

REQUIREMENTS FOR MODERN JOURNALISM EDUCATION

THE PERSPECTIVE OF STUDENTS IN SOUTH EAST EUROPE

EDITED BY VIKTORIJA CAR, MIROLJUB RADOJKOVIĆ AND
MANUELA ZLATEVA



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FOREWORD

There are few industries in which the alignment of education and practice presents a greater challenge. What future reporters and news anchors learn at university is frequently at odds with the reality they later encounter at media outlets. An obvious approach to identifying the reasons for this gap between theory and daily work is to seek the input of those directly concerned – students at leading universities.

The KAS Task Force on Journalism Education in South East Europe has conducted a survey among journalism undergraduates and graduates in five countries – a first-time initiative in the region. Their response can be seen as a testimonial of a media sector in turmoil. In the Western Balkans and other countries in South East Europe, such as Romania, the general challenges for media outlets precipitated by the internet revolution are compounded by specific deficiencies of the media landscape.

In many cases, media outlets in South East Europe operate at a loss. National media markets are too small to accommodate the relatively high number of media outlets. Citizens are largely reluctant to pay for a high standard of journalism – one of the reasons why employment conditions are volatile and often unattractive. Fewer journalists are expected to deliver a greater news output in the cross-media era. Moreover, media are often owned by business moguls with inclinations to use media ownership as an instrument for gaining political influence for whom journalist entrepreneurship is not a primary concern.

Despite these daunting challenges in the broader environment, many still consider journalism a dream job. On the other hand, the study shows that half of media students envisage working in other fields following graduation.

Modern education must equip students with a skillset that enables them to maintain a high standard of journalism under increasingly difficult conditions, which must then be refreshed and adapted on a regular basis. One of the biggest obstacles is keeping up with the pace of technological development in the multimedia knowledge domain. Technical equipment is seen critically by every second student, and a majority of future journalists bewail a lack of practical exercises. Universities should also increasingly offer know-how for media start-ups.

For young democracies, a high standard of media is crucial because of the strong need of citizens for information about political changes and their involvement in the underlying decision-making process. The manner of resolving problems in the media sector is particularly important for the ongoing process of democratization of societies and adaptation to European practice. Democracy needs to be lived and practised, which entails a need for reliable information. Despite the rise of social media, professional journalism will remain a key requirement for open societies.

The conclusions and recommendations set out in this publication are based on the opinions voiced by students from South East Europe and the analysis of their input by leading experts from the region. They will serve as a basis for a public debate with politicians, media managers and other stakeholders on possible education reform and a better alignment of theory and practice.

Sofia, 1 November 2016

Christian Spahr

Head of the KAS Media Program South East Europe

INTRODUCTION: A PROFESSION IN TURMOIL – THE RELEVANCE OF EDUCATION REFORMS

Viktorija Car and Manuela Zlateva

Journalism is an approach to knowledge, not just a job, and journalism education is therefore about teaching a distinctive epistemology that enjoys broad professional utility.

(Shapiro 2015: 15)

Debates among journalism educators on the quality of journalist training and its future have become 'hot discussions' (Allen et al. 2015; Banda 2013; Josephi 2010; Godole 2015; McBride and Rosenstiel 2013; Self 2015; Schmidt 2015). Globally, an increasing number of countries are investing in journalism education (Self 2015: 2). A new international standard for journalism education is taking shape as a combination of hands-on journalism skills training and principles of professionalism and social impact (*Ibid.*). One measure of this change is programme accreditation, which has become common across Europe, the US and Latin America. A 'Model curriculum' was developed by UNESCO in 2007 and subsequently updated in 2013 (Banda 2013). The journalism of the twenty-first century is fundamentally different from that of the twentieth century (Picard 2015: 4). The advent of the internet age and Web 2.0 and apps technology have created high expectations that new media technologies will systematically enhance the quality of journalism and the level of available and reliable information in society, furthering the development of national and global political cultures in societies with well-informed citizens (Jenkins and Thorburn 2003). Furthermore, phenomena like the 'filter bubble' (Pariser 2012) and the overflow of information on digital media, digital communication platforms and social networks, assign more duties and greater responsibilities to journalists than ever before – to double check not only two, but all available sources, approach topics from different angles, and consistently provide context. Nowadays, the analytical approach underlying journalism is associated with highbrow journalism, while the publishing of information already made available online is being regarded as mere republishing, which does not require an intervention from a professional journalist.

