood as theoretical knowledge about journalism and journalism studies, which in turn generates new semantic confusion. He views Blöbaum’s proposal for

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<sup>245</sup> Translates from original quote: “Der herkömmliche Begriff von Praxis, wie sie an Lehrredaktionen diverser Hochschulen vermittelt werden soll, lässt sich von Theorie nicht mehr analytisch trennen, weil jede Praxis auch Theorie beinhaltet. Wer schreibt, redigiert, interviewt oder organisiert, macht dies niemals kopflos, sondern immer mit Wissen, also mithilfe welcher Theorie auch immer.” Streitbürger, W. (2014), p. 214.

<sup>246</sup> Cf. Streitbürger, W. (2014), p. 224.

<sup>247</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 213ff.

<sup>248</sup> Cf. Blöbaum, B. (2000). Zwischen Redaktion und Reflexion: Integration von Theorie und Praxis in der Journalistenausbildung. *Beiträge zur Kommunikationstheorie, Band 18*. Münster, Germany: LIT Verlag.

three types of journalism education as merely replacing the old dichotomy with a new trichotomy, rather than resolving the persisting polysemy.<sup>249</sup>

Streitbörger's critical assessment of Blöbaum's efforts to clarify the semantics of 'theory' and 'practice' thus lead him to propose an alternative third dimension: 'techne.'<sup>250</sup> The term 'techne' refers to the antique meaning of 'praxis,' which stands for autonomous action and, in essence, requires two competencies: one, practical knowledge relevant to the corresponding journalistic action ('practice'), and two, Practical capacities such as journalistic instruments and methods ('techne'). Following Streitbörger's detailed analysis of the ancient Greek origin and evolution of the term 'techne,' this third dimension of journalism education can be interpreted as tradecraft, methodological knowledge, and an ability to use the relevant instruments correctly.

In examining terminological differences and equivalences in the American debate on 'theory' and 'practice,' Streitbörger notes that the Anglophone discussion revolves mainly around the concepts of 'academia' and 'profession,' and other terms such as 'knowledge' and 'craft' are frequently utilized. While the process of translation bears the risk of losing meaning along the way, these semantic and linguistic reflections themselves mirror the confusion and controversy between academia and industry, representing theory on the one hand, and practice on the other, leading to opposing perspectives rather than a fruitful integration of both spheres.<sup>251</sup>

Moving on from the semantic debate, we can identify at least two arguments in favor of tertiary academic journalism education: Firstly, university-based journalism education can react to ongoing trends and, in its corrective function,<sup>252</sup> make improvements to contemporary problems in the field of journalism (see sub-chapter 3.1.2). Already at the turn of the twentieth century, Weischenberg and many other scholars predicted that societal and media systems would undergo radical changes including major shifts to the economic, technological and organizational pre-

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<sup>249</sup> Streitbörger, W. (2014), p. 224.

<sup>250</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 215-225.

<sup>251</sup> Cf. Streitbörger p. 226ff.

<sup>252</sup> Cf. Josephi, B. (2009-a), p. 52.

conditions of journalistic work (see sub-chapter 4.1).<sup>253</sup> Such developments undoubtedly had an impact on journalistic roles and self-perceptions, forcing journalists to adapt to new functions and requirements. Reese more explicitly discusses the crisis of journalism education, which was directly linked to the changes and challenges undergone by the journalistic profession at the turn of the twenty-first century.<sup>254</sup> Reduced journalistic quality and reach, as well as the changing preferences and behaviors of audiences are only two factors Weischenberg mentions to illustrate emerging threats to journalistic identity and credibility.<sup>255</sup>

As a result, practitioners and theorists had to confront professional challenges as journalistic ethics entered the public debate. Despite the absence of a universal definition or catalog of professional ethics, professional standards, and moral values became crucial for journalists to fulfill their societal responsibilities and function as purveyors of public information. As the state of journalistic values and ethics mirrors societal, economic and political pressures, Weischenberg claims that the systematic approaches taught as part of academic journalism education are the most appropriate form for discussing and reflecting on these professional values in society and in a complex media landscape.<sup>256</sup>

Adding to this line of thought, Streitböcker points out that in societies based on knowledge, innovation can and must come from the academic sector. He agrees with Weischenberg that theoretical approaches in journalism education have the potential to support solving the problems of journalism. Innovation is frequently understood as originating from the professional or practical world, and journalism students frequently ask for more practice-oriented education in order to find work after graduation. According to Streitböcker, future journalists and educators forget that learning ‘how it has always been done’ might provide a head start in the

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<sup>253</sup> Cf. Weischenberg, S., Altmeyen, D., Löffelholz, M. (1994); cf. Altmeyen, K.-D. (2002). Traditionelle Prämissen und neue Ausbildungsangebote. Kontinuität oder Fortschritte in der Journalistenausbildung. In Altmeyen, K.-D., Hömberg, W. (eds.) *Journalistenausbildung für eine veränderte Medienwelt* (pp. 7-30). Wiesbaden, Germany: Westdeutscher Verlag; cf. Ruß-Mohl, Stephan (2016). *Journalismus. Das Lehr- und Handbuch*. Frankfurt, Germany: Frankfurter Allgemeine Buch.

<sup>254</sup> Cf. Reese, S.D. (1999), p. 71.

<sup>255</sup> Cf. Weischenberg, S. (1990), pp. 28/29.

<sup>256</sup> Cf. Weischenberg, S. (1990), p. 20.

labor market, but can lead to setbacks later in their careers. He posits that innovation and long-term success require both theory and practice.<sup>257</sup>

Weischenberg postulates that a second strength of tertiary journalism education is its potential resistance to the hardships of the journalistic working environment. By nature, academic journalism education is not affected by the global market conditions of media organizations, which it is assumed, act to limit journalistic autonomy and competence. Journalistic work is impacted and often impeded by the internal organizational atmosphere and external environment in which media companies are embedded, which the author calls the 'journalistic milieu.' There are two options for journalism education to interact with the journalistic environment: Journalists can either be thrown into the deep end of a media business through a classic traineeship ('Volontariat'), or can be provided with career strategies that slowly introduce them to the day-to-day journalistic environment. Despite the limited access to empirical data on 'journalistic milieus,' academic journalism education critically analyzes the professional milieu from an outside perspective. The aim of this work is to prevent future journalists from submitting themselves to 'business as usual' by sacrificing their professional values and standards. Through this, journalism graduates develop resilient and critical perspectives on media practices – in the clear interest of future journalism.<sup>258</sup>

Reese also fiercely criticizes the creation of a simplistic – and therefore dangerous – dichotomy between the media industry and academia, demanding the integration of practical and theoretical approaches. He stresses the potential benefits of integrating the two spaces and considers the professional isolation from universities as a risk for the field of journalism, since academia provides space for intellectual autonomy and, thus, opportunities to advance both the profession and create a more informed public. Urging industry representatives to increase their collaborations with higher education, Reese states that journalism education can be a role model for curricular reforms based on journalism as an interdisciplinary and hybrid field of study.<sup>259</sup> In the United States at the end of

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<sup>257</sup> Cf. Streitböcker, W. (2014), p. 24.

<sup>258</sup> Cf. Weischenberg, S. (1990), p. 31.

<sup>259</sup> Cf. Reese, S.D. (1999), pp. 71/72.

the twentieth century, for instance, more ‘free-flowing’ journalism schools and institutes were founded within the universities, leading to symbiotic ties with industry. While Reese acknowledges the value of such close relationships with media organizations, he stresses the benefits of sound intellectual foundations and scholarly independence in light of the growing criticism and scrutiny of journalistic practices.<sup>260</sup>

Referring back to the German example, Altmeppen and Hömberg conclude that at least until the beginning of the twenty-first century, continuity won out over progress. The balance between theory and practice, the debates over specialization versus generalization, and the controversy surrounding concrete journalistic competencies remain the primary topics of discussion.<sup>261</sup> Journalism education programs traditionally collaborate with journalistic practice and media organizations by bringing in media professionals as instructors and providing opportunities for internships as well as other forms of practical experience.<sup>262</sup> Altmeppen and Hömberg also point out the lack of systematic and curricular integration of practical elements with theoretical components, which remain disconnected from one another. This weakness, they claim, is related to the ongoing divide between the various actors and institutions involved in journalism education. Rather than institutionalized integrating practical elements along with theoretical reflections on the role of journalists and their societal responsibilities, the traditional separation between journalistic craft and academic approaches to the ‘profession,’ and between its values and purpose, continues to prevail.<sup>263</sup> Conversely, the authors acknowledge the rising interdisciplinarity of journalism education programs as a reaction to the convergence of media, technology and economic realities, and identify the need to further intensify such collaborations in the future.<sup>264</sup>

Harnischmacher also highlights how digital and media transformation processes have had major repercussions on the labor market and on the requirements for journalistic competence, thus creating an even greater

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<sup>260</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>261</sup> Cf. Altmeppen, K.-D., Hömberg, W. (2002), pp. 7/8.

<sup>262</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, p. 11.

<sup>263</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 8/9.

<sup>264</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, p. 1.



need for adaptation in journalism education.<sup>265</sup> He argues that academic journalism education can keep up with the changing conditions of journalistic work as it provides students with the necessary analytical competencies and autonomous problem-solving skills that form a key element of tertiary education.<sup>266</sup>

There is a general consensus that journalism education programs must innovate in order to adequately react to current and future trends in digitalization and media transformation including changes to the market. For example, in the United States and in some European countries including the Netherlands and Spain, entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial journalism have emerged as topics of journalism education (see sub-chapter 4.1.2). Chapter 4 analyzes and defines digital and media transformation in greater detail, but before doing so, it is vital to explore existing competency grids, model curricula and quality indicators for journalism education.

### **3.3 Normative Approaches and International Standards of Journalism Education**

#### **3.3.1 Competence Models for Journalism Education**

As in any profession, clear definitions of key competencies are a prerequisite for the conceptualization of professional training and education. In academic journalism education, these are usually stated within the scope of curricular specifications.

Donsbach distinguishes between functional or normative journalistic competencies: Functional approaches describe the professional tasks and the required competencies to complete those activities.<sup>267</sup> The varied perceptions of what constitutes journalistic functions, i.e. the roles and responsibilities of journalists in the society in which they live and work, leads to many different definitions of and models for the resulting journalistic competencies. However, as Weischenberg notes, this does not consider the different requirements for the various forms of media and

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<sup>265</sup> Cf. Harnischmacher, M. (2009), pp. 81/82.

<sup>266</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, p. 87.

<sup>267</sup> Cf. Donsbach, W. (2012), p. 34/35.

types of journalism, which add to the conceptual divergence between journalistic competencies.<sup>268</sup>

Following Donsbach's approach, normative competence models are based on the ideals of democracy and related assumptions about the necessary characteristics and qualifications of journalists and other citizens within a society. Professional competencies are thus deduced from this overarching system of norms and values. He also critiques that normative approaches are rarely applied to journalism education. Even though journalism associations, academic and other educational institutions reflect on the content and objectives of journalism training, the debates over proposed competence models remain rather abstract, without providing sufficient elaboration and justification as to *why* exactly these skills and knowledge areas are relevant for journalistic practice.<sup>269</sup> Donsbach further scrutinizes the common excuse that the journalistic profession is simply too complex, consisting of a myriad of job titles and types of work within the profession, and that causal links between journalistic content and its effects cannot be clearly demonstrated. Therefore, a claim frequently heard is that journalism education cannot be subsumed under a single universal competence model or concept.<sup>270</sup>

As part of the discussion around the professionalization of journalism and the formalization of journalism education in Germany in the 1970s, journalistic competence became a frequent topic of debate. Although a consensus was quickly reached that academic journalism education was the most adequate form of training given rising societal complexity, it was not clear what exactly 'journalistic competence' meant. There are various approaches to the concept, primarily related to different understandings of the functions of journalism and journalists in a democratic society. As a result, journalistic competencies are closely linked to the learning outcomes and program content of journalism degree programs. The discussion of the latter reflects the problematic nature of the former.<sup>271</sup>

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<sup>268</sup> Cf. Weischenberg, S. (1998), p. 19.

<sup>269</sup> Cf. Donsbach, W. (2012), pp. 41/42.

<sup>270</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 34/35.

<sup>271</sup> Cf. Weischenberg, S. (1990), pp. 21/22.

In response to the lack of consistent approaches to journalistic competencies in the German journalism education system, Weischenberg proposes the following model, which builds on the results of his empirical research, as well as Hömberg's earlier theoretical reflections.<sup>272</sup> The competence grid consists of three core elements:

1. Journalistic competence ('Fachkompetenz')
2. Subject competence ('Sachkompetenz')
3. Communications/dissemination competence ('Vermittlungskompetenz')

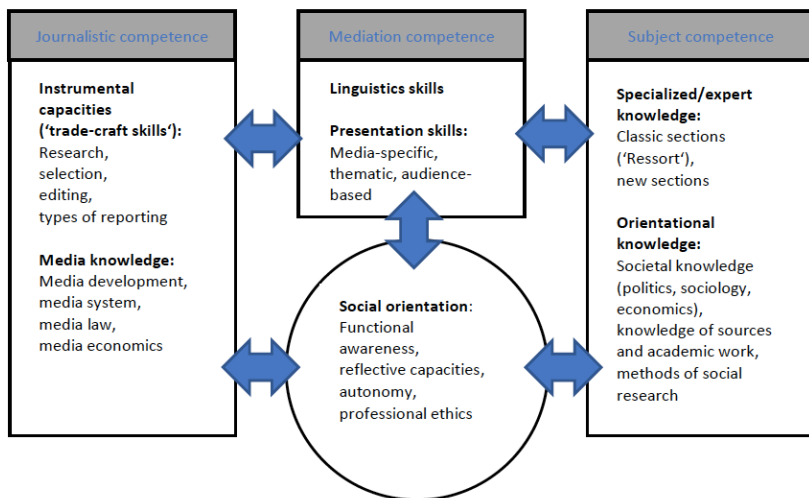


Figure 4: Weischenberg's Competence Model for Journalism Education<sup>273</sup>

Subject and journalistic competence can be easily distinguished: Whereas journalistic competence focuses on modes of communication, subject competence focuses on the topical knowledge relevant to journalistic practice. Both competence areas are interlinked through the process of communication and therefore cannot be considered self-sufficient or isolated

<sup>272</sup> Hömberg, W. (1978). Journalistenausbildung. Modelle, Erfahrungen, Analysen. *Band 1 der Schriftenreihe der DG PuK*. Munich, Germany: Ölschläger.

<sup>273</sup> Translated from Weischenberg, S. (1990), pp. 22-26.

competencies. The subsequent intersection is represented by a mediation or dissemination competence.

As part of this theoretical model, Weischenberg provides indicators for each competence area based on the existing literature and on didactical and curricular material: **Journalistic competence** consists of instrumental capacities and specific journalistic knowledge from communication and media studies. The practical ‘tradecraft’ skills are four-fold: research skills, selection skills, editorial/corrective skills, and organizational and technical skills. Theoretical journalistic knowledge includes media economics, politics, law, history, and technology. The author further stresses that practical skills and theoretical journalistic knowledge are closely inter-linked rather than isolated competencies.<sup>274</sup>

Weischenberg expects the need for **subject competence** and specialized non-journalistic knowledge to continuously rise, alongside the increasing diversification and ‘scientification’ of nearly all areas of life and the growing complexity of societal and technological problems. In response to this challenge, he suggests providing students with the opportunity to develop expert knowledge in a non-journalistic discipline. Moreover, journalists should be able to gain expertise in the social sciences –sociology, political science and economics –so that they can apply that knowledge to societal contexts. In addition, studying another academic discipline has the benefit of providing journalism students with analytical skills that allow them to grasp complex problems of an interdisciplinary nature. In this context, Weischenberg emphasizes the need to integrate specialized skills and expertise in database research into journalism education curricula. As early as the 1990s, the significance of electronic data collection and storage was clear.<sup>275</sup> Weischenberg suggest three specific learning objectives to provide future journalists with an adequate orientation: functional awareness, reflective capacities, and an awareness of their autonomy. Theoretical knowledge as part of ‘journalistic competence’ remains the conceptual foundation for the societal orientation.<sup>276</sup>

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<sup>274</sup> Cf. Weischenberg, S. (1990), p. 23.

<sup>275</sup> Cf. Weischenberg, S. (1990), pp. 24/25.

<sup>276</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 26/27.

The third competence area, **mediation/dissemination competence**, focuses on linguistic abilities and the transfer of information, meaning the adequate processing of information about specific topics and for specific audiences through specific forms of presentation (such as news reports, reportage, features, comments etc.) and different types of media (print and broadcast). Weischenberg also stresses that not only news journalism, but also other journalistic practices such as ‘investigative reporting’ and ‘precision journalism’ must be included to provide future journalists with alternatives to conventional patterns of reporting.<sup>277</sup>

Weischenberg’s competence grid can be viewed as a first attempt to codify a normative approach to journalism education based on competencies. While the divide between theorists and practitioners and the underlying premises continue to impinge on the quality of journalism education, especially in times of economic crisis and technological change, Altmeppe and Hömberg view it as a positive that the distinction between subject, practical and process competencies had become standardized, allowing for comparison and orientation within journalism education systems. Given the continuing diversification of journalism education programs and the increase in tertiary journalism education not only in Germany, such models can be helpful not only for scholars and educators, but also for students making a decision about their educational futures.<sup>278</sup> Nonetheless, especially after nearly three decades, Weischenberg’s model has significant limitations in the era of digitalization, which has not only transformed the media, but also journalism itself. As a consequence, it has been adapted and extended by various scholars.

Mast, for instance, adds an **organizational competence** to the three dimensions journalistic, subject and mediation competence: the knowledge and understanding of processes and requirements of media management, its organization, and its economic targets in a competitive media market environment. The author’s desire to introduce this additional competence is based on an assumption that especially profit-oriented media organizations measure journalistic work in monetary terms, through advertising revenue and audience reach as quantified by the number of viewers,

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<sup>277</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, p. 25.

<sup>278</sup> Cf. Altmeppe, K.-D, Hömberg, W. (2002), p. 10.

listeners, or sold copies. Organizational aspects become even more important as journalists take on tasks such as program planning and coordination in the newsroom. Therefore, organizational competence requires a profound knowledge of market developments and the ability to implement organizational goals and objectives efficiently, that is, to make economic decisions in accordance with journalistic principles.<sup>279</sup> Whereas, in Weischenberg's model, organizational competence is subsumed under the tradecraft skills, namely "organization and technology,"<sup>280</sup> Mast's approach attributes a greater significance to the economic factors shaping current media landscapes and journalistic work and thus makes it a separate competence.

Conversely, Behmer highlights the role of technology in his expansion of Weischenberg's three-competence-model by including **technological competence**, that is, digital skills and knowledge, such as computer literacy, production skills and knowledge of editing technology. Behmer explicitly refers to the changing requirements of cross-media journalism in the digital age.<sup>281</sup> Furthermore, this list of competencies introduces 'reflection' as a fifth dimension, which combines the three aspects of social orientation described by Weischenberg (functional awareness, reflective capacities and awareness of autonomy).<sup>282</sup> Whereas the three-fold model leaves open whether these aspects are competencies themselves, Behmer concretely summarizes them as a **reflective competence** that includes not only awareness of one's social responsibility, thinking about one's role as a journalist, and ethical principles, but also more specifically an understanding of market pressures and the professional demarcation of journalistic work from public relations.<sup>283</sup>

In his handbook on journalism studies, Meier proposes a concrete competence grid, which is an adaptation and expansion of Weischenberg's

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<sup>279</sup> Cf. Mast, C. (1996), pp. 122/123.

<sup>280</sup> Cf. Weischenberg, S. (1990), p. 23.

<sup>281</sup> Cf. Behmer, M. (2012), p. 354.

<sup>282</sup> Cf. Weischenberg, S. (1990), pp. 23/26.

<sup>283</sup> Cf. Behmer, M. (2012), p. 354.

model, drawing on the work of a range of additional authors.<sup>284</sup> In essence, this newer model adds two more areas of competence to Weischenberg's initial model: one, a technical and creative competence ('Gestaltungskompetenz'); and two, an organizational and conceptual competence.<sup>285</sup>

As Figure 5 reveals, **technological and creative competencies** are closely related to the mediation/dissemination area of competence, which is located in between subject competence and specific journalistic competence. The ability to relay information, technical capacities and content creation skills rely heavily on storytelling techniques that are tailored to the specific media format, topic and target group. As journalists increasingly draw on digital technologies and collaborate with technicians, graphic designers, photographers and cinematographers, journalists need to be able understand the perspectives of their coworkers as well as the problems and solutions that arise during such a collaboration. By introducing this dimension, Meier stresses that the adequate presentation of a topic not only depends on the choice of journalistic genre or media format, but on successful content creation and the overall technical realization of the story. This includes technical web skills, database skills and the professional utilization of editorial systems and research software programs. Moreover, this competence includes the ability to create audiovisual, print, online and multimedia content.<sup>286</sup>

Beyond the technical and creative dimension, Meier also proposes the need for a new **organizational and conceptual competence**. In doing so, the model emphasizes that it is crucial for journalists to think innovatively about their organizations within which they work and to gain concrete knowledge about their target groups, that is, who is consuming their content and how to better deliver quality journalism to that audience. Depending on the journalistic product, editorial workflows and thus journalistic

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<sup>284</sup> Cf. Meier, K. (2011), p. 223; cf. Weischenberg, S. (1990); cf. Weischenberg, S., Altmeppen, D., Löffelholz, M. (1994); cf. Dörman, J., Pätzhold, U. (1998). Journalismus, neue Technik, Multimedia und Medienentwicklungen. Ein Plädoyer für journalistische Produktion und Qualifikation in den Neuen Medien. *Journalist*, 7, 59-79.

<sup>285</sup> Cf. Meier, K. (2011), pp. 222-224.

<sup>286</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 223/224.

quality can be optimized through a careful application of this competence.<sup>287</sup>

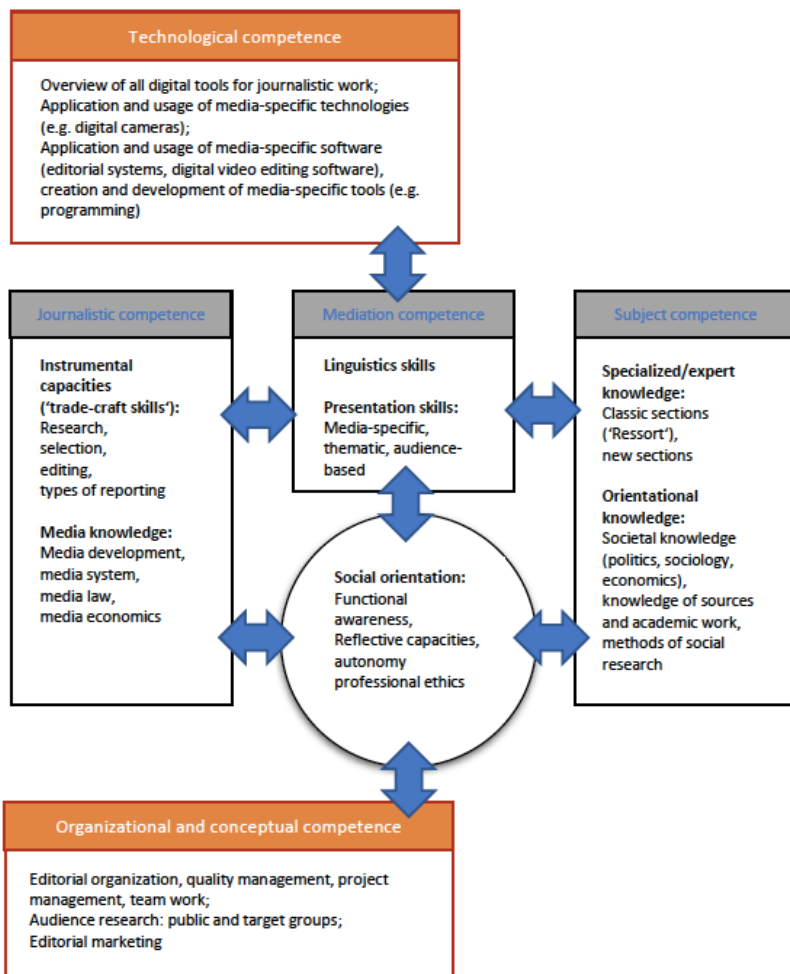


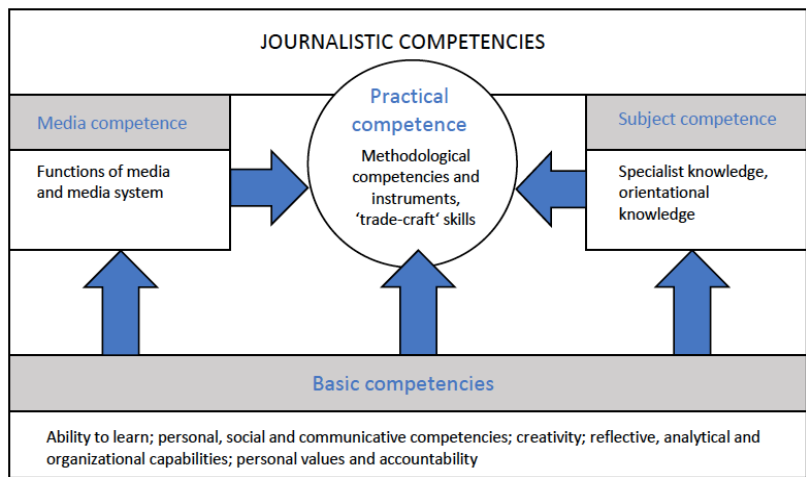
Figure 5: Meier's Competence Model for Journalism Education<sup>288</sup>

<sup>287</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, (2011), p. 224.

<sup>288</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, p. 223.



While Mast, Behmer and Meier expand upon Weischenberg’s model by adding new dimensions and competencies, Nowak proposes an entirely new integrated competence model for journalism education. They critique that Weischenberg’s approach to journalistic competence (Fachkompetenz) consists of certain journalistic practical skills, such as research skills, but no other media-specific competencies. Based on her systematic theoretical reflections on different types of professional competencies, Nowak propose an adaptation of Weischenberg’s three-dimensional approach, by distinguishing four areas of competence: a functional media competence (Fachkompetenz), a practical journalistic competence (Handlungskompetenz), a specific subject competence (Sachkompetenz) and a basic competence (Basiskompetenz).<sup>289</sup>



**Figure 6: Nowak’s Competence Model for Journalism Education**<sup>290</sup>

Journalists with a functional **media competence** grasp the various functions of the media and have an understanding of the entire media system and the societal role of journalism, its causes, and consequences. In terms of academic subjects and disciplines, Nowak distinguishes three areas of knowledge: one, media and communication studies (with a focus on

<sup>289</sup> Cf. Nowak, E. (2007), pp. 93-97.  
<sup>290</sup> Translated from Nowak, E. (2007), p. 93.

journalism theory and the current state of the art, including audience research and media effects); two, media systems (including their historical background and legal frameworks), as well media economics, politics and ethics; and three, media organization and processes (editorial work flows, newsroom and quality management, media technologies, media business and the entrepreneurial aspects of media management).<sup>291</sup> **Subject competence** can be separated from functional competence through its specific focus on media content, made up of two components: orientational knowledge (Orientierungswissen) and specialist knowledge (Ressortwissen). The latter includes sufficient expertise in a topic area that does not require journalism students to become experts themselves, but rather enables them to understand and question experts in a certain area or field. Specialization does not necessarily equate to an academic discipline. Instead, it is developed through practical journalistic within a certain thematic focus, instead of across all topics, and thus increasing one's experience in that specific area. In addition, specialization is based on prior knowledge and a general interest in the given issue or topic. Orientational knowledge is based on a journalist's general knowledge which allows them to put relevant issues into perspective and make sense of an issue within a larger societal context.<sup>292</sup> **Practical competence** includes those methodological and instrumental capabilities that allow the journalists to apply their media and subject competence to their work. Located between subject and media competence, it is frequently described as a journalist's 'tradecraft,' including their core journalistic skills (the capacity to take on journalistic roles, organizational and managerial capacities, journalistic communication and critical thinking skills) and techniques (such as research skills, topic selection, editing and relaying information), and media-specific capacities (such as the ability to use production technologies and storytelling techniques). Nowak stresses that a journalist's practical competence can only be developed through reflective media experience. Whereas Weischenberg's model isolates this process of reflection by subsuming it under the 'social orientation,' Donsbach, Behmer and Nowak consider it an integral competence.<sup>293</sup> The fourth area of competence

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<sup>291</sup> Cf. Nowak, E. (2007), pp. 93/94.

<sup>292</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 94/95.

<sup>293</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 94/95.

forms the basis of this model and consists of **basic competencies**. These are not inherently journalism-specific competencies, and indeed can also be relevant to many other professions. However, professional journalists can be characterized by the combination and strength of these basic competencies: Social competencies, for example, are incredibly important given the societal role and responsibilities of journalists. Moreover, journalistic work would be impossible without a certain level of communicative competence and creativity, analytical and reflective abilities, and organizational capacities. Some of these basic competencies, especially social skills such as empathy and accountability, cannot be developed through journalistic training and education, but are instead based on personal characteristics and capabilities. Other basic skills such as creativity, autonomy, and conflict management, however, can very well be acquired. Nowak recommends that basic competencies should also be considered in the selection process of journalism education programs.<sup>294</sup>

To bring in an international angle on journalistic competencies, Donsbach's model approach can be discussed and compared to the German perspective: Together with his colleague Tom Fiedler, Wolfgang Donsbach was asked to provide a mid-term assessment of the curriculum enrichment program launched by the American Carnegie and Knight Foundation in 2005. The assessment focused on the top ten journalism degree programs in the United States, each of which had received funding to innovate their curricula.<sup>295</sup> Based on the rather disappointing results, the two scholars recommended that journalism education programs ideally focus on five core competencies:

1. General Competence ('allgemeine Kompetenz')
2. Practical Skills and Techniques ('Fachkompetenz')
3. Process Competence ('Prozesskompetenz')
4. Professional Ethics and Values ('professionelle Werte')
5. Subject Competence ('Sachkompetenz')<sup>296</sup>

As part of their empirical assessment, Donsbach and Fiedler stressed that journalists need to have a broad **general competence** and historical

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<sup>294</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 95-97.

<sup>295</sup> Cf. Donsbach, W., Fiedler, T. (10/2008), p. 2.

<sup>296</sup> Cf. Donsbach, W. (2012), pp. 40-42.

knowledge, as well as specific cognitive abilities. Journalists are required to understand and assess both events and human behavior, and their relationships to other societal processes. These competencies are primarily conveyed in humanities and social sciences. Conversely, the profession also demands high levels of analytical and logical thinking, which are typically the purview of the natural sciences and philosophy.<sup>297</sup>

Regarding the area of **practical competence**, the model proposes the integration of classic journalistic skills – such as the identification of sources and the utilization of archives – and different types of production and reporting skills – including recording and interview techniques as well as digital storytelling – in the curriculum. Donsbach acknowledges that “with the technological changes brought by digitalization, journalists must also learn to work across different media ‘platforms’ to convey their messages to the audience”<sup>298</sup> However, he critiques that, especially in the United States but in other countries, investment into new technologies has largely exceeded the resources dedicated to developing new educational concepts and to training journalism educators in the application of innovative teaching and learning approaches.

**Process competence** refers to a journalist’s ability to analyze communication processes and to anticipate influencing factors and the consequences of media products, particularly in terms of audience reactions to different formats in which a story can be told. Donsbach believes that journalists can engage in their profession more effectively and responsibly based on their knowledge of mass communication and social psychology. This includes analyzing the impact of visual versus text material as well as group behavior and dynamics.<sup>299</sup> Donsbach considers process competence to a core requirement of the journalistic profession as it enables journalists to understand the origins, perception, and effects of journalistic content, and to apply this knowledge to their work.<sup>300</sup>

The fourth area of this competence model, **professional ethics, and values**, must be part of journalism education. Donsbach stresses the

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<sup>297</sup> Cf. Donsbach, W, Fiedler, T. (10/2008), p. 4; cf. Donsbach, W. (2012), p. 40.

<sup>298</sup> Ibid., p. 4.

<sup>299</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, p. 5; cf. Donsbach, W. (2012), p. 41.

<sup>300</sup> Cf. Donsbach, W. (2012), p. 42.

responsibility of journalists to serve the public's information needs. Future journalists must therefore learn about not only their professional role, tradition, and identity within societal context, but also moral sensitivity and tolerance. Legal and ethical standards are thus an important cornerstone of journalistic work enabling journalists to deal with ethical issues and ambiguities in a professional manner.

Last but not least, journalists require **subject competence**. They can acquire such specialized knowledge by choosing a specific academic subject or sub-discipline (e.g. international politics, economics, sports or genetics) in which they are able to develop the necessary expertise to identify and critically discuss relevant issues with other experts in the field.<sup>301</sup> Donsbach admits that “while a journalist’s level of substantive knowledge will rarely compare to that of a true expert in the field, it has to be sufficiently deep so that the journalist is able to exercise independent judgment about the news event or situation.”<sup>302</sup>

Donsbach emphasizes that these core competencies remain without value if there is no connection to journalistic practice. Students and educators must be able to apply these skills and knowledge to real-life journalism, namely current topics and news stories. Most of these elements are included to some degree in most curricula. However, Donsbach stresses that their relevance for the journalistic profession must also be discussed as part of any program. Theoretical approaches must be applied to the reality of journalistic practice throughout the journalism degree programs. More concretely, Donsbach calls for team-teaching and other new didactical approaches to bring journalistic practitioners together with academics from different disciplines.<sup>303</sup>

Similar to Nowak’s approach, Donsbach and Fiedler’s international perspective on journalism education, which looks beyond Germany to assess tertiary journalism education in the United States, can also be classified as an integrated model. Digital competencies and media management skills and knowledge are included within other areas of competence rather than being added to the model as separate dimensions. Yet, presented as

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<sup>301</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, p. 41; cf. Donsbach, W., Fiedler, T. (10/2008), p. 5.

<sup>302</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5.

<sup>303</sup> Cf. Donsbach, W. (2012), pp. 41/42.

a simple list and description of competencies, the framework lacks specificity in terms of causal links and the intersections between the competencies. Moreover, they understand journalistic skills as merely practical skills and techniques – in other words, their approach does not include media competence as expertise about the media system and the role of journalists within society. Instead, Donsbach and Fiedler's framework emphasizes the importance of professional ethics and values as a specific competence that encompasses journalists' understanding of their public information function and their societal role and responsibility in the past and in the present. In comparison, Nowak's model only mentions personal values and accountability as part of basic competencies, but gives particular attention to the media landscape and societal context within the area of media competence.

In assessing the different competence models, there appears to be a consensus that subject competence, that is, specialized knowledge about a certain topic or issue should be a competence area in and of itself, rather than subsumed under other areas of competence. It is also evident that technological knowledge and skills on the one hand, and media management (including organizational as well as entrepreneurial capabilities) on the other hand, have become deeply relevant to theoretical debate about journalism education. These new issues have impact the existing competence grids in two ways: as self-sufficient areas of competence, or alternatively, as cross-cutting capabilities and topics which form part of other areas of competence and are therefore not explicitly mentioned as competencies but as indicators.

The following empirical study engages in an integrative approach to digital and media management competencies, defined as cross-sectional competencies that form part of other overarching competence areas, by applying Nowak's competence grid to this research project. The question as to whether the competence models underlying the journalism education degree programs in the countries selected apply an integrated approach or view digital and media management as separate areas of competence promises to unearth interesting insights.

In 2019, after the conceptual framework for this study was finalized, Gossel published another model of journalistic competencies. The German scholar follows in the tradition of Behmer, Mast and Meier and,

again, added **technological, management and entrepreneurial competencies** as separate dimensions to Nowak's integrated model. Figure 7 outlines the indicators for the three additional competencies.<sup>304</sup>

The additional competencies were derived from empirical research in Germany and include concrete indicators specified by training content which are applicable to other national contexts. Overall, the indicators for the three additional dimensions are well structured, especially regarding technological competence. Compared to Meier's notion of technological and creative competencies, Gossel's suggestions are process-based rather than focusing on the different types of tools and technologies themselves. The author suggests a differentiation between the application of media-specific, digital technology (for example digital cameras) and software (editorial and video editing programs), and the skills and knowledge to create and develop digital tools (i.e. programming skills). This structured approach to technological competencies for journalistic work seems to be more relevant and sustainable than referring to specific devices, software and digital formats, as the rapidly changing digital environment leads a high level of transiency.

The effects of the digital media revolution on journalism and journalism education was already evident in the assessment of the state of the field (chapter 2). The analysis of different competence models further illustrates the significance of technological and economic changes for the professional training and education of journalists. In line with the thematic focus of this study, chapter 4 explores the context of the digital revolution and its effects on the areas of competence relevant to future journalists in both developed and developing countries.

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<sup>304</sup> Cf. Gossel, B. M., Konyen, K. (2019), p. 14.

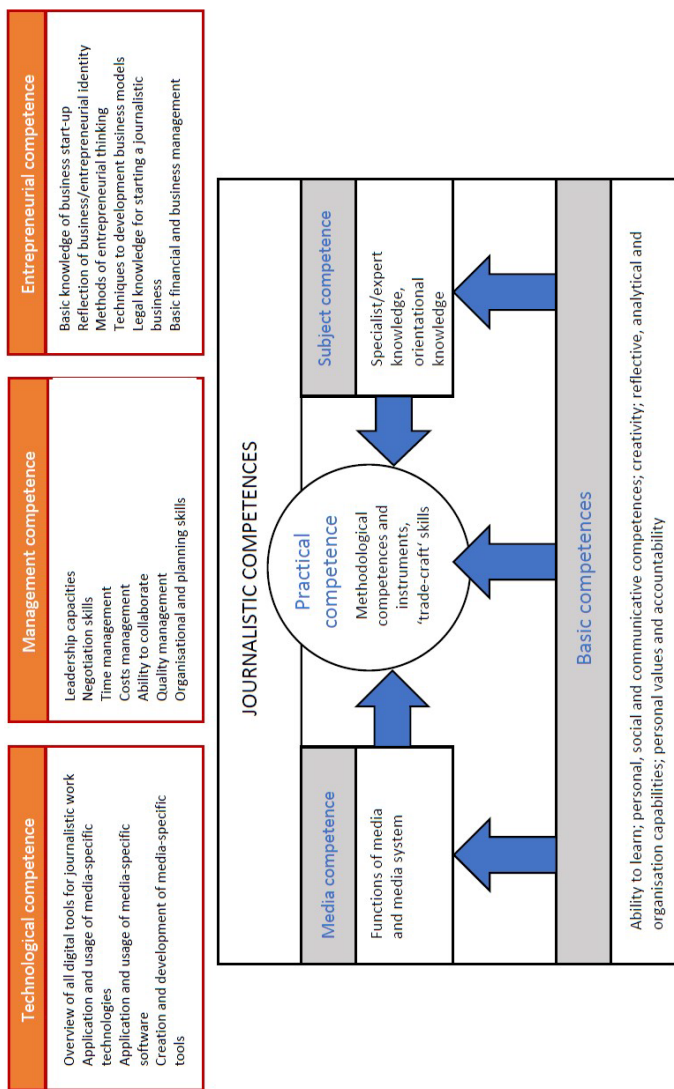


Figure 7: Adapted Competence Model for Journalism Education<sup>305</sup>

<sup>305</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, p. 14.



### 3.3.2 WJEC's Principles of Journalism Education

The term 'standard' can be defined as the level of quality considered acceptable, normal, or average. Standards can be used as a "measure, norm or model in comparative evaluations"<sup>306, 307</sup> As an outcome of intense discussions between the members of 28 journalism education associations from six different continents at the first World Congress of Journalism Educators in Singapore in 2007, **eleven principles for journalism education** were defined.<sup>308</sup> These principles include standards for

- Curricula and content
- Requirements for educators and aspects of
- Institutional collaboration.

The WJEC stressed the importance of ethical values and journalism's commitment to the public. It views journalism education as the theoretical and empirical basis for a journalistic practice that fulfills its societal role and responsibilities to create and sustain an informed society. In doing so, the eleven principles aim to improve and enhance journalism education for the benefit of students, media professionals and organizations and society as a whole.

In terms of the specific formulation of the WJEC's standard, the organization emphasizes the balance between theory and practice as a central element of journalism education, calling for journalism education to be "an academic field in its own right with a distinctive body of knowledge and theory"<sup>309</sup> that should offer all titled degrees, from Bachelors and Masters to PhDs, as well as other types of certificates and mid-career diplomas. The WJEC recommends an interdisciplinary approach that encompasses a wide range of topics, such as historical, ethical, and professional aspects of journalism, the role of the media in society, political life, and culture and media economics and management. It is worth

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<sup>306</sup> Lexico UK Dictionary (n.d.). *Standard*: <https://www.lexico.com/definition/standard?locale=en> [8/1/2021].

<sup>307</sup> Cf. Cambridge Dictionary (n.d.-d). *Standard*: [http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/british/standard\\_1?q=standard](http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/british/standard_1?q=standard) [Last retrieved 8/1/2021].

<sup>308</sup> WJEC – World Journalism Education Council (n.d.-b). *Declaration of Principles*: <https://wjec.net/about/declaration-of-principles/> [Last retrieved 8/1/2021].

<sup>309</sup> Ibid.

mentioning that the WJEC notes that “in some countries, journalism education includes allied fields like public relations, advertising, and broadcast production.”<sup>310</sup> At the same time, the set of standards is based on a “strong vocational orientation”<sup>311</sup> with practical components such as on-the-job training and experiential learning opportunities incorporated into the curriculum.

Looking closer at the recommendations regarding coursework and content, the WJEC principles specifically emphasize the importance of ethical and social responsibilities for future journalists, who are meant to “fulfill the public interest obligations that are central to their work.”<sup>312</sup> Furthermore, the WJEC considers journalism a “technologically intensive field”<sup>313</sup> and highlight that journalism education must integrate computer-based tools into its curriculum. The WJEC also expects a certain integration of international perspectives into journalism education by acknowledging both a common set of professional and cultural values, calling journalism a “global endeavor.”<sup>314</sup>

With regard to journalism educators, the ideal is a mix of practitioners and theorists in the classroom since journalistic work experience and close ties to media organizations are viewed as essential. In addition, the role and responsibilities of journalism educators go beyond the classroom as teachers and trainers are expected to promote media education and literacy within their institutions and to the general public. Furthermore, they are expected to enhance cooperation between educators around the world in order to establish journalism education as an academic field and to enhance the overall professionalization of the discipline.

The WJEC’s eleven principles provide a comprehensive set of standards that critically reflect the profession as a whole. While stressing practical skills and learning opportunities as well as connections and collaboration with other disciplines, the WJEC defines journalism education as an autonomous academic field rather than a sub-discipline of media and

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<sup>310</sup> Ibid.

<sup>311</sup> Ibid.

<sup>312</sup> Ibid.

<sup>313</sup> Ibid.

<sup>314</sup> Ibid.

communication studies. When compared to Nowak's competence grid, all areas of competence are covered in lesser or greater detail – except subject competence. Media management and economics are specifically mentioned as a key component of journalism education, even though the WJEC does not elaborate on its relevance for journalistic practice, nor do they name any specific learning outcomes such as expertise in entrepreneurial journalism, or organizational and financial management skills.

Equally, the impact of digital change and innovation on journalistic practice was not translated into any concrete principles or recommendations. In this respect, the WJEC's standards are limited to suggesting the integration of computer-based tools rather than including competencies in digital journalism or digital tools and technologies, for example, online research and data analysis, digital media production and storytelling, and programming skills. Notably, the WJEC's set of standards also does not include specific journalistic competencies, such as the option to specialize in a topic or issue by enrolling in courses on business and economics, political science or health and the natural sciences.

### **3.3.3 UNESCO Model Curricula for Academic Journalism Education**

In 2005, UNESCO called a meeting in Paris in response to its members' requests for guidance on journalism degree programs in their countries of origin. In response, a working group of four experts collaborating with twenty experienced journalism educators in developing countries presented the first Model Curriculum for Journalism Education<sup>315</sup> at the WJEC conference in 2007. UNESCO has taken on a leading role in ensuring the quality of global journalism education and intends to provide "standards based on good practice internationally, as a resource on which stakeholders around the world can draw to improve the quality of journalism education in their countries."<sup>316</sup> In addition to a two-year mid-career diploma, they propose four different curricula for both undergraduate (three and four-year Bachelor degree programs) and postgraduate levels

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<sup>315</sup> UNESCO – United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (2007). *UNESCO Series on Journalism Education. Model Curricula for Journalism Education*: <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000151209> [Last retrieved 8/1/2021].

<sup>316</sup> Banda, F. (2013). UNESCO Series on Journalism Education. Model Curricula of Journalism Education. A Compendium of New Syllabi. *UNESCO*, p. 9: <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000221199> [Last retrieved 8/1/2021].

(Master degrees for students with or without prior journalistic experience). Based on their understanding of journalism as a promoter of public debate and thus democratic processes as well as socio-economic and cultural development, UNESCO highlights that journalism students should be enabled “to cover political and social issues of particular importance to their own society, [...] to develop both a broad general knowledge and the foundation of specialized knowledge in a field important to journalism.”<sup>317</sup> A further learning outcome must be “to adapt to technological developments and other changes in the news media.”<sup>318</sup>

UNESCO provided detailed descriptions of twenty different journalism courses in three different categories: journalistic practice, journalism studies, and studies in other disciplines. These categories are in accordance with the three axes proposed by UNESCO as the **cornerstones of journalism curricula**:

1. Journalistic norms, values, tools, standards, and practices
2. Social, political, cultural, economic, legal, and ethical aspects of journalism
3. Knowledge of the world and intellectual challenges of the profession<sup>319</sup>

While UNESCO acknowledges the need for specialized mid-career journalism training, the main focus of the Model Curricula is on journalism education at all university levels, stressing the principal aim is “to develop a strong core educational structure with a balance between the practical and the academic.”<sup>320</sup> Similar to the WJEC principles, the UNESCO clearly advocates for the distinction between journalism degrees and media and communication studies and related fields such as PR, advertising and film studies.

As part of UNESCO’s first axis, practical skills and standards should be considered the core of every journalism program. Students must gain key skills relevant to the profession of journalism including “methods of

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<sup>317</sup> UNESCO (2007), p. 6.

<sup>318</sup> Ibid., p. 6.

<sup>319</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, p. 7.

<sup>320</sup> Ibid., p. 6.

knowing and thinking as well as recording and representing.”<sup>321</sup> The integration of internships and **collaboration** with media companies form an essential element within the UNESCO curricula, emphasizing that “such partnerships may serve to narrow the gap between the academic journalism program and the industry.”<sup>322</sup> Moreover, UNESCO highlights the need for **educators** to provide practical expertise and to receive adequate remuneration.

The second axis involves the function of journalism in society and the role of journalists within relevant institutions. Coursework must aim to strengthen a student’s journalistic identity and professional values, as well as imbue an awareness of moral and legal constraints both at a national and international level. In this context, UNESCO also affirms the significance of journalistic independence for democratic processes.<sup>323</sup>

As a general guideline and specifically within the third axis, UNESCO claims that journalism education cannot remain an isolated educational discipline, but must include and **connect with other disciplines** in the arts and sciences. With the aim of promoting the intellectual development of future journalists, they “propose that journalism students in university programs qualify not only in journalism but also in a separate academic field.”<sup>324</sup> In Nowak’s model this would be referred to as subject competence. Whereas the WJEC principles do not touch on this competence area at all, UNESCO highlights the importance of specializing in a specific topical area. Furthermore, UNESCO suggest that especially undergraduate journalism degrees should include basic competencies in the form of units dealing with “the foundations of journalism, which are designed to promote prerequisite intellectual and craft skills.”<sup>325</sup> These consist of critical thinking skills, journalistic writing skills, knowledge of national and international topics and issues, and a general knowledge of history, geography, and current affairs.

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<sup>321</sup> Ibid., p. 7.

<sup>322</sup> Ibid., p. 7.

<sup>323</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 7-8.

<sup>324</sup> Ibid., p. 9.

<sup>325</sup> Ibid., p. 8.

In addition, and in line with these three conceptual axes, UNESCO describes three sets of competencies on the following topics: professional standards, journalism and society, and knowledge. Only the first is explained in greater detail: it includes the classic journalistic research and writing skills, as well as technology-based skills for editing, designing, and producing media content of all formats, taking into account media convergence and innovation, professional ethics, knowledge of best practice in journalism and workplace competencies. This does not mean however that the other two dimensions are of lesser importance. In fact, the UNESCO Model Curriculum 2007 specifically addresses the competence area ‘journalism and society’ and ‘knowledge’ by referring to journalists’ understanding of journalism in society including past, present, and future developments. Furthermore, UNESCO stresses the importance of both a general understanding of one’s societal context and of national and international media systems, and subject competence and specialized knowledge “in at least one subject area important to journalism in one’s own country.”<sup>326</sup>

By 2012, the UNESCO Model Curricula was adapted by more than 70 journalism schools in 60 countries.<sup>327</sup> By 2013, a second version of the Model Curricula was published as a reaction to the “demand for new and often specialized literacies reflecting a fast-changing social, political, economic and technological order.”<sup>328</sup> This second version was an outcome of an ongoing process of reflection and review of the first Model Curriculum and its application in member countries, including discussions with the community at various international conferences, such as a workshop at the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC)<sup>329</sup> conference in Chicago and a UNESCO panel at the ECREA convention in Istanbul in 2012.<sup>330</sup>

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<sup>326</sup> Ibid., p. 34.

<sup>327</sup> Cf. Banda, F. (02/2013), p. 14

<sup>328</sup> Banda, F. (2013), p. 5.

<sup>329</sup> AEJMC – Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication: <https://www.aejmc.org/> [Last retrieved 9/24/2021].

<sup>330</sup> Cf. Banda, F. (2013), p. 10.

The new curriculum further elaborates on subject competence through a compendium of ten syllabi for specialized journalism degree programs<sup>331</sup> focusing on concrete topics and issues relevant to current global and local challenges to media practice, especially in the context of developing countries. The UNESCO claims:

There is a demand for new and often specialized literacies reflecting a fast-changing social, political, economic, and technological order. As a result, contemporary newsrooms and classrooms must not only learn to navigate the treacherous waters of financial and economic sustainability but also – as part of that sustainability agenda – take on board the particular literacies of science communication, data mining, human trafficking, gender, etc.<sup>332</sup>

At the third WJEC conference in 2013 in Mechelen, Belgium, future challenges and opportunities of journalism education were discussed and linked to both the need for innovation and the overarching questions of how journalism education can reinvent itself.<sup>333</sup>

This discussion of normative approaches in the form of competence grids, the WJEC's set of international standards, and the UNESCO model curricula reveal a number of key challenges for journalism education in the future. UNESCO emphasized that their curriculum initiative was developed in an era of continuous digital transformation and global economic crisis and that the respective changes and challenges to the profession and journalism education represent potential threats, that "if not seriously taken up, will have dire consequences for media practice and journalism education in the developing world."<sup>334</sup> Before looking closer at the particular context of developing countries and its relevance for journalism

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<sup>331</sup> The complete list of syllabi consists of the following programs: Media sustainability, data journalism, intercultural journalism, community radio journalism, global journalism, science journalism (incorporating bioethics), gender and journalism, humanitarian journalism, reporting human trafficking, and safety and journalism.

<sup>332</sup> Banda, F. (2013), p. 5. (s. Fußnote 327)

<sup>333</sup> Cf. Goodman, R. S. (2014). World Journalism Education Congress Explores Methods for Renewing Journalism Through Education. Columbia: *ASJMC Insights, Spring 2014*, 26-36 <http://asjmc.org/publications/insights/spring2014.pdf#page=27> [Last retrieved 1/8/2021].

<sup>334</sup> Banda, F. (2013), p. 5

education, chapter 3.3.4 outlines the relevant analytical dimensions and indicators for quality journalism education beyond the curricular level.

### **3.3.4 Analytical Dimensions and Indicators for Quality Journalism Education**

In the overall context of journalistic quality and with respect to normative perspectives on journalism education, it is important to define the term ‘quality’ as ‘of high standard.’<sup>335</sup> Within the WJEC standards, those principles that refer to course content and institutional resources are most relevant for this study. As a main criterion for quality journalism education curricula, the balance between theoretical and practical subjects stands out.<sup>336</sup>

In 2008, UNESCO issued its Media Development Indicators (see also sub-chapter 4.1.3) which consisted of four categories for measuring the potential contribution of free and diverse media landscapes to democratic transformation processes and, thus, their role in promoting human development (see also sub-chapter 4.1.3).<sup>337</sup> Category 4 concentrates on “professional capacity building and supporting institutions that underpins freedom of expression, pluralism and diversity.” Generally, “academic courses in journalism and other aspects of media practice are a means of disseminating both practical, craft-based skills and of encouraging critical thought about media policy and the role of media in society.”<sup>338</sup>

The indicators for this dimension of journalistic capacity building and institutional support are

- availability of professional media training
- availability of academic courses in media practice
- presence of trade unions and professional organizations, and

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<sup>335</sup> Cf. Cambridge Dictionary (n.d.-e). *Quality*: <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/de/worterbuch/englisch/quality> [Last retrieved 1/8/2021].

<sup>336</sup> Cf. WJEC (n.d.-b).

<sup>337</sup> Cf. UNESCO (2008). *Media Development Indicators: A Framework for Assessing Media Development*: <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000163102.unesco.org/programme/ipdc/initiatives/mdis> [Last retrieved: 8/1/2021].

<sup>338</sup> UNESCO (2008), p. 76.



- presence of civil society organizations.

For academic journalism education, the framework provides two sub-indicators outlined in detail in Table 1.

**Table 1: Key Indicators for Academic Journalism Education**<sup>339</sup>

4.4 Academic courses accessible to a wide range of students
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Universities and colleges offer undergraduate and postgraduate courses in Journalism and other aspects of the media</li> <li>• Training materials and textbooks available in local languages</li> <li>• Necessary training equipment/technical facilities, including access to ICTs</li> <li>• Available in media training institutions</li> </ul> <p><i>Means of verification:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⇒ Number of courses available</li> <li>⇒ Number of publicly funded options compared to courses offered by commercial concerns</li> <li>⇒ Existence of cross-industry or cross-sector training councils</li> <li>⇒ Active links between academic institutions and employers in the industry/sector</li> <li>⇒ Reports from credible agencies about the accessibility and quality of journalism courses</li> </ul>

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<sup>339</sup> Source: UNESCO (2008), p. 76.

**Table 1: Key Indicators for Academic Journalism Education (cont'd)**

4.5 Academic courses equip students with skills and knowledge related to democratic development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Courses cover issues of media law, ethics, regulation, and public policy</li> <li>• Courses help build awareness of the potential of the media to promote democracy and human rights</li> <li>• Courses equip students with the skills needed for independent thought and analysis</li> <li>• Courses contain essential disciplinary knowledge in the subject areas that journalists are expected to cover</li> <li>• Courses on media literacy geared to the modern communications environment are provided</li> </ul> <p><i>Means of verification:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⇒ Evaluation of course curricula by credible agencies</li> <li>⇒ Evidence of academic institutions working with media organizations, CSOs and research institutes to build relevant curricula and act as a forum for public debate</li> </ul>

The relationship between the media, democracy and development issues are concretely addressed by the first UNESCO Model Curriculum. In terms of teaching resources and equipment, UNESCO also suggests measuring the education and skill set of teachers, as well as the quality of technology and internet access, and the integration of practical elements into the coursework. Another aspect within this first set of indicators are tools and methods to evaluate both student learning and instructor performance.<sup>340</sup>

In the same year as the publication of the first Model Curriculum, UNESCO embarked on an ambitious attempt to map 96 journalism schools and to identify so-called ‘centers of excellence’ in Africa. This research project was coordinated by Rhodes University’s School of

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<sup>340</sup> Cf. UNESCO (2007).

Journalism and Media Studies and the ESJ in close collaboration with UNESCO. As a result, twelve African journalism schools were identified as potential ‘centers of excellence’ and another nine were defined as potential ‘centers of reference.’<sup>341</sup> In addition, UNESCO was able to define three key sets of indicators for the assessment of journalism education institutions, in collaboration and consultation with seven experts, eleven media development agencies and nineteen African journalism schools.

The indicators were developed based on existing criteria and assessment schemes for the quality of journalism education in English and French-speaking Western countries including the United States, the United Kingdom, and France. The initial 22 criteria were then adapted to the African context: All 96 journalism schools were given the opportunity to provide feedback and to make suggestions for changes. Even though the attempt to develop a set of common criteria and to apply one specific methodological approach to all types of journalism schools on the African continent was criticized by some institutions, UNESCO stresses that a “constructive debate emerged from the discussion, including the extent to which journalism schools should define quality, rather than the national and regional media industry which in some areas failed to live up to aspired standards.”<sup>342</sup> For example, by categorizing the common concepts and different perceptions that became visible during the open consultation process, the selection of prospective journalism students was identified as an important criteria for the quality of journalism schools. Overall, the initial complexity of over twenty indicators was reduced down to **three core criteria** which can be broken down into a set of indicators:

- **Criterion A:** Curriculum and institutional capacity

*Indicators:* Curriculum, teaching resources and equipment, assessment systems

- **Criterion B:** Professional and public service, external links, and recognition

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<sup>341</sup> Berger, G, Matras, C. (2007). Criteria and Indicators for Quality Journalism Training Institutions & Identifying Potential Centres of Excellence in Journalism in Africa. In *UNESCO Series on Journalism Education*, p. 2:  
[https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000151496\\_eng](https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000151496_eng) [Last retrieved 8/1/2021].

<sup>342</sup> Ibid., p. 6.

*Indicators:* Interactions and relations with the profession, international networking and recognition, social participation and standing, other external orientations

- **Criterion C:** Development plan, strategy, and potential

*Indicators:* Strategy, budget and sustainability, management, challenges<sup>343</sup>

The UNESCO approach to criteria and indicators represents a multi-level assessment of academic journalism education programs that focuses on contextual aspects instead of solely on the program content. By outlining quality criteria, it enhances the definition of concrete learning outcomes and competencies as part of global efforts to standardize journalism education, if only implicitly. Specific survey questions were also developed as a guideline for the self-assessment of journalism degree programs.

By identifying potential ‘centers of excellence,’ UNESCO also specified **seven factors of differentiation between institutions:**

1. Variety of media platforms integrated in the curriculum
2. Formalized interactions with the journalistic profession
3. Range of journalism training and education from entry to in-service level
4. Involvement in journalism association and networks
5. Growth and successful innovations over the last three years
6. Sustainability in terms of commitment of the management
7. Diversity of partnerships, mechanisms for personnel development

Whereas UNESCO takes the curriculum as a starting point for a more detailed analysis, Deuze proposes a ten-step model to ensure the quality of journalism education programs. As a result of identifying “key critical debates in journalism education shared cross-culturally”<sup>344</sup> Deuze’s **ten analytical categories** builds on a comprehensive literature review of

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<sup>343</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 8ff.

<sup>344</sup> Deuze, M. (2009), p. 268.

existing reports mapping journalism education in particular countries or regions, academic publications, and journal articles on the topic (see also Chapter 2). Deuze has formulated guiding questions for each of the ten categories, designed as a roadmap for establishing new journalism education programs.<sup>345</sup>

For the first category ‘**motivation**,’ Deuze suggests the formulation of concrete concepts and arguments for setting up specific journalism education programs. A primary goal should be to “build and sustain the professional self-organization of journalism, and contribute to the establishment, development, and application of quality assessment tools of journalistic practices.”<sup>346</sup>

Deuze understands ‘**paradigm**’ as the “specific role and mandate of journalism education”<sup>347</sup> and makes two main assumptions: one, journalism education is the foundation of journalism as a profession, and two, journalism has an important societal function. The debate about whether journalism education should focus on employability or social responsibility is mirrored in these two paradigmatic conceptions of journalism. Moreover, it reflects the conflicting interests of industry on the one side, with academia and society at large, on the other.

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<sup>345</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, p. 271.

<sup>346</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 272.

<sup>347</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 273.

Table 2: Ten Analytical Categories for Journalism Education Programs <sup>348</sup>

1. **Motivation:** Why journalism education?
2. **Paradigm:** Which ideas guide journalism education?
3. **Mission:** What is the position of journalism education toward the profession and the public?
4. **Orientation:** On which aspects of journalism is the education based?
5. **Direction:** What are the ideal characteristics of those graduating?
6. **Contextualization:** In what social context is journalism education grounded?
7. **Education:** Is journalism education an agent for socialization or an individualization agent?
8. **Curriculum:** How is the balance between practical and contextual knowledge resolved?
9. **Method:** What is the structural or preferred pedagogy, and why?
10. **Management and Organization:** How is journalism education organized?

The category ‘**mission**’ focuses on the “relationship of the mode of instruction with the profession of journalism.”<sup>349</sup> Deuze distinguishes the ‘follower’ from the ‘innovator’: Whereas the former holds a static perspective based on the present requirements of the profession, the latter has a dynamic approach looking to future requirements through innovative changes in the profession. Aside from labor market trends such as decreasing job security, this analytical step also considers technological, economic, and societal developments.

The ‘**orientation**’ assessment level is based on the premise that different models of journalism and media generate different orientations of journalism education. Deuze defines three types: instrumental and technodeterminist; functional; and new orientation. The instrumental

<sup>348</sup> Source: Ibid.

<sup>349</sup> Ibid., p. 273.

orientation is rather outdated, as it reduces journalists to media workers who exercise routine actions such as pressing buttons. The functional orientation to journalism education (see sub-chapter 3.1) is focused on fulfilling a variety of journalistic and media-based functions, such as entertainment, human interest, soft news vs. hard news, investigative reporting, and information dissemination. With the “new orientation,” Deuze describes a focus on a common “set of values, ideas and practices of journalism independent of media, delegating the particulars of possible sequences to the background.”<sup>350</sup>

The category ‘**direction**’ is closely linked to ‘mission’ and ‘orientation.’ The direction of a journalism program determines how students are prepared for their career and professional life. This can include responding to current trends such as frequent changes of employer, department and media genres. It also includes the debate over whether future journalists should be trained as specialists or generalists, as well adapting local journalism education to trends in global media.<sup>351</sup>

‘**Contextualization**’ refers to how journalism education is connected to local and global developments. Deuze highlights that journalism is not an independent, isolated system, but part of society and should reflect its diversity and differences. As a consequence, “a school of journalism has to define ways to culturally and thematically contextualize its program.”<sup>352</sup> Deuze suggests different contextual levels. Not only globalization, internationalization, and cultural contexts, but also ‘glocalization’ – the connections between the global and the local levels – become relevant. Moreover, he mentions digitalization and economic frameworks, such as the “corporate colonization of newsrooms”<sup>353</sup> and “commodification of news”<sup>354</sup> as crucial developments.

The category ‘**education**’ refers to journalism education as two distinct processes: The first process, individualization, concentrates on self-creation, self-reflection and “teaching as a way to help students develop their

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<sup>350</sup> Ibid., p. 273.

<sup>351</sup> Ibid., pp. 274/275.

<sup>352</sup> Ibid., p. 275.

<sup>353</sup> Ibid., p. 275.

<sup>354</sup> Ibid., p. 275.

own voice in the field.”<sup>355</sup> The second process of socialization is based on consensual knowledge and views “education as a socializing agent from secondary to tertiary education.”<sup>356</sup>

‘**Curriculum**’ has a clear focus on *what* is taught. Referring to Weischenberg’s competence model, Deuze recommends differentiating skill sets and types of knowledge. Highlighting the abundance of theoretical concepts of curricula for journalism education, Deuze critiques the lack of contextual considerations, reflected in the dichotomy between contextual knowledge and practical competencies. Moreover, he recommends going beyond analyzing curricular content in terms of theory versus practice by including its overall purpose and form. The purpose of the curriculum manifests itself in its criteria for integrating specific topics, concepts, and coursework as well as aspects of its localized context. Formal aspects include didactical questions within more or less flexible program structures that allow students to choose their own coursework and to include non-journalistic subjects. Practical components allow students to gain hands-on experiences through on or off-campus media.

Furthermore, Deuze considers evaluation processes and standards to be crucial. They should assess the students’ experience and performance, as well as evaluate the curriculum. A quality assessment must bring together a wide range of expectations from industry representatives on the one side, and academic requirements on the other. In addition, standards for journalism education must be elucidated both for individual students and courses, and for a cross-cultural and cross-media assessment of curricula.

‘**Methodology**’ concentrates on how the curriculum is implemented through forms of teaching and learning. As discussed in previous chapters, the didactical debate is gaining increasing attention, moving beyond the traditional conversation about integrating theory and practice. Deuze postulates “a shift toward a ‘converged’ curriculum,”<sup>357</sup> which he ascribes to the direct impact of technological changes and the convergence of media formats, as well as the role of media organizations and media economies as models of journalism education. He further highlights the

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<sup>355</sup> Ibid., p. 276.

<sup>356</sup> Ibid., p. 276.

<sup>357</sup> Ibid., p. 278.



debates between those advocating standardized, product-oriented teaching methods as part of “increasing commodification and massification of higher education,”<sup>358</sup> and those who argue for a process-based culture of individual learning. The increasingly influence of Anglophone models and the standardization of journalism training and education on a global scale has immediate risks for journalism’s societal role and responsibilities, which are no longer understood within their local context.

Under ‘**management and organization**’ Deuze considers to the question of how journalism education is organized. The author does not elaborate further on this dimension, which is closely linked to teaching methodologies. ‘Management and organization’ may also include other institutional features such as organizational structure, financial administration and aspects of revenue and funding, as well as the management of human resources and technical equipment.

The practical purpose of this framework as a ten-step guideline for establishing new journalism education programs is debatable. The formulation and explanations for the different dimensions are rather abstract and include significant overlaps between categories. At least in this form, it remains unclear as to how the categories could be translated into qualitative or quantitative indicators that are concrete enough to be operationalized. Nonetheless, the analytical framework has theoretical value for advancing the debate and research on journalism education. This comprehensive set of categories will serve as a basis for the research design of this particular study, which considers micro, meso and macro levels including the global trends of digital and media transformation as well as the specific national contextual conditions of the selected developing countries.

Deuze’s category scheme is also limited in so far as it does not specify relevant actors or interest groups. The ten-step approach leaves open who might influence the respective categories that form the basis for analyzing the quality of journalism education. By contrast, Nowak stresses the importance of identifying and assessing the different interests of relevant actors including individual students, instructors, academic institutions,

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<sup>358</sup> Ibid., p. 278.

potential employers, and society as a whole. Despite her focus on Germany, Nowak provides a more structured, theory-based approach to quality journalism education including a comprehensive set of specific indicators, which is built upon comprehensive in-depth and interdisciplinary analysis of relevant literature including business and organizational sciences, theories of teaching (didactics) and learning including cognitive psychology.<sup>359</sup> As a result, she suggests five different analytical levels for assessing journalism education: 1. institutional, 2. teaching, 3. recruitment, 4. labor market, and 5. quality management. These levels are based on a three-dimensional understanding of ‘quality,’ which considers the potential, processes, and results of journalism education.<sup>360</sup> This means, according to Nowak, that if high values are reached for all five indicators, the quality of journalism education can be rated as high. Furthermore, the probability of graduates reaching their educational objectives in such cases is also high. If the values are high for only one indicator, however, the assumption is at least one of the dimensions of quality (potential, process, or result) has been neglected.<sup>361</sup> The indicators can be described separately for each of the five educational dimensions as outlined in Table 3.

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<sup>359</sup> Cf. Nowak, E. (2007), p. 7.

<sup>360</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, p. 13.

<sup>361</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 236/237.

Table 3: Dimensions and Indicators for the Quality of Journalism Education

Institution
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The institution defines journalism as a central educational goal.</li><li>• Educational objectives account for the societal function of journalism.</li><li>• Instructors and organizational staff agree with these educational objectives.</li><li>• Educators and other staff that are directly involved in the planning of program content are independent from interest groups and funding partners.</li><li>• The journalism program provides sufficient personal and financial resource and infrastructure.</li><li>• It integrates and adapts to current trends in journalism including technological, organizational, and content-based aspects.</li><li>• It provides flexible and ongoing access of students to resources for research and production.</li><li>• Students have short-term and direct access to individual support and coaching for organizational and content-based questions.</li><li>• Students know the organizational structure of the program, participate in events, and contribute to organizational development.</li></ul>

**Table 3: Dimensions and Indicators for the Quality of Journalism Education (cont'd)**

Teaching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• On the level of teaching, the educational program and its elements are systematically planned according to didactic principles.</li> <li>• The journalism education consists of different forms of learning with an emphasize on open learning opportunities.</li> <li>• Concrete learning objectives are formulation for the educational program and its components.</li> <li>• The learning environment is based on group work and utilizes a variety of methods.</li> <li>• Time structure for teaching and learning units are dynamic.</li> <li>• Examination is based on learning objectives.</li> <li>• Journalism education...</li> <li>• ...integrates theory and practice.</li> <li>• ... provides practice-orientation including company-based and experimental training as well as a research perspective.</li> <li>• ... promotes reflections on journalism and journalistic work.</li> <li>• ... enables students to master journalism programs.</li> <li>• ... enables students to work in more than one media genre.</li> <li>• ... includes all organizational levels of the media landscape, from media outlets to editorial departments, as well as routine communication and decision-making processes.</li> <li>• ... has a socialization function based on journalistic standards and through the opportunity to try out different journalistic roles.</li> <li>• ... is primarily organized outside of media companies, but includes supervised practical experience in different editorial departments of media outlets outside the educational institutions.</li> </ul>
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Table 3: Dimensions and Indicators for the Quality of Journalism Education (cont'd)

Recruitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Educators bring pedagogical training as well as journalistic training and professional experience.</li><li>• Instructors have an educational background that allows them to impart academic knowledge and methods of scientific research.</li><li>• Teachers and other organizational staff obtain continuous training.</li><li>• Entry requirements are defined for all areas of the educational institution.</li><li>• Selection tests and criteria include general qualifications and motivation.</li><li>• Students take responsibility for their own learning process.</li></ul>
Labor market	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Alumni are able to find employment shortly after graduation in a preferred journalistic area or start working as freelance journalists.</li><li>• They are successful in the professional field of journalism.</li></ul>

**Table 3: Dimensions and Indicators for the Quality of Journalism Education (cont'd)**

Quality management	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The journalism education program applies a quality management system, which has been adapted to the specific institution and program.</li> <li>• The elements of quality management include all three quality dimensions: potential, process, result.</li> <li>• Organizational staff, instructors and students participate in an ongoing, institutionalized dialogue about the quality of journalism education.</li> <li>• Evaluations feed into a process of quality development involving all participants.</li> <li>• The institution is in regular contact with media companies, organizations and journalists exchanging relevant information.</li> <li>• The journalism education program is in regular contact with alumni utilizing the exchange for the purpose of evaluation.</li> <li>• The institution is in regular contact with other journalism education program exchanging relevant information.</li> </ul>

Whereas the set of indicators for the institutional and teaching level is comprehensive, fewer indicators are defined for quality management, as well as recruitment and the labor market. This reflects the differing levels of importance of the five dimensions. Notably, the teaching dimension, including indicators for journalistic competence, has the greatest share. The quality indicators refer directly to Nowak's competence grid and cover all four competence areas.

Beyond this quantitative assessment of the number of indicators for the different dimensions, this analytical framework has some key qualitative strengths: The formulation of indicators is comprehensive and concrete and specifies the relevant interest groups and actors. Although this multilayered set of indicators has been developed for the German context, it provides a systematic scholarly foundation that is equally useful for the present research with its focus on developing countries, which I present and operationalize in chapter 5.

It has become clear that the evolution of journalism education is heavily influenced by its institutionalization and must therefore be situated within the context of historical, but also present and future, developments in journalism as a whole. Thus, this research pays special attention to current debates about the impact of digital media transformation, including economic challenges and subsequent changes and repercussion for the journalistic profession (see sub-chapter 4.1). Moreover, this study follows the demand for a de-Westernization of global media and communication studies in general,<sup>362</sup> and journalism education research in particular, taking on a 'glocal' perspective by analyzing the specific local context of journalism education in developing countries against the backdrop of global journalism studies and standards. The following section (sub-chapter 4.2) therefore discusses the national context of Vietnam and Cambodia by providing an analysis of the local frameworks for journalism education in the two countries.

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<sup>362</sup> Cf. Curran, J, Park, M.-J. (2000); cf. Wang, G. (2011). *De-Westernizing Communication Research: Altering Questions and Changing Frameworks*. London, U.K.: Routledge; cf. Wassermann, H, de Beer, H.S. (2009).

#### **4. Journalism Education in Vietnam and Cambodia: Contextual Considerations**

Before presenting the research design and research results, this chapter discuss the context of the overall study, with special consideration given to digitalization, the conditions in developing countries (sub-chapter 4.1) and the national framework conditions in Vietnam and Cambodia (sub-chapter 4.2) with reference to the journalistic profession and journalism education. This bridging chapter aims to link the relevant theoretical and conceptual approaches with the contextual and practical realities on a global and local level.

First, it is necessary to briefly outline the repercussions of the ongoing process of digitalization and transformations in the media that have undoubtedly shaped the evolution of journalistic functions and the emergence of new understandings of the role of journalists (see sub-chapter 4.1.1). This understanding will be the basis for the assessment and discussion of how digital skills are integrated into journalism education curricula in the two countries selected. As we will see in sub-chapter 4.1.2, the second focus topic of this study, media management, is closely linked to these dynamics and reveals the particular relevance of entrepreneurial journalism to the professionalization of journalism – an angle that remains under-researched and thus worthy of having more light shed on it here.

Sub-chapter 4.1.3 defines ‘development journalism’ as a sub-field of ‘democratic journalism’ within the larger field of ‘development communication.’ I will discuss the emergence and evolution of related terms and approaches. The goal is to lay the groundwork for exploring whether and how relevant skills and competencies – or theoretical concepts – are conveyed in journalism degree programs in Vietnam and Cambodia. Furthermore, this section will consider relevant indicators such as the Digital Adoption Index, the Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) Development Index and the Media Development Indicators. These measures are outlined in sub-chapter 4.2, which explores the national framework condition in the two countries selected after a brief consideration of alternative approaches to non-Western media systems, identifying



the most relevant and recent scholarship. The main part of this sections provides an overview for Vietnam and Cambodia. The analysis of the context in both countries focuses on three key areas: political, socio-economic and human development; the historical development of academic journalism education; and the media landscape and its development, with special emphasis on working conditions for journalists.

## **4.1 Digital, Entrepreneurial and Development Journalism**

### **4.1.1 Impact of Digitalization and Media Transformation on Journalistic Functions**

Given the complexity and volatility of the topic, it is necessary to take a step back before exploring the implications of digitalization on journalism education in order to clarify underlying terms such as ‘digitization’ and ‘digitalization,’ which are sometimes used synonymously, despite having different meanings.<sup>363</sup> Through a particular focus on digital media and media business models, Picard describes ‘digitization’ as “the process of changing content production, storage, distribution, and consumption from an analog to a digital base. Its most important characteristic is that it changes from physical form to binary electronic form.”<sup>364</sup> According to Brennen and Kreiss,<sup>365</sup> digitalization has a more holistic meaning and stands for the “structuring of many and diverse domains of social life around digital communication and media infrastructures.”<sup>366</sup> The

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<sup>363</sup> Cf. Van Dijk, J. (1999). *The Network Society*. London, U.K.: SAGE Publications, p. 30; cf. Picard, R. G. (2011). *Mapping Digital Media. Digitization and Media Business Models*. Open Society Foundations: [https://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/publications/digitization-media-business-models#publications\\_download](https://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/publications/digitization-media-business-models#publications_download) [Last retrieved 9/5/2021], pp. 15/16.

<sup>364</sup> Picard, R. G. (2011), p. 6.

<sup>365</sup> Before their scholarly article was published in *The International Encyclopedia of Communication Theory and Philosophy*, in September 2014 the authors issued a draft online version of their piece here: <https://culturedigitally.org/2014/09/digitalization-and-digitization/> [Last retrieved 9/5/2021]. For the conceptualization of my study, I initially based my work on this internet article as the scholarly article became available only in 2016. However, the following references will be using the academic article: Brennen, J. S, Kreiss, D. (2016). Digitalization. In Jensen, K.B. et al. (eds.) *The International Encyclopedia of Communication Theory and Philosophy* (pp. 556-566). Wiley Online Library: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1002/9781118766804.wbiect111> [Last retrieved 9/11/2021].

<sup>366</sup> Brennen, J. S, Kreiss, D. (2016), p. 560.

authors state that the term was coined by Robert Wachal, writing on the computerization of human life in an essay in the *North American Review* in 1971.<sup>367</sup> Since then, the literature on the topic has grown exponentially, with a clear emphasis on digitalization, that is “the ways that digital media structure, shape, and influence the contemporary world.”<sup>368</sup>

The World Bank highlights that “the internet and related technologies have reached developing countries much faster than previous technological innovations.”<sup>369</sup> In 2016, they presented the Digital Adoption Index (DAI) to measure the diffusion of digital technologies across 180 countries and three dimensions: government, business and people. The most recent data was made available in 2016 as part of the World Development Report.

The composite DAI consists of three sub-indices assessing accountability and efficiency levels of government services; growth and improved productivity for companies; and increased welfare and opportunities for individuals. While other indices such as the World Economic Forum’s Network Readiness Index have relied on perception surveys, the DAI claims to be a more comprehensive index, based on data reflecting the availability and adoption – that is, the actual usage – of digital technology. The World Bank produces the index specifically for policy makers developing digital transformation and adoption strategies interested in taking into consideration different types of users.<sup>370</sup>

The second key measure I draw on is the ICT (Information and Communications Technology) Development Index (IDI), provided by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) on an annual basis since 2009. This index is especially relevant for assessing journalism education in the context of digitalization and development for two reasons: Firstly, rather than economic and governmental actors, it focuses on households and individuals to explore various dimensions of the development of ICTs in and across countries and time. Secondly, it aims to measure “the

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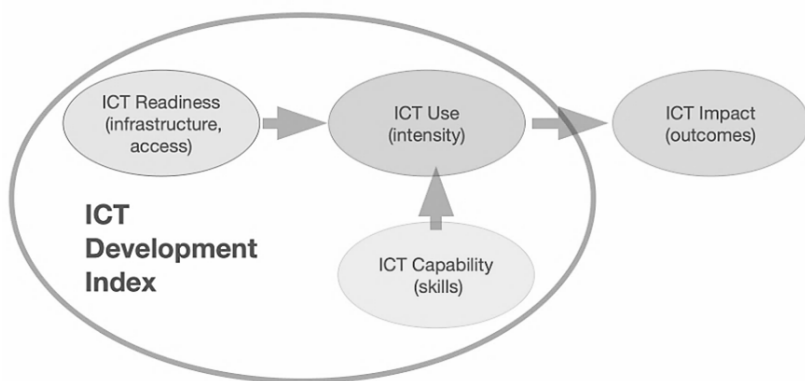
<sup>367</sup> Wachal, R. (1971). Humanities and Computers: A Personal View. *The North American Review*, 256(1), p. 30.

<sup>368</sup> Brennan, J. S, Kreiss, D. (2016), p. 560.

<sup>369</sup> World Bank (2016). World Development Report 2016. Digital Dividends, p. 3: <https://www.worldbank.org/en/publication/wdr2016> [Last retrieved 9/5/2021].

<sup>370</sup> Ibid., p. 3.

*development potential* of ICTs and the extent to which countries can make use of them to enhance growth and development in the context of available capabilities and skills.”<sup>371</sup> One of the declared objectives of the IDI is to identify and monitor the digital gap between developed and developing countries.<sup>372</sup> A nation’s transformation toward an information society follows a three-stage model, according to the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) (see Figure 8):



**Figure 8: ICT Development Index and Sub-Indices**<sup>373</sup>

1. ICT readiness: determined by the level of ICT access and infrastructure
2. ICT use: revealing the intensity of ICT usage in a country
3. ICT impact: reflecting the outcomes of more efficient and effective ICT use

Figure 8 also reveals a fourth dimension essential for developing countries in general and media development in particular: Apart from readiness, use and impact, the IDI also takes into account ICT skill levels and

<sup>371</sup> ITU – International Telecommunication Union (n.d.-d). The ICT Development Index (IDI): Conceptual Framework and Methodology:

<https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Statistics/Pages/publications/mis2017/methodology.aspx> [Last retrieved 10/8/2021].

<sup>372</sup> Cf. *ibid.*

<sup>373</sup> Source: ITU (n.d.-d).

capabilities. Both basic literacy and media and information literacy<sup>374</sup> have an impact on journalistic content, its use and its perception. The capability dimension thus makes the IDI even more meaningful for this study, although it is given less weight since it is based on three proxy indicators that only indirectly assess ICT-related skills, namely mean of years of schooling, gross secondary enrollment, and gross tertiary enrollment, which is of particular relevance for the assessment academic journalism education. In terms of the impact of digital technologies and new ICTs on journalism, Pavlik pointed out at the turn of the millennium that new technologies have shaped journalism since its very beginnings.<sup>375</sup> Similarly, Weischenberg and Hienzsch's central thesis is that since the beginning of modern mass communication, and more specifically since Gutenberg's invention of the printing press around 1450, technological innovations have influenced the construction of reality through the media and journalism. While electronic media emerged in the early 1900s, the invention of TV and radio sparked new forms of media and new communication technologies that have led to innovations in media production, media organization and the media economy. Later, computer-based communication technologies gained importance with comparable consequences for the ways in which media messages of all kinds are produced and distributed. In line with many other scholars, Weischenberg and Hienzsch highlight that new media and communication technologies, in the sense of artifacts and tools to support communication processes, have been used since human exchange reached beyond verbal and non-verbal face-to-face communication.<sup>376</sup>

As Deuze argues, "it is important to understand how technology automates as well as augments media practitioners' abilities to communicate, create, interact, and distribute."<sup>377</sup> More precisely, as Pavlik suggests,

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<sup>374</sup> For more resources on media and information literacy: <https://en.unesco.org/themes/media-and-information-literacy> [Last retrieved 9/5/2021].

<sup>375</sup> Cf. Pavlik, J. (2000). The Impact of Technology on Journalism. *Journalism Studies*, 1(2), p. 229.

<sup>376</sup> Cf. Weischenberg, S, Hienzsch, U. (1994). Die Entwicklung der Medientechnik. In Weischenberg, S, Hienzsch, U, Merten, K, Schmidt, S.J. (eds.) *Die Wirklichkeit der Medien. Eine Einführung in die Kommunikationswissenschaft* (pp. 456-458). Opladen, Germany: Westdeutscher Verlag.

<sup>377</sup> Deuze, M. (2007). *Media Work*. Cambridge, U.K.: Polity Press, p. 93.

journalism is generally impacted by technological changes in four different areas:

1. Journalistic work or practice
2. Journalistic content
3. Journalistic organization and the media industry
4. Relationships between journalistic organizations<sup>378</sup>

In each of these areas, technological changes impact the skills sets and competencies that journalists need to bring to the job, the organization and the sector. In other words, technology has consequences for the micro, meso and macro level of journalistic practice or journalism as a profession and should be continuously reflected in the curricula of journalism education programs.

In a similar vein, Picard posits that the transformation of the media has been ongoing, initially impacting the production of print media, and then audiovisual media, that is, TV, film and radio. Not only have production costs been reduced over the past 50 years, but the storage of original media content has also become easier and cheaper. The digitalization of the distribution and consumption of media content and its consequential improvement are part of wider societal transformation processes that have impacted all forms of business, including the telecommunication and computing industries. He further highlights that “most of the effects on journalism imposed by new technology are shaped in the most developed societies, but these changes are equally influencing the media in less developed societies.”<sup>379</sup> This is particularly relevant for this study on the Global South.

Little doubt remains that the global drive toward digitalization and the inexorable convergence of different industries and means of communication have led to faster and cheaper content production and distribution, and “shift greater control to consumers by allowing them to select, filter, search, control, and participate on multiple forms of communication.”<sup>380</sup> There is a close link between the rise of digitalization and ‘convergence,’

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<sup>378</sup> Cf. Pavlik, J. (2000), p. 229.

<sup>379</sup> Picard, R. G. (2011), p. 3.

<sup>380</sup> Ibid., p. 6.

which Jenkins views as “a cultural shift, as consumers are encouraged to seek out new information and make connections among dispersed media content.”<sup>381</sup> Rather than being a mere technological process wherein one device combines various media functions, convergence is deeply rooted in participatory culture, insofar as individual and corporate media users are not simply passive recipients, but are actively involved in the process of media production, distribution and consumption. Similarly, McQuail concludes that digitalization is a prerequisite for media convergence: As a consequence of the computerization of media, the boundaries between different types of media with respect to production processes, but also transmission and reception have become increasingly blurry. Based on the interactive nature of digital technologies, the distinction between production and consumption, communicator and recipient has also disappeared.<sup>382</sup>

These changes have also affected the journalistic profession, which has come under greater scrutiny and forced journalists around the globe to review their core functions. Picard sums up the new legitimization of journalists as:

There is still a role for content creators and aggregators (newspapers, magazines, broadcast channels and internet sites) to make selections and provide quality control. This role is badly needed by consumers, who are overwhelmed by news, information, entertainment, and marketing messages.<sup>383</sup>

In line with this argument, Neuberger provides a model approach to the public sphere in the digital age that illustrates the implications of digitalization, and the internet in particular, on the functions of online journalism, making it is highly relevant for this study.

To start with, Neuberger considers the thesis of ‘disintermediation,’ that is, the phenomenon of consumers bypassing intermediaries and, as a consequence, directly communicating with the sources of journalism, such

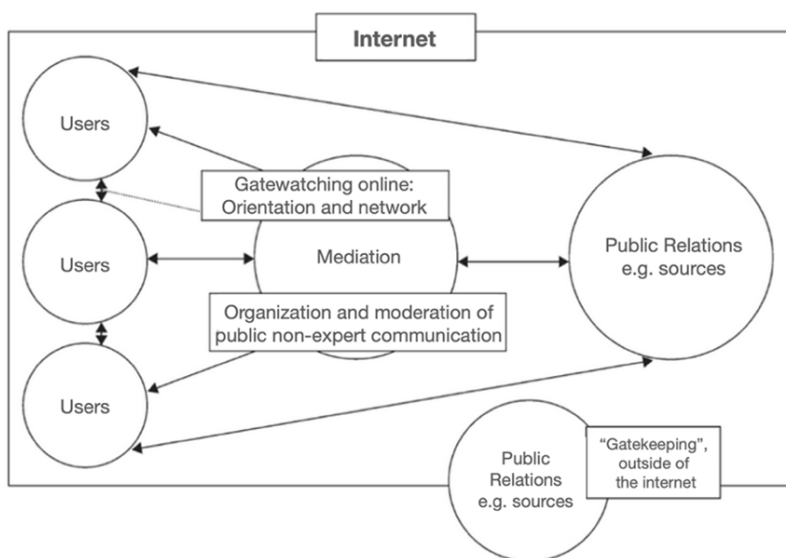
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<sup>381</sup> Jenkins, H. (2006). *Convergence Culture. Where Old and New Media Collide*. New York, U.S.A.: New York University Press, p. 3.