Both digital media and Web 2.0 act as integrating social factors. They provide new communication platforms, which help people to communicate and exchange information, using text, audio-visual and multimedia content faster and less expensively than before (Car 2014: 214). At the same time, social and political life and the economy have become media staples. This accounts for the transformational effect of media on societies¹.

¹ More in Bennett and Entman 2001; Carpentier et al. 2013; Couldry 2000; Curran 2002; Dahlgren 2013; McQuail 2013; McChesney 2013; Meyer 2002.

However, at the onset of the internet era no one could predict that laypersons (i.e. citizens) will receive an opportunity to report and inform their fellow citizens about different events and report on topics, calling what they do journalism. In a way, with the Facebook and Twitter revolutions in North Africa and the Middle East this became the 'new now', especially during and after the large-scale protests and revolutions in 2011 and the years that followed. The term 'citizen journalism' has gained credibility and respect even in academia (Allan 2009). Expectations of journalists have certainly changed.

Twenty-first century information and technology reality is challenging the relevance and existence of traditional journalist training. It was in the twentieth century when journalists and news providers held a monopoly on the provision of information.

'Many journalists and journalism educators view the twentieth century as the high point of professional journalism because it was an era in which abundant resources supported strong news institutions. This was possible because twentieth-century news enterprises and the journalists who worked for them had near monopolies on daily news provision and controlled the institutions that defined journalism and what its practices were.' (Picard 2015: 4)

Today, only investigative journalists remain in the fore of bringing information to the public, the remainder merely reporting on topics that audiences are already familiar with because information holders and opinion makers are publishing information themselves. This typically occurs on social networks without waiting for journalist reports to be published first. This means that the role of journalists no longer involves solely publishing information, but providing a broader context for published information and employing an analytical approach to help citizens better understand the socio-political and economic background of an event, political decision or another important issue.

Yet it is not digital technology alone that has changed media room processes of reporting and editing, but also the change in audiences and media practices. Nowadays, information about global events and context explanations are available from multiple sources. This helps audiences to sort through events and debates, providing an opportunity for engagement and throwing light on events. The primary carriers of breaking news in the twenty-first century are social media (Picard 2015: 5).

This means that the work of journalists has changed significantly during the last fifteen years. Journalists can no longer imagine having to work without access to the internet, being online, checking social networks and looking up names, other details and general information, and even spellchecking online (Car and Andrijašević 2012: 45). The daily workload of journalists has doubled, meaning that they have half the time to prepare an article, or a radio or television package, and significantly less time for investigative journalism. If a journalist works for a traditional media, he or she will also be expected to produce news for the media's webpage. The opportunities created by new technology are largely counterbalanced

by pressure to continually increase news output. Owing to newsroom convergence, there are more journalists with a broader multi-tasking range today. Newsroom copy-editing and technical support has been reduced to a minimum (*Ibid.*).

Digital media bring more information of poorer quality to the public in shorter timespans. The speed of information publishing has become top priority, which is why many journalists reprint information published by other media, re-editing it and presenting it as their own. Journalists call this practice, which has already gained a degree of legitimacy and is especially popular on news websites, 'copy-paste journalism'. As more information is readily available than before, editors have higher expectations of journalist productivity. To satisfy the demand for quantity, journalists would typically compromise with quality; they are less focused on and engaged with the story, hence the loss of credibility on account of unverified information being disseminated more often. The goal of being the first to publish a story reigns supreme. With most journalists copying and pasting from each other, the number of sources relied on for stories stagnates. Additional sources and angles will be sought out only when a story has been pursued over a longer period (Car and Andrijašević 2012: 46).

Editorial policy places a greater emphasis on content visualization. Texts are shorter. Soft news abounds as trivia sells better. Copying and e-editing is cheaper (to aggregate) than creating original content. The biggest loser is print media, where editorial policy currently displays a stronger leaning toward 'Internetization', with content increasingly resembling online material (brief news, big images, more soft news, etc.) (*Ibid.*).

In addition, there is a host of other influences that change working conditions in the newsroom, such as media ownership concentration, global corporate culture in media, cross-media concentration, lacking transparency in media, insufficient investigative journalism, media tabloidization on the rise, poor-taste content, etc. All this reflects on students' motivation to pursue studies in journalism and on their perception of the kind of knowledge and skills needed to be a journalist.

And what about journalist training? Can it keep up with the pace of change in the profession? Experience varies greatly between countries and continents.