<sup>382</sup> McQuail, D. (2010). *Mass Communication Theory* (6th edition). London, U.K.: SAGE Publications, p. 553.

<sup>383</sup> Picard, R. G. (2011), p. 2.

as political parties and companies.<sup>384</sup> This assumed dynamic has sparked a controversial discussion of about whether journalism is losing its legitimization and overall function. Neuberger is of the opinion that despite the possibility of disintermediation, journalists have not become obsolete in their role as mediators, but that a process of ‘re-mediation’ is taking place online. In essence, Neuberger highlights the potential of online journalism by illustrating the multitude of ways in which the internet provides far more opportunities to offer media content than traditional mass media. The model affirms that high levels of interactivity and participation in online spheres create not only new opportunities, but also challenges and changing expectations for journalists.<sup>385</sup>



**Figure 9: Mediation Functions in the Current Online Public Sphere<sup>386</sup>**

<sup>384</sup> Cf. Neuberger, C. (2009). Internet, Journalismus, Öffentlichkeit: Analyse des Medienumbruchs. In Neuberger, C, Nuernbergk, C, Rischke, M. (eds.) Journalismus im Internet. Profession, Partizipation, Technisierung (pp. 19-105). Wiesbaden, Germany: VS Verlag, p. 39.

<sup>385</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 54-59.

<sup>386</sup> Source: Translated from Neuberger, C. (2009), p. 55.

Within Neuberger's model of the mediation functions in the current online public sphere,<sup>387</sup> three functional areas must be distinguished:

1. Journalists take on the central job of 'gatewatching' online communication: the *ex-post* selection, assessment and linking of information that has already been published online. Neuberger speaks of "building bridges"<sup>388</sup> between different political perspectives and sub-cultures. Gatewatching also includes connecting mainstream content with niche topics targeting a specific audience.
2. Journalists organize and moderate public lay communication: By assessing the quality of content produced by internet users and ensuring relevant linkages between weblogs, journalists are able to focus their audience's attention. Neuberger speculates that a symbiosis between professional journalistic content targeting mass audiences online, on the one hand, and participatory 'long tail' online offerings on the other hand might emerge, comparable to coffee house communication and the German weekly moral publications ('Moralische Wochenschriften').<sup>389</sup>
3. Journalists still fulfill a gatekeeping function outside the online sphere: Classic media outlets still produce the largest share of journalistic content and information available online. Internet and platform providers are not able to build editorial teams that can produce exclusive information.<sup>390</sup>

Given this multidimensional approach, Neuberger's model provides a promising basis for investigating the changing roles and functions of journalists in society in the digital age, as reflected in the relevant adaptations of journalism curricula. It will be used as a frame of reference to explore one of the main questions of this study:

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<sup>387</sup> Cf. original German wording: 'Vermittlungsleistungen in der aktuellen Internetöffentlichkeit'; cf. Neuberger, C. (2009), pp. 54ff.

<sup>388</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, p. 56.

<sup>389</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, p. 57; cf. Martens, W. (1971). *Die Botschaft der Tugend: Die Aufklärung im Spiegel der deutschen Moralischen Wochenschriften*. Stuttgart, Germany: Metzler Verlag.

<sup>390</sup> Cf. Neuberger, C. (2009), p. 59.



**RQ 3.1** To what extent and in which form are digital and ICT skills and competencies included in academic journalism schools in Vietnam and Cambodia?

In contrast, while Loo does not deny the need to innovate journalism training and education programs, he warns against the dominance of digitalization in debates about sustaining journalistic best practices. The author argues that the debate among journalism educators has been overwhelmed by the hype generated by new media technologies that have allegedly revolutionized journalism practice and reshaped news organizations. In consequence, journalism education curricula have placed too much emphasis on technology, compromising the teaching of traditional journalistic values and best practices. Loo is concerned that students are being trained in digital media production and packing skills, as well as specific web technologies and applications, at the expense of classic journalistic competencies such as critical thinking, storytelling, investigative skills and ethics. Quality journalism, according to Loo, should not be confused with digital media skills: “Apart from teaching about technology and training in production skills, students must be educated in how to tell stories truthfully, research, fact-check, engage with primary sources and represent actualities the best way they can, and to factualize what they hear, see and feel.”<sup>391</sup>

The causes and effects of digital innovation and the economic transformation of the journalistic profession can no longer be separated. Picard points out that, until the 1990s, the business models of media organizations did not undergo any changes, existing in parallel to the digitization process, as analog media content and traditional production continued to be distributed and consumed. However, new software technologies would come to transform computer-based networks that “previously required specialist knowledge and skills into the relatively easy to use internet.”<sup>392</sup> Subsequently, revenue streams and funding models across the business world were forced to adapt to new market players, and new types of creation, dissemination and consumption. Consequently, digitalization, and

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<sup>391</sup> Cf. Loo, E. (December 2010). Back to Basics in Journalism Education Amid the Techno Hype. *Asia Pacific Media Education*, 20, p. 2.

<sup>392</sup> Picard, R. G. (2011), p. 7.

in particular the internet as a network technology, has disrupted monopolistic and oligopolistic markets; consumers have increased influence and power based on their new double-role as producers and consumers of content. In addition, the 2008-2009 global financial crisis led to media outlets around the world shuttering, downsizing or outsourcing their production, resulting in a significant decrease in the number of jobs available to journalism graduates. In response to these economic and digital transformations, Quinn believes that journalism educators must provide students with multimedia skills and prepare them for new entrepreneurial forms of journalism: “We will need to see the emergence of the recent graduate journalist as entrepreneur, willing to work in a range of media and able to sell their content to a range of employers.”<sup>393</sup>

#### **4.1.2 Media Management and Entrepreneurial Journalism as Relevant Topics**

As we saw in Chapter 3, some competence models for journalism education include media management. Based on their empirical research, Vazquez Schaich and Klein have concluded that although media management is not a new competency area for journalism schools, their relevance has increased and shifted to include both entrepreneurial and intrapreneurial aspects, from helping journalism students navigate self-employment on the one hand, to increasing their ability to productively contribute to innovation and business development in established media organization.<sup>394</sup>

Before exploring the relatively new concept of ‘entrepreneurial journalism,’ its limited literature, and its relevance to journalism education, it is worthwhile clarifying the definitions and approaches to ‘media management’ and ‘media economics.’ Albarran’s *The Media Economy*<sup>395</sup> is a classic English-language reference work on the topic of media management,

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<sup>393</sup> Quinn, S. (2010). Opportunities for Journalism Education in an Online Entrepreneurial World. *Asia Pacific Media Education*, 20, p. 78.

<sup>394</sup> Cf. Vazquez Schaich, M.J., Klein, J.S. (2013). Entrepreneurial Journalism Education. Where Are We Now? *Observatorio (OBS) Journal*, 7(4), p. 186.

<sup>395</sup> Cf. Albarran, A.B. (2010). *The Media Economy* (1st edition). New York, U.S.A.: Routledge. NOTE: A second edition of this book was published in 2016 after the conceptualization of this study.

as is Albarran et al's *Handbook of Media Management and Economics*,<sup>396</sup> first published in 2005, which covers the theoretical dimensions, analytical approaches, and current and future issues facing media businesses in light of globalization and media convergence from a Western perspective. Albarran points out that until the turn of the century, academic research has added little to the theoretical and practical discourse on media management, primarily due to a lack of systematic empirical research. Furthermore, a more consensual and comprehensive conceptual approach is necessary as "the field is ripe for exploring new avenues of research."<sup>397</sup> A new edition of the handbook, including a revised structure, additional chapters and new authors became available in 2018, after the conceptualization of this study. Notably, over ten years later, Albarran argues that, in an environment of continuous technological innovation and digital disruption, the struggle to find a common definition for 'media business,' 'media management' and 'media economics' continues. Consequently, he recommends accepting that all three terms stand for "enterprises that operate on multiple levels and are not easily identified as a simple concept."<sup>398</sup>

In his handbook *Medien und Internet Management*, Wirtz illustrates the differences between German and American definitions of media economics, arguing that in North America, media economics are primarily focuses on a macro level view of media industries and only rarely engages with problems on the meso level. In contrast, 'Medienökonomie' is framed as a sub-discipline of communication studies in Germany, where scholars more clearly distinguish 'media economics' from 'media management', a sub-discipline focusing specifically on the organizational aspects of media businesses,<sup>399</sup> pinpointing a "common denominator in the agreement about the business administrative character of media

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<sup>396</sup> Cf. Albarran, A.B, Chan-Olmsted, S.M, Wirth, M.O. (2005). *Handbook of Media Management and Economics* (1st edition). New York, U.S.A.: Routledge.

<sup>397</sup> Albarran, A.B. et al (2005), p. 16.

<sup>398</sup> Albarran, A.B, Mierzejewska, R, Jung J. (2018). *Handbook of Media Management and Economics* (2nd edition). New York, U.S.A.: Routledge, p. 11.

<sup>399</sup> Cf. Wirtz, B.W. (2006). *Medien- und Internetmanagement* (5th edition). Wiesbaden, Germany: Springer Gabler Verlag, pp.15-16; NOTE: The book became available in English in 2011.

management.”<sup>400</sup> Although there seems to be a consensus here and a growing interest in the topic (at least among German scholars),<sup>401</sup> Wirtz agrees with Albarran et al on the difficulty of defining ‘media management,’<sup>402</sup> narrowing down the concept as follows:

Media and internet management covers all the goal-oriented activities of planning, organization and control within the framework of the creation and distribution processes for information or entertainment content in media enterprises.<sup>403</sup>

While this understanding of digital media management certainly encompasses the complexity of running a media enterprise from a managerial perspective, it does not sufficiently cover new forms of journalistic work, including self-employment and employment in digital media startups. While media management, business and economics (as well as editorial management) have been a part of journalism education programs for a long time, the more recent transformation of media organizations in response to digitalization, market deregulation and privatization, has created new career paths and professional options beyond the traditional categories of editors and reporters within established media organization.

More concretely, there has been growing evidence for the relevance of ‘entrepreneurship’ for journalists around the globe. A survey of 509 journalists from Western countries revealed that journalists are aware that the option of traditional full-time employment with a media organization continues to become less likely in their field. Instead, they need to acquire entrepreneurial competencies to adapt to the “often radical changes involved in journalism moving from 20<sup>th</sup>-century organizations to 21<sup>st</sup>.”

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<sup>400</sup> Cf. Wirtz, B. W. (2011). *Media and Internet Management*. Wiesbaden, Germany: Springer Gabler Verlag. p. 15

<sup>401</sup> Looking at the emergence of international academic journals on the topic of media management, the *International Journal on Media Management* was first issued in 1999 and the *Journal of Digital Media Management* released its first volume in 2012.

<sup>402</sup> Cf. Albarran, A.B. et al (2005), p. 15; cf. Wirtz, B.W. (2006), p. 17.

<sup>403</sup> Wirtz, B.W. (2011), p. 15.

century ones,”<sup>404</sup> as Picard puts it in his report on journalists’ perspectives of the future of the profession. As part of the survey, 55% of respondents agree or strongly agree with the statement that “in the future, journalists will increasingly become entrepreneurs and establish their own news companies.”<sup>405</sup>

Gossel and Kalka highlight the need for research into ‘entrepreneurial journalism’ which they consider an under-studied, but deeply relevant concept at the intersection of entrepreneurship research, media economics, and journalism studies. The authors state that American and British scholars have long acknowledged the importance of the phenomenon, in contrast to German and other European researchers, who have largely ignored the issues.<sup>406</sup>

Existing attempts to define the term ‘entrepreneurial journalism’ are dominated by practitioners, rather than theorists – such as Mark Briggs who published a landmark guide in 2011, *Entrepreneurial Journalism*,<sup>407</sup> that addresses practicing journalists who intend to start their own digital media business.<sup>408</sup> This focus on journalistic work has reduced the term to the act of founding a media business or journalistic enterprise, inadequately reflecting the complexity of an interdisciplinary concept closely linked to entrepreneurial research. Gossel and Kalka thus explore definitions of ‘entrepreneurship’ that include opportunities for starting a business as well as the characteristics of entrepreneurial people, stressing the relevance not only of the establishment of new organizations, but also the

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<sup>404</sup> Picard, R. G. (2015, May). *Journalists’ Perception of the Future of Journalistic Work*. Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism/University of Oxford, p. 1: <https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/our-research/journalists-perceptions-future-journalistic-work> [Last retrieved 9/5/2021].

<sup>405</sup> Ibid., p. 9.

<sup>406</sup> Cf. Gossel, B.M, Kalka, R. (2015). *Entrepreneurial Journalism. JournalistInnen als UnternehmerInnen? Eine empirische Bestandsaufnahme von Entrepreneurship Education im Rahmen der Journalistenausbildung in Deutschland*. In Pagel, S. (eds.) *Schnittstellen (in) der Medienökonomie* (pp. 143-163). Baden-Baden, Germany: Nomos; cf. Nazhmidinova, R, Ruß-Mohl, S. (2012, October 17). *Entrepreneurial Journalism: Eine Bestandsaufnahme in Europa*. VOCER: <https://www.vocer.org/entrepreneurial-journalism-eine-bestandsaufnahme-in-europa/> [Last retrieved 9/5/2021].

<sup>407</sup> Cf. Briggs, M. (2011). *Entrepreneurial Journalism: How to Build What's Next for News*. Thousand Oaks, U.S.A.: SAGE Publications.

<sup>408</sup> Another landmark practical guide published after the conceptualization of this study is Marsden, P. (2017). *Entrepreneurial Journalism*. Oxon, U.K.: Routledge.

leveraging of opportunities within existing organizations ('intrapreneurship'). Overall, the process character of entrepreneurship, which some scholars prefer to call 'entrepreneurship' to center it as an instrument or method, has not yet reached the scholarly debates within 'entrepreneurial journalism.'<sup>409</sup>

This conceptual deficiency is likely rooted in the 'newsroom paradigm,' as Vazquez Schaich and Klein call it, which traditionally "isolated journalists from the business side of the companies they work in, and from the basic notions of economic value creation for their organizations"<sup>410</sup> – an error that dates back to the 1970s. Nazhmidinova and Ruß-Mohl believe that the invisible wall between management and editors, which they even call the Chinese Wall, is increasingly falling apart as the internet has forced media organizations to review their business models and funding schemes. Whereas the German scholars argue that individual journalists have already started to reinvent themselves, establish their own brands and explore new career paths, Vazquez Schaich and Klein are less optimistic: They fear that the lack of understanding of and participation in strategic planning, managerial processes, business development and innovation will have long-term negative effects on the future of the profession. At a minimum, the long history of an "anti-business culture"<sup>411</sup> in journalism represents a major challenge for the training and education of journalists.<sup>412</sup>

Interestingly, in Germany, a large number of freelance journalists considered themselves 'entrepreneurs' long before the term 'entrepreneurial journalism' was coined. They compare entrepreneurship to the tradition of freelancing which remains a common employment model in the central European country. However, this implies that the definition of the term still lacks clarity. Nazhmidinova and Ruß-Mohl posit that entrepreneurial journalism goes beyond working as an independent journalist for different media outlets, which requires freelance journalists to collaborate with their colleagues, market their products, establish joint ventures and enterprises, and hire staff if necessary. Entrepreneurial journalism

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<sup>409</sup> Cf. Gossel, B.M, Kalka, R. (2015), pp. 147ff.

<sup>410</sup> Vazquez Schaich, M.J, Klein, J.S. (2013), p. 186.

<sup>411</sup> Ibid., p. 207.

<sup>412</sup> Cf. Nazhmidinova, R, Ruß-Mohl, S. (2012, October 17).

continues to be a foreign concept to journalists and educators in Germany, unlike the United States where entrepreneurship, innovation and startup culture seem much more common. This is unsurprising, considering Gossel's and Kalka's 2015 baseline study of entrepreneurial journalism in German journalism schools, journalism degrees (Journalistik) and communication science programs (Publizistik) that showed that only 13 out of 65 journalism university program and 4 out 22 journalism schools mention the topic in their curricula. Notably, none of the communication studies degrees do so.<sup>413</sup> While in some countries such as the United Kingdom, entrepreneurial journalism has been integrated into curricula, it is still not an issue of interest for practitioners. In France, for example, journalists have increasingly become entrepreneurs in the 'real world.' Nonetheless, Nazhmidinova and Ruß-Mohl report that entrepreneurship remains missing from French journalism education programs. Although their analysis is not empirical in nature, it provides an insightful overview of the situation in different parts of Europe.<sup>414</sup>

Ferrier's comparative research represents a frequently cited milestone of cross-national scientific research on entrepreneurial journalism. He investigated perceptions of media entrepreneurship in journalism departments in Canada and the United States based on qualitative telephone interviews, emails and participant observation. The study explores three aspects: motivations for developing new courses in entrepreneurial journalism; constraints for developing and teaching these courses; and their content. Ferrier identified three types of motivations for departments to develop course in media entrepreneurship: industry, institutional and mindset motivations. Industry motivation is linked to the disappearance of traditional job opportunities and the creation of new types of jobs. In contrast, the driving force for change can also come from administrators, or from faculty members, who "feel they need to prepare students mentally to be adaptable and inventive."<sup>415</sup>

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<sup>413</sup> Cf. Gossel, B.M., Kalka, R. (2015).

<sup>414</sup> Cf. Nazhmidinova, R., Ruß-Mohl, S. (2012, 17 October).

<sup>415</sup> Ferrier, M.B. (2012). Media Entrepreneurship: Curriculum Development and Faculty Perceptions of What Students Should Know. *Journalism & Mass Communication Educator*, 68(3), p. 229.

Without going into the details of the study results since they only cover two North American countries, it should be noted that this classification provides a valuable multi-level framework for exploring journalism education programs interested in adapting and developing their curricula. As a systematic approach that encompasses internal and external factors as well as individual and institutional aspects, this research makes a significant contribution to limited scholarship on entrepreneurial journalism. While the study focuses on faculty perspectives and their role in providing future journalists with entrepreneurship skills and competencies, “additional research should be conducted around student perceptions of media entrepreneurship and student experiences in the classroom.”<sup>416</sup> In addition, Ferrier argues that ‘professional culture,’ that is, the “traditional separation of church and state – or editorial and the business of media”<sup>417</sup> remains a major constraint impeding the development of entrepreneurial courses at journalism schools.

Vazquez Schaich and Klein investigated the perspectives of journalism lecturers on the state of entrepreneurial journalism courses in terms of course objectives, resources and structure, challenges and lessons learned, and instructor profiles by means of an online survey of 33 lecturers from the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, France, Colombia and Mexico. The results illustrate how journalism schools are adapting to the transformation of the journalistic profession through digitalization: Firstly, they act as innovation labs comparable to teaching hospitals in medical degree programs.<sup>418</sup> Secondly, professors developed new curricula, including media management and entrepreneurial courses. In Europe, the United States and Latin America, entrepreneurial skills and competencies have become increasingly integrated into journalism curricula at both the undergraduate and graduate level. The study found,

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<sup>416</sup> Ibid., p. 237.

<sup>417</sup> Ibid., p. 223.

<sup>418</sup> The authors of the mentioned study note that Lenhoff and Andersons et al compared this approach to the earlier concept of the ‘teaching hospital’. For more insight refer to: Lenhoff, A. (2011). *The Teaching Hospital: Possibilities for Journalism Education*. New York, U.S.A.: Lap Lambert Publishing; Anderson, C.W, Glaisyer, T, Smith J. & Rothfeld M. (2011). *Shaping 21st Century Journalism. Leveraging a “Teaching Hospital Model” in Journalism Education*. Washington D.C, U.S.A.: New America Foundation.



however, that “half of the courses are still elective and focused on the graduate and professional levels.”<sup>419</sup>

The authors also revealed that these entrepreneurship courses were in many cases the first attempt to increase students’ business skills, as courses in media economics and management were not previously offered. Furthermore, the survey results point to a lack of coordination between media economics and management courses on the one hand, and entrepreneurial journalism courses on the other. Journalism instructors held on to the false premise that entrepreneurship is only interested in new media outlets, whereas media management courses should focus on processes within established organization, neglecting that entrepreneurship can also include ‘intrapreneurship.’<sup>420</sup> In order to connect individual mindsets, macroeconomic transformations and the media business on a meso level, the study recommends a stronger focus on practical teaching elements and project-based learning. In addition, they propose an increased collaboration between journalism programs and business schools in order to develop and implement entrepreneurial courses. Furthermore, research needs to be intensified in the field of entrepreneurial journalism through a collaboration between instructors of entrepreneurial journalism and media management and economics scholars, which will in turn contribute to directly needed teaching and learning material, such as case studies and other systematic insights and resources. As the authors point out: “Entrepreneurial journalism is new. Teaching entrepreneurial journalism is even newer.”<sup>421</sup>

In addition, Vazquez Schaich and Klein’s study emphasizes the specific characteristics of journalism compared to other enterprises: Most importantly, journalism has a social function; it is a public good and requires the adherence to ethical standards.<sup>422</sup> Nazhmidinova and Rußmohl also stress the discrepancy between the editorial and economic facets of journalism and its repercussions for journalistic ethics – namely the conflict between the ruthlessness of profit-oriented businesses and a journalist’s ethical responsibilities as a public service provider. It has frequently been

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<sup>419</sup> Vazquez Schaich, M.J., Klein, J.S. (2013), p. 207.

<sup>420</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, p. 208.

<sup>421</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 209.

<sup>422</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, p. 191.

argued, including by Vos and Singer, that the credibility and quality of journalism is at risk when market economics enter the editorial sphere. According to the results of their discourse analysis, normative issues are closely attached to the seemingly diverging concepts of journalism as a public good on the one hand, and entrepreneurship driven by market forces on the other hand. Once again, it becomes evident that journalism education plays a crucial role in defining and legitimizing the concept of entrepreneurial journalism.<sup>423</sup>

Considering the overall state of research alongside the increase in entrepreneurship courses in journalism schools, there is a parallel growth of studies on the possibilities and constraints of such courses. Rafter confirms this trend, while also assessing the consequences for the education and training of journalists.<sup>424</sup> Nonetheless, similar to the field of media economics and management, there is no consensus on the definition of ‘media entrepreneurship’ despite the emergence of a field of entrepreneurship research.

In their analysis of scholarly English-language publications on entrepreneurship in the media or the impact of the media on entrepreneurship between 1971 and 2004, Hang and van Weezel argue that the relationship between the media and entrepreneurship is reciprocal. Despite this rather long timespan, they found that the topic remains under-researched, at least in quantitative terms. The majority of the publications discuss the role of entrepreneurship in the media, with an emphasis on creative industries such as film and music, as well as print media. Assessing the number of publications over time, Hang and van Weezel highlight that there is a significant increase in relevant studies on media and entrepreneurship between 2000 and 2004: “The rapid growth of research interest indicates an increasing attention paid by scholars on entrepreneurship and media issues.”<sup>425</sup> They correctly predicted in 2005 that this trend

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<sup>423</sup> Cf. Vos, T.P., Singer, J.B. (2016). Media Discourse About Entrepreneurial Journalism. Implications for Journalistic Capital. *Journalism Practice* 10(2), p. 148.

<sup>424</sup> Cf. Rafter, K. (2016). Introduction: Understanding Where Entrepreneurial Journalism Fits In. *Journalism Practice* 10(2), pp. 140/141.

<sup>425</sup> Hang, M. van Weezel, A. (2005). Media and Entrepreneurship. A Survey of the Literature Relating Both Concepts. Media Management and Transformation Centre. Jönköping International Business School, p. 16.: <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.465.7107&rep=rep1&type=pdf> [Last retrieved 9/5/2021].

would continue and the body of research on media and entrepreneurship would continue to grow. Indeed, the first issue of the *Journal of Media Management and Entrepreneurship* was published in 2019.

While there are, by now, various handbooks on different aspects of media management and research in the field has certainly increased, Claussen points to a lack of studies that can guide course and curricula development on entrepreneurship and innovation in the media industry. In his essay outlining the origins of one of the first degree programs on entrepreneurial journalism at the City University of New York, he posits: “Training our students is just the beginning. We need research to find economic models that will replace the financial underpinnings that no longer work, and new products to reach new audiences in new ways.”<sup>426</sup> As a logical consequence, journalism students cannot be taught to start their own enterprises or act as innovators within existing media organizations without knowing about the repercussions of digitalization and recent economic upheavals on the media business. Acknowledging the lack of prompt adaptation of academic journalism programs to this rapidly transforming environment, Hunter and Nel’s experiment is very relevant, insofar as it describes a project in the United Kingdom in which a number of extra-curricular workshops were offered to journalism students. The goal of this intervention was to equip them with the knowledge and skills relevant for an industry going through significant changes. Beyond complementing existing courses, another aim was to provide a basis of information for the development of the curriculum which thus far did not include entrepreneurial journalism.<sup>427</sup>

In line with Hunter and Nel,<sup>428</sup> Quinn notes that the (in)capacities of university administrations must be taken into consideration: “Given the glacial speed at which curricula change proceeds, we need to start now to update journalism education to prepare for a future that is rapidly

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<sup>426</sup> Claussen, D. (2011, March). CUNY’s Entrepreneurial Journalism: Partially Old Wine in a New Bottle, and Not Quite Thirst-Quenching, but Still a Good Drink. *Journalism & Mass Communication Educator*, 66(6), p. 3.

<sup>427</sup> Cf. Hunter, A, Nel, F.P. (2011). Equipping the Entrepreneurial Journalist: An Exercise in Creative Enterprise. *Journalism & Mass Communication Educator*, 66(1), 10-24.

<sup>428</sup> Cf. Hunter, A, Nel, F.P. (2011) p. 11.

becoming present.”<sup>429</sup> Nazhmidinova and Rußmohl also argue that this is also true for Eastern European countries in which the difficulty in adapting curricula in order to include entrepreneurial journalism courses has become obvious. Accreditation procedures also present a major regulatory hurdle,<sup>430</sup> a tendency that is expected to be equally significant in developing nations. Organizational and management aspects of academic journalism education institutions will thus be given the necessary attention and analysis in this empirical study.

To conclude, regardless or maybe because of institutional challenges, including the traditional divide between business and editorial matters in media organizations, there is a consensus on the urgent need for the reforms of journalism curricula to include entrepreneurial skills and competencies for journalists: “Journalism schools have a key role in helping students take ownership of their futures and the future of media.”<sup>431</sup> Not only the eminent journalist, lecturer and media expert Jeff Jarvis is convinced of the importance of the “economics of news,”<sup>432</sup> but also academic scholars like Vazquez Schaich and Klein have joined the chorus by stating that “it is time that journalists learn to take responsibility for their own ‘brands’ and participate actively in the business strategies that affect their craft.”<sup>433</sup> As we have seen, various empirical studies demonstrate the importance of entrepreneurship for the journalistic profession and, more specifically, the employability of journalists in response to the constant pace of transformation in the digital age.

The practical relevance of this issue lies in equipping students with an entrepreneurial mindset, a theoretical grounding and the practical skills that allow them to adapt to the changing requirements of the job market. It is crucial to highlight that the next generation of journalists around the

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<sup>429</sup> Quinn, S. (2010), p. 78; cf. Breiner, J. (May 2013, May 17). How J-Schools are Helping Students Develop Entrepreneurial Journalism Skills. Poynter: <https://www.poynter.org/reporting-editing/2013/how-j-schools-are-helping-students-develop-entrepreneurial-journalism-skills/> [Last retrieved 9/5/2021].

<sup>430</sup> Cf. Nazhmidinova, R, Ruß-Mohl, (2012, October 17).

<sup>431</sup> Ferrier, M.B. (2012), p. 237.

<sup>432</sup> Jarvis, J. (2012, September 10). Teaching Entrepreneurial Journalism. Buzz Machine: <http://buzzmachine.com/2010/01/11/teaching-entrepreneurial-journalism> [Last retrieved 9/10/2021].

<sup>433</sup> Vazquez Schaich, M.J, Klein, J.S. (2013), p. 185.

globe must continue to strive for politically and financially independent quality journalism, but put professional ethics and values first.

Based on the finding of the research presented in this sub-chapter and the conceptualization of ‘entrepreneurship’ as illustrated by Gossel and Kalka<sup>434</sup>, the objectives of ‘entrepreneurial journalism’ in the context of journalism education can be defined as developing

1. an entrepreneurial attitude or mindset,
2. a deep understanding of the media business and its economic context, and
3. competencies in identifying business opportunities.

This provides a basis for assessing one of the topics embedded in RQ 3:

**RQ 3.2** To what extent and in which form are media management and entrepreneurial journalism skills and competencies included in journalism education at universities in Vietnam and Cambodia?

#### **4.1.3 Media Development, Development Journalism and Related Concepts**

Development is a complex concept that is both difficult to define and measure. Unsurprisingly, there is no universal approach or set of generally accepted criteria to classify the level of development in individual countries. This study is based on the country classification system developed by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) which aims to “emphasize that people and their capabilities should be the ultimate criteria for assessing the development of a country, not economic growth alone.”<sup>435</sup> The UNDP’s Human Development Index (HDI) consists of three dimensions measuring a country’s achievement toward providing its population with a long and healthy life, education and a decent standard of living. Moreover, in contrast to the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), it takes into account other development aspects such as human security and political freedom.<sup>436</sup> In

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<sup>434</sup> Gossel, B.M, Kalka, R. (2015), p. 149.

<sup>435</sup> Cf. UNDP (n.d.-a).

<sup>436</sup> Cf. A4ID – Advocates for International Development (n.d.). Understanding the Developed/Developing Country Taxonomy: <http://www.a4id.org/policy/understanding-the-developeddeveloping-country-taxonomy/> [Last retrieved 9/7/2021].

contrast, the Inequality-Adjusted HDI (IHDI), introduced in 2010,<sup>437</sup> takes into account the extent to which achievements are distributed equally among the inhabitants of a country. As the UNDP points out “the difference between the IHDI and HDI is the human development cost of inequality, also termed – the overall loss to human development due to inequality.”<sup>438</sup> Two nations with the same HDI value may have different IHDI values as they are sensitive to the distribution of human development. The IHDI can serve as a basis for policies to reduce inequality and helps to better understand the uneven distribution of human development within a country. In the following analysis (sub-chapter 4.2), I draw particular attention to the knowledge dimension of the HDI and the IHDI. The education index consists of two components – expected years of schooling and mean years of schooling – and thus reflects the basic conditions for access to tertiary education in general and academic journalism education in particular.

While there seems to be a consensus on what human development entails and how it can be measured, the definition of ‘media development’ remains up for debate.<sup>439</sup> According to the Center for International Media Assistance (CIMA), in the most literal sense, media development stands for the “evolution and change in the fields of news media and communications”<sup>440</sup> on an institutional, practical and behavioral level. These changes can be related to legal and regulatory framework conditions, economic and business environments, the individual right to freedom of expression and opinion, and journalistic professionalism (and thus journalism training and education). DW Akademie highlights the technical aspect of media development, namely “national and international aid efforts to support the media as institutions and improve media landscapes as a

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<sup>437</sup> Cf. Kovacevic, M. (2010, November) Measurement of Inequality in Human Development - Review. UNDP Human Development Research Paper 2010/35: [http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/hdrp\\_2010\\_35.pdf](http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/hdrp_2010_35.pdf) [Last retrieved 9/7/2021].

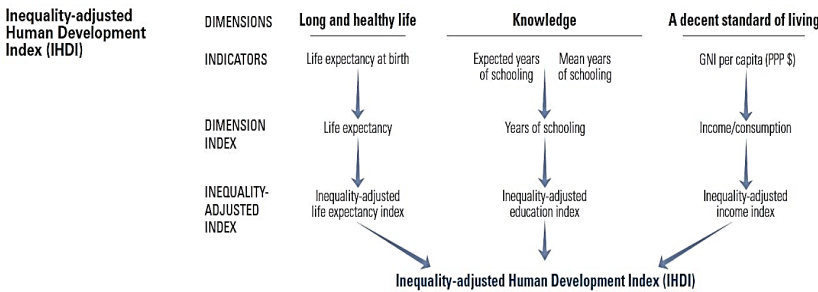
<sup>438</sup> UNDP (n.d.-b).

<sup>439</sup> Cf. Olmos, D. (2016, September 15) #mediadev. Rebranding Media Development. DW Akademie: <https://www.dw.com/en/rebranding-media-development/a-19555310> [Last retrieved 9/7/2021].

<sup>440</sup> CIMA – Center for International Media Assistance (n.d.). *What is Media Development?*: <https://www.cima.ned.org/what-is-media-development/> [Last retrieved 9/7/2021].

whole.”<sup>441</sup> In 2006, UNESCO published a set of Media Development Indicators (MDIs) based on the assumed democratic potential of the media:

Free, independent and pluralistic media empower citizens with information that enables them to make informed choices and actively participate in democratic processes. They can help enhance transparency and accountability, by facilitating dialogue between decision-makers and the rest of society and by exposing abuse of power. They also play a crucial role in improving the public’s understanding of current or emerging issues, events, priorities, and policy pronouncements and options.<sup>442</sup>



**Figure 10: Inequality-adjusted Human Development Index**<sup>443</sup>

UNESCO developed a comprehensive framework of existing attempts to assess national media landscapes across the globe, with five main categories of media development:

1. **Category 1:** A system of regulation conducive to freedom of expression, pluralism and diversity of the media
2. **Category 2:** Plurality and diversity of media, a level economic playing field and transparency of ownership
3. **Category 3:** Media as a platform for democratic discourse
4. **Category 4:** Professional capacity building and supporting institutions that underpins freedom of expression, pluralism and diversity

<sup>441</sup> Cf. Olmos, D. (2016, 15 September).

<sup>442</sup> UNESCO (2008), p. v

<sup>443</sup> Source: UNDP (n.d.-b).

5. **Category 5:** Infrastructural capacity is sufficient to support independent and pluralistic media.<sup>444</sup>

It must be pointed out that category 4 includes not only the ‘availability of professional media training,’ but also the ‘availability of academic courses in media practice,’ a sub-category for which UNESCO has developed concrete indicators, as outlined in sub-chapter 3.3.3. Since the mid-2000s, a number of country-specific research initiatives have been initiated and national in-depth reports have been produced by a team of local and international researchers. UNESCO aims to provide practical guidance with a set of 21 sub-categories, 50 key indicators and 190 sub-indicators including means of verification.<sup>445</sup> As Schneider underscores, the MDI framework allows for a qualitative rather than a quantitative analysis, which thus does not provide the necessary grounds for comparison across countries.<sup>446</sup> In 2013, UNESCO added specific indicators for journalistic safety and internet universality to its mapping of media development. As Vietnam’s journalistic safety has only been assessed since 2019 and Cambodia has not yet been included, reports are not available yet.<sup>447</sup>

Notably, the MDGs,<sup>448</sup> which represent the first global framework for development, did not include media development as a specific field of action – despite the fact that freedom of opinion and information was included in the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights:

Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and

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<sup>444</sup> Cf. UNESCO (2008); cf. UNESCO (n.d.-a). *Media Development Indicators*: <https://en.unesco.org/programme/ipdc/initiatives/mdis> [Last retrieved 9/7/2021].

<sup>445</sup> Cf. Puddephatt, A. (2007). Defining Indicators of Media Development. Background Paper. *UNESCO/IPDC*: [https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000160017\\_eng](https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000160017_eng) [Last retrieved 9/7/2021].

<sup>446</sup> Cf. Schneider, L. (2020). *Measuring Global Media Freedom. The Media Freedom Analyzer as a New Assessment Tool*. Wiesbaden, Germany: Springer, pp. 110/111.

<sup>447</sup> Cf. UNESCO (n.d.-b). *Media and Internet-related Assessments*: [https://en.unesco.org/sites/default/files/media\\_and\\_internet\\_related\\_assessments\\_sept19.pdf](https://en.unesco.org/sites/default/files/media_and_internet_related_assessments_sept19.pdf) [Last retrieved 9/7/2021].

<sup>448</sup> Cf. UN (n.d.-b).



to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.<sup>449</sup>

The MDGs, as defined in 2000, target specific areas of human development including health, the environment, poverty reduction and education, and have been critiqued for being one-dimensional and lacking in adaptability to ensure sustainability.<sup>450</sup> More concretely, a range of suggestions had been made as to how the role of media and journalism should be integrated in the post-2015 agenda – for example, as an additional goal in itself or as part of good governance which views a free media as a cross-cutting target akin to accountability and transparency.<sup>451</sup> A broad agreement prevailed that the media contributes significantly to sustainable development, since media professionals and journalists can promote transparency, provide trustworthy information and diverse perspectives, and hold political and economic leaders accountable.

The SDGs,<sup>452</sup> which succeeded the MDGs, specifically name access to information as a fundamental prerequisite for human development. The SDGs currently bind the 193 United Nations (UN) member countries to a new development agenda that encompasses a set of 17 targets and 231 indicators to be reached by 2030.<sup>453</sup> Goal 16.10 calls on all member states

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<sup>449</sup> UN (n.d.-a). Universal Declaration of Human Rights: <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights> [Last retrieved 9/7/2021].

<sup>450</sup> Cf. Loewe, M. (2012). Post 2015: How to Reconcile the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Briefing Paper 18/2012. Bonn, Germany: German Development Institute/Deutsches Institut für Entwicklungspolitik (DIE): [http://www.die-gdi.de/uploads/media/BP\\_18.2012.pdf](http://www.die-gdi.de/uploads/media/BP_18.2012.pdf) [Last retrieved 9/7/2021]; cf. EU – European Union (2013). European Report on Development 2013. Post-2015: Global Action for an Inclusive and Sustainable Future. Brussels, Belgium: ODI – Overseas Development Institute, DIE – German Development Institute/Deutsches Institut für Entwicklungspolitik, ECDPM – European Centre for Development Policy Management: <https://ecdpm.org/publications/european-report-development-2013-post-2015-global-action-inclusive-sustainable-future/> [Last retrieved 9/15/2021].

<sup>451</sup> Cf. Lublinski, J, Deselears, P, Berner, P. (2013, September). Post 2015-MDGs: Freedom of Expression and the Media. Discussion Paper. Bonn, Germany: Deutsche Welle Akademie: <https://www.dw.com/en/discussion-paper-freedom-of-expression-and-the-media-in-the-development-agenda-after-2015/a-17150514> [Last retrieved 9/23/2021].

<sup>452</sup> Cf. UNDESA (n.d.-b).

<sup>453</sup> Cf. UNDESA Department of Economic and Social Affairs. Statistics Division (n.d.). SDG Indicators. Global Indicator Framework for the Sustainable Development Goals and Targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/indicators/indicators-list/> [Last retrieved 9/7/2021].

to “ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national legislation and international agreements.”<sup>454</sup> Especially Indicator 16.10.1 highlights the role that journalism and media professional play in this context. The UN suggests measuring the “number of verified cases of killing, kidnapping, enforced disappearance, arbitrary detention and torture of journalists, associated media personnel, trade unionists and human rights advocates in the previous 12 months.”<sup>455</sup> This formulation reflects the growing acknowledgment of the importance of independent media and quality journalism in development and democratic transformation.

Among international aid actors and stakeholders, the consensus on the integral role of the media in sustainable development is rooted in its practical relevance, resting upon the assumption that the media can transfer content, including norms and values, which can lead to positive social change in a country or region. Not only the UN, but also the OECD and the World Bank have emphasized the function of the media in enhancing democratic processes since the turn of the century.<sup>456</sup> International media development organizations such as the CIMA<sup>457</sup> and Internews<sup>458</sup> based in the United States, Media Action<sup>459</sup> run by the British Broadcasting Cooperation (BBC) and DW Akademie<sup>460</sup> in Germany aim to strengthen free and transparent media systems through the training and education of media professionals.

In a similar vein, UNESCO’s efforts to develop model curricula (see sub-chapter 3.3.3) in order to improve journalism education stems from its strong belief that “professional journalistic standards are essential to a media system that can foster democracy, dialogue and development.”<sup>461</sup> The underlying argument is that well-educated journalists have the skills

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<sup>454</sup> UNDESA (n.d.-a). Sustainable Development. Goals. 16: <https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal16> [Last retrieved 9/24/2021].

<sup>455</sup> Cf. UNDESA. Statistics Division (n.d.).

<sup>456</sup> Cf. Schmidt, C. (2011). Interdependenzen zwischen Medien und Entwicklung. In Schmidt, C, Arnold, B.-P. (eds.) *Handbuch International Media Studies* (pp. 90-105). Leipzig, Germany: VISTAS Verlag.

<sup>457</sup> CIMA: <https://www.cima.ned.org/> [Last retrieved 9/7/2021].

<sup>458</sup> Internews: <https://internews.org/> [Last retrieved 9/7/2021].

<sup>459</sup> BBC Media Action: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/mediaaction/> [Last retrieved 9/7/2021].

<sup>460</sup> DW Akademie (n.d.)

<sup>461</sup> Banda, F. (2013), p. 9.

and competencies to produce quality journalism which, in turn represents a precondition for positive social change – especially in transitional democracies. For decades, development organizations focusing on Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights have foregrounded the training and education of journalists around the world with the aim of enhancing free and independent media.<sup>462</sup>

Moreover, UNESCO's Media and Good Governance report<sup>463</sup> represents a milestone publication in the field of media freedom and media development. It illustrates that the media, in its plurality, is expected to enable the process of opinion-building – a *sine qua non* for political participation in civil society, and thus, for democratic transformation. However, it is important to note that media diversity does not equal a plurality of perspectives, and a lack of quality journalism and independent reporting represents a central obstacle to the sustainability of free and democratic societies. This interdependency underlines the significance of journalism education in providing a foundation for journalistic values and professional competence.<sup>464</sup>

This bridging chapter concentrates on the concept of 'development journalism.' It would exceed its limitations to provide a historical and conceptual exploration of 'democracy'<sup>465</sup> and 'democratization'<sup>466</sup> as a central objective in the development process. It can certainly not be ignored that "journalism – unlike other modes of communication – has an organic and intrinsic link to democracy."<sup>467</sup> Berger even claims that the contribution

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<sup>462</sup> Cf. UN (n.d.-a) Universal Declaration of Human Rights: <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights> [Last retrieved 9/7/2021].

<sup>463</sup> Cf. James, B. (2005). Media and Good Governance. UNESCO. Paris, France: <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0014/001463/146311e.pdf> [Last retrieved 9/7/2021].

<sup>464</sup> Cf. Mc Phail, T. L. (2009). Development Communication: Reframing the Role of the Media. West Sussex, U.K.: Blackwell Publishing; cf. Schmidt, C. (2011).

<sup>465</sup> The term 'democracy' has Greek roots ('dēmokratia' from 'dēmos' (=people) and 'kratos' (=rule) and stands for a political system ruled by the people. Cf. Dahl, R. K. (2021, March 9). Democracy, Britannica: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/democracy> [Last retrieved 9/7/2021].

<sup>466</sup> Democratization can be defined as the transformation process of a political regime to a democratic system. Cf. Kauffman, C. M. (n.d.) Democratization. Britannica: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/democratization> [Last retrieved 9/7/2021].

<sup>467</sup> Berger, G. (2000). Grave New World? Democratic Journalism Enters the Global Twenty-first Century. Journalism Studies, 1(1), p. 82.

of journalism to political life is larger and more meaningful than its impact on socio-economic development. He thus argues that journalism's democratic function must be distinguished from its developmental role, and its practice from its institutional context.<sup>468</sup> Berger nonetheless admits that "the normative ideal of democratic journalism is outdated and/or unrealistic, for different reasons, in both Worlds,"<sup>469</sup> namely the developing world and the Global North, and that development journalism can only complement democratic journalism. Given the special relevance of the developmental function of journalism in the Global South, the present study draws particular attention development journalism as a sub-field of democratic journalism.<sup>470</sup>

In order to better understand the particular role of journalism and journalism education in developing countries aiming to encourage sustainable social change, it is not only essential to explore the concept of development and media development, but also the origins of and approaches to 'development journalism.' It appears that the concept was first discussed in a workshop organized by the East West Center in Hawaii in the 1960s,<sup>471</sup> and subsequently used and shaped by Western development organizations in the Philippines. Alan Chalkley, the founder of the Press Foundation of Asia, is said to have coined the term 'development journalist' in 1968.<sup>472</sup> Originally, the term applied to the practice of distributing

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<sup>468</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, p. 83.

<sup>469</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 95.

<sup>470</sup> For further insights into the contemporary scholarly debate of the role of journalism and media in democratic transformation processes see also: Voltmer, K. (2013). *The Media in Transitional Democracies*. Malden, U.S.A.: Polity Press; McNair, B. (2000). *Journalism and Democracy. An Evaluation of the Political Public Sphere*. London, U.K.: Routledge.

<sup>471</sup> Cf. Gunaratne, S. A. (1996). Old Wine in a New Bottle: Public Journalism versus Developmental Journalism in the US. *Asia Pacific Media Educator*, 1(1), 64-75; cf. Jayaweera, N, Amunugama, S. (1987). *Rethinking Development Communication*. Singapore, Republic of Singapore: Asian Mass Communication Research and Information Centre; cf. Lerner, D, Schramm, W. (1967). *Communication and Change in the Developing World*. Honolulu, Hawaii: East-West Center Press; cf. Xiaoge, X. (2009). Development Journalism. In Wahl-Jorgensen, K., Hanitzsch, T. (eds.) *Handbook of Journalism Studies*. Oxon, U.K.: Routledge, pp. 357/358.

<sup>472</sup> Cf. Chalkley, A. (1968). *A Manual of Development Journalism*. Manila, Philippines: Thomson Foundation and Press Foundation.of Asia.

agricultural information to development actors, especially farmers, in the Global South.<sup>473</sup>

Xiaoge explores the empirical and contextual roots of the concept with a focus on Asia, emphasizing that “ideologically, development was closely connected to the movements of the New International Economic Order (a 1974 UN declaration) and the New World Information Order (called for in 1980 by MacBride Commission).”<sup>474</sup> Frequently cited, Aggarwala attempts to define the role of the news in the context of development in the late 1970s.<sup>475</sup> However, the belief that mass media can lead to social change has existed long before UNESCO reignited the discussion on the New World Information Order (NWIO). Indeed, it dates back to the role of media and communication in government programs promoting rural development in the United States in the 1930s, when the Agricultural Extension Office ran weekly columns in newspapers and rural radio programs for farmers. In the second half of the twentieth century, the hope was to transfer such communication practices to development projects in poverty-stricken former colonies in Africa and Asia.<sup>476</sup>

Since the 1960s, development journalism has been put into practice in a multitude of ways in different countries, all of which have been widely ignored by journalism studies scholars, resulting in, according to Xiaoge, a lack of consistent theoretical approaches.<sup>477</sup> Historically, no consensus on the definition of term ‘development journalism’ has emerged; other expressions such as ‘communication development,’ ‘development communication’ and ‘development information’ have been deployed as synonyms. According to Stevenson, all of them express the “simple idea that

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<sup>473</sup> Cf. Shafer, R. (1998). Comparing Development Journalism and Public Journalism as Interventionist Press Models. *Asian Journal of Communication*, 8(1), 31-52.

<sup>474</sup> Xiaoge, X. (2009), p. 350.

<sup>475</sup> Cf. Aggarwala, N. K. (1978-a). Media, News and People: A Third World View. *Media Asia* 5(2), 78-81; cf. Aggarwala, N. K. (1978-b). News with Third World Perspectives: A Practical Suggestion. In Horton, P.C. (ed.) *The Third World and Press Freedom* (pp. 197-209). New York, U.S.A.: Praeger; cf. Aggarwala, N. K. (1979). What is Development News? *Journal of Communication*, 29(2), 181-82.

<sup>476</sup> Cf. Stevenson, R. L. (1994), p. 232.

<sup>477</sup> Xiaoge, X. (2009), p. 357.

social change (progress, development) can be facilitated by change agents and that the work of change agents can be multiplied by mass media.”<sup>478</sup>

Although this study situates ‘development journalism’ within the field of ‘development communication,’ only a small number of works in communication studies have investigated the interplay between communication, the media and development. Considering the specific role of journalism in developing countries, two main theoretical approaches to development communication determine the contemporary debate: Communication for Development (C4D) or Media for Development (M4D), and Participatory Communication.

The goal of these approaches is to evoke positive, development-oriented attitudes and behaviors through the media. The first strand has its origins in the modernization theories of the 1950s and 1960s that postulated the introduction of mass media as an essential step toward the transformation of traditional societies into modern ones. International development projects often use **Communication for Development (C4D)**, characterized by wide-ranging definitions including all communication processes which are aimed at social change and positive development. In practical terms, this form of development communication primarily involves public relations, advocacy, and campaigns initiated by local and international development organizations rather than classic journalism.<sup>479</sup> **Media for Development (M4D)** is as another specific type of development communication closely connected to journalism as a profession (rather than other media and communications fields). In that sense, development journalism is often applied synonymously with terms such as ‘civic journalism’ and ‘humanitarian journalism.’ It is often confused with C4D, as the understanding of development journalism has been significantly influenced by the debates surrounding development communication. Manyozo attempts to specify the journalistic perspective and defines ‘development journalism’ as a synthesis of these approaches: “Development journalism is the strategic and deliberate production, packaging and circulation of

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<sup>478</sup> Stevenson, R. L. (1994), p. 232.

<sup>479</sup> Cf. Lennie, J, Tacchi, J. (2013). *Evaluating Communication for Development: A Framework for Social Change*. Oxon, U.K.: Routledge; cf. Servaes, J. (2013). *Communication for Development and Social Change* (6th edition). New Delhi, India: SAGE Publications India.

development reports as a way of contributing toward meeting goals of national development policies.”<sup>480</sup>

**Participatory Communication** is closely related to M4D and C4D and stems from participatory theories that gained momentum in the 1970s, building upon dependency theory which was itself an outgrowth of modernization theory. Dependency theory originated in Latin America and is grounded in the assumption that development is determined and dependent on Western capitalist markets and neo-colonial ideologies. In this context, educational reporting under the umbrella of ‘social communication’ gained increasing popularity in South America. The aim of this type of development communication is to apply methods of social marketing to create positive societal change. Participatory communication models pay particular attention to the inclusion of all relevant actors in decentralized decision-making processes. According to this approach, the dissemination of indigenous knowledge, agricultural and rural communication and local community development are the foundation of all communication processes.<sup>481</sup>

In search of the origins of the concept of ‘development journalism,’ two scholars stand out: Daniel Lerner and Wilbur Schramm.<sup>482</sup> Lerner conducted empirical research on social change in the Middle East in the late 1950s.<sup>483</sup> His public opinion survey counts as a pioneering study of the contribution of mass communication to development. Lerner’s theory of how mass media accelerates the influence of traditional change agents and thus could lead to social change became the dominant paradigm, influencing change makers in the Global South for decades to come. Lerner defined ‘development’ in political terms with the ultimate goal of establishing democracies along a Western model. Rather than viewing it as a superior political system, Lerner argued that in contrast to traditional societies, democratic systems were flexible enough to allow societies to adapt to rapid and radical change. Conversely, Stevenson highlights that

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<sup>480</sup> Manyozo, L. (2012). *Media, Communication and Development. Three Approaches*. New Delhi, India: SAGE Publications India, p. 59.

<sup>481</sup> Cf. *ibid.* p. 152.

<sup>482</sup> Cf. Lerner, D, Schramm, W. (1967).

<sup>483</sup> Cf. Lerner, D. (1958). *The Passing of Traditional Society. Modernizing the Middle East*. Glencoe, U.S.A.: Free Press.

development was initially defined in political terms, but that, in practice, economic growth quickly became the center of attention.<sup>484</sup>

Similarly, Schramm's *Mass Media and Development* (1964) became a key resource and how-to-guide for practitioners and advocates in the field of development communication. He proposes a number of ways in which mass media can contribute to national development, such as taking on a societal watchdog function, expanding traditionally limited perspectives, creating a climate for development, supporting decision-making processes and enforcing social norms.<sup>485</sup> Schramm was optimistic in terms of the media as a tool for development. Yet, he also expressed concern that political and economic change was an objective that could not be reached from one day to the next. Traditional cultures and powerholders tended to show resistance to social change. Schramm himself raised the question whether mass media could really enhance national development and alleviate the "terrible ascent to modernization,"<sup>486</sup> or whether it only added to the struggle toward Western-style models of economic wealth and political stability.<sup>487</sup>

Lerner's and Schramm's paradigms shaped the concepts of C4D and M4D, sparking substantial controversy. Soon after their ideas reached the international stage, they came under attack and were deemed neo-imperialistic, deployed by developed nations to uphold their central position in the global system and thereby maintain the dependence of developing countries. As Stevenson puts it:

The argument was that under the guise of development aid and training, Western governments were really using the increasingly powerful mass media to maintain themselves as the center of an

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<sup>484</sup> Cf. Stevenson, R. L. (1994), p. 234.

<sup>485</sup> Schramm, W. (1964). *Mass Media and Development*. Stanford, U.S.A.: Stanford University Press, pp. 127-140.

<sup>486</sup> The Tanzanian president Julius Nyerere used the expression and was quoted in: Hachten, W.A. (1971). *Muffled Drums: The News Media in Africa*. Ames, U.S.A.: Iowa State University Press, p. xvi.

<sup>487</sup> Cf. Schramm, W. (1964), p. 271; cf. Stevenson, R. L. (1994), p. 235.



emerging world system and keep the developing nations at the periphery, still dependent on the nations at the center.<sup>488</sup>

Given these early concerns and the danger of both developed nations and authoritarian governments in developing countries abusing mass media for the purpose of maintaining this power imbalance, the theoretical debate was soon influenced by systems theory.<sup>489</sup> Schmidt, however, posits that the academic debate and further development of a more holistic understanding of development communication began to stagnate toward the end of the twentieth century due its lack of applicability in the digital age.<sup>490</sup> Approaches to Information and Communication for Development (ICT4D) began to increasingly dominate the theoretical debate and practical sphere.

Others attribute this void to a lack of conceptual engagement by practitioners: “After reaching its height in the mid-1980, development journalism lost its momentum when most journalists reverted to traditional and libertarian Western approaches.”<sup>491</sup> What Shafer described in the Philippines, was also true for many other developing nations in Latin America and Africa: Rather than enabling journalists to take on a watchdog function, development journalism was continuously applied as a tool to uphold the political power of authoritarian governments.<sup>492</sup> “Consequently, it is the elite, not the ordinary people who have benefited most from the practices of development journalism.”<sup>493</sup>

In addition, Asian practitioners were concerned that the Western-centered model of event-focused instead of process-oriented journalism did not fit local Asian cultures. This led to a desire to counterbalance Western

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<sup>488</sup> Stevenson, R. L. (1994), p. 236.

<sup>489</sup> Cf. Kunczik, M. (1988). *Concepts of Journalism: North and South*. Bonn, Germany: Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, pp. 88-90.

<sup>490</sup> Cf. Schmidt, C. (2011), p. 94; The term Information and Communication for Development (ICT4D) originated in the mid 1980s. For more information on the history of IT4D, the following article provides a good starting point: Walsham, G. (2017). ICT4D Research: Reflections on History and Future Agenda. *Information Technology for Development*, 23(1), 18-41.

<sup>491</sup> Xiaoge, X. (2009), p. 358.

<sup>492</sup> Shafer, R. (1998). Comparing Development Journalism and Public Journalism as Interventionalist Press Models. *Asian Journal of Communication*, 8(1), 31-52.

<sup>493</sup> Xiaoge, X. (2009), p. 359.

reporting styles that concentrating on sensational events and commercialized media but missed out on socially relevant topics about local communities and rural populations. Based on the apprehensions concerning the dominant perspective of the Global North, concerted efforts were made by journalism scholars and professionals to de-Westernize Asian media and journalism practices. This process of emancipation was significantly influenced by the Asian value debate, which originated in the 1970s, and was used to justify local forms of economic, political and social development and to safeguard cultural diversity against Western cultural domination: “By the 1990s, Asian values were also used in journalism to advocate national stability, racial harmony, nation-building, and national development.”<sup>494</sup> According to Masterton, the controversy as to which values were inherently Asian was overcome by agreeing to a set of universal principles in journalism, including impartiality, social justice, truthful reporting and renunciation of violence.<sup>495</sup> Xiaoge concludes that the attempts to de-Westernize Asian journalism practices based on appropriate cultural and professional values shaped the further evolution and rise of development journalism in the region.

Along a different line, Kunczik distinguishes between two types of development journalism that became predominant in the 1980s, namely authoritarian-benevolent and investigative reporting. The former was “strongly advocated by authoritarian governments who believed that journalism should cooperate with governments in nation-building and overall social, economic and political development.”<sup>496</sup> In parallel, Chalkley defines three schools of thought in development journalism – pro-process, pro-participation, and pro-government.<sup>497</sup> While he promotes the idea of pro-process journalism, other academics, such as Servaes,<sup>498</sup> advocate for pro-participation journalism in the development context.<sup>499</sup> As for the

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<sup>494</sup> Ibid., p. 361.

<sup>495</sup> Cf. Masterton, M. (1996). *Asian Values in Journalism*. Singapore, Republic of Singapore: Asian Media Information and Communication Centre.

<sup>496</sup> Xiaoge, X. (2009), p. 362.

<sup>497</sup> Cf. Chalkley, A. (1980). Development Journalism – a New Dimension in the Information Process. *Media Asia* 7(4), 215-217.

<sup>498</sup> Cf. Servaes, J, Malikhao, P. (2005). Participatory Communication: The New Paradigm? In Hemer, O, Tufte, T. (eds.) *Media and Global Change. Rethinking Communication for Development* (pp. 91-103), Sweden/Argentina: NORDICOM/CLASCO.

<sup>499</sup> Cf. Xiaoge, X. (2009), pp. 362-364.

pro-government perspective, which emerged from the above-mentioned de-Westernization efforts, Xiaoge points out that it accentuates the educational function of media in the process of economic development and nation-building:

The catalytic role of the press in Asia does not necessarily mean that it becomes less critical of government. Criticism of government remains part of development journalism practice, although it tends to be more mild than wild.<sup>500</sup>

In essence, journalists are expected to show a high level of responsibility and awareness of cause and effect in the local context, particularly in terms of the possible negative impact of specific news items.<sup>501</sup>

The concept of ‘emancipatory journalism’ introduced by Shah<sup>502</sup> in the 1990s represents “one of few torches that attempted to lead development journalism research out of the tunnel”<sup>503</sup> by calling on journalists in developing countries to liberate themselves from the Western-centered approaches to press freedom. Instead, they must regain control of their journalistic practices in order to contribute to a value-based development that fits the local context.

Notably, after the conceptualization of this study, Hamidi and Möglich published an essay systematically analyzing and categorizing past discussions and existing concepts in order to establish a new field of **Communication for Social Change** (C4SC) within communication studies at the University of Leipzig, in Germany. In contrast to the German scholarship, development communication is firmly established as a field of academic research in the United States, the United Kingdom and various Scandinavian countries. They argue that the terms ‘communication for development’ and ‘development communication’ have survived since the 1960s despite a lack of academic debate, and that only with the turn of the

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<sup>500</sup> Ibid., p. 363.

<sup>501</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, p. 364.

<sup>502</sup> Cf. Shah, H. (1996). Modernization, Marginalization, and Emancipation: Toward a Normative Model of Journalism and National Development. *Communication Theory*, 6(2), 143-166.

<sup>503</sup> Xiaoge, X. (2009), p. 365.

current century have new concepts emerged including their suggested discipline of C4SC.<sup>504</sup>

The results of a cross-national comparative study on the perception of the role of journalists in development journalism was published in 2017. The research forms part of the Worlds of Journalism Study and included the survey results of 2598 journalists. Selected data was analyzed for eight countries in sub-Saharan Africa, South and Southeast Asia, but not Vietnam and Cambodia. Kalyango et al's research is based on the idea that development journalism has three main functions: educating one's audience; promoting national development; and intervening in social processes. Not surprisingly, considering the origins of the concept, development journalism was more important to journalists from developing countries than to their Western colleagues.<sup>505</sup> Further results of the research with respect to the three functions of development journalism will be discussed as part of the empirical findings on Vietnam and Cambodia.

Chakley's more recent claim that the term 'development journalism' has enjoyed continued popularity in theoretical discussions is debatable. Rather, conceptual discussions continue to fall behind the process of putting development journalism into practice. Despite been practiced for more than 40 years across Asia, Africa and Latin America, "development journalism faces several pending issues that have hindered its further development, acceptance or recognition as a journalism practice and a branch of journalism studies."<sup>506</sup> Xiaoge reveals that the overall number of journal articles published between the 1960s and 2007 is very low, totaling only 34 publications. Notably, he emphasizes that only a limited number of articles have attempted to assess in how the media can enhance cultural and political development. Moreover, it is important to stress that, by the early twenty-first century, scholars had begun to conduct comprehensive analyses on the digital divide. However, once again, the question as to how

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<sup>504</sup> Cf. Hamidi, K, Möglich, A.M. (2010, Spring/Summer). Entwicklungskommunikation – Communication for Social: Change Aufbau und Etablierung eines neuen Schwerpunktes in der deutschen

Kommunikationswissenschaft. *Global Media Journal*. German Edition. 9(1), 1-15.

<sup>505</sup> Cf. Kalyango, Y. (Jr.) et al (2017). Journalists' Development Journalism Role Perceptions. *Journalism Studies*, 18(5), p. 589.

<sup>506</sup> Xiaoge, X. (2009), p. 365.

digital media impacts on development journalism remains under-researched. This is particularly unfortunate as new ICTs provide opportunities for the developmental role of journalism “in encouraging more participation from the ordinary people in the process of development and also in empowering them to have their voices and views heard and felt in an enlarging public sphere.”<sup>507</sup>

In contrast to the gaps in the academic research, Xiaoge underscores that development journalism “remains vital as a journalism practice despite criticisms and prejudices.”<sup>508</sup> In response to the lack of conceptualization, he provides a valuable definition of the concept with reference to a range of scholarly approaches that have shaped the discussion since the 1970s. Accordingly, development journalism

- concentrates on process-oriented reporting on development topics rather than daily news coverage,
- focuses news reporting on the development of economy and society,
- should remain independent from state influence and promote critical discussion and constructive dialogue to support citizens and communities in the process of improving their living conditions, and
- compares the intended impact of development and the actual positive changes.<sup>509</sup>

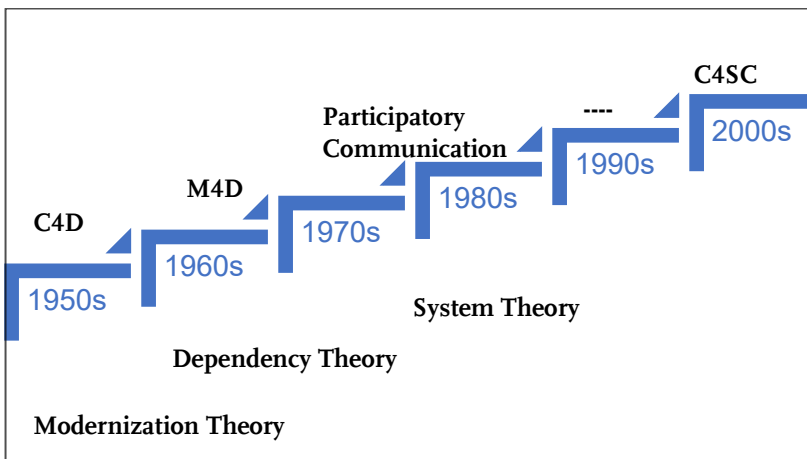
Figure 11 provides a historical overview of the definitions of development communication. To sum up, ‘development journalism’ has been influenced by scholarly and practice-oriented debates from C4D to participatory approaches to C4SC. Above all, the M4D approach is the concept with the strongest connection to the specific field of development journalism (versus the wider field of media and communication studies).

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<sup>507</sup> Ibid., p. 366.

<sup>508</sup> Ibid., p. 357.

<sup>509</sup> Cf. Xiaoge, X. (2009), p. 358.



**Figure 11: Timeline of Key Concepts in Development Communication**

By shedding light on the evolution of ‘development journalism,’ the groundwork has been laid for the empirical exploration of the third focus of this dissertation:

**RQ 3.3** *To what extent and in which ways do specialized reporting skills, such as ‘development journalism,’ form part of academic journalism education in Vietnam and Cambodia?*

Indicators for RQ 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3 as well as for other analytical dimensions and categories defined by the overall research questions (see subchapter 1.2) will be formulated in Chapter 5, which outlines the methodology and research design.

## 4.2 Journalism Education in Vietnam and Cambodia

This section and the research design aim to counterbalance the deficiencies of Western-centered research (chapter 2) and to build on current conceptual debates and normative approaches to journalism education, in particular, new models of journalistic competencies and international journalism education standards. Before specifying the framework conditions in Vietnam (chapter 4.2.2) and Cambodia (4.2.3) as developing nations, this section provides an overview of alternative approaches to non-

Western media systems (4.2.1) as a basic orientation for assessing the media and journalism education environment in the two selected Southeast Asian countries. This chapter lays out the country-specific political systems and levels of socio-economic and human development. Moreover, the country sub-chapters include an assessment of the local media environment and journalistic working conditions, and insights into the history and evolution of academic journalism education in both states. Even though the analysis takes more recent developments into account, it must be underlined here that the focus lies on the framework conditions at the time of data collection, namely 2017.

#### 4.2.1 Alternative Approaches to Non-Western Media Systems

The twentieth century binary concept of libertarianism versus authoritarianism based on Siebert et al.'s *Four Theories of the Press*<sup>510</sup> has long lost its relevance, as the world has become increasingly globalized. Western media systems have become more or less democratic, while also being increasingly influenced by market liberalization and capitalist profit maximization. Non-democratic authoritarian systems continue however to exist, especially in the developing world. For the Asian context, research has been limited primarily to China, as a BRIC nation and a transitional economy.<sup>511</sup>

In 2000, Curran and Park published a collection of country case studies based on a conceptual framework that goes beyond the question of globalization by re-focusing on nation-states as a starting point for classifying and comparing media systems. Within this model, they advocate for differentiating between not only democratic versus authoritarian systems, but also neo-liberal and regulated economies. Furthermore, the two spectrums include mixed systems wherein the country is in the midst of a political or economic transformation. Their research focus lies on the role of the media in the power structure of a country, aspects of media regulation and control, the overall impact of the media on society and the effects of globalization and innovation on media systems.<sup>512</sup>

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<sup>510</sup> Cf. Siebert, F.T., Peterson, T.B., Schramm, W. (1956). *Four Theories of the Press*. Urbana, U.S.A: University of Illinois Press.

<sup>511</sup> Cf. Josephi, B. (2010), pp. 2/3.

<sup>512</sup> Cf. Curran, J., Park, M.-J. (2000).

Thomaß published a milestone handbook in 2007 on comparative media systems research. The main contribution of the author was to clarify the terminology and conceptualize relevant elements and methodological approaches to international media system analysis. The publication also compares media systems based on particular parameters such as media concentration, political communication and gendering. Notably, journalism education is not included as a possible point of comparison. In the second section, various scholars outline their findings on media systems in Latin America, Asia, Africa and the Arab world.<sup>513</sup>

After facing a wave of criticism for their Western-centric perspective, Hallin and Mancini extended their well-known and widely discussed model to international media systems in developing countries in political transition in a 2012 anthology called *Comparing Media Systems Beyond the Western World*. The book includes perspectives from the Global South with the aim of providing new concepts, models and approaches for understanding non-Western media systems such as Brazil, China, South Africa, and Thailand. However, their publication is limited to a consideration of the political dimension. In addition, the book remains anecdotal and descriptive, and does not provide adequate and comprehensive theoretical approaches to media system analysis.<sup>514</sup>

In more recent years, there have been various attempts to include a more diverse range of national, political, socio-economic and cultural framework conditions that shape media systems and thus news cultures and journalistic practices. While a comprehensive discussion of different models and theories of media systems with relevance to a non-Western context would exceed the scope here, two selected conceptual approaches are presented that understand journalism education as a field that shapes journalistic cultures and working conditions and *vice versa*. As Altschull highlighted as early as 1989 as part of the seven laws of journalism, journalism schools bear the dangerous potential to convey ideologies and

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<sup>513</sup> Cf. Thomaß, B. (2013). *Mediensysteme im internationalen Vergleich* (2nd edition). Konstanz, Germany: UVK.

<sup>514</sup> Cf. Hallin, D, Mancini, P. (2012).



societal values and thereby support power holders in controlling the media.<sup>515</sup>

Meyen's recent efforts to contribute to media system research go beyond the dominant perception of political framework conditions as the primary determining factor for the level of media freedom in a given country. Based on comprehensive desk research combined with over 150 expert interviews in 46 nation-states, the author explores key aspects that explain differences in media systems around the world. The conceptual approach is concise and rooted in structuration theory, developed by sociologist Anthony Giddens, which distinguishes rules and resources in different natural and social contexts that have an effect on the media system. According to this approach, journalism education is one among several important influencing factors on the professional autonomy of journalists.<sup>516</sup>

Media system theory has a long tradition of prioritizing the impact of political framework conditions on mass media. While not disputing the importance of political systems, Meyen believes that media systems are impacted by a number of societal structures and influencing factors. He thus scrutinizes how journalistic autonomy is negotiated and controlled by various societal agents and "calls for approaches that leave the close link to political systems research behind, and [...] seeks to examine societal structures in a more general way."<sup>517</sup> He agrees with other scholars that it is worthwhile holding on to the nation-state as a research unit when investigating media systems, despite the ongoing trend of globalization and digitalization: "The key argument is based on states' natural interest in guiding, steering and controlling the public information and opinion-forming stages."<sup>518</sup>

Using qualitative research methods similar to cluster analysis, Meyen attempts to identify a number of categories that can serve as a guideline for a systematic analysis of media systems from around the globe. The main

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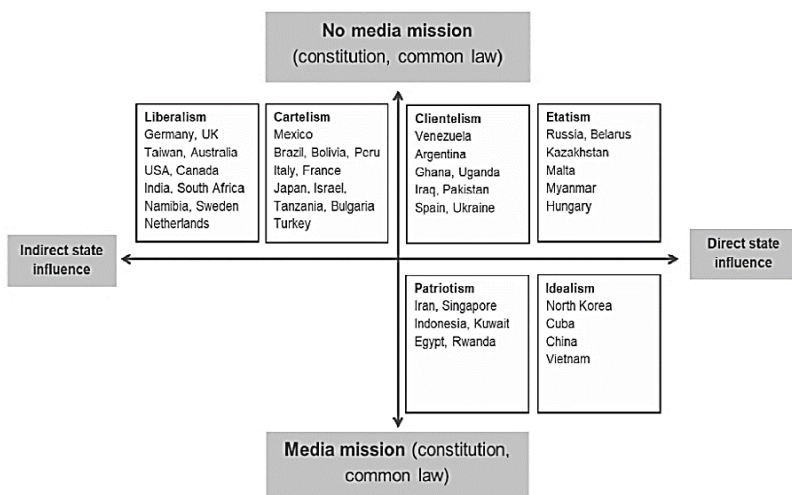
<sup>515</sup> Altschull, H. (1989). *Agenten der Macht. Die Welt der Nachrichtenmedien – eine kritische Studie*. Konstanz, Germany: UVK.

<sup>516</sup> Cf. Meyen, M. (2018). Journalists' Autonomy Around the Globe: A Typology of 46 Mass Media Systems. *Global Media Journal. German Edition*, 8(1), p. 2

<sup>517</sup> Ibid., p. 2.

<sup>518</sup> Ibid., p. 1.

finding of the research is “that media freedom and journalists’ autonomy depend on not only the particular governmental system, the constitution, journalism education, and the existence of commercial media but also, to a significant extent, on economic realities, the tradition of press freedom, and various other factors that are historical, religious, and/or geographic.”<sup>519</sup> Meyen presents a typology of six types of media systems. Figure 12 shows the distinction based on two dimensions: the spectrum from indirect to direct state influence and the extent to which the media mission is enshrined in the constitution or common law of a respective country. Vietnam was included in the research, and is classified in the bottom right corner as a system of idealism. Cambodia was not included.



**Figure 12: Typology of Mass Media Systems**<sup>520</sup>

To a certain extent, Meyen’s study can be viewed as an expansion of Blum’s approach,<sup>521</sup> which also distinguishes six types of media systems, but Meyen bases his work on Gidden’s structuration theory, applies it to document analysis and qualitative interview data in order to presenting a conceptual framework for media system analysis that distances itself away

<sup>519</sup> Ibid., p. 2.

<sup>520</sup> Source: Meyen, M. (2018), p. 13.

<sup>521</sup> Cf. Blum, R. (2014). *Lautsprecher und Widersprecher. Ein Ansatz zum Vergleich der Mediensysteme*. Köln, Germany: Herbert von Halem Verlag.

from the dominant idea that political systems determine media freedom and journalistic autonomy. In contrast, Blum's exploration remains more descriptive, as it both lacks solid theoretical foundation and empirical evidence. Blum's approach is rooted in three main assumptions: that political influences are stronger than economic factors; that nation-states are more relevant than international, continental and global contexts; and that differences between media systems have a greater influence than any similarities.

Despite the fact that his approach is rooted in the assumed significance of political over economic factors and societal influences, Blum surprisingly derives a set of criteria for media system analysis that includes a range of variables that go far beyond political systems, such as historical developments, media ownership, journalism culture and professionalism. In this case, 'journalistic professionalism' refers explicitly to journalism education and has three levels: high, medium and low professionalism. For each, academic journalism education is classified according to its role in the process of journalistic professionalization in a given media system.<sup>522</sup> Among others, Blum identifies a clientele and a liberal media system – models also found in Meyen's typology. The strength and added value of both studies is that they both contribute to the de-Westernization (see also Chapter 2) of media system research by including a significant number of countries from the Global South into their research. While Vietnam is classified as a media system based on 'idealism,' Cambodia was not included in either Meyen or Blum's assessments. After this short foray into media systems research, the following chapters will explore the local framework conditions in Vietnam and Cambodia.

#### **4.2.2 Local Framework Conditions in Vietnam**

##### **4.2.2.1 Political, Socio-Economic, and Human Development**

###### **Historical Background and Economy**

The French colonization of Vietnam began in 1858, culminating in the establishment of the French Indochina in 1887. Although it declared independence after WWII, Vietnam remained under French rule until the mid-twentieth century when Ho Chi Minh came to power. Under the

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<sup>522</sup>Ibid., pp. 350-355.

Geneva Accords of 1954, the country was split into an anti-communist South and a communist North. During the Vietnam or Second Indochina War,<sup>523</sup> the South received increasing military and economic aid from the United States, while the North was supported by Russia and China. In 1975, two years after the United States was forced to withdraw in response to a cease-fire agreement, the North Vietnamese annexed the Southern half of the country; the Viet Minh<sup>524</sup> installed a Leninist political system and a planned economy. Soon, the Socialist Republic of Vietnam (SRV) faced a stagnating economy, a mass exodus and, consequently, isolation by the international community.<sup>525</sup>

In the 1980s, *doi moi* (restoration) policy sparked a modernization process that introduced liberal economic values, market competition, export-driven industries and important structural reforms to the country, stabilizing the economy by the 1990s. Nonetheless, the collapse of Communism in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union led to Vietnam's further international isolation. In Cambodia, the Khmer Rouge regime in Cambodia ended in 1991 after Vietnam's forces withdrew in the late 1980s and the Paris peace agreements put an end to the country's pariah status within the global community, dramatically improving relations between the two countries. The Vietnamese government began to collaborate with the United States to identify the remains of missing American soldiers from the war in the mid-1990s. As a result, the United States ended the embargo and entered into diplomatic relations with Vietnam. In 1995, Vietnam became a member of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).<sup>526</sup>

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<sup>523</sup> Cf. Spector, R.H. (1998, July 20) Vietnam War. 1954-1975. *Britannica*: <https://www.britannica.com/event/Vietnam-War> [Last retrieved 9/8/2021].

<sup>524</sup> Viet Minh stands for Viet Nam Doc Lap Dong Minh Hoi (League for the Independence of Vietnam), the group which spearheaded the struggle for independence from French rule. Cf. *Britannica* (n.d.-b). *Viet Minh. Vietnamese Revolutionary Organization*: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Viet-Minh> [Last retrieved 9/8/2021].

<sup>525</sup> Cf. CIA – Central Intelligence Agency (n.d.-b). *The World Factbook. Explore All Countries – Vietnam*: <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/vietnam/> [Last retrieved 9/8/2021]; cf. Hickey, G.C. (1999, July 26). Vietnam. *Britannica*: <https://www.britannica.com/place/Vietnam> [Last retrieved 9/8/2021].

<sup>526</sup> Cf. Hickey, G.C. (1999, July 26).

Today, the SRV continues on its path toward market liberalization. The World Bank has described Vietnam as “one of the most dynamic emerging countries in East Asia region.”<sup>527</sup> It has also shown a rare level of economic resilience during the COVID-19 crisis: The country’s gross domestic product (GDP) grew by 2.9% in 2020 and is expected to increase by 6.6% in 2021.

## Political System

Politically, Vietnam remains one of the few remaining one-party states, next to Cuba and its neighbors China and Laos. The powerholders continue to repress opposing political views and ignore international pressure to safeguard basic human rights such as the freedom of opinion.<sup>528</sup> The first constitution, adopted in 1980, defined the Communist Party of Vietnam (CPV) as the one and only source of leadership for Vietnamese society and the state. The 1992 constitution still prescribed a dominant role to the Party, although a greater level of authority was bestowed on the head of state and the cabinet. Whereas the Party was in charge of general policies, the president and their cabinet are expected to govern the country. The latest constitution, which came into effect in 2014, cemented this power dynamic. Today, the legislative, executive and judicial branches continue to be controlled by the Party. The Politburo consists of 16 party officials that decide on general policies. The Central Committee of the CPV is the second highest party organ, with 180 members.<sup>529</sup> Members of the National Assembly are usually party officials.<sup>530</sup> The legislature is a unicameral body elected by direct popular vote. It is the supreme organ of

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<sup>527</sup> World Bank (n.d.-d). *The World Bank in Vietnam. Overview*: <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/vietnam/overview> [Last retrieved 9/8/2021].

<sup>528</sup> Cf. CIA (n.d.-b); cf. HRW – Human Rights Watch (n.d.). *Vietnam*: <https://www.hrw.org/de/asia/vietnam> [Last retrieved 9/8/2021]; cf. Puddington, A. (2017). *Freedom in the World. The Annual Survey of Political Rights and Civil Liberties. Freedom House*: [https://freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/2020-02/Freedom\\_in\\_the\\_World\\_2017\\_complete\\_book.pdf](https://freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/2020-02/Freedom_in_the_World_2017_complete_book.pdf) [Last retrieved 9/8/2021].

<sup>529</sup> Cf. Nguyen, K. (2021, January 31). Everything You Need to Know About Vietnam’s Central Committee of the VCP. *The Vietnamese Magazine*: <https://www.thevietnamese.org/2021/01/everything-you-need-to-know-about-vietnams-central-committee-of-the-vcp/> [Last retrieved 9/8/2021].

<sup>530</sup> Cf. Kooperation International (n.d.). *Allgemeine Landesinformationen: Vietnam*: <https://www.kooperation-international.de/laender/asien/vietnam/allgemeine-landesinformationen/> - c49203 [Last retrieved 9/8/2021].

the Vietnamese government and elects the president and vice-president. The cabinet consists of the prime minister, the deputy prime minister, and the heads of ministries and state organizations. On the local level, there are administrative committees supervised by the cabinet.

In addition, the CPV leads the Fatherland Front, a coalition of mass organizations, including influential associations such as the Ho Chi Minh Communist Youth Union, the Vietnam Women's Union, the Vietnam Youth Union and the Farmers' Union. The Fatherland Front "disseminates party policies, serves as a training ground for potential party members, and submits lists of candidates for seats in the National Assembly."<sup>531</sup>

Vietnam's political system has four pillars that overlap to a large degree: The CPV, the armed forces, the state apparatus (national and local government), and the Fatherland Front. Thayer claims that "most party members are dual-role elites who simultaneously hold leadership positions in two or more organizations."<sup>532</sup> Since the 1950s, the Communist Party has consolidated its leadership through the electoral system and by maintaining CPV committees in all relevant organizations in Vietnam.<sup>533</sup> In this regard, it comes as a surprise that Schuler describes the Vietnamese electoral and legislative system as much more open than in other communist countries:

Unlike China, Cuba, and North Korea, as well as most former communist countries in Eastern Europe, Vietnam allows direct elections for National Assembly candidates with more candidates than seats available. Additionally, the legislature allows public debate, including televised queries of high-ranking government officials, including the prime minister.<sup>534</sup>

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<sup>531</sup> Cf. Hickey, G.C. (1999, July 26).

<sup>532</sup> Thayer, C. A. (2010, June). Political Legitimacy in Vietnam: Challenge and Response. *Politics & Policy*, 38(3), p.424.

<sup>533</sup> Cf. *ibid.*

<sup>534</sup> Ronkin, A. (2021, January 28). A Balance of Power: The Role of Vietnam's Electoral and Legislative Institutions, *Stanford Freeman Spoglio Institute for International Studies*: <https://fsi.stanford.edu/news/balance-power-role-vietnam's-electoral-and-legislative-institutions> [Last retrieved 9/8/2021].

Since the *doi moi*, the national legislature professionalized in order to meet the complex requirements of globalization and modernization. However, the CPV continues to tightly control the electoral system, providing the party with the necessary leverage to channel the discourse in the 500-seat National Assembly.

Citizens who are at least 18 years old are eligible, but not obliged to vote. Election turnout is usually very high. In the 2021 elections, 95% of voters went to the ballot box.<sup>535</sup> Notably, a growing number of female and non-party representatives have begun to fill seats in the National Assembly.<sup>536</sup> As has happened many times before, the 15<sup>th</sup> National Assembly vote in May 2021 was rated as a “futile gesture.”<sup>537</sup> Rather than encouraging free and fair elections, the ballot has strengthened the political monopoly of the Communist Party, especially since over 90 per cent of candidates are reported to be party members.<sup>538</sup>

## Demography and Geography

Today, Vietnam spans over 331,210 square kilometers, surrounded by the Gulf of Thailand, the Gulf of Tonkin, and the South China Sea, as well as China, Laos, and Cambodia. With a total population of 98.7 million, Vietnam’s most recent annual growth rate was 0.84%. 4.8 million inhabitants currently live in Hanoi, the capital. Other urban centers include Ho Chi Minh City (8.8 million), Haiphong and Da Nang, each with slightly more than 1 million inhabitants. Nearly a third of the population (28%) lives in urban areas; the urbanization rate was estimated to be at around 2.7% in 2020.

Almost 40% of the Vietnamese population is under 24 years old, with a median age of 31.9 years. The share of people over 55 has risen to over

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<sup>535</sup> Viet Nam News (2021, May 23). *Election Council Reports Voter Turnout of More Than 95 Per Cent*: <https://vietnamnews.vn/politics-laws/955254/election-council-reports-voter-turnout-of-more-than-95-per-cent.html> [Last retrieved 9/24/2021].

<sup>536</sup> Cf. Hickey, G.C. (1999, July 26)

<sup>537</sup> Sochua, M. (2021, May 22). Vietnam’s National Assembly Vote: A Futile Gesture. *The Diplomat*: <https://thediplomat.com/2021/05/vietnams-national-assembly-vote-a-futile-gesture/> [Last retrieved 9/24/2021].

<sup>538</sup> Cf. Reuters (2021, May 23). *Vietnam Holds Parliament Elections Amid New COVID-19 Outbreak*: <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/vietnam-holds-parliament-election-amid-new-covid-19-outbreak-2021-05-23/> [Last retrieved 9/24/2021].

15%. The largest ethnic group is the Kinh (Viet), representing 86%. There are a range of minority groups in Vietnam including Tay, Muong, Khmer, Mong and Nung. The official language is Vietnamese, with English increasingly favored as a second language next to Chinese, French, Khmer, and certain languages prevalent in the mountainous regions (e.g., Mon-Khmer and Malayo-Polynesian). The majority of the population is not religious (82%), although a small share (7.9%) are Buddhists, Catholics (6.6%) or belong to other religions.<sup>539</sup>

## Human Development

Vietnam's HDI value stood at 0.69 in 2017, the year of this projects data collection, which classifies it as medium on the human development scale, at rank 116 of a total of 189 nations.<sup>540</sup> As Figure 13 reveals, since the first Human Development Report was issued in 1990, the value of the index has been rising continuously in most countries in East Asia and the Pacific, including Vietnam.

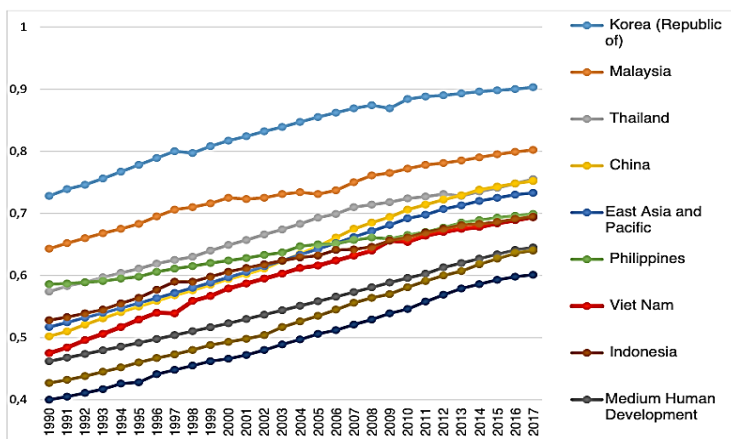


Figure 13: HDI Development in Vietnam and Comparison Countries<sup>541</sup>

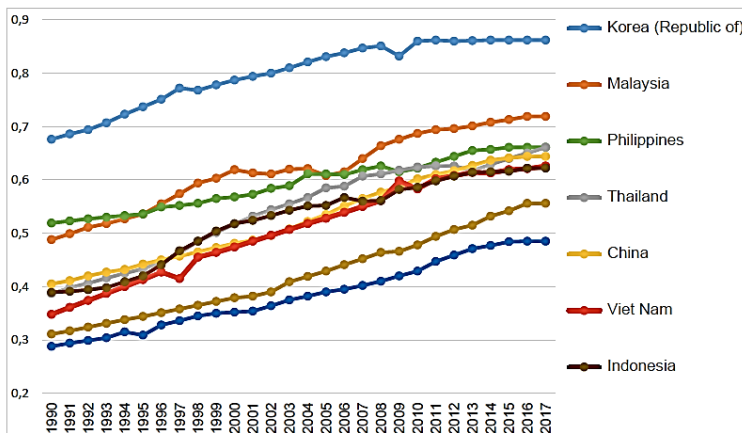
<sup>539</sup> Cf. CIA (n.d.-b).

<sup>540</sup> UNDP (2018). Human Development Indices and Indicators. Viet Nam's 2018 Statistical Update, p. 3: <https://www.mppn.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Vietnam-Human-Development-Indices-and-Indicators-Viet-Nam27s-statistical-updates-Final-2018.pdf> [Last retrieved 9/10/2021].

<sup>541</sup> Source: Ibid., p. 5.



In 1990, Vietnam's education index was relatively low compared to other countries in the region. Figure 14 shows that the country has not been able to draw level with China, the Philippines, Malaysia and Thailand.<sup>542</sup>



**Figure 14: Progress on Education Index in Vietnam and Comparator Countries**<sup>543</sup>

Looking closer at the different components of the education index, the indicator 'expected years of schooling' increased from 7.8 years in 1990 to 12.7 years in 2017. This value is comparable to the average of the medium human development countries (12.0) and the world's average (12.7), but below the average in high human development countries (14.1) and similar to various countries in South and East Asia. The recent deceleration in the number of expected years of schooling might explain why Vietnam has not been able to catch up with the overall education index with most countries in the region.<sup>544</sup> Notably, for the second indicator, 'mean years of schooling,' progress has been stable since 1990. The value stood at 8.2 years in 2017, which is only slightly below the global average (8.4), but at the same level as the average in high human development countries, and above the regional average (7.9).<sup>545</sup>

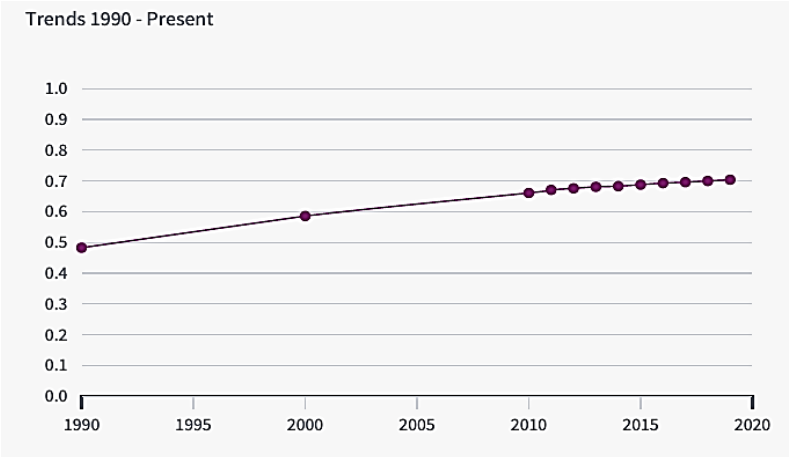
<sup>542</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, p. 6.

<sup>543</sup> Source: *Ibid.*, p. 6.

<sup>544</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, p. 7.

<sup>545</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 8/9.

The IHDI stood at 0.57 in 2017, which means a 17% drop in value when accounting for the unequal distribution of life expectancy after birth, education and income among the overall population. The UNDP reports that “on the base of aggregate date, Viet Nam has managed to achieve relatively rapid progress in economic growth without significant increases in inequality.”<sup>546</sup> By 2019, the HDI reached 0.704. With regard to education, the expected years of schooling stood at 12.7 years. The mean years of schooling also did not change significantly, resting at 8.3 years. The Inequality-adjusted HDI was at 0.59, which means a 16.5% decrease from the base value.<sup>547</sup> Figure 15 shows a steady overall increase in human development in Vietnam since 1990.<sup>548</sup>



**Figure 15: Human Development Indicator in Vietnam between 1990 and 2020**<sup>549</sup>

<sup>546</sup> Ibid., p. 18.

<sup>547</sup> Cf. UNDP (2020-b). *Human Development Report 2020. The Next Frontier: Human Development and the Anthropocene*. Viet Nam: <http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/Country-Profiles/VNM.pdf> [Last retrieved 9/10/2021].

<sup>548</sup> Cf. UNDP (n.d.-d). *Human Development Reports*. Viet Nam: <http://hdr.undp.org/en/countries/profiles/VNM> [Last retrieved 9/10/2021].

<sup>549</sup> Source: ibid.

## Digitalization and ICT Development

The DAI provides information about the spread of digital technologies in Vietnam including their adoption by the population, companies and the government. In 2016, the last available value, it stood at 0.52, which represents a significant increase from its 2014 value (0.47). The sub-indices in Table 4 reveal a lower value for the DAI People cluster. 0.43 indicates that mobile and internet access at home is still relatively low. The government sub-index reflects the adoption of digital technologies by state agents, at 0.538.

**Table 4: Vietnam's Digital Adoption Index in 2014 and 2016**<sup>550</sup>

Year	Digital Adoption Index	DAI Business Sub-index	DAI People Sub-index	DAI Government Sub-index
2014	0,467211872	0,506105542	0,408275217	0,487254828
2016	0,521303654	0,593714237	0,431228667	0,538968146

According to the World Bank, Vietnam has made large investments into the expansion of broadband internet in the years leading up to the 2016 *World Development Report*. Internet access is now available in all provinces. As Figure 16 illustrates, in 2011, over 80% of manufacturing and service companies used online communications for their business, even though only 2.2% of all companies used the internet to sell their services and products.<sup>551</sup>

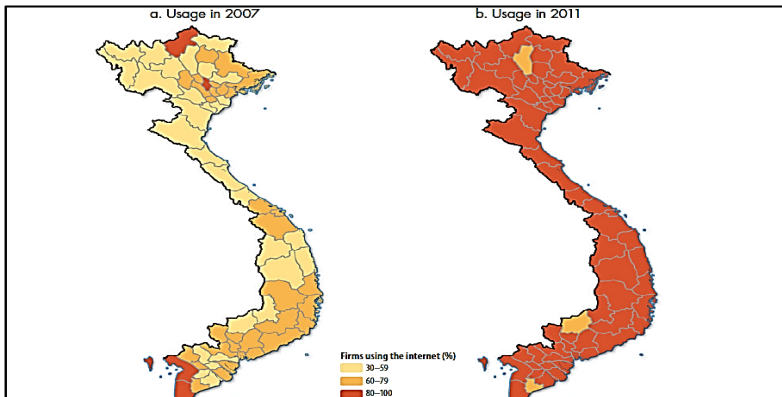
The wider use of digital technologies remains limited in Vietnam as in many other developing countries. 52 million Vietnamese were still offline in 2016.<sup>552</sup>

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<sup>550</sup> Source: World Bank (n.d.-a). Digital Adoption Index (Raw data for download): <https://pubdocs.worldbank.org/en/625521534508595697/DAI-for-web.xlsx> [Last retrieved 9/10/2021].

<sup>551</sup> Cf. World Bank (2016), pp. 51-53.

<sup>552</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, p. 8.



**Figure 16: Internet Usage of Vietnamese Firms in 2007 and 2011** <sup>553</sup>

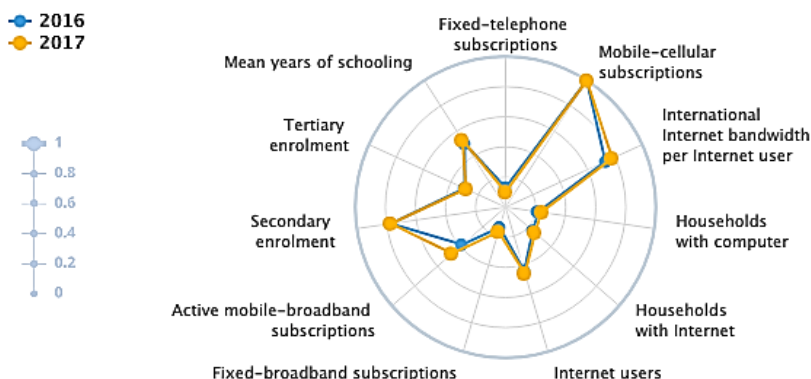
Looking closer at individual and households' access to digital technologies, the IDI value was at 4.43 in 2017, which positions it at 108 of 175 countries worldwide.<sup>554</sup> The ITU country report highlights that Vietnam implemented a unique competition model that involved state-run enterprises in order to expand its telecommunication networks. As a result of the introduction of fiber glass cables in 2013, almost 40% of the population has a broadband subscription.<sup>555</sup> In addition, mobile internet access has grown significantly in recent years, especially in rural parts of the country.<sup>556</sup>

<sup>553</sup> Source: World Bank (2016), p. 53.

<sup>554</sup> Cf. ITU (n.d.-c). ICT Development Index 2017. Viet Nam: <https://www.itu.int/net4/ITU-D/idi/2017/index.html> - [idi2017economy-card-tab&VNM](https://www.itu.int/net4/ITU-D/idi/2017/economy-card-tab&VNM) [Last retrieved 9/10/2021].

<sup>555</sup> Cf. Nguyen, P.-M, Vuong, Q. H. (2016, November 14). In Vietnam, Digital is Democratizing. CIME – NED: [https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract\\_id=2869808](https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2869808) [Last retrieved 9/10/2021].

<sup>556</sup> Cf. ITU (2017). Measuring the Information Society Report 2017. Volume 2. ICT Country Profiles: [https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Statistics/Documents/publications/misr2017/MISR2017\\_Volume2.pdf](https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Statistics/Documents/publications/misr2017/MISR2017_Volume2.pdf) [Last retrieved 9/10/2021].



**Figure 17: Sub-indices of ICT Development in Vietnam, 2016 vs. 2017<sup>557</sup>**

Figure 17 illustrates the various sub-indices of Vietnam's ICT Development. In 2017, 26% of households had internet access, far less than the 46% of individuals with internet access. This discrepancy can possibly be explained by the high percentage of people using mobile internet. The sub-index for IDI skills includes the tertiary gross enrollment ratio which rested at 29%.<sup>558</sup>

#### 4.2.2.2. Media System and Working Conditions for Journalists

##### Media Market and Usage

While it seems from the outside as if Vietnam has a diverse media landscape, the party-state exerts strict control over national publications. In 2013, Reporters Without Borders (RWB) counted over 800 newspapers, more than 700 news agencies, around 80 online news sites and close to 70 radio and TV stations.<sup>559</sup> TV remains the preferred medium: According to a survey conducted by the American Broadcasting Board of Governors (BBG), in 2015, 97% of adults watched TV regularly, a percentage that has remained relatively stable. A quarter of the population also listens

<sup>557</sup> Source: ITU (n.d.-c).

<sup>558</sup> Cf. *ibid.*

<sup>559</sup> Cf. RWB – Reporters Without Borders (2013, September). Vietnam. Programmed Death of Freedom of Information: <https://rsf.org/en/news/programmed-death-freedom-information-how-party-cracks-down> [Last retrieved 9/10/2021].

to radio programs, although radio usage is in decline.<sup>560</sup> Vietnam Television (VTV), a state-run TV channel, is the only countrywide TV network; it also owns cable and satellite television platforms that host some international broadcasters. Voice of Vietnam (VoV) is the national radio network which offers programs in English and other foreign languages on VoV5.<sup>561</sup>

*Doi moi* sparked an exponential growth in the number of newspapers across the country. In Ho Chi Minh City, for example, the number of newspapers nearly quadrupled between 1985 and 1991, and kept growing exponentially after that.<sup>562</sup> Today's Vietnamese print newspapers include Thanh Nien (Youth), Tuổi Trẻ (Youth), Người Lao Động (The Worker), Tiền Phong (Vanguard), Sài Gòn Giải Phóng (Liberated Saigon), and Hà Nội Mới (New Hanoi). In addition, the CPV's newspaper Nhân Dân (People) was established in 1951 and printed over 80 million copies in the early 2000s.<sup>563</sup> In addition, internet technology, which reached the Vietnamese population at the turn of the century, has resulted in a vast array of online newspapers.<sup>564</sup>

Looking closer at different age groups, news consumption is centered around TV for over 90% of people between 15 and 24 years of age and those above 25. The biggest difference appears with regard to online news: 72% of 15 to 24 year-olds consume news online, whereas less than a third (28%) of those older than 24 do so. Among the total population, VTV is the most popular source of news and information (65%), followed by TV

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<sup>560</sup> Cf. BBG – Broadcasting Board of Governors/Gallup (2015). BBG Research Series. The Changing Media Landscape in Vietnam: <https://www.usagm.gov/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/Vietnam-Event-Final.pdf> [Last retrieved 9/10/2021].

<sup>561</sup> Cf. BBC – British Broadcasting Corporation (2018, November 20). Vietnam Profile – Media: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-pacific-16567840> [Last retrieved 9/10/2021].

<sup>562</sup> Cf. Heng, R. H.-K. (1998). Media in Vietnam and the Structure of its Management. In Marr, D.G. (ed.) *The Mass Media in Vietnam* (pp. 27-53). Canberra, Australia: Department of Political and Social Change. p. 31; cf. Wikipedia (n.d.-c). Mass Media in Vietnam: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mass\\_media\\_in\\_Vietnam\\_-\\_Newspapers\\_and\\_Periodicals](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mass_media_in_Vietnam_-_Newspapers_and_Periodicals) [Last retrieved 9/10/2021].

<sup>563</sup> Nhân Dân (n.d.). Nhân Dân – A Reliable Companion of Readers: [https://en.nhandan.vn/about\\_us.html](https://en.nhandan.vn/about_us.html) [Last retrieved 9/10/2021].

<sup>564</sup> Cf. Wikipedia (n.d.-c); cf. Lê, T.D. (2010). Study Case: The Internet Revolution and The Adaptation of Vietnamese Journalism. KAS 2010 Journalism and Development Conference. Vientiane, Laos, p. 21: [https://www.kas.de/c/document\\_library/get\\_file?uuid=03a0338f-9a27-0b51-56d5-4a313882080b&groupId=269323](https://www.kas.de/c/document_library/get_file?uuid=03a0338f-9a27-0b51-56d5-4a313882080b&groupId=269323) [Last retrieved 9/10/2021].

stations such as provincial TV, Vietnam Television Corporation (VTC) and Ho Chi Minh City TV (HTV). The percentages for all TV stations increase in line with the age of its viewership.<sup>565</sup>

Internet usage in Vietnam has been growing at high speed: From 39% in 2015,<sup>566</sup> the share of the population using the internet reached 58% in 2017 (the year data was collected for this study).<sup>567</sup> Table 5 demonstrates that the internet penetration rate has now reached 76% or 74 million individual users. It is worth noting that the number of internet users is identical with those using Facebook, the most popular social networking site in Vietnam, and has risen concurrently with internet access.<sup>568</sup>

**Table 5: Vietnam Internet and Facebook Users<sup>569</sup>**

<i>Population (2021 est.)</i>	<i>Internet Users 2021, March 31</i>	<i>Penetration % Population</i>	<i>Users % Asia</i>	<i>Facebook 2021, March 31</i>
98,168,833	74,750,000	76.1 %	2.7 %	74,750,000

The 2015 BBG survey indicates that the majority of people who were online at least once a week accessed the internet through their mobile devices (81%). In terms of language, Vietnamese content is preferred by the vast majority (99%). Only 16% access online content in English. Figure 18 illustrates the demographics of internet users based on the question when they last used the internet. The biggest share of internet users is between 15 and 24 years old (79%), lives in urban areas (52%) and has completed vocational training or tertiary education (69%).

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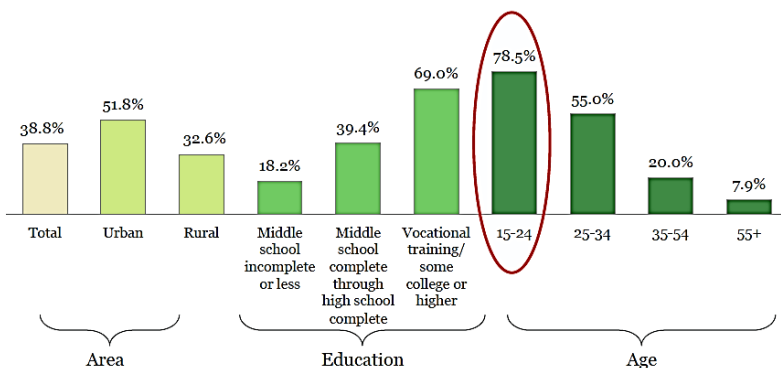
<sup>565</sup> Cf. BBG/Gallup, pp. 31/32.

<sup>566</sup> Cf. *ibid.*

<sup>567</sup> Cf. World Bank (n.d.-b) *Individuals Using the Internet (% of Population)* (Excel file for download): <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/IT.NET.USER.ZS?end=2019&start=2004> [Last retrieved 9/10/2021].

<sup>568</sup> Cf. Internet World Stats (n.d.-a). *Asia Internet Use, Populations Statistics Data and Facebook Data – Mid-year 2021*: <https://www.internetworldstats.com/stats3.htm - asia> [Last retrieved 9/10/2021]; cf. Internet World Stats (n.d.-b). *Vietnam*: <https://www.internetworldstats.com/asia.htm - vn> [Last retrieved 9/10/2021].

<sup>569</sup> Source: Internet World Stats (n.d.-a).



**Figure 18: Demographics of Internet Users**<sup>570</sup>

The distribution of living conditions, education and age is rather similar for mobile internet usage: Mostly younger people with college or university degrees in the cities access the internet through their smartphones.<sup>571</sup> In terms of the usage of mobile phone apps, Vietnam could be classified as a Facebook-first country, with almost half of all users (48%) indicating that it is their preferred social media application, followed by Google, YouTube, the social network Zalo and the chatting app Zingme. Notably both Zalo and Zingme are owned by the local ZNG Corporation.<sup>572</sup> The CIMA calls this a “dramatic demographic shift in the way that people are accessing news, as young people increasingly turn to Facebook and Google at the expense of the traditionally-dominant state media television stations.”<sup>573</sup> In comparison to young people in China, in Vietnam young media users can access Facebook and Google without major restrictions. The BBG concludes that they are “pushing digital media forward by what they own and what they do digitally.”<sup>574</sup>

The BBG surveyed the Vietnamese population about what the most serious problems were from their point of view. The topic mentioned most

<sup>570</sup> Source: BBG/Gallup (2015), p. 23.

<sup>571</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, p. 23.

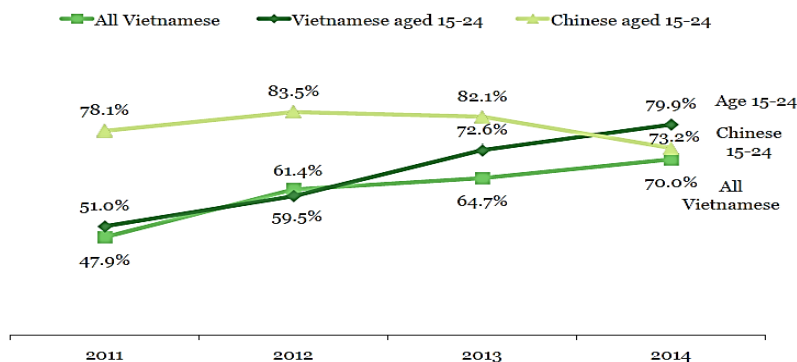
<sup>572</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 28/29.

<sup>573</sup> Rothman, P. (2015, June 10). Media Use in Vietnam: Findings from BBG and Gallup. CIMA: <https://www.cima.ned.org/blog/media-use-vietnam/> [Last retrieved 9/10/2021].

<sup>574</sup> Cf. BBG/Gallup (2015), p. 36.



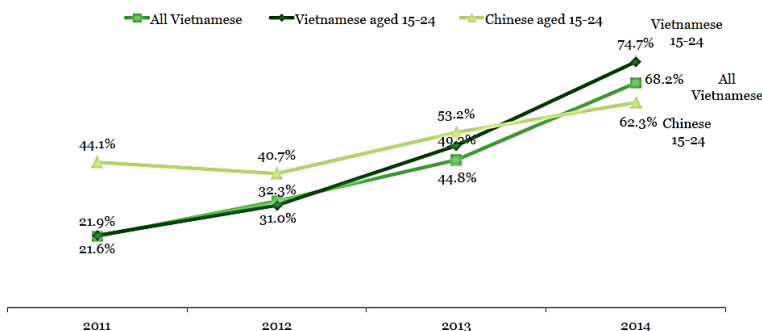
frequently was Chinese territorial claims (17% of respondents), followed by environmental issues (8.5%), and crime/lack of safety (11%). Notably, poverty was not perceived as a major issue, especially for the younger population between 15 and 24 years (2.8%) compared to those over 25 years (12%). Conversely, education and unemployment are more of a problem for the younger population. In 2015, a large proportion of Vietnamese (73%) between 15 and 34 years of age believe that their standard of living is improving.<sup>575</sup> Optimism about finding work is still below the level seen before the 2008 financial crises. However, 43% (versus 40%) thought that the job market was good. The image of business owners and entrepreneurs in Vietnam has significantly improved, especially among the young population as Figure 19 demonstrates. The percentage of those who would prefer to start their own business compared to working for someone else has been growing even faster as Figure 19 shows.



**Figure 19: Business Owners as Positive Role Models in Vietnam and China**<sup>576</sup>

<sup>575</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, p. 9.

<sup>576</sup> Source: BBG/Gallup (2015), p. 14.



**Figure 20: Proportion of Young Vietnamese Willing to be Self-Employed**<sup>577</sup>

The BBG concludes that “Vietnam has a highly engaged, optimistic and entrepreneurial population and a rapidly changing media environment.”<sup>578</sup>

From this perspective, Lè draws attention to the implications of digitalization for newsrooms and the journalistic profession in Vietnam: While legacy newspapers have been struggling with their entry into the digital sphere, younger online news services in Vietnam never had a print edition. As in many other countries around the globe, in Vietnam, “the editors in chief of the print media have possibly been too hesitant and speculated for too long about the risk of seeing the print edition lose revenue because of the online circulation.”<sup>579</sup> Lagging behind in terms of technological innovation and infrastructure, traditional newspapers missed the chance to take advantage of half a century of professional journalism experience as their biggest selling point.

Lè describes how ‘amateur journalists’ have leveraged the rise of online and mobile communication. For instance, VnExpress was set up in 2001, sponsored by the successful tech company Group FPT. While initially the outlet did not produce any original journalistic content, selecting and copying the most interesting news items from other websites, VnExpress as well as similar enterprises like Vietnam.vn and Dantri.com added

<sup>577</sup> Source: BBG/Gallup (2015), p. 15.

<sup>578</sup> BBG/Gallup (2015), p. 36.

<sup>579</sup> Lè, T.D. (2010), p. 22.

professional editors and journalist to their team later on and began to create their own news stories. Furthermore, mobile apps not only provide less restricted ways of accessing online news, but also bring benefits with regard to business models based on micro-payments made by the audience. Baomoi.mobi was the first mobile app to allow for pre-paid subscriptions attracting over one million subscribers within a year.<sup>580</sup>

According to Lè, the transformation of the media landscape is above all a business revolution which has an impact on the journalistic profession in two respects: Firstly, ‘amateur journalists’ setting up news websites like VnExpress were smart and tech-savvy entrepreneurs with significant sponsorship behind them. They very soon realized that they had to professionalize their newsrooms: “They hired good reporters and journalists with a track record of professional experience. They structured the operation of the newsroom and introduced computer technology to upgrade the editorial process.”<sup>581</sup> VnExpress’s ten million dollar profit margin in 2009 certainly allowed it to compete with state-run newspapers early on. Secondly, user-generated content grew rapidly, allowing for profits from advertising services such as Google Ads, resulting in new social media companies offering bloggers and citizen journalists platforms to easily publish their content. Zing, for example, attracted 5 million users by 2010.

The rising competition between online news services, which has been challenging to professional journalists in Vietnam, was a wake-up call – especially for print media. With regard to journalistic quality standards, it must be emphasized that the copy-paste culture of new online outlets has been sharply criticized by journalists, who see their professional image at stake. Lè criticizes that “many online newspapers do not have any practice of the editorial process and strong competition has even lowered further the poor quality of articles that tend to bet on sensational headlines.”<sup>582</sup>

In addition to these private news websites, free blogging tools have enabled internet users to write anonymously about socially taboo topics and publish stories that would have been censored in any state-run media. RWB claims that bloggers are filling a void in Vietnam: “Defying the

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<sup>580</sup> Cf. *ibid.*

<sup>581</sup> Lè, T.D. (2010), p. 2

<sup>582</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 22.

state's censorship and propaganda, the news websites and blogs proliferating on the Internet provide an alternative source of information for a public that is tired of the party's ideological brainwashing.”<sup>583</sup> Others emphasize that the blogger scene has become highly politicized and that the CPV has increasingly used blogs to disseminate pro-state information.<sup>584</sup>

Moreover, social networking sites such as Facebook have taken over as the forum for public debate. There, Vietnamese citizens discuss, more or less freely, politically sensitive information and shine a light on international affairs and cases of local corruption. “The recent emergence of popular, independent writers, who utilize personal blogs and social media, has turned into a wave of increasingly influential micro-pages attached to social media systems,”<sup>585</sup> Nguyen and Vuong posit. As a consequence, the authors note a decline in the information gatekeeping function of journalists. Professional editors and reporters have become increasingly preoccupied with watching conversations about controversial topics that have passed through the gates of the social media system.

Market liberalization and international trade relations have forced the government to open up the online sphere, which has had irreversible effects on the overall media landscape of Vietnam. The online media sector has continued to expand with new social media platforms and news outlets adding to the diversity of the media market. However, the growth of the domestic media and information system has not automatically improved the level of media and internet freedom.<sup>586</sup> Considering the reliability of news content, 58% of respondents believe that blogs are more trustworthy than state-run news. The CIMA rates this as “an alarming statistic for a long dominant state-run new apparatus.”<sup>587</sup> It seems as if the Vietnamese government is well aware of the shrinking power of the official media and the rising influence of social media platforms. In reaction, the Vietnamese government is at least attempting to tighten the bolts. Freedom House states that Prime Minister Nguyen Xuan Phuc, who came to power in

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<sup>583</sup> RWB (2013, September), p. 16.

<sup>584</sup> Cf. Duong, M. (2017). Blogging Three Ways in Vietnam's Blogosphere. *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, 39(2), 373-392.

<sup>585</sup> Cf. Nguyen, P.-M, Vuong. Q. H. (2016, November 14).

<sup>586</sup> Cf. Nguyen, P.-M, Vuong. Q. H. (2016, November 14).

<sup>587</sup> Rothman, P. (2015, June 10).

2016, has shown no signs of attempting to reinforce internet freedom. In contrast, the number of bloggers and activists arrested for online activities increased in 2017.<sup>588</sup>

### Media Regulation and Control

Article 69 of Vietnam's 1992 constitution states: "Citizens are entitled to freedom of speech and freedom of the press; they have the right to receive information and the right of assembly, association and demonstration in accordance with the law."<sup>589</sup> In addition, the Vietnamese government issued a media law in 1989 that reinforces the freedom of information. Article 2 underlines the state's intention to "create favourable conditions for the media to develop its proper role."<sup>590</sup> The CPV nonetheless overrides these legal provisions whenever necessary. The government has built a complex apparatus of media control which consists, first and foremost of the party, the armed forces, and a range of other government bodies. RWB highlights that "Vietnam has no single official body in charge of censorship, but the media are subject to meticulous control by the party's various organs."<sup>591</sup> Heng identifies three building blocks of a system of state supervision of the Vietnamese media landscape:

1. Provision of general political information (e.g., party resolutions or decisions)
2. Formal directives and suggestions of topics (based on regular meetings, but without editorial interference)
3. High level of editorial intervention (e.g., elimination of topics, stories or issues)<sup>592</sup>

With regard to journalistic professionalism, Nguyen and Vuong point out that journalists are licensed by the government, which gives them permission to produce and publish content. This licensing process undermines diversity of opinion and allows the party-state to control the media.

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<sup>588</sup> Cf. Freedom House (2017-b). *Freedom on the Net 2017. Vietnam*: <https://freedomhouse.org/country/vietnam/freedom-net/2017> [Last retrieved 9/10/2021].

<sup>589</sup> RWB (2013, September), p. 17.

<sup>590</sup> Ibid., p. 9.

<sup>591</sup> Ibid., p. 9.

<sup>592</sup> Cf. Heng, R. H.-K. (1998), p. 38

Until a few years ago, the Vietnam Journalism Association (VJA) was the only journalism association in the country which “exists in accordance to the legal provision for such a body provided in the Media Law (Article 16).”<sup>593</sup> Officially, the organization is responsible for enforcing media-related policies and safeguarding the legal rights of journalists. In 2014, the first Independent Journalists Association of Vietnam (IJAVN) launched with a mission to promote free and independent reporting.<sup>594</sup> In 2021 however, RWB reported: “Several members of the Independent Journalists Association of Vietnam (IJAVN) were arrested in 2020 and three were given sentences ranging from 11 to 15 years in prison.”<sup>595</sup> Furthermore, RWB criticize that “no Vietnamese citizens can launch a news outlet on their own initiative.”<sup>596</sup> Media organizations are required to register with a municipal, provincial or central party branch; only youth or labor unions are permitted to run news services. All Vietnamese media outlets are thus closely connected to such party organs. Moreover, large state-owned corporations such as Petro Vietnam produce their own publication *Petrotimes*.

Heng accentuates that media control is also reflected in underlying management structures, regulations and ideological influences exerted by bureaucratic institutions and political authorities. The author postulates that these structures have been “more resistant to change, not least because they are less directly exposed than media content to change-inducing agencies such as public visibility.”<sup>597</sup> Within every media organization in Vietnam, a Communist party committee is established to ensure that no information harmful to the party-state is published. Furthermore, all executives are party officials:

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<sup>593</sup> Accountable Journalism (n.d.). *Asia: Vietnam*: <https://accountablejournalism.org/ethics-codes/vietnam-vietnamese-journalists-association> [Last retrieved 10/9//2021].

<sup>594</sup> RWB (2014, July 7). *RWB Hails Creation of Vietnam’s First Independent Journalists Association*: <https://rsf.org/en/news/rwb-hails-creation-vietnams-first-independent-journalists-association> [Last retrieved 9/10/2021].

<sup>595</sup> RWB (n.d.-d). *Vietnam*: <https://rsf.org/en/vietnam> [Last retrieved 9/10/2021].

<sup>596</sup> RWB (2013, September), p. 8.

<sup>597</sup> Heng, R. H.-K. (1998), p. 46.

The heads of the leading media such as Nhan Dan (People's Daily), VTV (Vietnam Television) and VoV (Voice of Vietnam) have the same status as government ministers or deputy ministers and are directly involved in the activities of the party and government.<sup>598</sup>

Editors are obliged to provide information to Communist Party organs once a week. The Central Department of Propaganda and Education also gathers the provincial heads of the propaganda department for weekly briefings. On the following day, they return to the provinces to pass on the orders to the editors of the local news organizations. "Editors are required by the Department of Propaganda and Education to brief their journalists well about the 'advice' issued at these meetings."<sup>599</sup> Discussion of or reference to these party instructions is not allowed. Based on descriptions of local journalists, RWB calls these sessions indoctrination; failure to comply is rewarded with sanctions ranging from warnings to job loss. Freedom House concludes that "economic and social penalties, in addition to the risk of criminal prosecution foster self-censorship."<sup>600</sup>

In addition, the government frequently issues new decrees to restrict of media freedom and strengthen its own position. Under the guise of protecting intellectual property rights online, the Vietnamese government issued Decree 72 in 2013, which forbids the use of social media and blogs to share news content. According to Freedom House, this circular also requires local and international intermediaries to collaborate with the government. For example, owners of cyber-café's are made responsible when their customers access controversial content, and websites owners are held accountable for third-party contributions, which they are expected to pull down instantly. Apart from that, the circular restricts the licensing process for social networking sites. Altogether, the circular adds to other legal provisions restricting media and internet freedom: "Its promulgation reflects the government's desire to bring more specific charges against independent news providers than the standard one of anti-government 'propaganda.'"<sup>601</sup> RWB argues that Degree 72 puts an end internet

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<sup>598</sup> RWB (2013, September), p. 8.

<sup>599</sup> Ibid., p. 9.

<sup>600</sup> Freedom House (2017-b).

<sup>601</sup> RWB (2013, September), p. 22.

freedom, “taking the already widespread self-censorship to new heights.”<sup>602</sup> Similarly, Decree 97 targets bloggers, impeding them from publishing political commentary and sharing press articles; Decree 02 came into effect in 2011 and enables authorities to charge journalists for various offenses such as using a pseudonym online.<sup>603</sup> Moreover, RWB points out that, in the criminal code, “crimes are defined in such a deliberately vague way that it is easy to apply them to the journalists and bloggers who stray from the party line”<sup>604</sup> (p. 19). Countless journalists have faced arbitrary arrest and kidnapping, mistreatment and torture in prison, while others have been confined to their homes or held in psychiatric clinics.<sup>605</sup>

In terms of internet regulation, the Vietnam Internet Network Center (VNNIC) which is controlled by the Ministry of Information and Communications manages the country’s internet infrastructure, including domain names and IP addresses. In addition, three other ministries control internet services: the Ministry of Information and Culture, the Ministry of Public Security and the Ministry of Culture, Sport and Tourism.

According to Freedom House, blocking and filtering activities are still in effect. Social networking apps including the most popular platform, Facebook, have been repeatedly blocked. Some operators attempt to circumvent blocking, sparking a rise in their user numbers. The Vietnamese government collaborates with internet service providers (ISPs) to identify and block content and the URLs of popular websites and blogs that it deems a threat to the CPV. Topics can include human rights, religious organizations, opposition to domestic policies or international affairs, such as the border conflict with China. International websites of human rights organizations or international media outlets are not always accessible.

Online media outlets receive highly untransparent, often verbal instructions from the Party’s Department for Culture and Ideology and the Ministry of Information and Culture to remove controversial content. Moreover, state authorities have asked local and international companies to

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<sup>602</sup> Ibid., p. 23.

<sup>603</sup> Freedom House (2017-b)

<sup>604</sup> RWB (2013, September), p. 19.

<sup>605</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 24-28.



remove their advertisements from major social networking sites such as Facebook. At the time of data collection, a draft version of a cybercrime law was being circulated. Despite all these restrictive measures, market liberalization and the subsequent ‘internet revolution,’ as Le calls it, has opened up a new online public sphere in Vietnam. Cain proposes a nuanced perspective and warns of “a false dichotomy between authoritarian censorship and democratic press freedom.”<sup>606</sup> Exploring the relationship between the party-run state and the state-supervised media, the author describes how the semi-democratic function of the media has come to replace a top-town model of authoritarian control.

Heng emphasizes that economic factors, such as profit maximization, have increasingly played a role along with the *doi moi*: Previously, strong editorial control undermined the quality and creativity of content and, consequently, impacted on the scope of the publication. While this did not carry weight before the reforms, the state has subsequently become more aware of consumer needs and profit-interests, resulting in the CPV allowing the press more freedom to increase circulation and, consequently, their market shares.<sup>607</sup>

According to Cain, the relationship between the media and the state is shaped by “the breakdown of elite consensus and pluralization of Vietnamese society, as well as the rise of money politics.”<sup>608</sup> The state does not seem to have the resources necessary to manage critical reporting being done by virtual and civil society actors on numerous corruption and environmental scandals. Partial liberalization in terms of media coverage on such investigative stories such as the Tien Lang affair<sup>609</sup> allows the CPV to keep its official “status as the benevolent parent of national development,”<sup>610</sup> while tolerating a certain degree of controversial media

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<sup>606</sup> Cain, G. (2014). Kill One to Warn One Hundred: The Politics of Press Censorship in Vietnam. *The International Journal of Press/Politics*, 19(1), p. 89.

<sup>607</sup> Heng, R. H.-K. (1998), p. 38.

<sup>608</sup> Cain, G. (2014), p. 89.

<sup>609</sup> The incident centers around a fish farmer called Doan Van Vuon in the Tien Lang District, who authorities attempted to evict forcefully. The story was closely by national media expressing support for the fish farmer. The CVP did not apply censorship in this case: Cf. Marr, D.G. (2012, March 23). Vietnam’s High-profile Land Dispute. *Inside Story*: <https://insidestory.org.au/vietnams-high-profile-land-dispute/> [Last retrieved 9/10/2021].

<sup>610</sup> Cain, G. (2014), p. 87.

coverage. This is in line with Marcus's idea of 'repressive tolerance,'<sup>611</sup> wherein Vietnam's Communist party attempts to enforce its "popular mandate to address the grievances of the people while reasserting its control on the periphery."<sup>612</sup> Both the party-state and the media work along a spectrum of repression and resistance. While self-censorship (or journalistic state-compliance out of fear of reprisal) remains a form of media control, reporters have begun to "push the boundaries in a form of fierce resistance [...]. motivated by a search for justice as well as profit."<sup>613</sup> This model of the media as a 'state-sponsored watchdog' can also be applied also to other transitional countries including China, Myanmar and Cuba.

Analyzing journalistic freedom can provide insights into the development of civil society. This has certainly become evident in Vietnam as the gap between the perspectives expressed by civil society through social media on the one hand, and the messages spread by the CPV through state media on the other hand, has become undeniable. Nguyen and Vuong note that due to its century-old Confucian tradition proclaiming the societal division of classes, democratic transformation processes have sustainable impacts on all societal spheres, especially the perceptions of civil society.<sup>614</sup> In Vietnam, "the public seems to have found ways of expressing their political attitudes and getting more involved in shaping the country's future course of diplomatic relations."<sup>615</sup>

The government likely did not expect the impact of internet technology and social networking sites to override authoritarian censorship efforts. Nguyen and Vuong are optimistic: "Given that technological innovations will further speed up the rate of information access and disrupt the modus operandi of the Vietnamese media system, individual users will gain ever more power to challenge large media institutions."<sup>616</sup> This remains speculation given the simultaneous rise of opportunities for authoritarian governments to tighten media and internet control; Vietnam most recently

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<sup>611</sup> Ibid., p. 90.

<sup>612</sup> Ibid., p. 87.

<sup>613</sup> Ibid., p. 91.

<sup>614</sup> More insights into the influence of Confucianism on the historical development of Vietnam: Cf. McHale, S. F. (2008). *Print and Power: Confucianism, Communism, and Buddhism in the Making of Modern Vietnam*. Honolulu, Hawaii: University of Hawaii Press.

<sup>615</sup> Nguyen, P.-M., Vuong, Q. H. (2016, November 14).

<sup>616</sup> Ibid.

scored 84 on the Freedom of the Press Index, which classifies the country's the level of media freedom as "not free."<sup>617</sup> Moreover, RWB described Vietnam's "very serious situation" in 2021. The situation has not changed much since 2017. Vietnam continues to rank 175 out of 180 countries worldwide, followed closely by regimes such as China and North Korea.<sup>618</sup> In terms of internet freedom, Freedom House also classifies Vietnam as 'not free' with a score of 24. The Freedom of the Net Index assesses restrictions to internet access, online content and user rights on a country level; here too, the country's status has not changed significantly, with a score of 22 in 2020.

In 2013, spyware was detected for the first time. There are regular reports of attacks on individual journalists and activists.<sup>619</sup> A cybercrime law was enacted in 2019 that forces international online platforms to store local user data on Vietnamese servers and pass it on to state authorities upon request. Moreover, the party-state has created a cyber-warfare department called 'Force 47,' staffed by 10,000 people to strengthen their control over the internet.<sup>620</sup> In addition, Freedom House reports that the Vietnamese government has established a team of 900 'public opinion shapers' and 'internet polemicists' to control online debate on all relevant topics through their individual accounts and websites. In 2020, Facebook was fiercely criticized for allowing the government's online censorship army to attack dissidents.<sup>621</sup> In June 2021, the government issued a country-wide code of conduct for social media that prohibits citizens from

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<sup>617</sup> The Freedom of the Press Index became unavailable after 2017. Freedom House from then onwards concentrated on the Freedom in the World Report and Freedom of the Net Index.

<sup>618</sup> Cf. RWB (n.d.-e) *2021 World Press Freedom Index. Ranking 2017*: <https://rsf.org/en/ranking/2017> [Last retrieved 9/10/2021].

<sup>619</sup> Cf. Freedom House (2020-b). *Freedom on the Net 2020. Viet Nam*: <https://freedomhouse.org/country/vietnam/freedom-net/2020> [Last retrieved 9/10/2021].

<sup>620</sup> Cf. RWB (n.d.-b)

<sup>621</sup> Cf. Biddle, S. (2020, December 21). Facebook Lets Vietnam's Cyberarmy Target Dissidents, Rejecting A Celebrity's Plea. *The Intercept*: <https://theintercept.com/2020/12/21/facebook-vietnam-censorship/> [Last retrieved 9/10/2021].

publishing content that could negatively affect the national interest. It is yet another attempt to increase social media and internet restrictions.<sup>622</sup>

#### 4.2.2.3. History and Evolution of Academic Journalism Education

Nguyen traces the first accounts of journalism education in Vietnam to the 1860s, when basic journalism training on news writing was offered for the first time by *The Gia Dinh Journal*, the first Vietnamese-language newspaper. Until the early twentieth century however, journalism remained a writing style rather than a profession unto itself. In the 1920s, journalist and pioneer Hoang Tich Chu together with a few colleagues introduced new “concise journalistic writing styles and techniques”<sup>623</sup> to Vietnam. Educated in France, they inspired young Vietnamese with their own journalistic pieces. In the 1930s, comprehensive French textbooks such as the *Cours de Legislation de la Presse* – which outlined basic writing and editing skills, media law and ethics and historical aspects of journalism in France – were translated into Vietnamese. Nonetheless, journalism was not considered a profession until the next decade, when formal training became available.

The 1945 August Revolution marked not only the end of the colonial period, but also an important milestone for the journalistic profession, regarded as an important tool by Ho Chi Minh’s Communist Party. In 1949, the government organized the first four-month journalism training. President Ho described the purpose of newspaper journalism as propaganda, mobilization, and the organization of ordinary people to reach collective goals. This reflects Siebert et al’s communist theory of the press,<sup>624</sup> which remained predominant in Vietnam until the new millennium, according to Nguyen.

Journalists played a central role as a backbone of the Communist system in Vietnam. The Vietnam war and the North-South divide shaped the

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<sup>622</sup> Cf. Strangio, S. (2021, June 21). Vietnam Formulates Nationwide Code of Conduct for Social Media. *The Diplomat*: <https://thediplomat.com/2021/06/vietnam-formulates-nationwide-code-of-conduct-for-social-media/> [Last retrieved 9/10/2021].

<sup>623</sup> Nguyen, A. (2008). Journalism Education in Vietnam. *Media Asia*, 35(2), p. 111; Note: Nguyen refers to a range of original sources in Vietnamese, for example, statistics provided by the Ministry of Education and Training (MoET). In this study, however, I refer to Nguyen’s article as the primary source due to a lack of local language skills.

<sup>624</sup> Cf. Siebert, F.T. et al (1956).

evolution of journalism education and training. Academic training was first offered in the South, the Republic of Vietnam, at various universities and taught by the most famous journalists and directors of news organizations, some whom had both an international reputation and international work experience; “in the meantime, journalism education in the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (North Vietnam) was mainly a vocational and ideological education task.”<sup>625</sup> The Communist Party of Vietnam established the Central School of Propaganda and Education in Hanoi in 1962, now the country’s longest-standing journalism training institution.

After the re-unification of the country in 1975, academic journalism education did not exist until *doi moi*, the economic reform in 1986. As a response to the growing demand for the professional training of journalists as mouthpieces of the CPV, a Journalism Department was set up at the College of Social Sciences and Humanities at Vietnam National University (VNU) in Hanoi. Moreover, the CPV decided to transform its Central School of Propaganda and Education into a university in 1993, giving it the new name Academy of Journalism and Communication. Beyond the two state journalism programs in Hanoi, Vietnam University offers a degree similar to the University of Social Sciences and Humanities (USSH) program in Ho Chi Minh City. Additionally, Hue University and Da Lat University in the center of Vietnam have set up journalism courses attached to their Linguistic departments.

As such, journalism degrees have been in the hands of the government – and thus state universities – since the very beginning. Nguyen exemplifies this restriction with the case of Ho Chi Minh City Open University, a semi-private university at the time<sup>626</sup>: The institution opened a new journalism program in 1992. Two years later, the Ministry of Education and Training (MoET) asked for it to be closed down. A few years later, in 1997, the CPV officially released a new regulation that “media cadres should be trained and educated domestically under the Party’s leadership and the

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<sup>625</sup> Nguyen, A. (2008), p. 111.

<sup>626</sup> Ho Chi Minh City Open University: <http://en.ou.edu.vn/> [Last retrieved 9/10/2021]; Note: According to Wikipedia, the university has become a public institution later on: Wikipedia (n.d.-b). *Ho Chi Minh City Open University*: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ho\\_Chi\\_Minh\\_City\\_Open\\_University](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ho_Chi_Minh_City_Open_University) [Last retrieved 9/10/2021].

government's strict management,"<sup>627</sup> in effect barring private and semi-private universities from training journalists. At least up until the first decade of the twenty-first century, only certain state universities have offered journalism degree programs in Vietnam: VNU in Hanoi, VNU Ho Chi Minh City, Academy of Journalism and Communication (AJC) in Hanoi, and Hue University.<sup>628</sup> In addition to Bachelor's degrees, all three also offer postgraduate and doctoral degree programs. Nguyen distinguished three types of university degree programs for Vietnam:

1. Intensive first degrees targeted mainly at school leavers who fulfill the application criteria and pass entry exams
2. In-service degrees, which are primarily for working journalists who want to complete an academic degree, and
3. Second degrees, for student who hold a first university degree and want another academic title in a different discipline.

The entrance examinations are developed and controlled by the MoET. Prospective students must pass tests in literature, history and geography (Block C), foreign language and mathematics (Block D). Notably, the required scores for admission to journalism degrees are the highest across all other disciplines within the social sciences and humanities. As Nguyen highlights for the early 2000s, "in recent years, the number of school leavers registering for journalism programmes has been consistently high, leading to very tough competition." The rate of exclusion is high for all four journalism programs, meaning that despite good career prospects for other degrees, prospective students take a rather high risk of not being admitted. In fact, the numbers imply that journalism is one of the most popular disciplines. Due to the large numbers of applicants, the Department of Linguistic at the VNU in Hanoi, according to Nguyen, offered journalism subjects in disguise as part of the linguistic curricula despite the fact that they lack the formal mandate to graduate journalism students.<sup>629</sup>

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<sup>627</sup> Cf. Dinh, H. (2004). Vietnams Journalism Training and Education Challenge of a Free Market Economy. *Asia Pacific Media Educator*, 15(15), p. 182.

<sup>628</sup> Dalat University is sometimes mentioned with regard to academic journalism education in Vietnam. However, Nguyen argues that the university does not offer a regular journalism degree.

<sup>629</sup> Cf. Nguyen, A. (2008), p. 112.

In 2003, the Vietnamese government issued a national curriculum for journalism students. In a rather lengthy, unfocused and confusing statement, the curriculum states that Vietnamese journalism graduates are expected to

- (a) have a (high) level of political enlightenment and a firm class standpoint
- (b) have a deep level of patriotism
- (c) have the capacity to equally integrate into professional journalistic activities in the region and the world
- (d) have an immaculate ethical standard, healthy lifestyle, and courageous attitude in order to participate in the struggle to protect the policies and guidelines of the Communist Party and the State of Vietnam in its fight against antiregime conspiracies and activities, and to mobilize and guide the mass in building and protecting the socialist Vietnam fatherland
- (e) have a deep sense of discipline and responsibility, a professional passion, a serious, scholarly and self-development-oriented working style on the basis of a full and voluntary awareness of the role and social status of journalism and mass communication.<sup>630</sup>

Based on focus interviews with journalism education experts and the content analysis of journalism curricula, Nguyen identifies several key issues for academic journalism education in Vietnam. First, the curriculum contains too much content for four years of study. Second, journalistic theory outweighs practice: Adding up theoretical journalism subjects (introduction to journalism) and non-journalistic subjects (politics, social sciences and humanities) as well as the graduation module, the total theoretical components make up 55% of the courses at the VNU Hanoi, 61% at the VNU in Ho Chi Minh City and 65% at the AJC.<sup>631</sup> Taken together, internships and journalism skills modules account for less than a quarter of academic course content at all three universities. Nguyen points out that skills-based courses are even less

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<sup>630</sup> Nguyen, A. (2008), p. 117.

<sup>631</sup> Cf. Nguyen, A. (2008), p. 119.

practice-oriented in real life. When textbooks are used in class, they are mainly Soviet publications. Moreover, average former students without teacher training are hired as instructors. There is a lack of collaboration between industry and the universities; internships hard to set up, and there is no real practical experience. One interviewee also stated that new approaches, such as practical projects rather than an academic thesis, receive little support from students.

Overall, there is a mismatch between the universities and industry. As a result of the high demand for journalism education from prospective students and employers, and the deficiencies in the program content and in pedagogy, Nguyen concludes that there is a “massive supply with poor quality.”<sup>632</sup> He estimates that thousands of journalism graduates – maybe even tens of thousands, if one includes those who studying journalism in-service or as a second degree – have come out of journalism schools. The qualitative deficiency is closely intertwined with the quantitative shortage, as a lack of supply results in the majority of working journalists not having completed any formal training: In 2005, 75% of the 13,000 nationally recognized Vietnamese journalists — those conferred a professional identity card by the Ministry of Culture and Information — have never attended any formal journalism classes.<sup>633</sup> Conversely, Nguyen stress that media organization do not hire formally trained graduates due to their lack of practical skills. Employers prefer the on-the-job training of alumni from other disciplines:

As a result, the ball is thrown from the universities back into the industry’s court. To save themselves from lagging behind new market and technological demands, many newsrooms have set up their own systems and distributed resources to recruit cadets from different disciplines, including journalism, and train them from scratch.<sup>634</sup>

To a large extent, these findings are in line with Dinh’s analysis which was based on a case study analysis of the AJC curriculum. In contrast to

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<sup>632</sup> Nguyen, A. (2008), p. 114.

<sup>633</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, p. 115.

<sup>634</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 116.



Nguyen, Dinh emphasizes the shortcomings of theoretical approaches to journalism education, which he argues are closely linked to a lack of qualified journalism teachers and adequate textbooks.<sup>635</sup> Moreover, existing journalism curricula have significant conceptual deficiencies: “The lack of teaching materials has resulted in media theory, journalism studies and professional practice being non-systematic and non-standardized.”<sup>636</sup> Individual teachers have to design their own courses from scratch including reading lists and scripts. Dinh accentuates that in Vietnamese culture, at the time of his research at the beginning of the millennium, journalism was still widely perceived as a discipline within Literature departments; consequently, theoretical, non-journalistic literature subjects made up a substantial part of the curricula.

A further issue, besides the abundance of applicants, is the lack of competition with private journalism schools and in-house programs. Similar to Western countries, these shortcomings bear the danger of university journalism education losing its legitimacy in Vietnam if they do not assess the situation and adapt to the demands of both learners and educators. Above all, Nguyen posits that public journalism schools hold a social responsibility to contribute not only to the media sector, but also to society as a whole. They must act as standard-setting bodies that educate students about journalism and journalistic work in a broader, process-oriented sense “so that the students can practice journalism while meeting and improving existing standards and developing new ones.”<sup>637</sup> Nguyen formulates a number of concrete recommendations for the improvement of academic journalism education in Vietnam. These include a greater emphasis on practical subjects and on-campus practical learning opportunities (e.g., through practice websites), collaboration with the media industry, and setting up journalism and mass communication libraries for students and teachers.<sup>638</sup> In addition, Dinh stresses that the quality of journalism can only be increased by shifting the focus to professional skills and competencies rather than concentrating on the CPV’s ideology of Marxism and Leninism.

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<sup>635</sup> Cf. Dinh, H. (2004), pp. 183/184.

<sup>636</sup> Ibid., p. 185.

<sup>637</sup> Nguyen, A. (2008), p. 125.

<sup>638</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, p. 126.

These recommendations are even more relevant when considered within the context of the country's wider media environment. According to Nguyen, "with fast expansion in both size and substance in the past 20 years, the Vietnamese media system is beginning to feel the need for formal journalism education and training."<sup>639</sup> The author relates the rising demand for well-trained journalists to two changes in the media landscape: On the one hand, the prestige of the journalistic profession has improved since *doi moi*, when the CPV liberalized its stance toward the media while maintaining tight control over media content. On the other, and more importantly, the media in Vietnam underwent a transformation process from propaganda mouthpiece to "a more active and responsive social-monitoring and civic participation mechanism marked by a more public-oriented service, an increasing diversity of perspectives and a somewhat aggressive and daring move toward investigative journalism."<sup>640</sup> According to Nguyen, media organizations have begun to report on political, social and economic issues affecting the Vietnamese people. While traditionally journalists had to stand against the popular pun describing their profession as 'telling lies to make a living,'<sup>641</sup> the profession enjoyed more trust and respect from the public since the 1980s. The appeal of the journalistic profession experienced a further shift with the transformation of the Vietnamese media landscape in the early 2000s as the number of broadcast and print outlets grew rapidly. Moreover, digitalization led to new online media and cable TV channels sprouting out of existing media organizations. "Some new players, particularly Internet-only news outlets such as *VietnamNet* or *VnExpress*, are becoming increasingly larger in both size and substance."<sup>642</sup> In the process of globalization, modernization and market liberalization, media organizations moved from being fully government-funded to becoming partly self-financed. As a result, the media emancipated itself from serving the Party and began to listen to the needs of its target groups, primarily advertisers and audiences. Consequently, the diversity of media content has increased.<sup>643</sup>

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<sup>639</sup> Ibid., p. 108.

<sup>640</sup> Ibid., p. 114.

<sup>641</sup> Original phrase in Vietnamese: 'Nha bao noi lao an tien', cf. Nguyen, A. (2008), p. 114.

<sup>642</sup> Ibid., p. 114.

<sup>643</sup> Cf. Dinh, H. (2004), pp. 182/190.

There is a risk that “in their desperate search for well-trained journalism graduates, journalists and media executives begin to disregard the role the universities play in journalism education.”<sup>644</sup> Although they produce approximately 400 graduates per year, and there are even more in-service and second-degree graduates, the schools cannot live up to the quality requirements of employers. Both Nguyen and Dinh stress that, in the early 2000s, academic journalism institutions began falling behind in their role as supplier of the next generation of qualified journalists, and therefore urgently need reforming. This empirical study will assess whether and to what extent academic journalism schools have adapted their programs to the new requirements of the digital era.

### **4.2.3 Local Framework Conditions in Cambodia**

#### **4.2.3.1 Political, Socio-economic and Human Development**

##### **Demography and Geography**

The Kingdom of Cambodia shares a border with Vietnam, Laos and Thailand as well as the Gulf of Thailand. The country covers 181,035 square kilometers and has the highest population density in the Southeast around the national capital Phnom Penh, the largest urban area. Cambodia consists of 24 provinces and one municipality. The total population stood at 17.3 million in 2021, with an estimated 2.1 million living in the capital. As a consequence of the Khmer Rouge genocide, the Cambodian population shrank dramatically before fertility rates recovered in the 1980s. In 2020, 47% of Cambodians were under the age of 25. The median age was 26.4 years. The country is rather homogenous in terms of religion and ethnicities: 97% are Khmer and 95% are Buddhist. The official language is Khmer; a few minority languages including Vietnamese and Chinese are also spoken.<sup>645</sup>

##### **Historical Background and Political Development**

In 1863, Cambodia became a French colony, and was integrated into the French Indochina in 1887. During WWII, Cambodia was under Japanese occupation. In 1946, the French protectorate was re-instated and a new

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<sup>644</sup> Nguyen, A. (2008), p. 117.

<sup>645</sup> CIA (n.d.-a). *The World Factbook. Explore All Countries – Cambodia*: <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/cambodia/> [Last retrieved 9/10/2021].

constitution allowed the formation of political parties. In 1953, the Kingdom of Cambodia under King Sihanouk gained independence from France. Shortly after, Sihanouk became the first prime minister and head of state. Cambodia's genocide is rooted in the Vietnam war (1955 to 1975). During the 1960s, Cambodia became an important training ground for the Vietnamese National Liberation Front (NLF) as Sihanouk permitted North Vietnamese guerrillas to set up camps in Cambodia as part of their campaign against South Vietnam, which was supported by the United States. Four years later, U.S. president Richard Nixon decided to bomb the East of Cambodia in response.

After being ousted by Lon Nol, Sihanouk allied with the communist resistance movement, the Khmer Rouge. American interference led to rising support for the Khmer Rouge, who formed the armed wing of the Communist Party of Kampuchea and took over Phnom Penh in 1975. The Khmer Rouge, led by Pol Pot, wished to re-establish an agrarian society and to eradicate intellectual elites, and all ethnic and religious minorities. By 1979, approximately 1.7 million out of a total population of 8 million had died as a consequence of famine, forced labor, torture, murder or illness.<sup>646</sup> Since the end of the Khmer Rouge, Cambodia has been shaped by the 'Hun Sen system',<sup>647</sup> named after a former commander of the Khmer Rouge who became the country's first prime minister in 1985. In office for over 36 years, Hun Sen is one of the world's longest serving heads of state,<sup>648</sup> with a firm grip on the Cambodian People's Party (CPP). Initially, the party shared power with the royal Front Uni National Pour Un Cambodge Indépendant (FUNCINPEC),<sup>649</sup> which won the first

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<sup>646</sup> Cf. Britannica (n.d.-a). *Khmer Rouge*: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Khmer-Rouge> [Last retrieved 9/10/2021]; cf. BBC (n.d.). *Cambodia Profile – Timeline*: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-pacific-13006828> [Last retrieved 9/10/2021]; cf. Wikipedia (n.d.-a). *French Protectorate of Cambodia*: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/French\\_protectorate\\_of\\_Cambodia\\_-\\_French\\_colonial\\_rule](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/French_protectorate_of_Cambodia_-_French_colonial_rule) [Last retrieved 9/10/2021].

<sup>647</sup> Cf. RWB (2018). *Cambodia: The Independent Press in Ruins*, p. 3: <https://rsf.org/en/news/rsf-publishes-report-media-freedom-under-attack-cambodia> [Last retrieved 9/10/2021].

<sup>648</sup> Cf. Sokhean, B. (2021, January 15). PM Marks 36 Years in Power With Both Praise and Criticism. *Khmer Times*: <https://www.khmertimeskh.com/50803835/pm-marks-36-years-in-power-with-both-praise-and-criticism/> [Last retrieved 9/10/2021]; cf. Karbaum, M. (2016). *Kambodscha: Abriss der demokratischen Fassade, südostasien*, 3, p. 1.

<sup>649</sup> English translation: Front for an Independent, Neutral, Peaceful and Cooperative Cambodia.

elections in 1993 under the aegis of the UN. Sihanouk's son and FUNCINPEC party leader, prince Norodom Ranariddh, became the first prime minister, with Hun Sen as deputy prime minister. The CPP and FUNCINPEC jointly signed the 1991 Paris Peace Accords to be implemented by the United Nation Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC). In 1994, several thousand Khmer Rouge guerrillas surrendered after the government announced an amnesty. After a coup in 1997 during which Norodom was ousted, Hun Sen took over his position. In the same year, Pol Pot was sentenced to life in prison. Meanwhile, the new prime minister established a sophisticated system of patronage rewarding loyalty and controlling resistance within the party. Until today, the legislative and judicial powers remain subordinated to the executive. King Norodom Sihamoni, who came into power in 2004, has rather limited political influence.

It took almost 30 years after the end of the genocide for the establishment of a Khmer Rouge Tribunal to reappraise the country's past. The Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia (ECCC) was only founded in 2006. Analysts believe that the reason for this delay in coming to terms with the Khmer Rouge regime lies with the dynamics of the Cold War. Similar to Vietnam, Cambodia's political system is marked by French colonial rule. Within this ostensibly liberal democracy based on a multi-party system based on a division of judicial, legislative and executive powers, the Council of Ministers is the most powerful executive organ. The Supreme Court and the Constitutional Court constitute the judiciary. Notably, judicial powers in Cambodia are strongly affiliated with the ruling party.<sup>650</sup> The legislature consists of the Senate and the National Assembly.<sup>651</sup> Furthermore, Cambodia remains a constitutional monarchy with a king who reigns, but no political power. According to the constitution, "Khmer citizens' fundamental rights and freedoms are recognized, and political parties are encouraged to participate in elections."<sup>652</sup> Every five years, Cambodians elect representatives to the National Assembly

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<sup>650</sup> Cf. Overton, L.C. (1999, July 26). Cambodia. *Britannica*: <https://www.britannica.com/place/Cambodia> [Last retrieved 9/10/2021].

<sup>651</sup> Cf. CIA (n.d.-a).

<sup>652</sup> Cf. Open Development Cambodia (2015, September 8). *System of Government*: <https://opendevelopmentcambodia.net/topics/system-of-government/> [Link retrieved 9/10/2021].

(general elections) and the Commune Council (commune elections), which have some administrative autonomy. The national government oversees the provincial governments.

With regard to the country's more recent political development, the National Assembly elections in 2013 presented another turning point. Within one year of its founding, the Cambodian National Rescue Party (CNRP) unexpectedly won 55 out of 123 mandates, despite accusations that the CPP manipulated the election results. After several years of rapprochement, Hun Sen returned to assault mode; since then, hundreds of dissidents have arrested.<sup>653</sup> Oppositional leader Sam Rainsy went into exile in Paris. CNRP president, Kem Sokha, was also charged with treason and was jailed and under house arrest for several years. He was only recently released, but banned from conducting any political activities.<sup>654</sup> Independent media increasingly served as platform for public disputes as mass protests took place in the capital Phnom Penh over the course of a whole year. The government grew increasingly concerned. After the CNRP consolidated its rising popularity by winning 46% of the vote in the local commune elections in 2017, the opposition party was dissolved by the Supreme Court only six months before the 2018 general elections, leaving the ruling CPP without a rival. Over 100 members of the CNRP were prohibited from engaging in political activities for five years.<sup>655</sup>

At this point, Cambodia found itself at a crossroads, turning either toward a new democracy or old demons. Unfortunately, the Hun Sen regime “resisted all reforms, transitions, and protests, establishing an authoritarian regime marked by widespread corruption – one in which economic and political power is concentrated without any transparency in the hands of a limited group.”<sup>656</sup> In July 2016, a Global Witness report stated that the

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<sup>653</sup> RWB lists 47 political prisoners at the time of this publication being finished in 2021: RWB (n.d.-b). *Cambodian Opposition Politicians and Activists Behind Bars*: <https://www.rfa.org/english/news/special/campoliticalprisoner/home.html> [Last retrieved 9/10/2021].

<sup>654</sup> BBC (2019, November 19). *Kem Sokha: Cambodian Opposition Leader Freed from House Arrest*: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-50367724> [Last retrieved 9/10/2021].

<sup>655</sup> Cf. RWB (2018), p. 4; cf. BBC. (2017, November 16). *Cambodia Top Court Dissolves Main Opposition CNRP Party*: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-42006828> [Last retrieved 9/10/2021].

<sup>656</sup> RWB (2018), p. 3.

prime minister's family had accumulated about \$200 million USD in assets since taking office in 1983, using this wealth to solidify their political power.<sup>657</sup>

Economically, Cambodia has taken on a leading position compared to other countries in Southeast Asia.<sup>658</sup> Cambodia's economy, heavily dependent on tourism and the garment industry, has grown at lightning speed, averaging 7% per year between 1998 and 2019. According to the World Bank, it attained a lower middle-income status in 2015 and is expected to become an upper middle-income country by 2030. In 2020, the country was not only hit by the COVID-19 pandemic, but also by the EU's decision to suspend Cambodia's preferential duty-free and quota-free access to the European market under the 'Everything but Arms'<sup>659</sup> initiative. The decision was based on serious concerns about human rights abuses in Cambodia. Last year's negative growth rate of more than 3% meant a significant economic loss for the country.<sup>660</sup> In response to Western critiques, the Cambodian government has increasingly turned to China, which promises investment without expecting the country to respect human rights.<sup>661</sup> As early as 2012, BBC Media Action noted that the CPP was "shunning Western development assistance and the expectations of the international community in relation to governance and the protection of Cambodian's rights."<sup>662</sup> In 2014, most Cambodians believed that corruption is widespread throughout government (70.3%) and business

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<sup>657</sup> Cf. Global Witness (2016, July 17). *Hostile Takeover*: <https://www.globalwitness.org/en/reports/hostile-takeover/> [Last retrieved 9/10/2021].

<sup>658</sup> Cf. Oldag, A. et al (2015). *Freedom of the Press and Media Regulation in Cambodia*. Phnom Penh, Cambodia: Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, p. 3.

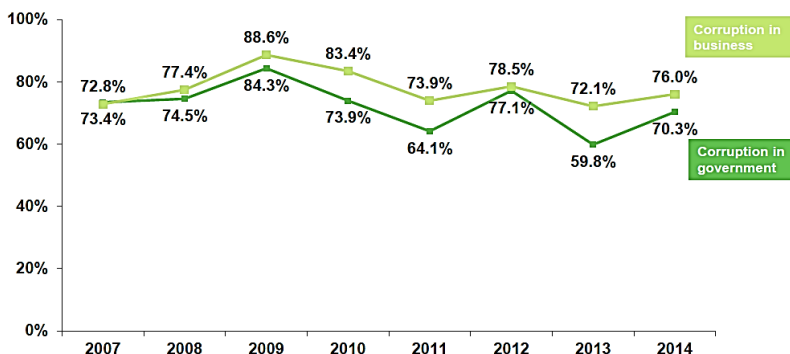
<sup>659</sup> Cf. EC – European Commission (2020, August 12). *Cambodia Loses Duty-free Access to the EU Market over Human Rights Concerns*: [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip\\_20\\_1469](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_20_1469) [Last retrieved 9/24/2021].

<sup>660</sup> Cf. World Bank (n.d.-c). *The World Bank in Cambodia. Overview*: <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/cambodia/overview> [Last retrieved 9/24/2021].

<sup>661</sup> Cf. Rother, S. (2020, October 26). Kambodscha. *Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung*: <https://www.bpb.de/internationales/weltweit/innerstaatliche-konflikte/54786/kambodscha> [Last retrieved 9/11/2021].

<sup>662</sup> Cf. BBC Media Action (2012, August). *Country Case Study: Cambodia*: <http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/mediaaction/pdf/cambodia.pdf> [Last retrieved 9/11/2021].

(76.0%), numbers that have remained relatively stable since the late 2000s, as Figure 21 shows.<sup>663</sup>



**Figure 21: Cambodians' Perception of Corruption<sup>664</sup>**

Freedom House rated Cambodia as ‘not free’ in 2017, stressing the deteriorating political situation in the country and the absence of an electoral democracy. That year was marked by the assassination of political commentator Kem Ley and the conviction of exiled opposition leader Sam Rainsy to five years in prison. Both left Cambodian society in shock. Local media called it a “travesty of justice.”<sup>665</sup> Indeed, “while civil society is relatively strong, activists working on environmental, land, labor, and civil rights issues face severe intimidation.”<sup>666</sup> The Freedom House report further highlights that independent media and citizen journalists have continued to challenge the CPP government despite rising intimidation, attacks and arrests. Democratic transitions have stalled, and socio-political conflicts are on the rise due to social inequalities and pending problems such as a lack of development in rural areas.<sup>667</sup>

<sup>663</sup> Cf. BBG (2014). *BBG Research Series. Cambodia. From Big Screen to Small*, p. 8: <https://www.usagm.gov/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/Cambodia-FINAL.pdf> [Last retrieved 9/11/2021].

<sup>664</sup> Source: BBG (2014), p. 8.

<sup>665</sup> Cf. RWB (2018), p. 8.

<sup>666</sup> Puddington, A. (2017), p. 85.

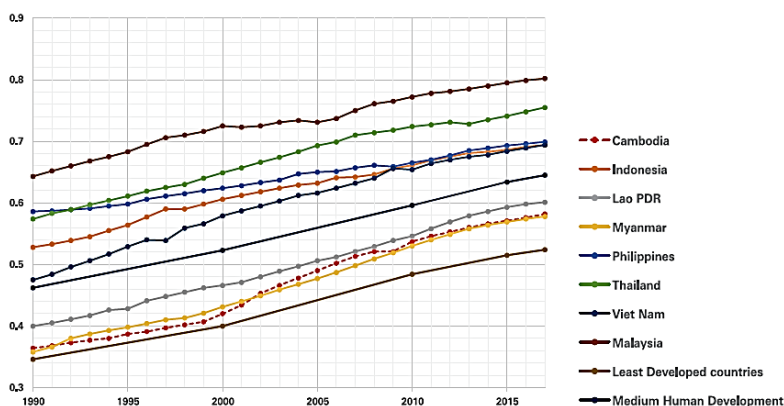
<sup>667</sup> Cf. Oldag, A. et al (2015), p. 3.



## Human Development

Cambodia's HDI has been rising continuously since the 1990s. In fact, the country had the seventh fastest HDI growth rate in the world and the second fastest in Asia between 1990 and 2017, when the country reached a value of 0.582 (see Figure 22).<sup>668</sup> Cambodia, however, still has to catch up with neighboring states, including Vietnam. Today, Cambodia has reached a value of 0.594 and ranks 144 out of 180 countries.<sup>669</sup>

### Rapid improvements in the Human Development Index (HDI), but further catch-up is required



**Figure 22: Human Development in Cambodia and the Region since 1990**<sup>670</sup>

Figure 23 presents Cambodia's education index, which has been on the rise, but also remains below other countries in the region. The rise in the country's HDI should be attributed first to rising life expectancy and income levels, rather than an improvement in education levels.<sup>671</sup>

<sup>668</sup> Cf. UNDP (2019). *Human Development Report Cambodia 2019. Sustaining Natural Resources For All*: [https://www.kh.undp.org/content/cambodia/en/home/library/human\\_development/human-development-report-2019--sustaining-natural-resources-for-.html](https://www.kh.undp.org/content/cambodia/en/home/library/human_development/human-development-report-2019--sustaining-natural-resources-for-.html) [Last retrieved 9/11/2021]; cf. Country Economy (n.d.). *Cambodia – Human Development Index – HDI*: <https://countryeconomy.com/hdi/cambodia> [Last retrieved 9/11/2021].

<sup>669</sup> Cf. UNDP (n.d.-c). *Human Development Reports. Cambodia*: <http://hdr.undp.org/en/countries/profiles/KHM> [Last retrieved 9/11/2021].

<sup>670</sup> Source: UNDP (2019), p. 29.

<sup>671</sup> Cf. UNDP (2019), pp. 3/27.

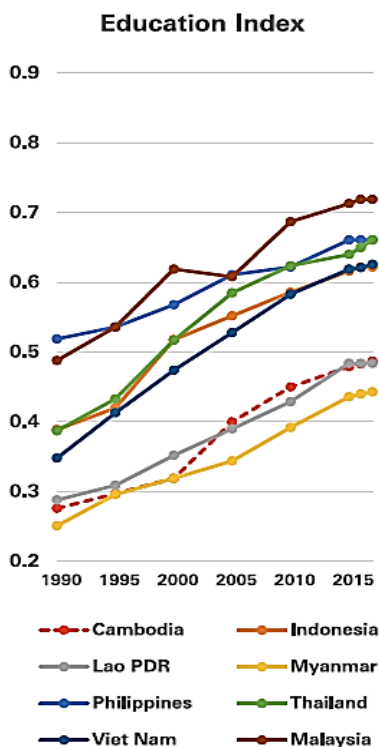


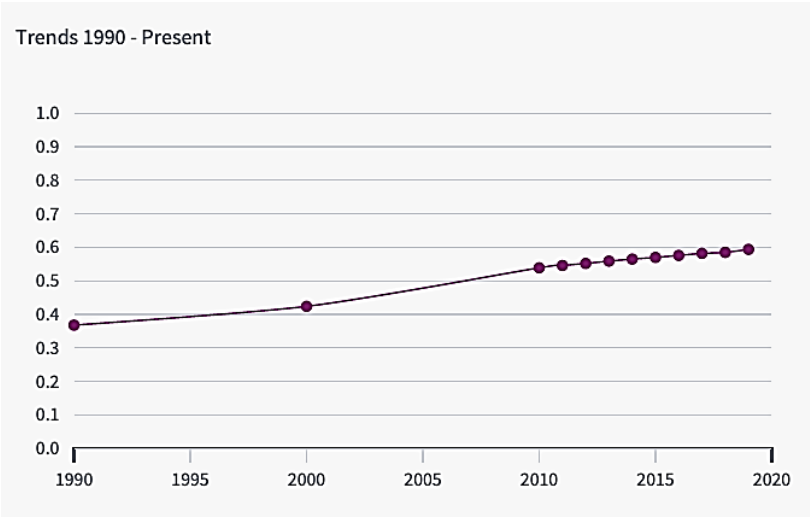
Figure 23: Education Index of Cambodia between 1990 and 2015<sup>672</sup>

The 2013 Cambodia Inter-Censal Population Survey identified that over 20% of the adult population in Cambodia was illiterate. For urban residents, the share is slightly smaller, but still at almost 10%.<sup>673</sup> In 2019, the ‘expected years of schooling’ reached 11.5 years. This value lies below the global average (12.7) and below that of medium human development countries (12.0). The ‘mean years of schooling’ stands at five years. As

<sup>672</sup> Source: UNDP (2019), p. 3.

<sup>673</sup> The World Bank published comparable literacy rates stating that in 2009 76% of Cambodians could read and write. In 2015, the share has increased to approximately 80%: cf. World Bank (2020, September). *Literacy Rate, Adult Total (% of People Ages 15 and Above)*. *ambodia* (Raw file for download): <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SE.ADT.LITR.ZS?end=2015&locations=KH&start=2007> [Last retrieved 9/11/2021].

Figure 24 illustrates, Cambodia’s HDI has improved steadily over the last decade. Inequality has also fallen reaching a low of 19% in 2017. A more balanced income distribution and wider access to health and education have been positively impacted Cambodia’s IHDl. <sup>674</sup>



**Figure 24: Human Development Indicator in Cambodia between 1990 and 2020** <sup>675</sup>

In 2012, BBC Media Action reported that internet access still lagged behind the soaring rise of penetration rates in the region. Neighboring Myanmar has overtaken Cambodia, with less than 10% of the population using the internet. The report identified costs and language as the two major obstacles for the stalling of the internet revolution in Cambodia. <sup>676</sup> Since then, internet usage has grown at a startling pace. Whereas in 2010 only

<sup>674</sup> Cf. UNDP (2019), p. 29; cf. UNDP (2020-a). *Human Development Report 2020. The Next Frontier: Human Development and the Anthropocene*. Cambodia: <http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/Country-Profiles/KHM.pdf> [Last retrieved 9/11/2021].

<sup>675</sup> Source: UNDP (n.d.-c).

<sup>676</sup> Cf. BBC Media Action (2012, August).

about 1% of the population used the internet, it reached 14% in 2014 and almost a third of Cambodians (32%) in 2017.<sup>677</sup>

The DAI value reached 0.39 in 2016, a slight increase since 2014. It is worth highlighting that the DAI People Sub-Index has grown by almost 10%, more than the business value. In contrast, the government's digital adoption has sunk. <sup>678</sup> (See Table 6)

**Table 6: Cambodia's Digital Adoption Index in 2014 and 2016** <sup>679</sup>

Year	Digital Adoption Index	DAI Business Sub-index	DAI People Sub-index	DAI Government Sub-index
2014	0,358745366	0,345100611	0,299321443	0,431814075
2016	0,397918463	0,413881034	0,388893604	0,39098075

A policy note from 2018 on Cambodia's digital adoption provides further insights: Figure 25 shows the country's DAI sub-indices compared to the world average. It becomes clear that Cambodia lags behind especially in the business and governmental sphere. Less than a quarter of Cambodian businesses have an online presence, which is far below the global median of 46%. Furthermore, the government lacks a regulatory framework or security standards for web services. Internationally, "Cambodia falls in the second quintile for online provision of government services." <sup>680</sup> The digital adoption sub-index for people has increased drastically. While internet penetration remained relatively low, with one of the lowest broadband access rates regionally, mobile internet access is on the rise. The report also points to low digital literacy rates and that "many users navigate

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<sup>677</sup> Cf. World Bank (n.d.-b). *Individuals Using the Internet (% of Population)* (Excel file for download): <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/IT.NET.USER.ZS?end=2019&start=2004> [Last retrieved 11/9/2021].

<sup>678</sup> Cf. World Bank (n.d.-a).

<sup>679</sup> Source: Based on raw data from World Bank (n.d.-a).

<sup>680</sup> World Bank (2018, July). *Benefiting from the Digital Economy. Cambodia Policy Note*, p. 6: <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/100841543598854492/pdf/128267-REVISED-Digital-Economy-web.pdf> [Last retrieved 9/11/2021].

exclusively through Facebook and are unlikely to fully exploit the potential of the World Wide Web.”<sup>681</sup>

As Figure 25 illustrates, the country remains at the lower end of the digital adoption spectrum compared to other countries in the East Asia and Pacific region, including Vietnam.

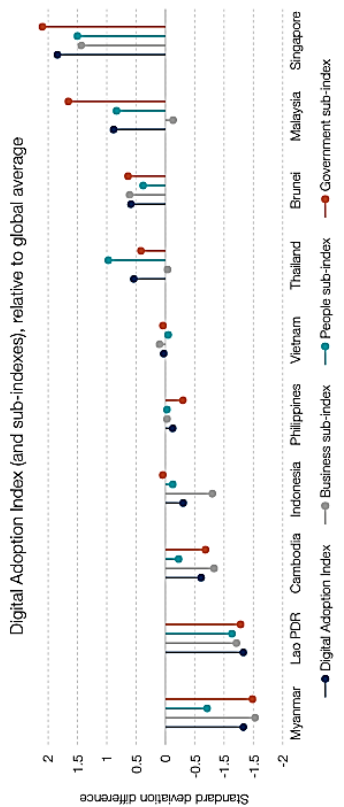


Figure 25: DAI Relative to Global Averages<sup>682</sup>

<sup>681</sup> Ibid., p. 10.

<sup>682</sup> Source: World Bank (2018, July), p. 9.

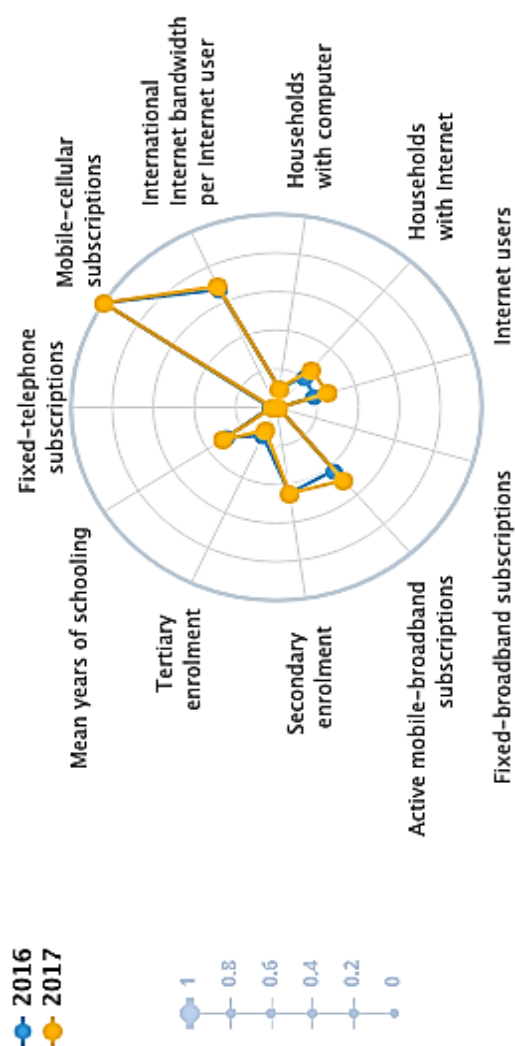


Figure 26: Sub-indices of ICT Development in Cambodia 2016 vs. 2017<sup>683</sup>

<sup>683</sup> Source: ITU (n.d.-b). *ICT Development Index 2017. Cambodia*: <https://www.itu.int/net4/ITU-D/idi/2017/index.html> - idi2017economytab&KHM [Last retrieved 9/11/2021].

Regarding the ICT development sub-indices, 26% of all households in Cambodia and the same per centage of individuals had internet access in 2017. This was still a relatively low number of individual internet users compared to Vietnam. It is worth highlighting that these numbers have begun to dramatically increase since then. Nonetheless, the focus here is on the year of data collection. Similarly, the share of Cambodians enrolled in tertiary education (13%) was rather small in 2017.<sup>684</sup> With regard to the IDI, Cambodia stayed at rank 128 out of a total of 176 nations with a value of 3.28 (compared to 3.04 in 2016), reflecting that access to digital technologies of individuals and households did not increased. Given the exponential relative growth of individuals using the internet between 2010 and 2018, this plateau is surprising.<sup>685</sup> In their country report, the ITU puts a spotlight on Cambodia's extremely competitive mobile market. Following the example of Vietnam, LTE technologies were introduced, allowing the country to "achieve a very high rate of mobile access with the cheapest mobile-broadband prices in the region."<sup>686</sup> Moreover, the price of low-end smartphones has also decreased throughout the region. The ITU estimated that in 2021 more than 12 million Cambodians, approximately 71%, have access to internet.<sup>687</sup> Cambodia has also witnessed a rising interest in tech startups.<sup>688</sup> In 2020, the country was expected to host South-east Asia's biggest digital tech conference Digital Cambodia.<sup>689</sup> Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the event was postponed.<sup>690</sup>

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<sup>684</sup> Cf. *ibid.*

<sup>685</sup> Cf. ITU (n.d.-a).

<sup>686</sup> ITU (2017), p. 34.

<sup>687</sup> Cf. Internet World Stats (n.d.-a).

<sup>688</sup> Cf. Chhorn, P. (2020, March 5). Digital 2020 Cambodia. Cambodia To Showcase Digital Growth Potential With 'Digital Cambodia 2020'. *Geeks in Cambodia*: <http://geeksincambodia.com/cambodia-to-showcase-digital-growth-potential-with-digital-cambodia-2020/> [Last retrieved 9/11/2021].

<sup>689</sup> Cf. Soh, J. (2017, February 9). Cambodia's 2017 Social Media & Digital Statistics. *Geeks in Cambodia*: <http://geeksincambodia.com/cambodias-2017-social-media-digital-statistics/> [Last retrieved 9/11/2021].

<sup>690</sup> Cf. Digital 2020 Cambodia: <https://www.digitalcambodia.com.kh/> [Last retrieved 9/11/2021].

#### 4.2.3.2 Media System and Journalistic Working Conditions

##### Media Landscape and Usage

In response to its ongoing democratic transformation and market liberalization after the peace agreements, Cambodia's media sector also began to open up. In the early 1990s, media outlets underwent a rapid and radical transformation process: In addition to infrastructure development, private media organizations entered the market, media consumption increased, and the diversity of media content grew. According to Clarke, by the second National Assembly elections in 1998, Cambodia counted approximately 200 officially registered news media outlets.<sup>691</sup> In the following years, however, media development slowed and only minor structural reforms were enacted.<sup>692</sup>

In terms of print media, the first French-language newspaper was established in Cambodia in 1922. In the 1930s, the first Khmer newspaper followed. Both papers had a rather limited circulation of approximately 5,000 copies targeted at colonial rulers and the Khmer elite. With Cambodia's independence from the French and Japanese occupation in the 1950s, newspaper consumption grew, and new opposition publications were established. Historically, the level of press freedom fluctuated according to the political situation, according to Ritter. Although newspapers were censored during the Vietnam war, the print sector continued to grow, reaching a circulation of 70,000 in the 1970s. During the Khmer Rouge regime, journalists were labeled across the board as oppositional regime critics; newspapers were shut down, and individual journalists murdered. After the end of the dictatorship, four new daily communist papers were established in the 1980s. Given the high levels of illiteracy (around 85%) and the lack of printing and distribution infrastructure, readership rates remained low. Only in the 1990s would private owners re-invented the print media sector.<sup>693</sup> According to the 2016 Cambodian Communication Review and data provided by the Ministry of Information, 242 Khmer-language and 35 foreign-language newspapers were registered in Phnom

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<sup>691</sup> Cf. Clarke, J. (2000). Training Journalists in an Emerging Democracy: The Case of Cambodia. *Asia Pacific Media Educator*, 8(January - June), p. 83.

<sup>692</sup> Cf. Ritter, M. (2008). Kambodschas Medien – Eine Einführung. *ASIEN* 107, 11-25.

<sup>693</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 15-18.



Penh in 2013.<sup>694</sup> Yet, only around 10% of all newspapers are produced and published regularly.<sup>695</sup> Moreover, in 2012, no more than 8% referred to newspapers as a source of information, likely due to high levels of illiteracy, especially in rural areas, and a general “lack of reading culture.”<sup>696</sup> A large proportion of Cambodian newspapers are also backed by the ruling party.<sup>697</sup> Cambodian journalists who participated in the Cambodian Center for Independent Media (CCIM) survey on independent media and journalistic working conditions in 2017 stated that *Cambodia Daily* was the most independent newspaper in the country. The *Phnom Penh Post*, a foreign English-language newspaper with a Khmer edition, was also deemed trustworthy.<sup>698</sup>

As for broadcast media, the first state-owned broadcaster was set up in the 1950s. Due to weak transmission, radio and TV are less popular than the 30 movie theaters in the country. The Khmer Rouge destroyed the national TV station in 1975, radio was used as tool for propaganda, and pop music and ‘Western information’ were prohibited. Later, during Vietnamese rule, broadcast media remained an instrument under the direct control of the Ministry of Propaganda and Information. In the 1980s, several TV stations re-opened, but it took another decade for TV to become a popular mass media.<sup>699</sup> UNCTAD Radio played a crucial role in the early 1990s, disseminating its program across all provinces and thus providing Cambodian’s with unbiased political information and facts about the political parties in the lead up to the first free elections in 1993.<sup>700</sup> Ten years later, there were 132 radio stations nationwide, 68 in Phnom Penh and 64

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<sup>694</sup> Cf. Sok, S. (2016). *Cambodian Communication Review 2016*. Phnom Penh, Cambodia: Department of Media and Communication/Cambodia Communication Institute/Royal University of Phnom Penh, p. 6: <https://dmc-cci.edu.kh/research/cambodian-communication-review-2016/> [Last retrieved 9/11/2021].

<sup>695</sup> Cf. Oldag, A. et al (2015), pp. 10/11.

<sup>696</sup> BBC Media Action (2012, August), p. 7.

<sup>697</sup> Cf. RWB (2018); cf. CCIM – Cambodian Center for Independent Media (2017). *Challenges for Independent Media*: <https://ccimcambodia.org/?p=413> [Last retrieved 9/11/2021]; cf. RWB (n.d.-c) *Media Ownership Monitor. Cambodia*: <https://www.mom.rsf.org/en/countries/cambodia/> [Last retrieved 9/11/2021].