'In the 150 years since journalism education entered universities, it has not developed a fundamental knowledge base, widely agreed upon journalistic practices, or unambiguous professional standards. Large numbers of journalism educators have failed to make even rudimentary contributions toward understanding the impact of journalism and media on society. Some of the reasons for these failures are philosophical. Some are because we have tended to separate journalism education from media studies. Many of the deficiencies exist because journalism is closer to craft than a profession.' (Picard 2015: 7)

There have been many changes and developments in journalism education in South East Europe over the last 20 years (Bukvić 2014: 4). Educating and training journalists with the aim of promoting free media and independent journalism has been a major aspect of cooperation in the media domain for many years. However, improvements are still needed to further raise educational standards (Spahr 2014). The countries in the region are experiencing similar challenges in the training of young journalists. Insufficient cooperation between universities and media outlets and lacking possibilities to gain practical skills as part of the curricula have already been a topic of discussion at various international conferences and workshops (Zlateva 2015).

In 2013, the KAS Media Program South East Europe established a task force on journalism education to assess the current state of journalism programmes throughout the region. A group of media professionals and academics was invited to join the first project, which aimed to map journalism education in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Macedonia, Romania and Serbia. The outcome of this first initiative was a publication with national reports setting out the *status quo* of journalism education.

The analysis² was primarily based on a review of prior literature, a historical overview of the development of journalism training in each country, and mapping all the institutions and organisations currently providing journalism training (Rusch et al. 2014). The socio-political and economic frameworks were also outlined to better understand developments in the field.

The current report sets out the outcomes of a cross-national survey focused on South East Europe, providing insight into the students' perspective on journalism education at universities. The survey fills a gap in research, considering the lack of prior in-depth analysis of the attitudes of journalism students in a regional context. In contrast to the first initiative, the publication contains empirical data on journalism education, collected on the basis of a survey conducted with journalism students in Albania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Romania and Serbia. The main purpose and objective of the survey was to analyse the motivation and attitudes of students to the system of journalism education and the ways in which it can be improved, using a bottom-up approach. For this purpose, the following research questions were asked:

- What motivates a student to pursue an education in journalism?
- To what extent are students satisfied with the learning conditions?
- What are their recommendations for study programme improvement?

All questions are framed in a socio-political and economic context. The survey was conducted in the five biggest South East European countries, including three EU Member States. They were chosen among others because all five have implemented the Bologna Process reforms in education at bachelor, master and doctoral level (EC 2016).

² National reports are available online under http://www.kas.de/wf/doc/kas_39583-1522-2-30.pdf?141118150329 (20.07.2016).

‘The Bachelor’s degree programme (BA) is usually an undergraduate course which lasts three to four years and upon its completion the students get awarded with 180 or 240 ECTS-credit points. After completing the BA programme, the student acquires the university Bachelor’s degree (baccalaureus or baccalaureate) for a particular area, which qualifies the student for specialised, artistic or scientific work. After finishing the BA programme, students can enrol into a university Master’s degree programme, a specialist graduate study programme or enter the labour market. The Master’s programme (MA) usually lasts one or two years during which the student gets awarded with 60 or 120 ECTS-credit points. The total number of ECTS-credit points are awarded with after the completion of both the Bachelor’s and Master’s degree programme is at least 300 ECTS-credit points. Upon completion of both the Bachelor’s and Master’s degree programme, the student acquires the academic title Master of a respective profession.’ (MZOS 2015)

Methodological framework

The research method used is a paper questionnaire survey³, which contains 30 questions (see Appendix). It was developed by Assistant Professor Viktorija Car and PhD student Marin Bukvić from the University of Zagreb, with input and assistance from the other members of the working group.

The questions were clustered in five groups. The first part contains general questions, such as the age and sex of respondents, the name of the university and faculty in which they are enrolled, the type of university, level and year of studies and the possession of other university degrees in areas other than journalism.

The second group is designed to appraise the motivation and requirements of students. It includes questions on taking additional journalism-related courses, exploring the ambition to study journalism and the level of general knowledge required for a good journalist.

The third set of questions explores the expectations of the students and whether they have been met. This section contains an analysis of the level of students’ satisfaction with learning conditions, the deficiencies of journalism faculties in terms of theoretical and practice-oriented education, the importance of guest lecturers, and proposals for additional courses and improvements to study programmes.

In addition, the relation between theory and practice in education from the perspective of students has been analysed.