<sup>698</sup> Cf. CCIM (2017), p. 5.

<sup>699</sup> Cf. Ritter, M. (2008), pp. 18/19.

<sup>700</sup> Cf. Oldag, A. et al (2015), p. 5.

in the provinces.<sup>701</sup> Oldag et al assert that radio was the most accessible media for rural Cambodians.<sup>702</sup> Although it has been losing in popularity recently, “radio is nevertheless considered vital in disseminating news to rural provinces.”<sup>703</sup> Today, the rural population is likely to have attained the same level of access to online media, in particular, given the high penetration rates for internet and mobile phones. In 2016, the Information Ministry counted 13 national broadcasters in Phnom Penh, one state broadcaster, two international broadcast relay stations and 69 local broadcast relay stations. In addition, there were two cable TV providers and almost 100 cable TV channels available.<sup>704</sup>

Television remains closely affiliated to the CPP. Both family and staff members of Prime Minister Hun Sen, as well as media tycoons well connected to the ruling party, own significant shares of the Cambodia TV sector. According to the Media Ownership Monitor (MOM),<sup>705</sup> seven out of the top ten TV stations were government-backed in 2017. Generally, financial data on media outlets is not easily accessible and media ownership transparency is low in Cambodia. RWB highlights the concentration in Cambodia’s media sector: Royal Group, Hun Mana, Seng Bunyen and Hang Maes are the four largest media corporations, which together have a reach of almost 85% of the population. All are run by government representatives or advisers.<sup>706</sup> Nice TV was launched with support from China. Another media group is concentrated around Say Chhu, spokesperson of the senate and the CPP’s vice-president, who own various radio channels, two TV stations and *Rasmei Kampuchea*, a leading local newspaper. In terms of print media, most Khmer-language newspapers are owned by CPP-affiliates. While newspapers are not as influential as TV and radio, *Koh Santeapheap*, the newspaper with the biggest circulation in 2017, was nonetheless mostly staffed with journalists employed by the Interior Ministry.<sup>707</sup> Notably, TV has the highest consumption rates: 96% of

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<sup>701</sup> Cf. Sok, S. (2016), p. 7; Note: More recent numbers were not available. After 2016, the DMC did not publish any reviews on the Cambodian media landscape.

<sup>702</sup> Cf. Oldag, A. et al (2015), p. 9.

<sup>703</sup> CCIM (2017), p. 4.

<sup>704</sup> Cf. Sok, S. (2016), p. 7.

<sup>705</sup> Cf. RWB (n.d.-c).

<sup>706</sup> Cf. RWB (2018), p. 13.

<sup>707</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, p. 13.

Cambodians watched television in 2017. Cambodian News Channel (CNC) is owned by the Cambodian Chamber of Commerce and employs the president of the UJFC. Hun Sen's wife owns Bayon TV, Cambodia's biggest TV channel, which has been taken over by their daughter Hun Mana.<sup>708</sup> RWB summarizes:

The combination of high viewer ratings, high level of ownership concentration, and direct political affiliation to the ruling party or government leaves no room for media pluralism. TV news consists above all of official ceremonies, speeches by the prime minister, and the inevitable military parades.<sup>709</sup>

The state broadcaster publishes law enforcement news, national security information and entertainment. Conversely, Sun TV, the outcome of a deal between the CPP and the opposition, kept struggling with administrative hurdles and the arrests of key staff in the process of setting up its premises and programs. The CNRP was permitted to set up an independent TV channel after the mass protests that followed the 2013 elections.<sup>710</sup> Not surprisingly, the CCIM survey revealed that Cambodian journalists viewed TV as the least independent media outlet.<sup>711</sup> At the time of a countrywide representative survey conducted by the BBG in 2014, which interviewing around 2000 Cambodians over 14 years of age, TV was the most popular news source (57%), followed by radio (42.9%), with only about a tenth relying on the internet for news. Hang Maes TV, Cambodian TV Network and Cambodian News Channel were Cambodians' top three information channels.<sup>712</sup>

Until 2015, the number of internet users was still below the share of those who favored TV as their source of news, as Figure 27 illustrates. However, by 2016, the numbers had reached a tipping point as internet overtook TV

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<sup>708</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, p. 14.

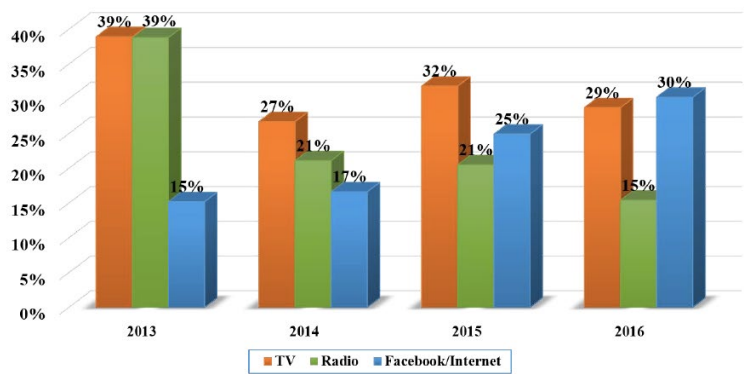
<sup>709</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 13.

<sup>710</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 14/15.

<sup>711</sup> Cf. CCIM (2017), p. 4.

<sup>712</sup> Cf. BBG (2014), p. 18.

for the first time, with almost one third of the population using it as a news source.<sup>713</sup>



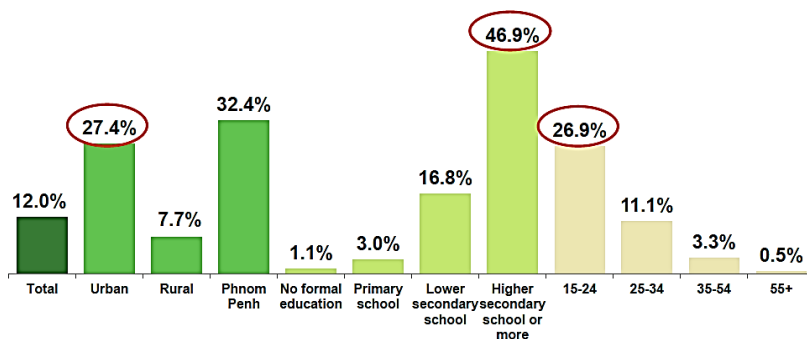
**Figure 27: News Sources in Cambodia between 2013 and 2016**<sup>714</sup>

Figure 28 shows that internet usage was significantly higher for Cambodians with higher secondary education (46.9%). More than a fourth of all internet users are between 15 and 24 years old (26.9%) and live in urban areas (27.4%). The percentage of urban internet users reaches climbs to 50% in Phnom Penh. These discrepancies are most likely related to higher literacy rates among the urban population.<sup>715</sup>

<sup>713</sup> Cf. Phong, K, Srou, L, Solá J. (2016, December). Mobile Phones and Internet Use in Cambodia. *Open Institute*, p. 19: <https://asiafoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/Mobile-Phones-and-Internet-Use-in-Cambodia-2016.pdf> [Last retrieved 9/11/2021].

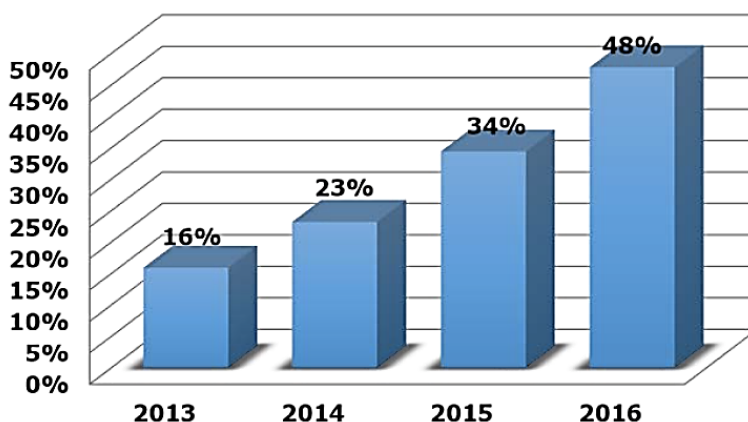
<sup>714</sup> Source: Ibid., p. 19.

<sup>715</sup> Cf. BBG (2014), p. 28.



**Figure 28: Young, Urban and Educated Are Online in Cambodia (2014)**<sup>716</sup>

As early as 2014, the BBG predicted that “Cambodia is a country on the cusp of rapid media change”<sup>717</sup> with internet users growing exponentially and Facebook establishing its dominance as the main social media platform. (See Figure 29)



**Figure 29: Facebook Usage in Cambodia between 2013 and 2016**<sup>718</sup>

<sup>716</sup> Source: Ibid., p. 28.

<sup>717</sup> BBG (2014), p. 37.

<sup>718</sup> Source: Phong, K. et al (2016, December), p. 16.

In 2016, Facebook was the primary news source for 75% of all internet users. The Open Institute predicted a continuous increase leading to a consolidation of the social networking site as the reliable news source.<sup>719</sup> Beyond Facebook, Instagram user numbers also grew in 2017. Soh points out that both the number of active social media users and those who access social media through their mobile phones has grown by 1.5 million to 4.9 million and 4.4. million respectively. These statistics can be considered a “testament to the country’s thrust to embrace the digital age.”<sup>720</sup> The number of smartphone users has risen significantly from one fifth in 2013 to almost half of the population (48%) in 2016, with an emphasis on urban residents (60%) compared to those living in rural areas (42%) (see Figure 30).<sup>721</sup>

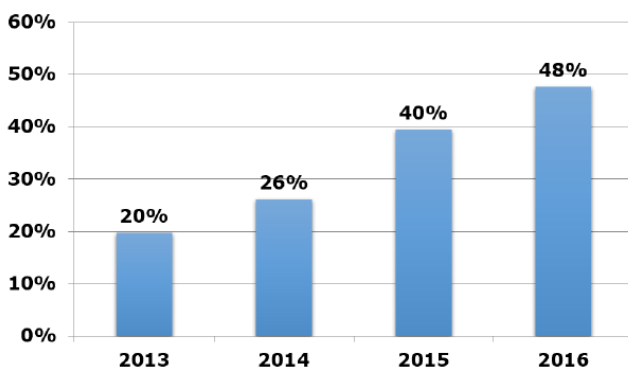


Figure 30: Smartphone Penetration in Cambodia between 2013 and 2016<sup>722</sup>

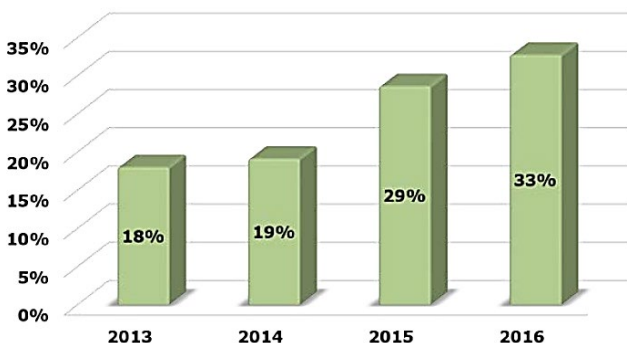
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<sup>719</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, p. 25.

<sup>720</sup> Soh, J. (2017, February 9).

<sup>721</sup> Cf. Phong, K. et al (2016, December), p. 9.

<sup>722</sup> Source: *Ibid.*, p. 9.



**Figure 31: Usage of Mobile Internet in Cambodia between 2013 and 2016**<sup>723</sup>

Figure 31 outlines the use of mobile internet, which has grown from 18% to a third of all Cambodians in the same period, likely spurred by the rising numbers of Khmer-enabled mobile phones, as pre-2013 devices, which were unable to display local language fonts, are replaced by new phones.<sup>724</sup> The Open Institute study also notes that Cambodians increasingly read online news stories and participate in public and private communication via their phones, whereas previously information was received passively via video or audio outlets – “a huge qualitative shift in a society in which, until recently, encouragement to read outside of school was almost entirely absent.”<sup>725</sup>

Cambodia’s media landscape has witnessed a radical digital transformation, offering both challenges and opportunities to traditional media outlets. TV stations have begun to publish some of their programs via Facebook Live Stream; radio stations – especially those under threat of being banned from the airwaves– have also begun to use online platforms. CCIM maintained that “print’s ongoing decline is counterbalanced by some newspapers’ relatively strong digital versions.”<sup>726</sup> For instance, *Koh Santepheap* is not only the most popular print newspaper, but also publishes one of the most frequently visited news websites. A vast array of news websites has emerged, including online versions of traditional

<sup>723</sup> Source: Ibid., p. 16.

<sup>724</sup> Cf. ibid., p. 26.

<sup>725</sup> Ibid., p. 25.

<sup>726</sup> CCIM (2017), p. 5.

newspapers and independent web-only media outlets such as *Thmey Thmey* and *Kley Kley*. In addition, *Cambodia Daily* has set up a digital-only version from abroad, *Voice of Democracy* (VOD) has continued to publish content through its website and RFA reached almost 5 million Facebook followers in 2017.<sup>727</sup> CCIM noted that “the digital sector was considered to have the potential to break up Cambodia’s concentration of media ownership in the hands of a few wealthy, government-linked businesspeople.”<sup>728</sup> Media choice has certainly had an impact on political votes in Cambodia: In 2016, when the opposition party was still active, more than half of those who preferred TV as a news source indicated that they would vote for the CPP in the next elections, whereas 56% Facebook users stated that their vote was going to the CNRP.<sup>729</sup>

At the same time, political elites have not been idle. Hun Sen was among the eight most followed world leaders on Facebook in 2017, alongside Donald Trump and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Notably, the Cambodian prime minister has been accused of using international ‘click farms’ to generate new followers on Facebook.<sup>730</sup> Although citizen journalists and bloggers<sup>731</sup> have certainly made a substantial contribution to the social media landscape in Cambodia, Facebook has put a stranglehold on the success of these alternative voices by trialing the Explore feed function in Cambodia and five other countries. As part of this new set-up, the regular Newsfeed is limited to media organizations that pay to have their content featured and posted by Facebook friends. All other news content is pushed to the secondary Explore feed. RWB has called on the company to immediately remove the Explore feed, as independent news outlets were pushed out to the detriment of independent media in Cambodia. The case of exiled opposition leader Sam Rainsy, whose Facebook follower numbers have fallen by 25% since the Explore feed was introduced, exemplifies the drastic consequences for independent voices. *Phnom Penh Post*’s Khmer-language Facebook readership has also decreased by 45%.

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<sup>727</sup> Cf. RWB (2018), p. 20.

<sup>728</sup> CCIM (2017), p. 4.

<sup>729</sup> Cf. RWB (2018), p. 22.

<sup>730</sup> Cf. RWB (2018), p. 23.

<sup>731</sup> Especially video bloggers such as Facebook star Catherine Harry who touched taboo topics and reached a large viewership instantly.



Furthermore, the fate of citizen journalists depends heavily on the company's policies and general decision-making.<sup>732</sup>

### **Media Regulation and Control**

According to RWB, the high concentration of media ownership reflects deficiencies in the legal and regulatory frameworks of Cambodia's media system.<sup>733</sup> Oldag et al also draw attention to media regulation as a necessary component that allows journalists to put their professional values into practice: "Journalists need 'democratic air' to breathe."<sup>734</sup> There is no doubt that the Khmer Rouge regime left its mark on the country, and that Cambodia still lacks a democratic media culture long after the 1991 UN Peace Agreement.<sup>735</sup> In 1995, the Cambodian Law on the Press came into effect, including guarantees of media freedom based on democratic principles and the Constitution's Article 41 on 'Freedom of Expression.' Compared to its equivalents in Vietnam, Singapore and Malaysia, the media law is rather progressive and less restrictive. Even so, the Cambodian law consists of some "problematic precisions that, through narrow interpretation, could lead to limitations of press freedom."<sup>736</sup> Article 12, in particular represents a loophole for the government, as it requires Cambodians to safeguard national stability and security. Moreover, Article 17 outlines the 'Competition Clause,' which requires that one legal entity or individual can only own a maximum of two newspapers, applies only to the print sector and thus leaves broadcast media unrestricted in terms of ownership. A further legal mechanism restricting journalistic work is the Cambodian penal code itself. The code was enacted in 2010 and prohibits public insult, incitement of social disturbance and crime, and defamation, a category that is commonly used to criminalize critical reporting and is also mentioned in the Press Law. Taken together, the different articles, laws and codes reveal a great number of inconsistencies with respect to their application, which

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<sup>732</sup> Cf. RWB (2018), p. 23; cf. Paviour, B. (2017, October 31). What a Facebook Experiment Did to News in Cambodia, *BBC*: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-41801071> [Last retrieved 9/11/2021].

<sup>733</sup> Cf. RWB (n.d.-b).

<sup>734</sup> Oldag, A. et al (2015), p. 3.

<sup>735</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4.

<sup>736</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5.

impedes the media from establishing itself as a ‘fourth estate’ within democratic transformation process.<sup>737</sup> Oldag et al also point out that journalists have added to their poor reputation by accepting bribes in exchange for favorable reporting. The root causes of this professional misbehavior are closely linked to low salaries on the one hand, and a culture of corruption “as a minor offence or gentleman’s crime”<sup>738</sup> on the other.

A further issue is the lack of collaboration between authorities and journalists, especially in the field of political reporting. Press offices of ministries do not have qualified staff and information requests are not responded to or have long processing times. In addition, the government does not provide regular press conferences which would allow for a transparent way means of releasing and discussing political decisions.<sup>739</sup> Similarly, instead of an independent authority, the Ministry of Information grants and cancels media licenses in often untransparent ways. For the licensing of broadcasting stations, the Information Ministry depends on the investment law, which limits foreign investments to less than 50% for broadcast and 20% for print media. Party affiliation or at least affinity is a further criterion in addition to reach and financial viability.<sup>740</sup>

The same ministry also allocates press passes to individual journalists based on relevant education, without specifying what education is considered relevant. Moreover, press passes are sold on the black market. The government has been criticized for the arbitrary withdrawal of licenses.<sup>741</sup> According to RWB, former RFA and *Cambodia Daily* reporters were denied press passes to work as freelance journalists for alternative media organizations.<sup>742</sup> Furthermore, reporters cannot prove their identity to authorities, especially the police, when they are attacked or threatened, since there is no official system of accreditation. Independent and unrestricted reporting on public protests is thus not possible, which in turn has led to self-censorship. The increasing crackdowns on independent media,

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<sup>737</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 5-7.

<sup>738</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7.

<sup>739</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, p. 7.

<sup>740</sup> Cf. Ritter, M. (2015), p. 19.

<sup>741</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, p. 16.

<sup>742</sup> Cf. RWB (2018), pp. 9/10.

attacks on individual journalists and arrests of independent voices have overshadowed the country's outlook.

The title of the most recent country review by Reporters Without Borders – *Cambodia: The Independent Press in Ruins*<sup>743</sup> – sums up the state of media freedom, which has continued to deteriorate further. Around the Commune Council elections in 2017, Cambodia witnesses a series of forced closures of independent media outlets; the number of journalists who were intimidated, violently attacked or arrested skyrocketed. As an outcome of this environment of fear and brutality, self-censorship rose sharply. At the same time, the CPP government sharpened its legal and economic control mechanisms and tightened internet control. RWB estimates that at least 25 broadcasters and print outlets were shut or taken off the air. According to the CCIM, radio was the hardest hit in 2017 by government crackdowns: A total of 21 radio stations were taken off the air by authorities, including the CNRP's broadcast.<sup>744</sup> In addition, Hun Sen directly addressed journalists from the two independent outlets RFA and *Cambodian Daily* during a press conference at the ASEA World Economic Forum held in Phnom Penh in May 2017. There he accused both organizations of working against the government and serving foreign institutions. Despite these threats, he faced no repercussions. According to RWB, Hun Sen "left no doubt as to which two media outlets were the regime's main adversaries."<sup>745</sup>

Resembling the simplistic story line of a political thriller, the following events did not come as a surprise: The *Cambodia Daily* was founded in 1993, the year of the first democratic elections. By September 2017, it was accused of not having paid a six million dollar tax bill and consequently had to shut down its operations. The headline of its last edition aptly summarizes the end of a democratic transition process, which the newspaper had been covering over more than 20 years: "Descent into outright dictatorship."<sup>746</sup> In August 2017, the Women's Media Center of Cambodia (WMC) and Mohanokor, two local radio stations, were told to shutter their radio programs and accused of breaching their licensing agreement.

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<sup>743</sup> Cf. *ibid.*

<sup>744</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 4/6; cf. CCIM (2017), p. 4.

<sup>745</sup> RWB (2018), p. 4.

<sup>746</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, p. 5.

Several other stations were shut down because they had been relaying Voice of America (VOA) and RFA programming; both were funded by the United States and had previously been on the government's radar, receiving threats as early as 2012. With this purge, the authorities intentionally re-created an atmosphere of anxiety among local journalists in a country that had experienced the Khmer Rouge regime, one of the most brutal dictatorships in the region and beyond: "Fear of reprisals for being overly critical of the authorities is deeply anchored in the journalistic culture."<sup>747</sup> Since the murder of Kem Ley in July 2016, several media professionals have faced prison sentences, including Australian filmmaker James Rick-etson and former journalists of the *Cambodia Daily*, who were charged for inciting crime. RFA reporters were also arrested after being accused of foreign espionage that threatened national security.<sup>748</sup>

A further means of media control consists of refusing access to public spaces and court hearings. In 2017, the Information Ministry was considering a new Access to Information Law in collaboration with UNESCO. However, 65% of the journalists surveyed by CCIM had no hope that the law would mean any improvement, since access to governmental information was limited depending on the type of document requested; for instance, information on land sales and court documents were especially hard to access.<sup>749</sup>

As an outcome of this environment of fear, self-censorship increased, including at foreign-owned media outlets such as the *Phnom Penh Post* and *Radio France Internationale* (RFI). While the *Phnom Penh Post* was well-funded by its Australian owners until 2018,<sup>750</sup> *Cambodia Daily* relied on the support of the NGO World Assistance, which RWB identified as a weak point in light of the tax bill it could not pay. The report highlights a new Law on Associations and NGOs (LANGO) promulgated in 2015. The new legislation has been criticized for its inconsistencies, which allows

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<sup>747</sup> Ibid., p. 7.

<sup>748</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, p. 8.

<sup>749</sup> CCIM (2017), p. 13.

<sup>750</sup> In May 2018, the *Phnom Penh Post* was taken over by Malaysian investors allegedly holding close ties to Hun Sen: Chhor, A. (2018, May 22). The Death of the Free Press in Cambodia, *Freedom House*: <https://freedomhouse.org/article/death-press-freedom-cambodia> [Last retrieved 9/11/2021].

the authorities to easily sanction NGOs. This dynamic also directly affected CCIM, the NGO that has run VOD since 2003. The radio stations reach almost 8 million listeners, especially in the provinces. As an advocate for human rights, it received funding from the European Union (EU) and was among the outlets shut down in 2017. Even though CCIM shifted to the digital sphere with VODHotNews and online TV news, the staff feared further reprimands and restrictions.<sup>751</sup>

RWB summarizes the situation by saying that “the Cambodian government has partly succeeded in its aim of silencing all criticism in order to ensure that it wins the next general elections.”<sup>752</sup> While some have highlighted the persistent divide between more or less independent outlets and government-backed media, and some professional and citizen journalists continue to challenge CPP-rule despite rising restrictions, others claim that Cambodia’s media is mostly complying and practicing self-censorship, while the CPP continues to disseminate its propaganda.<sup>753</sup> Journalists are equally split: the CCIM survey reveals those who were hopeful in response to the growing significance of the internet as a news source, and those who were concerned about opinion and information sharing through social media. This skepticism might be related to the fact that in 2017 at least seven individuals were arrested for publishing their viewpoints on Facebook. Overall, Figure 32 shows that almost half (47%) of the interviewees said they received threats at least once in 2017, a significant increase from 29% in 2015.

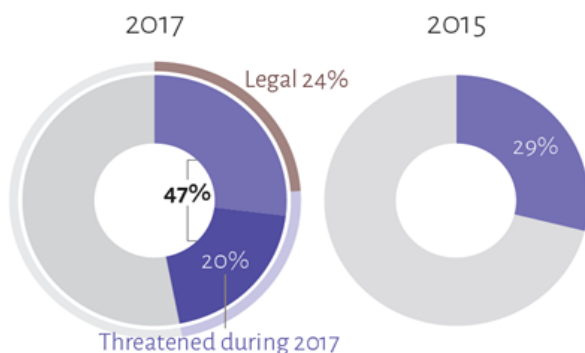
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<sup>751</sup> Cf. CCIM (2017), pp. 10/11.

<sup>752</sup> Cf. RWB (2018), p. 12.

<sup>753</sup> Cf. CCIM (2017), p. 9; cf. Puddington, A. (2017), p. 85.

## HAVE YOU EVER BEEN THREATENED? PHYSICALLY/LEGALLY/VERBALLY



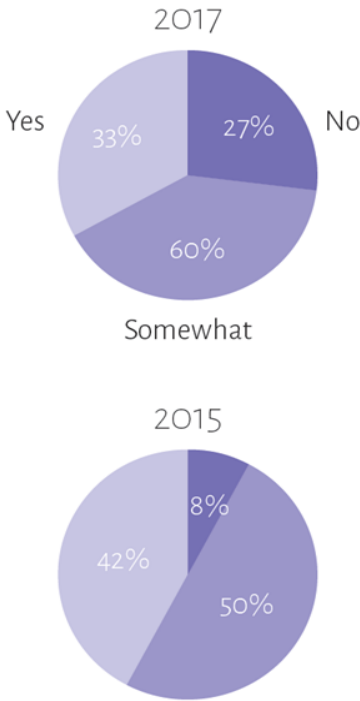
**Figure 32: Physical, Verbal and Legal Attacks of Cambodian Journalists in 2017**<sup>754</sup>

While in 2015, 58% of the respondents indicated that they did not “feel completely free to report on all subjects without fear of interference or repercussions,”<sup>755</sup> in 2017 that share reached 87%. (See Figure 33).

<sup>754</sup> Source: CCIM (2017), p. 6.

<sup>755</sup> CCIM (2017), p. 8.

**Do you feel free to report on all subjects without interference or fear of repercussions?**



**Figure 33: Freedom to Report Without Interference and Fear in 2017<sup>756</sup>**

In addition, fear of repression has grown among sources. The CCIM survey also found that one of the most difficult issues to cover in Cambodia was corruption. Journalists working for CPP-aligned media outlets acknowledged the limitations on their journalistic work, indicating a certain degree of awareness. No more than 17% of interviewees working for state-supported media thought their organization was free from political

<sup>756</sup> Source: Ibid., p. 8.

or business influences, whereas 90% of those working for independent outlets believed so.<sup>757</sup> While only 7% of journalists working for government-affiliated media outlets were attacked verbally or physically in 2017, that number was more than double (20%) for journalists reporting for independent news organizations.<sup>758</sup> With regard to online news and information, CCIM states that reporting on social media has become common practice for Cambodian media: “The burgeoning amount of content online, however, has split the opinion of journalists.”<sup>759</sup> While over half of all survey participants believed that social media had a positive effect on media freedom, almost 40% thought the opposite. Similarly, there is no clear answer about the impact of online information sources on the journalistic quality of online content, as Figure 34 reveals.



**Figure 34: Impact of Online Information Sources in 2017<sup>760</sup>**

<sup>757</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, p. 9.  
<sup>758</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, p. 8.  
<sup>759</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 10.  
<sup>760</sup> Source: *Ibid.*, p. 10.



A further issue highlighted by CCIM is that "anonymous and unverified stories have spread quickly on websites and Facebook."<sup>761</sup> Those critiquing the government on social media have been confronted with charges and arrests for defamation and incitement. The rising significance of online and social media as alternative sources of more or less trustworthy information has been a challenge for the government, since existing measures such as censorship and crackdowns have proven less effective than for traditional broadcast and print media.<sup>762</sup> In reaction, the CPP tightened its control over the internet in 2017. The Freedom on the Net Report 2017 country report for Cambodia outlines: "Criminal charges in relation to Facebook posts, relatively uncommon just two years ago, appear to be increasing in advance of 2018 elections and were used to punish the political opposition."<sup>763</sup> In particular, two opposition members were imprisoned for content shared on the social media platform. Moreover, the email and social media accounts of journalists and activists were hacked. Freedom House reported that before 2017, there were no internet or mobile network shutdowns and access to social media platforms including Facebook, YouTube and Twitter remained unrestricted. Yet, individual bloggers allegedly supporting the opposition were blocked. Generally, "content removal remains difficult to assess, as the process is unofficial and nontransparent."<sup>764</sup> Censorship measures also remain opaque, "apparently based on informal communications between government officials and service providers."<sup>765</sup>

Freedom of speech seems to be shrinking online. While social media had meant a certain degree of liberation for Cambodians in an analog media environment controlled by the ruling CPP, the hope for more diversity in media content online was shattered in the second half of 2017 and continuously alongside the general elections in 2018.<sup>766</sup> In terms of legal internet restrictions, the Hun Sen government released a decree that obliged

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<sup>761</sup> Ibid., p. 10.

<sup>762</sup> RWB (2018), p. 21.

<sup>763</sup> Freedom House (2017-a). *Freedom on the Net 2017. Cambodia*: <https://freedomhouse.org/country/cambodia/freedom-net/2017> [Last retrieved 9/11/2021].

<sup>764</sup> Ibid.

<sup>765</sup> Ibid.

<sup>766</sup> Cf. CCIM (2020). *Challenges for Independent Media*, p. 4: <https://ccimcambodia.org/?p=5394> [Last retrieved 9/11/2021].

cyber-café to set up video surveillance as early as 2012. A year later, a draft cybercrime law outraged civil society organizations and the general public. Even though it was officially dropped in late 2014, rumors about the government planning to install surveillance technology through ISPs and mobile phone networks continued to spread.<sup>767</sup> The Freedom on the Net 2017 report states that online surveillance in Cambodia was limited due to lack of technological ability. However, security and privacy could easily be undermined, based on the 2015 Telecommunication Law. Especially Article 6 provides the Ministry of Post and Telecommunication with the option to request service data from all telecommunications operators. In addition, Article 97 allows authorities to conduct secret surveillance.<sup>768</sup>

Turning to journalistic content, the Fresh News phenomenon cannot be ignored. As the CPP's news agency, Agence Kampuchea Press, was visibly losing in influence, the government decided to establish the website Fresh News, likely to more effectively discredit political opponents. Fresh News continues to deny any connections to the government. Yet, as a matter of fact, the website disseminated anonymous letters and opinion pieces with anti-opposition perspectives and conspiracy theories about foreign plans to topple the Hun Sen government. RWB sees parallels to the media policies and control mechanisms enacted by the Chinese Communist government in reaction to the growth of the digital sphere. Regional experts assume that the CPP has received guidance in setting up a pro-government army of digital commentators.<sup>769</sup> RWB describes the state's communication strategy as follows:

The recipe is more or less the same every day: draw attention to the problems in other countries in order to discredit those who would change things in Cambodia; attack all forms of opposition as a potential danger to Cambodia's stability; and criticize the United States as the mastermind of the color revolution that would try to topple the government and create chaos.<sup>770</sup>

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<sup>767</sup> Cf. CCIM (2017), p. 10; cf. RWB (2018), p. 19; cf. Freedom House (2017-a).

<sup>768</sup> Cf. *ibid.*

<sup>769</sup> Cf. RWB (2018), pp. 16/17.

<sup>770</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 17.

Fresh News, the RWB posits, does not live up to a standard of journalistic ethics, but has become the country's leading "fake news factory."<sup>771</sup> The website played a key role in breaking the news on the arrest of CNRP leader Kem Sokha in September 2017. One month earlier, Fresh News published *Cambodia Daily's* tax bill. By 2017, Fresh News had already two million readers. Norén-Nilson labels Fresh News an "authoritarian innovation"<sup>772</sup> scrutinizing its ambiguous role as a private, but government-controlled news outlet.

Above all, the widespread closures of independent media outlets in 2017 have meant that many Cambodian journalists dedicated to independent reporting lost their jobs from one day to the next. Before the National Assembly elections scheduled for 2018, the CPP focused its attention on the digital sphere and the government imposed new directives on online platforms. Cambodians deemed to be spreading fake news affecting national stability and security could face criminal charges. The regulation enabled authorities to shut down websites easily. It made immediate use of this option only a few hours before the vote, when access to 17 independent online media was blocked.<sup>773</sup> Furthermore, the National Electoral Commission (NEC) introduced a code of conduct for journalists reporting on the poll to prevent them from scrutinizing the electoral process and its results.<sup>774</sup> It is also worth mentioning that prior to the parliamentary vote in 2018, the National Assembly unanimously passed *lés majesté* laws. On the grounds of this legislation, anyone allegedly insulting the king or the royal family can be prosecuted and imprisoned for five years.<sup>775</sup>

Under these circumstances, it is anything but surprising that a vast majority of Cambodian journalists and bloggers expressed security concerns

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<sup>771</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, p. 18.

<sup>772</sup> Norén-Nilson, A. (2021). Fresh News, Innovative News: Popularizing Cambodia's Authoritarian Turn. *Critical Asian Studies*, 53(1), 89-108.

<sup>773</sup> Cf. Handley, E. (2018, July 28). Cambodia Blocks 17 Media Websites Before Vote. *Aljazeera*: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/7/28/cambodia-blocks-17-media-websites-before-vote> [Last retrieved 9/11/2021].

<sup>774</sup> Cf. Pekkonen, S, Sanomat, H. (2018, July 13). Cambodia Media Stifled ahead of Elections. *International Press Institute*: <https://ipi.media/cambodia-media-stifled-ahead-of-elections/> [Last retrieved 9/11/2021].

<sup>775</sup> Cf. IFJ (n.d.-a). *Charting Cambodia's Declining Press Freedom*: <https://www.ifj.org/actions/ifj-campaigns/charting-cambodias-declining-press-freedom.html> [Last retrieved 9/11/2021].

in 2018, as Figure 35 highlights. The perceived threats are manifold, with fear of arrest and detainment by authorities leading at 31%, followed by poor wages, censorship and job loss or reprimands. Notably, cyberattacks and online harassment still ranked relatively low in 2018.

In addition to the government's attempt to tighten its control over the internet and growing concerns over fake news, a majority of 57.94% of journalists interviewed by the CCIM in 2020 have experienced psychological pressure. Self-censorship also continues to pose a threat to independent media in Cambodia. A vast majority of more than 80% stated they have censored their own reporting due to the current political situation. Almost 70% practiced self-censorship out of fear of being accused of defamation under the current law. Furthermore, similar percentages of journalists in Cambodia are concerned about reporting on sensitive topics such as human rights abuses (80%), political issues (85%), the exploitation of natural resources (85%) and cases of impunity (76%).<sup>776</sup> In early 2020, Hun Sen took the COVID-19 pandemic as a further excuse to arrest and attack political opponents, accusing them of spreading fake news.<sup>777</sup> Crackdowns have also continued. RWB reports that over 20 newspapers have been closed down in the last five years.<sup>778</sup>

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<sup>776</sup> Cf. CCIM (2020), p. 9.

<sup>777</sup> Cf. Rother, S. (2020, October 26).

<sup>778</sup> Cf. RWB (2021, June 28). *At Least 22 Newspapers 'Murdered' in the Past Five Years*: <https://rsf.org/en/news/least-22-newspapers-murdered-past-five-years> [Last retrieved 9/11/2021].

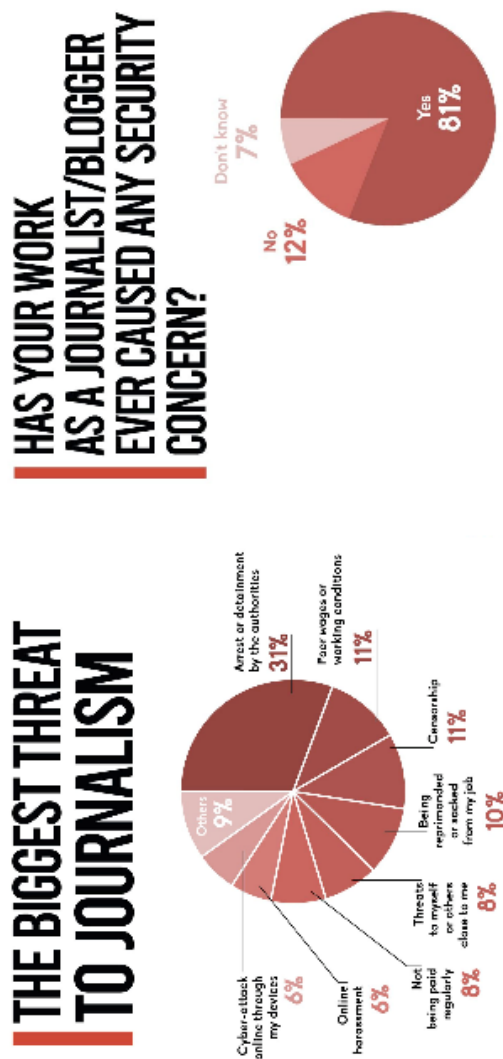


Figure 35: Threats and Security Concerns for Cambodian Journalist <sup>779</sup>

<sup>779</sup> Source: IFJ (n.d.-a).

While this analysis focuses on the years before and shortly after data collection in early 2017, the continuous rise of internet and social media usage cannot be ignored. The numbers continued to soar in recent years: Facebook reached 8.8 million users in 2019;<sup>780</sup> the number of mobile internet users exceeded all predictions, passing the 17 million mark in early 2021. This equals almost 100% of the current population.<sup>781</sup> In contrast to this growth in users, Cambodia's Press Freedom Index has been on the decline for several years. Whereas in 2017 the country ranked 132 out of 180 countries, it dropped to 144 in 2021. RWB describes the situation in Cambodia as "very serious."<sup>782</sup> The Freedom on the Net Index by Freedom House classifies Cambodia as "partially free." In 2020, reports about coordinated cyber troops and a new state of emergency law have become a cause for concerns with respect to the future of unrestricted internet access.<sup>783</sup> The latest effort to stifle a free media is a planned National Internet Gateway following the Chinese example that will "enable the government to increase online surveillance, censorship, and control of the internet that will seriously infringe on rights to free expression and privacy."<sup>784</sup> Not surprisingly, Cambodia's prime minister has been named one of the enemies of worldwide press freedom in 2021.<sup>785</sup>

#### 4.2.3.3 History and Evolution of Academic Journalism Education

The trauma of the Khmer Rouge genocide, rising political tensions and the subsequent restrictions and repression in recent years have deeply marked journalistic professionalization in Cambodia. The evolution of the

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<sup>780</sup> Cf. Ang, C. (2019, July 16). Cambodia's 2019 Social Media & Digital Statistics. *Geeks in Cambodia*: <http://geeksincambodia.com/cambodias-2019-social-media-digital-statistics/> [Last retrieved 9/11/2021].

<sup>781</sup> Cf. TRC – Telecommunication Regulator of Cambodia (n.d.). *Internet Subscribers*: <https://www.trc.gov.kh/en/internet-subscribers/> [Last retrieved 9/11/2021].

<sup>782</sup> Cf. RWB (n.d.-a). *Cambodia*: <https://rsf.org/en/cambodia> [Last retrieved 9/11/2021].

<sup>783</sup> Cf. Freedom House (2020-a). *Freedom on the Net 2020. Cambodia*: <https://freedomhouse.org/country/cambodia/freedom-net/2020> [Last retrieved 9/11/2021].

<sup>784</sup> Human Rights Watch (2021, February 18). *Cambodia: Internet Censorship, Control, Expanded*; cf. Thul, P. C. (2021, February 17). Cambodia Adopts China-Style Internet Gateway Amid Opposition Crackdown. *Reuters*: <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-cambodia-internet-idUSKBN2AH1CZ> [Last retrieved 9/11/2021].

<sup>785</sup> Cf. Reporter ohne Grenzen (2021). *Feindinnen und Feinde der Pressefreiheit 2021*: [http://www.reporter-ohne-grenzen.de/fileadmin/Redaktion/Downloads/Feinde\\_der\\_Pressefreiheit/RSF\\_Feinde\\_der\\_Pressefreiheit\\_2021.pdf](http://www.reporter-ohne-grenzen.de/fileadmin/Redaktion/Downloads/Feinde_der_Pressefreiheit/RSF_Feinde_der_Pressefreiheit_2021.pdf) [Last retrieved 9/11/2021].

country's journalism and journalism education does not date back that far: From the 1950s, under King Norodom Sihanouk, until the end of the Khmer Republic in 1975, journalists experienced few restrictions and the profession prospered. In stark contrast to the situation in Vietnam, where journalists continue to be considered servants of the state, Cambodian journalists were targeted as soon as the Khmer Rouge came into power in 1975. As enemies of the state, a large number of them lost their lives. According to some estimates, only ten journalists survived the genocide.<sup>786</sup> Very few decided not to continue to practice their profession. Journalists working in the People's Republic of Kampuchea were thus completely new to the job, without any professional experience, and unable to draw on the knowledge of senior colleagues.

Clarke identifies the 1991 Paris Peace Accords as another major turning point and, more importantly, a fresh start for the journalistic professionalization in Cambodia. As the only country in the region at that time transitioning from a communist to a democratic system, the peace agreement was an attempt to bring democracy and freedom of expression to Cambodia. Until then, the media had been run and controlled directly by the regime, following a Soviet model similar to the set-up in Vietnam, China and other countries in the region.<sup>787</sup>

Another parallel development, in comparison to Vietnam, was the evidence of French influence in Cambodia. Additionally, Clarke exposes the influence of a wide range of international organizations that provided consulting, training and financial support to Cambodian journalism programs both in the academic and non-academic realm. The 1990s were also marked by a rapid and large-scale emergence of private news media outlets. The demand for journalism training rose equally quickly as the number of newspapers, radio and TV stations flourished. Yet the exponential growth of free media did not automatically entail the development of professional and ethical values at the same speed and to the same extent. Due to limited local funding, the international community, including both non-governmental and governmental organizations, stepped in to provide short-term training courses focusing on basic journalistic skills. UNESCO

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<sup>786</sup> Cf. Oldag, A. et al (2015), p. 4.

<sup>787</sup> Cf. Clarke, J. (2000).

soon took the lead in coordinating the aid sector's activities in the field of media and made large-scale journalism training possible.

In 1994, the UN recommended the foundation of an academic journalism degree program. The French government had initiated a journalism course at the Royal University of Phnom Penh (RUPP) conducted in French, targeting working professionals as early as 1992. However, shortly thereafter the program became part of the French program in the Language Department, offering only 10 to 15 graduates a year the possibility to graduate with a major in journalism. Several years later, in 2001, the Department of Media and Communication (DMC) was founded at the RUPP with support of the German Konrad Adenauer Foundation (KAS).<sup>788</sup> According to a report issued by KAS, the DMC is the only institution in Cambodia which can live up to international quality standards of journalism education.<sup>789</sup> Today, it remains the main journalism school and the only academic degree program in the country, offering a Bachelor of Arts in Media Management. The program accepts around 30 journalism students per year, thus graduating a relatively small number of academically trained journalists.<sup>790</sup>

Of the journalists surveyed as part of the 2017 CCIM, three quarters attended university at some stage in their lives. The majority studied journalism and media, others law or English as a foreign language.<sup>791</sup> In addition to international aid organizations providing short-courses and capacity building workshops on a range of topics of interest to local journalists, numerous training programs have been developed by party-affiliated journalism associations and the Information Ministry.<sup>792</sup> Supported by international organizations such as KAS from 2000 to 2017, the Club of Cambodian Journalists (CCJ) is the main professional association for

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<sup>788</sup> Cf. Clarke, J. (2005). International Aid and the News Sector in Cambodia. In Romano, A, Bromley, M.(eds.) *Journalism and Democracy in Asia* (pp. 41-53). London, U.K.: Routledge; cf. Clarke, J. (2010). Cambodia: Educating Journalists in a World of Poverty, Corruption and Power Abuse. In Josephi, B. (ed.) *Journalism Education in Countries with Limited Press Freedom* (pp. 54 - 70). New York, U.S.A.: Peter Lang Publishing.

<sup>789</sup> Cf. Oldag, A. et al (2015), p. 6.

<sup>790</sup> Department of Media and Communication: <http://dmc-cci.edu.kh/> [Last retrieved 9/11/2021].

<sup>791</sup> Cf. CCIM (2017), p. 11.

<sup>792</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, p. 2.



journalists in the country, run by a CPP affiliate who is also editor-in-chief of a government-backed TV station run by a CPP senator.

In 2016, the Interior Ministry launched the Union of Journalist Federations of Cambodia UJFC, allegedly building up a 1000-member base. Both organizations aim to promote quality journalism and press freedom. The 2017 CCIM quotes Huy Vannak, president of the UJFC, who calls on journalists to follow the directive of their superiors and to avoid too much political reporting as “too much about politics [...] brings people too much hardship.”<sup>793</sup> Vannak, who previously worked in the Information Ministry and was head of news at the *Cambodian Television Network* (CTN) at the time, expressed his admiration for Singapore’s media regulations, which are known for creating a highly restrictive media environment. Notably, its Press Freedom Index is ranked even lower than Cambodia’s.

In 2020, the Cambodian Journalists Alliance Association (CamboJA) was founded as “the first independent membership-based network of journalists and media professionals in Cambodia.”<sup>794</sup> It brings together former *Cambodia Daily* and *Phnom Penh Post* journalists as in an independent body to promote professional journalism, access to information, and media freedom in an increasingly restrictive environment. Apart from CamboJA News, which produces investigative and in-depth reports, the association conducts research and monitors the media landscape in Cambodia. In addition, they provide capacity building and training to practicing journalists.<sup>795</sup>

In 2017, the year of data collection, 60% of the journalists surveyed by CCIM stated that they had taken part in four or more professional training workshops since they have started working.<sup>796</sup> In prior surveys, a lack of journalistic training and education was raised as a key challenge.<sup>797</sup> In

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<sup>793</sup> CCIM (2017), p. 11.

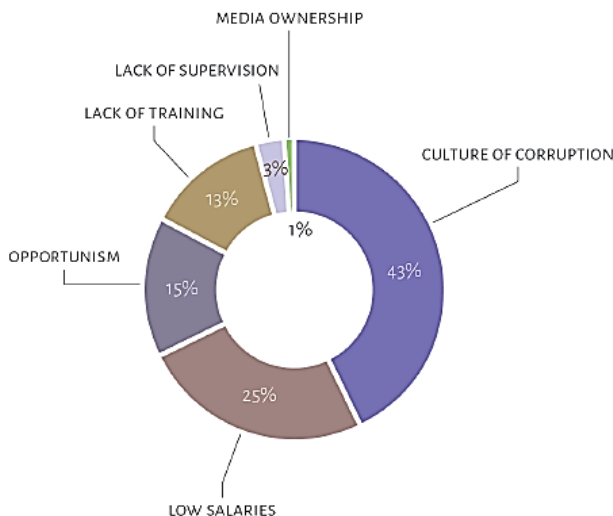
<sup>794</sup> CamboJa – Cambodian Journalists Association (n.d.-a). *Welcome to CamboJa*: <https://www.camboja.net/> [Last retrieved 9/11/2021].

<sup>795</sup> Cf. CamboJa (n.d.-b). *Our Work*: <https://www.camboja.net/our-work/> [Last retrieved 9/11/2021].

<sup>796</sup> Cf. CCIM (2017), p. 2.

<sup>797</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, p. 11

2017, 13% thought that a lack of training was contributing to unethical journalistic practices. (See Figure 36).



**Figure 36: Factors Contributing to Unethical Journalism in Cambodia in 2017**<sup>798</sup>

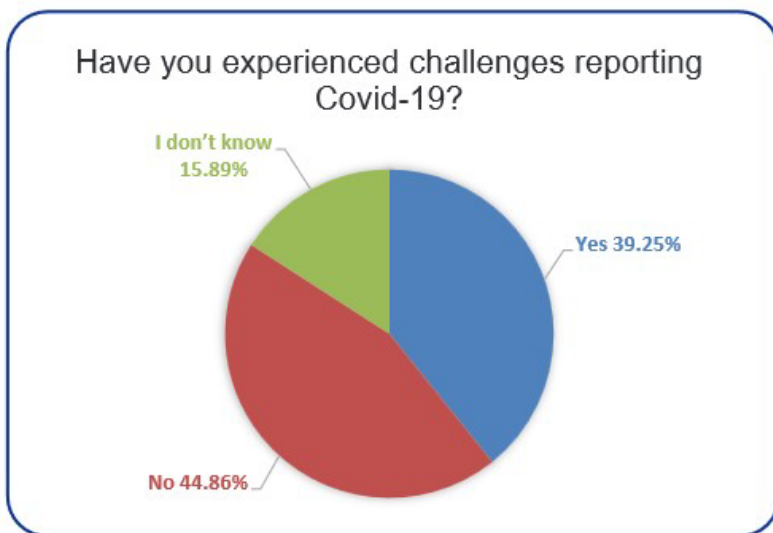
The vast majority (85%) of survey participants believed that Cambodian journalists do not conduct themselves with sufficient professionalism – a stark increase from 44% just two years earlier. Corruption is seen as the most important factor contributing to unethical behavior, followed by inadequate salaries (25%), and opportunism (15%).<sup>799</sup>

In 2020, the IFJ reported a ration of 1,000 female to 4,000 male journalists in Cambodia, based on data provided by the Information Ministry.<sup>800</sup> In terms of capacity building, the CCIM identified a lack of scientific knowledge in light of the COVID-19 pandemic in their newest report on independent media (see Figure 37).

<sup>798</sup> Source: CCIM (2017), p. 12

<sup>799</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, p. 12

<sup>800</sup> Cf. IFJ (n.d.-a).



**Figure 37: Challenges Reporting on COVID-19 for Cambodian Journalists in 2020**<sup>801</sup>

Asked about whether journalists had the competencies to professionally practice journalism almost a third believed that this is not the case, as Figure 38 reveals. The provision of needs-based journalistic training is one essential way to respond to this lack of adequate professionalization.

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<sup>801</sup> Source: CCIM (2020), p. 7.

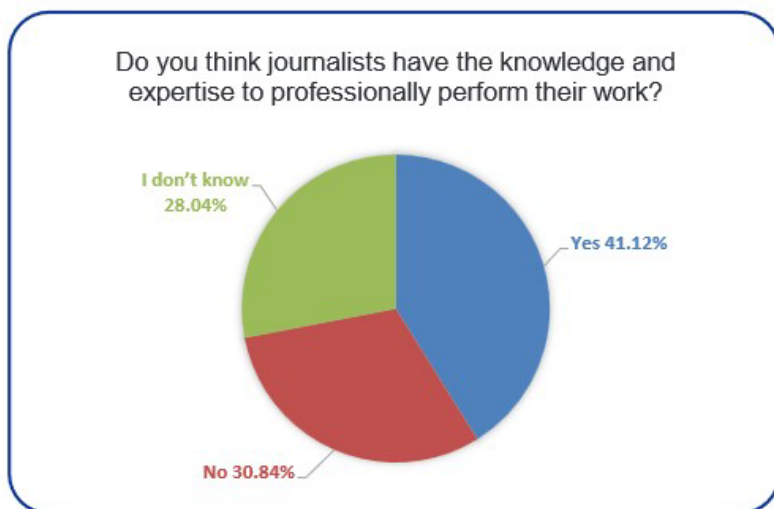


Figure 38: Professional Capacities of Cambodian Journalists in 2020<sup>802</sup>

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<sup>802</sup> Source: Ibid., p. 7.



## 5. Research Design and Methodological Approach

The theoretical and conceptual approach (see Chapter 3), combined with the identification of the concrete gaps in the literature (see sub-chapter 2.2.3), provides the basis for the overall research design. Taking a multi-level approach, the aim was to explore academic journalism education and to identify key influencing factors in the two selected Southeast Asian countries: Vietnam and Cambodia. The empirical study examines the following **research questions** on academic journalism education programs with a focus on digital (RQ 3.1), media management (RQ 3.2) and specialized (RQ 3.3) competencies:

- **RQ 1:** What are relevant historical and current socio-economic, political and cultural framework conditions of journalism education in Vietnam and Cambodia? (macro level)
- **RQ 2:** What are the main similarities and differences regarding the individual, program content and institutional level of public journalism degrees in the two countries? (micro and meso level)
- **RQ 3:** To what extent and in which form do existing public journalism degree programs include specialized journalistic, digital and media management skills and competencies? (meso level)
  - **RQ 3.1:** To what extent and in which form are digital and ICT skills and competencies included?
  - **RQ 3.2:** To what extent and in which form are media management and entrepreneurial journalism skills and competencies included?
  - **RQ 3.3:** To what extent and in which ways do specialized reporting skills, such as ‘development journalism,’ form part of academic journalism education in Vietnam and Cambodia?
- **RQ 4:** Which key factors influencing public academic journalism education can be *identified* concerning program, institutional and country level? (meso and macro level)

The research design is based on an **inclusive definition** of academic journalism programs that encompasses not only classic journalism degrees, but also other academic programs within the field of media and communication studies that have the declared intention of preparing students for

the journalistic profession. Given the relevance and previously identified ‘graduatization’ within academic journalism education, this project focuses on fully or partially state-funded university programs in Vietnam and Cambodia.

The **final objective** of this research is to develop a new model for assessing academic journalism education in the context of digitalization and the transformation of the media in developing countries. By engaging in a quantitative and qualitative analysis of three university programs in the two countries, as well as a systematic institutional and national comparison between them, this research considers the micro, meso and macro factors influencing academic journalism education. The results of each of the research questions will be compared across the selected institutions and subject countries in order to identify the main differences and similarities between them. The study applies existing analytical approaches and indicators to the specific local conditions as a means of identifying key factors influencing the programs on a micro, meso and macro level. The overall goal of this study is thus to further develop and adapt internationally-recognized assessment frameworks to the reality of digitalization and the transformation of the media in developing countries.

The following section outlines the selected mix of qualitative and quantitative research instruments (sub-chapter 5.2) and the selection criteria for the subject countries and research topics (sub-chapter 5.3). Before doing so, sub-chapter 5.1 briefly sheds light on the potential and limitations of international comparative studies of journalism education.

## **5.1 Pre-conditions for and Potential of Comparative Research Approaches**

On the subject of research on higher education – which is also relevant for cross-national comparative approaches to tertiary journalism education in developing countries – Weiler posits:

Research that transcends the boundaries of a single national system of higher education yields the most significant scholarly

insights and theoretical understanding only if it utilizes the explanatory, or at least the heuristic utility of cross-system comparisons.<sup>803</sup>

According to Esser, comparative communication research must fulfill various conditions. It must consider at least two different systems or cultures, wherein the research subject is analyzed through explanatory variables on the micro level of actors, the meso level of organizations or institutions, and the systemic or macro level. In contrast to non-comparative research, comparative studies are cross-national, draw conclusions that are relevant beyond the specific systems or cultures, and explain the commonalities and differences between research subjects based on the conditions identified in the respective systems or cultures.<sup>804</sup> Under these conditions, international comparative research can contribute to scholarly knowledge in the field of journalism studies in a number of ways. Research assessing different national contexts as part of international comparative initiatives holds the potential to obviate, or at least reduce ethnocentrism, thereby increasing researchers' knowledge not only of journalism in foreign regional and national contexts, but also their understanding of their own systems.

International comparative studies have a **theoretical potential** in two regards: first, the comparison of a variety of country-specific findings allows for a contextualization of existing theories. In particular, the multi-level approach of this and other studies allows for the consideration of a comprehensive range of analytical dimensions and categories. Second, comparative research projects can explore and further develop the validity of internationally-recognized normative approaches by testing them under local conditions in different countries.<sup>805</sup> Hahn et al argue that journalism cultures in national or other specific contexts can be better understood through comparison than through single national case studies,

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<sup>803</sup> Cf. Weiler, H.N. (2008), p. 2.

<sup>804</sup> Cf. Esser, F. (2004).

<sup>805</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, p. 177.



combining an external view on differences with an internal perspective that localizes journalistic identities.<sup>806</sup>

From the **practice-oriented perspective** of applied research, the comparison itself represents the key to revealing general characteristics and common trends in journalism systems and cultures and to exploring globalized processes of integration. Comparative studies can thereby systematically identify similarities across national contexts. A comparative approach also allows for the identification of diverging dynamics and the diffusion of assumed global theories and practices. On these grounds, cross-national comparative research can be a useful source of solutions, recommendations and reforms on a national level based on best and worst practices drawn from other contexts.<sup>807</sup>

The theoretical and practice-oriented potential of international comparative studies can also be applied to the field of international journalism education. In terms of the methodological approach to comparative journalism research, Esser stresses that a **functional equivalence** must be demonstrated on multiple levels:

1. Research instruments (standardized modes of data collection)
2. Research object(s) (definition and operationalization)
3. Research items (dimensions, categories, survey questions etc.)
4. Research populations and subjects (sampling techniques and selection criteria)
5. Data analysis<sup>808</sup>

The author points out that existing studies are primarily descriptive due to a lack of effective comparative research designs (see sub-chapter 2.1). Fröhlich identifies further structural deficits in international studies on journalism education. She argues that standardized research instruments often lack the necessary flexibility to adapt to the differences in local

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<sup>806</sup> Cf. Hahn, O, Schröder, R. (2008). *Journalistische Kulturen. Internationale und interdisziplinäre Theoriebausteine*. Cologne, Germany: Herbert von Halem Verlag, p. 7

<sup>807</sup> Cf. Esser, F. (2004), p. 176; cf. Fröhlich, R. (2008). Modelle der Journalistenausbildung im internationalen Vergleich – oder: Über die Möglichkeit, sich von der Außenposition zu nähern. In Melischek, G, Seethaler, J, Wilke, J. (eds.) *Medien & Kommunikationsforschung im Vergleich. Grundlagen. Gegenstandsbereiche, Verfahrensweisen* (pp. 291-308). Wiesbaden, Germany: VS Verlag.

<sup>808</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, p. 152ff.

conditions. Moreover, in terms of research subjects, the self-assessment of journalism education institutions sometimes contradict external perspectives. As a result, findings are difficult to construe.<sup>809</sup> To counterbalance these and other weaknesses in comparative journalism research, this study will be based not only on theory-based research dimensions and categories, but also on systematic selection processes and criteria that combine both the external perspectives of international experts and the local expertise represented by a range of research subjects. Furthermore, research instruments were designed with a certain level of adaptability to national, institutional and individual context.

## 5.2 Selection Process and Principles

In order to adequately analyze the research object and its different expressions, Esser recommends selecting countries with different framework conditions in order to reveal how the object under investigation is impacted by changing conditions and vice versa, and what effects it has on the system, culture and society it is embedded in.<sup>810</sup> In addition to the question of functional equivalence (see sub-chapter 5.1), Esser calls for a multi-level conceptual approach to ensure the theoretical comparability of the research subjects within different national systems. This can only be guaranteed by considering contextual factors on the micro, meso and macro level, as an intercultural *tertium comparationis*, that is, an independent third frame of reference that allows for the comparison of one country with another.<sup>811</sup>

Hanitzsch and Donsbach contend that the selection of subject countries should not be a random process, but must be based on feasibility and, even more importantly, on a conceptual framework for comparison that, in turn, demands certain selection criteria.<sup>812</sup> Otherwise differences and similarities might turn out to be as equally random and artificial as the

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<sup>809</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 163ff

<sup>810</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 152/153.

<sup>811</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 156-158.

<sup>812</sup> Cf. Hanitzsch, T., Donsbach, W. (2012), p. 270.

initial country selection.<sup>813</sup> The choice of selection criteria for the countries and the different research subjects will be explained in the following sub-chapters.

### 5.2.1 Selected Region and Countries

As we have seen in sub-chapter 2.2.2, a large share of journalism education programs are located in Asia. According to the WJEC's latest census results from 2010,<sup>814</sup> almost one third of all programs were offered by institutions in Asia, closely behind North America. Southeast Asia in particular holds out the promise of interesting comparative results. It is a geographically bounded area limited by China and various Indian mountain ranges in the North and by multiple oceans in the South and East.<sup>815</sup> Mainland Southeast Asia includes Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Singapore and Thailand.<sup>816</sup> The Indochina peninsula encompasses Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos and represents a politically and culturally heterogeneous region. In order to reflect the diversity of Southeast Asia, Cambodia and Vietnam were selected based on the principle of a 'most different system design.'<sup>817</sup>

As outlined in sub-chapter 4.2, Vietnam is a communist one-party regime that has engaged in a process of economic liberalization since the 1980s. By contrast, Cambodia embarked on a democratic transformation process in the 1990s. At least theoretically, in 2017 (the year data was collected for this research), the country's political system was based on a competitive multi-party system with a division between the executive, legislative and judicial powers.<sup>818</sup> Furthermore, the countries differ significantly in terms of geographical size and demographics: Whereas Cambodia covers only slightly more than 180,000 square kilometers, Vietnam is almost

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<sup>813</sup> Cf. Hantrais, L. (1999). Cross Contextualization in Cross-National Comparative Research. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 2, 93-108.

<sup>814</sup> Cf. Oliver, L. (2010, July 5); cf. WJEC (n.d.-a).

<sup>815</sup> Cf. Frederick, W.H. (n.d.). Southeast Asia. *Britannica*: <https://www.britannica.com/place/Southeast-Asia> [Last retrieved 9/11/2021].

<sup>816</sup> In contrast to Maritime Southeast Asia which consists of Indonesia, East Timor, East Malaysia, Brunei and the Philippines; cf. *ibid*.

<sup>817</sup> Cf. Hanitzsch, T. et al (2011).

<sup>818</sup> As outlined in Chapter 4.2.3, Cambodia has become a one-party state shortly after the year of data collection, when the opposition CNRP was forbidden, and the government further tightened *de facto* autocratic rule.

twice the size with more than 330,000 square kilometers. While there are 98 million Vietnamese, there are only 17 million Cambodians. Various ethnic smaller groups exist in Vietnam, but they play almost no political role. Almost the entire Cambodian population is Khmer. Vietnamese are non-religious, in contrast to Cambodians, 95% of whom are Buddhist. Although both countries have a rather young population (almost 40% and nearing 50% under the age of 25, respectively), the median age differs slightly more: 31.9 versus 26.4 years.<sup>819</sup> It is also worth pointing out that Vietnamese and Cambodian cultures differ significantly: Whereas Vietnam was influenced by Chinese culture and Confucianism, Cambodia has its own unique culture shaped by Buddhism and Hinduism (see Table 7).<sup>820</sup>

**Table 7: Political, Geographical, Demographic and Cultural Differences<sup>821</sup>**

	<b>Vietnam</b>	<b>Cambodia</b>
<b>Political System</b>	Communist, one-party regime	Multi-party democratic system, division of power
<b>Geographical Size</b>	331,210 sq km	181,035 sq km
<b>Population Size</b>	98.7 million	17.3 million
<b>Ethnicities</b>	Several minority groups	Majority: Khmer
<b>Religion</b>	Non-religious (81%)	Buddhist (95%)
<b>Median Age</b>	31.9	26.4
<b>Culture</b>	Chinese influence, Confucianism	Buddhism and Hinduism

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<sup>819</sup> Apart from population growth in both countries, the situation has not changed much since 2017 regarding the outlined criteria. Therefore, I opt to present the most recent values for geographical and demographic facts: Cf. CIA (n.d.-a); cf. CIA (n.d.-b).

<sup>820</sup> Cf. BBC Media Action (2012, August), p. 9; cf. McHale S. F. (2008).

<sup>821</sup> Source: Own creation.

Although Vietnam and Cambodia differ significantly in terms of geographical size, political system, characteristics of population and culture, the two countries are rather similar in terms of levels of human development, digitalization and media freedom. Table 8 presents the various indices available for the year of data collection. Both Vietnam and Cambodia were classified as medium human development countries in 2017 according to their HDI values. Furthermore, the DAI and ICT Development Index (IDI) show comparable levels of digitalization in the two neighboring states.<sup>822</sup> Finally, the Freedom of the Press index by Reporters without Borders and the Freedom of the Net index by Freedom House reveal similar levels of media restrictions in Vietnam and Cambodia.

**Table 8: Human Development, Digitalization and Media Freedom in 2016/2017<sup>823</sup>**

Index	Vietnam	Cambodia
<b>Human Development Index</b>	0.694	0.582
<b>Digital Adoption Index</b>	0.52	0.39
<b>ICT Development Index</b>	4.43	3.28
<b>Press Freedom Index (RWB)</b>	‘very serious situation’	‘very serious situation’
<b>Freedom on the Net (Freedom House)</b>	‘not free’	‘partially free’

This systematic selection of Vietnam and Cambodia based on their national variances in terms of political, geographical and demographic characteristics on the one hand, but with striking similarities in terms of economic development and digitalization on the other, creates the potential for this study to lay the groundwork for further cross-national research on academic journalism education beyond the countries in question.

Before outlining the research instruments used to determine further similarities and differences as well as the influencing factors of academic

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<sup>822</sup> Note: The latest data available for the DAI for Vietnam and Cambodia is from 2016: Cf. World Bank (n.d.-a).

<sup>823</sup> Source: Own creation, see also Chapter 4.2.2 and 4.2.3

journalism education in the two countries, I will present the process and principles for selecting the research subjects on the meso and micro level.

### 5.2.2 Selected Journalism Education Institutions

On the meso level, only fully or partly state-funded university degree programs were selected for both countries in order to ensure a ‘functional equivalence’ in the process of comparison. The inclusion of private and non-academic journalism education institutions would have increased the complexity of this research, and thereby limited the comparability of the two country case studies.

Furthermore, only universities in the capital cities of Cambodia and Vietnam were included in the study. This stemmed less from methodological considerations, but due to time and funding constraints. In Vietnam, it was not possible to travel to Ho Chi Minh City, where the VNU has a campus offering a journalism degree program. Journalists in Vietnam – at least to a certain extent and often under the disguise of other degree programs – are also trained at public universities in various provinces (see sub-chapter 4.2.3.3), but these institutions were not, however, included in the study.

In Cambodia, by contrast, the Royal University of Phnom Penh (RUPP) is the only state university that offers journalism education program. It is worth noting that the Department of Media Management is partly funded by the Konrad Adenauer Foundation (KAS)<sup>824</sup>, a German political foundation affiliated with the Christian Democratic Party (CDU)<sup>825</sup>. Furthermore, the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD)<sup>826</sup> and the German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ)<sup>827</sup> support the school with long-term advisers and teaching staff. The GIZ does so as part of the Civil Peace Service (ZFD)<sup>828</sup> program.

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<sup>824</sup> KAS – Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (Konrad Adenauer Foundation)

<sup>825</sup> CDU – Christlich Demokratische Union Deutschlands (Christian Democratic Party of Germany)

<sup>826</sup> DAAD – Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst (German Academic Exchange Service)

<sup>827</sup> GIZ – Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (German Agency for International Cooperation)

<sup>828</sup> ZFD – Zentraler Friedensdienst (Civil Peace Service)

The selected degree programs are presented in Table 9.

**Table 9: Selected Universities and Journalism Degree Programs**

<b>Journalism Program</b>	<b>University or Faculty</b>	<b>Academic Degree</b>	<b>Location</b>
University of Social Sciences and Humanities (USSH) 829	Vietnam National University (VNU)	Bachelor in Journalism	Hanoi, Vietnam
Academy of Journalism and Communication (AJC)	Faculty of Journalism	Bachelor in Journalism	Hanoi, Vietnam
Department of Media Management (DMC)	Royal University of Phnom Penh (RUPP)	Bachelor in Media Management	Phnom Penh, Cambodia

### 5.2.3 Selected Students, Alumni and Experts

On the micro level of analysis, **students** close to graduation, ideally in Year 3 or 4, were selected so that they would have a wealth of experience to refer to when answering the survey questions. Moreover, the aim was to include as many students as possible in the survey. Since that the DMC is a rather small journalism school, the intention all later semester students complete the survey. With regard to **alumni**, the study relied heavily on collaboration with local staff at the two universities in Vietnam and a representative of the alumni network in Cambodia. The primary aim was to reach a comparable sample size for both countries.

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<sup>829</sup> After data collection the name of the USSH was changed School of Journalism and Communication (SJC): Cf. USSH – University of Social Sciences and Humanities (n.d.). *Organizational Structure. Overview:* <https://ussh.vnu.edu.vn/en/organizational-structure/school-of-journalism-and-communication/overview-18103.html> [Last retrieved 9/11/2021].

**Table 10: Expert Categories**

Category	Institution	Criteria
<b>A</b>	<b>Journalism Education Institutions</b>	Teachers or management staff (e.g. directors, heads, managers, coordinators) of public academic journalism degree programs
<b>B</b>	<b>International Organizations</b>	Representatives of international organizations that collaborate or have collaborated with local journalism education institutions, in particular academic degree program, and/or have experience working in the journalism training and education field of the country in the past.
<b>C</b>	<b>Journalism Associations and Unions</b>	Interviewees representing the media landscape of the respective country and providing insights into the national journalism training and education system. A Journalism Association might collaborate with journalism education degree programs.

In selecting **local and international experts**, the aim was also to identify a comparable numbers of interview partners in both countries. Purposive sampling was applied based on the researcher's field knowledge of certain groups representing specific parts of society and providing expertise on the research topic.<sup>830</sup> Participants were grouped according to pre-selected criteria relevant to the research questions. Flick argues that interview-based studies rely on the quality of the sample, which depends on the choice of interview partners and their adequate representation of a particular social group.<sup>831</sup> Experts were selected according to common guidelines distinguishing between three main categories of experts. Table 10

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<sup>830</sup> Cf. Berg, B. L. (2009). *Qualitative Research Methods for the Social Sciences* (7th edition). Boston, U.S.A.: Allyn & Bacon, pp. 50-51.

<sup>831</sup> Cf. Flick, U. (2014). *An Introduction to Qualitative Research* (5th edition). Los Angeles, U.S.A.: SAGE Publications, p. 178.



outlines the three expert categories. Interviewees could belong to one or more expert categories:

All interview partners were required to have expertise in the field of journalism education in the relevant national context. Furthermore, they were expected to provide a broad analytical perspectives on the country-specific journalism education landscape, such as knowledge of the different programs that were available and the career pathways for future journalists. This included knowledge about relevant actors and stakeholders and the journalistic profession as part of journalism education more generally. Ideally, interview partners should bring experience regarding the implementation of journalism education, for example, through practical teaching experience, combined with the ability to provide strategic macro and meso level perspectives.

The limited existence of relevant interview partners and the difficulty in gaining access to them was taken into account in the research planning. As a result, the exact number of selected interviewees was flexible. In total, six to eight experts per country were identified and interviewed face-to-face during field trips, or alternatively by telephone or video call. Each national sampling was expected to consist of a minimum of two to three representatives from each journalism education institution (Group A) since they represented the core expertise on the respective degree programs. Moreover, the intention was to find at least one international expert (Group B). These interviews served as the first exploration of journalism education in the local context, and acted to identify potential interview partners in the respective countries. Moreover, the aim was to interview at least one representative of a journalism association or union for each of the two countries (Group C).

### 5.3 Mix of Qualitative and Quantitative Methods

The study design combines qualitative and quantitative research instruments, which makes it a **mixed-method approach**.<sup>832</sup> The methodologies used for data analysis are primarily *qualitative content analysis* and *statistical data analysis*. The project employs four primary research instruments:

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<sup>832</sup> Cf. Kuckartz, U. (2014-a). *Mixed Methods. Methodologie, Forschungsdesign und Analyseverfahren*. Wiesbaden, Germany: Springer VS.

1. *Analysis of curricula of journalism degree programs at public universities*
2. *Quantitative, standardized pen-and-paper survey with current students of journalism degree programs*
3. *Qualitative, semi-structured focus interviews with local and international experts for journalism education*
4. *Qualitative alumni survey and focus group discussion with journalism graduates*

Denzin's principle of triangulation<sup>833</sup> applies to this research in two respects: First, **data triangulation** is based on various sources of types and sets of data. For each of the three university programs studied there is a data set including three types of collected data:

- *Curricula* of the selected academic journalism education programs
- *Survey results* based on a questionnaire for current students
- *Transcripts* of focus interviews and a focus group discussion with experts and graduates

The empirical study fulfills the requirements of **theoretical triangulation** through data analysis and interpretation. A range of theoretical approaches (see Chapter 3) create a conceptual foundation, which allows for a creative approach to the interpretation of study results instead of being limited to fixed theoretical assumptions. Furthermore, theoretical triangulation will allow for the formulation of an integrated model approach to journalism education in the context of development and digitalization (see Chapter 7).<sup>834</sup>

The research guidelines and analytical categories for data collection will be presented in the following chapters for each research instrument. It is important to note that the alumni questionnaire and the student survey were translated into Vietnamese. Moreover, relevant parts of the AJC and USSH curricula also had to be translated. The translation of the research instruments creates a risk that information and meaning will be lost due to false interpretations while putting the questions into a foreign

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<sup>833</sup> Cf. Denzin, N.K. (1978). *The Research Act: A Theoretical Introduction to Sociological Methods*. New York, U.S.A.: McGraw-Hill.

<sup>834</sup> Cf. Kuckartz, U. (2014-a), pp. 44-50.

language. The epistemological difficulties of translation represent a limitation of this study and must be taken into account when analyzing and interpreting the data (see sub-chapter 7.2).<sup>835</sup>

### 5.3.1 Structural and Content Analysis of Degree Programs

The analysis of the main structural elements of the selected degree programs was based on a set of criteria assessing official documents outlining the curricula provided by the faculties or available online.

First, the **general characteristics** of the programs were identified using the following criteria:

- Title of degree
- Type of degree (Bachelor or Master)
- Length of the program
- Total Credit Points (CPs)
- Entry requirements
- University and faculty

Next, the **program structure and content** of the relevant journalism programs at the AJC, the USSH and the DMC were assessed. The assessment of the program content was divided into *general program content* and *specific program content* by year and semester.

General program content looked at

- Overall objectives and learning outcomes
- Employment perspectives
- Journalism theory and media studies (including ethics and professional values)
- Practical journalism (including internships, fieldwork etc.)
- Other non-journalistic subjects (including PR and corporate communication, and foreign languages)

Specific program content was analyzed based on the three key dimensions:

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<sup>835</sup> For more reflection on this matter, see for example: Temple, B, Young, A. (2004). Qualitative Research and Translation Dilemma, *Qualitative Research*, 4(2), 161-178.

1. Digital skills and competencies
2. Media management and entrepreneurial skills
3. Specialized knowledge and reporting skills (including development topics, e.g., environmental or human rights reporting)

### 5.3.2 Qualitative, Semi-structured Interviews with Experts

Semi-standardized expert interviews were employed as a research instrument in order to explore the topic of journalism education systematically and to allow for an institutional and cross-national comparison of similarities and differences while keeping the flexibility of qualitative research approaches. Interviews as an empirical instrument of data collection can, in general, be applied to different contexts, environments and social situations.<sup>836</sup>

While ensuring openness, qualitative interviews are goal-oriented with a clearly defined purpose and, above all, they rely on the successful identification of relevant interview partners.<sup>837</sup> Flick emphasizes that experts provide “specific insights and knowledge because of their professional position and expertise.”<sup>838</sup> Accordingly, this study focuses on the interviewees’ knowledge of journalism education rather than the person as a whole. Their contribution to the research is not based upon their individual story, but how it serves to represent an entire group. Yet, as interviewees tend to present biased viewpoints which are influenced by cultural codes and social values, it is essential “to gather a whole matrix of information about the people we recruit and use this information to design the best possible interviews.”<sup>839</sup> The Annex includes an overview with key information from all interviewed experts, albeit in an anonymized form.<sup>840</sup>

In order to ensure that interview material is meaningful for the study’s objectives and presents reliable and realistic empirical findings,<sup>841</sup> the standardization of the interviews is another crucial factor. Given the comparative design of this research, semi-standardized interviews were

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<sup>836</sup> Cf. Lindlof, R. L., Taylor, B.C. (2011). *Qualitative Communication Research Methods*. Thousand Oaks, U.S.A.: SAGE Publications, p. 171.

<sup>837</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, p. 172.

<sup>838</sup> Flick, U. (2014), p. 227.

<sup>839</sup> Lindlof, R.L., Taylor, B.C. (2011), p. 173.

<sup>840</sup> See Annex, p. 530.

<sup>841</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, p. 173.

chosen as the appropriate method to ensure the necessary scope for adaptation and interpretation as well as to provide the required equivalence of the material collected. As the term ‘semi-standardized’ or ‘semi-structured’ implies, this type of interview is neither fully standardized nor completely open. As Berg explains, semi-standardized interviews include a list of defined questions and themes that are asked in a predetermined order. The interviewer is, however, allowed and even at times required to handle the content and structure of the interview openly by adding additional questions and deviating from the guidelines where necessary.<sup>842</sup>

The interview guidelines were adapted for the three different groups of experts described in Chapter 5.2.3 resulting in two separate questionnaires: one for international experts of journalism education in the national context<sup>843</sup> and one set of guidelines for the university teachers and managerial staff of the journalism degree programs<sup>844</sup>. Both types of questionnaires included historical, institutional and programmatic aspects as well as questions about the future of journalism education. At the beginning of the interviews, all interviewees were asked to briefly describe their own educational and professional background and their current position. This served both as a ‘warm-up,’ but it also served to confirm that the interviewer had prior knowledge of the interviewees expertise.

In the **guideline for international experts**, who are not directly involved in the journalism degree programs assessed for this research, the interviews begin (Part A) by exploring the origins of academic journalism education in the country. The guideline then focus on the most relevant influencing factors in journalism education in the respective country in the past, as well as the positive developments and negative trends of the present.

Part B concentrates on the journalism education landscape and institutional frameworks, that is, typical educational pathways to becoming a journalist and types of institutions offering journalism education, including their collaboration with international organizations. Regarding existing academic degree programs in journalism, the interviews aim to document the experts’ knowledge on how the degrees are financed, which

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<sup>842</sup> Cf. Berg, B. L. (2009), p. 107.

<sup>843</sup> See Annex, pp. 519-520.

<sup>844</sup> See Annex, pp. 521-522.

national regulatory or standard-setting bodies exist, how the programs are accredited and how their quality is being managed. This set of questions further explores the role and reputation of academic journalism education programs compared to non-academic training programs in addition to how journalism degree programs collaborate with other sectors and institutions such as journalism associations, the private sector, and local and international development organizations, but also governmental bodies.

Part C consists of questions on academic journalism education in the respective country including the characteristics of students, the main educational goals, and the skills and competencies of journalism graduates. The questionnaire also includes questions about characteristics of instructors (educational and professional background), teaching styles and methods before concentrating on the program content and curricula of journalism degrees. The aspects covered in this section reflect the main research questions of this project, existing normative approaches (see sub-chapter 3.3) as well as outcomes of prior research (see sub-chapter 2.2.3). Experts were asked for their assessment of the extent to which the following topic areas and learning opportunities are included in academic journalism education:

- Journalism ethics and professional values
- Role and responsibilities of journalism in society
- Classic journalistic skills
- Vocational training and practical learning opportunities
- General theoretical knowledge and competencies
- Theoretical specialization in one field of knowledge
- Specific forms of reporting related to development issues and topics
- Development communication and development journalism
- Digital topics and technologies, skills and competencies
- Entrepreneurial and media management skills, knowledge of media economics
- Ratio/balance of theory and practice

The interviews end (Part D) with an outlook on the future prospects and challenges of journalism education in the country including potential employment opportunities, aspects of the media market and the restrictions on the media system. Besides referring back to the macro level of

journalism education, the intention of these concluding questions is to re-open the conversation allowing the interviewees to raise any additional thoughts that have not been covered as part of the questionnaire.

The interview **guideline for university staff** also begins (Part A) with questions on the history and origins of the journalism degree program in question. The aim is to complete and confirm information on when the program was founded, who was involved and how it was funded. Furthermore, interviewees were asked about the initial vision and mission of the program.

Part B consists of questions on institutional and organizational aspects including aspects of quality management:

- Funding model
- Stakeholders, partners and collaborations
- Organizational and management structure
- Linkages to other academic departments, faculties and the main university
- Collaboration with other communication degrees (e.g Marketing, Advertising, PR)
- Accreditation and re-accreditation, standard-setting bodies and quality management
- Instructor qualifications and selection process
- Monitoring and evaluation processes including student and external evaluation

Part C concentrates on the student admission process:

- Entry requirements and application process
- Demographic characteristics of students
- Perspectives after graduation
- Alumni and career support

Part D consists of a set of questions dedicated to teaching environment and infrastructure:

- Teaching styles and methods
- Relationships between managerial, teaching staff and students

- Technical infrastructure and equipment
- Educational and professional background and selection process

The main body of the questionnaire (Part E) explores the curriculum including the overall structure and learning outcomes, and the general program content. The interviewees are then asked to provide their perspective on specific program contents including the main research aspects of specialized journalistic, digital and media management skills and competencies. These questions are identical to those already outlined for international and local experts, however, with a Micro level focus on the particular degree program, rather than academic journalism education in the country more generally. Before concluding, the interviews cover aspects of alumni management and employment perspectives for graduates (Part E). Interviewees are asked about particular alumni platforms and forms of career support provided by the school.

Furthermore, the guideline for university program representatives were designed so that it could be adapted for both managerial and teaching staff. Journalism education instructors were asked only the questions with a clear focus on the program content, but also institutional aspects of collaboration with other disciplines and departments, the teaching environment (including teaching styles and methods, technical resources and equipment etc.) and the outlook for graduates to find journalistic jobs. While teaching staff can not provide the same overview and managerial insight compared to managers and directors of degree program, they hold invaluable curricular knowledge and classroom experience based on direct interactions with journalism students.

All interviews with university staff concluded (Part G) with questions regarding the future of the journalism degree program similar to the guideline designed for local and international experts.

Although the interview guidelines were validated and further developed as part of the IJES, **pre-tests** were conducted prior to data collection in Cambodia and Vietnam<sup>845</sup> project. Interviews were conducted with one international experts each for Vietnam and Cambodia. The guidelines for

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<sup>845</sup> As already outlined earlier in Chapter 2.2.2, the IJES study can be considered an exploratory study for this PhD research: Cf. Schmidt, C. (2015).



local experts were tested with the same Cambodian instructor and former DMC student who also volunteered to check on the survey questions prior to data collection with current students in both countries.

### 5.3.3 Qualitative Focus Group Discussion and Alumni Questionnaire

Apart from semi-standardized expert interviews, a focus group discussion (FGD) was planned with alumni of the respective journalism degree programs in Cambodia and Vietnam. Alternatively, in cases where it was not possible to organize an FGD, individual graduates would be asked to answer the same guiding questions in written form.

The **FGD guideline**<sup>846</sup> start by asking the participants to briefly describe their current job situation. The group is then asked to discuss how easy or difficult it was for them to find a job after graduation and what mattered most to them when taking on their first job. The next question focuses on how much the interviewees work journalistically and to what extent they are able to apply the skills and knowledge they have gained during their academic degree program. This introductory part of the discussion is then followed by a set of questions focusing retrospectively on program content and the learning opportunities of the degree program they graduated from. The participants were asked to discuss which key skills and competencies they gained during the academic program. More specifically, they were asked to evaluate the following:

- Classic and hands-on journalistic skills (including critical thinking skills)
- Practical components available off-campus
- On-campus practical learning opportunities
- Ratio of theory and practical components
- Possibilities to specialize in a theoretical field
- Role and responsibility of media and journalism in society
- Development topics and development journalism
- Specialization in other types of reporting
- Digital technologies and new ICT including digital journalistic skills
- Entrepreneurial and media management skills

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<sup>846</sup> See Annex, pp. 524-525.

Subsequently, the group was asked to assess their level of satisfaction, what else they would have liked to learn and what they would suggest to improve the degree program and academic education for future journalists. They were also asked which kind of alumni support they find helpful.

In order to open up the discussion again, the graduates were asked to debate what is the most important function of journalism in today's society. Before wrapping up the discussion, the participants were specifically asked if there would like to raise any other important aspects.

The **alumni questionnaire**<sup>847</sup> uses the same questions as the FGD. They were both designed with open questions that could be answered either in face-to-face interviews or in written form via email.

### 5.3.4 Quantitative Survey of Journalism Students

A student survey was conducted at all three universities, which was developed based on the theoretical and conceptual framework outlined in Chapter 3, in particular on relevant normative approaches, especially existing analytical dimensions and indicators (see sub-chapter 3.3.4).

The questionnaire consists of four main parts and a total of 28 questions.<sup>848</sup> The first group of nominal and numeric questions (Part A, Q1 to Q7) covers **demographic information** such as year of birth and gender. The survey also includes the current level of education, the current academic semester, the start date of studies and the expected graduation date. The intention was to start off with a number of basic questions which are easy to answer for the survey participants and to obtain key information about the sample.

The second part of the survey (B, Q8 to Q12) focuses on the **accessibility and access** to the degree program. It includes nominal questions about student fees and the funding for studies. Furthermore, three ordinal questions which use a simple three-step scale (from 'very difficult' and 'moderately difficult' to 'not difficult at all') are used to assess the general difficulty of entering the degree program, the relevance of specific entry

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<sup>847</sup> See Annex, pp. 526-529.

<sup>848</sup> See Annex, pp. 487-508.

requirements (from ‘very important’ and ‘moderately important’ to ‘not important at all’) and the personal motivation to enroll in the program.

The core of the questionnaire is the third part (C, Q13 to Q24) which consists of mostly closed questions about the specific **content of the journalism degree program**. The majority of questions (Q13, Q15 to Q18, Q20) use a four-step Likert scale<sup>849</sup> to measure the extent to which certain topics and skills are covered in the program. The question types consists of sets of six to twelve items that I considered most relevant to the respective topic area based on the theoretical background and conceptual framework of this study. For some questions, specific items are listed, providing only closed answer options in the form of ‘yes’ and ‘no’ or multiple choice (Q14, Q19, Q21 to Q24).

The first two questions (Q13 and Q14) cover *journalistic ethics and values*,<sup>850</sup> followed by a large set of questions on *general and specific journalistic skills and competencies*. To begin with, Q15 refers to basic journalistic skills such as critical thinking, research, interview, writing and production skills. Moreover, this survey includes particular sets of questions covering the focus of this study: *Specific reporting skills* (Q16), *digital skills* (Q17), and *media management and entrepreneurial skills* (Q18).

Q19 to Q24 assess *practical versus theoretical learning opportunities*. The section also covers aspects of *interdisciplinarity*, that is, access to non-journalistic academic subjects or disciplines (Q21). The last three questions in this section specifically focus on theoretical and practical components of the degree program and the options for *specialization*: Q22 and Q23 are nominal questions inquiring about the general possibility of specializing in either a theoretical or practical field and if so, in which one. Q24 asks the interviewee to evaluate the balance of theory and practice based on the five-step Likert scale.<sup>851</sup>

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<sup>849</sup> From ‘very extensively, in the form of an entire module or subject’, ‘In detail, but not in the form of a specific module or subject’, ‘more generally, i.e., here and there in seminars and lectures’ to ‘not at all has it been a topic’

<sup>850</sup> To specify the items, the *IJF Declaration of Principles on the Conduct of Journalists* was used as a basis: IFJ (2003, May 5). *Status of Journalists and Journalism Ethics*. <https://www.ifj.org/media-centre/news/detail/category/europe/article/status-of-journalists-and-journalism-ethics-ifj-principles.html> [Last retrieved 9/11/2021].

<sup>851</sup> See Annex p. 503.

The final part of the survey (D, Q25 to Q27) deals with the **self-perception and perspectives of future journalists**. Q25 aims to assess the roles and responsibilities of future journalists and society and asks the interviewee to rate a range of aspects on a three-step scale of importance (from 'very important' and 'moderately important' to 'not important at all'). Q26 utilizes the same scale to assess the relevance of specific job criteria for graduates. Q27 is an open question that aims to provide sufficient space for students to describe in more detail any other thoughts and aspects that are important to them regarding their journalistic future.

To conclude, Q28 also offers the space to mention any other points about the respective journalism education program. In addition, almost all questions have the option to answer 'I don't know' and an open answer option for students to mention any other aspects or thoughts they may have regarding the specific question. This applies in particular to the third part of the survey on the program content.

For the survey, a **pre-test** was conducted with a former DMC graduate. Question and answer options were adapted according to their suggestions before the pen-and-paper survey was conducted in the field.



## 6. Data Analysis

Three different data sets were generated for each academic journalism education program – DMC, USSH and AJC – in Vietnam and Cambodia:

- *Curricula* of the selected academic journalism education programs
- *Survey results* of the student questionnaires at all three journalism schools
- *Transcripts* of expert interviews and alumni data

The analysis of the curricula was completed before analyzing the quantitative survey data and conducting the qualitative content analysis of the interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs). The goal was to fill information gaps generated by the analysis of the official program documentation and to explore which elements of the course content were actually implemented, and to what extent and in what ways. Quantitative survey data and qualitative interview data sets were assessed based on a **parallel design**, with the aim of making final inferences on the meta level by bringing together the finding of all three data sets.<sup>852</sup>

### 6.1 Curricula Analysis

The overall structure and content of the journalism programs at the three universities in Vietnam and Cambodia was analyzed based on a set of previously defined criteria. A code system was created in MAXQDA to systematically assess official information provided by the curricula, program websites and other documentation available online. The following Table 11 outlines the main analytical dimensions and categories.

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<sup>852</sup> Cf. Kuckartz, U. (2014-a), pp. 73/74, 104.

**Table 11: Code System for Curricula Analysis**

Codes		Frequencies
Program content		0
	General content and learning outcomes	36
	Academic research skills	2
	Other non-journalistic subjects/disciplines	0
	Other theoretical subjects	1
	PR, corporate communication etc.	4
	Foreign languages and international relations	6
	Journalism theory	3
	Ethics and professional values	9
	Media and communication sciences	11
	Final project/thesis	13
	Practical journalistic skills	13
	Critical thinking skills	1
	Internship	5
	Employment perspectives	10
	Specific program content	49
	Development	4
	Specialized reporting	10

**Table 11: Code System for Curricula Analysis (cont'd)**

Codes		Frequencies
	Media management	18
	Digital skills and competences	17
Other characteristics		24
	Scholarships	0
	Origins/history	4
	Length of degree	4
	International collaboration	2
	Entry requirements	2
	Credits	1
	Type of degree	4
	Title of degree	3
	Faculty, scientific disciplines	4
TOTAL		187

### 6.1.1 Department of Media and Communication (DMC)

The Department of Media and Communication (DMC) was founded in 2001 at the Royal University of Phnom Penh (RUPP) as an academic training institution for journalists and media professionals with continued funding from the Konrad Adenauer Foundation (KAS) since its establishment. The school receives technical support from the German development agency (GIZ) the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), the German international broadcaster Deutsche Welle (DW) and a number of international universities, including the Hochschule Mittweida, the University of Hamburg, and Ateneo de Manila University. The Bachelor of



Arts in Media Management is a four-year undergraduate degree that consists of a total of 146 Credit Points (CP).<sup>853</sup>

### **Program Structure**

Year 1 is a foundation year that lays the groundwork for further study by providing a basis in a range of subjects, including introductory courses in academic studies, social sciences and history (Contemporary Cambodian and World History) and media studies (Introduction to Mass Communication and Principles and Practices of Journalism). Moreover, students gain language skills, especially English writing skills. Year 2 provides students with advanced English skills, basic journalism skills with a focus on print media and news writing, layout and design techniques (photojournalism), and an introduction to media ethics and law. Year 3 consists of the basics of broadcast, video and TV production, an introduction to PR and political communication, advanced reporting in print journalism, Media and Society, and Mass Communication Theories and Research. Year 4 focuses on media management skills and competencies (Newsroom Management and Entrepreneurial Journalism), multimedia journalism, corporate communication, social affairs reporting (Specialized Reporting) and a final research thesis or media project.

### **General Program Content**

As outlined in their amended curriculum, the DMC program is guided by the three principles:

- a. to prepare students to be effective, professional, standard bearers for ethical behavior within mass media's various formats
- b. to foster a free, viable and socially responsible media landscape in Cambodia
- c. to prepare students to become creative and responsible mass media leaders and managers, serving the needs of the Cambodian people

In addition, the program aims to provide students with the following competencies:

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<sup>853</sup> See also DMC website: <http://dmc-cci.edu.kh/>

- a. analytical skills, intellectual ability and creativity in the field of media and communication
- b. professional skills in research, writing and other forms of presentation, editing, design and production
- c. ability to use the tools of journalism and to adapt to new technologies and innovative practices such as social media
- d. professional competencies, including knowledge of ethics and law
- e. knowledge of and adaptation to the changing media environment, the role of journalism and communication in society
- f. going out into the real world (internships at national and international media outlets)<sup>854</sup>

Overall, the DMC highlights that academic subjects are put “in the context of current social, economic, political and cultural developments.”<sup>855</sup> In terms of their *employment perspectives*, DMC graduates can work as staff or freelancer (self-employed) journalists in media organizations and newsrooms or in the fields of PR and marketing.

### **Journalism Theory**

As outlined in the program structure, in Year 1, social sciences are one of the foundational subjects of the degree program. In addition, the amended curriculum includes various competencies including knowledge of ethics and law. In Year 3, for example, the focus is on various aspects of broadcast journalism including “specific ethical standards for media producers.”<sup>856</sup>

### **Practical Journalism**

The amended curriculum integrates real-life practical media and journalism skills through internships in international and Cambodian media organizations. At first, the focus is on print production, followed by

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<sup>854</sup> DMC Curriculum, Pos. 24-34

<sup>855</sup> Ibid., Pos. 40

<sup>856</sup> Ibid., Pos. 58

photojournalism and then broadcast journalism. In the final year, students concentrate on their multimedia production skills.

### **Other Non-Journalistic Subjects**

PR and corporate communications are part of the curriculum in Year 3 and 4. English as a *foreign language* is a major subject in Year 1 and 2.

### **Final Thesis/Project**

Students can choose between a research thesis or a creative media project. The final graduation work is worth 10 CP.

### **Specific Program Content**

#### *Media Management*

The degree program at the RUPP is a Bachelor's in Media Management. Especially in Year 4, students acquire specific skills and competencies in the management of multimedia environments. The course work includes Newsroom Management and Entrepreneurial Journalism.

#### *Digital Skills and Competencies*

One main objective is to provide students with the “ability to use the tools of journalism and to adapt to new technologies and innovative practices such as social media.”<sup>857</sup> Year 4 has a special focus on multimedia journalism.

#### *Specialized Reporting Skills*

Specialized Reporting is part of the Year 4 curriculum, building on the material covered in Year 1, during which academic subjects are taught “in the context of social, economic, political and cultural developments.”<sup>858</sup>

### **6.1.2 University of Social Sciences and Humanities (USSH)**

The current journalism school at the USSH was established by the Ministry of Education and Training in 1990 as part of the Faculty of Journalism at Hanoi General University. One year later, the first undergraduate journalism cohort was launched with 160 students. In 2008, it was moved

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<sup>857</sup> Ibid., Pos. 31

<sup>858</sup> Ibid., Pos. 40

to the re-named Faculty of Journalism and Communication at the USSH, part of the VNU, which has campuses both in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City. In 2014, the USSH launched a Master's program in Communication Management in collaboration with Stirling University in the UK, wherein the degree is conferred by Stirling University. Since 2017, the VNU also offers a Master's in Journalism. In 2018, the institution was given the new title of 'School of Journalism and Communication' with a Center of Media Practice.<sup>859</sup>

At the time of this study, the undergraduate program was four years or eight semesters in length. After successful completion of 139 CP, graduates gain the title of Bachelor's degree in Journalism from the VNU.

### **Program Structure**

The program consists of three main components over the course of eight semesters: General Study, Specific Knowledge and Internship and Graduation.

All subjects in the General Study block are compulsory. Specific Knowledge includes obligatory coursework and electives as part of the major. There are three majors to choose from:

1. Print journalism
2. Radio/TV (broadcast) journalism
3. PR and advertising

Semester 1 focuses on general knowledge, such as Law, Culture, Marxism and Leninism, and History, as well as Computer Science, English and an Introduction to Journalism and Communication. From Semester 2 onwards, more social science topics are added. Communist topics such as 'Ho Chi Minh's Ideology' remain on the curriculum until Semester 3. From then on, more journalistic subjects and communications studies topics are included. In Year 2 (Semester 4), journalism topics predominate, including both theoretical subjects such as Journalism and Communication Law, Professional Code of Ethics, and Communication Technology, as well as practical courses on photojournalism. From Semester 5, almost all subjects focus on practical journalism skills and competencies

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<sup>859</sup> Cf. USSH (n.d.); cf. USSH (2018, November 17).

including print, radio, TV and online journalism, apart from specific courses on editing and TV presentation. Semester 8 consists of a range of specialized reporting subjects, as well as the completion of an internship and final graduation project.

### **General Program Content**

The *overall goals* of the program at the USSH are divided into general and concrete objectives.

The journalism school aims to provide students with the necessary skills, knowledge and attitudes to work in the field of journalism and communications. Graduates are expected to meet the requirements to engage in journalistic work in the context of digitalization and globalization and to have gained the necessary academic research skills to contribute to communication studies. They are also eligible to seek further postgraduate education. Furthermore, the program provides them with the foundations to take on leadership positions and become experts in the field of journalism and communication. The general objectives are intertwined with the *employment perspectives*: Graduates are able to perform reporting and editing duties at press agencies, magazines, news agencies, radio and television stations. They can work for different types of institutions including political and social organizations such as NGOs, journalism training and scientific research organization, as well as in media monitoring agencies. Students can also work in corporate communication and PR.

The curriculum outlines these concrete objectives and *learning outcomes* as follows: The students have a broad understanding of social life and an in-depth knowledge of print, radio, television, online newspapers, advertising and public relations. At the same time, the students are able grasp the upcoming journalistic trends in the country and in the world and analyze, discuss and comment on topics related to journalism studies.

In terms of practical or professional skills, students are trained in all areas of print, radio, television, and online media. These skills enable students to integrate into a new work environment and to continue to develop after graduation, as well as working in a team and making decisions in real-life journalistic situations. Moreover, graduates have gained the necessary competencies to work as reporters and editors in various media, as researchers and teaching staff, as PR specialist and press officers – all of

which require a basic, systematic set of journalistic skills. Graduates are also sufficiently adaptable to work in other institutions related to journalism and media. The curriculum outlines the following intended learning outcomes:

Graduates acquire a high level of political education and strong class attitudes, a deep sense of nationality and patriotism, clear morals, healthy lifestyle, courageous attitude in the struggle to defend the lines and policies of the Communist Party and the state of Vietnam against conspiracies and actions that undermine the regime. They are disciplined and have a high sense of responsibility, a passion for the job, an academic and serious working style, and a great vision based on full awareness and self-awareness of the role of the press and media in society.<sup>860</sup>

### **Non-Journalistic Subjects**

Looking closer at the program content, the USSH puts greater emphasis on general theoretical knowledge at the beginning of the degree. The first general knowledge block includes subjects such as Fundamentals of Marxist-Leninist Philosophy and Ho Chi Minh's Ideology. A second knowledge block focuses on social sciences and humanities. Subjects include politics, psychology, sociology, history and economics, including the "dialectical-materialistic world view, political enlightenment and stable class attitudes."<sup>861</sup>

Besides English and Chinese, students can learn other *foreign languages* such as Russian and French. International Relations, Corporate Communication and PR are offered in the fourth semester according to the course outline. More importantly, PR and Advertising form one of the three majors that students can choose from at the USSH. Introduction to International Relations is an optional subject offered as part of the Specific Knowledge block.

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<sup>860</sup> USSH Curriculum, Pos. 43

<sup>861</sup> Ibid., Pos. 57

## Journalism Theory

The USSH aims to provide students with an awareness of their function as journalists in society, in media organizations and within production processes. Journalism theory subjects include Fundamentals of Mass Communication, Psychology of Communication, Sociology of Mass Communication and Public Opinion, and Communication Theory and Process. In terms of professional values and ethics, the curriculum outlines two relevant areas: professional ethics and social morality. As a results of these, students are expected to practice the following:

- fairness, honesty and a sense of responsibility
- a professional, proactive and independent way of working
- a professional way of working that reflects the behavioral culture of journalists / people who work in the media sector
- compliance with the laws and guidelines of the party and the state
- the preservation and promotion of their national cultural identity
- fight for justice, democracy and civilization (including appropriate, rule-compliant, value-based behavior)
- the preservation and promotion of the image of a reporter / a person who works in the media sector<sup>862</sup>

The program overview available online at the time of data collection outlined two additional subjects: Journalism and Communication Law and Professional Code of Ethics.

## Practical Journalism

The Specific Knowledge block includes compulsory coursework on journalistic practice including Writing for Print Newspapers, Online Journalism, and Broadcast Journalism, with an emphasis on specific training in media production.

According to the USSH curriculum, the key knowledge and skills areas for professional journalism are:

- understanding of communication devices
- information gathering and evaluation skills

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<sup>862</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, Pos. 231-247

- processing and organizing information
- media editing skills
- newspaper design and production and radio and television program production<sup>863</sup>

The program includes subjects in the *social sciences and research* such as Research Methods, Statistics for Social Sciences and Research Methods in Communications. Quantitative and qualitative research skills are also explicitly mentioned as concrete program objectives. These are closely related to *critical thinking skills* and problem-solving skills.

The intention of the supervised *internship* in the final semester is outlined as:

The students understand the organizational model and the operational processes of the press or media agencies. The students have the ability to competently implement the knowledge and skills they have learned in professional practice under the guidance of journalists and communication experts. Students can adapt to the pressurized work environment of the press. You will flexibly apply basic communication skills with information sources, colleagues and editorial offices. You have the opportunity to coordinate with groups / production teams for press products.<sup>864</sup>

In addition, the curriculum emphasizes soft skills such as autonomy, interpersonal communication skills, and the ability to work in a team.

### **Final Thesis/Project**

The graduation project can be a final thesis, a media product or coursework.

### **Specific Program Content**

#### *Media Management*

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<sup>863</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, Pos. 103-127

<sup>864</sup> *Ibid.*, Pos. 88-95



The table of modules and subjects include the following units related to media management:

- General Economics
- General Management Science
- Organization and Operation

The overall aim is that students have a good understanding of the organizational model and the operational processes of press and media agencies, as well as the roles and responsibilities of individuals in these organizations. In addition, the curriculum specifically underlines the role of organizational knowledge alongside management and leadership skills:

The students know the organizational background and adapt to the professional requirements of various organizational models (newsrooms, media companies, government media, non-governmental organizations, companies, schools). The students connect through communication within the organization, contribute to the formation of an organizational culture and work successfully in the organization.<sup>865</sup>

Graduates also learn how to organize and assign work and ability to participate in the assessment of individual and collective performance.

### *Digital Skills and Competencies*

Digital skills and competencies are mentioned at various points throughout the curriculum, as part of the instruction in the social sciences and humanities – “the students understand the role of the social sciences and humanities in social life, especially in the digital age, in integration and in globalization”<sup>866</sup> – and in professional/journalistic hard skills:

The students have basic knowledge in dealing with new technical and technological media in mass communication and show their adaptability in multimedia and digital professional working environments. The students have in-depth knowledge in dealing with

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<sup>865</sup> Ibid., Pos. 172-177

<sup>866</sup> Ibid., Pos. 63

camcorders, cameras, recorders etc., and in the use of information processing software on a fundamental level.<sup>867</sup>

Reference to digital technologies and trends is also made within the context of the students' ability to create, develop and direct changes in their careers. Moreover, students learn to use standard computer and IT software for media production (e.g. Adobe and other audiovisual editing programs) as well as engage in data analysis, such as SPSS statistical software. The Specific Knowledge block also includes a compulsory unit on Website Design.

### *Specialized Reporting Skills*

There are no references made to *specialized reporting skills* and/or *development journalism* in the curriculum. However, the program overview lists a number of specialized reporting subjects:

- Reporting on internal affairs
- Business and economic reporting
- Education, health and environmental reporting
- Sports reporting

Notably, education, health and the environment are all topics that can be classified as socially relevant issues with a direct impact on human development. Moreover, environment and development are mentioned as subjects in the Specific Knowledge block.

### **6.1.3 Academy of Journalism and Communication (AJC)**

The Secretariat of the Communist Party of Vietnam established the Central School of Propagandizing and Educating in Hanoi in 1962. Since then, the institution's name has changed several times. Almost three decades later, in 1993, it was re-named the Institute of Journalism and Communication; in 2005, it was given its current title Academy of Journalism and Communication (AJC). Similarly, the institutional framework also changed over time: The school was recognized as a university within the national education system in 1990. Three years later, the Communist

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<sup>867</sup> Ibid., Pos. 105-107

Party decided that the AJC would form part of the Ho Chi Minh National Academy of Politics, to which it still belongs today. It has only one campus in the capital.

As part of the Faculty of Journalism, one of nineteen faculties, the AJC confers a Bachelor's in journalism, which consists of 130 Credit Points (CP) over a maximum of six years. Prospective students must pass an entry exam and have completed high school with a certain minimum grade. According to the curriculum guidelines, all interested students can apply for the degree regardless of ethnic, family and economic background, religion or gender. There is no mentioning of international collaboration or exchange programs.<sup>868</sup>

### **Program Structure**

The program consists of two parts: general education (46 CP) and specialized education (84 CP). The first section includes Marx and Ho Chi Minh's Ideology, humanities and social sciences, math and natural science, foreign languages (English and Chinese) and physical education. Students have a range of subjects to choose from within the humanities and social sciences.

The specialized education section focuses on journalism theory and practice. It is split into required subjects and electives. Communication Theory, Journalism Law and Ethics are, for example, basic compulsory subjects, as is specialized journalism training in print, radio, TV and online journalism.

Furthermore, students can choose one of the following six majors: print/newspaper journalism; photojournalism; radio broadcast journalism; TV journalism; TV production; and online newspaper journalism. In each major, students must complete a certain number of compulsory courses, alongside additional electives, and practical training such as field

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<sup>868</sup> Wikipedia (n.d.-d). *Academy of Journalism and Education*: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Academy\\_of\\_Journalism\\_and\\_Communication](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Academy_of_Journalism_and_Communication) [Last retrieved 9/24/2021]; The AJC's website (<https://ajc.hcma.vn/Pages/default.aspx>) [Last retrieved 9/24/2021].) is only available in Vietnamese. Hence, it was necessary to draw on Wikipedia as the only other available source of information for desk research.

work (Year 3) and a supervised internship. A graduation thesis, final project or coursework must be completed in Year 4.

### **General Program Content**

The AJC defines the overall objectives of the program through the *employment perspectives* of students: After completion, graduates are able to work as journalists in various media institutions, including print and online newspapers, news agencies, radio, and TV. Moreover, they are able to pursue employment with other organizations or entities that require journalistic skills and knowledge.

Learning outcomes are divided into general theoretical knowledge, journalistic skills, and political and ethical competencies. The ‘general basic knowledge’ module comprises Marxism-Leninism, Ho Chi Minh’s Ideology, social sciences and humanities, math and science, physical education and national defense education. The main journalism theory subjects are Basic and Specialized Journalism, Print, Photo, Radio, TV, Film and Online Journalism. In terms of practical journalistic skills and competencies, the program includes print and photojournalism, as well as radio, TV, film and online journalism. Furthermore, the curriculum outlines ‘political and ethical qualities’ as another focus of learning outcomes.

### **Journalism Theory**

The curriculum includes courses on *journalism theory* in general and specifically for print, photo, radio, TV, film and online journalism. As part of the Specialized Education block, the following theory units are compulsory:

- Communication theory
- Journalism history
- Journalism sociology
- Journalism and communication psychology
- Social media and social networks

On the subject of *ethics and professional values*, the curriculum outlines:

Students trained under this program must have clear political education, attitude, and staunch ideology; strong national consciousness and strong patriotism; a pure morality, a healthy lifestyle, a

courageous stance in the struggle to defend the lines and policies of the Communist Party and the state of Vietnam against conspiracies and acts intended to undermine the regime; They must also encourage and accompany the population to take part in the construction and defense of the Vietnamese fatherland.<sup>869</sup>

Regarding journalistic values in particular, the AJC stresses that students must also maintain their professional ethics and act as responsible citizens. Furthermore, they must be “physically and mentally able to meet the demands of a professional journalist.”<sup>870</sup> General Law and Journalism Law and Ethics are included as specific subjects.

### **Practical Journalism**

Practical journalism is a key component of the degree program. Students can take part in real-world activities, journalism projects, and a supervised *internship*. According to the curriculum, students gain media production skills for each type of journalism. For print journalism, these skills encompass finding topics, collecting and processing information, creating journalistic products, editing, and tracking feedback. *Critical thinking skills* are not mentioned in the AJC curriculum.

### **Other Non-journalistic Subjects**

In terms of theoretical knowledge, the general basic knowledge module consists of Marxism-Leninism, Ho Chi Minh’s Ideology, social sciences and humanities, math and science, physical education and national defense education. *PR and corporate communication skills* and competencies are not explicitly mentioned within the learning outcomes; however, the curriculum states that “the graduates have a broad adaptability in order to be able to carry out work functions in press agencies and units and to take on the position of image organization for media companies, websites and information portals.”<sup>871</sup> In addition, Public Relations is an elective unit that forms part of the basic knowledge section within the Specialized

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<sup>869</sup> Cf. AJC Curriculum, Pos. 88

<sup>870</sup> Ibid., Pos. 86-90

<sup>871</sup> Ibid., Pos. 134-136

Education block. Chinese and English are the *foreign languages* taught as part of the degree.

### **Final Thesis/Project**

The final graduation work consists of 6 CP. Students have the option of completing a thesis or a graduation project. The final thesis can be replaced by coursework which differs for each major. For instance, for print journalism, students have to complete the following units: Theory and Skills of Modern Journalism, Printed Newspaper in a Digital Media Environment, and Creation of Print Newspapers.

### **Specific Program Content**

#### *Media Management*

General economics is one of the obligatory elements in the General Education block, whereas Principles of Economic Management is offered as an elective. Journalistic work is included in the Specialized Education block. Organizational competencies are included within the concrete learning outcomes for the various forms of journalism education offered in the program. The aim is to provide students with the ability to plan and organize the production of journalistic work as a whole, as well as for particular forms of journalism. Organizational skills are part of the majors in photo, radio, TV and online newspaper journalism.

#### *Digital Skills and Competencies*

The ability to use digital media technologies to organize media production processes and to create journalistic works is explicitly named as an overall learning outcome of the program and for each journalistic format. Moreover, computer skills are listed as a separate learning outcome in the curriculum. Digital media technology is a compulsory subject in all majors. Online Newspaper Journalism and Social Media and Social Networks are compulsory courses in the Specialized Education block. Students can also major in online newspaper journalism. Applied IT are part of the math and natural science module in the General Education block.

### *Specialized Reporting Skills*

At the AJC, students can choose from a range of specialized reporting units in each major journalism subject (such as print journalism), including courses on:

- Politics and society reporting
- Economic and social security reporting
- Science and education reporting
- National security and defense reporting
- Culture and art reporting
- Environment and climate change reporting
- Sports and entertainment reporting
- Religion, ethnic minorities, human rights reporting

Notably, the program offers opportunities to gain specialized reporting skills on topics relevant for development such as education, the environment and human rights. In addition, the environment and development is a theoretical unit within the humanities and social science unit of the General Education block.

## **6.2 Statistical Analysis of Student Surveys**

The statistical analysis of the student surveys was conducted at the three selected state universities in Vietnam and Cambodia.<sup>872</sup> The code plan for the statistical data analysis is outlined in the Annex.<sup>873</sup> The comprehensive findings will be presented in three parts: Firstly, a **descriptive** frequency analysis was conducted. Secondly, a **bivariate** correlation analysis was applied to the survey data. Thirdly, a **multivariate** analysis revealed relevant factors and answer patterns.

In the following, a **description of the sample and sub-samples** based on the frequency of the main demographic variables (Part A) will be presented (sub-chapter 6.1.1.1). Sub-chapter 6.1.1.2. consists of an in-depth presentation of the **frequency, correlations and factor analyses** for the main categories: *accessibility and access, program content and self-perception*

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<sup>872</sup> For the statistical analysis the software SPSS was used: <https://www.ibm.com/de-de/products/spss-statistics> [Last retrieved 9/24/2021].

<sup>873</sup> See Annex, pp. 509-518

and future perspectives. Furthermore, I outline key findings of a **country-based and institutional comparison** of the survey data. The data analysis follows the general structure of the questionnaire, with a focus on Part B (accessibility and access) and Part C (program content) and Part D (self-perception and perspectives). Moreover, I include a gender-specific analysis of the survey results.

### 6.2.1 Description of Sample and Sub-Samples

A total of 178 students filled out the questionnaire. 38 were Cambodian and 140 Vietnamese. (See Table 12)

As can be seen in Table 12, **three sub-samples** were collected, based on the three institutions in two different countries: 38 survey participants came from the DMC in Cambodia, while 43 students were enrolled at the AJC, and 97 at the USSH in Vietnam. Thus, more than half of the respondents studied at the USSH and a total of 140 were Vietnamese.

Table 12: Survey Participants by Country

COUNTRY	Frequency	Percent
Cambodia	38	21.3
Vietnam	140	78.7
Total	178	100.0

At the DMC, which is a small department within the RUPP, nearly all of the relevant upper-level students took part in the survey. At the two Vietnamese universities, it was not possible to conduct a complete survey of all second- and third-year students due to the size of the schools. The **age** of the students ranged between 20 and 26, with an average age of 21.5. In terms of the **gender** distribution, 149 out of the 178 participating students were female (see Table 14). Whereas in Cambodia the **gender** distribution was more even (57% women compared to 42% men), 90% of the Vietnamese students were women. As the cross-tabulation (Table 15) shows, this was particularly true for the USSH, where almost 95% of survey participants were young women, compared to 81% at the AJC.



Table 13: Survey Participants by Institution

INSTITUTION	Frequency	Percent
DMC	38	21.3
AJC	43	24.2
USSH	97	54.5
Total	178	100.0

Table 14: Gender Distribution

GENDER	Frequency	Percent
female	149	83,7
male	29	16,3
Total	178	100,0

Table 15: Cross-tabulation for Gender and Institution

		INSTITUTION		
	COLUMN %	DMC	AJC	USSH
GENDER	female	57,9%	81,4%	94,8%
	male	42,1%	18,6%	5,2%
	Total	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%

Regarding the **level of education**, 177 respondents held at least a high school degree with one missing response. Almost all respondents (93%) indicated that, at the time of the survey, they were studying at the undergraduate level, i.e., a Bachelor's degree.

168 (87%) of the survey participants indicated that they were in Semester 6. Whereas almost all Vietnamese students were in Year 3, at the DMC, the distribution was more uneven: 10% were only in Year 1, a bit more than half (57%) were in Year 3, and about a third (32%) were already in Semester 8. Across all three institutions, the vast majority of 95% planned to graduate within the next year or two.

## **6.2.2 Description and Comparison of Survey Results**

This sub-chapter provides a detailed statistical analysis of the main part of the survey (Part B, C and D). It consists of frequency, bivariate and multivariate analyses of the data. Moreover, this sub-chapter includes comparative analysis across institutions and countries.

As an overall result, Cambodian respondents chose 'extensively' or 'in detail' as the response for various aspects of program content (Part C) more often than Vietnamese students. By contrast, the responses of Vietnamese students are spread more evenly across the four response options.

### **6.2.2.1 Accessibility and Access**

Looking at the accessibility of the program (Part B), including tuition fees and the financial situation of students, entry requirements and initial motivation to enroll in the program, the following findings are of greatest significance.

#### **Fees and Funding**

91% of the students indicated that they had to pay fees (Q8) for their studies (see Table 16).

**Table 16: Tuition Fees**

FEES	Frequency	Percent
yes	159	91.4
no	15	8.6
<b>Total</b>	174	100,0

The average annual student fees in Cambodia were 100 Riel, which equals approximately 565 VND and corresponds to less than 1 EUR .<sup>874</sup> For the majority of Vietnamese students, the costs per year were at least 6 million VND, that is, approximately 245 EUR<sup>875</sup>. Even though the country-based costs can only be compared in relation to other national economic indicators, the data analysis reveals a crucial difference between the two Vietnamese university programs: At the USSH, the number of students paying between 7 to 8 million VND per year (285 to 326 EUR) was significantly higher than for respondents from the AJC (56 compared to only 20). Moreover, there were eight respondents at the USSH who indicated that they paid 10 million VND or more at the time.

Table 17 illustrates how students financed their degree (Q9): With 92%, the largest share of the overall sample received financial support from their families to fund their academic education. A third of the respondents co-financed their studies with a job (32%). However, only a quarter (8%) financed their studies independently through paid work without relying on family support. One quarter of all respondents (24%) combined job and financial support from their families. Only one USSH student mentioned another form of funding, namely a scholarship.

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<sup>874</sup> Source of currency conversion: <https://freecurrencyrates.com/en/exchange-rate-history/VND-KHR/2017> [Last retrieved 8/1/2021].

<sup>875</sup> Historical currency conversion for 1/2/2017: <https://www.oanda.com/currency-converter/de/?from=VND&to=EUR&amount=NaN> [Last retrieved 8/1/2021].

**Table 17: Cross-tabulation Financial Support through Job and Family**

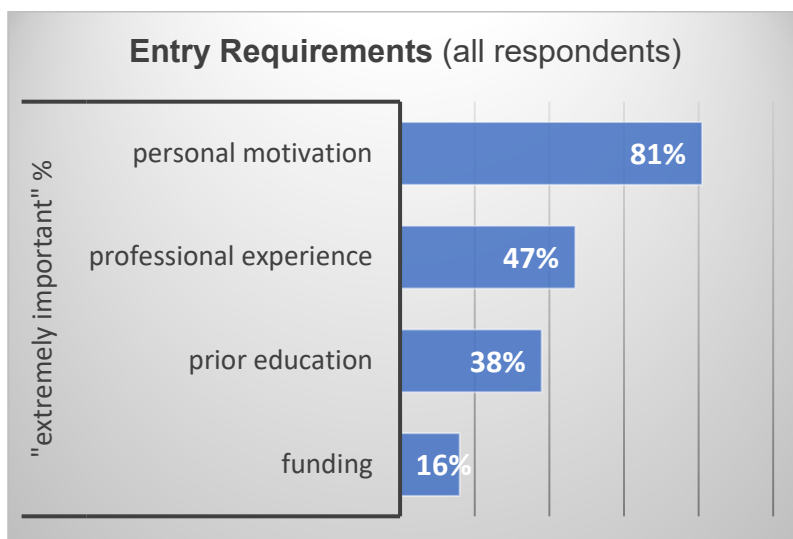
		FINANCE FAMILY		
		yes	no	Total
FINANCE JOB	yes	23,7%	8,5%	32,2%
	no	67,8%	0,0%	67,8%
	Total	91,5%	8,5%	100,0%

In terms of financing their studies, the situation for Vietnamese and Cambodian respondents was rather similar according to the data collected: In both countries, the majority received financial support from their families (84% in Cambodia, 93% in Vietnam) rather from a job, with less than a third of the respondents engaging in paid work in both countries. Looking at the institutional sub-samples, at the AJC, the share of students funding their degree through family support was the largest (95%), whereas less than a fifth (19%) had a job. At the USSH, in contrast, the share of those who financed their degree through a combination of paid work and family funding was the largest at almost a third of the respondents (31%). It is worth highlighting that 16% of the DMC students paid for their degree without depending on family funding, compared to only 5% and 7% at the AJC and the USSH respectively.

### **Entry Requirements**

80% of all survey participants found it only ‘moderately difficult’ to enter their program (Q10). Regarding the relevance of different entry requirements (Q11), the majority (81%) thought that personal motivation was ‘very important,’ followed by professional experience (47%), prior education (38%) and funding (16%).

A number of differences between the two countries can be identified in regard to the entry requirements: DMC students considered it more difficult to enter the program, with a third of the respondents rating it “extremely difficult” compared to the two Vietnamese programs. At the USSH and AJC, 85% of the students described it as “moderately difficult” to get accepted into their respective journalism degree programs.



**Figure 39: Relevance of Entry Requirements**

Almost all Cambodian respondents thought that prior education (97%) and their funding situation (93%) were relevant. Whereas also over half of the Vietnamese believed so, the share of those who viewed these requirements as “extremely” important was significantly larger for Cambodian students compared to their Vietnamese colleagues. Approximately half of the students from the Vietnamese AJC and USSH were of the opinion that professional experience is highly relevant for prospective students. The responses for both countries are rather similar concerning personal motivation as expressed in the application process. There are no significant differences in terms of the importance of different entry requirements when comparing the AJC and USSH.

### **Motivation**

Regarding the individual motivation to enroll in the journalism program (Q12) Figure 40 illustrates that gaining practical, hands-on journalistic skills was rated as ‘very important’ by 66% of all respondents. Only slightly fewer – 59% -- found the academic title equally relevant, followed by those who thought that the theoretical understanding of media and journalism in the societal context (43%) and building professional networks (42%) were the most important.

This assessment is rather similar for both countries: Generally, the factors mentioned are all rated as relevant, especially gaining a degree title and practical experience, which only 4% of all respondents rated as “not important at all.” The least relevance was attributed to network-building by AJC students with almost one fourth stating that this was not a motivation for them at all. 72% of DMC students, by contrast, indicated that they were highly motivated by the opportunity to build professional contacts. They also ascribed great importance to learning about theoretical concepts than their fellow students in Vietnam.

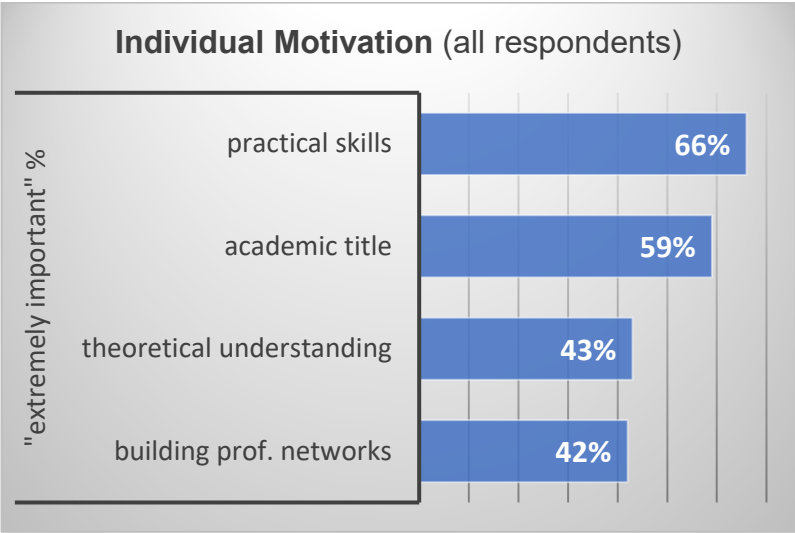


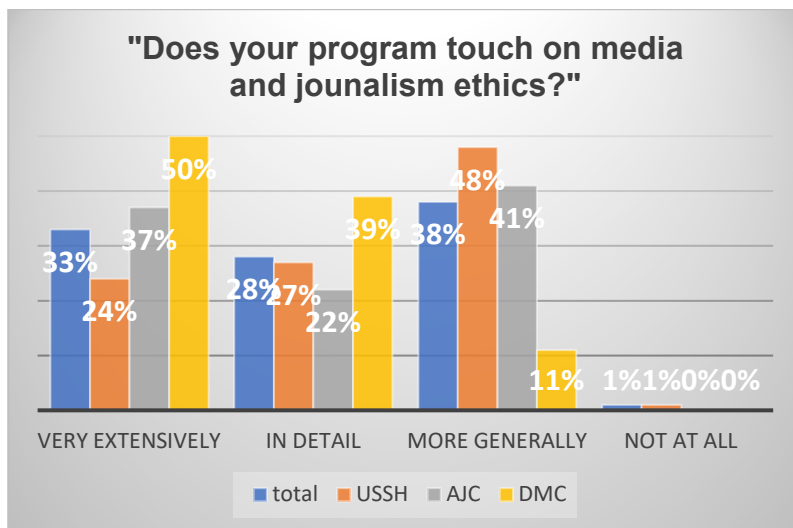
Figure 40: Relevance of Individual Motivation

6.2.2.2 Program Content

Journalistic Ethics and Professional Values

Considering the program content (Part C), almost all students stated that media and journalistic ethics (Q13) are part of their degree program at least ‘generally’ (38%), if not ‘in detail’ (29%) or even ‘very extensively’ (33%). There are some differences when comparing the different schools: According to the large majority of Cambodian students who participated in the survey, media and journalistic ethics are included either ‘in detail’ (39%) or even ‘very extensively’ (50%). In Vietnam, however, the largest share of the respondents stated that ethics are only touched upon

‘generally’(45%). The other half of the students were split between those who thought it is included in a rather detailed form, but not as a specific component of the curriculum, and those who said that the topic takes up even an entire course or module. (See Figure 41)



**Figure 41: Media and Journalism Ethics by University**

The vast majority of over 90% of the respondent indicated that professional values (Q14) are covered in the curriculum. Only the items ‘clarification of false reporting’ (83%) and ‘separation of editorial content and advertising’ (69%) received fewer positive responses. Only four respondents added other professional values as part of the open answer option that did not raise any additional aspects of professional values in journalism.

In terms of the two countries and three institutions, the answers are almost identical: Cambodian students confirmed with at least 90% of responses that all eight values are included in their programs. This is also the case for six values in the Vietnamese case, with the exception of ‘clarification of false reporting’ and ‘separation of editorial content and advertising.’ For these categories, significant shares of the respondents (21% and 38%) denied that these were part of the degree program. Comparing the AJC and the USSH, there are no noteworthy differences.

## Classic Journalistic Skills and Competencies

Regarding the question on classic journalistic competencies (Q15), more than half of the respondents indicated that the topics ‘critical thinking,’ ‘online research,’ ‘data analysis’ and ‘storytelling skills’ are covered ‘in detail’ or ‘very extensively’ as a concrete module or subject. This is the case for over two thirds of the respondents asked about interview, creative writing, print, radio, film and multimedia production skills. Notably, empirical and database research skills are only general topics in the course work according to around 40% of the respondents per item. Five additional topics were mentioned as part of the open answer option, which do not include any new aspects of classical journalistic training, but rather raise specific competencies, such as academic writing and knowledge of PR and marketing. However, these aspects are covered in other parts of the questionnaire.

Statistical factor analysis revealed three components of classic journalistic skills that individual respondents believe are covered to a detailed extent in the degree program:

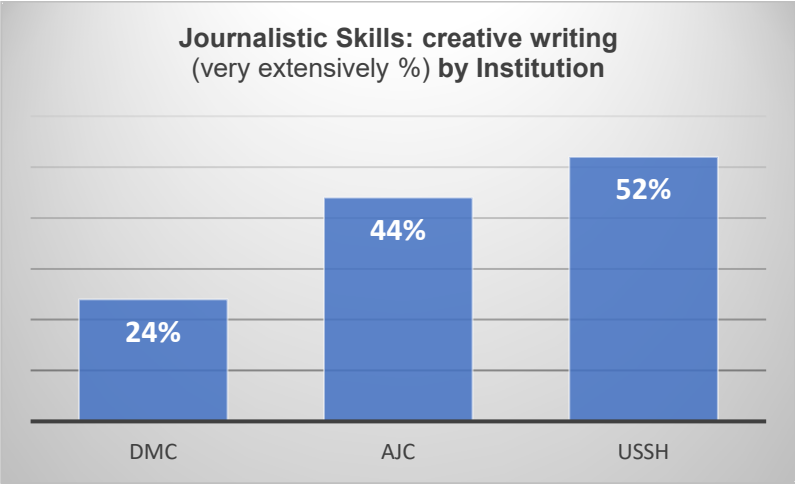
1. Production skills for TV/film, radio, multimedia and print
2. Critical thinking and research skills including empirical and online research
3. Other journalistic skills such as data analysis, interview techniques and creative writing skills.

The cross-national and cross-institutional comparison of specific production skills for print, radio, film and multimedia as classic journalistic competencies revealed certain differences: The number of Cambodian students stating that these are included ‘extensively’ in the program was significantly higher than for the Vietnamese universities. This was also the case for storytelling (48%) and interview techniques (65%). It is worth mentioning that for the latter, there was a high percentage of Vietnamese students who stated that interview skills are included as a module or subject (30%) or in other detailed form (38%).

Figure 42 shows that creative writing skills are incorporated in the curriculum ‘very extensively’ according to almost a quarter of the DMC students taking part in the survey. 76% of the Vietnamese respondents stated that it was covered in more or less detailed form in their program. The

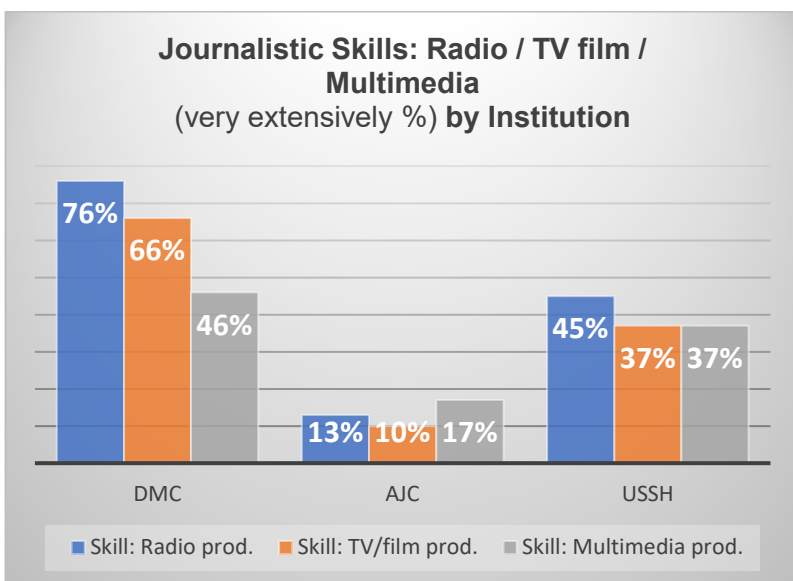


frequency distributions for research skills (empirical, online and database) and critical thinking were rather similar for both countries. These competencies were rated only slightly higher by Cambodian students.



**Figure 42: Creative Writing Skills by University**

Furthermore, there were some institutional differences for radio, film and multimedia production skills: Whereas only around 40% of USSH students believed that each production skill type was taught “very extensively,” the percentages are even less for the AJC (13% for radio, 10% for film and 17% for multimedia). According to the student survey, production skills are covered in much more detail at the DMC: 76% of respondents thought that radio skills are taught “very extensively,” 66% believed so for TV and film production and 46% for multimedia production.



**Figure 43: Creative Writing Skills by University**

Regarding the findings of all other classic journalistic skills, the comparison of the two Vietnamese universities does not reveal any clear pattern. The frequency distributions are rather similar for most skill types.

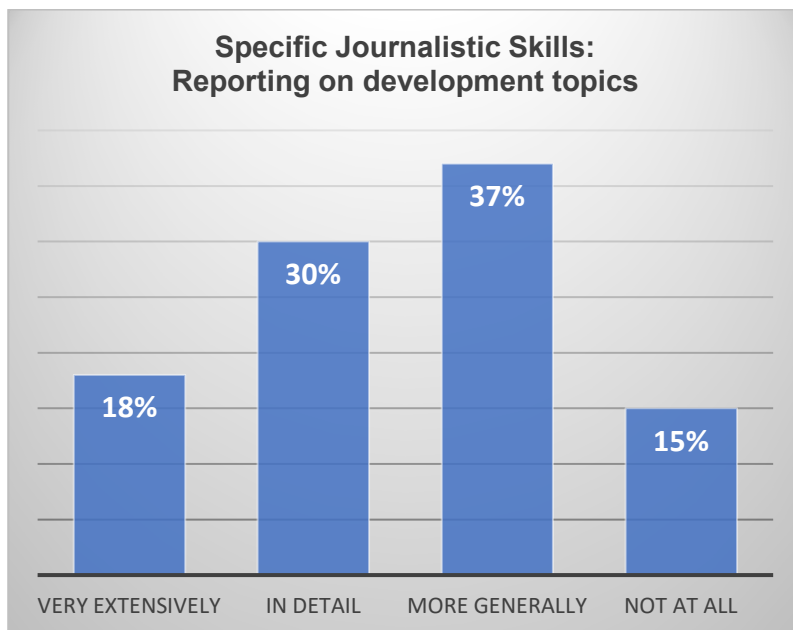
### **Specific Reporting Skills**

The relevant section on specific journalistic skills (Q16) includes questions for *reporting on development* (Q16.5) and *ICT topics* (Q16.12). Overall, 41% of respondents stated that news reporting skills are covered very extensively. A third of the students said that investigative reporting skills are covered to an equal extent. However, the other half of respondents were divided into the response options ‘generally’ and ‘in detail,’ thus not providing a clear picture.

Other specific reporting competencies are covered only generally or in some detail according to the students, including: political and election reporting, conflict-sensitive journalism, reporting on development topics, environment, health and science journalism, reporting on cultural events, and sports and entertainment. Business journalism, reporting on ethnic and indigenous minorities, and ICT topics are also only covered

sporadically in some lectures and seminars according to over a third each of the survey participants. The remaining respondents were split between stating that these reporting types are not included at all or in some detail.

Looking in particular at topics relevant for development (Q 16.5), as the bar graph Figure 44 shows, 48% stated that development reporting skills are covered at least 'in detail' or 'very extensively.'



**Figure 44: Development Reporting All Universities**

According to a factor analysis of the entire sample, two groups can be distinguished:

1. *Primary reporting skills*, i.e., specific types of reporting, including investigative reporting, news reporting and conflict-sensitive reporting
2. *Secondary reporting skills*, i.e., reporting on specific topics, consisting of business and economic reporting, reporting on indigenous and ethnic minorities, sports and entertainment, ICT, health and science, cultural events, the environment and development topics.

Contrasting the data for each of the countries and schools for specific reporting skills again, the responses from AJC and USSH were more evenly spread across all response options. DMC students, by contrast, seem to have a more unified view on the extent and the form in which the various reporting types are covered as part of their degree program, albeit with some exceptions: The answers for *reporting on ICT topics* are almost evenly divided into the three groups ‘not at all,’ ‘generally’ and ‘in detail’ for both countries. This is also the case for both Vietnam and Cambodia in terms of sports and entertainment reporting. The biggest difference can be found with respect to investigative (91%) and conflict-sensitive reporting (68%), which the great majority of Cambodian students believed are covered at least ‘in detail,’ if not ‘extensively,’ in contrast to the Vietnamese respondents, who were divided with at least a third of them choosing ‘generally’ as a response. In both countries, news reporting appears as the topic that is integrated most extensively as a particular module or subject at both the Cambodian (62%) and the Vietnamese universities (36%). According to about 50% of the DMC students, reporting on development topics, the environment, science and business is covered only in a general form as part of their degree. Again, here the responses of the Vietnamese students are less unified.

As outlined earlier, about half of all survey participants thought that *reporting on development topics* (Q16.5) was covered in some detail, with the majority of the respondents studying at the AJC (57%), followed by journalism students from the USSH (45%) and the DMC (42%).

In terms of the institutional effects in Vietnam, some differences can be highlighted: At more than 50%, significantly more AJC students thought that news and investigative reporting was covered ‘extensively’ as a module or subject in the journalism degree program. Conflict-sensitive reporting, reporting on development topics, the environment, health and science, and cultural events and issues were included to a more detailed extent at the AJC compared to the USSH, where the majority of the respondents indicated that it is only touched upon in a general form. There are no differences across all three institutions concerning reporting on ICT topics, which is taught across various subjects and modules or not at all, as indicated by an almost equal shares of responses.

## Digital Journalism

Most skills areas within the field of digital journalism (Q17) appear to be elements of the examined degree programs only to a very basic extent or not at all. These include mobile research and reporting, blogging, reporting on ICT topics, and programming and content management skills for websites. However, social media research and reporting, and verification skills, however, are in fact integral parts of the curricula. For both categories, over two thirds of the students stated that these competencies were developed either ‘in detail’ or even ‘very extensively’ in the form of an entire module or subject. By contrast, the topic of mobile applications produced the biggest gap: Programming skills (56%) and content management (53%) are not included at all in the degree according to more than half of the respondents. Two factors can be identified for digital skills:

1. *Digital research and reporting skills* such as online, social media, mobile research and reporting on ICT topics
2. *Technical skills* such as programming and content management skills for mobile apps and websites

The country and university-based analysis reveals that online research, social media research and reporting, and verification of online sources and content are integrated into the DMC curriculum to a more detailed degree compared to the Vietnamese programs. The main similarity is that blogging, mobile reporting and reporting on ICT topics were only broadly covered in the curricula in both countries. Even less attention was given to programming and content management skills for both websites and mobile applications, with a majority of students stating that they were not covered at all or only generally. AJC students indicated this even more clearly through their responses: Over 50% of them stated that programming and content management (CMS) were not included at all in their degree program, whereas the responses from USSH students are more evenly distributed.

## Entrepreneurial and Media Management Skills

Regarding entrepreneurial and media management skills (Q18), it is noteworthy that one student stated in the open answer field that they had never heard of these topics before. A detailed analysis of the closed questions confirms this perspective. Only organizational development and strategic

planning skills were rated as a topic that was included in the curricula in some detailed form. However, the answers are almost evenly divided into the three response options 'not at all,' 'generally' and 'in detail.' Over 65% of all respondents said that financial planning and almost half (46%) that accounting skills were not covered at all. Equally, according to more than two thirds of the survey participants, essential competencies such as bookkeeping, business planning, project and human resource management skills were not part of the program at all or only covered only superficially.

The statistical search for relevant patterns reveals only one general *factor* that combines all items, that is: those respondents who believed that one aspect was covered 'very extensively' or 'in detail' believed this to be true for all media management skills mentioned in the survey. The share of these respondents is, however, rather low (between 8% and 35%).

The results for **entrepreneurial and media management skills** (Q18) for both countries are quite similar. Negative responses outweigh positive at both the DMC and the Vietnamese universities, especially for accounting and bookkeeping skills (66% and 64% stated that these topics are not included at all), but also financial planning and fundraising, and business planning and development competencies. For human resource and project management, the responses of the Vietnamese students are more negative than those enrolled in the DMC. Organizational development and strategic planning was the only topic for which the answers were divided primarily and fairly evenly into those who say it is not included at all, only 'generally' and 'in detail.' Also, for this question block the responses from AJC students were more nuanced: The share of those who provided negative responses was larger for all media management skill types compared to USSH survey participants.

The factor analysis for all questions regarding journalistic competencies (Q15 to Q18) reveals five relevant factors for explaining the variances of answers. After leaving out redundant variables, second level factor analysis leads to a 5-factor-solution which explains 71% of the variance in the variables regarding journalistic competencies. These factors are:

1. *Specific reporting skills*: nine out of twelve reporting skills listed (Q16)

2. *Media management skills*: all six aspects of media management and entrepreneurial skills (Q18)
3. *Digital research skills*: mainly items from Q17, including online research, social media and mobile research and reporting, online verification, but also classic interview and analytical skills (Q15)
4. *Production skills* for film, radio, print and multimedia (Q15)
5. *Programming and CMS skills* for websites and apps (Q17)

## Theory and Practice

Considering the integration of theory and practice (Q19 and Q20), including the level of interdisciplinarity, a number of findings are relevant: Overall, the Vietnamese and Cambodian students have a variety of options to gain *practical experience as part of the degree program* (Q19): 86% stated they are able to do an internship at a media company, 77% mention taking part in excursions and field trips followed by contributing to newspaper, magazine or other print publication on-campus or in class (63%), TV or film production (61%), radio production (57%) and/or online content such as websites, social media or blogs (55%).

The comparison between the responses from the Cambodian and Vietnamese survey participants reveals that the share of DMC students who thought they had a range of practical learning opportunities as part of their degree program is larger than for the Vietnamese students. Over 90% of the DMC students stated that they could take part in internships in the media industry, excursions and/or curricular radio production. Internships and excursions also seem to be part of the Vietnamese degrees, according to 83% of AJC and 72% of USSH students. However, radio, print, film/video and web production experience on-campus or in class is limited at the Vietnamese universities. Internships seem to be more institutionalized at the AJC compared to the USSH, where over 20% of the respondents stated that they do not have the opportunity of gaining experience through an internship during their degree. Furthermore, around 80% of the AJC students claimed that radio, film and online production were not integrated into the curriculum as practical components. By contrast, the focus at the AJC appears to be on providing print production experience (65%). Practical learning opportunities were provided for different media formats including online production at the USSH according to the majority of the respondents. Nonetheless, a significant share of

USSH students, ranging between 30% and 45%, thought that the program does not include practical learning opportunities for media production in the four areas.

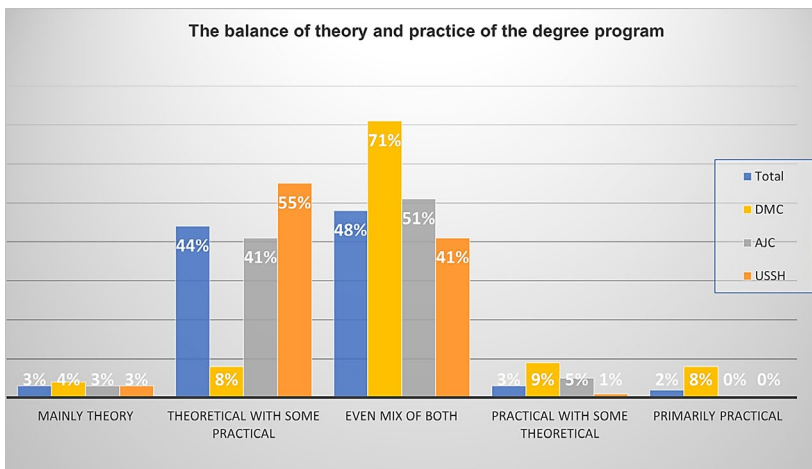
Asked whether their degree includes specific *theoretical topics* (Q20), about the role of media and journalism in society, 'journalism as a profession' (85%), 'history of journalism' (73%) and the 'role of media in politics' (69%) were the highest-ranking topics. Notably, the 'economics of the media' held the lowest rank, with only 31% of the students stating that it was covered 'in detail' or even 'extensively.' Half of the students believed that the other topics 'intercultural communication,' 'local media landscape' and 'international media and globalization' were covered in more or less detailed fashion.

DMC students indicated that theoretical topics were covered very extensively, especially journalism as a profession (73%) and the role of media in politics and political communication (65%), with the exception of media business and economics, media systems of other countries, and international media and globalization. In the Vietnamese programs, most topics were touched upon at least generally. Only for entrepreneurial journalism and the economic aspects of the media, did a substantial share of the Vietnamese students accounting for almost a third of all the respondents from the AJC and the USSH, say that this topic was not covered at all.

As another difference: over half of the DMC students stated that information on the local media system was included in detail with almost 30% saying that it was integrated to the extent of a separate module or subject. In contrast, over 40% of the Vietnamese respondents indicated that this was only a general topic. In terms of institutional effects, AJC students stated that the history of journalism and media, the journalistic profession, and media and politics were covered to a greater extent, compared to the USSH. Aspects of international media and globalization were covered as their own curricular component at the AJC according to 21% of the students in contrast to only 8% at the USSH.

A substantial portion of the survey participants (48%) believed that the degree was made up of an *even mix of theoretical and practical elements* (Q24). However, only slightly fewer respondents (46%) stated that the program was more theoretical, whereas only 6% believed the curriculum was rather practical or even consisted primarily of practical training.





**Figure 45: Balance of Theory and Practice**

The statistical results vary between the two countries: Vietnamese journalism students believed the degree program was rather theoretical (50%) or consisted of an even mix (44%). The Cambodian program at the DMC was described as a balance of theory and practice by over 65%. Another fifth of the respondents thought that the coursework was more practical. Looking at the two different universities in Vietnam, there is only a minor variation with respect to those respondents who believed that there was a balance of theory and practice: 51% at the AJC versus 40% of students at the USSH, where over half (54%) stated that theory outweighed practice at least to some extent in their degree.

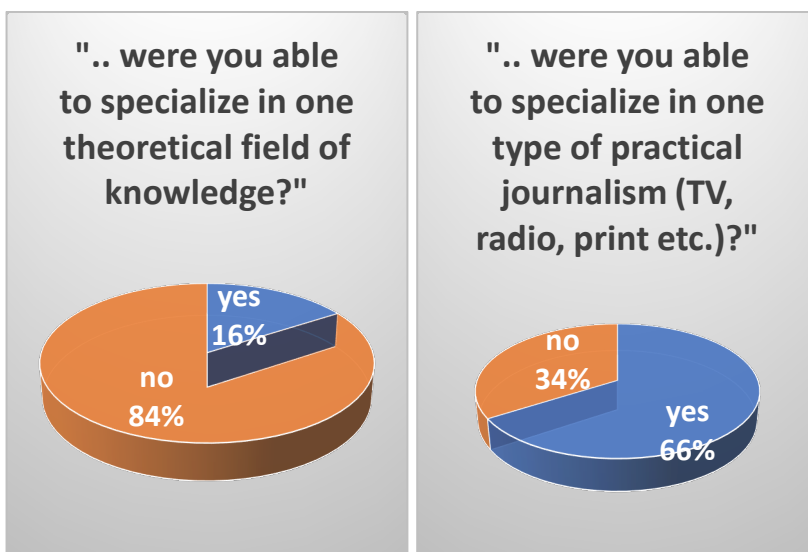
### Interdisciplinarity

In order to assess interdisciplinarity, all students were asked about their *access to other subject areas or disciplines* (Q21) as part of the program. The vast majority of students (86%) stated that they had access to related fields of media and communication studies such as public relations, marketing and advertising. More than half of the respondents said that they could access courses in history and politics (61%), ICT and computer science (61%), social and economics sciences (59%), and linguistic and cultural

studies (57%). By contrast, access to natural science subjects seems very limited: 88% thought they did not have access to these disciplines.

In terms of the opportunity to *specialize in either a theoretical or a practical area* (Q22 and Q23), the vast majority of 84% felt that they were not able to specialize in theoretical subjects (see Figure 46).

The 28 survey participants who believed they could specialize in a specific field mentioned a wide range of different topics, including particular branches of business studies and political science. Some topics such as public relations and mass communication are closely linked to basic journalism education. One student mentioned practical journalism ('broadcast journalism and video production').



**Figure 46: Pie Charts for Theoretical vs. Practical Specialization**

The options regarding practical specialization (see Figure 46) were perceived as significantly greater than for theoretical subjects with 66% of the students indicating that they could develop a practical specialization as part of their journalism degree. These included newspaper, radio, online journalism as well as TV and film production or public relations. Here, the similarities between countries outweigh the differences: Student

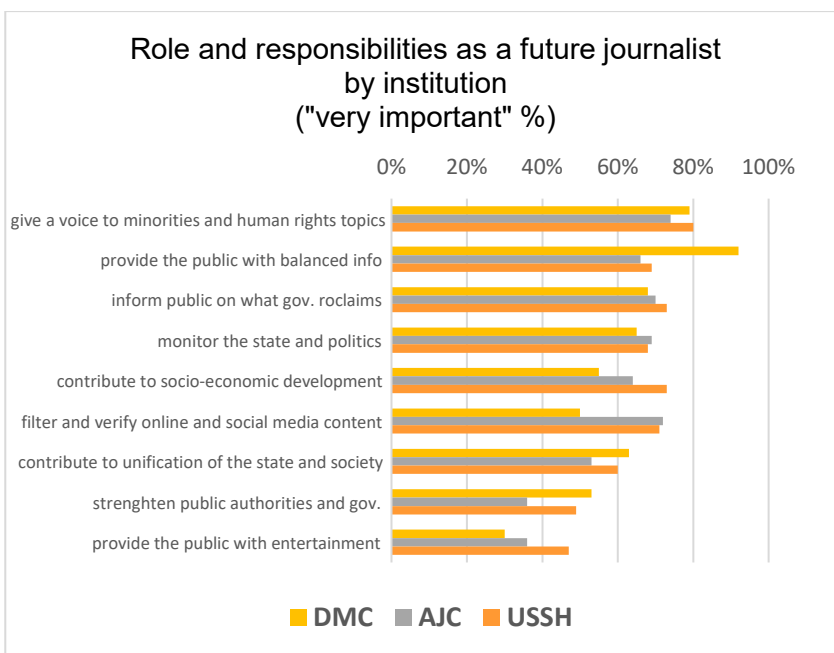
responses indicated that although access to natural sciences was limited, other fields of communication sciences could be tapped into in both the Cambodian and Vietnamese degree programs. Perceptions of access to ICT and computer sciences were divided, with a slight majority of 57% in Cambodia and 62% in Vietnam giving a positive response. A similar distribution appeared for access to social and economic sciences. Differences also appear for history and political science which seemed more accessible for DMC students (92%) than for the programs in Hanoi (52%), and for linguistic and cultural studies, which were accessible according to 64% of the Vietnamese respondents, but not attainable for 71% of Cambodian journalism students.

Distinguishing between the two Vietnamese university programs, it is worth noting that history and political science, linguistic and cultural studies as well as ICT and computer sciences were considered much more accessible by AJC students than those at the USSH. At the same time, the USSH journalism degree was more connected to other fields of communication studies according to the student responses.

The country comparison also demonstrates similarities regarding the opportunities to specialize in a practical field or topic. Whereas 89% Vietnamese students and 65% Cambodians stated that they cannot specialize in a theoretical field, the vast majority (63% and 73%) indicated that it was possible to choose a practical specialization.

### **6.2.2.3 Self-Perception and Future Perspectives**

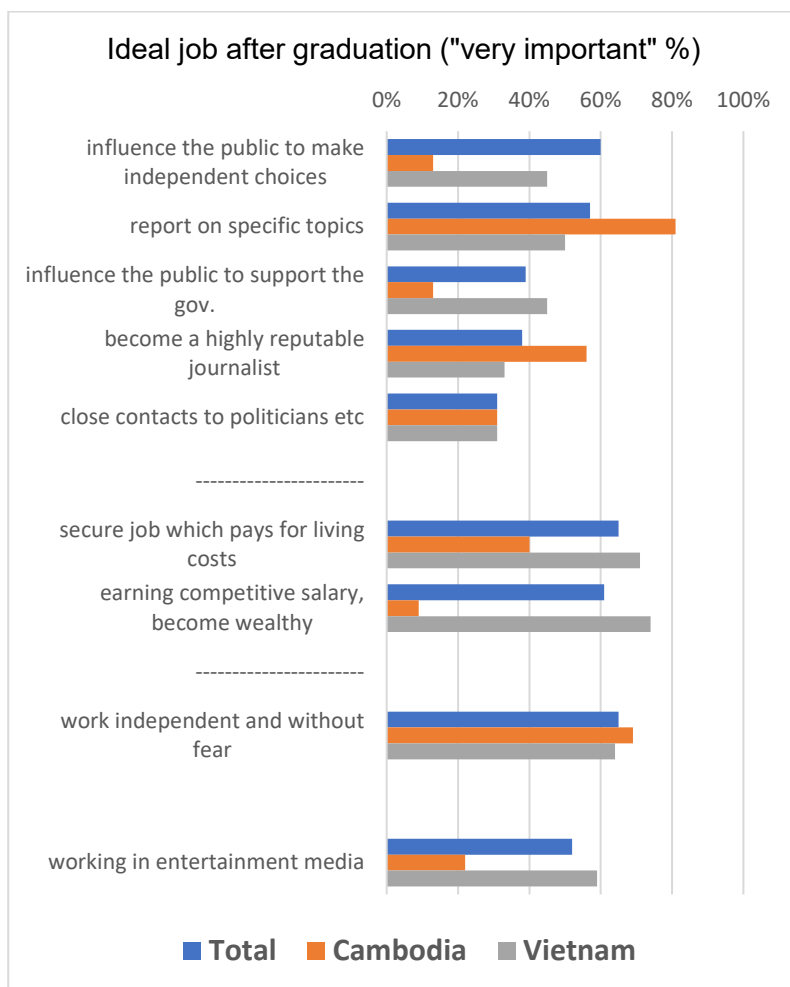
Notably, considering the self-perception of future journalism graduates (Part D) from Vietnam and Cambodia who took part in the survey, the most important *societal role and responsibility as a future journalist* (Q25) was ‘to give voice to minorities and human rights topics’ (79%) followed by ‘to provide the public with balanced information’ (74%) and ‘to inform the public on what the government proclaims’ (71%). Other aspects such as ‘monitoring the state and politics,’ ‘contributing to socio-economic development,’ ‘verifying online and social media content’ and ‘unification of state and society’ also ranked high, with over half of the respondents believing that they were ‘very important.’ Slightly less than half of the students (47%) thought that ‘strengthening the position of authorities’ was of major relevance. Overall, only 40% saw themselves as providers of public entertainment. Figure 47 shows the differences for each institution.



**Figure 47: Role and Responsibilities as a Future Journalist**

While the frequency of these responses does not deliver a clear picture of the perception of key journalistic roles and responsibilities, the statistical search for patterns revealed two main factors:

1. *Humanitarian 'watchdog'*: Students who thought their role was 'to give a voice to minorities and human rights topics,' 'to contribute to socio-economic development by reporting on it,' combined with those who believed that their task was 'to filter and verify existing online and social media content for the audience' and 'to monitor the state and politics.'
2. *Link between public and politics*: These responses reflected a clear tendency to be the 'mouthpiece' of government authorities. Students thought they should 'contribute to a unification of the state and society by reporting on related issues,' followed by the responsibility 'to inform the public on what the government proclaims' and 'to strengthen the position of public authorities and the government.'



**Figure 48: Ideal Job after Graduation by Country**

Figure 48 illustrates the results of the *ideal job after graduation* (Q26) in both countries. Secure job prospects (65%) and a competitive salary and wealth (61%) were perceived as highly important by large majorities of the survey participants. More than half of the respondent also considered other more intrinsic aspects as highly relevant for their choice of job, including the ability to work editorially independently and without fear of reprisals (65%), to influence the public to make informed and

independent choices (60%), and to report on specific socially relevant topics (57%). Working in entertainment media (52%) was also at the top of the list, whereas the ability to influence the public to support the government (39%) and to have close contacts to politicians and state authorities (31%) ranked relatively low. Personal satisfaction and becoming a highly reputable journalist was only considered as 'very important' by 38% of the students. Factor analysis for the ideal job as a future journalist identified three factors:

1. Public service function: Respondents ideally wanted to hold a public service function with a slight tendency towards acting as the government's 'mouthpiece.' Similar to Q25, there was a dichotomy between relaying pro-government perspectives on the one hand, and providing independent information and monitoring politicians and state authorities on the other hand. The item with the highest value was 'being able to influence the public to make informed and independent choices,' followed by 'having close contact to politicians and state authorities,' 'being able to influence the public to support government,' and 'become a highly reputable journalist that contributes to the forthcoming of the country,' and to report on socially relevant topics.
2. Competitive salary and job security
3. Editorial independence and no fear of reprisals

When comparing the two countries, journalistic self-perception turned out to be rather similar: considering their *societal role and responsibility as a future journalist*, it was extremely important to the majority of students from both countries to inform the public about government proclamations, to contribute to the unification of the state and society, and to monitor the state and politics. Notably, reporting on human rights issues and amplifying minority perspectives was a deeply meaningful task for around 78% of the students from both countries. Moreover, for over 90% of the DMC students, it was very important to provide balanced information compared to 68% at AJC and USSH. In contrast, contributing to development, filtering and verifying online content and providing the public with entertainment appeared slightly more relevant to Vietnamese students than to respondents from the DMC. No significant institutional effects could be elucidated for the two Vietnamese university programs.

There were nonetheless differences between countries when considering the *ideal job after graduation*: For Cambodian students, it was of high importance to be in a position to report independently (68%), to influence the public to make independent and informed decisions (78%) and to report on socially relevant topics (81%). Compared to that, Vietnamese respondents indicated that a secure job (71%) and a competitive salary (73%) were most relevant to them. For the majority of the DMC students these two financial aspects were only moderately relevant together with ‘working in entertainment,’ which in turn was extremely attractive for over half of the Vietnamese students. So was ‘independent reporting,’ ‘influencing the public to make independent choices’ and ‘reporting on socially relevant topics.’ The importance of having close contacts to politicians and becoming a reputable and influential journalist was similar for both countries. 70 to 80% of the respondents rated this as at least ‘moderately important.’ Notably, the biggest difference appeared in ‘influencing the public to support the government,’ which over 80% of Vietnamese students viewed as important, whereas 66% of the DMC respondents thought this was not at all important. Similar to the questions on journalistic self-perception (Q25), there were no significant institutional effects in comparing the AJC and the USSH.

#### **6.2.2.4 Cross-National and Cross-Institutional Comparison of Factors**

Regarding the mean differences of country and institution with skills factors (Q15 to Q18), there are only significant differences in one of the five identified factors, namely production skills: In Cambodia, from the perspective of the students, production skills are integrated into the curriculum in more detailed form than in Vietnam. Considering institution-based differences, the AJC scores significantly lower than the USSH. In contrast, AJC scored significantly higher than the USSH in digital research skills. Correlation analysis of country and institution with identified factors for future role (Q25) and ideal job (Q26) as journalists revealed the following: In Vietnam, the ideal job is determined to a greater extent by the ideal of *having job security and sufficient income*. For Cambodian students, in contrast, the ideal of *editorial independence and no fear of reprisals* is much more relevant. The comparison of mean values for the three institutions specifies these findings: Job security and income was not terribly relevant for DMC students, whereas editorial independence was only of minor importance for the students from the USSH and the AJC.

### 6.2.2.5 Gender Analysis

As part of the bivariate analysis, the survey data can be distinguished between female and male respondents. It is important to highlight that the findings are limited primarily to the sample from the DMC. As explained earlier, a significant share of slightly more than 40% of the Cambodian participants were men, whereas in Vietnam an average of 90% of the respondents were female at both universities. In statistical terms, however, the following results refer to the complete sample.

The gender analysis focuses on the respondents' answers about accessibility to the program including motivational aspects (Part B) and their professional role-perception including ideal job prospects (Part D). The questions on program content (Part C) are not part of this gender analysis, as this part of the survey primarily served the content-based mapping and analysis of the selected journalism degrees in Vietnam and Cambodia.

First of all, in terms of their **financial situations**, more male students funded their degree with a job (41% compared to 30% of the women) and fewer men received financial support from their families at the time of the survey. While equal shares of female and male students considered the overall **entry requirements** to be very demanding (79% and 80%), more men (17%) than women (10%) thought that they were 'extremely difficult.' Looking at concrete entry requirements, female and male students shared the opinion that personal motivation had very high relevance (82% and 72%), followed by prior education and knowledge, which slightly more male respondents considered extremely relevant (59% compared to 34% women). Similarly, more than double the number of men perceived the funding situation as highly important (33% compared to 12%). Professional experience was rated as important by a large majority of both women (90%) and men (83%).

Comparing the initial individual **motivations** of female and male students for enrolling in the journalism degree program, both female and male students considered the opportunity to gain hands-on, practical journalistic skills as the biggest motivational factor. 66% of women and 72% of men described it as 'extremely important' to them. Only 4% did not view this as an incentive. This was followed by the desire 'to hold an academic degree after graduation' which almost evenly 96% of all respondents considered somewhat or very relevant to their personal career. There were



some differences regarding a 'theoretical understanding of the role of media and journalism in society' as a motivational factor, which seemed more important to male students (62% versus 29% women). This was also the case for professional networks which the same percentage of men (62%) found highly motivational compared to 37% of women.

Regarding their professional **self-perception and future perspectives** as journalists, the views of female and male students proved to be rather similar in terms of the way they viewed their *role and responsibility in society* (Q25). The only notable difference appears for the item 'to provide the public with entertainment': Whereas the share of those who do not find this aspect important is similar for both genders, 43% of female students found it more relevant compared to only a quarter of all male students.

Asked about their *ideal job after graduation* (Q26), the results are more nuanced. To begin with, there are similarities for both genders when it comes to editorial independence and job security. Both aspects are highly relevant for both women and men. For female respondents, the most decisive factor was job security, which 66% found highly important, followed by a competitive salary (65%), editorial independence (64%), informing the public (58%), reporting on relevant topics (54%) and working in entertainment media (53%). In comparison, men put editorial independence at the top, as 72% considered it extremely important. Reporting on relevant topics and informing the public share second place, with 70%, followed by job security as the third factor to which more than half of the male respondents attribute high importance (60%). The opinions between male and female students are divided when it comes to having close contacts to politicians and state authorities and influencing the public to support the government: Whereas the share of women who found the latter extremely relevant to their future job (42% versus 27% men), more men (48%) considered contacts to political figures and state authorities as very important, compared to female survey respondents (28%). The distribution of responses by women and men were similar in terms of their desire to contribute to the progress of the country as highly reputable journalists with a fairly even distribution of 80% for both genders that consider this aspect relevant or even very relevant.

### 6.3 Qualitative Content Analysis of Expert Interviews and Alumni Data

This sub-chapter outlines the key findings from the qualitative content analysis of a total of nineteen semi-structured focus interviews with local and international experts (see selection criteria in sub-chapter 5.2.3). Moreover, a total of eleven graduates participated in short questionnaires in Vietnam and a Focus Group Discussion (FGD) in Cambodia. Expert interviews were conducted with similar numbers of experts for Cambodia (11) and Vietnam (9). At the USSH, three representatives were interviewed, at the AJC four university staff members took part in the study. One of the AJC interviewees also held the position of director at the VJA at the time of this study. In addition, one interview with an international expert for Vietnam and one expert talk with a representative of a private journalism training institution were included in the data analysis as no other international experts could be identified for Vietnam later on. For Cambodia, the analysis included five interviews with local DMC staff, four international experts for journalism education in Cambodia and one representative of a journalism association. The pre-test interview with a Cambodian lecturer was included in the data analysis as the insights and reflections provided by the interviewee seemed too relevant to be ignored. It is crucial to mention that various interview partners had multiple roles. Apart from being journalism instructors at the university level, some of them also held managerial positions as faculty heads, deans or interim directors in the case of Cambodia. Principally, all local interviewees were considered local experts for the field of journalism education. The majority of the interviewed instructors in Vietnam and all local teaching staff at the DMC were graduates of the respective journalism degree programs. And anonymized overview of all local and international experts can be found in the Annex.<sup>876</sup>

In Cambodia, a FGD was conducted with four graduates from the DMC. In Vietnam, it was not possible to gather a group of alumni from both schools. However, six alumni from USSH responded to a short questionnaire via email that included the same topics as the guideline for the FGD in Cambodia. Qualitative content analysis of the interview data was based

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<sup>876</sup> Annex, p. 530.

on Mayring<sup>877</sup> and Kuckartz<sup>878</sup> and supported by MAXQDA. The original interview guidelines for focus interviews and FGD were used as a basis for the concrete analytical categories for each dimension. In the process of coding the interview transcripts in MAXQDA, the analytical categories were adapted and further developed – that is, codes and subcodes were added and those without substantial findings deleted. The following section outlines the analytical dimensions and categories on the micro, meso and macro level. Table 18 outlines the final code system, exported from MAXQDA. It also shows how many times the codes were allocated to a certain section of the transcribed interviews.

### **Expert Interviews**

As Table 18 outlines, the analysis on the *micro level* focuses on one dimension, i.e., the conditions for students. This covers aspects such as the admission and application process, tuition fees and scholarships, and alumni support. Sub-chapters 6.3.1.1., 6.3.2.1. and 6.3.3.1. outline the findings for the analytical categories for each university.

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<sup>877</sup> Mayring, P. (2010).

<sup>878</sup> Kuckartz, U. (2014-b).

**Table 18: Code System for Expert Interviews on Micro, Meso and Macro Level**

Codes		Frequencies
Micro level		0
CONDITIONS FOR STUDENTS		0
	Teaching styles and methods	14
	Relationship instructors student	14
	Teaching material and equipment	8
	Working students	2
	Alumni support	0
	Career support	9
	Alumni program	6
	Student admission	0
	Scholarships	1
	Tuition fees	5
	No. of students	2
	Demographics	4
	Application process	5
	Entry requirements and exam	9

**Table 18: Code System for Expert Interviews on Micro, Meso and Macro Level (cont'd)**

Codes			Frequencies
Meso level			0
INSTITUTIONAL ASPECTS			0
	Financial and human resources		0
	Funding and sustainability		29
	Human Resources		140
	Collaboration among instructors		4
	Relationship instructors management		13
	International instructors		19
	Local teaching staff		27
	Instructor training and development		7
	Instructor salaries and incentives		11
	Educational and professional profiles		37
	Collaboration and networks		0
	International cooperation		41
	Governmental links		23
	Ministries		13
	Politicians		7
	Industry collaboration		12
	University links		0

**Table 18: Code System for Expert Interviews on Micro, Meso and Macro Level (cont'd)**

Codes		Frequencies
	Main university	16
	Other related media degrees	11
	Internal Master's degree	3
	PR subjects and programs	3
	Exchange or international programs	4
	Other types of collaboration	6
	Quality and change management	0
	Curriculum development and amendments	31
	External advisory	6
	Monitoring and evaluation	9
	Accreditation	2
	Student evaluation	10
<b>CURRICULUM</b>		0
	General program content	0
	Overall objectives and structure	11
	Exams and final thesis	4
	Balance of theory and practice	12
	Other non-journalistic subjects	0
	PR skills	5
	English language skills	6
	Basic journalistic skills	0
	Research skills	5

**Table 18: Code System for Expert Interviews on Micro, Meso and Macro Level (cont'd)**

Codes		Frequencies
	Critical thinking skills	5
	Practical off campus elements	21
	Practical on-campus elements	21
	Theoretical knowledge	0
	Specialized academic knowledge	2
	Ethics and professional values	15
	Other types journalism theory	2
	Societal role and responsibility	8
	Specific program content	0
	Digital skills and competences	23
	Media management and entrepreneurial journalism	13
	Specialized reporting skills	12
	Finance and economic reporting	2
	Development journalism	4
	Environmental reporting	1
	Conflict-sensitive reporting	4
<b>Macro level</b>		<b>0</b>
Journalism Education Landscape		<b>23</b>
Internationalization		<b>9</b>
Technological change and innovation		<b>10</b>
Political influence		<b>24</b>
Market conditions		<b>25</b>
	Employment perspectives	30
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>712</b>

The second set of sub-chapters (6.3.1.2., 6.3.2.2., 6.3.3.2.) concentrate on the *meso level*. This encompasses relevant results concerning the *program*

*content* in terms of structure and key elements. A substantial part of the content analysis explores the details of the program content adding on to the curriculum analysis (see Chapter 6.1) and the quantitative student survey (see sub-chapter 6.2). In addition, *institutional aspects* such as teaching conditions, external collaborations and networks, quality and change management, and financial and human resource management. Asking local and international experts as well as graduates of the respective programs' questions about the curriculum of the selected degree programs had two aims: firstly, to confirm the overall structure, general and specific content of each program, and secondly, to identify deviations and discrepancies from the official curriculum. Such discrepancies may be closely related to challenges in the implementation of the program content, to be assessed in the following. Moreover, the analysis of the responses goes beyond the assessment criteria of the structural and content analysis of the curricula. In terms of the program content, the analysis distinguishes general and specific aspects of the degree program. As a second dimension of the assessment, institutional aspects were analyzed by concentrating on financial resources and human resources, collaborations and networks, and quality and change management.

On the *macro level*, the study explores the journalism education landscape in the respective countries from the perspective of local and international experts and alumni. The analysis assesses the journalistic educational landscape in the country with a clear focus on current opportunities and challenges. Technological innovation, political influences, market conditions and employment perspectives have been identified as the most relevant categories. Table 19 shows the final codes and subcodes on the macro level.

### **Alumni Survey and Focus Group Discussion**

In addition to this multi-level analysis of expert interviews, this section outlines the results of the alumni survey in Vietnam and the FGD with Cambodian graduates. The findings were integrated into the relevant sub-chapters based on the analytical dimensions and categories presented in Table 19. The alumni discussed *institutional aspects* and the *program content*. The participant responses were assessed based on a similar code system for general and specific program content. This included the three main topics of interest of this study: digital skills, media management and



entrepreneurial skills and specialized reporting skills. Moreover, they were asked to formulate concrete suggestions to the school. Both the institutional dimension and curriculum assessment center on the *meso level*.

In addition, the main findings with regard to the graduates' experiences on the job market will be outlined, including difficulties finding a job after graduation, their current jobs, their criteria for choosing particular positions, whether they work as journalists and the extent to which they apply at work what they learned at university. This dimension refers to the *macro level*.

Table 18 and Table 19 include the frequency of each code. Even though the content of the expert interviews and alumni data was analyzed using a qualitative approach, the numbers allowed for the elimination of very low frequency codes. For both the content analysis of the expert interviews and the alumni data, categories without substantial findings in terms of quantity or quality were not included in the presentation or the results. Furthermore, the high frequency of certain codes indicated a certain level of relevance for the respective topic, which was taken into account in the following analysis.

**Table 19: Code System for Alumni Data**

<b>Codes</b>		<b>Frequencies</b>
<b>Journalism Education Institution</b>		<b>0</b>
	Suggestions to school	11
	Level of satisfaction	7
<b>Program Content</b>		<b>0</b>
	Overall skills and competences gained	8
	Missing elements	6
	English skills	4
	Specialization	3

Table 19: Code System for Alumni Data (cont'd)

Codes		Frequencies
	Societal role and responsibility	5
	Practical components off-campus	8
	Practical components on-campus	8
	Balance of theory and practice	11
	Media management and entrepreneurial skills	8
	Development journalism	6
	Digital skills	9
	Journalistic ethics and professional values	7
<b>Experiences on the Job Market</b>		<b>0</b>
	Current job and tasks	15
	Difficulty finding a job after graduation	10
	Criteria to accept current job	10
	Journalistic work and application of degree	12
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>148</b>

### 6.3.1 DMC

#### 6.3.1.1 Micro Level: Conditions for Students

##### Student Admission

Regarding the *number of students*, the DMC started off with only 20 to 25 students due to limited resources.<sup>879</sup> In 2017, approximately 30 students per year were studying at the school. Scholarships are provided to all of them by the government. There were no *tuition fees* at the time of data collection.<sup>880</sup> Yet, the DMC was developing a fee-based program strategy. As part of this process, the curriculum and the graduation guidelines were

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<sup>879</sup> Cf. Interviewee 9, #00:21:20#

<sup>880</sup> Cf. Interviewee 1, #00:15:28#

amended and approved by the RUPP and the Ministry.<sup>881</sup> In terms of *demographics*, the number of female students has grown over the years. Likely due to reputation of journalism being a dangerous and poorly paid job, many parents would not have wanted their daughters to become reporters. One expert explained that today, there is a better understanding of the media market and communication has become a promising industry especially for women.<sup>882</sup>

In terms of the *application process*, the number of applicants per year fluctuates between 300 and 100.<sup>883</sup> With respect to *entry requirements*, it was not easy to find prospective students with the required English language skills in the early years of the program.<sup>884</sup> Today, the maximum age for applying to the DMC is 22. Prospective students must have a high school certificate and go through two examination stages – a written exam on general knowledge and an interview about media-related topics.<sup>885</sup> The selection committee consists of lecturers and one or two representatives from the KAS. There are four main criteria: English, interest in media and communication, knowledge of current affairs and personality.<sup>886</sup>

### Teaching Styles and Methods

One instructor mentioned that they used American teaching materials, which was problematic since they did not relate to the Cambodia context. Due to a lack of comprehension and reading skills, the instructor was required to directly support the students with the main themes of the texts in order to make it easier for them.<sup>887</sup> One of the international instructors identified a major difference between the teaching styles of local and international lecturers – even at the DMC. Instructors from Germany used interactive teaching methods, while the older Cambodian lecturers were used to hierarchical structures and chalk-and-talk teaching methods.