The fourth group of questions concerns the assessment of cooperation with local and national media outlets, much needed improvements in the field, experience of media

³ For further reading about the survey as a research method we recommend Jensen and Jankowski 1991; Lamza Posavec 2015; Schroder et al. 2003.

internships and overall satisfaction with them. The analysis further explores whether students have already gained work experience in the media and, where this is the case, explores the type of media and length of experience gained.

The focus of the fifth group of questions is on the students' prospects for professional development. This cluster analyses whether students are willing to work as journalists following graduation, and the types of media and fields of journalism in which they would like to pursue a career.

The questionnaire was distributed among 531 students: 414 Bachelor (BA) degree and 116 Master (MA) degree students⁴ from private (23 percent) and state universities (77 percent) in the local language of each country (see Table 1).

The survey relied on a non-probability convenience sample.

Table 1: Universities per country and number of respondents

Country	University	Type	Number of respondents
Albania	Beder University	Private	28
	University of Elbasan 'Aleksander Xhuvani'	State	26
	University of Tirana	State	25
	University of Shkodra 'Luigj Gurakuqi'	State	22
	Total for Albania		101
Bulgaria	New Bulgarian University	Private	19
	Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski	State	53
	University of Veliko Tarnovo	State	35
	Total for Bulgaria		107

⁴ One student did not give an answer to the question about level of studies.

Country	University	Type	Number of respondents
Croatia	VERN' University of Applied Sciences	Private	20
	University of Dubrovnik	State	40
	University North	Private	20
	University of Zagreb	State	40
	Total for Croatia		120
Romania	'Al. I. Cuza' University	State	20
	Hyperion University	Private	20
	National School of Political Studies and Public Administration	State	20
	University of Bucharest	State	40
	Total for Romania		100
Serbia	University of Belgrade	State	27
	University of Niš	State	31
	University of Novi Sad	State	31
	University of Singidunum	Private	14
	Total for Serbia		103
Overall sample	TOTAL		531

The working group members with a background in journalism education proposed that three to five major universities with programmes in journalism in each country be selected. The questionnaires were completed in every country by approximately 100 full-time students in February and March 2015.

The convenience sample of the survey has certain limitations. It was chosen due to the pilot nature of the project. The sample is not representative but rather outlines students' perceptions of journalism education in the region. Measuring sustainable developments in the training of young professionals in South East Europe will require further comparative research. For the purpose of a broader analysis, we recommend curriculum assessment and engaging in dialogue with stakeholders in the process of educating journalists other than students, such as employers in the media industry, trainers and professors at different schools of journalism and universities.

Data was analysed using SPSS at the level of the overall sample and for each country individually. Considering the overall sample, the number of respondents who attended public universities was significantly higher than that of students enrolled in private universities ($\chi^2=157.29$, $df=1$, $p<0.01$). This is due to the public universities in most countries covered by the study having higher enrolment rates for journalism students than private universities. The average age of the respondents is 24 years (the oldest respondent was born in 1967 and the youngest in 1996). In the overall sample, there were more female (75.9 percent) than male students (24.1 percent) ($\chi^2=142.42$, $df=1$, $p<0.01$). This trend was observed in all study countries (see Comparative perspective, pp. 183). Significantly more respondents were enrolled in BA programmes than in MA programmes in the overall sample ($\chi^2=167.56$, $df=1$, $p<0.01$) and most students were in their third year of study, followed by those in fourth and second year of study, respectively ($\chi^2=112.08$, $df=4$, $p<0.01$). The fact that more students in the sample were in the middle of their studies has enabled us to gain a better insight into their level of satisfaction with learning conditions and views on their future study and career paths.

The descriptive statistics was complemented by a cross-analysis necessitated by gender differences, comparisons between the universities, public and private universities, BA and MA students and further differences due to motivation and attitudes and the students' assessment of the balance between education and practice.

The chapters of the book are divided into national reports and a comparative overview of the region with analyses of the students' motivation and requirements for successful education, the relations between theory and practice and their career development prospects as well as recommendations for journalism education in South East Europe. All country reports have the same structure and follow the clusters of questions contained in the questionnaire. The authors are aware that the study does not exhaust the topic of journalism education in South East European (SEE) countries. The country reports can be supplemented by further analysis of current curricula and used to develop appropriate university policies.

The survey comes at a time when journalism education in SEE countries is under pressure to adjust to the new realities brought on by the ongoing technological evolution and the global financial and economic crisis, which have affected journalism at a global level. From a student's perspective, the survey highlights the challenges, which the educational

system faces in the journalism domain, as the basis for recommendations for further improvement and additional analysis and research in the field. Students' insights can help journalism educators to better understand the educational approaches that students prefer, enabling them to more adequately prepare students for their future careers. We have found similarities across all five SEE countries covered by the study. Although the survey was grounded into the traditional 'theory versus practice' debate about journalism education (Allen et al. 2015: 156), this book may serve as a reference point to design a framework for future journalism education in the region.

Of course, the authors realise that no one can 'teach the future'. Nevertheless, we agree that the evaluation of journalism education should be an ongoing and thorough process – always encouraging change and development – to help students to learn how to discover and interpret information with value for other people and master a new, twenty-first century skillset. We therefore hope that this book contains valuable information for those willing to re-imagine journalism education in SEE countries and the future opportunities for its development.

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ALBANIA: A NEED FOR DIALOGUE WITH MEDIA OUTLETS ON INTERNSHIPS

Jonila Godole and Matilda Karçanaj

1. INTRODUCTION

In Albania, journalism is perceived as requiring talent and experience rather than being understood as a specialist occupation (Godole 2014; Godole and Karçanaj 2015). In the first post-1990 decade, journalist training at University of Tirana had a strong practical bias, which included a theoretical approach based mainly on US printed material on journalism (*Ibid.*). During the following decade journalism was taught only at University of Tirana the study programme lasting four years, including a practical component. Then, in 2003 Albanian universities adapted the Bologna process, introducing a two-cycle study system: a Bachelor programme (BA, which requires a minimum of 3 years of study) and a Master programme (MA, which requires a further 2 years of study).

After the fall of communism newsrooms in Albania overflowed with new journalists who did not have proper training and had a dim view of the profession: newsgathering did not require special skills, only passion and energy (Fuga 2010). During the academic year 1992-1993 the Department of Journalism at University of Tirana introduced a course in journalism, enabling the first educated generation of students to graduate who have remained in the Albanian media market. In 1968, the first centre for journalism education was established at the Faculty of Political Science and Law of University of Tirana (Gjergji 2014: 6). This School of Journalism was closed in 1978 (*Ibid.*) and a second attempt to reopen it was made after the fall of communism. Thus, in 1992 the programme reopened at University of Tirana – this time at the Faculty of History and Language Studies (*Ibid.*). In 1997, the Department of Journalism was expanded to other towns in Albania, when two new departments opening at the Universities in Shkodra and Elbasan (Godole and Karçanaj 2015).

It is important to note that despite major changes made in the period after 1999/2000, when the number of lecturers and their publishing activities registered a significant increase, the establishment of additional journalism programmes outside of University of Tirana lowered pressure on enrolment and admissions (Gjergji 2014: 8-9). Across these educational institutions better academic discussions and more critical thinking are still needed (*Ibid.*: 8-9) to satisfy the expectations that students have at the time of enrolment. It is also recommended that lecturers and students be involved in research projects focusing on the Albanian media context as a step toward raising the number of academic publications available in Albanian (*Ibid.*: 9).

In addition, relations with media outlets rely exclusively on inviting journalists to teach practical courses (*Ibid.*). This practical component of training has demonstrated the need for more dialogue between educational institution and the media (*Ibid.*). Regarding education policies, a comprehensive study on the current state-of-play of the labour market is necessary, as Gjergji suggests, to halt student recruitment in numbers much higher than market demand. The opportunities available to students for internships depending on their profile (Arts and Culture, Economics, Politics) and the quality of such internships must also be improved (*Ibid.*).

In order to better understand the state-of-play of journalism education in Albania and identify ways to improve it, the survey was conducted at four Albanian universities – University of Tirana (25 students), Beder University (28 students), the 'Luigj Gurakuqi' University in Shkodra (22 students) and the 'Aleksander Xhuvani' University in Elbasan (26 students). The survey was conducted exclusively among BA students¹. It included 69 female students (68.3 percent) and 32 male students (31.7 percent). Thus, in the Albanian sample the number of female respondents is significantly higher than that of male students ($\chi^2=13.9$, $df=1$, $p<0.01$). This is in keeping with the results of other studies, which indicate that Albanian journalism is female oriented: 52 percent of working journalists are female who are also better educated (61 percent having completed MA programmes as compared to 31 percent of their male colleagues) (Godole 2014: 139).