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<sup>881</sup> Cf. Interviewee 5, #00:13:40#

<sup>882</sup> Cf. Interviewee 1, #00:18:31#

<sup>883</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, #00:16:57#

<sup>884</sup> Cf. Interviewee 9, #00:21:20#

<sup>885</sup> Cf. Interviewee 1, #00:15:28#

<sup>886</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, #00:15:28#

<sup>887</sup> Cf. Interviewee 3, #00:06:20#

Students are not encouraged to ask questions.<sup>888</sup> To a former international lecturer, the continuous gender gap was also striking:

It's hard most of the time for the girls, who are often the more clever journalists actually. It's mostly hard for them to argue against the opinions of men. [...]. Opinions of men are usually more valued than a woman's opinion.<sup>889</sup>

Another interviewee noted that the students enjoy more praxis-oriented subjects rather than theory. They also believed that the atmosphere in class depended on the course and the instructor, who can create a fun environment or not.<sup>890</sup>

### **Relationship between Teaching Staff and Students**

The relationship between lecturers and students was described as rather informal and familial compared to other departments at the RUPP.<sup>891</sup> Another interviewee confirmed this friendly atmosphere. For instance, every year a field trip is organized in which both lecturers and students take part.<sup>892</sup> The biggest challenge for one lecturer, who was a graduate of the DMC, was to teach students who are almost the same age and without any training or experience as a lecturer.<sup>893</sup> The same instructor noted that there is normally no power imbalance between young local lecturers and students. The instructors even receive complaints that they are too strict.<sup>894</sup>

### **Alumni Support**

There is no formal *alumni program*, but the interim director of the DMC stated that they try to engage alumni in many different ways, most recently as part of the fifteenth anniversary of the school. Moreover, graduates are invited to work as lecturers.<sup>895</sup> There is an informal alumni

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<sup>888</sup> Cf. Interviewee 7, #00:17:08#; cf. Interviewee 4, #00:12:07#

<sup>889</sup> Interviewee 7, #00:19:52#

<sup>890</sup> Cf. Interviewee 2, #00:02:15#; cf. Interviewee 3, #00:04:37#

<sup>891</sup> Cf. Interviewee 1, #00:20:18#; cf. Interviewee 3, #00:05:22# / #00:03:55#

<sup>892</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, #00:13:14#

<sup>893</sup> Cf. Interviewee 6, #00:05:25

<sup>894</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, #00:05:25#

<sup>895</sup> Cf. Interviewee 1, #00:10:40#

association, independent of the DMC; although its members are an autonomous group, they remain very committed to and supportive of the school.<sup>896</sup> The representative of the alumni network interviewed for this study perceived the DMC as rather passive, complaining of the insufficient communication from the side of DMC management. For example, graduates were not invited to the last field trip, which disappointed the members of the association.<sup>897</sup>

The DMC does not provide formal *career support*, but students turn to lecturers and management staff to take advantage of their networks. The DMC also passes on job announcements to students.<sup>898</sup> One former international lecturer reported that they were tasked with establishing partnerships with local media in order create job opportunities for DMC students.<sup>899</sup> The president of the alumni network used to provide career advice to graduates. Although they were invited to the DMC to talk to the students, the interviewee believed that career support was more effective on an individual, informal basis, especially since students did not always attends official events. The alumni association has suggested that they come to the department regularly to provide career advice.<sup>900</sup> One interviewee raised the possibility of DMC graduates receiving further professional training from the CCI (Cambodian Communication Institute). However, the institute is rather disconnected from the DMC and only offers training outside of work hours.<sup>901</sup>

### 6.3.1.2 Meso Level: Program Content and Institutional Aspects

#### General Program Content

One interviewee describes the overall *program structure*, in accordance with the official curriculum, as follows:

The first year is the foundation year. It focuses on language, computer skills and other general knowledge, like history, political

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<sup>896</sup> Cf. Interviewee 8, #00:11:37#

<sup>897</sup> Cf. Interviewee 2#00:30:49# / #00:32:42#

<sup>898</sup> Cf. Interviewee 1, #00:11:44#

<sup>899</sup> Cf. Interviewee 7, #00:05:42#

<sup>900</sup> Cf. Interviewee 2, #00:28:15#

<sup>901</sup> Cf. Interviewee 2, #00:35:29#

science, economics. And the second year is on print journalism, so news writing and reporting, journalism ethics and law. The main focus of year 3 is broadcast journalism where the focus is on radio and TV production. And in year 4 we focus more on management related aspects, like project management and newsroom management.<sup>902</sup>

Concerning the *overall objectives* of the degree program, one expert highlighted that the DMC does not promote itself as a journalism school, but a media management school.<sup>903</sup> The goal to contribute to media and communications research in Cambodia by publishing an annual communications journal has run aground: One expert reported that the person in charge of the project left and was never replaced.<sup>904</sup>

Besides a research-based *final thesis*, students can complete a media production project if they have attained a minimum grade point average.<sup>905</sup> As of the year in which the interview took place, an alternative option – a comprehensive written exam – became available for those who did not meet the mark, and covers four areas: language skills (English and Khmer); print and broadcast journalism; multimedia journalism; and media management subjects.<sup>906</sup>

Various experts, both local and international lecturers, maintained that the DMC program provides a *balance of theoretical and practical subjects*.<sup>907</sup> One lecturer asserted that the greater challenge was to create quality learning outcomes for both, which was easier for practical skills than for theoretical topics. The DMC appears to be rather advanced in terms of practical skills, while offering a solid theoretical foundation supported by international lecturers – which sets it apart from other media studies programs.<sup>908</sup> The alumni who took part in the FGD also thought that there was a balance between theory and practice.<sup>909</sup> However, one graduate

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<sup>902</sup> Interviewee 1, #00:03:30#

<sup>903</sup> Cf. Interviewee 2, #00:10:23#

<sup>904</sup> Cf. Interviewee 3, #00:11:37#

<sup>905</sup> Cf. Interviewee 1, #0:06:50#

<sup>906</sup> Cf. Interviewee 1, #00:04:00#

<sup>907</sup> Cf. Interviewee 1, #00:00:30#; Interviewee 2 #00:03:50#; Interviewee 4, #00:11:24#

<sup>908</sup> Cf. Interviewee 3, #00:15:30#

<sup>909</sup> Cf. FGD #00:30:04#

stressed that to a certain degree students learn what journalism should be in theory, but cannot be in real life.<sup>910</sup> In practice, journalistic freedom in Cambodia is restricted.<sup>911</sup> In terms of the *overall skills and competencies* gained, one graduate explained that the DMC provided them with a basic set of competencies and a mindset rather than any particular “hard skills.”<sup>912</sup> The soft skills they acquired enable them to adapt quickly to the different requirements of the job.<sup>913</sup>

### *Basic Journalistic Skills*

One lecturer expressed their concern over the ability of students to complete a research thesis as the final graduation project given that they do not gain enough *research skills* during the degree program. In addition, there are a lack of tutors for the final projects. Furthermore, they believe that the alternative of a written exam is not beneficial: “We think that it’s not really a good idea, because that is the DMC’s strong point actually – that everyone has a chance to do a thesis. And also there are not so many institutions researching the media.”<sup>914</sup>

The expert opinions on the extent to which students develop *practical experience on-campus* differed. One local lecturer believed it was sufficient, but wished for students to receive more critical feedback from the instructors.<sup>915</sup> The DMC has a radio and TV studio with audiovisual equipment.<sup>916</sup> A former international lecturer pointed out that “the DMC has a better set-up or is better equipped than most of the German media academies.”<sup>917</sup> Another Cambodian interviewee stated that the DMC is relatively well-equipped. There are even drones for documentary production.<sup>918</sup> Conversely, another local lecturer claimed that the studio was not set up properly and was therefore not functioning.<sup>919</sup>

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<sup>910</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, #00:24:00#

<sup>911</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, #00:24:35#

<sup>912</sup> *Ibid.*, #00:17:21#

<sup>913</sup> Cf. *ibid.*

<sup>914</sup> Interviewee 6, #00:19:02#

<sup>915</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, #00:22:00#

<sup>916</sup> Cf. Interviewee 1, #00:01:33#

<sup>917</sup> Interviewee 7, #00:01:15#

<sup>918</sup> Cf. Interviewee 6, #00:14:15#

<sup>919</sup> Cf. Interviewee 6, #00:31:53#

The focus group participants believed that students had various opportunities to put into practice what they learned at the school including field interviews.<sup>920</sup> However, the group of graduates jointly highlighted that practical on-campus coursework was rather far removed from real-life journalism.<sup>921</sup> The alumni emphasized that internships were the only *off-campus* opportunity to gain practical experience.<sup>922</sup> Formally, in Year 2 and 3, students are obliged to do internships at various media and communication institutions, usually first in print media and then broadcast journalism.<sup>923</sup> Another expert described that the program includes guest speakers and field trips to various newsrooms.<sup>924</sup> At least in the past, there were also short-term collaborations and projects with TV or radio stations that students could take part in.<sup>925</sup> In addition, the DMC sometimes takes on media production projects, for instance, for embassies or the EU delegation. The idea is that students can take part in real-life media productions and thereby gain professional experience.<sup>926</sup>

### *Theoretical Knowledge*

When asked about courses that consider the *role of journalists in society*, one local lecturer referred to ‘Practices of Journalism,’ which focuses on the role of journalists as professionals in theory and practice.<sup>927</sup> The international lecturer accentuated that it always depends on the motivation and approach of the lecturer to relate the subject to real journalistic work.<sup>928</sup> Overall, they believed that students have a rather good understanding of the relationship between the media and society. In terms of *ethics and professional values*, the international lecturer rated the subjects ‘Media Law and Ethics’ as sufficient and highlighted the general effort of lecturers to include relevant topics in their course work.<sup>929</sup> One of the local experts pointed out that the problem was putting the theoretical

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<sup>920</sup> Cf. FGD #00:22:46# / #00:21:39#

<sup>921</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, #00:30:08#

<sup>922</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, #00:30:15#

<sup>923</sup> Cf. Interviewee 1, #00:02:20#

<sup>924</sup> Cf. Interviewee 4, #00:05:45#

<sup>925</sup> Cf. Interviewee 7, #00:06:59#

<sup>926</sup> Cf. Interviewee 8, #00:12:25-5#

<sup>927</sup> Cf. Interviewee 1, #00:03:43#

<sup>928</sup> Interviewee 4, #00:05:45#

<sup>929</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, #00:04:14#; cf. Interviewee 1, #00:04:21#



concepts of journalistic ethics into practice,<sup>930</sup> since it very much depends on the individual how a young journalists will deal with ethical issues in reality.<sup>931</sup> The alumni group agreed that the best way to learn about media law and ethics was to gain practical experience.<sup>932</sup>

One local lecturer described how only some students enjoy *critical thinking* and media analysis. Generally, students prefer practical courses.<sup>933</sup> Another local expert mentioned that they would like to see more critical thinking in the curriculum.<sup>934</sup> Furthermore, the same interviewee reiterated that international instructors are often sufficiently aware of the situation in the country and thus apply their own approaches and solutions to the Cambodian context, which, in practice, are not applicable leading to frustration with the students.<sup>935</sup>

Another non-journalistic subject is *English*. Both local and international experts agreed that English language skills are beneficial for graduates, since at least some 80% of the news organizations in Cambodia produce an English version of their content.<sup>936</sup> One interviewee underscored that the main factor for the program's choice of English as the working language was not because the school still heavily relied on international lecturers, but to produce students with solid English language skills. Nonetheless, it is a problem that DMC graduates can write journalistically in English, but not their local language.<sup>937</sup> Another local lecturer raised the issue of a lack of teaching materials in Khmer and problems with sourcing translations as a central reason for the program being in English. Moreover, the students' ability to read English texts was limited, which posed a major challenge to this instructor.<sup>938</sup> For the alumni, the fact that the program is taught in English was a major weakness. In addition to not enabling students to work journalistically in their own language, there was a

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<sup>930</sup> Cf. Interviewee 6 #00:20:59#

<sup>931</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, #00:46:48#

<sup>932</sup> Cf. FGD, #00:20:45#

<sup>933</sup> Cf. Interviewee 2, #00:12:18#

<sup>934</sup> Cf. Interviewee 6, #00:18:07#

<sup>935</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, #00:45:59#

<sup>936</sup> Cf. Interviewee 2, #00:15:28#; cf. Interviewee 4 #00:13:00#

<sup>937</sup> Interviewee 2, #00:18:42#

<sup>938</sup> Cf. Interviewee 3, #00:08:35#

significant gap between those students who had good English skills and those who did not and were therefore falling behind.<sup>939</sup>

## Specific Program Content

### *Specialized Reporting Skills*

At the DMC, there are no *specialized reporting* options:

We don't have elective courses. And so far, the journalism that we teach the students is quite general. We don't have a specialization like environmental or entrepreneurial journalism, no science specialization.<sup>940</sup>

A Cambodian lecturer outlined several reasons for why a specialization was impossible: one, the degree program is only four years in length and thus too short for students to become experts in a particular topic or field; two, only a small group of students were enrolled every year and the program lacked the resources to allow for specializations; three, there was no real demand for it in Cambodia.<sup>941</sup> From another perspective, the possibility of specialization depends on the course: One international lecturer explained that they try to link the course content to current affairs in Cambodia – including issues such as climate change.<sup>942</sup> The program also does not include a module or course on *development journalism*. However, one interviewee believed that some subjects touch on the topic: For instance, 'Media and Society,' but also 'Media Law and Ethics' include case studies and real-life examples in order to make theoretical concepts practically relevant.<sup>943</sup> As for other specialized reporting subjects, another local expert highlighted that there is also no course on conflict-sensitive reporting. In contrast, the former international lecturer sent to the DMC by the GIZ/ZFD explained that, as part of the country program on the Khmer

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<sup>939</sup> Cf. FGD, #00:47:39#

<sup>940</sup> Interviewee 1, #00:02:51#

<sup>941</sup> Cf. Interviewee 6, #00:25:20#

<sup>942</sup> Cf. Interviewee 4, #00:07:28#

<sup>943</sup> Cf. Interviewee 1, #00:05:40#

Rouge Tribunal, the DMC produced news stories and other media pieces such as radio shows and documentaries on the past events.<sup>944</sup>

### *Media Management and Entrepreneurial Skills*

With respect to *media management*, one local lecturer stated that the amended curriculum will include a course on ‘Entrepreneurial Journalism.’ According to the interim director, the current curriculum covers ‘Newsroom Management’ and ‘Project and Production Management’ in order to prepare students for roles as media managers. Thus far, a handful of graduates have set up their own production companies.<sup>945</sup> The course also covers budgets and financial management as well as staffing.<sup>946</sup> Conversely, one international lecturer felt that media management skills were rather limited in the curriculum, partly due to limited resources. Moreover, the course on newsroom management was not enough to cover all relevant aspects.<sup>947</sup> According to the group of DMC graduates, students learn about business planning from a communications perspective, but not how to run or set up a business<sup>948</sup> – “Yet, there was some effort put into trying to expose the student into this new business startup, media-related business startup, because oftentimes they will get lecturers, people who just started businesses, and they would come and share their idea and how it all began.”<sup>949</sup> The former students found it very useful to learn from startups and experts more widely.<sup>950</sup>

### *Digital Skills and Competencies*

The first lectures in *digital skills* training were offered as early as 2008, in collaboration with the GIZ/ZFD. In 2014, ‘Multimedia Journalism’ was introduced to the Year 4 curriculum. The changes provided enough space to teach the necessary skills and competencies. Up to that point, students only gained experience in print, radio and TV journalism. In the same year, data journalism training was also offered by DW Akademie. Notably,

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<sup>944</sup> Cf. Interviewee 7, #00:35:29#

<sup>945</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, #00:03:22#

<sup>946</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, #00:07:30#

<sup>947</sup> Cf. Interviewee 4, #00:09:52#

<sup>948</sup> Cf. FGD, #00:34:27#

<sup>949</sup> *Ibid.*, #00:34:48#

<sup>950</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, #00:36:16#

data journalism had only recently been integrated into the German journalism curricula.<sup>951</sup> The interviews revealed a controversy in terms of the extent to which digital skills and competencies were part of the journalism training at the DMC. From an international expert's viewpoint, the curriculum could only respond to *digital skills* requirements relevant to journalism and the media to a limited degree – due, again, to a lack of resources. They stressed that the DMC offered only one course on social media.<sup>952</sup> In contrast, a local lecturer argued that students were well prepared for multimedia and online journalism, but that individual lecturers had a responsibility to integrate relevant topics and skills into their courses.<sup>953</sup> Even though the alumni considered digital media to be a rather broad field, one graduate felt that DMC students did know enough about online media, especially in terms of internet safety, fake news and verification.<sup>954</sup> It was difficult for the focus group to judge whether the DMC equipped them with digital skills or if they were tech-savvy young people to begin with, able to use social media and run a blog.<sup>955</sup> One called themselves an early adapter of technology.<sup>956</sup>

## Financial and Human Resources

### *Funding and Sustainability*

Considering *funding*, the KAS, the GIZ and the Cambodian government have supported the DMC since its foundation.<sup>957</sup> The GIZ also provides technical support, equipment and one international expert. The DAAD sends another foreign lecturer to the school.<sup>958</sup> The DMC's funding structure has not changed much since its founding.<sup>959</sup> When these interviews were conducted, the KAS provided approximately 70.000 EUR per year to the DMC, for staffing (including the director and short-term teaching staff), operational costs and a small amount for equipment.<sup>960</sup> On

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<sup>951</sup> Cf. Interviewee 7, #00:05:26#

<sup>952</sup> Cf. Interviewee 4, #00:08:23#

<sup>953</sup> Cf. Interviewee 6, #00:23:41#

<sup>954</sup> Cf. FGD, #00:31:16#

<sup>955</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, #00:32:20# / #00:33:30#

<sup>956</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, #00:31:50#

<sup>957</sup> Cf. Interviewee 1, #00:26:48#

<sup>958</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, #00:26:59#

<sup>959</sup> Cf. Interviewee 5, #00:04:45#

<sup>960</sup> Cf. Interviewee, 8 #00:07:55# / #00:11:06#

occasion, the government provides additional funding for the studio and equipment, but it is not set up and maintained properly, and is thus non-functional.<sup>961</sup> One expert described how, on the one hand, the KAS wants the equipment to be sufficient for journalistic training, but on the other, they expected the DMC to show financial ownership and thus find their own ways to pay for new equipment.<sup>962</sup> Similarly, the computers in the library are in disrepair. One instructor pointed out that slow and unstable internet impeded students from accessing journal articles, for example, and thus from completing their research assignments. Showing videos in class can also be a problem.<sup>963</sup> Toilets and other basic facilities are also often not in working order.<sup>964</sup>

The RUPP provides the facilities and is expected to finance four Cambodian instructors. One expert highlighted that only one position was covered by the state university; that lecturer currently only works one day a week, because they also work outside the DMC.<sup>965</sup> One of the DMC's biggest "bottlenecks"<sup>966</sup> is finding permanent local teaching staff, since it does not have sufficient funds to hire more full-time staff.<sup>967</sup> Recently, the debate over whether and how the DMC can become self-sufficient arose. One interviewee highlighted that it was vital to find permanent Cambodian lecturers to reach this goal.<sup>968</sup> The same international expert stressed that, over the years, the pool of professional Cambodians lecturers with the necessary education and experience to work at the DMC has been slowly built up.<sup>969</sup>

At the time of the interview, the international donors were negotiating with the DMC on how to strengthen their ownership of the program, despite the fact that the RUPP cannot provide enough funding and thus wants to keep the DMC donor-funded indefinitely.<sup>970</sup> One of the

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<sup>961</sup> Cf. Interviewee 6, #00:31:53#

<sup>962</sup> Cf. Interviewee, 8 #00:07:55# / #00:11:06#

<sup>963</sup> Cf. Interviewee 3, 00:20:03#

<sup>964</sup> Cf. Interviewee 6, #00:31:53#

<sup>965</sup> Cf. Interviewee 8, #00:03:41#

<sup>966</sup> Ibid., #00:03:41#

<sup>967</sup> Cf. interviewee 1, #00:13:38#

<sup>968</sup> Cf. Interviewee 7, #00:09:19#

<sup>969</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, #00:10:34#

<sup>970</sup> Cf. Interviewee 8, #00:14:19#

international lecturers at the DMC agreed that the DMC needed long-term funding from foreign donors to secure its future.<sup>971</sup> Another international expert added that partner organizations needed to be more patient with the DMC. The German donors should not leave the DMC in the lurch, or must at least stay for another five to ten years as it is the only journalism school in Cambodia. The exchange program with international lectures must also continue.<sup>972</sup> An international expert who was involved in the founding of the DMC even argued that more donor funding would increase the DMC's independence from the RUPP and from political influence.<sup>973</sup> According to the same expert, the risk of a dependency on donor funding was not high and therefore not problematic, since the amount was very small and it would be impossible for the DMC to rely solely on this funding.<sup>974</sup>

In terms of alternative sources of funding, the KAS representative stated that the DMC has been more proactive in this respect in the past.<sup>975</sup> In addition, the DMC creates revenue through external productions, which adds to the GIZ funding. A local lecturer explained that 50% of that income was re-invested into the department. 12.5% went to the production manager.<sup>976</sup> Other revenue streams, such as media production projects for local embassies or the EU delegation, were limited to 2000 or 3000 EUR per year.<sup>977</sup> The interim director has also been working on a fee-based program in order to become less dependent on donor funding.<sup>978</sup> In addition to the 30 current students, 20 to 60 students will be accepted into the fee-based program. However, they emphasized that the existing infrastructure, as well as the available technical and human resources, were insufficient to accommodate these students.<sup>979</sup> From the point of view of another Cambodian expert, the fee-based program was problematic because tuition would be higher than for other degrees, and the

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<sup>971</sup> Cf. Interviewee 4, #00:20:49#

<sup>972</sup> Cf. Interviewee 9, #00:28:37#

<sup>973</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, #00:31:51#

<sup>974</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, #00:31:51#

<sup>975</sup> Cf. Interviewee 8, #00:11:06#

<sup>976</sup> Cf. Interviewee 6, #00:16:39#

<sup>977</sup> Cf. Interviewee 8, #00:12:25-5#

<sup>978</sup> Cf. Interviewee 1, #00:24:27#

<sup>979</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, #00:25:37#

demand for journalism education was high enough, eventually forcing the DMC to offer other programs as well.<sup>980</sup>

### *Administrative and Managerial Staff*

When the DMC was established, international donors provided support for curriculum development, teaching and human resources.<sup>981</sup> The program started off with a co-director system, which caused a lot of problems and disagreements within the DMC. One international expert argued that it was the right decision to end it and to give more autonomy to the national staff.<sup>982</sup> One of the first directors left to take up a better paid job offer with an embassy. The next director was not hired for his media background, but his legal education and close relationship to the prime minister and other government officials. The new director was meant to focus on administration in order to strengthen the DMC, which the government considered the most important institution for educating the next generation of Cambodian journalists. One major problem, however, was that the director was absent most of the time and had no administrative experience either. As a result, students were no longer involved in the decision-making processes, and staff had to complete tasks that were not relevant to the program itself.<sup>983</sup> Since 2012, this interviewee observed a lack of innovation at the DMC: New ideas or projects suggested by international partners were repeatedly blocked.<sup>984</sup>

In 2017, the administrative team consisted of the director and the head of office, who was responsible for IT and academic administration. Apart from that, the general administrator was also responsible for the books.<sup>985</sup> The interim director stressed that the DMC's management structure was internally weak with a very small team, consisting of the director, one full-time local lecturer, two full-time international instructors and three administrative staff members.<sup>986</sup> The director role was being advertised at the time of the interview. The interim director accentuated the fact the

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<sup>980</sup> Cf. Interviewee 5, #00:04:45

<sup>981</sup> Cf. Interviewee 9, #00:09:16#

<sup>982</sup> Cf. Interviewee 5, #00:07:17#

<sup>983</sup> Cf. Interviewee 7, #00:27:25#

<sup>984</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, #00:28:33#

<sup>985</sup> Cf. Interviewee 1 #00:28:16#

<sup>986</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, #00:28:16#

RUPP nominated the candidates and the final decision lay with the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MoEYS).<sup>987</sup> In contrast, a local lecturer perceived the administrative team as stable, but also expressed concern over the frequent changes of the director position and, related to that, the lasting vacancy of the position: “It’s like we do not have a static team, a team that really works to move the department forward.”<sup>988</sup> As mentioned previously, it is difficult for the DMC to build up human resources, for example, by winning graduates as lecturers.<sup>989</sup> Moreover, there is a shortage of Cambodian experts and senior professionals who could complement graduates and international experts, who also only stay for a few years, coming on board as lecturers.<sup>990</sup> In particular, there is a lack of staff engaged in academic research.<sup>991</sup>

### *Local Instructors and Staff*

Overall, there is not enough staff at the DMC to run all projects.<sup>992</sup> The KAS representative claimed that, at the time of the interview, there were four permanent instructors at the DMC who were university employees.<sup>993</sup> However, only the instructor funded by the KAS was full-time. All other local instructors were employed on a part-time basis, which affected their teaching and thus the quality of the program.<sup>994</sup> With regard to the *educational and professional profiles* of local instructors, from the very beginning, it has been a challenge to find local expertise for the DMC.<sup>995</sup> While a Master’s degree is the main requirement, most people do not attain this level of education in Cambodia,<sup>996</sup> where most only hold Bachelor’s degrees.<sup>997</sup> Their practical experience before becoming lecturers after graduation is limited to internships and project work during the degree.<sup>998</sup> Some local lecturers have also been educated abroad at private

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<sup>987</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, #00:28:16#

<sup>988</sup> Cf. Interviewee 3 #00:21:47#

<sup>989</sup> Cf. Interviewee 1, #00:22:5#

<sup>990</sup> Cf. Interviewee 3 #00:21:47#

<sup>991</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, #00:21:47#

<sup>992</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, #00:25:17#

<sup>993</sup> Cf. Interviewee 8, #00:02:46#

<sup>994</sup> Cf. Interviewee 1, #00:12:16#

<sup>995</sup> Cf. Interviewee 9, #00:06:34#

<sup>996</sup> Cf. Interviewee 1, #00:13:38#; cf. Interviewee 6, #00:00:19#

<sup>997</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, #00:18:06#

<sup>998</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, #00:02:03#



academies.<sup>999</sup> Today, most local lecturers are former graduates of the DMC and rather young.<sup>1000</sup> “We lack the senior people who really know their stuff and are able to do this.”<sup>1001</sup> One international expert pointed out that some Cambodians, who might become DMC lecturers in the future, have studied in the United States, Australia or Germany and have a higher level of education.<sup>1002</sup>

In terms of *instructor salaries and incentives*, the KAS underlined that the DMC must adhere to university regulations in terms of salaries.<sup>1003</sup> DMC lecturers earned up to a maximum 240 USD per month, yet given their international education, they could easily find better paid jobs, earning at least 1000 USD per month.<sup>1004</sup> Especially local part-time instructors cannot not live off their DMC salary. The small number of students per year at the DMC further contributes to low salaries. At other departments, more students means the lecturers can teach more courses, one expert pointed out. As a result, there is a high fluctuation in the teaching staff.<sup>1005</sup> This ‘brain drain’ eventually threatens the quality of the program as it depends heavily on qualified staff. The wages at the DMC are simply not attractive, especially for those who have studied overseas on international scholarships, and when compared to other employment options at media agencies, private companies and NGOs, who oftentimes pay double the salary.<sup>1006</sup> When the new director was hired, they thus changed the title of ‘assistant lecturer’ to ‘lecturer’ even though they did not hold a Master’s degree yet.<sup>1007</sup>

### *Relationship between Teaching and Management*

One local instructor described the relationship between the lecturers and the DMC management as good. They appreciate the job that they do: “They coordinate. They share information. They keep me updated.”<sup>1008</sup>

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<sup>999</sup> Cf. Interviewee 7, #00:11:31#

<sup>1000</sup> Cf. Interviewee 3, #00:20:03#; cf. Interviewee 1, #00:13:38#

<sup>1001</sup> Interviewee 3, #00:25:17#

<sup>1002</sup> Cf. Interviewee 9, #00:28:11#

<sup>1003</sup> Cf. Interviewee 8, #00:16:40#

<sup>1004</sup> Cf. Interviewee 7, #00:12:25#, Part 2

<sup>1005</sup> Cf. Interviewee 8, #00:05:38#

<sup>1006</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, #00:27:58#; cf. Interviewee 7, #00:12:25# Part 2; cf. Interviewee 5, #00:19:12#

<sup>1007</sup> Cf. Interviewee 1, #00:13:38#; cf. Interviewee 6, #00:00:19#

<sup>1008</sup> Interviewee 2, #00:06:24#

Another Cambodian interviewee noted they did not have much contact with other lecturers, but rather with management, with whom they regularly discussing processes like graduation guidelines, the research thesis and the like.<sup>1009</sup> One of the international instructors stated that there was a close relationship with the management including regular meetings with all staff members, and that all lecturers were involved in developing the curriculum.<sup>1010</sup> Foreign lecturers were also involved in new international projects, for instance, with the Rhein Waal University in Germany.<sup>1011</sup>

In contrast, a local interviewee stressed that, under the former director, there were meetings at least once a month, while the director that followed was not at the DMC a lot, despite the fact that most decisions had to be signed off by the director. International lecturers were not invited to the departmental meetings, and separate meetings were held for them. There were complaints from the international lecturers that they were not invited.<sup>1012</sup> A foreign interviewee agreed that the atmosphere depended strongly on management, namely the director at any given time. They pointed out that in 2004 and 2005, there was still a dual director position, shared between a Cambodian and a German co-director, who had the same rights and responsibilities.<sup>1013</sup> The same lecturer said they decided to leave the DMC due to poor management. The director at the time also did not want to extend their contract. After them there was a large gap before the next German expert was sent to the DMC.<sup>1014</sup> With respect to the current interim director, one of the international experts was of the opinion that the person had the potential to improve the culture and vision of the DMC.<sup>1015</sup>

### *Collaboration among Teaching Staff*

One local interviewee, a part-time lecturer, explained that they only came to the DMC for class and thus had not meet many other instructors –

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<sup>1009</sup> Cf. Interviewee 3, #00:13:14#

<sup>1010</sup> Cf. Interviewee 4, #00:17:58# / #00:19:52#

<sup>1011</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, #00:17:58#

<sup>1012</sup> Cf. Interviewee 6, #00:11:04# / #00:13:00#

<sup>1013</sup> Cf. Interviewee 7, #00:22:12#

<sup>1014</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, #00:29:15# / #00:30:28#

<sup>1015</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, #00:29:15# / #00:30:28#

mainly the ones from their own graduation cohort.<sup>1016</sup> Another Cambodian lecturer said that they worked together closely with the international lecturer from the GIZ. As co-lecturers, they met before each class to discuss the game plan. For example, the international instructor would cover the theory in English, with the local instructor teaching the practical component in Khmer.<sup>1017</sup>

### *International Lecturers*

While the KAS is a founding member of the school, the GIZ/ZFD came in later with one international full-time lecturer with expertise in peace and conflict management.<sup>1018</sup> Although there were four international lecturers in the beginning, another interviewee believed there will always be two or three. At the time of this study, there were two instructors from Germany, one sent by the GIZ/ZFD and one by the DAAD.<sup>1019</sup> The former director stressed that the GIZ lecturer was an adviser for the Civil Peace Service project at the DMC, not an adviser to the department as a whole.<sup>1020</sup> The DAAD lecturer was considered a long-term expert.<sup>1021</sup> Instructors from overseas supply an international approach, giving students more opportunities to go abroad with their support, although the decision lies with the GIZ, KAS and DAAD.<sup>1022</sup> The fact that international lecturers come and go adds to the challenge of staff turnover at the DMC.<sup>1023</sup> At the time of the interview, there were rumors that the DAAD position might not be filled again.<sup>1024</sup> A local interviewee underscored that the DMC depended on international advisers, who take the initiative to develop new projects and thereby improve the quality of the program,<sup>1025</sup> but that they were also not sufficiently aware of the local context, which was dissatisfying for the students who were not presented with feasible solutions for

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<sup>1016</sup> Cf. Interviewee 2, 00:05:20#

<sup>1017</sup> Cf. Interviewee 6, #00:03:55#

<sup>1018</sup> Cf. Interviewee 8, #00:06:28#

<sup>1019</sup> Cf. Interviewee 9 #00:27:31#

<sup>1020</sup> Cf. Interviewee 5, #00:06:02#

<sup>1021</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, #00:06:21#

<sup>1022</sup> Cf. Interviewee 4, #00:22:08#

<sup>1023</sup> Cf. Interviewee 3, #00:25:17#

<sup>1024</sup> Cf. Interviewee 9, #00:28:11#; According to later informal reports by Interviewee 6, the DAAD position still existed in 2021.

<sup>1025</sup> Cf. Interviewee 6, #00:36:22#

Cambodia-specific issues. Local instructors, in turn, were sometimes biased toward the government, which could be equally problematic.<sup>1026</sup>

## **Collaboration and Networks**

Due to the DMC's funding situation and its long-term partnerships with the KAS, the DAAD and the GIZ/ZFD, the analytical category 'international collaboration' is closely related various other institutional criteria. In the following, only additional aspects that are not part of the descriptions of other codes are included.

### *International Collaboration*

Concerning the DMC's dual dependency on the RUPP and on international donors, the interviewee stressed that it was important for all stakeholders to understand their roles:

I think the leaders of this department, as well as the sponsors, have to understand that this department, this department is under the Royal University of Phnom Penh, under the Ministry of Education which have to comply with the government's regulations and media regulations.<sup>1027</sup>

While the KAS has been criticized by other international donors for collaborating with a government-backed institution, this local expert highlighted the benefits of this arrangement.<sup>1028</sup> Apart from its main donors, the DMC collaborates with UN organizations such as UNDP, UNICEF and UNESCO.<sup>1029</sup> At the time of the interview, the DMC together with international lecturers was working on a new cooperation with the Rhein Waal University, which would include an semester-long exchange of three students from each country starting the following semester.<sup>1030</sup> The DMC also collaborates with Erasmus and other institutions, although the exchange students often do not know English as well as the DMC students.

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<sup>1026</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, #00:45:59#

<sup>1027</sup> Interviewee 5, #00:10:17#

<sup>1028</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, #00:12:19#

<sup>1029</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, #00:14:43#

<sup>1030</sup> Cf. Interviewee 4, #00:19:03#

Furthermore, there are usually no Memoranda of Understanding to ensure the quality of the exchange program:

I am in favor of this kind of exchange program but it would be nice if the school had some memorandum or checking the quality of the exchange program and then when the student goes we know what they are going to study and it's good.<sup>1031</sup>

Over the years, one international expert observed, the DMC has established a range of international partnerships, from internships at the Asia News Network, established by the KAS, to opportunities to study in Germany.<sup>1032</sup>

### *Links to Ministries and Politicians*

In terms of the DMC's relationship with various ministries and politicians, apart from the MoEYS, which regulates the RUPP, the Ministry of Information was mentioned by various interviewees. The information minister supported the DMC in establishing the curriculum according to international standards<sup>1033</sup> and forms part of the DMC's Advisory Board.<sup>1034</sup> Throughout its history, the DMC received direct support from Prime Minister Hun Sen. From its very beginning, the prime minister's personal relationships with international actors have played a significant role. After a regional event on decentralization with European and Asian stakeholders, the prime minister himself initiated a project and approached the KAS to support an academic media education program at the RUPP. One international expert remembered Hun Sen making the following statement:

I'm fighting all the time with journalists here and one of the biggest problems is they don't know what reporting is and what judgments are and what defamation is and so on. If we would have a

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<sup>1031</sup> Interviewee 6, #00:38:34#

<sup>1032</sup> Cf. Interviewee 9, #00:17:17#

<sup>1033</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, #00:22:00#

<sup>1034</sup> Cf. Interviewee 8, #00:09:37#

serious journalism education, it would solve some of our problems well.<sup>1035</sup>

It took the direct intervention of the prime minister to convince the RUPP that the DMC should have the autonomy to offer the German director a higher salary.<sup>1036</sup> The same applied to recruiting directors suitable for the position rather than those that the RUPP wanted to move out of other departments.<sup>1037</sup> The prime minister also decided that the DMC could have separate statutes, especially for student recruitment,<sup>1038</sup> although he did not influence the curriculum itself.<sup>1039</sup> The DMC depends on Hun Sen's ongoing direct support to counterbalance the power of the Royal University in decision-making processes.<sup>1040</sup>

One of the international experts pointed out that as part of the coming-and-going of DMC directors, one of the former directors accepted the role of co-director at the RUPP, after having previously consulted for the Hun Sen government. In the meantime, an interim director was appointed. The expert called this dynamic a common power play by the Cambodian government:

So it's a typical construction of Cambodian power management [...]. if they're not sure about taking over a role in an institution, they put somebody they can trust into this position, and just call him interim until they make up their minds who will take over the role."<sup>1041</sup>

### *University Links*

One local expert described the university framework: The DMC is one of 35 departments at the RUPP and a member of the Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, whose dean acts under the direct supervision of

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<sup>1035</sup> Interviewee 9, #00:03:42#

<sup>1036</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, #00:13:51#

<sup>1037</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, #00:14:38#

<sup>1038</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, #00:11:40#

<sup>1039</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, #00:22:00#

<sup>1040</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, #00:31:51#

<sup>1041</sup> Interviewee 7, #00:31:58#

the University Director.<sup>1042</sup> Another instructor considered the dual dependency on international donors and the RUPP as a challenge and an opportunity. The DMC is pressured from both sides and thus forced to find a balance: They gain resources for training journalists from the KAS, but depend on government regulations. At the same time, the RUPP provides the school with a lot of support.<sup>1043</sup> The Royal University does not seem to interfere with the implementation of the program and its course content, signing off on the curriculum as long as political topics are not included. For example, the German lecturer sent by the DAAD was keen to introduce a course on political journalism, which became an issue for the RUPP. Eventually, the title of the course was changed.<sup>1044</sup>

In contrast, a former international lecturer has always been skeptical: Firstly, the DMC is on the RUPP campus, but the school has to pay for rent and electricity themselves. Secondly, the RUPP does not provide any student scholarships.<sup>1045</sup> Another international expert believed that – within the regulatory framework of a state university – the DMC was relatively autonomous in its relationship with the RUPP, due to its budgetary independence, which allows it bypass fights over resources.<sup>1046</sup> One of the foreign lecturers believed that the DMC could exist independently from the RUPP if a director with a strong journalistic background could be installed.<sup>1047</sup> Concerning its relationships to other RUPP departments, at the time of the interviews, the DMC worked with lecturers from the History, Mathematics and English.<sup>1048</sup>

### *Industry and other Types of Collaboration*

In 2014, a former international lecturer was tasked with establishing partnerships with local media outlets to create internship and job opportunities for DMC students. TV production projects also allow for collaborations with local media organizations.<sup>1049</sup> Moreover, the school works

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<sup>1042</sup> Cf. Interviewee 5, #00:09:11#

<sup>1043</sup> Cf. Interviewee 3, 00:28:51#

<sup>1044</sup> Cf. Interviewee 1, #00:31:27#; cf. Interviewee 7, #00:11:29#

<sup>1045</sup> Cf. Interviewee 7, #00:11:29#

<sup>1046</sup> Cf. Interviewee 8, #00:00:25#, Part 2

<sup>1047</sup> Cf. Interviewee 7, #00:13:54#

<sup>1048</sup> Cf. Interviewee 5, #00:16:23#

<sup>1049</sup> Cf. Interviewee 7, #00:05:42# / #00:06:59#

together with NGOs, embassies and the EU delegations on media production projects, bringing additional funding and providing practical learning opportunities for students.<sup>1050</sup> At the time of the interviews, the school was collaborating with media organizations such as the Women's Media Center and various radio stations.<sup>1051</sup> Furthermore, the DMC worked with the Club of Cambodian Journalists.<sup>1052</sup>

## **Quality and Change Management**

### *External Advisory*

The DMC Advisory Board consists of the Ministry of Information, the president of the RUPP, the director of the DMC and the KAS. The other two international partners, DAAD and GIZ, are not part of the board. The KAS is one of the closest partners, offering advice on institutional development.<sup>1053</sup>

### *Monitoring and Evaluation*

The KAS conducts regular assessments of the DMC, sending reports back to their headquarters in Germany. The GIZ does an annual quality check and the ZFD conducts its own evaluation as part of their country program, which has a focus on the Khmer Rouge Tribunal and involves several other organizations in Cambodia. DW Akademie also conducts evaluations, including interviews with the director and the students.<sup>1054</sup> A former international lecturer stated that the KAS regularly reported the evaluation results back to the DMC in the form of annual workshops.<sup>1055</sup> The same interviewee claimed that the last director they witnessed at the DMC was not interested in any suggestions for the development of the department.<sup>1056</sup> Another international expert stated that the evaluation is conducted jointly by the three partners (DAAD, ZFD and KAS). It is not an external or standardized process, but an internal evaluation process that includes an analysis of the current situation and key challenges with a

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<sup>1050</sup> Cf. Interviewee 6, #00:15:30#; cf. Interviewee 8, #00:12:25#

<sup>1051</sup> Cf. Interviewee 5, #00:14:26#

<sup>1052</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, #00:14:26#

<sup>1053</sup> Cf. Interviewee 8, #00:09:17#

<sup>1054</sup> Cf. Interviewee 7, #00:35:29#

<sup>1055</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, #00:38:47#

<sup>1056</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, #00:38:47#



final presentation to the Advisory Board. Parallel to this, at the time of the interview, KAS, GIZ and DAAD representatives, including the international lecturers, met every three to four weeks. Two months before the interview, an end-of-year evaluation workshop took place during which the partners discussed the key challenges in detail and came up with recommendations.<sup>1057</sup>

According to one of the local lecturers in a management position, there are no external evaluations of the DMC.<sup>1058</sup> Furthermore, there is no knowledge of any alumni study.<sup>1059</sup> At the end of each semester, *student evaluations* of lecturers, courses, staff and facilities are conducted. While the results are supposed to be sent to individual lecturers and staff,<sup>1060</sup> instructors have not received any student feedback and were not aware of when to expect it.<sup>1061</sup> One of the international instructors claimed that student evaluations were not conducted regularly and the results not shared on a regular basis either.<sup>1062</sup> Another local instructors stressed that the problem was that the analysis of the quantitative survey takes time and the staff was too busy with other tasks. In addition, there is a letter box into which students can submit anonymous feedback. The same interviewee explained that there have been incidents where students posted rather strong criticism of the DMC, which the director at the time discussed with the lecturers, but only in general terms.<sup>1063</sup>

### *Curriculum and Organizational Development*

Following official university procedures, the RUPP and the Ministry must sign off when the DMC wants to amend the curriculum.<sup>1064</sup> Regarding the amendment that was in process at the time of the data collection, it was unknown to the DMC when they would receive feedback on the revisions from the ministry and therefore, when and whether they will be

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<sup>1057</sup> Cf. Interviewee 8, #00:03:35#

<sup>1058</sup> Cf. Interviewee 1, #00:21:55#

<sup>1059</sup> Cf. Interviewee 4, #00:16:42#

<sup>1060</sup> Cf. Interviewee 1, #00:21:01#

<sup>1061</sup> Cf. Interviewee 2, #00:07:11#; cf. Interviewee 3, #00:19:21#

<sup>1062</sup> Cf. Interviewee 4, #00:16:59#

<sup>1063</sup> Cf. Interviewee 6, #00:07:33#

<sup>1064</sup> Cf. Interviewee 8, #00:18:30#

implemented.<sup>1065</sup> In terms of the program content and its implementation, the DMC is relatively autonomous, as long as political topics do not form part of the curriculum.<sup>1066</sup> Supposedly, the KAS's evaluation results were used to feed into the further development of the department,<sup>1067</sup> although, one local interviewee noted that the management team was not really interested in improving the school. They did not consider any internal issues but concentrated on the DMC's reputation, for example, through public events with high-ranking officials. This lecturer thus expressed their fear that the quality of the school and the students would decrease.<sup>1068</sup>

### **Alumni Recommendations to the School**

One interviewee believed that the DMC should have a clearer focus, calling it "a jack of all trades, but a master of none."<sup>1069</sup> Journalism should still be an option, but not the main focus. Offering media education for the entertainment industry could be a more realistic path, given the state of journalism in Cambodia and the job prospects of DMC graduates. The DMC needed to use resources more efficiently by, for example, putting more emphasis on TV production including film making and other non-journalistic entertainment formats such as game shows.<sup>1070</sup>

One alumnus emphasized the importance of including concrete skills to set up and run a media business.<sup>1071</sup> Another participant proposed focusing on Khmer writing skills in the first year, before moving on to English in the second. However, this also depends on the overall objective of the school and which skills the graduates are expected to ultimately master. In short, students need to have production skills for the Khmer market for their first job after graduation, since they do not jump straight into leadership positions. Only very few elite students can start their own production company straight away.<sup>1072</sup> One former student argued that it

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<sup>1065</sup> Cf. Interviewee 3, #00:03:48#

<sup>1066</sup> Cf. Interviewee 7, #00:11:29#; cf. Interviewee 1, #00:31:27#

<sup>1067</sup> Cf. Interviewee 7, #00:38:47#

<sup>1068</sup> Cf. Interviewee 6, #00:31:53#

<sup>1069</sup> Cf. FGD, #00:37:22#

<sup>1070</sup> Cf. *ibid*

<sup>1071</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, #00:43:45#

<sup>1072</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, #00:50:12#

would be best if the DMC offered a multimedia degree in which students acquire a general knowledge of all media types but can specialize in a particular major. However, this requires a lot of human and financial resources. The lack of resources was of great concern, especially given the number of part-time instructors.<sup>1073</sup> In terms of the selection process, one alumnus outlined two options: The DMC could choose the best candidates and remain an elite institution preparing students for leadership positions. Or they could choose the most motivated applicants and train them for what the market requirements.<sup>1074</sup>

### 6.3.2 USSH

#### 6.3.2.1 Micro Level: Conditions for Students

##### Student Admissions

Regarding *demographics* at the USSH, approximately 80% of the students are young women.<sup>1075</sup> One interviewee claimed that the majority of students are migrants from poor farming families.<sup>1076</sup> In terms of the *number of students*, there were a total of 1000 to 1500 students countrywide per year. At the Hanoi campus, 500 students are enrolled per year.<sup>1077</sup> One interviewee estimated that only around a third of students with excellent grades received a *scholarship*.<sup>1078</sup> Students have to pay *tuition fees* per subject or CP.<sup>1079</sup> USSH journalism students pay approximately 20 to 25 dollars per month. Moreover, living costs add up to around 120 dollars. Especially for students from poor rural areas this is a lot of financial pressure. In response, this instructor was critical of the plans to raise tuition fees, but noted that most colleagues were in favor of it.<sup>1080</sup> In terms of the *application process* and *entry requirements*, one instructor pointed out that the entry exam at USSH had been changed to a standard multiple-choice exam across the VNU. Compared to other universities in the country, this

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<sup>1073</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, #00:40:09#

<sup>1074</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, #00:50:12#

<sup>1075</sup> Cf. Interviewee 10, #00:20:44#

<sup>1076</sup> Cf. Interviewee 11, #00:07:54#

<sup>1077</sup> Cf. Interviewee 12, #00:19:10#

<sup>1078</sup> Cf. Interviewee 10, #00:18:14#

<sup>1079</sup> Cf. *ibid.* 10, #00:18:04#

<sup>1080</sup> Cf. Interviewee 11, #00:42:40#

was rather innovative.<sup>1081</sup> Instructors at the USSH do not meet prospective students before they start the program.<sup>1082</sup>

### **Relationship between Instructors and Students**

There is an established hierarchy between instructors and students, reflected in the seating arrangement in class, where the instructor is elevated at the front of the classroom. A lot of students are intimidated and hesitant to actively engage in discussion in class.<sup>1083</sup> One instructor described the power imbalance as disastrous.<sup>1084</sup>

### **Teaching Styles and Methods**

One interviewee noted that the teaching depends on an instructor's English and age:

Some lecturers are very good because they can extend their materials. They can read English. The others are very conservative, so they just repeat the past law in Vietnam. So it really depends, normally the younger the lecturers, the more inclusive. But we always have to maintain a political view.<sup>1085</sup>

One instructor emphasized that the overall lack of teaching material was a key constraint, above ideological issues that restrict the course content.<sup>1086</sup> Generally, teaching staff have a lot of freedom in how they run their courses, as long as they cover what the curriculum demands.<sup>1087</sup> Every instructor teaches their course differently,<sup>1088</sup> with few restrictions on what and how to teach the classes as long the expected political perspective is maintained, although “we are struggling to equip ourselves with new knowledge.”<sup>1089</sup> Especially younger lecturers with sufficient English language skills have therefore tried to gain access to literature and

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<sup>1081</sup> Cf. *ibid* 11, #00:42:03#

<sup>1082</sup> Cf. Interviewee 10, #00:19:22#

<sup>1083</sup> Cf. Interviewee 11, #00:05:24#7#00:20:34#

<sup>1084</sup> Cf. *ibid* 11, #00:20:34#

<sup>1085</sup> *Ibid.*, #00:14:29#

<sup>1086</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, #00:04:18#

<sup>1087</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, #00:33:40#

<sup>1088</sup> *Ibid.*, #00:03:06#

<sup>1089</sup> Interviewee 1, #00:13:50#

other teaching resources from colleagues overseas, which they translate and adapt for the USSH curriculum and course content. English language skills are a major asset in this respect. Some older, more conservative lecturers keep on teaching old content based on Vietnamese law.<sup>1090</sup> One instructor is trying to reduce the power imbalance by reducing the class size, letting students bring music for group work, trying to spark the students' interest by focusing on practical skills, and showing documentaries.<sup>1091</sup>

## Alumni Support

The USSH has an alumni network of around 2000 graduates. There is no formal *alumni program*, but graduates are invited once per year to talk to current students about their experiences and provide *career support*.<sup>1092</sup>

### 6.3.2.2 Meso Level: Program Content and Institutional Aspects

#### General Program Content

Concerning the overall *program structure*, the interviewees clarified that the curriculum consists of five parts or modules: The first module consists of subjects appointed by the MoET. The second part consists of more general knowledge and fundamental theoretical subjects. Module 3 focuses on journalism-related fields of social sciences such as politics, law, and social work, for which the USSH works together with other departments. In the fourth stage, students concentrate on journalism itself. In the fifth section, the students are able to choose a specialization: print, online, broadcast journalism or PR.<sup>1093</sup> One lecturer stated that the logic of the modules differs from the program structure, namely the way the program is taught: "When we teach, we don't have to follow it step by step from the first year to the fourth year. Some of the subjects in Module 5 we teach the third-year students."<sup>1094</sup> One expert noted that the main *objective* of the USSH is to provide students with practical journalistic skills in order to prepare them for future jobs in newsrooms.<sup>1095</sup>

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<sup>1090</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, #00:13:50#

<sup>1091</sup> Cf. Interviewee 11, #00:05:32# / #00:05:32# / #00:22:05#

<sup>1092</sup> Cf. Interviewee 10, #00:27:31#; cf. Interviewee 12, #00:46:33#

<sup>1093</sup> Cf. Interviewee 10, #00:02:27#; Interviewee 12, #00:11:03#

<sup>1094</sup> Interviewee 10, #00:03:23#

<sup>1095</sup> Cf. Interviewee 12, #00:11:03#

With regard to the final exams and the thesis, USSH teaching staff confirmed that the graduation module is five CP.<sup>1096</sup> As for the final exam, it is possible to write a thesis or hand in a comprehensive journalistic product, e.g., a TV program or newspaper.<sup>1097</sup> Regarding the final thesis, students can choose between two in-class subjects for a final exam or conducting their own research. One lecturer noted that a lot of students want to conduct research on digital media in collaboration with innovative newsrooms where they can do observations.<sup>1098</sup>

Concerning the *balance of theory and practice*, one lecturer claimed that the faculty concentrates on practical journalism, whereas another local expert estimates that theory takes up 60% and practice around 40%.<sup>1099</sup> Despite the intention to become more practical, it was important to teach students how to think wholistically, another instructor pointed out: “I think that if you teach them philosophy or you teach them sociology, psychology, something that sounds quite irrelevant can be very good for them.”<sup>1100</sup> There is a consensus among the graduates who took part in the survey that theoretical subjects outweighed practical components. Most of them estimated that theory made up 60 to 70% and practice only a third.<sup>1101</sup> One former student even believed that 90% of the entire degree program consisted of theoretical coursework.<sup>1102</sup> Another graduate was of the opinion that the ratio depended on the attitude of students. Those who were more proactive and ambitious invested more in the practical elements in order to produce journalistic pieces of better quality that they could offer to media organizations.<sup>1103</sup>

One USSH graduate highlighted professional values and practical journalistic skills as a main competency they acquired during their degree.<sup>1104</sup> Other alumni named a range of skills and competencies including social

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<sup>1096</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, #00:40:30#

<sup>1097</sup> Cf. Interviewee 10, #00:25:59#

<sup>1098</sup> Cf. Interviewee 12, #00:40:30#

<sup>1099</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, #00:19:11#; cf. Interviewee 10, #00:13:38#

<sup>1100</sup> Interviewee 11, #00:24:50#

<sup>1101</sup> Cf. Cf. Alumni 1, Pos. 21; cf. Alumni 6, Pos. 45; cf. Alumni 4, Pos. 60; cf. Alumni 2, Pos.

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<sup>1102</sup> Cf. Alumni 5, Pos. 60

<sup>1103</sup> Cf. Alumni 4, Pos. 60

<sup>1104</sup> Cf. Alumni 1, Pos. 46

knowledge and the role and responsibility of journalists in society.<sup>1105</sup> Only one survey respondent stated that they did not gain any essential competencies.<sup>1106</sup> In terms of missing elements, the alumni survey revealed a wish for more communication management and entrepreneurship competencies.<sup>1107</sup>

### Basic Journalistic Skills

Expert interviews confirmed that students at the USSH acquired *social research skills*.<sup>1108</sup> A local instructor noted that they prefer to teach students *critical thinking skills* rather than focusing too much on practical competencies. Especially given the limitations of teaching materials and qualified lecturers, the ability to understand the media and journalistic system was crucial.<sup>1109</sup> In this context, the same lecturer highlighted:

So if you we think about liberating students from the burden of political norms or cultural conventions, the best way is not to teach them to go directly against them [...]. but to teach them the complexity of the world so that they make their own judgment.<sup>1110</sup>

In terms of *practical on-campus elements*, the USSH has a Centre for Media Practice (CMP) with a studio, editing room and a lab for print media. Students can practice using modern equipment at any time and at no cost.<sup>1111</sup> One instructor claimed that the situation is better than at the AJC, which has various departments and faculties. At the USSH, different types of media and PR courses are combined into one faculty, which shares all resources.<sup>1112</sup>

One alumnus criticized the university radio program for not serving its purpose as there were very few opportunities to practice.<sup>1113</sup> Another graduate noted that the options for practicing at the CMP were limited

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<sup>1105</sup> Cf. Alumni 3, Pos. 88; cf. Alumni 4, Pos. 94; cf. Alumni 5, Pos. 93

<sup>1106</sup> Cf. Alumni 2, Pos. 79

<sup>1107</sup> Cf. Alumni 3, Pos. 97

<sup>1108</sup> Cf. Interviewee 12, #00:29:09#

<sup>1109</sup> Cf. Interviewee 11, #00:24:50#

<sup>1110</sup> Ibid., #00:24:50#

<sup>1111</sup> Cf. Interviewee 10, #00:06:40#; cf. Interviewee 12, #00:21:11#

<sup>1112</sup> Cf. Interviewee 12, #00:21:53#

<sup>1113</sup> Cf. Alumni 4, Pos. 54

because it was very expensive. Only a few workshops and seminars were conducted at the CMP.<sup>1114</sup> On a more positive note, one graduate mentioned the journalism faculty website, where, supposedly, students can publish their articles on faculty events. Moreover, they could practice filming and news production by covering university events.<sup>1115</sup> Another alumnus added that instructors created many opportunities for students to gain practical experience on-campus. However, these experiences were still far from daily newsroom reality.<sup>1116</sup>

In terms of *practical off-campus elements*, teaching staff claimed that there are two compulsory internships: The first one is 2 CP over the course of a month, consisting of a couple of hours a day. The students are marked on the results they bring back to faculty. The second option to gain the 2 CP is to join an experienced journalist for a field trip with a group of 20 to 30 students. After the field trip, they are expected to produce media content. The second compulsory internship is worth 5 CP and takes place in the final year over the course of at least three to six months. Students have to hand in a comprehensive report of 20 to 30 pages in which they describe the organizational structure of the media outlet. In addition, they have to hand in several media products, as well as a diary. The supervisor at the media organization also supports the evaluation and grading.<sup>1117</sup> The faculty helps students in finding internship opportunities, e.g., by writing support letters to the newsroom.<sup>1118</sup> Sometimes students line up internships through guest lecturers.<sup>1119</sup>

One graduate thought that despite the internships, practical elements were not effectively taught. Students gained real practical journalistic experience only after graduation.<sup>1120</sup> Another graduate estimated that only 10% of the study time was dedicated to working with media organizations. From their point of view, the degree program was too theoretical. Students know how to write an article ‘on paper’ or how to take a press photo in

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<sup>1114</sup> Cf. Alumni 5, Pos. 56

<sup>1115</sup> Cf. Alumni 6, Pos. 39

<sup>1116</sup> Cf. Alumni 2, Pos. 51

<sup>1117</sup> Cf. Interviewee 12, #00:24:18#

<sup>1118</sup> Cf. Interviewee 11, #00:37:30#

<sup>1119</sup> Cf. Interviewee 12, #00:24:18#

<sup>1120</sup> Cf. Alumni 1, Pos. 13



theory, but not in practice. The alumni stressed the importance of their own initiative in gaining practical experience during their studies.<sup>1121</sup> Furthermore, one interviewee stressed that internships were not obligatory. While students are encouraged to work with media organizations, the curriculum is tight, time is limited and students are not proactive enough. As a result, practical skills remain limited and their journalistic work of recent graduates is not easily accepted by news agencies.<sup>1122</sup> In contrast, another graduate mentioned that instructors enabled students to gain practical experience in various media organizations and that students had the opportunity to work for the most important media outlets.<sup>1123</sup> Another alumni specified that the USSH worked with certain agencies to offer practical experiences to students.<sup>1124</sup>

### *Theoretical Knowledge*

Asked about the *societal role and responsibility* of journalists, only one USSH lecturer explored the topic, mentioning that they cover the topic from a theoretical perspective with reference to case studies. Marxist theory plays a central role, even though traditional journalistic norms have been destroyed by new principles of marketization. The instructor explained that they tended to hold back their opinions on Marxism as well as capitalism, considering their task teaching students about the complexity of the issue rather than providing ready-made answers and solutions.<sup>1125</sup>

The alumni survey showed that the societal role and responsibility of the media are a crucial aspect of the curriculum emphasized throughout the entire program.<sup>1126</sup> One graduate confirmed that instructors assist students in identifying the appropriate role of the media in society.<sup>1127</sup> Interviewees stressed that apart from one specific subject covering media law and ethics, USSH taught *ethics and professional values* throughout their degree. One interviewee believed that the students needed to learn about the

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<sup>1121</sup> Cf. Alumni 5, Pos. 52

<sup>1122</sup> Cf. Alumni 4, Pos. 50

<sup>1123</sup> Alumni 3, Pos. 50

<sup>1124</sup> Cf. Alumni 6, Pos. 39

<sup>1125</sup> Cf. Interviewee 11, #00:30:12#

<sup>1126</sup> Cf. Alumni 3, Pos 67; cf. Alumni 4, Pos. 68; cf. Alumni 5, Pos. 68

<sup>1127</sup> Cf. Alumni 5, Pos. 68

balance of ethics and professional skills.<sup>1128</sup> The conservative view, that reporting has to conform to what the party says, is outdated. A lot of journalists struggle to push boundaries and report on social injustices.<sup>1129</sup> The financial pressure of increasingly a commercialized media landscape also contributes to the difficulty of practicing ethical journalism:

The problem of ethics let's say 20 years ago was very simple: you follow whatever the party says and the party gives you money. [...]. But now the majority of Vietnamese newspapers [...] follow all the state guidelines, but they sustain themselves economically. So, you know, there's a lot of problems with ethics.<sup>1130</sup>

The instructors try to make the topic of journalistic ethics more practical through case studies on how to represent women or religious minorities in a story.<sup>1131</sup> Recently, a new module on journalistic law and ethics was developed by a new instructor with a rather Western approach. As one interviewee emphasized, such foreign concepts are not necessarily comparable to the dilemmas journalists find themselves in within a doctrine-based, socialist system.<sup>1132</sup> According to one local expert, the faculty puts pressure on the lecturers to include professional skills and values in their coursework as learning outcomes.<sup>1133</sup> The same interviewee raised the issue of receiving 'brown envelopes' which is a topic in more practical journalistic classes.<sup>1134</sup>

The alumni survey revealed a variety of opinions on journalistic ethics and professional values. The majority of graduates thought that ethics were a key topic at the USSH, taught through practical examples meant to convey major professional principles such as truth, fairness and clarity.<sup>1135</sup> One graduate, however, considered it only a formal part of the curriculum, covered superficially. Nonetheless, lecturers took the topic seriously.<sup>1136</sup> One

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<sup>1128</sup> Cf. Interviewee 10, #00:05:08#

<sup>1129</sup> Cf. Interviewee 11, #00:10:02#

<sup>1130</sup> Ibid., #00:10:02#

<sup>1131</sup> Cf. ibid., #00:10:02#

<sup>1132</sup> Cf. Interviewee 11, #00:10:02#

<sup>1133</sup> Cf. Interviewee 12, #00:43:37#

<sup>1134</sup> Cf. ibid., #00:42:04#

<sup>1135</sup> Cf. Alumni 1, Pos. 5; cf. Alumni 2, Pos. 41; cf. Alumni 5, Pos. 29; Cf. Alumni 6, Pos. 27

<sup>1136</sup> Cf. Alumni 3, Pos. 40

interviewee accentuated that only professional experience allows journalists to understand the relevance of professional ethics.<sup>1137</sup>

The questionnaire included a general question about options for specialization during the degree. One graduate proposed more subjects that enable students to write about specific topics including culture, the environment and society.<sup>1138</sup> They mentioned the possibility of specializing in particular formats such as TV or online media.<sup>1139</sup>

### *Other Non-Journalistic Subjects*

One of the key challenges is the lack of English language skills of both instructors and students. Their reading skills are poor and instructors cannot demand that students work with English materials. As a consequence, teaching materials are limited.<sup>1140</sup> One graduate suggested the inclusion of more foreign-language subjects in the curriculum.<sup>1141</sup>

The USSH has opened up another field of specialization, allowing students to specialize not only in print, online and broadcast journalism, but also PR.<sup>1142</sup> At the time of the interviews, there was no information on how many students had chosen the PR stream. Students seemingly tended to study as many subjects as possible, since tuition fees were low and they wanted to find a job as soon as possible after graduation in order to become financially independent from their parents.<sup>1143</sup> One instructor expressed their belief that the PR option empowered students in terms of their employment options.<sup>1144</sup> Whereas excellent students still found journalistic work, the average student have to consider to media-adjacent jobs, such as writing for PR.

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<sup>1137</sup> Alumni 1, Pos. 5

<sup>1138</sup> Cf. Alumni 6, Pos. 89

<sup>1139</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, Pos. 49

<sup>1140</sup> Cf. Interviewee 12, #00:34:51#

<sup>1141</sup> Cf. Alumni 4, Pos. 114

<sup>1142</sup> Cf. Interviewee 12, #0:15:44#

<sup>1143</sup> Cf. Interviewee 12, #00:17:17#

<sup>1144</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, #0:15:44# / #00:48:36#

## Specific Program Content

### *Specialized Reporting Skills*

Generally, USSH students can choose from one of five specialized journalism courses: sports, economic, education, culture or lifestyle journalism.<sup>1145</sup> Teaching staff cover the basics and then invite experienced journalists to come and teach the course. The course is compulsory, but the content changes continuously. At the time of the interview, the faculty offered three options for specialized reporting.<sup>1146</sup> Interviewees mentioned *environmental reporting* as well as *finance and economic reporting*.<sup>1147</sup> The interviewed USSH lecturers did not make any notable remarks regarding *conflict-sensitive reporting* or *development journalism*. Development reporting and development topics were not included in the curriculum or only to a limited degree according to two of the graduates.<sup>1148</sup> However, one survey participant noted that instructors generally include socially relevant issues.<sup>1149</sup> Another graduate thought that the program touched on environmental issues, human rights and poverty reduction – all relevant current topics. Globalization and international relations were covered to a lesser extent.<sup>1150</sup> The same interviewee suggested that including more subjects that enable students to write about specific topics including culture, the environment and society would be beneficial.<sup>1151</sup>

### *Media Management and Entrepreneurial Journalism*

The Bachelor's degree at the USSH is limited to basic knowledge of the overall media industry, i.e. media economics. The Master's degree also covers financial aspects of the media landscape,<sup>1152</sup> and includes a special module on financial management. In addition, there is a particular stream on media management.<sup>1153</sup> While one expert stated that the topic was covered as part of the course on newsroom management, another interviewee

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<sup>1145</sup> Cf. Interviewee 10, #00:09:01#

<sup>1146</sup> Cf. Interviewee 12, #00:34:27# / #00:31:38#; cf. Interviewee 10, #00:09:01#

<sup>1147</sup> Cf. Interviewee 10, #00:10:58#

<sup>1148</sup> Cf. Alumni 1, Pos. 33; cf. Alumni 5, Pos. 72

<sup>1149</sup> Cf. Alumni 3, Pos. 71

<sup>1150</sup> Cf. Alumni 6, Pos. 57

<sup>1151</sup> Cf. Alumni 6, Pos. 89

<sup>1152</sup> Cf. Interviewee 10, #00:12:50#

<sup>1153</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, #00:13:12#

explained that the USSH offers basic courses in economics, which they did not find sufficient.<sup>1154</sup> The alumni survey confirmed that media management and entrepreneurial skills were not part of the degree program or were only touched upon to a very limited degree.<sup>1155</sup> One former student even argued that organizational development and financial management of media outlets and freelance journalism were not mentioned at all.<sup>1156</sup> Another graduate voiced their desire for greater competencies in media management and entrepreneurship.<sup>1157</sup>

### *Digital Skills and Competencies*

Apart from print, broadcast and PR, student can specialize in online journalism toward the end of their degree.<sup>1158</sup> Online journalism was included in the USSH curriculum early on, with 5 CP and later with 6 CP – which are still not enough according to one expert.<sup>1159</sup> At the CMP, computers and the internet are used for teaching.<sup>1160</sup> PowerPoint was introduced to the classrooms in 2005 and 2006; before that, chalkboards were used.<sup>1161</sup> One lecturer stressed that the USSH has a very limited budget, making the switch to digital a major effort. Another local instructor described the difficulties of adapting the program to the digital age and providing students with *digital skills and competencies* as follows:

Because it is still brand-new for everyone, the research, the body of knowledge in digital journalism is still, how do you say, confusing. So even us, like professors and the industry, is changing every day. [...]. I think we have room for adjusting the program every year by around 20%.<sup>1162</sup>

Even though there has been a lot of improvement in terms of equipment, a certain mindset in favor of technological innovation is missing: “We

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<sup>1154</sup> Cf. Interviewee 11, #00:12:21#; cf. Interviewee 12, #00:31:38#

<sup>1155</sup> Cf. Alumni 1, Pos. 41; cf. Alumni 3, Pos. 83; cf. Alumni 4, Pos. 84

<sup>1156</sup> Cf. Alumni 5, Pos. 82

<sup>1157</sup> Cf. Alumni 4, Pos. 97

<sup>1158</sup> Cf. Interviewee 10, #00:02:27#; cf. Interviewee 12, #00:11:03#

<sup>1159</sup> Cf. Interviewee 12, #00:37:33#

<sup>1160</sup> Cf. Interviewee 10, #00:11:57#

<sup>1161</sup> Interviewee 11, #00:22:05#

<sup>1162</sup> Interviewee 12, #00:37:33#

have big labs, we have computers but we don't have that spirit here, that tech-savvy spirit.”<sup>1163</sup> The head of the journalism department wants to innovate the programs as they are convinced that they will otherwise lose students.<sup>1164</sup> Social media is becoming more and more of a topic in the program.<sup>1165</sup> Consequently, the program depends heavily on the availability of instructors with digital competencies. The USSH thus invites professionals as guest lecturers and encourages students to acquire digital skills by themselves.<sup>1166</sup> Moreover, the interviews revealed that a lot of students want to conduct research on digital media in collaboration with innovative newsrooms where they can do observations.<sup>1167</sup> While acknowledging the importance of digital media and ICT skills, most graduates agreed that these topics are not included or only included to a limited degree in the program.<sup>1168</sup> Blogs and social media were only rarely mentioned.<sup>1169</sup>

## **Financial and Human Resources**

### *Funding and Sustainability*

The program is state-funded and relies on tuition fees from students.<sup>1170</sup> Tuition fees have increased in recent years. For students from rural areas, tuition fees are a major burden.<sup>1171</sup>

### *Managerial and Administrative Staff*

Normally, the program is overseen by a dean and two or three vice-deans on five-year appointments. The management structure is reviewed every five years.<sup>1172</sup>

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<sup>1163</sup> Interviewee 11, #00:22:05#

<sup>1164</sup> Cf. Interviewee 11, #00:23:59#

<sup>1165</sup> Cf. Interviewee 10, #00:11:57#

<sup>1166</sup> Cf. Interviewee 12, #00:37:33#

<sup>1167</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, #00:40:30#

<sup>1168</sup> Cf. Alumni 1, Pos. 31; cf. Alumni 2, Pos. 71; cf. Alumni 4, Pos. 78

<sup>1169</sup> Cf. Alumni 1, Pos. 31; cf. Alumni 4, Pos. 78

<sup>1170</sup> Cf. Interviewee 10, #00:18:04#

<sup>1171</sup> Cf. Interviewee 11, #00:43:03#

<sup>1172</sup> Cf. Interviewee 10, #00:03:08# / #00:04:31#

### *Local Teaching Staff*

There are only fifteen full-time lecturers at the USSH. About 70% of the faculty is made up of visiting and guest lecturers from other institutions and the media industry.<sup>1173</sup> One interviewee reported that the instructors in the USSH journalism program are relatively young, often below 45. Only two of them were older, approaching retirement age. Their teaching was rather theoretical, forcing the dean to reduce their teaching commitments and to give more courses to younger instructors.<sup>1174</sup> In terms of their *education and professional profiles*, the majority of instructors had a degree in journalism or media and communication. In addition, they were required to have a doctoral degree. One instructor estimated that half also had practical journalistic experience. Younger lecturers are often also working journalists. Some senior lecturers held part-time advisory or director positions at various media organizations. The requirements and consequently the recruitment of instructors was identified as one the biggest institutional challenges.<sup>1175</sup> One interviewee who graduated from USSH mentioned that they were not allowed to teach there before gaining a Master's degree.<sup>1176</sup> There were only around ten doctoral graduates in the country, who would qualify as lecturers at the USSH.<sup>1177</sup> Various instructors explained that they had gained practical experience at well-known media organizations and held doctoral degrees from overseas (for instance, from Australia and South Korea).<sup>1178</sup> One interviewee identified two major problems with regard to *instructor salaries and incentives*: One, the salaries were very low, with instructors being offered jobs outside the university with much better pay; two, it took a very long time to pursue a PhD, while simultaneously missing out on practical experiences – which was also a requirement for a lectureship in journalism.<sup>1179</sup> Generally, a PhD was very well regarded and provided good career opportunities, but, at the USSH, a lecturer only earns around 400 dollars per month. Salaries

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<sup>1173</sup> Cf. Interviewee 12, #00:19:10# / #00:29:06#

<sup>1174</sup> Cf. Interviewee 11, #00:15:09

<sup>1175</sup> Cf. Interviewee 10, #00:21:08#

<sup>1176</sup> Cf. Interviewee 11, #00:00:08#

<sup>1177</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, #00:16:19#

<sup>1178</sup> Cf. Interviewee 12, #00:00:35#; cf. Interviewee 11, #00:00:08#

<sup>1179</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, #00:45:13#

at private universities or government jobs were much higher.<sup>1180</sup> In order to recruit guest lecturers, the USSH tried to create a win-win-situation for external lecturers teaching in the journalism program. Guest lecturers can scout potential new staff for their organizations; alumni are asked to talk about their experiences after graduating from the VNU. Instead of offering compensation, intrinsic motivation played a big role: former students felt proud and respected when sharing their knowledge and networks with prospective graduates.<sup>1181</sup>

In terms of *instructor training and development*, one interviewee and head of department stated that they discussed the methodology and content of the classes with the lecturers on a monthly basis. Furthermore, the instructors took part in instructor training workshops provided by the university.<sup>1182</sup> Another lecturer said that they offered a lot of classes on teaching methods.<sup>1183</sup> Moreover, one interviewee mentioned the ‘media studies’ division, which belongs to the faculty and focuses on research.<sup>1184</sup>

#### *Relationship between Instructors and Management*

In terms of the relationship between teaching staff and faculty management, only one interviewee highlighted that lecturers have a lot of freedom: “I’m allowed to teach basically everything that I want.”<sup>1185</sup> The interviews did not reveal any information about *Collaboration Among Teaching Staff* at the AJC. *International Instructors* was also not a topic with substantial results.

### **Collaboration and Networks**

#### *Government Links*

One interviewee accentuated that the VNU had their own entry exams, although they are signed off by the Ministry of Education. The government wants to apply the VNU model to universities across the whole country.<sup>1186</sup> The curriculum is vetted by the Ministry of Education, which

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<sup>1180</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, #00:16:19#

<sup>1181</sup> Cf. Interviewee 12, #00:45:13#

<sup>1182</sup> Cf. Interviewee 10, #00:23:58#

<sup>1183</sup> Cf. Interviewee 11, #00:05:57#

<sup>1184</sup> Cf. Interviewee 12, #00:30:14#

<sup>1185</sup> *Ibid.*, #00:03:06#

<sup>1186</sup> Cf. Interviewee 11, #00:44:22#



means that any changes need to be signed off by the ministry. Nonetheless, lecturers have a lot of freedom as to what and how they teach.<sup>1187</sup> Interviewees made no references to individual *politicians* being connected to or influencing the USSH.

### *International Cooperation*

The USSH works together with the Stirling University and the City of London University, both in the U.K.<sup>1188</sup> The intention is to invite international scholars to teach at the USSH in order to prepare students for the global demands of their profession. Another aim is to attract more students from the region who speak Vietnamese as, currently, the number of exchange students is rather small. To increase the number of international students, the USSH developed a Master's in media management in collaboration with Stirling. Furthermore, the school had plans to create an English language undergraduate program.<sup>1189</sup> In addition, the journalism school collaborates with local and international NGOs (including from Germany, Japan, Korea and the United States).<sup>1190</sup>

### *Industry and Other Collaboration*

The USSH works with well-known media professionals on program development. The school invites them to discuss the process and quality of the curriculum.<sup>1191</sup> Every year or so, the USSH sends out a survey to potential media employers in order for them to provide feedback on-the-job performance of their graduates.<sup>1192</sup> As outlined earlier, a great majority of instructors are external guest lecturers from media organization.<sup>1193</sup> Moreover, at the USSH a number of famous journalists hold or share chair positions. For instance, the chair of the broadcast department is a famous media producer for VTV.<sup>1194</sup> There were no substantial findings concerning *University Links*.

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<sup>1187</sup> Cf. Interviewee 12, #00:03:06#

<sup>1188</sup> Cf. Interviewee 10, #00:16:43#

<sup>1189</sup> Cf. Interviewee 12, #00:54:34#

<sup>1190</sup> Cf. Interviewee 10, #00:17:19#

<sup>1191</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, #00:00:31#

<sup>1192</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, #00:01:50#

<sup>1193</sup> Cf. Interviewee 12, #00:19:11#

<sup>1194</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, #00:29:07#

## Quality and Change Management

### *External Advisory*

The City of London University consults the USSH.<sup>1195</sup>

### *Monitoring and Evaluation*

As mentioned under ‘industry collaboration,’ the USSH works together with media professionals and asks for feedback from employers.<sup>1196</sup> Instructors are not audited or monitored.<sup>1197</sup> Furthermore, there are no statistics regarding graduates and their employment prospects after finishing the degree.<sup>1198</sup> Several interviewees stated that there is a *student evaluation* at the end of each semester for each course, to assess the quality of the instructor and the course.<sup>1199</sup> Moreover, one instructor mentioned that they encourage students to give them feedback and raise questions, although they rarely do so. Students are rather introverted compared to the lecturer’s experience with students in the United States, for example.<sup>1200</sup>

### *Curriculum and Organizational Development*

As one of the initial challenges, it is worth documenting that the program originated from a literature department and the USSH did not have the knowledge and competencies in journalism. Therefore, in 2000, when one lecturer was themselves a student, a significant part of the courses taught were in literature as most of the instructors had a literature background.<sup>1201</sup> However, in the last two decades, the situation greatly improved. Literature courses were replaced by journalistic coursework: “So we removed now every single subject of literature. There’s not a single one left. That’s a big revolution.” The shortage of teaching staff is of great concern in response.<sup>1202</sup>

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<sup>1195</sup> Cf. Interviewee 10, #00:00:10# Part 2

<sup>1196</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, #00:00:31# / #00:01:50#

<sup>1197</sup> Cf. Interviewee 11, #00:33:32#

<sup>1198</sup> Cf. Interviewee 12, #00:48:36#

<sup>1199</sup> Cf. Interviewee 10, #00:24:37#; cf. Interviewee 11, #00:20:05#

<sup>1200</sup> Cf. Interviewee 11, #00:20:22#

<sup>1201</sup> Cf. Interviewee 10, #00:18:17#

<sup>1202</sup> Cf. Interviewee 11, #00:18:55#; cf. Interviewee 12, #00:11:03#

Another instructor stressed that the program structure is rather fixed and dependent on the reform of the VNU in 2012 and 2013. Considering *current opportunities and challenges*, one local expert highlighted that while there have been a lot of reforms, institutional and cultural obstacles remain standing in the way of simple changes,<sup>1203</sup> insofar as the USSH has focused on reforming content and teaching, rather than program structure.<sup>1204</sup> The curriculum is flexible in terms of the special reporting subject, which changes every year (see ‘program content,’ ‘specialized reporting skills’).<sup>1205</sup> Moreover, instructors have a lot of freedom as to how and what they want to teach in their course.<sup>1206</sup>

In terms of technological innovation, the development of social media and the repercussions for theoretical and practical journalism are a challenge for the USSH.<sup>1207</sup> The head of the program intends to improve the program with respect to new technologies, online journalism and digital competencies.<sup>1208</sup> The strength of the USSH is that they provide the students with a solid foundation in history, philosophy and literature: “we believe that technology may change, however, the nature of the people and the basic knowledge of journalists will remain there.”<sup>1209</sup> A key challenge for the institution is in creating a mindset ready for technological innovation beyond the classroom.<sup>1210</sup>

### **Alumni Suggestions to School**

Various recommendations from USSH alumni concerned the balance of theory and practice. One graduate proposed providing more opportunities for students to practice journalism with guidance from instructors in order to prevent students from being overwhelmed in their first jobs. Furthermore, employers would no longer have to train new employees from scratch.<sup>1211</sup> Another suggestion was to focus less on general subjects such as economics, the environment and development, history and psychology

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<sup>1203</sup> Cf. Interviewee 11, #00:44:22#

<sup>1204</sup> Cf. Interviewee 10, #00:15:02#

<sup>1205</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, #00:10:58#; cf. Interviewee 12, #00:34:19#

<sup>1206</sup> Cf. Interviewee 11, #00:33:32#

<sup>1207</sup> Cf. Interviewee 10, #00:06:30#, Part 2

<sup>1208</sup> Cf. Interviewee 11, #00:23:59#; cf. Interviewee 12, #00:37:33#

<sup>1209</sup> Interviewee 10, #00:08:04#, Part 2

<sup>1210</sup> Cf. Interviewee 11, #00:22:05#

<sup>1211</sup> Cf. Alumni 3, Pos. 103; cf. Alumni 5, Pos. 112; cf. Alumni 6, Pos. 89

and more on practical journalism.<sup>1212</sup> One survey participant recommended training students in writing about specific topics including culture, the environment and society. Students should also learn how to deal with radio and TV equipment.<sup>1213</sup> Another proposal was to include more IT skills and foreign languages in the curriculum.<sup>1214</sup>

### 6.3.3 AJC

#### 6.3.3.1 Micro level: Conditions for Students

##### Student Admission

In terms of the *number of students*, the AJC broadcast faculty is the largest department. At the time of this research, there were six to seven Bachelor classes of 40 to 50 students each, adding up to 350 to 400 students per year across four years, totaling approximately 1500 students per year. The print faculty has half the number of students; the PR and advertising faculty enroll two Bachelor classes per year and two Master cohorts of 15 to 20 students each.<sup>1215</sup> Regarding *demographics*, students come from all socio-economic backgrounds.<sup>1216</sup> The AJC enrolls far more female students than male, as the school recruits students based on grades attained in literature, history, geography, English and mathematics, subjects in which female students tend to score higher.<sup>1217</sup> Looking at *tuition fees and scholarships*, the AJC supports students from lower socio-economic backgrounds with free tuition, and gives out around 100 scholarships. Moreover, some state media outlets provide student scholarships. Normally, students have to pay 180,000 Vietnam dollars –fees that are on the rise.<sup>1218</sup>

With respect to the *application process, entry requirements and exams*: Previously, prospective students had to pass a national exam after high school, and then sit an exam that assessed their suitability for journalism. The exam consisted of a general knowledge multiple-choice test on politics, history, geography and the like, and a written exam that assessed the

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<sup>1212</sup> Cf. Alumni 4, Pos. 114

<sup>1213</sup> Cf. Alumni 6, Pos. 89

<sup>1214</sup> Cf. Alumni 4, Pos. 114

<sup>1215</sup> Cf. Interviewee 16, #00:24:32#

<sup>1216</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, #00:20:45#

<sup>1217</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, #00:20:38#

<sup>1218</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, #00:20:45#

candidate's journalistic abilities by asking them to work with texts and produce a report on current affairs.<sup>1219</sup> One instructor noted that the university entrance exams had changed every year since 2014. Although previously prospective students were required to sit a general entrance exam, during which parts C and D (on literature, mathematics and English) were particularly relevant for AJC students, the exam was shelved in 2017.<sup>1220</sup> Another interviewee reiterated that entrance exams were no longer required at AJC,<sup>1221</sup> as the school now uses the high school final exam to make its determination. For AJC and VNU, the grades required are a bit higher than at other, especially private, universities, which affects the quality of students and thus also the quality of teaching.<sup>1222</sup> One instructor saw it as a major challenge that the students at AJC lacked motivation, as there was a lot of pressure on high school graduates to enter university without knowing what they actually want to do in the future.<sup>1223</sup> Another interviewee agreed that teaching students without a passion for the journalistic profession was very difficult.<sup>1224</sup>

### **Relationship between Instructors and Students**

One lecturer explained that they saw themselves firstly as a friend and secondly as an adviser to their students.<sup>1225</sup> Another interviewee pointed out that the relationship between instructors and students is traditionally very distant. Instructors are very well-respected due to their knowledge in their field and their life experiences. Nonetheless, they described their relationship to the students as close. Even though this was criticized by other colleagues, they believed that the distance between lecturer and student needs to be reduced:

You have to be close with them. If you are so separate from your students, there's no way you'll understand them. If you don't understand them, you can't fix the problem. You can't motivate them.

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<sup>1219</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, #00:17:23#; cf. Interviewee 16, #00:19:47-2#; cf. Interviewee 15, #00:13:09#

<sup>1220</sup> Cf. Interviewee 15, #00:11:20#

<sup>1221</sup> Cf. Interviewee 13, Pos. 92

<sup>1222</sup> Cf. Interviewee 13, Pos. 92

<sup>1223</sup> Cf. Interviewee 14, #00:31:01#

<sup>1224</sup> Cf. Interviewee 13, #00:33:08#

<sup>1225</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, #00:58:30#

The instructor is not about giving you only knowledge but it's also about motivation.<sup>1226</sup>

## Teaching Styles and Methods

One instructor stated that they applied a rather hands-on teaching style. They stressed that the homework assigned is also practical.<sup>1227</sup> Apart from that, other interviewees did not reveal any notable insights into their teaching approaches.

## Alumni Support

It is key requirement for instructors at the AJC to provide current students with *career support*.<sup>1228</sup> Some interviewees claimed that they do this voluntarily, connecting students with certain media organizations.<sup>1229</sup> No formal *alumni program* was mentioned.