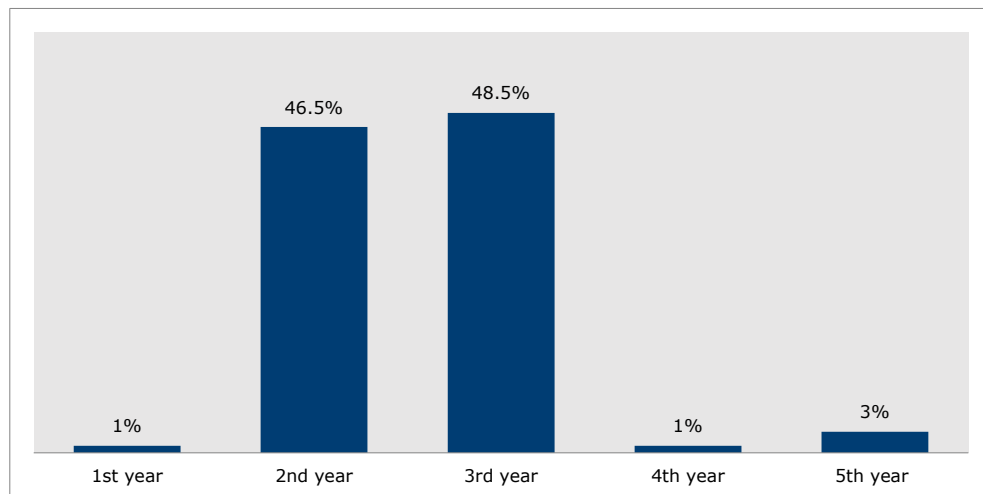
The survey was conducted at three public / state universities and one private university. 72.3 percent of the students who participated in the survey are from public / state universities such as University of Tirana (24.8 percent), the University of Elbasan (25.7 percent) and the University of Shkodra (21.8 percent), with only 27.7 percent of students enrolled in the private Beder University. There were significantly more respondents who attended public universities compared to those who attended private university ($\chi^2=20.1$, $df=1$, $p<0.01$).

Most respondents stated that they were in their second (46.5 percent) and third (48.5 percent) year of study ($\chi^2=127.8$, $df=4$, $p<0.01$). Only 1 percent were first-year students (see Chart 1). Out of all students, three percent had been pursuing a study programme for five years. All students in the survey were studying toward a BA degree, with some having taken breaks in their studies or were considering programmes other than journalism.

¹ The authors want to thank Professor Bashkim Gjergji for conducting the survey with Bachelor students in the journalism departments in Albania. The survey was conducted only among BA students who are represented in all institutions that offer studies in journalism. MA studies are offered in communication sciences at the University of Tirana and at the Beder University, mainly in public relations.

Chart 1: Year of study (N=101)

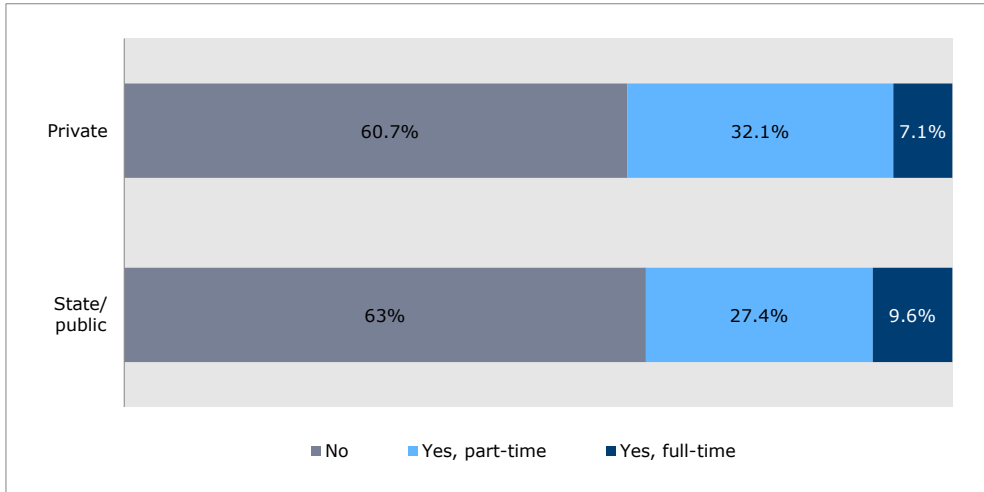
Question: Year of study (compared to whole duration of studies: BA)



When students were asked if they had finished another BA or MA programme other than journalism, the answers showed that only three percent had completed another BA programme before enrolling in the current study programme ($\chi^2=88.360$, $df=1$, $p<0.05$). In total, 97 percent of students had not done another BA or MA programme.