### 6.3.3.2 Meso Level: Program Content and Institutional Aspects

#### General Program Content

In terms of the *overall objectives and structure* of the curriculum, one interviewee pointed out the main difference between the AJC and Western journalism schools: The AJC includes modules on politics, economy and ideology as a requirement by the MoET. A third of the four-year program consists of standardized courses which are the same at every university in Vietnam.<sup>1230</sup> No additional remarks were made about a *final thesis and exams* deviating from the official curriculum. Considering the *balance of theory and practice*, one instructor identified a significant lack of practice. They stressed the necessity, especially for undergraduates, to acquire practical skills, perceiving them as more important than theory.<sup>1231</sup> One interviewee believed that in the last five to ten years the ratio had changed, and the focus had shifted from theory to practice. The current aim is to provide students with more opportunities to practice journalism during their

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<sup>1226</sup> Interviewee 14, #00:14:32#

<sup>1227</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, #00:11:38#

<sup>1228</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, #00:05:09#

<sup>1229</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, #00:24:30#; cf. Interviewee 13, #00:34:33#

<sup>1230</sup> Cf. Interviewee 15, #00:18:33#

<sup>1231</sup> Cf. Interviewee 14, #00:11:10#

education at the AJC.<sup>1232</sup> In contrast, another instructor thought that, despite a technical balance of theory and practice, there was too much emphasis on practice and too little attention paid to journalism theory, which the students are less interested in. Theory, however, was vital to understanding how the media and journalists work:<sup>1233</sup> “When they really understand the theory, then they can do practice.”<sup>1234</sup>

### *Basic Journalistic Skills*

Asked about scientific and social *research skills*, one instructor mentioned Methodology as one of the compulsory, non-journalistic, courses included in the curriculum.<sup>1235</sup> With respect to *critical thinking skills*, no substantial responses were given by AJC experts. In each course, students are asked to produce journalistic content and go through the entire process from identifying a topic, conducting field research and collecting data to putting together a journalistic report for TV, for instance.<sup>1236</sup> One interviewee stressed that the extent to which journalistic practice was part of a course depended on the teacher and the practical expertise they bring to the classroom.<sup>1237</sup> In this context, another lecturer considered the lack of focus on interview techniques, investigative reporting skills, storytelling and other basic journalistic skills to be a major challenge:

They have to do all the sort of multimedia things and really they lose or don't pay enough attention to the core skills, like a good interview technique or good investigative journalism, writing a good story. Because now everything is so rushed and quick and fast. And so they don't want to really pay much attention on traditional journalism.<sup>1238</sup>

In terms of *practical on-campus* elements, the AJC provides a studio for radio, TV and online production.<sup>1239</sup> Various interviewees revealed that

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<sup>1232</sup> Cf. Interviewee 16, #00:16:29#

<sup>1233</sup> Cf. Interviewee 15, #00:47:18#

<sup>1234</sup> Ibid., #00:48:38#

<sup>1235</sup> Cf. ibid., #00:20:37#

<sup>1236</sup> Cf. Interviewee 16, #00:03:12#

<sup>1237</sup> Cf. Interviewee 14, #00:13:12#

<sup>1238</sup> Interviewee 15, #00:51:11#

<sup>1239</sup> Cf. Interviewee 16, #00:03:20#

the online lab needs improvement, there is not enough equipment for students to borrow, which means they can only hire it for a small amount of time, and time in the labs is limited. Students are thus encouraged to use their personal equipment and smartphones.<sup>1240</sup> Purportedly, the facilities are used frequently by students.<sup>1241</sup> Furthermore, the AJC provides a website for online journalism called ‘New Wave’ where students have to upload articles and audiovisual content. In the past, they were asked to create a blog themselves; now, they learn how to use a CMS. Instructors invest a lot of time giving feedback and supporting the students in producing quality content, preparing them for the real newsroom experience after graduation, as one lecturer argued.<sup>1242</sup> Regarding on-campus practical learning, the broadcast faculty provides two in-house radio programs for which students produce on a weekly basis.<sup>1243</sup> For print, there is a campus magazine.<sup>1244</sup>

Concerning *practical off-campus* learning, one lecturer stated that they introduce good students early on to newsrooms where they can work part-time or on a particular story.<sup>1245</sup> Several interviewees mentioned two compulsory internships: In the third year, students intern at a press office for one month to observe, and in the final year they do a three-month practical internship.<sup>1246</sup> Another interviewee expressed their belief that while this was an adequate approach, the quality of the internship depended on the news organization: “A lot of students feel very frustrated because they are not assigned any concrete work.”<sup>1247</sup> The initiative of the individual student to make the most of this experience also plays a significant role. Apart from internships, one interviewee claimed that students have the opportunity to produce for the Hanoi Radio and TV station.<sup>1248</sup>

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<sup>1240</sup> Cf. Interviewee 13, #00:26:47#; cf. Interviewee 16, #00:39:02#

<sup>1241</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, #00:04:31#; cf. Interviewee 15, #00:03:12#

<sup>1242</sup> Cf. Interviewee 13, #00:17:25#

<sup>1243</sup> Cf. Interviewee 15, #00:12:56#

<sup>1244</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, #00:28:01#

<sup>1245</sup> Cf. Interviewee 13, #0:33:37#

<sup>1246</sup> Cf. Interviewee 14, #00:26:27#; cf. Interviewee 15, #00:12:56# / #00:21:58#

<sup>1247</sup> *Ibid.*, #00:21:58#

<sup>1248</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, #00:12:56#



### *Other Non-Journalistic Subjects*

*PR skills* are part of the curriculum, with related subjects taught by the PR and Advertising department at the AJC, allowing the various faculties to work together.<sup>1249</sup> One interviewee stated that *English language skills* are important for students to understand developments across the global media landscape, such as international media outlets advanced use of technology.<sup>1250</sup> At the time of the interviews, the AJC had plans to open a so-called 'high quality program' for top students, in which of the material 30 to 40% is taught in English.<sup>1251</sup>

### *Theoretical Knowledge*

Experts confirmed that the *societal role and responsibility* of journalists forms part of several courses, above all, the theory of journalism.<sup>1252</sup> The AJC considers journalism ethics to be a very important issue, and as such, *ethics and professional values* has been included across various modules and subjects for a long time. In addition, there is a specific one-semester course on Media Law and Ethics. One interviewee believed that journalists who have graduated from a journalism school like AJC or USSH are more aware of these topics than their colleagues, who have not studied journalism at a university.<sup>1253</sup> Conversely, another instructor expressed concern that students were lazy and copied content from other journalists. Nevertheless, they were very strict about this type of plagiarism, considering it unethical and letting students fail the course as a consequence.<sup>1254</sup> In terms of other professional values, the instructor mentioned fake news, but did not consider it relevant for their course. As for ethics: they talk to their students in the classroom about it and stress that they must be aware of what the newsrooms require.<sup>1255</sup>

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<sup>1249</sup> Cf. Interviewee 16, #00:26:37#

<sup>1250</sup> Cf. Interviewee 14, #00:06:01#

<sup>1251</sup> Cf. Interviewee 13, #00:45:56#

<sup>1252</sup> Cf. Interviewee 16, #00:09:29#; cf. Interviewee 15, #00:31:13#

<sup>1253</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, #00:31:13#; cf. Interviewee 16, #00:07:29#

<sup>1254</sup> Cf. Interviewee 13, #00:30:12#

<sup>1255</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, #00:32:17#

## Special Program Content

### *Specialized Reporting Skills*

The AJC curriculum includes a 5 CP course entitled ‘Specialized Subject.’ For each CP, students can specialize in one area and choose from a variety of topics, with *financial and economic reporting* as one option. Professional journalists are invited to guest lecture about their specializations.<sup>1256</sup> Another interviewee explained that *development journalism* is not a focus at the AJC. Nonetheless, the curriculum includes specialized reporting courses, which is not compulsory, on particular issues such as the environment or *conflict-sensitive reporting*.<sup>1257</sup> In this context, they emphasized that journalists in Vietnam are not able to report on politically sensitive issues, such as the relationship with China.<sup>1258</sup>

### *Media Management and Entrepreneurial Skills*

Media economics is part of the curriculum, but the course content is limited to the macro level of the media industry and is rather theoretical instead of practice-oriented. According to one interviewee, entrepreneurial skills are not needed in Vietnam since journalists cannot open up their own media outlets, except by becoming bloggers or being active on social media.<sup>1259</sup> Similarly, media management skills are not taught at the undergraduate level, since there is no ‘private journalism’ in Vietnam, and financial matters are dealt with by newsroom managers and not journalists.<sup>1260</sup> One instructor stressed that it is not possible in Vietnam to do journalism ‘privately,’ and that most media organizations are state-owned. In the Master’s degree, media management plays a greater role.<sup>1261</sup>

### *Digital Skills and Competencies*

Online journalism is one of four major subjects at the AJC. The school claims to offer a wide range of theoretical and practical subjects to develop the skills necessary for online journalism.<sup>1262</sup> Accordingly, one

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<sup>1256</sup> Cf. Interviewee 13, #00:35:55#; cf. Interviewee 16, #00:11:50#

<sup>1257</sup> Cf. Interviewee 15, #00:41:53#

<sup>1258</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, #00:39:58# / #00:43:25#

<sup>1259</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, #00:45:53#

<sup>1260</sup> Cf. Interviewee 13, #0:53:34#

<sup>1261</sup> Cf. Interviewee 16, #00:10:38

<sup>1262</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, #00:05:06#

instructor accentuated that AJC students are well-situated to get a job after graduation due to their tech-savviness. They know how to produce multimedia content and use social media.<sup>1263</sup> However, they also noted that although all AJC lecturers now think digitally and include digital journalism in their course work, the students, essentially, have to acquire digital skills by themselves. Apart from studios for broadcast journalism, the AJC provides a computer lab with access to the internet. One instructor teaches mobile journalism by asking students to use their smartphones to produce video clips.<sup>1264</sup>

One interviewee explained that the curriculum has been adapted in order to overcome the strict separation between the five areas and faculties by establishing something the AJC calls ‘integrated journalism.’ After Year 1 and 2, during which the students learn the same things, they have a choice between certain specializations in Year 3, for example TV and online.<sup>1265</sup> Overall, the instructors shared different perspectives about the conceptualization of online and multimedia journalism at AJC. While some saw multimedia as the combination of broadcast, print and online, others believed that online journalism was the basis for all other forms of journalism today. They criticized the multimedia approach:

they have to learn a little bit about TV, they have to study a little bit about radio, about print. And it’s mixed together. It’s like a hot pot. You know the hot pot in Vietnam? It is a mix of anything, but nothing special.<sup>1266</sup>

The same lecturer recommended teaching online journalism earlier in the program in order for students to learn the entire process from writing, editing and publishing content online.<sup>1267</sup> In their courses, they cover new trends such as data journalism.<sup>1268</sup> Thus far, they have not included social media in a systematic way, but have asked students to share their pieces via Facebook in addition to publishing it on the website. Not many

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<sup>1263</sup> Cf. Interviewee 15, #0:26:09#

<sup>1264</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, #00:28:01#

<sup>1265</sup> Cf. Interviewee 13, #00:43:32#

<sup>1266</sup> *Ibid.*, #00:12:07#

<sup>1267</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, #00:38:33#

<sup>1268</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, #00:22:39#

instructors require even that, according to this interviewee, underlining that there needs to be a greater focus on social media.<sup>1269</sup>

## Financial and Human Resources

Interviewees from the AJC did not reveal any notable details about *funding and sustainability*.

### *Local Instructors and Staff*

Lecturers need to meet various requirements on-the-job: Firstly, they are required to do research and publish articles or books, either academic or field research in media organizations.<sup>1270</sup> Secondly, they are expected to teach and take part in conferences and workshops. Thirdly, they are required to provide career support to students.<sup>1271</sup> In terms of their *education and professional profiles*, the minimum requirement set by the MoET to teach at the university level is a Master's degree, a doctoral degree and an academic publication. One instructor and VJA representative explained that practicing journalists did not want to go down this long and complicated academic path. In other countries, the interviewee believed, the prerequisites were less onerous.<sup>1272</sup>

Most of the teaching staff that took part in this study have been working at the AJC for a long time. All of them hold a doctorate from international universities, speak English well, and have years of journalistic experience, even though some are no longer practicing journalists.<sup>1273</sup> A number of the teaching staff are relatively young and do not have a sufficient portfolio of journalistic work.<sup>1274</sup> Regarding *instructor salaries and incentives*, lecturers preferred to work part-time due to their low salaries in academia.<sup>1275</sup> One interviewee underscored the need for a great deal of intrinsic motivation to contribute to their field by educating the next generation of journalists.<sup>1276</sup> As for *instructor training and development*, lecturers can take six

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<sup>1269</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, #00:24:24#

<sup>1270</sup> Cf. Interviewee 14, #00:05:09#

<sup>1271</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, #00:05:09#

<sup>1272</sup> Cf. Interviewee 15, 00:08:01#

<sup>1273</sup> Cf. Interviewee 13, #00:00:15# / #00:02:36# / #00:05:02#; cf. Interviewee 14, #00:01:02#; cf. Interviewee 15, #00:00:31# / #00:01:59#; cf. Interviewee 16, #00:00:32#

<sup>1274</sup> Cf. Interviewee 14, #00:12:59#; cf. Interviewee 15, #00:03:42#

<sup>1275</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, #00:03:42# / #00:08:01#

<sup>1276</sup> Cf. Interviewee 14, 00:34:07

months to work at a media organization. The AJC also offers some graduates PhD or to do an internship overseas in order to expand their knowledge and experience. One faculty head they explained how the AJC assessed teaching abilities:

At least a Master's degree. And before going into a class to teach, we often test and check their teaching ability, teaching methodology and their skills and knowledge in a subject. They have to compile a syllabus, a specific outline for the subject. And they also have to teach in front of all members of the faculty.<sup>1277</sup>

On this point, one interviewee called it a major challenge to raise the quality of teaching and thereby, the quality of the students able to meet the requirements of the media industry in the current, fast-changing, environment.<sup>1278</sup>

#### *Relationship between Instructors and Management*

One instructor mentioned that they worked directly with the Dean, who was of similar age. The atmosphere is positive and on equal terms. However, there is limited contact with the directors.<sup>1279</sup> Another lecturer described the relationship with the faculty management as positive and respectful. They expressed gratitude for the opportunity to teach at the AJC.<sup>1280</sup>

#### *Collaboration among Teaching Staff*

As a rule, AJC lecturers from different faculties collaborate. Instructors from the PR faculty teach in the journalism program, and the instructors from the print faculty also teach in the broadcast journalism faculty. The school has been working on a cooperation program with the Middlesex University in the U.K. For the international Master's degree, lecturers from all AJC faculties work together.<sup>1281</sup> Another interviewee noted that although lecturers were required to work autonomously, a main lecturer

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<sup>1277</sup> Interviewee 16, #00:37:46#

<sup>1278</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, #00:36:18#

<sup>1279</sup> Cf. Interviewee 13, #00:40:14#

<sup>1280</sup> Cf. Interviewee 14, #00:17:23#

<sup>1281</sup> Cf. Interviewee 16, #00:01:45# / #00:26:37#

and a subordinate were designated for each subject.<sup>1282</sup> Moreover, working groups – for example, the multimedia group, which consists of six or seven instructors – meet on occasion and communicate via social media (e.g. Facebook groups) to discuss their experiences and share information on specific topics and trends (e.g. robot journalism). They also work on publications together.<sup>1283</sup>

**International Instructors** were not a topic in the interviews with AJC representatives.

## **Collaboration and Networks**

### *Governmental Links*

In terms of their relationships to government *ministries*, one interviewee explained that the AJC curriculum was set up by the MoET; one third of the CPs are compulsory at every university. Apart from Methodology, these include Politics, Mathematics and English. The other two thirds of the program were flexible.<sup>1284</sup> On the topic of governmental influence, one expert emphasized that students need to understand the political structure and party-politics of Vietnam.<sup>1285</sup> No statements were made with respect to affiliations with individual *politicians*.

### *University Links*

Various faculties work together at the AJC. Instructors from the PR and Advertising section teach in the journalism program; print journalism instructors also teach in other faculties. In the Middlesex program, lecturers from all AJC faculties work together.<sup>1286</sup>

### *Industry and Other Collaborations*

The AJC works together with media organizations as part of their internship program.<sup>1287</sup> One lecturer stated that the AJC would like to work

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<sup>1282</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, #00:35:18#

<sup>1283</sup> Cf. Interviewee 13, #00:08:50#

<sup>1284</sup> Cf. Interviewee 15, #00:20:37#

<sup>1285</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, #00:18:33#

<sup>1286</sup> Cf. Interviewee 16, #00:26:37#

<sup>1287</sup> Cf. Interviewee 15, #00:21:58#

more closely with so-called 'press offices.' Media professionals also guest lecture in the program.<sup>1288</sup>

### *International Collaboration*

The AJC is developing an English language program with the Middlesex University in the U.K.<sup>1289</sup> The program, entitled 'Media and Public Relations Management,' will not be housed within the faculty of journalism, but will instead graduate students with a Bachelor's degree in PR and Advertising. Students with excellent grades will have the opportunity to the UK, and the AJC will invite lecturers from overseas to come to Hanoi to teach.<sup>1290</sup>

### **Quality and Change Management**

No information was revealed regarding *external advisory* mechanisms at the AJC.

### *Monitoring and Evaluation*

Employers that hire AJC graduates are provided with a survey in order to give feedback on their new employees. In the past, according to certain teaching staff, a large number of students held good positions in state media organizations.<sup>1291</sup> *Alumni data*, however, is not frequently or regularly collected. At the time of the interview, it had been two years since the last attempt.<sup>1292</sup> In terms of *student evaluation* processes, before receiving their grades, students have to fill out an evaluation form about their courses and instructors.<sup>1293</sup> One lecturer remarked that there was no standardized questionnaire and that they had produced their own feedback form: in their course, there is a page as part of the final project for the students to express their thoughts about the course and what they learned from it.<sup>1294</sup>

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<sup>1288</sup> Cf. Interviewee 16, #00:41:07#

<sup>1289</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, #00:26:37#; cf. Interviewee 14, #00:07:24#

<sup>1290</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, #00:07:49#; cf. Interviewee 16, #00:27:49#

<sup>1291</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, #00:33:17#

<sup>1292</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, #00:33:55#

<sup>1293</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, #00:34:30#

<sup>1294</sup> Cf. Interviewee 13, #00:39:14#

One instructor pointed out that the AJC had a lot of autonomy in setting up the program, especially in terms of curriculum design. The program content and course titles are very similar to Western journalism degrees.<sup>1295</sup> Another interviewee noted that they were proud of the AJC for being one of the leading journalism schools in Vietnam and for successfully adapting to new demands from society and the media industry.<sup>1296</sup> The AJC journalism program is continuously changing, especially with respect to multimedia and online journalism, which increases the employment opportunities for graduates.<sup>1297</sup>

### **6.3.4 Macro Level: Journalism Education in Vietnam**

This analysis combines perspectives on the country level from local and international experts on journalism education in Vietnam at both the AJC and USSH. Notably, alumni perspectives on *market and employment conditions* are limited to graduates from the USSH, since it was not possible to recruit any former AJC students to participate in the survey.

The analysis of code relations illustrates several overlaps between the categories ‘journalism education landscape’ and ‘internationalization’ and ‘market conditions.’ Moreover, codes were allocated to the same text segments on political influences and market conditions several times.<sup>1298</sup>

One interviewee pointed to the difficulty in finding data on formal journalism training in Vietnam.<sup>1299</sup> Most journalists in Vietnam do not have a formal journalism education.<sup>1300</sup> As a rule, mostly urban middle-class young people have access to academic journalism education; entry requirements are generally rather high. Furthermore, it is impossible for poorer families to provide the regular tuition payments needed to enroll at university.<sup>1301</sup>

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<sup>1295</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, #00:18:33#

<sup>1296</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, #00:48:15#

<sup>1297</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, #00:42:07#

<sup>1298</sup> See code relations browser from MAXQDA in Annex, p. 531.

<sup>1299</sup> Cf. Interviewee 15, #00:24:49#

<sup>1300</sup> Cf. Interviewee 19, #00:09:37#

<sup>1301</sup> Cf. Interviewee 15, #00:24:49#



Overall, the interviews confirmed that the AJC and the VNU are the only official public journalism education programs in Vietnam, with campuses in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City.<sup>1302</sup> Smaller programs also exist in the provinces at public universities in Danang and Hue.<sup>1303</sup> In addition, there are programs in central Vietnam that offer mass communication programs within the faculty of literature, although one expert believed that the quality of these programs was limited.<sup>1304</sup> One interviewee from the AJC highlighted that the competition created by private and international journalism programs was a major challenge. The AJC was the first journalism program, but is no longer the only one.<sup>1305</sup> Private universities now offer PR and advertising degrees as part of mass communication programs that also offer journalism classes.<sup>1306</sup> One expert noted that it is more expensive to study at private universities, and that these schools treat students like customers to whom they provide a service. At public universities, students do not have to pay high fees, but the schools also do not care as much about their interests.<sup>1307</sup> In response to the rumors that the Australian RMIT was opening up a journalism program, one expert explained that the university has been in Vietnam for a long time. They do not offer journalism training, focusing instead on PR and advertising.<sup>1308</sup> There are other also foreign universities, in addition to the RMIT, that collaborate with local universities.<sup>1309</sup>

As a rule, the government controls media and journalism training and education in Vietnam. As one expert put it: “It was an unspoken kind of rule that you can only run a journalism program if you are a big university.”<sup>1310</sup> Some institutions set up journalism programs regardless and without permission. Journalism education was rebranded as mass communication or disguised under other disciplines such as cultural

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<sup>1302</sup> Cf. Interviewee 18, #00:10:10#; cf. Interviewee 13, #00:50:44#; cf. Interviewee 19, #00:12:35#

<sup>1303</sup> Cf. Interviewee 13, #00:50:04#; cf. Interviewee 15, #00:14:24#; cf. Interviewee 19, #00:10:36#

<sup>1304</sup> Cf. Interviewee 13, #00:51:04#

<sup>1305</sup> Cf. Interviewee 16, #00:36:18#

<sup>1306</sup> Cf. Interviewee 15, #00:14:24#

<sup>1307</sup> Cf. Interviewee 18, #00:32:44#

<sup>1308</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, #00:21:37#; cf. Interviewee 15, #00:16:41#;

<sup>1309</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, #00:16:41#

<sup>1310</sup> Interviewee 19, #00:13:29#

studies.<sup>1311</sup> Along with market liberalization and privatization in recent years, state-owned universities were gradually allowed to open up new programs.<sup>1312</sup> At the time of the interviews, the Vietnam VNMG<sup>1313</sup> School of Media mainly targeted young people by offering alternative training outside of a university setting.<sup>1314</sup> This approach is based on the notion that the most important aspect of journalism training is practice, supported by peer-learning and books. Those who want to become journalists thus do not necessarily have to go to university.<sup>1315</sup>

The VJA also offered journalism training. The representative, who was also a lecturer and faculty head at the AJC, explained that media organizations set up codes of conduct that their journalists have to adhere to. However, since news organizations are in a race to attract online users in order to bolster their revenues, the quality of their journalistic content has suffered. As a consequence, training in journalistic ethics and professional values continues to be essential.<sup>1316</sup> Lastly, international organizations also provide journalistic training, including in-house workshops and inviting journalists to their countries for training.<sup>1317</sup>

### **Internationalization**

Internationalization has provided Vietnamese media organizations with more opportunities to recruit staff members. In addition to those graduating from Vietnamese universities, there is a pool of candidates with degrees from Western universities, who distinguish themselves with very good foreign language skills.<sup>1318</sup> Nonetheless, many people who return to Vietnam after studying overseas decide to work for international organizations as consultants or in research due to the poor salaries in journalism.<sup>1319</sup>

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<sup>1311</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, #00:03:19# / #00:10:36#; cf. Interviewee 15, #00:14:24#

<sup>1312</sup> Cf. Interviewee 19, #00:13:29#

<sup>1313</sup> One interviewee was a representative of this school. It was not possible to establish what the abbreviation VNMG means, but most likely it stands for Vietnam Media Management.

<sup>1314</sup> Cf. Interviewee 18, #00:10:10#

<sup>1315</sup> Cf. Interviewee 18, #00:20:32#

<sup>1316</sup> Cf. Interviewee 15, #00:31:13#

<sup>1317</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, #00:31:10#

<sup>1318</sup> Cf. Interviewee 18, #00:24:54#

<sup>1319</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, #00:16:27#

One expert considered it a positive development that institutions such as the RMIT had begun to offer programs in mass communication. New players create competition and challenge the state monopoly on media and journalism education.<sup>1320</sup> Moreover, it enhances the international collaboration between local universities and overseas programs.<sup>1321</sup> Yet, the expert interviews revealed that there is, as of yet, not a lot of international collaboration in journalism education in Vietnam. One interviewee believed the system's rigidity and bureaucratic nature posed the largest challenge in this respect. While some were ambitious in initiating international cooperation, those in charge often had a background in philosophy or literature and thus lacked the necessary enthusiasm for journalism.<sup>1322</sup> Another local instructor stressed that the AJC was better adapted to the needs of Vietnam than foreign universities such as the RMIT. The standards, especially the language requirements, were too stringent for local students and it was very expensive to study there, making it difficult to compare AJC and USSH with the RMIT.<sup>1323</sup> Various interviewees also mentioned how another positive outcome of internationalization was that a number of local instructors have been educated abroad, although the number remained small. One expert predicted that a growing number of international graduates would be in charge in the future. Right now, they have the expertise, but not the power to make decisions.<sup>1324</sup>

### Technological Change

One expert explained that the resistance to innovation in public journalism education institutions in Vietnam stemmed from a lack of competition.<sup>1325</sup> The quality of their multimedia training was thus limited, with private schools offering much better training opportunities.<sup>1326</sup> Another interviewee argued that instructors direly needed to adapt to the rise of technology in the profession, but that their autonomy was limited.<sup>1327</sup> One expert noted that some newsrooms in Vietnam do not focus enough on

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<sup>1320</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, #00:21:37#

<sup>1321</sup> Cf. Interviewee 15, #00:16:41#

<sup>1322</sup> Cf. Interviewee 19, #00:32:36#

<sup>1323</sup> Cf. Interviewee 13, #00:47:32#

<sup>1324</sup> Cf. Interviewee 19, #00:22:51# / #00:34:33#

<sup>1325</sup> Cf. Interviewee 18, #00:11:18# / #00:33:42#

<sup>1326</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, #00:30:23#

<sup>1327</sup> Cf. Interviewee 19, #00:22:51#

social media.<sup>1328</sup> Conversely, another interviewee pointed out that digital technologies had contributed to the opening and growth of the media landscape as new – and profitable – products entered the market.<sup>1329</sup> It is worth highlighting that, at the time of this research, some startups such as Zalo, a widely used social networking site that collaborates with WhatsApp, were active in Vietnam. One expert stressed that Zalo was a big player, comparable to Weibo in China, which, they speculated, was supported by the because it was interested in gaining control over it.<sup>1330</sup>

### **Political Influences**

As mentioned previously, the government has historically tended to control formal journalism education at public universities.<sup>1331</sup> The main journalism schools, USSH and AJC, are state-owned and thus directly under the control of the government. As a consequence, the ability of lecturers to implement change is limited.<sup>1332</sup> One interviewee highlighted that ‘human rights’ is a sensitive term in Vietnam and that journalism education concentrates on basic skills training rather than providing specialist competencies within the area of human development.<sup>1333</sup> The same expert stated: “Professional journalism is supposed to be a political career; journalism is supposed to be from the top down.”<sup>1334</sup> Nonetheless, some journalists have been pushing boundaries for decades.<sup>1335</sup> While many graduates opt out of the journalistic profession because of the rampant corruption and political restrictions,<sup>1336</sup> the interviewee was also convinced that Vietnamese people are very smart and able to find creative ways to bypass government control.<sup>1337</sup> A different expert considered journalists to be important change agents in Vietnam.

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<sup>1328</sup> Cf. Interviewee 13, #00:24:24#

<sup>1329</sup> Cf. Interviewee 18, #00:34:48#

<sup>1330</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, #00:41:19#

<sup>1331</sup> Cf. Interviewee 15, #00:14:24#; cf. Interviewee 19, #00:13:29#

<sup>1332</sup> Cf. Interviewee 18, #00:33:42#

<sup>1333</sup> Cf. Interviewee 19, #00:27:21#

<sup>1334</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, #00:28:32#

<sup>1335</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, #00:22:51# / #00:28:32#

<sup>1336</sup> Cf. Interviewee 18, #00:16:27# / #00:17:44#

<sup>1337</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, #00:36:11#

The working environment for journalists has improved dramatically in the last ten years.<sup>1338</sup> One interviewee described the major changes in the political and educational systems in Vietnam: Ideological limitations imposed by the socialist regime are less influential than one might assume from the outside. The same lecturer experienced a great deal of stereotyping abroad about political censorship and freedom of education in Vietnam. They describe the situation in a more nuanced way:

Although I'm very critical of this whole regime, it is just as complex as everywhere else and it used to be very monotone, very tedious, very boring, but I don't think that now we can paint anything fully correct about the politics. The political system and education system in Vietnam is changing vastly and very quickly.<sup>1339</sup>

Nonetheless, Vietnam remains a one-party state with an orthodox Marxist ideology that still determines curricula.<sup>1340</sup>

### **Market and Employment Conditions**

In terms of media organizations, one expert explained that some are run like private companies based on corporate principles – for example, hiring qualified people with higher salaries on private contracts. Moreover, the interviewee predicted that many new outlets, leveraging new media technologies, would soon emerge and transform the market.<sup>1341</sup> Despite these trends, one instructor held on to the belief that media management and entrepreneurial skills were not relevant because there were no private media in Vietnam. Financial competencies were only relevant for newsroom managers or people in higher positions – not journalism graduates. It was therefore not worth teaching students these skills except at the newsroom level.<sup>1342</sup> In opposition, another expert pointed out that the newspaper business models were no longer working. Advertising revenues go

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<sup>1338</sup> Cf. Interviewee 19, #00:22:51# / #00:28:32#

<sup>1339</sup> Interviewee 11, #00:38:46#

<sup>1340</sup> Cf. Interviewee 18, #00:14:00#

<sup>1341</sup> Cf. Interviewee 18, #00:36:11# / #00:38:56#

<sup>1342</sup> Cf. Interviewee 13, #00:53:03#

primarily to social media. As a result, salaries for journalists are very low in Vietnam which remains a major challenge for the profession.<sup>1343</sup>

With regard to employment prospects of USSH and AJC graduates, expert opinion was divided: On the one hand, some local instructors believe they have good job opportunities.<sup>1344</sup> One USSH lecturer estimated that half of the students already had secured a job before their final year, due to the fact that the department works closely with media organizations and associated professionals.<sup>1345</sup> On the other hand, other interviewees highlighted that the job market had become rather competitive and that it was difficult for alumni to find employment, especially full-time.<sup>1346</sup> Media organizations have a great number of options to recruit staff from different local and international universities and from a variety of disciplines, such as economics, law or agricultural science depending on the issue they are expected to cover.<sup>1347</sup> The job market is also restricted due to market conditions. In addition, employers criticize the lack of practical skills of the graduates.<sup>1348</sup>

One interviewee from the AJC considered the question as to how to improve the quality of teaching and the quality of graduates as one of the biggest challenges in a fast-changing environment.<sup>1349</sup> Another expert highlighted that the global crisis in the media and the changing job market creates new challenges in terms of preparing students with the necessary skills.<sup>1350</sup> The emerging field of PR also poses new challenges to academic journalism education.<sup>1351</sup> While PR offers new job opportunities to trained journalists, the boundaries between PR and journalism are blurring. In addition, social media gives power to the audience, which also impacts journalism as a profession. This interviewee is rather optimistic:

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<sup>1343</sup> Cf. Interviewee 18, #00:10:10#

<sup>1344</sup> Cf. Interviewee 13, #00:21:05#

<sup>1345</sup> Cf. Interviewee 10, #00:26:39#

<sup>1346</sup> Interviewee 14, #00:27:32-9#

<sup>1347</sup> Cf. Interviewee 15, #00:15:43# / #00:24:54#

<sup>1348</sup> Cf. Interviewee 11, #00:35:40#

<sup>1349</sup> Cf. Interviewee 16, #00:39:02#

<sup>1350</sup> Cf. Interviewee 12, #00:12:44#

<sup>1351</sup> Cf. Interviewee 10, #00:07:03#, Part 2; cf. Interviewee 12, #00:50:41#

So ten years ago, the communication or the information process of the people just relied on public media and all of which were controlled by the government until now. But only a few years ago, when social media [arrived], it changed. The power comes to the people, amazing. [...]. Now the individuals, not the organizations themselves hold the media, the medium to influence the society.<sup>1352</sup>

Some experts noted that ambitious students will continue to find jobs easily, in part because traditional news organizations are in need of young professionals with digital skills,<sup>1353</sup> and that average graduates might have to go into non-journalistic, media-related fields such as PR.<sup>1354</sup> Some see it as an advantage that students have skills and competencies in the wider field of communications and can therefore find work with local and international NGOs and in the corporate sector.<sup>1355</sup> Supposedly, the AJC employer survey has shown that the majority of graduates finds good jobs. 50% work in journalism and the other half in communications.<sup>1356</sup>

### Alumni Experiences on the Job Market

With respect to the experiences of USSH alumni on the job market, the survey showed that not all *current jobs* are in journalism. One interviewee was a business and politics correspondent,<sup>1357</sup> another one worked in financial reporting,<sup>1358</sup> a third was an newspaper editor covering legal issues,<sup>1359</sup> and the fourth worked as a reporter for a local newspaper.<sup>1360</sup> Another alumni had just started working for a digital communications company in video production.<sup>1361</sup> One of the six respondents was employed as a guide in a tourist company.<sup>1362</sup> Considering the *difficulties in finding a job after graduation*, experiences differ. While two graduates

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<sup>1352</sup> Ibid., #00:50:41#

<sup>1353</sup> Cf. Interviewee 15, #00:24:54#

<sup>1354</sup> Cf. Interviewee 12, #00:48:36#

<sup>1355</sup> Cf. Interviewee 13, #00:42:53#

<sup>1356</sup> Cf. Interviewee 16, #00:32:00# / #00:33:17-5#

<sup>1357</sup> Cf. Alumni 1, Pos. 25

<sup>1358</sup> Cf. Alumni 2, Pos. 6

<sup>1359</sup> Cf. Alumni 4, Pos. 4

<sup>1360</sup> Cf. Alumni 5, Pos. 7

<sup>1361</sup> Cf. Alumni 6, Pos. 5

<sup>1362</sup> Cf. Alumni 3, Pos. 5

found it a hard or slow process,<sup>1363</sup> the rest described it as easy. Some were even offered different roles.<sup>1364</sup> Not all graduates opted to work as journalists in their first job and thereafter. The main *criteria for accepting* a job varied: Various alumni stressed organizational aspects such as the professional environment, the organizational culture and employer reputation.<sup>1365</sup> Others mentioned salary, their passion for the job and the perspectives of professional development.<sup>1366</sup>

In terms of *applying the degree on-the-job*, those who work in journalism stated that they could not use much of what they learned at the USSH and that they still had to learn a great deal on-the-job.<sup>1367</sup> One interviewee, who worked in video production, estimated that they could only apply 30%.<sup>1368</sup> In contrast, one graduate who works in the tourism industry claimed that they could apply up to 80% of the journalistic skills they acquired during the degree; their analytical competencies and problem-solving skills were also helpful in their new position.<sup>1369</sup> Another alumni, who worked journalistically but also in the cosmetic industry, had a similar experience. Journalistic skills were particularly helpful – especially for product marketing and social media.<sup>1370</sup>

### 6.3.5 Macro Level: Journalism Education in Cambodia

Local and international experts confirmed that there are no other journalism degree programs in Cambodia.<sup>1371</sup> One interviewee mentioned a Master's degree in Human Rights supported by a Swedish foundation, which includes media courses but is not a journalism program. Moreover, the private Paññāsāstra University of Cambodia (PUC) offers a Master's degree in media and communications with a focus on the commercial sector.<sup>1372</sup> Another interviewee named Norton University, where they taught photojournalism as part of a multimedia program; supposedly,

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<sup>1363</sup> Cf. Alumni 1, Pos. 57; cf. Alumni 2, Pos. 17

<sup>1364</sup> Cf. Alumni 3, Pos. 15; cf. Alumni 4, Pos. 8; cf. Alumni 5, Pos. 17; cf. Alumni 6, Pos. 11

<sup>1365</sup> Cf. Alumni 2, Pos. 29; cf. Alumni 3, Pos. 27; cf. Alumni 4, Pos. 17

<sup>1366</sup> Cf. *ibid* 4, Pos. 17; cf. Alumni 5, Pos. 27; cf. Alumni 6, Pos. 18

<sup>1367</sup> Cf. Alumni 1, Pos. 25; cf. Alumni 2, Pos. 34

<sup>1368</sup> Cf. Alumni 6, Pos. 23

<sup>1369</sup> Cf. Alumni 3, Pos. 33

<sup>1370</sup> Cf. Alumni 5, Pos. 34

<sup>1371</sup> Cf. Interviewee 6, #00:30:29#; cf. Interviewee 2, #00:14:10#

<sup>1372</sup> Cf. Interviewee 6, #00:30:29#



they wanted to offer a media program a few years ago. There were also rumors that Cambodia University wanted to create a journalism course. Both universities are private.<sup>1373</sup>

The CCJ representative stated that they wanted to bring together media owners and journalists in order to improve employment conditions for journalists.<sup>1374</sup> They collaborate with the KAS in order to provide working journalists with capacity building to better negotiate their working conditions. The CCJ aims to offer journalism graduates “intensive skills,”<sup>1375</sup> through specific reporting courses including on economic, environmental and financial reporting.<sup>1376</sup> While DMC students focus on media management skills, they also need specific reporting skills. The interviewee believed that the two competencies together strengthened the profession and empowered journalists to set up new media outlets to compete with existing ones. In addition, some journalists work for media organizations that provide support programs, such as in-house or on-the-job training. For example, *Thmey* has a summer program for journalists. The expert also noted that the CCI offered a six months training program, and that the CCJ was itself a registered training center, which offered capacity building funded by the KAS and other NGOs.<sup>1377</sup> It was also mentioned that a new journalism association had been established, with a lot of funding and close ties to the government, that claimed to offer technical capacity building to journalists.<sup>1378</sup> Notably not all interviewees discussed or mentioned aspects on the macro level, including both managerial staff and instructors. For those who did, the code relations browser illustrates that political influences and market conditions are closely linked since interviewees reflected on both aspects together rather than as separate categories.<sup>1379</sup>

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<sup>1373</sup> Cf. Interviewee 2, #00:14:10#

<sup>1374</sup> Cf. Interviewee 17, #00:08:56#

<sup>1375</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, #00:10:20#

<sup>1376</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, #00:13:51#

<sup>1377</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, #00:24:06#

<sup>1378</sup> Cf. Interviewee 8, #00:22:01#

<sup>1379</sup> See code relations matrix in Annex, p. 531.

## Internationalization

International competition or collaboration was not explicitly mentioned as an influencing factor by Cambodian experts. Only one local interviewee considered it an advantage that the program is taught in English as students could represent the country internationally.<sup>1380</sup>

## Technological Change

In terms of digitalization, one international expert claimed that Cambodia was one of the fastest growing digital economies in Southeast Asia. Not only are internet connections faster than in some European countries, but digital businesses are also increasingly offering new jobs in media-related fields such as digital advertising. They also noted that new digital enterprises have emerged, that offer graphic design video production and YouTube support companies. The expert concluded that “we have no Third World in digital development anymore in South Asia.”<sup>1381</sup> Social media has also increased competition in the media market and that traditional TV and radio journalism needed to professionalize.<sup>1382</sup> Another interviewee explained that in Cambodia, journalists did not use social media for professional, but only private purposes. Furthermore, online journalism did not generate enough revenue: Some journalists, who had started their own online outlets, were forced to give them up as they could not secure sufficient advertising revenue.<sup>1383</sup>

## Political Influences

The Cambodian government has an interest in professional journalism in terms of its adherence to professional reporting standards, rather than critical commentary or investigative journalism.<sup>1384</sup> The representative of the journalism association pointed to political interference and employment conditions, especially poor wages – and, as a consequence, violations of the code of conduct and bribery – when asked about the biggest challenges for the journalistic profession in Cambodia. The media lacks a clear purpose in Cambodia, since they are not committed to promoting

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<sup>1380</sup> Cf. Interviewee 6, #00:41:15#

<sup>1381</sup> Interviewee 7, #00:03:49#

<sup>1382</sup> Cf. Interviewee 8, #00:21:00#

<sup>1383</sup> Cf. Interviewee 10, #00:06:18# / #00:19:43#

<sup>1384</sup> Cf. *ibid*

media freedom and democratization. In Thailand, new media outlets had been founded with that intention, but in Cambodia especially new media organizations are run by influential politicians and businesspeople who want to benefit from them financially rather than promoting freedom of expression.<sup>1385</sup> Independent reporting is rarely possible without ending up in court, and media freedom is not promoted by the government.<sup>1386</sup> Instead, there is a lot of pressure from state authorities.<sup>1387</sup>

In practice, the situation for journalists is made difficult by political restrictions. It is often hard, for example, to find interview partners, especially from government institutions.<sup>1388</sup> Moreover, the government tries to influence those media outlets that become popular. For the foreign media, that can mean that travel permissions are restricted.<sup>1389</sup> Political control of the media and journalism can also be expressed financially: While most of the media is controlled by the government, public interest journalism lacks sufficient funding and cannot keep up with private sector salaries in the wider communications sector, leading to disinterest among graduates:

As long as a media institution providing journalism to the public is not able to pay or to keep up with private sector salaries, as long you will not have the people interested to go into the journalism field.<sup>1390</sup>

Another international expert described the situation of professional journalism and the role of the DMC in the lead up to the next national elections as follows:

I think that it is still important that we have such a rather autonomous institution like the DMC, which tries to really educate future generations of journalists. [...]. So that they are equipped to play their role in the continuing democratization process of the country

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<sup>1385</sup> Cf. Interviewee 8, #00:02:31#

<sup>1386</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, #00:14:52#

<sup>1387</sup> Cf. Interviewee 2, #00:10:23#

<sup>1388</sup> Cf. Interviewee 6, #00:46:48#

<sup>1389</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, #00:51:01#

<sup>1390</sup> Interviewee 7, #00:09:02#

[...]. Every time Cambodia enters the election cycle, the situation gets very tense because the stakes in the elections are very high in Cambodia. And therefore the space for media and civil society shrinks. And hopefully and usually also extends later on again.<sup>1391</sup>

The same interviewee underscored that Cambodia is a post-conflict country and a young democracy. The nation has to find its own path to and model of democracy, and media system. This expert was optimistic at the time of the interview.<sup>1392</sup> Overall, the political situation is challenging, and journalism remains a risky job. As such, a lot of women decide not to work in journalism; the local expert named the Blue Lady Blog, as one author who is no longer working as a journalist.<sup>1393</sup>

### Market and Employment Conditions

Local and international experts agreed that DMC graduates have very good *employment prospects*.<sup>1394</sup> One interviewee claimed that an alumni survey, conducted in 2015, showed that over the last 15 years, DMC graduates have found very good jobs, including in management positions in the media and communication sector.<sup>1395</sup> Most of the students already had a job lined up in Year 2 or 3.<sup>1396</sup> Nonetheless, the DMC's output in terms of the number of graduates is too small in comparison with the needs of the Cambodian media market.<sup>1397</sup>

One expert thought that the job market in media and communications was rather large in Cambodia, even for journalistic work. However, the DMC does not promote itself as a journalism school, and as a result, only a small number of graduates take up journalistic work – with international news agencies or Cambodian media organizations, for example.<sup>1398</sup> For those who do intend to work as journalists, they can do so easily as the

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<sup>1391</sup> Interviewee 8, #00:14:52#

<sup>1392</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, #00:19:00#

<sup>1393</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, #00:16:50#

<sup>1394</sup> Cf. Interviewee 1, #00:08:53#; cf. Interviewee 2, #00:07:57#; cf. Interviewee 3, #00:15:30#; cf. Interviewee 4, #00:14:40#; cf. Interviewee 9, #00:24:26#

<sup>1395</sup> Cf. Interviewee 5, #00:23:44#

<sup>1396</sup> Cf. Interviewee 3, #00:17:51#

<sup>1397</sup> Cf. Interviewee 5, #00:19:12#

<sup>1398</sup> Cf. Interviewee 2, #00:09:05#

DMC is the only institution that produces future journalists.<sup>1399</sup> In addition, journalism remains an unattractive field in Cambodia due political restrictions and very low salaries. There are very few local independent media organizations<sup>1400</sup> or foreign-owned independent media organizations, namely *Cambodia Daily* and *Phnom Penh Post*.<sup>1401</sup> Only foreign news agencies such as RFI and VOA, whose independence is up for debate, pay well.<sup>1402</sup> Salaries are also higher at international organizations and NGOs, and in the commercial sector.<sup>1403</sup> The job market in the advertising and media production industry is large.<sup>1404</sup> A small number of students work directly for governmental organizations as PR officers.<sup>1405</sup>

In the last five years before the interviews, the most prominent trend was for graduates to find work as communication officers in NGOs. Only recently, has there been an increase in the number of graduates deciding to go into journalism – the original mission of the DMC – by taking on positions in major media organization, especially in television, which is in need of more qualified staff and thus has begun to offer more competitive salaries.<sup>1406</sup> Local media outlets have also begun to produce English versions of their content, making the English skills that DMC students acquire increasingly valued on the job market.<sup>1407</sup> Another international expert believed that social media has created new competition in the market, requiring traditional TV and radio journalists to professionalize further.<sup>1408</sup>

One expert identified the establishment of online news sites as a new trend. However, for classic journalistic websites it continues to be very hard to create revenue and make a living.<sup>1409</sup> One local instructor pointed out that there was no training in entrepreneurship. Journalists starting

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<sup>1399</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, #00:09:05#

<sup>1400</sup> Cf. Interviewee 7, #00:09:02#

<sup>1401</sup> Cf. Interviewee 6, #00:27:11#

<sup>1402</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, #00:26:02# / #00:27:11#

<sup>1403</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, #00:26:02#, cf. Interviewee 2, #00:07:57#; cf. Interviewee 1 #00:08:53#; cf. Interviewee 2, #00:10:23#; cf. Interviewee 3, #00:15:30#

<sup>1404</sup> Cf. Interviewee 1, #00:10:18#

<sup>1405</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, #00:09:54#

<sup>1406</sup> Cf. Interviewee 5, #00:23:44# / #00:24:36#

<sup>1407</sup> Cf. Interviewee 2, #00:15:12#

<sup>1408</sup> Cf. Interviewee 8, #00:21:00#

<sup>1409</sup> Cf. Interviewee 6, #00:27:11#

their own media outlet simply follow the trends without knowing their audience or their own unique selling point, reinforcing the problem that the media does not contribute to society or civic participation: “They only follow sensational news and some general news but you don’t really improve or empower the people.”<sup>1410</sup> As a result, it is hard to distinguish between advertorial and regular news content. Furthermore, the audience remains unaware about what quality journalism actually looks like.<sup>1411</sup> The KAS representative explained that the foundation, in collaboration with the CCJ, intends to promote dialogue between media owners and educational institutions to improve working conditions for journalists.<sup>1412</sup> Part of this process includes convincing employers to pay adequate salaries.<sup>1413</sup> Another interviewee concluded: “As long as a media institution providing journalism to the public is not able to pay or to keep up with private sector salaries, as long you will not have the people interested to go into journalism.”<sup>1414</sup>

### Alumni Experiences on the Job Market

The experiences of DMC graduates taking part in the FGD on the job market varied significantly, although most found it rather easy to find a job after graduation.<sup>1415</sup> While DMC alumni can build on the reputation of earlier generations of alumni,<sup>1416</sup> in some cases, employers believed that fresh graduates were too young and unexperienced.<sup>1417</sup> The multitude of options sometimes presented a challenge for young graduates.<sup>1418</sup>

Considering *current jobs*, one interviewee worked for Transparency International of Cambodia as a communications officer. Another graduate was employed by BBC Media Action after having worked for the English language *Cambodia Daily* newspaper and *Radio Free Asia Khmer* service.<sup>1419</sup> Another interviewee worked for *Voice of Democracy* as a journalist, while

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<sup>1410</sup> Interviewee 6, #00:48:33#

<sup>1411</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, #00:51:01#

<sup>1412</sup> Cf. Interviewee 8, #00:21:00#

<sup>1413</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, #00:21:30#

<sup>1414</sup> Interviewee 7, #00:09:02#

<sup>1415</sup> Cf. FGD, #00:10:06#

<sup>1416</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, #00:10:06#

<sup>1417</sup> Cf. *ibid.* #00:12:51#

<sup>1418</sup> Cf. *ibid.* #00:11:58#

<sup>1419</sup> Cf. *ibid.* #00:00:15# / #00:02:45#

also, at the time of the interview, working as a consultant for public affairs for the Khmer tribunal related to the ECCC.<sup>1420</sup> One alumni was a research assistant.<sup>1421</sup> Their first research project after graduation was for the OECD on the topic of women and employment.<sup>1422</sup> The fourth interviewee worked in TV production on reality and game shows.<sup>1423</sup> The *criteria for accepting a job* varied from individual to individual. One interviewee admitted that they might change jobs soon due to low pay in order to provide for their family. For others, monetary aspects were not as crucial.<sup>1424</sup> In terms of *applying the degree on-the-job*, the group raised the point that as a fresh graduate, you cannot jump directly into leadership positions, but need to work your way up.<sup>1425</sup> One interviewee thought that they could apply a lot of what they had learned at the DMC in terms of media production and communication to their working life.<sup>1426</sup> Another respondent stated that they only applied what they had learned in their degree to a very limited degree in the current role as a researcher.<sup>1427</sup> Furthermore, the focus group participants highlighted that there were certain limitations within which journalists had to work in Cambodia, making it more attractive for graduates to work for NGOs or private media, instead of government institutions.<sup>1428</sup> As the data shows, not all graduates work as journalists after graduation.

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<sup>1420</sup> Cf. *ibid* #00:01:15#

<sup>1421</sup> Cf. *ibid* #00:02:15#

<sup>1422</sup> Cf. *ibid* #00:04:24#

<sup>1423</sup> Cf. *ibid* #00:03:27#

<sup>1424</sup> Cf. *ibid* #00:08:40# / #00:15:02#

<sup>1425</sup> Cf. *ibid* #00:53:05#

<sup>1426</sup> Cf. *ibid* #00:16:19#

<sup>1427</sup> Cf. *ibid* #00:16:57#

<sup>1428</sup> Cf. *ibid* #00:24:35#

## **7. Comparison and Discussion of the Study Results**

This final chapter discusses the most important findings stemming from the comparison between the selected journalism degree programs at public universities in Vietnam and Cambodia. The multi-level comparison (sub-chapter 7.1) reveals key factors influencing academic journalism degree programs, and thereby provides the basis for the subsequent section (sub-chapter 7.3), in which I will propose a new multi-level model and a system of indicators to assess the quality of academic journalism education in the particular context of developing countries and digital transformation. Before that I will reflect on the main limitations of this study in terms of its conceptual approach, research design and findings (sub-chapter 7.2). Last but not least, I will formulate concrete recommendations and propose directions for further research (sub-chapter 7.4) in the field of comparative journalism education research.

### **7.1 Cross-Institutional and Cross-National Comparative Analysis**

Before summarizing the main similarities and differences of the three journalism degree programs on the micro, meso and macro level, it is worthwhile comparing the origins of the three selected programs:

Established in 2001 with international support as part of the RUPP, the DMC is a relatively young program compared to the AJC, which emerged from the Central School of Propagandizing and Educating established in 1962. The AJC has been recognized as a stand-alone university and academic journalism education institution since 1990. The school changed its name many times and became the ‘Academy of Journalism and Communication’ in 2005. Only one year later, another program was launched by the Faculty of Journalism at Hanoi General University, which was renamed in 2008 as the ‘Faculty of Journalism and Communication’ at the USSH, part of the VNU. In 2018, after the research for this study was completed, the institution was given the new name ‘School of Journalism



and Communication' (SJC) as part of the consolidation of the USSH and the Professional Centre for Journalism and Communications.<sup>1429</sup>

### 7.1.1 Micro Level

#### Access and Study Conditions

All three journalism schools employ a multi-step *application process*. While the DMC involves its lecturers in the process, USSH instructors usually do not get to know the applicants before they begin their studies. Furthermore, English language skills are a key requirement to enroll in the bilingual degree at the DMC, but are not relevant for admission to the Vietnamese programs. Whereas the DMC is rather free to structure its own application process, the USSH applied standardized multiple-choice exams that are applied throughout the entire VNU system until the nationwide exam was abolished in 2017. Since then, the AJC refers primarily to high school exam grades to assess prospective students.

Cambodian students believed that prior education and funding were the most relevant *entry requirements* for the DMC. In contrast, Vietnamese students felt that professional experiences were more important. An overall majority of students from both countries (81%) thought that personal motivation was 'extremely important.' A vast majority (80%) of students from all three universities found it 'moderately difficult' to enter the program. Considering the initial *motivation* to enroll in a journalism degree, the findings are rather similar for all three institutions: Practical journalistic skills were perceived as very relevant for a majority (66%) of students, followed by gaining an academic degree (59%) and developing a theoretical knowledge base about the media and journalism (43%). The only significant difference appeared in the building of professional networks: While over 70% of DMC students were highly motivated to network, almost a fourth of AJC students stated that this was not relevant for them at all.

In terms of the *number of students*, the enrollment capacity of the journalism programs at the selected Vietnamese state universities is much larger,

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<sup>1429</sup> USSH (2018, November 17). *USSH Establishes Journalism and Communications School*: <https://en.nhandan.vn/society/item/6850002-uss-h-establishes-journalism-and-communications-school.html> (Last retrieved 9/9/2021)

with approximately 1,500 students per year at the AJC and the VNU campuses in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City. With only around 30 students, the DMC produces only a small number of journalism professionals per year. With regard to *demographics*, the number of female versus male students at all three schools is larger and has grown in the years prior to the study. This is particularly true for the USSH, where 94% of students were women. There were no significant difference in terms of age; the average journalism student was 22 years old.

While the DMC does not charge *tuition fees*, both the USSH and the AJC do so. The student survey revealed that it was more expensive to study at the USSH (7 to 8 million VND per year) compared to the AJC (6 million VND per year). Only a small number of Vietnamese students receive scholarships, while the DMC offers scholarships to all students. Notably, at the time of the research, the DMC was in the process of developing a fee-based program, and the Vietnamese schools were considering raising their fees. In terms of *funding and financial support*, the situation is similar in both countries. In Cambodia, 84% of students and, in Vietnam, 93% received financial help from their families, with the largest share studying at the AJC (95%). The combination of a student job and family support was most prevalent at the USSH (31%); the DMC had the largest share of students who were not dependent on family funding (16% compared to 5% at AJC and 7% at USSH).

Looking at the *relationship between instructors and students*, there is a strong tradition of deference at Vietnamese universities compared to the DMC, where the atmosphere was described as familial and friendly. In contrast, at the USSH, the power imbalance between instructors and students is maintained by the seating arrangements in the classroom. Students are intimidated and hesitant to actively engage in discussion. With respect to *teaching styles and methods*, in both countries, older teaching staff tend to hold on to chalk-and-talk methods, while the younger generation of lecturers applies a more interactive teaching style. The same is true for international instructors at the DMC. As a rule, both Vietnamese and Cambodian instructors stated that they had a significant amount of freedom in terms of how they teach their subjects, as long as it remained in line with the overall curriculum. The students seemingly prefer practice-oriented coursework in all programs. Instructors from both Cambodia and

Vietnam used American teaching materials due to a lack of literature in local languages. English competence levels were an asset in this context, although the reading skills of students were limited at all three journalism schools.

With regard to *career support*, none of the three journalism schools provide formal alumni programs, either to maintain their connection to the institution or to keep track of their careers. All three programs depend heavily on graduates as instructors (see also the category ‘Financial and Human Resources’). The USSH seems to be more actively engaging with former students than the AJC. At the DMC, an independent alumni association was established, although it has criticized the school for its lack of active engagement with the group.

### **7.1.2 Meso Level**

#### **Program Structure**

All three programs start off with a foundation year laying the groundwork for further study. While the DMC covers academic work, social sciences, history and media studies, the Vietnamese universities also include legal, economic, and cultural studies in the general knowledge block. In both countries, journalism students begin their English language training in Year 1. At the AJC, so-called ‘Specialized Education’ consists of journalistic practice and theory, which covers almost two thirds of the overall number of CP. Similarly, journalism subjects at the USSH increasingly outweigh general education courses as students reach the later semesters. In contrast to that, at the DMC journalism and media production is the main focus beginning already in Year 2. In terms of graduation projects, all three journalism schools offer several options, such as an academic research thesis, project work, final exams, or course work.

#### **Objectives and Learning Outcomes**

The DMC’s overall vision, as well as the concrete competencies and careers it expects to impart to its students, includes not only working for newsrooms and media organizations, but also in PR and marketing. The interviews revealed that the school does not promote itself as a journalism education institution, but as a school for media management. According to the graduates taking part in the focus group discussion, the DMC

provided them above all with a certain mindset, rather than particular ‘hard skills.’

The USSH differentiates between general objectives and concrete learning outcomes. Similar to the DMC, careers in journalism and communication, which includes PR and advertising, are considered the overall professional goal. Contributing to academic communications research is also mentioned as a potential area of employment. Moreover, the USSH curriculum explicitly mentions providing students with a political education in line with the policies of the Party. Alumni noted that they primarily acquired practical skills, professional values and learned about the societal responsibility of journalists.

As one interviewee from the AJC pointed out, the main difference between Western journalism programs and their degree is that, in keeping with MoET directives, it includes modules on Ho Chi Minh’s ideology. Journalism education at public universities in Vietnam is standardized in this respect. In addition to gaining practical journalistic skills, students acquire theoretical knowledge in subjects such as ‘Ho Chi Minh’s Ideology’ and ‘National Defense Education.’ Moreover, political and ethical competencies are listed as concrete learning outcomes for both Vietnamese programs. There is only one noteworthy difference between the USSH’s learning outcomes and those of the AJC, which does not list PR as a career option for its journalism graduates – likely related because the PR faculty is separate from the print, broadcast, and online journalism departments.

## **General Program Content**

### *Classic Journalistic Skills*

Experts from the AJC voiced concerns that basic journalistic skills such as interviewing, investigative and storytelling techniques were falling behind multimedia production skills. Given the USSH’s tradition of social research, students acquire empirical *research skills* and methods throughout their degree. Asked about research skills, instructors at the DMC voiced their concern over the students’ lack of academic research skills leading up to the final thesis.

As opposed to the AJC, where *critical thinking* was not raised by experts as a relevant issue at all, USSH instructors pointed out that instead of

practical journalism training, the main aim was to provide students with not only the necessary analytical skills, but also an understanding of societal contexts and politically sensitive issues. Within the DMC, only an international instructor mentioned the need for more critical thinking.

The comparison of the survey results between the two Vietnamese universities did not reveal any clear pattern for the category of classic journalistic skills. Only in terms of their *media production skills* did AJC students give significantly lower ratings compared to the USSH students. The cross-national comparison of specific production skills for print, radio, film, and multimedia revealed a few differences: The share of Cambodian students stating that media production skills, but also storytelling, interview and creative writing skills, were included in detailed form in the program was significantly higher than for the Vietnamese universities. The frequency distribution for research skills (empirical, online and database) and critical thinking were rather similar for both countries.

Looking at *practical learning opportunities on campus*, there appear to be more at the DMC compared to its Vietnamese counterparts. The school has a radio and TV production studio, as well as equipment that meets international standards and exceeds conditions at other Cambodian universities such as the PUC. In contrast, the CMP at the USSH offers few opportunities to practice, according to graduates, due to the high cost charged to use the facilities. Nonetheless, instructors claimed that the conditions at the USSH were better than at the AJC, given the fact that it consisted of only one faculty in which all resources for print, broadcast and online journalism were consolidated. In addition, the AJC has media production studios, but supposedly the quality of and access to equipment is even more limited than at the CMP. For online journalism training, all three journalism schools have websites on which students can publish their work.<sup>1430</sup> In terms of *off-campus practice*, all of three programs include internships and field work. At the USSH and the AJC, there are two supervised internships, while the DMC expects students to complete various internships in Year 2 and 3. Moreover, the school organizes field trips

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<sup>1430</sup> DMC students have published documentaries as part of the so called 'Project Three' on the school's website in 2015, 2016 and 2017: <https://dmc-cci.edu.kh/production/> [Last retrieved 9/2472021].

to media organizations and collaboration projects focusing on media production.

The share of DMC students who thought they had access to a range of practical learning opportunities as part of their degree is larger than for Vietnamese students. Over 90% of the DMC students stated that they could take part in off-campus learning opportunities, such as internships in the media industry, excursions and/or curricular radio production. Internships and excursions also seemed to be part of the Vietnamese degrees according to 83% of the AJC and 72% of the USSH students. However, radio, print, video, and web production experience on-campus or in class was limited at the Vietnamese universities. Notably, 80% of AJC students claimed that radio, video, and online production was not part of the program, which seemingly had a focus on print journalism.<sup>1431</sup> Conversely, only a third of USSH student thought their school did not offer practical learning opportunities in media production on campus.

### *Theoretical Knowledge*

At the AJC and the USSH, journalism theory was taught in various compulsory courses such as mass communication theory. The AJC provides for theoretical perspectives on ‘newer’ topics such as social media and networks. The student survey showed that over half of the DMC students thought that instruction in the theoretical basis of the local media system was included in detail (30%). In contrast to that, over 40% of the Vietnamese respondents indicated that this was only a general topic. Compared to USSH students, AJC students stated that media and journalism history, media and politics, and the journalistic profession were covered to a greater extent. Aspects of the international media landscape and globalization were also an essential topic at the AJC according to 21% of the students, in contrast to only 8% at the USSH.

In terms of *ethics and professional values*, all three degrees include media law and journalistic ethics as a concrete subject. This was confirmed by experts, students, and graduates. It must be highlighted that the AJC uses almost the same phrasing to describe the intended political education,

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<sup>1431</sup> This result might be influenced by the fact that the students who took part in the survey were mainly majoring in print journalism.

attitudes, and ideology that the USSH curriculum uses to specify the key learning outcomes of their program. (See also Chapter 6.1.2 and 6.1.3) The USSH divides the field in two areas: professional ethics and social morality, with the latter reiterating the importance of adhering to the CPV guidelines. This type of explicit political education does not apply in the Cambodian case. DMC instructors and graduates identified it the teaching of journalism ethics and values in theory as a key challenge, when the best way of learning in this context is through practice.

Ultimately, the answers of the students taking part in the survey were almost identical: Approximately 90% of Cambodian respondents confirmed that all eight values listed in the questionnaire were included in the program. This is also the case for six values in the Vietnamese case. For all three journalism schools, the *societal role and responsibility of journalists* is touched upon in various modules and courses, but remains highly dependent on the instructors themselves. In the Vietnamese context, interviewees accentuated that Marxism has traditionally shaped journalistic functions, which are increasingly influenced by economic liberalization (see also sub-chapter 7.1.3).

### *Balance of Theory and Practice*

The opinions of Vietnamese experts were divided in terms of the actual and ideal ratio between theory and practice. It appears that, in the recent past, both the AJC and the USSH have shifted their focus toward practical journalism, although it remains unclear what the actual ratio is. In terms of the ideal scenario, some instructors stressed the importance of theoretical competencies that provide students with a holistic understanding of society, the media landscape, and the journalistic profession. Among the USSH alumni, there was also no consensus regarding the percentage of theoretical versus practical subjects. The situation is different at the DMC: The school appears to be relatively progressive in terms of practical journalism education while simultaneously offering solid theoretical expertise with the support of international advisers and instructors. DMC graduates also thought that there was a balance of theory and practice, although they highlighted the dilemma of theory taught in the classroom which could not be applied in real-life due to restrictions to media freedom in Cambodia. The student survey confirmed these national variations: Whereas Vietnamese respondents believed that their degree programs were more

theoretical (50%) or balanced (44%) rather than practical, over 65% of Cambodian students described the DMC program as an even mix and another fifth thought that it was rather practical.

### *Non-Journalistic Skills*

At the DMC, PR and corporate communication are essential components of the curriculum in Year 3 and 4. PR is offered as a major at the USSH and as an elective at the AJC, where the PR faculty is independent of the print, broadcast, and online departments. The entire program is taught in English at DMC and language training starts in the first semester. Students can also learn other foreign languages at the USSH and AJC. In addition to English, Chinese is an option in both programs.

## **Specific Program Content**

### *Interdisciplinarity*

The student survey included findings regarding the perceived opportunity to *specialize in either a practical or theoretical field*. The similarities between countries outweigh the differences with opposite implications: Whereas 89% Vietnamese students and 65% Cambodians stated that they could not specialize in a theoretical field, the vast majority (63% and 73%) indicated that it was possible to choose a practical specialization. Distinguishing between the two Vietnamese university programs, it is worth noting that history and political science, linguistic and cultural studies, and ICT and computer science were considered much more accessible by AJC students than those from the USSH. At the same time, the student responses reveal that the USSH journalism degree is more connected to other fields of communication studies.

### *Specialized Reporting Skills*

The situation differs in Cambodia and Vietnam: While the DMC cannot offer much in the way of specialization due to the small size and limited resources of the program, the Vietnamese universities include specialized reporting as a specific subject. At the USSH, it is possible to choose one of five specialized journalism courses including financial and environmental reporting. Moreover, 'Environment and Development' is a theory subject. Similarly, the AJC degree includes a 5 CP specialized journalism course consisting of topics such as human rights, education, the



environment, and climate change. Social and democratic development is described as an overarching topic in the DMC curriculum. Consequently, socially relevant issues form part of the program. Even though development communication or development journalism are not explicitly mentioned, graduates are promoted on the website as being particularly qualified for the development sector. While conflict-sensitive reporting is not offered at the USSH, the AJC includes it as an elective. There were mixed statements regarding conflict-sensitive reporting at the DMC, which left it unclear in what way and to what extent it was part of the degree. In this context, it is worth pointing out again that one of the international lecturers seconded to the DMC by the German Civil Peace Service (GIZ/ZFD).

The majority of student survey participants thought that, out of all possible forms of specialized reporting, news reporting was integrated into the program most extensively. In terms of the three universities, the answers were more unified for respondents from the DMC. According to around 50% of Cambodian respondents, reporting on development topics was covered only generally. Responses from the USSH and AJC were divided in this respect. The biggest country-based difference appears for investigative reporting and conflict-sensitive reporting: The great majority of Cambodian respondents believed it was covered ‘in detail,’ if not ‘extensively.’ In contrast to that, Vietnamese students were divided, with at least a third of them choosing ‘generally’ as the answer.

### *Media Management*

It is worth highlighting again, that the DMC offers a Bachelor’s degree in ‘Media Management.’ Accordingly, the curriculum entails ‘Newsroom Management’ and ‘Project and Production Management’ with the intention of preparing students to become media managers. However, both instructors and graduates felt that the content was limited to managing an established business or a business unit, rather than founding one. In 2016, the DMC implemented a new course in ‘Entrepreneurial Journalism.’ Interviewees, however, did not make any reference to this course which implies that it may not have been implemented at the time of data collection. A revised curriculum came into effect in 2019, in which even more significance was placed on Entrepreneurial Journalism.

Media economics is part of the AJC and USSH undergraduate curriculum. Yet, the material is rather theoretical and concentrates on basic

knowledge of the overall media industry rather than media management, which was considered more relevant for the Master's degree level. Furthermore, the USSH and AJC curricula mention management and leadership, as well as organizational studies as subjects relevant for media management. Instructors highlighted their belief that it was not worth teaching entrepreneurial journalism, since it was impossible to start up private media businesses in Vietnam. Alumni, in contrast, voiced their interest in learning how to set up and run their own media businesses, especially in the digital sphere.

The results of the student questionnaire are rather similar for both countries and all three schools. Negative responses outweigh positive ones, in particular for accounting and bookkeeping (66% and 64%), but also for financial planning and fundraising, business development and planning competencies. In terms of human resources and project management, more DMC students thought that these topics were included to a certain extent. In terms of institutional differences, AJC students gave more negative responses for the questions on media management than did USSH and DMC students.

### *Digital and ICT Skills*

Formally, 'Multimedia Journalism' was introduced into the DMC curriculum as a new subject in 2014. Since then, students also receive training in specific areas such as data journalism. Local and international interviewees disagreed about the extent to which digital skills and competencies were implemented in the program. International instructors believed that it was insufficient, whereas Cambodian lecturers thought the opposite. Moreover, graduates speculated about the role the DMC actually played in terms of equipping students with digital competencies, since many were already rather tech-savvy to begin with.

At the USSH, the expert interviews revealed that a certain mindset open to technological innovation was missing. Students are able to specialize in online journalism toward the end of their degree, an option that has been available for several years. However, the school struggles with a lack of knowledge in digital journalism and the speed at which digitalization is changing the profession. Alumni confirmed that effectively digital journalism training is rather limited. In contrast, digital journalism seems to be more of a focus at the AJC, where it is one of four majors and includes

both practical and theoretical subjects. Interviewees claimed that AJC graduates are familiar with mobile journalism and social media. The curriculum has been adapted to an integrated approach allowing students to specialize in different types of journalism including online. Nonetheless, the perspectives on what ‘digital’ or ‘multimedia journalism’ stand for are divided: While some instructors view it as a special type of journalism, others consider it as something that cuts across all forms of journalism. In contrast to the USSH, social media is explicitly mentioned in the AJC curriculum. The Vietnamese journalism curricula also include computing and applied informatics. In addition, the DMC and the USSH outline more media-specific ICT skills such as website and graphic design.

According to the student survey, digital journalism is only covered to a very basic extent at all three journalism schools. Blogging, mobile reporting and reporting on ICT topics are only generally covered in both countries. Even less attention is given to programming and content management skills, which most respondents found were not touched upon at all. This was especially true for the AJC. Some skills are integrated to a greater extent in Cambodia than in Vietnam. These included online research, social media research and reporting, and online verification skills.

### **Collaboration and Networks**

Considering *industry and other collaborations*, both Vietnamese journalism programs work – to a rather limited degree compared to the DMC – with media organizations, as part of the internship programs and field trips, and with professional journalists, who regularly give guest lectures. It appears that the USSH invests more effort into hiring experienced media professionals as guest lecturers and as managerial staff. Furthermore, the DMC continuously offers practical learning opportunities, such as TV production projects and collaborates with NGOs, embassies and the EU delegation in Phnom Penh. In terms of *international collaboration*, the key difference for the DMC is that it is rooted in and continuously dependent on support from foreign partners, especially German development institutions and the KAS, a political foundation, as well as UN organizations. Conversely, the AJC and USSH are solely state-funded. All three schools primarily collaborate with universities in Europe, offering exchange programs and joint Master’s degrees. The USSH consults with a foreign university and also works with international NGOs.

In terms of *university links*, the DMC falls under the Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities and is therefore very similar to the journalism program offered by the USSH. Both schools are departments within their respective universities (RUPP and VNU). In contrast, the AJC is recognized as a stand-alone university. The DMC appears to be more autonomous in some respects, adhering to its own statutes in some areas, in comparison to the USSH. Nonetheless, curriculum amendments must be signed off by the RUPP and the MoEYS.

*Governmental links* play a significant role for all three journalism schools. They depend on the rules and regulations of the respective ministries (MoEYS for Cambodia and MoET for Vietnam). Moreover, in the case of the DMC, Prime Minister Hun Sen and the Information Minister reportedly played a key role in setting up the school, developing the first curriculum and making staffing decisions. Such accounts do not exist for the USSH or the AJC. However, the Vietnamese curricula are provided by the ministries rather than developed by the schools themselves. It must be highlighted that, in the context of institutional networks and partnerships, the DMC finds itself in unique position in terms of a dual dependency, supported by state authorities as part of the Royal University on the one hand, and by international donor funds on the other hand. In addition, the German political foundation KAS has been criticized for collaborating with a government-backed department.

### **Financial and Human Resources**

Looking at *financial management and sustainability*, the funding situation at the DMC is different from the Vietnamese journalism schools. The Cambodian institution has a complex funding structure: It is partly state-funded, while also receiving financial support from the KAS and the GIZ. Moreover, the ZFD and the DAAD send teaching and advisory staff to the school; the two foreign lecturers have full-time positions. The KAS covers operational costs, the director's salary and local teaching staff. In addition, the DMC raises its own funds through media production projects, for instance. The program has also been considering the introduction of a fee-based program. The building and other infrastructure are provided by the RUPP. The state university is also supposed to pay for more teaching staff. All in all, experts agreed that there is no prospect of the DMC becoming financially self-sufficient in the future and that it will have to remain

dependent on public and international donor funding for quite some time. In contrast to that, the AJC and USSH are funded solely by the government. Tuition fees have been raised in recent years at the USSH, which was criticized by some of the teaching staff.

In terms of *administrative and management staff*, the DMC suffers from a lack of stability and commitment from its past directors. The process of finding new directors depends on the RUPP and the MoEYS, which means the DMC does not have decision-making power for this key position. Notably, when the DMC was established, it was structured around a co-director system that consisted of two, Cambodian and international, co-directors. After growing conflicts, the system was abolished and more ownership was given over to the DMC. Similarly, management at the USSH has also been a challenge, as not all dean and vice-dean positions were filled at the time of the interview.

One of the biggest challenges for all three journalism schools is to find qualified long-term *teaching staff* with the necessary *educational and professional profiles*. At the DMC, most instructors are hired on a part-time basis, which affects the quality of teaching. Even though a Master's degree is a formal requirement, local teaching staff usually only hold undergraduate degrees. At the Vietnamese schools, requirements for instructors seem to be even higher (including a doctoral degree and research output in addition to teaching and maintaining a journalism practice). While most instructors have a Master's degree and professional experience, there are only a handful of candidates with a relevant PhD in the country.

Another challenge for all three institutions are low *salaries and incentives* for instructors. The schools are bound to university regulations in calculating wages, which are not attractive – especially for graduates with international experience, who can secure better job offers in the corporate sector and at international organizations. Intrinsic motivation thus plays a significant role, and fluctuations in local teaching staff are high in both countries. According to the interviews, the two Vietnamese institutions offer concrete mechanisms of *instructor training and development*, whereas the DMC does not provide formal staff development.

*International instructors* represent as an integral part of the DMC, whereas at the Vietnamese universities such collaborations are limited to exchange programs. While in the beginning, there were four international lecturers

at the DMC, today that number has dwindled to two: one from the DAAD and one from the GIZ/ZFD. The international perspective and the initiative shown by foreign staff to set up new projects contribute to the quality of the program. On the other hand, the coming-and-going also encourages a lack of stability, and foreign instructors do not have sufficient local knowledge, leaving some students dissatisfied in the face of a much more restrictive reality than in Western countries. In terms of *collaboration among teaching staff*, local instructors seem to work closely with foreign teaching staff in Cambodia. At the AJC, there is a system of main lecturer and subordinate, as well as a working group in which various instructors collaborate with respect to specific topics.

### **Quality and Change Management**

Regarding *external advisory boards*, the DMC has an advisory board that brings together the RUPP, the Ministry of Information and the KAS. The AJC and USSH do not seem to have such a board, although the City of London University offered consults with the USSH. Overall, *monitoring and evaluation* processes at the DMC appear to be rather untransparent. Even though the KAS has an annual internal monitoring process in place and feeds its findings back to the DMC management and advisory board, there are no regular external evaluations according to the expert interviews. Student evaluations are conducted regularly, but those results are not reliably passed on to instructors. In addition, there is a letter box into which students can anonymously drop their concerns. The AJC and the USSH also have a formal student evaluation process at the end of each course and semester. Moreover, the USSH works closely with media organizations to obtain feedback on their graduates.

Asked about *curriculum and organizational development*, AJC interviewees focused on the program level and stated that they had a lot of freedom to design the curriculum. Both programs appear to be committed to innovation and following the trends in new communication technologies and their impact on journalistic practice, even though the overall structure of the program cannot easily be adapted. The USSH appears to have even less flexibility in this respect since the curriculum is standardized for the entire VNU. The last official reform took place in 2012 and 2013. Nonetheless, the school tries to adapt the program by concentrating on specialized knowledge and skills, which can be changed on a yearly basis.

The DMC, in contrast, has amended its curriculum more frequently, while still seeking approval from the MoEYS and the RUPP. In terms of program content and implementation, the DMC is fairly autonomous, as long as political topics are not part of the curriculum. With regard to organizational development, the KAS has made concrete suggestions for institutional changes. However, at the time of the interviews, the director had been rather resistant to those proposals which has caused concern among teaching staff about a decrease in the quality of the program and the graduates.

Comparing alumni suggestions for the DMC and the USSH, the Cambodian graduates recommended improvements on the institutional level in order to improve the quality of the program and their job prospects, including re-defining the mission and objectives, the selection process, the funding model and human resources policies. USSH alumni were more focused on the program level and recommended a greater emphasis on particular skills and knowledge such as practical journalism, specialized reporting, as well as IT skills and foreign languages.

### **7.1.3 Macro Level**

The main difference between the Cambodian and the Vietnamese journalism education landscape is that there is only one academic journalism school in Phnom Penh, compared to several public university programs in Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh City, and various provinces such as Hue and Danang. Beyond that, an increasing number of public universities in central Vietnam have begun to offer journalism education under the guise of mass communication studies. In terms of other private university and non-academic programs, Cambodia and Vietnam resemble one another: Most programs are private and do not focus on journalism, but on PR and the corporate communication sector. Vietnamese experts underscored that these courses are usually more expensive. In addition, there are also training centers such as the CCI or the VNMG, as well as journalism associations, which offer capacity building to working journalists. Local media outlets and international organizations also offer in-house training and workshops.

Four categories were identified as the most important framework conditions for journalism education on the macro level: 1. *internationalization*, 2. *technological change and innovation*, 3. *political influences*, and 4. *market*

*and employment conditions.* Looking at potential correlations between these framework conditions and journalism education, the analysis of linkages between codes revealed that both internationalization and market conditions could have a strong influence on journalism education in Vietnam. For Cambodia, only market conditions showed weak but visible linkages to journalism education.<sup>1432</sup>

Considering potential correlations between the four macro level categories, market and employment conditions in Cambodia seem to be closely interrelated to political influences, which also carry a relatively weak connection to technological change and innovation. The situation in Vietnam is more complex: Market conditions are closely linked to both technological change and political influences. Overall, the findings imply that the economic situation and the local conditions of the media landscape cannot be isolated from other categories impacting on journalism education.

### **Internationalization**

Cooperation with overseas development organizations play a significant role for journalism training in Cambodia. In this context, it is worth highlighting that experts did not explicitly mention this as an influencing factor. In contrast, international cooperation appears to be slowed down by Vietnamese bureaucracy and the rigidity of state-run journalism degree programs. While international competition from foreign institutions offering academic journalism education was not relevant for the Cambodian context, Vietnamese experts considered international players such as the RMIT to simultaneously be a threat and an opportunity. Since they offer expensive degrees of supposedly lesser quality, these institutions are forcing public journalism schools to live up to the competition by innovating their programs. Moreover, internationalization has opened up new opportunities for Vietnamese media and journalism schools to recruit staff, as a lot of students go overseas and return with postgraduate degrees and foreign language skills. In contrast, the DMC program meets the demands of an increasingly globalized local market with the support of

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<sup>1432</sup> The DMC is the only journalism education institution in the country. Therefore the code for 'journalism education landscape' was not allocated to Cambodian interview transcripts frequently. Experts primarily concentrated on the DMC, that is, the institutional level. They analyzed primarily how external factors influenced the school as the main training center for professional journalists in the country.



foreign advisers and instructors. The school produces media professionals with advanced knowledge of English and a good understanding of the international media landscape.

### **Technological Change and Innovation**

In both countries, technological change – and digital transformation in particular – have created the need for media organizations to professionalize further. Consequently, the demand for young, tech-savvy journalism graduates is generally high, as Cambodia has a thriving tech scene, and its digital transformation in terms of fast internet access is even more advanced than in Western countries. In Cambodia, independent journalists have been setting up their own websites, in search of business models. Beyond an existing blogosphere, social media is not used for professional journalism in Vietnam according to experts, and the number of digital media startups in Vietnam is very limited. Furthermore, public universities offering journalism education have become aware that they must innovate their programs to meet the new requirements of the media market. The study revealed that this is easier for the only journalism school in Cambodia, which receives ongoing advice from international partners, than for the purely government-funded degrees in Vietnam.

### **Political Influences**

For Vietnam, experts explained that the situation has improved as journalists have become more creative in bypassing government control. Despite the country's continuing one-party system, ideological limitations imposed by the socialist regime are less influential than they may appear. For journalism education, this means that, on the one hand, the options for changing the journalism curricula is restricted, but on the other, that individual instructors have a fair amount of freedom in terms of how and what they want to teach in the classroom. Overall, journalism education institutions concentrate on practical journalism rather than sensitive topics such as human rights and specialized reporting. In comparison, in Cambodia, political interference was raised as one of the greatest challenges for professional journalism, which remains a very risky occupation. Political influence is closely linked to politicians running or funding media organizations. Moreover, the lack of the government interest in promoting media freedom becomes especially obvious during election periods in the post-conflict country, which is still finding its path to

democracy. Undoubtedly, this also has repercussions for journalism education, especially for publicly funded degree programs.

### **Market and Employment Conditions**

In addition to political restrictions, Cambodian experts named employment conditions as another major problem for journalists in the country. Both countries have in common that poor wages have a negative impact on the journalistic profession as graduates opt out of working as journalists and accept better paid jobs in corporate communications, PR and advertising, or get hired by international organizations to work as communication specialists. Notably, experts from both countries did not consider it a problem that students take on jobs in PR and advertising. Instead, especially for Vietnam, this was widely perceived as a benefit that widens the spectrum of professional options for journalism graduates.

The supply of DMC graduates is small in number compared to the demand shown by media organizations for qualified staff. Thus, regardless of low salaries for journalistic work, overall the employment prospects of graduates in Cambodia are very good. The situation is not as clear for Vietnam. While expert opinions diverged regarding the job opportunities for journalism graduates, there was a consensus that the employment market has become more competitive due to growing number of international players both in the field of journalism education and media organizations. Starting online media businesses had already become an more or less viable option for Cambodian graduates. Although the prediction for Vietnam was that digital media startups would change the market landscape, experts held on to the belief that media management and entrepreneurial skills are not relevant for Vietnamese journalists. In contrast, these competencies are already part of academic journalism education in Cambodia.

In both countries, journalism associations have entered into dialogue with employers in order to advocate for adequate salaries. Vietnamese employers criticize journalism programs for being too theoretical and consequently for producing graduates who have insufficient practical journalistic skills. In particular, USSH alumni who have worked as journalists confirmed this, stating that they could not apply much of what they learned at university. Cambodian alumni were less critical in this respect, highlighting that they did not necessarily apply their competencies

immediately, but thought that they were generally useful. While most of the focus group participants found it relatively easy to find work after graduation with all working in media and communications, Vietnamese alumni appeared to have more difficulty, with more of them worked in non-media jobs such as tourism or the cosmetic industry.

## **Professional Role Perceptions**

The student survey included two questions on the perspectives of students on the journalistic profession and their future working conditions. As such considerations shape the demand for journalism education nationally in the long-term, I will compare the key findings with reference to overall research results on the macro level: The students' views on the *societal role and responsibility as a future journalist* turned out to be rather similar for Vietnam and Cambodia. It was extremely important to the majority of students from both countries to inform the public on what the government proclaims, to contribute to the unification of the state and society, and to monitor the state and politics. Notably, reporting on human rights issues and providing the perspectives of minorities was a highly meaningful task for around 78% of the students from both countries. Considering the *ideal job after graduation*, the differences between the two countries outweighed the similarities: For Cambodian students, it was of high importance to be in a position to report independently (68%), to influence the public to make independent and informed decisions (78%), and to report on socially relevant topics (81%). Compared to that, Vietnamese respondents indicated that a secure job (71%) and competitive salary (73%) were most relevant to them. Notably, the biggest difference appeared for 'influencing the public to support the government,' which over 80% of Vietnamese students viewed as important, whereas 66% of the DMC respondents thought this was not important at all.

## **7.2 Limitations of Study**

### **Theoretical and Conceptual Aspects**

One main challenge of this study was to identify relevant theoretical approaches from the highly interdisciplinary fields of journalism and communications studies. The aim was to outline the state of relevant research and theories for the sub-discipline of journalism education research in

order to provide for a sound conceptual and methodological approach that can contribute to the advancement of this under-researched field. Theory-based research designs are an essential pre-condition for providing valid findings and conclusions that can be applied to both the scholarly debate and the practice of developing quality journalism education programs as part of international media assistance. Certainly, it is arguable to what extent the combination of scientific theories and practice-oriented normative approaches to academic journalism education, such as the UNESCO Model Curricula and Indicators and the WJEC's eleven principles, are substantial enough to serve as a conceptual basis for developing concrete research instruments. Simultaneously, due to their Western-centric origins and perspectives, existing theories alone also bear limitations and bias. Functional, structural and normative theoretical approaches to journalism education fall short in considering the context of restricted media and internet freedom in developing countries. Chapter 4 was an attempt to fill this void by not only diving deep into the national framework conditions of journalism education in Cambodia and Vietnam, but also by exploring digital, entrepreneurial and development journalism as under-researched concepts, which have been identified as highly relevant for the aims of this study. Nevertheless, the respective sub-chapter (4.1) only touched on essential aspects of these issues rather than going into depth.

### **Methodological Constraints**

As outlined in sub-chapter 5.1, comparative studies carry certain opportunities and limitations. As much as possible, this study ensured Esser's five principles of functional equivalence, but the process of implementing the mixed-method research design under field conditions was nonetheless challenging in numerous respects: To start off, the selection of countries following a "most different" principle had certain limitations. While Cambodia and Vietnam do have contrasting political systems, geographical size and population size, demographic and cultural characteristics, in retrospect, the disparities could have been stronger. Equally, the resemblance between Vietnam and Cambodia with respect to media and internet freedom, digitalization and human development was sufficient, but not particularly pronounced. In terms of selected journalism education institutions, ideally, the public journalism degrees in Ho Chi Minh City would have been included in the study. Unfortunately, due to limited

resources (including time and funds), it was not possible to visit any other university program outside of the capital Hanoi.

The level of comparability of the three journalism schools was limited mainly because it was not possible to create representative samples for the student survey. Instead, the intention was to include as many higher semester respondents as possible. As a consequence, the sample sizes varied significantly between countries and institutions. With 140 questionnaires, the sample size was considerably larger for Vietnam than Cambodia (38), weighted heavily toward the 97 USSH students who participated. It is crucial to emphasize that data analysis, including the entire student survey sample, was likely determined primarily by Vietnamese respondents. Moreover, the number and types of experts were not completely comparable. The overall number of experts for the DMC exceeds those of both Vietnamese schools. In addition, for Cambodia, more international experts were available. Another difficulty was that most experts had multiple functions (e.g., both teaching and managerial roles) and fulfilled the criteria for more than one category in some cases. At times, it was hard to distinguish which function was most relevant when analyzing particular interview questions.<sup>1433</sup>

Considering the standardization of research instruments and items, semi-structured interview guidelines for experts were adapted to the research subjects but remained comparable in terms of analytical dimensions and categories. The equivalency of research instruments and of the data gathered on graduates is, however, is up for debate: In the case of Cambodia, it was possible to conduct an interactive, face-to-face focus group discussion with four alumni. In contrast, for Vietnam, only six USSH students responded to a short questionnaire via email. Even though the same questionnaire was used for both groups, the depth of responses varied significantly. Nevertheless, the same code system was applied to both data sets in MAXQDA in order to ensure standardization in terms of data analysis.

As another obstacle, language and cultural differences must be mentioned, which impeded on the research process, thereby, the quality and comparability of data at least to a certain extent. Firstly, some interview

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<sup>1433</sup> See also table in Annex, p. 530.

partners had limited English language skills. This resulted in a wide variety of terms being used to explore the interview topics and questions and, as a consequence, a pragmatic approach to semantics and the interpretation of interview transcripts was required. Effectively, during the process of transcription meaning was lost and there was an inherent risk of inadequately capturing what the experts and students intended to express.

Furthermore, for the Vietnamese student and alumni surveys, research instruments required translation from English into Vietnamese. The responses as well as the official curricula of the USSH and the AJC were translated back into English or German. It is inevitable that also at this point information and meaning was lost in the process of two-way translations. While semantics are generally a key challenge in the process of qualitative content analysis, translations in and from languages foreign to the researcher and the subsequent reliance on third parties with a limited understanding of the research topic aggravated this issue.

In addition to these limitations of language and translations, cultural barriers must be highlighted with respect to interview and survey data collection. Experts may have had limited trust in the interviewer to keep the conversation confidential and restrict its usage to the aim of this research. Equally, students and alumni may have feared repercussions despite the fact that the researchers promised to keep the findings anonymous. Moreover, the culture in both Vietnam and Cambodia might have restricted the level of openness especially towards a Western researchers entering the local context. The risk of experts, university staff, students and alumni producing 'socially desirable' results in support of their university cannot be neglected. However, the overall level and amount of critical reflection coming from research participants must also be highlighted as a positive outcome in this context.

Regarding data collection in the field and obtaining official documentation, the support from and correspondence with all three university was rather limited. Visits to the Vietnamese universities required official permission from government authorities and it took a very long time to obtain the curricula and other program information. Internal evaluation reports or alumni data were not shared by any of the schools for the purpose of this research. Notably, the AJC's efforts to support contact with graduates were minimal and therefore unsuccessful. Overall, a lack of

documentation and transparency must be recorded for all three journalism schools, which impeded the overall process of data collection, particularly access to research subjects (especially students and alumni), but also official documents and reports.

### 7.3 New Multi-Level Approach and Indicators for Academic Journalism Education

Despite these research limitations, under the pretense of a systematic selection of Vietnam and Cambodia based on their national variances in terms of political systems, geographic and demographic characteristics on the one hand, and similarities with regard to aspects of their development and digitalization on the other, this study bears the principal potential to lay the foundation for further cross-national and cross-regional research on academic journalism education, including the addition of further developing countries in different world regions. In order to provide new theoretical perspectives, I propose a new multi-level model, as well as a system of indicators and sub-indicators, for assessing the quality of academic journalism education programs in developing countries in the context of digitalization and the transformation of the media landscape. Figure 49 presents this multi-level model, which builds on the conceptual approach and empirical findings of this research. Following Esser's functional approach to journalism (see sub-chapter 3.1.1) the model analyzes academic journalism education in the context of development, digitalization, and media transformation by exploring **the societal sphere** (macro level), **the institutional sphere**, **the program sphere** (meso level) and **the individual sphere** (micro level).