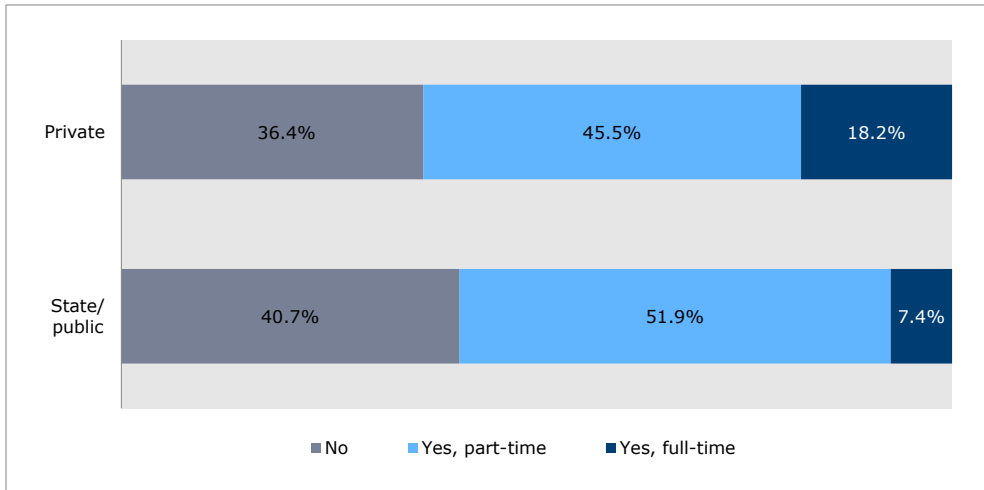
As to whether students work and study in parallel, the findings show that despite attending private or public university, most respondents reported that they did not obtain any work experience. A significantly lower number reported that they were working part-time, while only 9 percent had full-time jobs. Thus, the findings show that 27.4 percent of the total student population in the survey at public / state universities worked part-time in parallel to their studies and 9.6 percent worked full-time ($\chi^2=44.28$, $df=2$, $p<0.01$). However, 63 percent of the total number of the students attending public universities and 60.7 percent of those attending private university did not work in parallel to their studies (see Chart 2). As regards private universities, it is difficult to generalise as only one private university took part in the survey (Beder University, which accounts for 27.7 percent out of total number of students in the survey). However, the findings for Beder University show that 32.1 percent out of the total number of the students worked part-time and 7.1 percent worked full-time.

Chart 2: Students doing part-time or full-time jobs in parallel to their studies (N=101)
 Question: *Are you working alongside your studies (any kind of job)?*



Concerning the students at state universities who worked in parallel to their studies, the majority were employed in the media sector (59.3 percent) (see Chart 3).

Chart 3: Students working in media (N= 18)
 Question: *If yes, are you working in media (excluding internships)?*



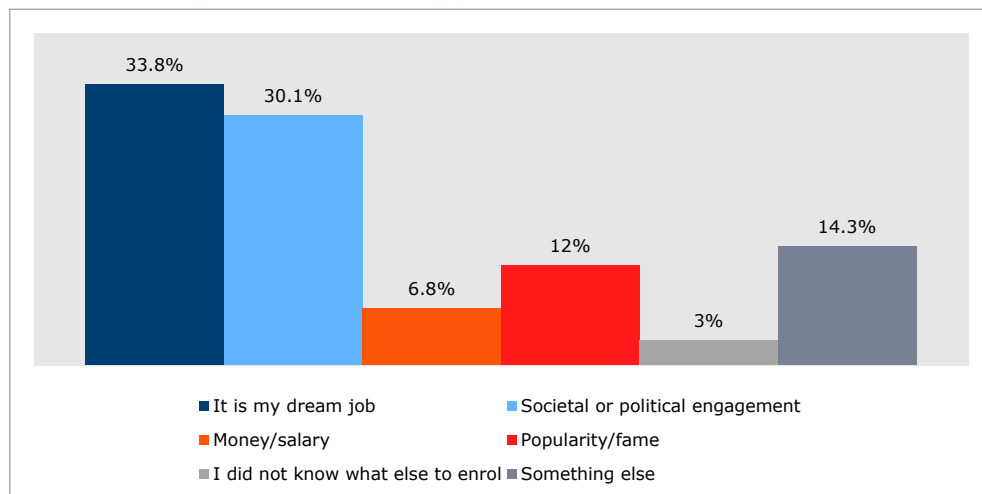
2. STUDENTS' MOTIVATION AND REQUIREMENTS

The survey on journalism education in Albania accords special prominence to students' motivation and their requirements for studying journalism and being a journalist. Regarding the additional courses relating to journalism and available outside of the faculty, only 23.2 percent of respondents have taken such courses. Most students have not taken any additional courses relating to journalism outside of the faculty ($\chi^2=28.4$, $df=1$, $p<0.01$). This means that 76.8 percent of the total number of students was educated in journalism exclusively at the faculty they were enrolled in.