Beyond historical, overall socio-economic and cultural aspects (see sub-chapter 4.2), the comparative data analysis on the **macro level** has shown that, on a societal level, *internationalization, technological change and innovation, political control and restrictions*, as well as *market and employment conditions* influence the status and evolution of academic journalism education. For the **meso level**, specific institutional influencing factors were identified through the qualitative content analysis of qualitative expert interviews and alumni data: *Funding and human resources, collaboration and networks*, as well as *quality and change management* appear to be the most influential factors in this sphere. Moreover, with regard to the program

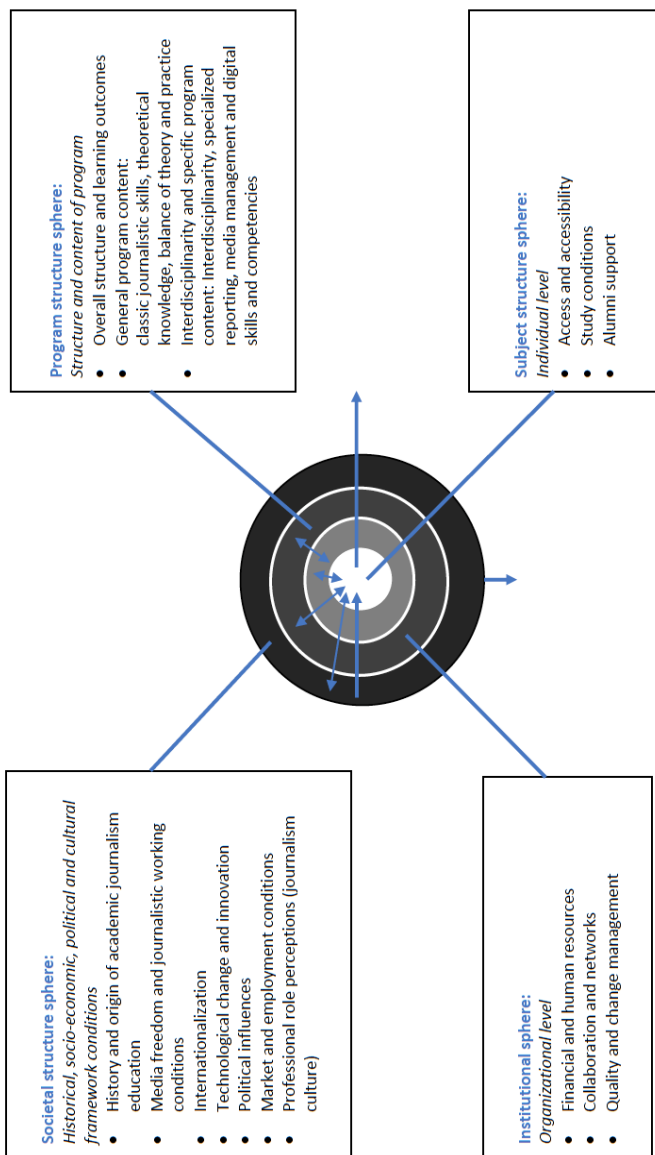
structure and content, special attention must be paid to the *overall structure and objectives* of the curriculum and its *general program content*, that is, journalism theory and practice. In addition, specific program content entail *interdisciplinarity*, providing opportunities for students to specialize in a practical or theoretical field. The quality of the contemporary journalism education programs is impacted by the extent to which students are able to gain *specialized reporting*, *media management* and *digital competencies*. On the *individual* or **micro level**, *access to the program* and *study conditions* were identified as key categories. In addition, it is worthwhile assessing whether graduates *work as journalists* after graduation.

Figure 49 illustrates the interconnection between all three levels and their possible impact on each other. The model thereby also indicates potential inter-sphere correlations, that is, factors impacting one level also affecting particular aspects of other spheres.

Building on these findings and the subsequent multi-level approach, Table 20 specifies a system of a total of nine indicators and 40 sub-indicators on the *individual*, *program* and *organizational level* for academic journalism education institutions. The means of verification imply that both qualitative and quantitative data should be collected on all levels. The main indicators as well as sub-indicators and means of verification are specified for each analytical level.

Statistical factor analysis of the student survey results allowed for a more concrete definition of certain general and specific competence areas. For instance, regarding the rather broad category of classic journalistic skills, three sets of competencies were identified: production skills; research and critical thinking skills; and other practical journalistic skills (e.g., interview techniques and creative writing). These factors were taken into account to define the sub-indicators (see sub-chapter 6.2.2).





**Figure 49: Multi-Level Approach to Academic Journalism Education Programs**<sup>1434</sup>

Table 20: System of Indicators for Academic Journalism Education Programs

Indicator 1: Access to school
<p><b>Students from all segments of society have access to academic journalism education.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>1.1 Application process and entry requirements are transparently communicated.</li><li>1.2 Students come from rural and urban areas.</li><li>1.3 The school includes students from low socio-economic backgrounds.</li><li>1.4 Ethnic and religious minorities are well represented.</li><li>1.5 The number of female and male students is nearly equal.</li></ul> <p><b>Means of verification:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>⇒ Analysis of official information and documentation (e.g. website)</li><li>⇒ Interviews with managerial staff</li><li>⇒ Student statistics</li></ul>
Indicator 2: Study conditions
<p><b>Students can learn and complete the degree under fair and good learning conditions.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>2.1 Scholarships or other financial support are provided for students who cannot afford to attend otherwise.</li><li>2.2 The power imbalance between students and teachers is low.</li><li>2.3 Instructors have access to sufficient and quality teaching material and equipment.</li><li>2.4 Instructors apply a variety of appropriate teaching styles and methods.</li></ul> <p><b>Means of verification:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>⇒ Interviews with managerial staff and instructors</li><li>⇒ Student surveys</li><li>⇒ Results of internal student evaluation</li></ul>

<sup>1434</sup> Source: Own creation based on Esser, F. (1998), p. 27.

Table 20: System of Indicators for Academic Journalism Education Programs (cont'd)

Indicator 3: Career support
<p><b>Students are supported in the development of their careers and finding journalistic work.</b></p> <p>3.1 Teaching staff support students in building networks and gaining work experience (e.g., finding relevant internships in media organizations).</p> <p>3.2 Formal processes of alumni management and support are in place.</p> <p>3.3 Students find relevant work as journalists after graduation.</p> <p><i>Means of verification:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⇒ Interviews with managerial staff and instructors</li> <li>⇒ Interviews or focus group discussions with graduates</li> <li>⇒ Alumni survey or interviews</li> <li>⇒ Internal alumni statistics</li> <li>⇒ Official statistics of journalistic labor market</li> </ul>
Indicator 4: Program structure and objectives
<p><b>The degree program has a balanced and clear structure allowing students to meet defined objectives and learning outcomes.</b></p> <p>4.1 The school has defined its objectives and learning outcomes for students.</p> <p>4.2 The curriculum has a clear structure consisting of different modules and courses.</p> <p>4.3 The curriculum consists of compulsory and elective elements.</p> <p>4.4 The curriculum provides for a balance of theory and practice.</p> <p>4.5 Students are required to complete a final thesis, exam and/or project to graduate.</p> <p><i>Means of verification:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⇒ Analysis of curricula and other official information and documentation</li> <li>⇒ Interviews with managerial staff</li> <li>⇒ Interviews with local and international experts to evaluate the curriculum</li> <li>⇒ Student and alumni surveys to assess the balance of the curriculum</li> </ul>

**Table 20: System of Indicators for Academic Journalism Education Programs (cont'd)**

<b>Indicator 5: General practical and theoretical journalism education</b>	
<b>The degree covers basic practical and theoretical journalistic competence areas.</b>	
5.1	The degree covers classic journalistic skills such as media production, research and critical thinking, as well as other practical journalistic skills. The programs offers on-campus practical learning opportunities, e.g. media production studios and labs.
5.2	The program provides for off-campus practical elements, e.g. internships, projects and/or field trips.
5.3	The curriculum includes theoretical knowledge covering media law and ethics, professional values and the societal function of journalism, as well as other media-related academic subjects.
<b>Means of verification:</b>	
⇒	Analysis of curricula and other official information and documentation
⇒	Interviews with managerial staff
⇒	Interviews with local and international experts to evaluate the program content
⇒	Student surveys and alumni surveys to assess the implementation of the curriculum
<b>Indicator 6: Interdisciplinarity and specific journalism education</b>	
<b>The program offers interdisciplinary education and specialized journalism training.</b>	
6.1	The program enables interdisciplinary teaching and learning, e.g. by collaborating with other academic disciplines and experts.
6.2	The degree offers courses in specialized reporting relevant for human development, e.g., on the environmental, human rights reporting, conflict-sensitive reporting or other forms of development journalism.
6.3	The program covers media management and entrepreneurial journalism.
6.4	The program offers training and education in digital journalism and ICT skills.
<b>Means of verification:</b>	
⇒	Analysis of curricula and other official information and documentation
⇒	Interviews with managerial staff
⇒	Interviews with local and international experts to evaluate the program content
⇒	Student surveys and alumni surveys to assess the implementation of the curriculum

Table 20: System of Indicators for Academic Journalism Education Programs (cont'd)

<p><b>Indicator 7: Autonomy and collaboration</b></p> <p>The journalism education institution maintains its autonomy while collaborating with local and international professionals and organizations.</p> <p>7.1 Political interference is limited to the accreditation of the program. Governmental actors do not influence program content or managerial decisions.</p> <p>7.2 The school collaborates with other disciplines and faculties within the main university.</p> <p>7.3 The school collaborates with media professionals and organizations.</p> <p>7.4 The school collaboration with international organizations and media and journalism schools (exchange programs).</p> <p><i>Means of verification:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⇒ Interviews with local and international experts to assess the program's independence</li> <li>⇒ Assess the number of media professionals invited as guest lecturers and the number of field trips to media organizations</li> <li>⇒ Assess the number of international exchange programs and students</li> </ul>	<p><b>Indicator 8: Funding and human resources</b></p> <p>The school manages its financial and human resources in an efficient and sustainable manner.</p> <p>8.1 Management and teaching staff communicate and collaborate openly and regularly.</p> <p>8.2 Instructors exchange knowledge and experience and support each other.</p> <p>8.3 Teaching staff are provided with opportunities for training and development.</p> <p>8.4 The school provides adequate incentives and salaries for instructors.</p> <p>8.5 The education and professional profiles of instructors meet the requirements of the program.</p> <p>8.6 The institution does not solely rely on government funding, but a diverse range of funders and revenue streams.</p> <p><i>Means of verification:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⇒ Interviews with managerial staff</li> <li>⇒ Interviews or survey with teaching staff</li> <li>⇒ Interviews with local and international experts to assess the financial and human resources management of the school</li> <li>⇒ Analysis of official financial planning and bookkeeping documentation</li> <li>⇒ Analysis of teaching staff profiles</li> </ul>
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**Table 20: System of Indicators for Academic Journalism Education Programs (cont'd)**

Indicator 9: Quality and change management	
The journalism education institution continuously aims to improve and innovate the program.	9.1 The school has established external advisory mechanisms in place, e.g. advisory board, external consultancy.
	9.2 The organization is generally able to react to external influences such as internationalization, technological change and innovation, market conditions and the changing demands of employers.
	9.3 The organization is resistant to interference from government authorities and politicians.
	9.4 Processes of internal and external evaluation are transparent and applied regularly, including feedback from various stakeholders and students.
	9.5 The school regularly reviews and adapts the curriculum.
<i>Means of verification:</i>	⇒ Interviews with managerial staff
	⇒ Interviews with external consultants and members of external advisory boards
	⇒ Interviews with local and international experts to assess internal and external evaluation processes
	⇒ Assess the availability of student and instructor feedback reports
	⇒ Assess the availability of Alumni survey results and statistics
	⇒ Assess the availability of collaboration partners

The system of indicators would certainly benefit from a process of peer review. Further refinement should also include the exact process of assessing and quantifying these indicators. One possibility – which I will trial in the following, utilizing the empirical findings on various levels and for a multitude of analytical dimensions and categories – is to apply the same Likert scale, ranking all indicators and sub-indicators from 0 to 3 in line with the design of the student survey. The values span from 3 for ‘completely applicable,’ 2 for ‘applicable to a great extent,’ 1 for ‘applicable to a rather limited extent’ to 0 for ‘not applicable at all.’ Ideally, a team of local and international researchers should work together in order to maximize objectivity based on inter-coder and inter-rater reliability.

Despite the need for further specification and collective discussion on an expert level, this set of indicators and their means of verification provide a solid basis for further comparative research, for example, by expanding their application to a larger number of countries and institutions across various world regions. This would require significant resources.

The system of indicators is intentionally limited to the micro and meso level, that is, it concentrates on the quality of particular degree programs rather than explicitly assessing societal framework conditions of academic journalism education. Following the proposed multi-level approach (Figure 49), it is essential to specify past and current political, socio-economic and cultural influencing factors based on both desk research and interviews with local and international experts. In terms of the key influencing factors regarding journalism education, apart from the aspects mentioned above, special attention must also be paid to media and internet freedom and, in parallel, working conditions for journalists. Moreover, journalists’ perception of their professional roles in individual countries plays a crucial role in shaping journalism education programs and pathways. The societal sphere must be analyzed separately, firstly, because the means of verification rely heavily on desk research. In contrast to the measurement applied on the micro and meso level, a meta-analysis on the macro level aims to synthesize a multitude of indices and reports rather than original empirical data generated by the researcher themselves or derived from evaluation reports and statistical data provided by local institutions.

**Micro and Meso Level Indicator Assessment of the DMC, USSH and  
AJC**

The following Table 21 summarizes the empirical results on the micro and meso level based on the system of indicators presented in the previous sub-chapter. As explained above, numerical values between 0 and 3 were allocated to each sub-indicator. Moreover, the table includes the sub-values for each of the nine indicators in order to assess the quality of the selected academic journalism education programs. Accordingly, the overall index for academic journalism education ranges from 0 for ‘extremely poor quality’ to 3 for ‘very high quality.’



Table 21: Ratings for Micro and Meso Level Indicators

Indicator	DMC	USSH	AJC
<b>Indicator 1: Access to school</b>			
1.1 Application process and entry requirements are transparently communicated.	3	2	2
1.2 Students come from rural and urban areas.	2	1	1
1.3 The school includes students from low socio-economic backgrounds.	2	1	1
1.4 Ethnic and religious minorities are well represented.	n.a. <sup>1439</sup>	n.a.	n.a.
1.5 The number of female and male students is at least equal.	3	3	3
Subtotal	2.5	2	2
<b>Indicator 2: Study conditions</b>			
2.1 Scholarships or other financial support are provided for students who cannot afford to attend otherwise.	3	1	1
2.2 The power imbalance between student and teachers is low.	3	1	1
2.3 Instructors have access to sufficient and quality teaching material and equipment.	3	1	1
2.4 Instructors apply a variety of adequate teaching styles and methods.	3	2	2
Subtotal	3	1.25	1.25

<sup>1439</sup> n.a. = category 'not applicable.' Due to a lack of access to student data, it was not possible to add a value to this sub-indicator for all three universities.

Table 21: Ratings for Micro and Meso Level Indicators (cont'd)

Indicator	DMC	USSH	AJC
<b>Indicator 3: Career support</b>			
3.1 Teaching staff support students in building networks and gaining work experience (e.g., finding relevant internships in media organizations).	3	2	2
3.2 Formal processes of alumni management and support are in place.	1	2	1
3.3 Students find relevant work as journalists after graduation.	3	1	1
Subtotal	2.33	1.66	1.33
<b>Indicator 4: Program structure and objectives</b>			
4.1 The school has defined objectives and learning outcomes for students.	3	2	2
4.2 The curriculum has a clear structure consisting of different modules and courses.	3	2	2
4.3 The curriculum consists of compulsory and elective elements.	3	3	3
4.4 The curriculum provides for a balance of theory and practice.	3	3	3
4.5 Students are required to complete a final thesis, exam and/or project to graduate.	3	3	3
Subtotal	3	2.6	2.6

Table 21: Ratings for Micro and Meso Level Indicators (cont'd)

Indicator	DMC	USSH	AJC
<b>Indicator 5: General practical and theoretical journalistic education</b>			
5.1 The degree covers classic journalistic skills such as media production skills, research and critical thinking skills, and other practical journalistic skills.	3	2	2
5.2 The program offers on-campus practical learning opportunities, e.g. media production studios and labs.	3	2	1
5.3 The program provides for off-campus practical elements, e.g. internships, projects and/or field trips.	3	3	3
5.4 The curriculum includes theoretical knowledge covering media law and ethics, professional values and the societal function of journalism, and other media-related academic subjects.	3	3	3
Subtotal	3	2.5	2.25
<b>Indicator 6: Interdisciplinarity and specific journalistic education</b>			
6.1 The program enables interdisciplinary teaching and learning, e.g. by collaborating with other academic disciplines and experts.	1	2	2
6.2 The degree offers courses in specialized reporting relevant for human development, e.g., the environment, human rights reporting, conflict-sensitive reporting or other forms of development journalism.	1	2	2
6.3 The program covers media management and entrepreneurial journalism.	3	1	1
6.4 The program offers training and education in digital journalism and ICT skills.	1	1	2
Subtotal	1.5	1.5	1.75

Table 21: Ratings for Micro and Meso Level Indicators (cont'd)

Indicator	DMC	USSH	AJC
<b>Indicator 7: Autonomy and collaboration</b>			
7.1 Political interference is limited to the accreditation of the program. Governmental actors do not influence program content or managerial decisions.	0	0	0
7.2 The school collaborates with other disciplines and faculties within the main university.	1	1	1
7.3 The school collaborates with media professionals and organizations.	3	3	3
7.4 The school collaborates with international organizations and media and journalism schools (exchange programs).	3	2	2
Subtotal	1.75	1.5	1.5
<b>Indicator 8: Funding and human resources</b>			
8.1 Management and teaching staff communicate and collaborate openly and regularly.	2	1	1
8.2 Instructors exchange knowledge and experience and support each other.	2	2	2
8.3 Teaching staff have access to training and development opportunities.	2	2	2
8.4 The school provides adequate incentives and salaries for instructors.	0	0	0
8.5 The education and professional profiles of instructors meet the requirements of the program.	1	3	3
8.6 The institution does not rely solely on government funding, but a diverse range of revenue streams and funders.	2	0	0
Subtotal	1.5	1.33	1.33

Table 21: Ratings for Micro and Meso Level Indicators (cont'd)

Indicator	DMC	USSH	AJC
<b>Indicator 9: Quality and change management</b>			
9.1 The school has established external advisory mechanisms in place, e.g. advisory board, external consultancy.	3	2	1
9.2 The organization is generally able to react to external influences such as internationalization, technological change and innovation, market conditions and the changing demands of employers.	2	1	1
9.3 The organization is resistant to interference of government authorities and politicians.	1	1	1
9.4 Processes of internal and external evaluation are transparent and applied regularly including feedback from various stakeholders and students.	2	2	2
9.5 The school regularly reviews and adapts the curriculum.	3	1	2
Subtotal	1.83	1.16	1.16
<b>Total Index Value</b>	<b>2.26</b>	<b>1.72</b>	<b>1.68</b>

The values for the overall index reveal that the quality of the DMC program is higher than those at the USSH and the AJC. Table 22 explains the index values. With a total value 2.26, the DMC's program is of standard quality, whereas the two Vietnamese journalism schools are sorted into the same category, but with scores (1.72 and 1.68) closer to the lower end of the spectrum.

**Table 22: Index Values and Interpretation for Academic Journalism Education Programs**

Index Value	Interpretation
Between 3 to 2.5	The journalism education institution offers a high quality program.
Between 2.5 to 1.5	The journalism education institution offers a program of standard to mediocre quality.
Between 1.5 to 0.5	The journalism education institution offers a program with sub-standard quality.
Under 0.5	The quality of the program offered by the journalism education institution is highly deficient.

Looking closer at the nine indicators and sub-indicators, variances appear for certain sub-indicators: Whereas none of the DMC's subtotals were below 1.5, the AJC and the USSH's share of sub-standard ratings for particular indicators is much higher. The Cambodian journalism school scored higher especially regarding study conditions (Indicator 2). The learning environment appears to be much better at the DMC, which scored maximum values for all four sub-indicators. Although less pronounced, cross-national variances also exist for career support (Indicator 3), program structure and objectives (Indicator 4), general journalism education (Indicator 5), and quality and change management (Indicator 9). Notably, for many sub-values, the DMC was assessed as top quality. The AJC and USSH only score higher for two sub-indicators that reflect the level of collaboration with other academic disciplines and experts (sub-indicator 6.1)

and specialized reporting with relevance to human development (sub-indicator 6.2). In addition, the two Vietnamese schools have a better rating for educational and professional profiles matching program requirements (sub-indicator 8.5).

In terms of similarities, the three schools resemble one another the most in terms of overall interdisciplinarity and specific journalism education (Indicator 6) followed by autonomy and collaboration (Indicator 7) and funding and human resources (Indicator 8). The subtotals for these three aspects total under the value of 2, that is, the quality of the program is relatively limited in these respects across all institutions. Contrary to that, all three programs had rather good assessments (above 2.5) for indicator 4, which focuses on the structure of the curriculum including overall objectives of the program. Also the ratings for indicator 5, which evaluates the quality of general journalism education elements, are rather high for all three institutions. Only the AJC scores slightly less than 2.5.

Comparing the two Vietnamese institutions, it is evident that there are only scant differences between the USSH and the AJC. The USSH scores higher in three categories: Formal alumni support (sub-indicator 3.2), on-campus practical learning opportunities (sub-indicator 5.2) and external advisory mechanisms (sub-indicator 9.1). In contrast, the AJC appears to review and adapt the curriculum more frequently (sub-indicator 9.5) and ranks higher with regard to digital journalism and ICT skills (sub-indicator 6.4).

### **Macro Level Framework Conditions**

Based on the analysis of macro level framework conditions in sub-chapter 4.2 and the comparative analysis of empirical findings in sub-chapter 7.1, the main findings can be interpreted as follows: To begin with, the fact that *technological change and innovation* was identified as a key influencing factor for journalism education in both Vietnam and Cambodia underscores the relevance of this research with the context of digitalization. In Vietnam, *market conditions*, which are characterized by increased liberalization in the Southeast Asian country, appear to be closely interconnected to all other societal spheres – that is, political, technological, and international influences. This became obvious through qualitative data analysis in particular. Desk research for Cambodia had previously revealed that market conditions were primarily shaped by media concentration and

ownership by political powerholders; economic aspects are thus tightly and increasingly intertwined with *political influences*. Qualitative expert interviews and insights from graduates underscored this finding for the particular issue of journalism education.

*Internationalization* was identified as an area that is also closely linked to the journalism landscape. Nonetheless, Cambodian experts did not explicitly mention and discuss it as a determining factor, which is astonishing – at least at first sight. The reason for this is likely that international support is so integral to the DMC and the journalism education landscape as a whole that experts did not view it as a separate element or influencing factor. While a lack of awareness of international influences can be dangerous and lead to long-term dependencies in Cambodia, the Vietnamese schools have also realized that they are impacted by the internationalization of the media market and by foreign universities offering media education. In response, it seems that they have intensified their efforts to collaborate with international programs.

Looking at professional *role perceptions* and *ideal jobs*, the factor analysis of the national and institutional student survey data samples did not reveal any significant patterns. Nonetheless, the statistical search for patterns revealed two main factors for the perceived societal function of future journalist across both countries and all three institutions: one, a humanitarian ‘watchdog’ function; and, two, a link between the public and politics. Respondents who viewed themselves as humanitarian ‘watchdogs’ thought that it was important to give a voice to minorities and human rights issues, contribute to human development, filter and verify information for the audience and to act as a watchdog observing the government. Students who understood themselves as a link between the public and politics reflected a clear tendency to be the ‘mouthpiece’ of government authorities to strengthen their position, relay official information, and contribute to the unification of state and society.

Factor analysis for the ideal job as a future journalist identified three factors: one, a *public service function*; two, *competitive salaries and job safety*; and three *editorial independence and a lack of fear of reprisals*. Interestingly, respondents who indicated that the public service function was most important to them, ideally wanted to fulfill this role also with a slight tendency to act as the government’s ‘mouthpiece.’ Overall, the survey results



revealed a dichotomy between relaying pro-government perspectives on the one hand, and providing independent information and monitoring politicians and state authorities on the other hand. It must be highlighted, that these findings are determined mainly by the large survey samples for the two Vietnamese degree programs. It would be worthwhile to further explore the roots and causes of these seemingly contradictory findings, which are interesting especially when contrasting them to perceptions of the role and responsibilities of journalists in society.

## 7.4 Research Recommendations

A follow-up study of the same universities would likely reveal interesting new insights. All three journalism schools have voiced certain plans to invest more into technological innovation and digital journalism education. In addition, both the AJC and the USSH have indicated that they want to intensify international collaboration and offer their students exchange programs. Furthermore, they had been working on new courses in PR and advertising, as well as Master's degrees. It would be interesting to look at the situation in a few years later to see how such measures impact study conditions, program content and institutional systems.

Since the completing of the data collection, the DMC has increased the number of students enrolled. To date, there are at least 60 students enrolled per year and the number is expected to reach 90 in the near future.<sup>1435</sup> It would be interesting to assess what effect this has had on the quality of the program, especially study and teaching conditions.

While the political situation has not changed much in Vietnam, it needs to be pointed out that Cambodia has experienced a drastic deterioration of media and internet freedom since 2017, the year of data collection. Given its close links to governmental institutions and even individual politicians (above all Prime Minister Hun Sen himself), the question immediately arises whether and how the DMC has been affected by an intensified climate of crackdowns and the censorship of independent media.

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<sup>1435</sup> This information was provided by DW Akademie in August 2021 following correspondence with the DAAD representative at the DMC.

In terms of economic framework conditions, a longitudinal study of journalism education in Vietnam could serve as a case study to reveal potential correlations between market liberalization and journalistic professionalization. Journalism education programs at public universities such as the USSH and the AJC have thus far ignored the fact that digital journalism increasingly requires an entrepreneurial mindset and relevant skills. Although they are not permitted to establish new media organizations in Vietnam, journalists have for many years explored the possibilities inherent to blogs and other new forms of independent reporting on social media. Digital spaces and independent online and social reporting are no longer just a loophole for critical journalists, but have begun to challenge state-run media in Vietnam. The study has also shown that the CVP has taken note of digital startups such as Zalo due to its rapidly growing reach.

The DMC, which calls its program a ‘Bachelor in Media Management,’ is more progressive in this respect. although the actual curriculum concentrates on journalism and media production, newsroom management and entrepreneurial journalism are essential components of the degree. While, according to alumni, the curriculum focuses more on how to run a business rather than setting one up, graduates have established their own media productions or YouTube support companies. In terms of further research, it would be interesting to quantify how many graduates of journalism schools in developing countries, having trained in media management and entrepreneurial journalism, apply this knowledge and become founders or media entrepreneurs. It would also be worthwhile to collect qualitative data on the utility of such courses for these professionals and their suggestions for improving journalism degree programs in this respect.

In terms of development journalism, this study has shown that, historically, the concept has evolved in parallel to political and economic paradigms shaping international cooperation in theory and practice. To date, there is no clear synthesis of the multitude of definitions and the overall relevance of the concept with respect to academic journalism education. The empirical findings for Vietnam and Cambodia reveal that the local perception of development journalism is closely linked to the definition of the role and responsibility of journalists in society and their relationship to the state and governmental institutions. An international

comparative study of professional journalists from the Global South, which explores their understanding of development journalism could provide more clarity. Essentially, a targeted inquiry into the perceptions of the role of journalism in the specific context of human development would counterbalance the tendency of Western countries imposing their understanding of what development communication and development journalism should be onto developing nations. Equally, the term digital journalism would benefit from further research into the context of developing countries. The study has brought to the surface that the understanding of what 'digital journalism' stands for – or, in a normative sense, what it should be – is anything but clear or consensual. Instead of approaching journalism education institutions with a predetermined definition of these terms, it is essential to inquire into local perceptions of these evolving concepts.

With regard to working conditions and employment perspectives of journalists in countries with limited media and internet freedom, it would also be promising to examine the increasing share of female students and graduates in greater detail. There is an assumed correlation between journalistic safety, which is often limited in countries with restricted media and internet freedom, and the share of women choosing to study journalism. However, this research has shown that even in risky environments such as Vietnam and Cambodia, more and more women want to become journalists. Thus, it would be valuable to identify other influencing factors influencing the 'feminization' of journalism education in order to more deeply explore the connection between the above-mentioned variables.

Another relevant field of research in terms of the job perspectives for future journalists in developing countries is the interrelationship between journalism and PR. While this issue has been widely and deeply discussed in the field of communication studies and journalism theory, the infiltration of PR education at journalism schools is a topic that has not received much attention, especially in the context of developing nations. This study provides a first basis for further research as PR was included as an analytical category throughout all three data sets (the student survey, curricula analysis and expert interviews). Both in Cambodia and Vietnam, the selected journalism degree programs offer PR and advertising as an option, which most experts perceived as an advantage as it widens the spectrum

of employment opportunities for the students. It would be interesting to identify how many other programs worldwide do so, and even more importantly, how they integrate PR education and training in programs that at least were originally designed as journalism degree programs. The key question here would be whether skills and knowledge in PR are clearly distinguished from journalism theory and practice, or if the boundary between these subject areas become increasingly blurred. Furthermore, apart from the immediate impact of these study options on the choice of jobs after graduation, it would be worthwhile to assess the negative long-term effects of such a 'brain drain' on the profession, which is already battling against low salaries and harsh working conditions, particularly in the developing world.



## 8. Conclusion

This dissertation engages directly with the field of international journalism studies, which has witnessed an upsurge in global comparative research since the late twentieth century. This new wave of scholarship reflects the need to expand theoretical approaches and research initiatives beyond national borders. Global journalism research continues to lack its own academic culture, influenced instead by a wide range of primarily Western paradigms and a variety of social science and humanities perspectives. As a consequence, journalism research remains an interdisciplinary and dynamic field within the broader area of communication studies. As such, the current theoretical discourse on journalism is heterogeneous, multidimensional, and full of competing ideas. Taking into account multiple structural levels, Esser's functional model of journalism is thus a suitable basis for this study, as it explores relevant theoretical approaches to journalism and journalism education on multiple levels. In this model, journalism education forms part of the media system and outlines a normative orientation for the profession.

Upon reviewing the current **state of relevant research** – in particular the issue of journalistic roles and self-perceptions – it becomes clear that professional practices and functions remain at the center of international journalism studies. Journalism education and training are especially relevant to the field, since it directly shapes the profession and its process of professionalization, with regard to both how future journalists perceive their societal role and responsibilities and how they put these norms, values and beliefs into practice in the newsroom. Despite this significance, theory-driven empirical research on journalism education that allows for systematic comparative analyses in and across national contexts remains a rare undertaking.

In concluding this study, it must be highlighted that statistical baseline data for journalism education is limited across the globe. The last census initiated by the WJEC was conducted in 2007. The ubiquitous 'graduatization' of journalism education has proven to be particularly relevant for the focus region of this study: In the 2000s, the WJEC had registered over 2,300 journalism degree programs, with around a quarter of them in Asia,

trailing North America, but ahead of Europe, South America, Africa and Oceania.

Furthermore, Western perspectives continue to prevail in the literature. Although new perspectives that expand on the Western-dominated approaches in journalism studies have gained increasing attention and acknowledgment, the need for empirical research that pays sufficient attention to the Global South stands out. While the first groundbreaking volumes on journalism education and training around the world were published as early as the 1990s, existing attempts to engage in worldwide comparative research on journalism education globally have lacked concise methodological approaches. Their findings are thus limited to descriptive accounts of journalism education and training in different world regions. The turn of the new millennium was dominated by Eurocentric studies and comparative analyses of European and North American journalism education. It would take another decade before substantial new comparative studies were published that actively included developing nations.

As this review of the global comparative journalism and journalism education research has shown, a significant number of publications to date lack a systematic comparative approach based on concise, theory-based conceptualization and operationalization of research questions and topics. Oftentimes, the selection criteria for the country case studies are unclear or have not been defined at all. Nonetheless, each of these requirements must be present in order to craft valid conclusions of true empirical value. While pragmatism is certainly useful when studying the Global South, these *sine qua non* conditions must be understood not only as the standard for quality academic research, but also, and even more importantly, as limiting factors and a structural challenge for studies that aim to contribute to an internationalized scholarly debate. It is thus vital that researchers hold to the consensus that they must continue to increase the number of non-Western case studies and incorporate a greater number of scholarly perspectives from the Global South in order to counterbalance an existing journalism education research literature dominated by scholars and case studies from the Global North.

The three major topics focused on in this dissertation build on the few studies exploring journalism education in developing countries with limited media freedom. In addition, as a result of a thorough analysis of

extant **normative approaches and international standards** of journalism education, the following thematic areas were identified as needing further investigation:

1. Digital and ICT skills and competencies
2. Media management and entrepreneurial journalism
3. Specialized journalistic reporting skills

The discussion of existing competence models, standards, model curricula and indicators revealed a number of key challenges for journalism education, which confirmed the relevance of the three thematic areas above. To begin with, UNESCO identified the need future journalists to acquire particular competencies as early as 2013. The new 2017 UNESCO Model Curricula consisted of a compendium of ten syllabi for specialized journalism degree programs and accentuated concrete topics and issues relevant to the current global and local challenges faced by the media, especially in the context of developing countries. In line with its aims of human development and media development, ‘development journalism’ was identified as a type of specialized reporting with particular relevance to the Global South. The UNESCO Media Development Indicators propose that journalism education programs should include courses that help build awareness of the potential of the media to promote democracy and human rights. The relationship between the media, democracy and development issues had been also concretely addressed by the first UNESCO Model Curriculum already four years earlier.

UNESCO emphasizes that their curriculum initiative was developed with the global context of continuous digital transformations and economic crises in mind. Not surprisingly, the first version of the Model Curriculum emphasizes technology-based skills for editing, designing, and producing media content of all formats, taking into account the importance of media convergence and innovation. The WJEC principles of journalism education also stress the importance of computer-based skills and tools for journalism. However, the concept of ‘digital journalism’ was not further clarified by either international standard-setting body, nor do extant competence models go into further detail on this aspect.

The causes and effects of digital innovation and the economic transformation of the journalistic profession can no longer be separated. In contrast to digital journalism, the WJEC’s eleven principles do explicitly



mention media management; notably, they are the only set of international standards available for journalism education that were developed with the involvement of non-Western experts. Moreover, media management and even entrepreneurial competencies are issues that are explored by current theoretical approaches to journalistic competencies.

In view of the unequivocal significance of the digital revolution on the journalistic profession and, thereby, on the process of training future journalists, in a bridging chapter this dissertation shed further light on relevant under-researched concepts. Investigating the repercussions of digitalization on the field of journalism also requires an understanding of media economics and management and the relatively new idea of entrepreneurial journalism. Furthermore, in the context of this study, it was necessary to define the origin and meaning of ‘development journalism’ and related concepts such as development communication.

As an outcome of a worldwide research and consultation initiative with the aim of identifying ‘centers of excellence,’ UNESCO defined three key sets of indicators for the assessment of journalism education institutions. This multilayered framework takes the curricula as a starting point, but also considers contextual aspects instead of concentrating solely on program content. In terms of teaching resources and equipment, the 2017 UNESCO Model Curriculum suggests measuring the education and skill set of teachers, the quality of technology and internet access, and the integration of practical elements into the coursework. Within this first set of indicators, tools and methods to evaluate both student learning and instructor performance are another important aspect.

During fieldwork, it also became evident that on the meso level, apart from program content covering particular journalistic competence areas, organizational issues within journalism education institutions play a significant role in determining the quality of the respective programs. Indeed, Deuze’s ten-step model accounts for institutional aspects as a relevant factor for the quality assurance of journalism education programs. His categorization scheme, however, does not specify relevant actors or interest groups, but leaves open who exactly influences the respective categories that form the basis for analyzing the quality of journalism education. By contrast, Nowak stresses the importance of identifying and assessing the different interests of relevant actors, from individual students

and instructors to academic institutions, potential employers, and society as a whole. Together with the aforementioned normative approaches and international standards, Nowak's analytical dimension and indicators thus served as a main conceptual basis for developing adequate research instruments for this study with the intention of providing an adapted multi-level approach and set of indicators for the particular context of developing countries.

Given the continued global trend within journalism education of increasing graduatization, the research here concentrated on selected degree programs at public universities. The selection of the two countries was based on the principle of a 'most different system design' with regard to the form of government, the countries' geographic and demographic characteristics, and their cultural backgrounds. Secondary research on the national context in Cambodia and Vietnam confirmed stark similarities between the two countries in terms of human development, media and internet freedom and digitalization. Conversely, the **history and evolution of journalism education** in the two countries turned out to be rather distinct: The origins of journalism education in Vietnam date back to the 1860s; formal journalism training became widely available in the twentieth century and was considered an important tool by Ho Chi Minh's communist Party. The Vietnam war and the North-South divide further shaped the evolution of journalism education programs and pathways in the country. The CPV established the Central School of Propaganda and Education in Hanoi in 1962, which is now the country's longest-standing journalism training institution, eventually becoming the AJC – although there was an interlude between the re-unification of the country in 1975 and *doi moi*, the economic reform in the 1980s, during which academic journalism education was halted. In response to the growing demand for the professional journalists as Party mouthpieces, a Journalism Department was set up at the College of Social Sciences and Humanities at the VNU in Hanoi. In the early 2000s, academic journalism institutions began falling behind in their role as suppliers of the next generation of qualified journalists. Today, a clear mismatch prevails between industry demands and what the universities offer in terms of journalism graduates. The programs are thus in urgent need of reform.

In Cambodia, the trauma of the Khmer Rouge genocide, rising political tensions and the subsequent restrictions and repression have deeply marked journalistic professionalization in recent years. The evolution of the country's journalism and journalism education does not date back very far: From the 1950s, under King Norodom Sihanouk, until the end of the Khmer Republic in 1975, journalists experienced few restrictions and the profession prospered. In stark contrast to the situation in Vietnam, where journalists continue to be considered servants of the state, Cambodian journalists were targeted as soon as the Khmer Rouge came into power. The 1991 Paris Peace Accords represent a major turning point and, more importantly, a fresh start for the professionalization of journalism. While the media had been directly controlled by the regime, following a Soviet model similar to the set-up in Vietnam, Cambodia subsequently became the only country in the region at that time transitioning from a communist to a democratic system. Additionally, the influence of a wide range of international organizations –providing consulting, training and financial support to Cambodian journalism programs both in the academic and non-academic realm – remains unprecedented in the region. The UN not only coordinated international cooperation, but also made large-scale journalism training in the country possible by recommending the foundation of an academic degree program. The DMC, which was founded with the international support in 2001, is considered the one and only journalism school in the country until today.

In any consideration of parallel trends in both countries, the evidence of French influence on journalism education must be pointed out. Moreover, in line with Deuze's typology of programs and pathways for journalism education, both countries evince mixed forms, with academic degree programs remaining the predominant way to become a journalist. In addition to public and private academic journalism educational institutions, there are also opportunities for on-the-job training provided by media outlets with the support of international development organizations in both countries. Furthermore, journalism associations provide capacity building. Notably, neither in Vietnam nor in Cambodia have stand-alone journalism schools been able to establish themselves. The DMC, USSH and AJC continue to be the leading journalism education institutions in their countries.

The analysis of existing theoretical and conceptual approaches, the global trends in digitalization and the subsequent transformation of the media, as well as the specific local context of journalism education in the two developing countries, provided the basis for a **mixed-method research design** for primary research. In response to the research aim and questions, the main similarities and differences were identified and analyzed on a societal, institutional, program and individual level. The multilayered empirical study consisted of both quantitative and qualitative data:

First, it entailed the analysis of the program content as outlined in the official curricula of the three selected Bachelor's degree programs at the DMC (Cambodia), the USSH and the AJC (both in Vietnam). Second, data was collected by means of a pen-and-paper questionnaire, filled out by a total of 178 upper-level journalism students in Phnom Penh and Hanoi. The survey centers on program content on the *meso level*, yet also includes questions on entry requirements, initial motivation and professional perspectives. Third, another key component of the field research consisted of nineteen semi-structured interviews with local and international experts, including teaching and managerial staff at all three universities. The interviews and subsequent qualitative content analysis combined all analytical levels, namely the study conditions (*micro level*), program content and institutional aspects (*meso level*) and the societal sphere (*macro level*). As a fourth data set, the perspectives of six Vietnamese graduates, who filled out a short questionnaire via email, and four Cambodian alumni taking part in a focus group discussion, complemented the perspectives of students and experts collected in the interviews and questionnaires.

Due to its systematic selection of Vietnam and Cambodia based on their national variations in terms of political system, population, geography and culture on the one hand, and similarities in terms of their level of human development, media and internet freedom, and digitalization on the other, this study has the potential to lay the groundwork for further cross-national research on academic journalism education through the inclusion of additional developing regions and countries. As an outcome and interpretation of the primary and secondary research conducted for this dissertation, a **system of nine indicators and 40 sub-indicators** that take into account the following analytical dimensions on the micro and meso levels was developed:

- Access to school
- Study conditions
- Career support
- Program structure and objectives
- General practical and theoretical journalism education
- Interdisciplinarity and specific journalism education
- Autonomy and collaboration
- Funding and human resources
- Quality and change management

The indicator system includes possible verification measures and calculates an index that quantifies the quality of academic journalism education with a rating from 3 for ‘very high quality’ to 0 for ‘highly deficient.’

Following this assessment framework, it was possible to summarize the **key findings of the cross-national and cross-institutional comparative analysis** and to measure the quality of the three journalism degree programs at public universities in Cambodia and Vietnam against a set of pre-defined criteria: All three schools offer journalism degrees that are of mediocre to standard quality, with the DMC attaining better ratings in most categories compared to the Vietnamese programs. In terms of the major differences and similarities, the biggest variations appeared on the *micro level* – especially the study conditions, which are better at the Cambodian university. In addition, the DMC scores higher with respect to career support, even though formal processes of alumni management are missing. Furthermore, the overall program structure and learning outcomes are defined more clearly, and the school has more effective quality control and change management mechanisms. Students, graduates and local and international experts also had a more positive evaluation of the components of the Cambodian journalism degree than the Vietnamese programs. Overall, the three journalism programs resemble one another with respect to their relatively low scores on the ‘interdisciplinary and special journalism education,’ ‘financial and human resources’ and ‘autonomy and collaboration’ indicators, reflecting the fact that curricula are provided or at least signed off by state authorities and that all three schools struggle to find qualified teaching staff. Yet, USSH and AJC teaching staff meet the job requirements to a greater extent than the DMC.

The cross-institutional comparison of the journalism education programs within Vietnam (*meso level*) demonstrates that similarities outweigh variances. The curriculum of the two programs is very similar, consisting of a General and Specific Education block, with the former dictated by the respective ministries to include theoretical subjects on political ideology (Marxism and Leninism). The DMC, in contrast, was not expected to engage in such explicit political indoctrination. For the two Vietnamese journalism schools, differences appeared only in the areas of alumni management, practical learning opportunities on campus, and external advice and consulting, in which the USSH scored higher. However, the AJC's capacity to develop the curriculum and train students in digital journalism seemed to be better.

Looking closer at the study results for the thematic areas of interest – **specific subject reporting, digital competencies, and media management** – which fall under 'specific journalism education,' the following points can be summarized: The DMC, as a relatively small and autonomous department within the RUPP, struggled to provide interdisciplinary education and training. Nevertheless, all three schools worked with media professionals and experts as guest lecturers to bring in the missing know-how from outside their institutions. Development journalism was considered an interdisciplinary topic of interest at the DMC, especially as many graduates end up working in the international development sector as communication specialists. Although development journalism was not explicitly mentioned in any of the official curricula, in fact it received more attention at the AJC and USSH, which offered electives on specific forms of journalism, such as environmental reporting.

Apart from that, all three institutions have been made noteworthy attempts to innovate their programs and adapt to journalism's digital transformation. The Cambodian school appeared to be rather advanced, at least according to the experts interviewed; students, however, criticized the program in this respect for only including a basic foundation in digital skills. Digital journalism education was also below standard levels at the USSH and AJC, where practical learning opportunities on campus, such as media production studios and equipment, were much more limited than at the DMC. Principally, students at none of the three universities felt sufficiently prepared in terms of their digital and ICT skills and competencies.

The Cambodian degree program was also one step ahead when it comes to media management as a competence. The Bachelor's in media management concretely incorporated entrepreneurial journalism as a subject. At the Vietnamese universities, such topics were rarely touched upon, and the concepts seemed foreign to the students. Experts stressed that it remained prohibited in Vietnam to establish private media outlets. However, there was no consensus on the relevance of media entrepreneurship skills. Some graduates believed that teaching future journalists entrepreneurial competencies was becoming more important, even in Vietnam, as digital media was on the rise, and the market was increasingly opening up. Not surprisingly, the USSH and AJC curricula included only general economics and, to some extent, organizational studies.

On the *macro level*, the expert interviews and alumni data revealed that the following factors have a crucial impact on journalism education in developing countries: political influences and restrictions, internationalization, technological change and innovation, and market conditions (especially with regard to employment prospects). Market liberalization and the internationalization of the tertiary education sector play a central role in Vietnam, leading to a previously unseen level of competition for students at the state-funded programs at the USSH and AJC. This certainly has positive effects in terms of pressuring these schools to critically review their curriculum and its implementation in order to continue attracting a shrinking number of prospective students. In the neighboring country, the political control of journalism education appeared to be a key influencing factor at the time of the study, tightly intertwined with a heavy media concentration and growing ownership of local media organizations by political actors and politically-affiliated businessmen. In terms of internationalization, the DMC continues to rely heavily on financial and human resources provided by partner organizations from Germany. As such, the Cambodia school presents an interesting example that showcases the challenges and opportunities inherent to the international support of journalism education institutions. Overall, the findings identified an inherent risk of long-term dependency on funding partners, consulting and teaching staff from abroad. Moreover, the expert opinions were split between the benefits and disadvantages of the DMC's dual dependency from the RUPP as a public university, which is regulated by political leaders and ministries, on the one side, and as a recipient of support from

international partner organizations, on the other side. Undoubtedly, the conflict of interest for the DMC and especially its managerial staff is problematic, but seems to be improving as the school strives to become autonomous on both a program and an institutional level.

The statistical analysis of the student survey also explored the societal self-perception and ideal job scenarios of future journalists in both countries. It must be emphasized that the findings primarily reflect the much larger sample of Vietnamese respondents. All in all, the responses reveal a dichotomy between a future career relaying official information provided by the government, opposed to independent reporting and critical analysis of the same. The alumni data showed that a significant share of students, especially in Vietnam, did not work as journalists after graduation due to poor wages and harsh working conditions. In both countries, private sector corporations and international organization offer the prospect of more attractive salaries and less risky work. Furthermore, all journalism schools offer training in PR and advertising, which implicitly encourages many graduates to view a non-journalistic career in the corporate communication sector as a viable option.

Finally, based on the identification of the aspects impacting academic journalism education on the micro, meso and macro level, a **multi-level approach to journalism education** was developed as an outcome of this research. This approach builds on Esser's functional model of journalism and specifies the relevant influencing factors within interconnected societal, institutional, program and individual spheres. With this new theoretical approach and the system of indicators, this study not only contributes to the field of international comparative journalism research, but also offers concrete instruments to assess, and potentially improve, academic journalism education as a strategic field of action in international development cooperation in order to enhance access to a free and independent media.

With an eye to **future research**, the normative debate surrounding journalism education has gained more ground in the global arena among both practitioners and scholars. As highlighted earlier, the current COVID-19 crisis has accelerated discussions of what journalism training programs must offer to the future journalists. The question of which competencies are necessary to sustainably financially independent journalism in the



digital era has become all the more pressing, and must be given greater adequate attention by training institutions as well as academic researchers. More concretely, it would be worthwhile to conduct further systematic international research on how journalism students can best be equipped with the skills and knowledge in media management, entrepreneurial and digital journalism that they require to thrive in the Global North and South.

Lastly, the aspiration to de-Westernize journalism studies requires more research on the causes and effects of the interrelationships between local journalism cultures and journalism education programs and pathways available to the next generation of journalists. In particular, further investigations and comparative analyses of country-based, culture-specific understandings of development journalism promise to unearth valuable new findings. Such research would not only have practical implications for journalism education systems and institutions in the respective countries, but would also provide new theoretical and practical insights relevant for journalism studies on a global scale.

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Annex

Student Survey

DEAR STUDENT,

The following questionnaire is about the journalism degree program you are currently enrolled in. It will take approximately 15 to 30 minutes to answer the questions.

The survey forms part of a doctoral research project looking at journalism education in Southeast Asia.

PLEASE NOTE: The survey is anonymous. Your answers will be used only for the purpose of this research project.

1. Year of birth:	
2. Gender:	<div><input type="checkbox"/> Female</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> Male</div>
3. Which level of education do you hold?	<div><input type="checkbox"/> Primary school</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> High school</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> Further education, if yes please specify: College or university degree, please specify Other degree or diploma, please specify</div>

<p><b>4. Which degree(s) are you currently enrolled in?</b></p> <p>Please specify the name of the degree: _____</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Bachelor</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Master</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other degree or diploma, please specify _____</p>
<p><b>5. When did you begin your studies at the DMC of the RUPP?</b></p> <p>Please specify: Month _____ Year _____</p>
<p><b>6. Which semester are you currently enrolled in?</b></p> <p>Please specify: _____</p>
<p><b>7. When do you plan to graduate?</b></p> <p>Please specify: Month _____ Year _____</p>
<p><b>8. Are you currently paying any student fees or contributions?</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes, please specify costs per year _____</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No</p>

9. How do you finance your studies?

☐ Job/employment

☐ Family

☐ Other source(s) of funding, please specify \_\_\_\_\_

10. Generally, how difficult would you was it to enter the program?

Extremely difficult	Moderately difficult	Not difficult at all	I don't know
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



11. Which relevance did the following aspects have for entering the degree program?

	<i>Very important</i>	<i>Moderately important</i>	<i>Not important at all</i>	<i>I don't know</i>
Prior education and knowledge				
Professional experiences				
Personal motivation				
Funding situation				

If any other requirements were relevant, please specify \_\_\_\_\_

12. Please describe your initial motivation to enroll in the program.

	Very important	Moderately important	Not important at all	I don't know
To gain hands-on, practical journalistic skills	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To gain theoretical understanding of the role of media and journalism in society	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To develop professional networks	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To hold an academic degree after graduation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

If other aspects influenced your motivation to apply for the program, please specify

13. To what extent does your degree program touch on media and journalism ethics?

Very extensively, in the form of an entire module or subject	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
In detail, but not in the form of a specific module or subject	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
More generally, i.e., here and there in seminars or lectures	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Not at all, has it been a topic	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I don't know	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## 14. Did you learn about the following professional and moral values?

	Yes	No	<i>I don't know</i>
Respect for truth, accuracy of research	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Balanced and objective (non-partisan) reporting	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Professional secrecy and protection of sources	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Respect of privacy and human dignity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Clarification of false reporting	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Anti-discrimination, no libel and defamation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
No acceptance of bribery funds	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Separation of editorial content and advertising	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Other professional morals or values, please specify

15. To what extent does your degree program include the following journalistic skills?

	<i>Very extensively, in the form of an entire module or subject</i>	<i>In detail, but not in the form of a specific module or subject</i>	<i>More generally, i.e., here and there in seminars or lectures</i>	<i>Not at all, has it been a topic</i>	<i>I don't know</i>
Critical thinking skills	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Empirical research skills	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Online research skills	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Database research skills	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Interview skills	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Data analysis skills	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Creative writing skills	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Story-telling skills	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Print production skills	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Radio production skills	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
TV/film production skills	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Multimedia production skills	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

If any other research and reporting skills are part of your program, please specify

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16. To what extent does your degree program include specific reporting skills?

	<i>Very extensively, in the form of an entire module or subject</i>	<i>In detail, but not in the form of a specific module or subject</i>	<i>More generally, i.e., here and there in seminars or lectures</i>	<i>Not at all, has it been a topic</i>	<i>I don't know</i>
News and current affairs reporting skills	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Investigative reporting	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Conflict-sensitive reporting	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Political and election reporting	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Reporting on development topics	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Environmental reporting	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Health and science journalism	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Business and economic reporting	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Reporting on indigenous and ethnic minorities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Reporting on cultural events, intercultural communication	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Reporting on sports and entertainment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Reporting on ICT topics	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

If any other specific forms of journalism and reporting are part of your program, please specify

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**17. To what extent does your degree program include digital skills?**

	<i>Very extensively, in the form of an entire module or subject</i>	<i>In detail, but not in the form of a specific module or subject</i>	<i>More generally, i.e., here and there in seminars or lec- tures</i>	<i>Not at all, has it been a topic</i>	<i>I don't know</i>
Online research	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Blogging	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Mobile research and reporting	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Social media research and reporting	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Reporting on ICT topics	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Verification of online sources and content	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Programming skills for web-sites	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Programming skills for mobile applications	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



Content management skills for websites	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Content management skills for mobile applications	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

If any other specific forms of digital and IT skills are part of your program, please specify

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18. To what extent does your degree program include entrepreneurial and media management skills?

	Very extensively, in the form of an entire module or subject	In detail, but not in the form of a specific module or subject	More generally, i.e., here and there in seminars or lectures	Not at all, has it been a topic	I don't know
Financial planning and fundraising skills	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Bookkeeping and accounting skills	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Business planning and business development skills	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Project and business management skills	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Human resource management skills	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Organizational development and strategic planning skills	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
If any other management and entrepreneurial skills are part of the program, please specify					

<p>19. Which of the following practical learning opportunities do you have as part of your degree program? I am/ was able to...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> ..complete an internship of at least 1 month in a media house</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> ..take part in excursions and field trips to visit editorial departments/newsrooms</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> ..take part in radio production on campus or in class</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> ..contribute to newspaper, magazine or other print publication on campus or in class</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> ..take part in TV or film production on campus or in class</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> ..create content for a website, blog, social media (e.g. Facebook) page on campus or in-class</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> ..take part in other practical learning opportunities, please specify</li></ul> <hr/> <hr/>
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20. To what extent does your degree program include the following topics?

	<i>Very extensively, in the form of an entire module or subject</i>	<i>In detail, but not in the form of a specific module or subject</i>	<i>More generally, i.e., here and there in seminars or lectures</i>	<i>Not at all, has it been a topic</i>	<i>I don't know</i>
History of journalism and media	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Journalism as a profession	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Role of media in politics, political communication	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Intercultural communication, media and culture	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Economics of media, media as a business, entrepreneurial journalism	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Local media landscape	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Media systems of other countries	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
International media, media and globalization	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

If any other aspects of media and journalism in society are part of your program, please specify

<p>21. To which of the following subject areas or disciplines do you have access through coursework or other forms of training?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> History and political sciences</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Linguistics and cultural studies (including anthropology)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Social and economic sciences (e.g., business studies, sociology, empirical research)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Natural sciences (incl. Biology, Medicine, Health Sciences Environmental Studies)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> ICT and computing sciences</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other fields of communication sciences (incl. Public Relations, Marketing and Advertising)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> If you have access to any other subject areas and disciplines, please specify</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>
<p>22. During your studies, are/were you able to specialize in one theoretical field of knowledge? (For example, politics, economics and business studies, environmental sciences)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes, please specify which subject area or discipline</p> <p>_____</p>

<p>23. During your studies, are/were you able to specialize on type of practical journalism (For example, TV, print, radio, online journalism)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes, please specify which subject area or discipline</p>	
<p>24. How would you describe the balance of theory and practice of your degree program?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The degree is mainly a theoretical academic program.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The program is rather theoretical with some practical elements.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The program consists of an even mix of theoretical and practical elements.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The degree is rather practical, with some theoretical elements.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The degree primarily consists of practical training.</p>	

25. Considering the role and responsibilities as a future journalist in society, how important do you rate the following tasks?

	<i>Very important</i>	<i>Moderately important</i>	<i>Not important at all</i>	<i>I don't know</i>
To inform the public on what the government proclaims	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To strengthen the position of public authorities and the government	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To contribute to a unification of the state and society by reporting on related issues	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To provide the public with balanced information	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To monitor the state and politics	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To contribute to socio-economic development by reporting on related issues	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To give a voice to minorities and human rights topics	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To filter and verify existing online and social media content for the audience	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To provide the public with entertainment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

If you think any other tasks are relevant for journalists in society, please specify

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26. Considering your ideal job after graduation, how important are the following aspects to you?

	<i>Very important</i>	<i>Moderately important</i>	<i>Not important at all</i>	<i>I don't know</i>
Being able to work editorially independent and without fear of reprisals	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Working in entertainment media	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Having close contacts to politicians and state authorities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Having a secure job which pays for my living costs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Earning a competitive salary and become wealthy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Become a highly reputable journalist that contributes to the forthcoming of the country	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Being able to influence the public to support the government	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Being able to influence the public to make informed and independent choices	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Being able to report on specific topics that are relevant for society (e.g. environment, business, culture, human rights)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

If reporting on socially-relevant topics is important to you, please specify which ones

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<p>27. Are there any other thoughts or aspects that are important to you in terms of your future job as a journalist, please specify:</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<p>28. If you would like to mention or stress any other aspects of your journalism education at the DMC of the RUPP, please do so:</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
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*THANK YOU very much for taking the time to answer the question! Your questionnaire will contribute significantly to the study of journalism education in Southeast Asia*

### *Code Plan - Student Survey*

Item	Name of Variable	Coding
CO	country	Cambodia = 1, Vietnam 2
UN	institution	DMC = 1, AJC= 2, USSH = 3
ID	number	0-200 for Cambodia, 201 - 400 for Vietnam
Q1	YoB	1900-2010
Q2	gender	1/2 = female/male
Q3.1	edu_level	1/2/3 = primary education/high school/further education
Q3.2	edu_further	0/1 = no/yes
Q3.3	edu_further_spec	enter text
Q4.1	degree_name	enter text
Q4.2	degree_level	1/2 = Bachelor/Master
Q4.3	degree_other	0/1 = no/yes, enter text
Q5	begin_studies	1= more than 1 and less than 6 months ago, 2 = more than 6 months and less than 1 year ago , 3 = more than 1 year and less than 2 years ago, 4 = more than 2 and less than 3 years ago, 5 = more than 3 and less than 4 years ago, 6 = more than 4 and less than 5 years ago, 7= more than 5 and less than 10 years ago, 8 = more than 10 years ago; enter text
Q6	semester	1-10 = 1 to 10 semesters, 11 = more than 10 semesters; enter text
Q7	graduation	1= within more than 1 and less than 6 months, 2 = within more than 6 months and less than 1 year, 3 = within more than 1 year and less than 2 years, 4 = within more than 2 and less than 3 years , 5 = within more than 3 and less than 4 years, 6 = within 4 and less than

Item	Name of Variable	Coding
		5 years, 7= within 5 and less than 10 years, 8 = within more 10 years
Q8.1	fees	0/1 = no/yes
Q8.2	annual_costs	number
Q8.3	converted_costs	number
Q9.1	finance_job	0/1 = no/yes
Q9.2	finance_family	0/1 = no/yes
Q9.3	finance_other	0/1 = no/yes
Q9.4	finance_other_spec	enter text
Q10	difficulty_entry	3/2/1/99 = extremely/moderately/not at all difficult/I don't know
Q11.1	require_edu	3/2/1/99 = extremely/moderately/not at all important/I don't know
Q11.2	require_experience	3/2/1/99 = extremely/moderately/not at all important/I don't know
Q11.3	require_motivation	3/2/1/99 = extremely/moderately/not at all important/I don't know
Q11.4	require_funding	3/2/1/99 = extremely/moderately/not at all important/I don't know
Q11.5	require_other	0/1 = no/yes
Q11.6	require_other_spec	enter text
Q12.1	motive_practice	3/2/1/99 = extremely/moderately/not at all important/I don't know
Q12.2	motive_theory	3/2/1/99 = extremely/moderately/not at all important/I don't know
Q12.3	motive_networks	3/2/1/99 = extremely/moderately/not at all important/I don't know
Q12.4	motive_degree	3/2/1/99 = extremely/moderately/not at all important/I don't know
Q12.5	motive_other	0/1 = no/yes
Q12.6	motive_other_spec	enter text

Item	Name of Variable	Coding
Q13	ethics	4/3/2/1/99 = very extensively/in detail/generally/not at all/ I don't know
Q14.1	value_truth	1/0/99 = yes/no/I don't know/no answer
Q14.2	value_balance	1/0/99 = yes/no/I don't know/no answer
Q14.3	value_secrecy	1/0/99 = yes/no/I don't know/no answer
Q14.4	value_privacy	1/0/99 = yes/no/I don't know/no answer
Q14.5	value_false report	1/0/99 = yes/no/I don't know/no answer
Q14.6	value_no libel	1/0/99 = yes/no/I don't know/no answer
Q14.7	value_no bribe	1/0/99 = yes/no/I don't know/no answer
Q14.8	value_adds	1/0/99 = yes/no/I don't know/no answer
Q14.9	value_other	0/1 = no/yes
Q14.10	value_other_spec	enter text
Q15.1	skills_critical	4/3/2/1/99 = very extensively/in detail/generally/not at all/ I don't know
Q15.2	skills_empirical	4/3/2/1/99 = very extensively/in detail/generally/not at all/ I don't know
Q15.3	skills_online	4/3/2/1/99 = very extensively/in detail/generally/not at all/ I don't know
Q15.4	skills_database	4/3/2/1/99 = very extensively/in detail/generally/not at all/ I don't know

Item	Name of Variable	Coding
Q15.5	skills_interview	4/3/2/1/99 = very extensively/in detail/generally/not at all/ I don't know
Q15.6	skills_analysis	4/3/2/1/99 = very extensively/in detail/generally/not at all/ I don't know
Q15.7	skills_creative writing	4/3/2/1/99 = very extensively/in detail/generally/not at all/ I don't know
Q15.8	skills_story	4/3/2/1/99 = very extensively/in detail/generally/not at all/ I don't know
Q15.9	skills_print	4/3/2/1/99 = very extensively/in detail/generally/not at all/ I don't know
Q15.10	skills_radio	4/3/2/1/99 = very extensively/in detail/generally/not at all/ I don't know
Q15.11	skills_film	4/3/2/1/99 = very extensively/in detail/generally/not at all/ I don't know
Q15.12	skills_multimedia	4/3/2/1/99 = very extensively/in detail/generally/not at all/ I don't know
Q15.13	skills_other	0/1 = no/yes
Q15.14	skills_other_spec	enter text
Q16.1	reporting skills_news	4/3/2/1/99 = very extensively/in detail/generally/not at all/ I don't know
Q16.2	reporting skills_investigative	4/3/2/1/99 = very extensively/in detail/generally/not at all/ I don't know
Q16.3	reporting skills_conflict	4/3/2/1/99 = very extensively/in detail/generally/not at all/ I don't know

Item	Name of Variable	Coding
Q16.4	reporting skills_politics	4/3/2/1/99 = very extensively/in detail/generally/not at all/ I don't know
Q16.5	reporting skills_development	4/3/2/1/99 = very extensively/in detail/generally/not at all/ I don't know
Q16.6	reporting skills_environment	4/3/2/1/99 = very extensively/in detail/generally/not at all/ I don't know
Q16.7	reporting skills_science	4/3/2/1/99 = very extensively/in detail/generally/not at all/ I don't know
Q16.8	reporting skills_business	4/3/2/1/99 = very extensively/in detail/generally/not at all/ I don't know
Q16.9	reporting skills_minorities	4/3/2/1/99 = very extensively/in detail/generally/not at all/ I don't know
Q16.10	reporting skills_culture	4/3/2/1/99 = very extensively/in detail/generally/not at all/ I don't know
Q16.11	reporting skills_sports	4/3/2/1/99 = very extensively/in detail/generally/not at all/ I don't know
Q16.12	reporting skills_ICT	4/3/2/1/99 = very extensively/in detail/generally/not at all/ I don't know
Q16.13	reporting skills_other	0/1 = no/yes
Q16.14	reporting skills_other_spec	enter text
Q17.1.	digital skills_research	4/3/2/1/99 = very extensively/in detail/generally/not at all/ I don't know

Item	Name of Variable	Coding
Q17.2	digital skills_blogs	4/3/2/1/99 = very extensively/in detail/generally/not at all/ I don't know
Q17.3	digital skills_mobile	4/3/2/1/99 = very extensively/in detail/generally/not at all/ I don't know
Q17.4	digital skills_social media	4/3/2/1/99 = very extensively/in detail/generally/not at all/ I don't know
Q17.5	digital skills_ICT	4/3/2/1/99 = very extensively/in detail/generally/not at all/ I don't know
Q17.6	digital skills_verification	4/3/2/1/99 = very extensively/in detail/generally/not at all/ I don't know
Q17.7	digital skills_web-sites	4/3/2/1/99 = very extensively/in detail/generally/not at all/ I don't know
Q17.8	digital skills_apps	4/3/2/1/99 = very extensively/in detail/generally/not at all/ I don't know
Q17.9	digital skills_CMS web	4/3/2/1/99 = very extensively/in detail/generally/not at all/ I don't know
Q17.10	digital skills_CMS app	4/3/2/1/99 = very extensively/in detail/generally/not at all/ I don't know
Q17.11	digital skills_other	0/1 = no/yes
Q17.12	digital skills_other_spec	enter text
Q18.1	managment skills_finance	4/3/2/1/99 = very extensively/in detail/generally/not at all/ I don't know

Item	Name of Variable	Coding
Q18.2	managment skills_account	4/3/2/1/99 = very extensively/in de- tail/generally/not at all/ I don't know
Q18.3	managment skills_biz dev	4/3/2/1/99 = very extensively/in de- tail/generally/not at all/ I don't know
Q18.4	managment skills_projects	4/3/2/1/99 = very extensively/in de- tail/generally/not at all/ I don't know
Q18.5	managment skills_HR	4/3/2/1/99 = very extensively/in de- tail/generally/not at all/ I don't know
Q18.6	managment skills_strategy	4/3/2/1/99 = very extensively/in de- tail/generally/not at all/ I don't know
Q18.7	managment skills_other	0/1 = no/yes
Q18.8	managment skills_other_spec	enter text
Q19.1	practice_intern	0/1 = no/yes
Q19.2	practice_excursion	0/1 = no/yes
Q19.3	practice_radio	0/1 = no/yes
Q19.4	practice_print	0/1 = no/yes
Q19.5	practice_film	0/1 = no/yes
Q19.6	practice_web	0/1 = no/yes
Q19.7	practice_other	0/1 = no/yes
Q19.8.	practice_other_spec	enter text
Q20.1.	topic_history	4/3/2/1/99 = very extensively/in de- tail/generally/not at all/ I don't know
Q20.2	topic_profession	4/3/2/1/99 = very extensively/in de- tail/generally/not at all/ I don't know



Item	Name of Variable	Coding
Q20.3	topic_politics	4/3/2/1/99 = very extensively/in detail/generally/not at all/ I don't know
Q20.4	topic_culture	4/3/2/1/99 = very extensively/in detail/generally/not at all/ I don't know
Q20.5	topic_business	4/3/2/1/99 = very extensively/in detail/generally/not at all/ I don't know
Q20.6	topic_local media	4/3/2/1/99 = very extensively/in detail/generally/not at all/ I don't know
Q20.7	topic_other countries	4/3/2/1/99 = very extensively/in detail/generally/not at all/ I don't know
Q20.8	topic_globalization	4/3/2/1/99 = very extensively/in detail/generally/not at all/ I don't know
Q20.9	topic_other	0/1 = no/yes
Q20.10	topic_other_spec	enter text
Q21.1	access_history politics	0/1 = no/yes
Q21.2	access_linguistics culture	0/1 = no/yes
Q21.3	access_social economics	0/1 = no/yes
Q21.4	access_natural sciences	0/1 = no/yes
Q21.5	access_ICT	0/1 = no/yes
Q21.6	access_other_ communication	0/1 = no/yes
Q21.7	access_other	0/1 = no/yes
Q21.8	access_other_spec	enter text

Item	Name of Variable	Coding
Q22.1	specialize_theory	0/1 = no/yes
Q22.2	specialize_theory_subject	enter text
Q23.1	specialize_practice	0/1 = no/yes
Q23.2	specialize_practical_subject	enter text
Q24	balance_theory practice	1/2/3/4/5/88 = mainly theory/some theory/even mix/rather practical/mainly practical/no answer
Q25.1	role_inform public	3/2/1/99 = extremely/moderately/not at all difficult/I don't know
Q25.2	role_strengthen authority	3/2/1/99 = extremely/moderately/not at all difficult/I don't know
Q25.3	role_unify society	3/2/1/99 = extremely/moderately/not at all difficult/I don't know
Q25.4	role_public info	3/2/1/99 = extremely/moderately/not at all difficult/I don't know
Q25.5	role_monitor politics	3/2/1/99 = extremely/moderately/not at all difficult/I don't know
Q25.6	role_development	3/2/1/99 = extremely/moderately/not at all difficult/I don't know
Q25.7	role_human rights	3/2/1/99 = extremely/moderately/not at all difficult/I don't know
Q25.8	role_online verification	3/2/1/99 = extremely/moderately/not at all difficult/I don't know
Q25.9	role_entertain	3/2/1/99 = extremely/moderately/not at all difficult/I don't know
Q25.10	role_other	0/1 = no/yes
Q25.11	role_other_spec	enter text
Q26.1	ideal_independency	3/2/1/99 = extremely/moderately/not at all important/I don't know
Q26.2	ideal_entertainment	3/2/1/99 = extremely/moderately/not at all important/I don't know

Item	Name of Variable	Coding
Q26.3	ideal_contacts poli- tics	3/2/1/99 = extremely/moderately/not at all important/I don't know
Q26.4	ideal_secure job	3/2/1/99 = extremely/moderately/not at all important/I don't know
Q26.5	ideal_competitive salary	3/2/1/99 = extremely/moderately/not at all important/I don't know
Q26.6	ideal_forthcoming country	3/2/1/99 = extremely/moderately/not at all important/I don't know
Q26.7	ideal_support gov- ernment	3/2/1/99 = extremely/moderately/not at all important/I don't know
Q26.8	ideal_inform public	3/2/1/99 = extremely/moderately/not at all important/I don't know
Q26.9	ideal_relevant topics	3/2/1/99 = extremely/moderately/not at all important/I don't know
Q26.10	ideal_other	0/1 = no/yes
Q26.11	ideal_other_spec	enter text
Q27	future_job	enter text
Q28	other _comments	enter text

## **Interview Guideline - International Experts**

### ***Part A – Framework Conditions and Influencing Factors***

What are the origins (history) of journalism education in Vietnam/Cambodia?

What are currently the biggest chances and challenges for journalism education?

### ***Part B – Journalism Education (JE) Landscape***

**What does the JE landscape look like?**

- Which programs are being offered?
- What are typical educational pathways in order to become a journalist in the country? Which options does a young person have to become a journalist?
- Which types of institutions currently offer JE programs?
- What does the collaboration between local journalism training institutions and international organizations look like?
- Which degree programs exist in the country?
- What are the most important future chances and challenges in the field of journalism training and education in the country?

### ***Part C – Characteristics of JE Degree Programs***

**What are key characteristics and elements of JE degree programs in Vietnam/Cambodia?**

- What are the characteristics of a typical journalism students at university?
- Which skills and competencies do journalism graduates provide after completing a journalism degree?
- Which educational and professional background do typical instructors at universities provide?
- Which teaching styles and methods are typically applied in journalism degree programs?
- How would you describe the overall objectives and learning outcomes of journalism degree programs?

- What is the typical structure of journalism degree programs? What are key components of journalism degree program?
- To what extent are journalism ethics and other professional values conveyed in journalism degree programs?
- Which role do classical journalistic skills play (e.g. critical thinking, research and interview techniques)?
- Do the programs usually include opportunities for vocational training/practical parts (such as internships, practical seminars, joint projects or exchanges with the media industry)?
- Which theoretical knowledge is included in JE programs?
- In what ways is the role and responsibility of media and journalism in society reflected upon in the degree programs?
- To what extent is it possible for students to specialize in a certain field of knowledge (e.g. political science, economic studies)?
- To what extent are specific forms of reporting related to development issues and topics taught at universities (e.g. conflict-sensitive reporting, environmental reporting)?
- Which role do new digital technologies play in journalism degree programs?
- To what extent are entrepreneurial and media management skills (e.g. financial and business planning) considered relevant in academic JE?
- How would you describe the ratio of theoretical and practical knowledge in academic JE?

### *Part D – Future Chances and Challenges*

#### **What are current and future chances and challenges?**

- What are the biggest chances and challenges considering the future of journalism and JE in Vietnam/Cambodia?

## **Interview Guideline – University Staff<sup>1436</sup>**

### ***Part A: History and Origin***

#### **What is the history and origin of the program?**

- When was the program founded? Who was involved?
- What was the initial vision and mission of the program?
- How was the set-up of the program initially funded/financed?

### ***Part B: Institutional Aspects***

#### **What are key institutional characteristics and challenges?**

- How is the program funded?
- Who are the most important stakeholders and partners? Which organizations are you partnering with? What do the collaborations consist of?
- In terms of the organizational structure, what are the key positions? Who manages the program?
- How would you describe the linkage of the program to other departments/faculties/the main university? (only formal/bureaucratic relationship vs. strong influence or collaboration regarding program content, management, staff, funding etc.)
- How is the program linked to other communications degrees such as Marketing, Advertising and Public Relations programs?
- What does the quality management look like?
- Which forms of monitoring and evaluation do you apply?
- Is there a regular student evaluation process?
- Are there forms of external evaluation and advisory processes?
- What are the biggest challenges for the program (at the moment) and how do you adapt to them (organizationally/institutionally and in terms of curriculum)?

### ***Part C: Students***

#### **What does the student selection admission process look like?**

- Which entry requirements do the students have to fulfill?

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<sup>1436</sup> University staff include directors and managerial staff as well as instructors. The focus for teaching staff should be on Part D, E and F.

- Which steps does the application process consist of?
- Which documents do prospective students have to provide?
- What are the demographic characteristics of the students?
- What is the outlook for your alumni?
- What are the employment perspectives of graduates?
- Are any platforms or programs provided to alumni? Which?
- Are they provided with career support? Which?

#### ***Part D: Teaching and Teachers***

##### **What does the teaching environment look like?**

- Which teaching styles and methods are typically applied in the program?
- What is the relationship between program directors and lecturers?
- What is the relationship between teachers and students?
- What does the technical infrastructure and equipment look like?
- Which educational and professional background do typical instructors at universities provide? How are the teachers selected?

#### ***Part E: Program Content***

##### **What are the main characteristics and elements of the program?**

- What is the structure of the program? What are key components of the curriculum?
- What are the overall objectives and intended learning outcomes?
- To what extent are journalism ethics and other professional values conveyed in journalism degree programs?
- Which role do classical, hands-on journalistic skills play (e.g. critical thinking, research and interview techniques)?
- Does the program include opportunities for vocational training/practical parts off-campus (such as internships, joint projects or exchanges with the media industry)?
- Which on-campus practical components are there (e.g. campus/student radio, blog, practical seminars)?
- In what ways is the role and responsibility of media and journalism in society reflected in the curriculum?

- To what extent is it possible for students to specialize in a certain theoretical field of knowledge (e.g. political science, economic studies)?
- To what extent are specific forms of reporting related to development topics taught (e.g. conflict-sensitive reporting, environmental reporting, human rights reporting)?
- Which role do new digital technologies and new ICT play in the program? Can students develop IT and computing skills? Are journalistic digital skills included (e.g. blogging, social media, programming skills)
- To what extent are entrepreneurial and media management skills (e.g. financial and business planning) included?
- What is the overall ratio of theoretical and practical knowledge?
- Which key skills and competencies do your students provide after graduation?

#### ***Part F: Future Chances and Challenges***

##### **What are current and future chances and challenges?**

- What are the biggest chances and challenges for the program considering the future of journalism?



### *Focus Group Discussion – DMC*

1. Can you name and describe your current job? What are your main tasks and topics at your current workplace?
2. How easy or difficult was it for you to find a job after your graduation? Please describe.
3. What mattered most to you when you took on your first job after graduation? On which basis did you decide for or against a job?
4. To what extent are you working journalistically at the moment? Are you able to apply the knowledge and skills you gained during your journalism degree at the DMC?
5. Looking back at your time at the DMC, in which ways were journalism ethics and other professional values part of the program?
6. Which role did classical, hands-on journalistic skills play (e.g. critical thinking, research and interview techniques)?
7. How would you evaluate the practical components off-campus (such as internships, joint projects or exchanges with the media industry)?
8. Which on-campus practical components were available to you (e.g. campus/student radio, blog, practical seminars)?
9. How would you describe the overall ratio of theoretical and practical knowledge?

10. Were you able to specialize in a theoretical field of your choice (e.g. political science, economics, environmental studies)?
11. In what ways was the role and responsibility of media and journalism in society reflected in the curriculum?
12. Was reporting on development topics at all part of the program (e.g. conflict-sensitive reporting, environmental reporting, human rights reporting)?
13. Which role did new digital technologies and new ICT play? Were you able to develop IT and computing skills? Were journalistic digital skills included (e.g. blogging, social media, programming skills)?
14. To what extent were entrepreneurial and media management skills (e.g. financial and business planning) included? Did you learn anything about to set-up your own media business or how to manage your finances as a free-lance journalist?
15. Overall, which key skills and competencies did you gain during the program?
16. How satisfied are you with the degree? Would you do it again?
17. What did you miss? What else would you have liked to learn or receive?
18. As a graduate, which suggestions would you give to the DMC to improve their program for future journalists?

## *Alumni Questionnaire – USSH*

1. Looking back, how would you describe the key components of program?

**Những phần chính trong chương trình học của bạn là gì?**

2. In which ways were journalism ethics and other professional values part of the program? Explain and discuss the following items (cf. student survey):

- ☐ Respect for truth, accuracy of research
- ☐ Balanced and objective (non-partisan) reporting
- ☐ Professional secrecy and protection of sources
- ☐ Respect of privacy and human dignity
- ☐ Clarification of false reporting
- ☐ Anti-discrimination, no libel and defamation
- ☐ No acceptance of bribery funds
- ☐ Separation of editorial content and advertising
- ☐ Others, please specify

Theo bạn thấy, đạo đức nghề báo được đề cập như thế nào trong chương trình học? Hãy giải thích và chia sẻ quan điểm của bạn về những yếu tố sau:

- ☐ Tôn trọng sự thật và sự chính xác khi làm nghiên cứu
- ☐ Báo cáo một cách trung thực, khách quan (không thiên vị)
- ☐ Giữ bí mật nghề nghiệp và bảo mật nguồn thông tin
- ☐ Tôn trọng quyền riêng tư và các giá trị đạo đức cơ bản
- ☐ Làm rõ khi báo cáo bị sai lệch
- ☐ Chống việc kì thị, không đăng tin sai lệch hoặc thổi phồng danh dự
- ☐ Không nhận hối lộ
- ☐ Phân biệt rạch ròi giữa việc đăng các nội dung báo chí và các nội dung quảng cáo
- ☐ Một vài giá trị khác mà bạn muốn làm rõ

**3. Which role did classical, hands-on journalistic skills play (e.g. critical thinking, research and interview techniques)?**

Theo bạn, các kĩ năng làm báo truyền thông (ví dụ: tư duy phản biện, các kĩ thuật nghiên cứu và phỏng vấn) đóng vai trò như thế nào?

**4. How would you evaluate the practical components off-campus (such as internships, joint projects or exchanges with the media industry)?**

Chương trình học của bạn có cho sinh viên thực hành ở các đơn vị bên ngoài nhiều không? (ví dụ: đi thực tập, làm các dự án hợp tác hoặc trao đổi với các cơ quan truyền thông)?

**5. Which on-campus practical components were there available to you (e.g. campus/student radio, blog, practical seminars)?**

Trong chính trường đại học của bạn, có các chương trình để bạn thực hành các kiến thức đã học không? (Ví dụ: Kênh radio của trường, các trang blog, các buổi hội thảo)

**6. How would you describe the overall ratio of theoretical and practical knowledge?**

Bạn thấy trong tổng thể chương trình học, các phần lý thuyết chiếm bao nhiêu phần trăm? Các phần thực hành chiếm bao nhiêu phần trăm?

**7. Were you able to specialize in a theoretical field of your choice (e.g. political science, economics, environmental studies)?**

Sau khi học xong, bạn thấy mình có thể làm chuyên môn tốt ở từng mảng cụ thể không? (hoặc chuyên làm báo về chính trị, chuyên làm báo về kinh tế, chuyên làm báo về môi trường)

**8. In what ways was the role and responsibility of media and journalism in society reflected in the curriculum?**

Trong chương trình học, vai trò và trách nhiệm của báo chí và truyền thông với xã hội được nhắc đến như thế nào?

**9. Was reporting on development topics at all part of the program (e.g. conflict-sensitive reporting, environmental reporting, human rights reporting)?**

Chương trình học có đưa ra nhiều nội dung liên quan đến truyền thông về các vấn đề phát triển (môi trường, quyền con người, xóa đói giảm nghèo) không?

**10. Which role did new digital technologies and new ICT play? Were you able to develop IT and computing skills? Were journalistic digital skills included (e.g. blogging, social media, programming skills)**

Theo bạn, các kỹ thuật truyền thông và ICT mới đóng vai trò thế nào trong việc làm báo thời nay? Kỹ năng IT và máy tính của bạn thế nào? Các phương tiện truyền thông hiện đại (làm blog, làm tin trên các kênh xã hội) có được đề cập nhiều trong chương trình học không?

**11. To what extent were entrepreneurial and media management skills (e.g. financial and business planning) included? Did you learn anything about to set-up your own media business or how to manage your finances as a free-lance journalist?**

Các kỹ năng quản lý truyền thông cũng như kỹ năng kinh doanh (ví dụ: lên kế hoạch kinh doanh, lên kế hoạch tài chính) có được đề cập trong chương trình học không? Bạn có được dạy cách phát triển một doanh nghiệp truyền thông hoặc cách quản lý tài chính nếu làm một nhà báo tự do không?

**12. Overall, which key skills and competencies did you gain during the program?**

Nhìn chung, bạn học được những kỹ năng và kiến thức chính nào trong chương trình học?

**13. How satisfied are with the degree? Would you do it again?**

Bạn có hài lòng với chương trình học không?

**14. What did you miss? What else would you have liked to learn or receive?**

Bạn nghĩ đáng nhẽ mình nên học thêm những kĩ năng gì trong trường không?

**15. As a graduate, how would you describe your employment perspective? Was it easy or difficult to find a job? Why so?**

Sau khi tốt nghiệp, bạn có gặp khó khăn nhiều khi tìm việc không? Bạn thấy công việc hiện tại của mình thế nào? Triển vọng công việc có tốt không?

## Interview Partners

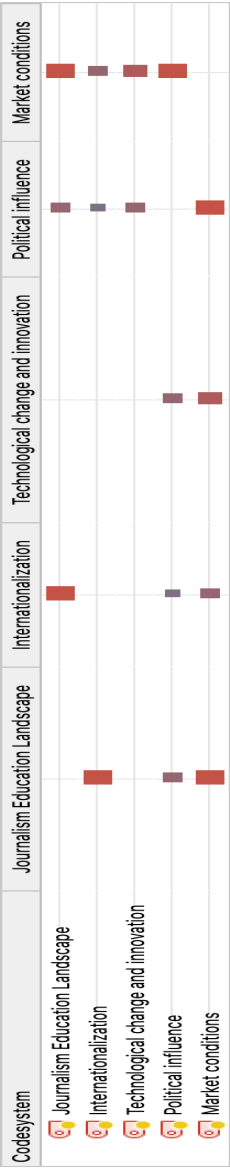
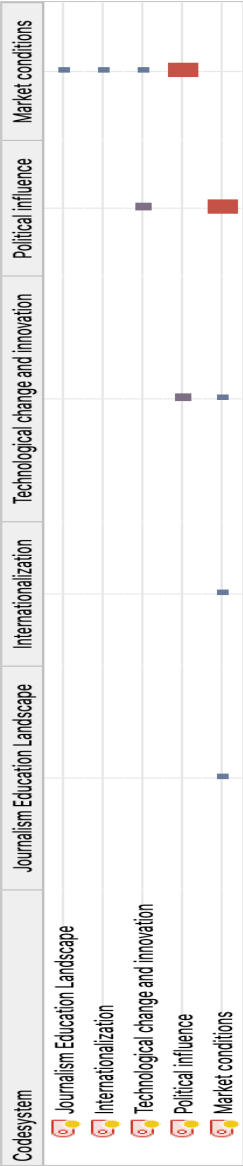
### Cambodia

	Interview 1	Interview 2	Interview 3	Interview 4	Interview 5	Interview 6	Interview 7	Interview 8	Interview 9	Interview 17
Institution	DMC	DMC/Alumni Assoc.	DMC	DMC/DAAD	DMC/PUPP	DMC	DMC/GZ	KAS	KAS	CCJ
Category	A	A	A	A+B	A	A	B	B	B	C
Managerial staff	x				x					
Teaching staff	x	x	x	x	x	x	x			x
Local expert	x	x	x		x	x				
International expert				x			x	x		
Media professional	x	x		x		x	x			x

### Vietnam

	Interview 10	Interview 11	Interview 12	Interview 13	Interview 14	Interview 15	Interview 16	Interview 18	Interview 19
Institution	USSH	USSH	USSH	AIC	AIC	AIC/VIA	AIC	VNMG	Bournemouth University
Category	A	A	A	A	A	A+C	A	C	C
Managerial staff	x						x		
Teaching staff	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		
Local expert	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
International expert									x
Media professional			x	x	x	x	x	x	

Macro Level Cambodia







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This dissertation forms part of international journalism research, which has witnessed an upsurge in global comparative studies since the late twentieth century. A new wave of scholarship reflects the need to expand theoretical approaches and research initiatives beyond national borders. The PhD research contributes to the field as a cross-national, intra-regional comparative study of academic journalism training in the context of human development and digital transformation. Based on structural, functional and normative theories of journalism research, secondary analysis of local framework conditions and primary data collection in the two focus countries Vietnam and Cambodia, the author develops a multi-level model and an indicator system for the evaluation of journalism degree programs on the basis of specific quality criteria. This new approach allows for a systematic assessment of academic journalism education within the context of digitalization and development. In doing so, this project not only contributed to international comparative journalism research, but also provides useful approaches to practitioners in the field of journalism training and education in the Global South.

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