Our findings demonstrate varied motives for studying journalism. It is important to note that only 33.8 percent saw journalism as their dream job, while 30.1 percent had chosen it because of the opportunity for societal and political engagement. Among the students who participated in the survey, 12 percent pursue popularity / fame through their professional role. There were also 6.8 percent of students who had chosen journalism out of money / salary considerations. Three percent were uncertain about their choice and 14.3 percent out of the total number indicated other reasons (see Chart 4).

Chart 4: Students' motivation to study journalism (N=133, multiple answers possible)

Question: *What is your motivation to study journalism?*

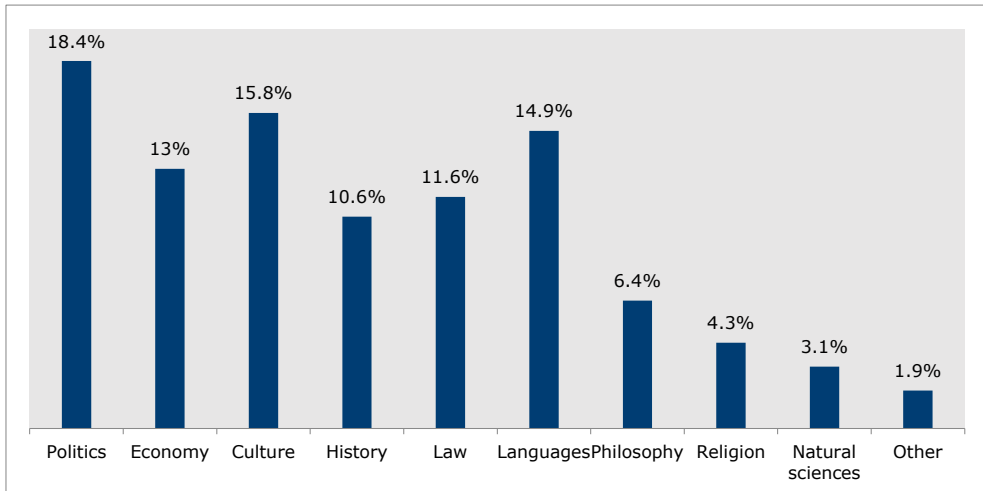


The general knowledge, which survey respondents considered important for journalists, is also given special prominence in the study. It is important to note that in the Albanian case knowledge of politics (18.4 percent) is considered essential for journalists. On the other hand, general knowledge of culture (15.8 percent) and languages (14.9 percent) are seen as almost equally important. Knowledge of the economy is important for 13 percent of the students. More than 10 percent regard law and history important for journalists, with 11.6 percent giving their preference to law and 10.6 percent to history, respectively. Furthermore, 6.4

percent of the students consider knowledge of philosophy important for journalists, with only 4.3 percent finding knowledge of religion important. Natural sciences such as mathematics, physics, chemistry and biology, are regarded as important by 3.1 percent and only 1.9 percent of the students consider other areas of knowledge important for journalists (see Chart 5).

Chart 5: Most important general knowledge for journalists according to students (N=423, multiple answers possible)

Question: *What kind of general knowledge is important for journalists in your opinion?*



Regardless of the most preferred area of specialisation in journalism, other important indicators must be considered to better understand students' motivation. Thus, as the findings from the study of journalism education conducted at public universities by Godole and Karçanaj (2015) show, diversity and vitality at work are equally important, as is the independence of the profession, followed by the opportunities it provides to oppose injustice, obtain a secure job. Work in a creative field and being able to shape students' mindsets were also mentioned as why students wish to pursue studies in journalism. The great interest in politics can also be explained with the fact that Albanian media give a lot of attention to politics in numerous daily broadcasts, actively engaging politicians. In news updates, news from the political arena is always broadcast first. Parliamentary proceedings are broadcast live and in full without interruption and commentary from the Albanian public broadcaster and private TV channels, creating an impression that politics is of great interest to audiences.

3. HAVE THE EXPECTATIONS OF STUDENTS BEEN MET?

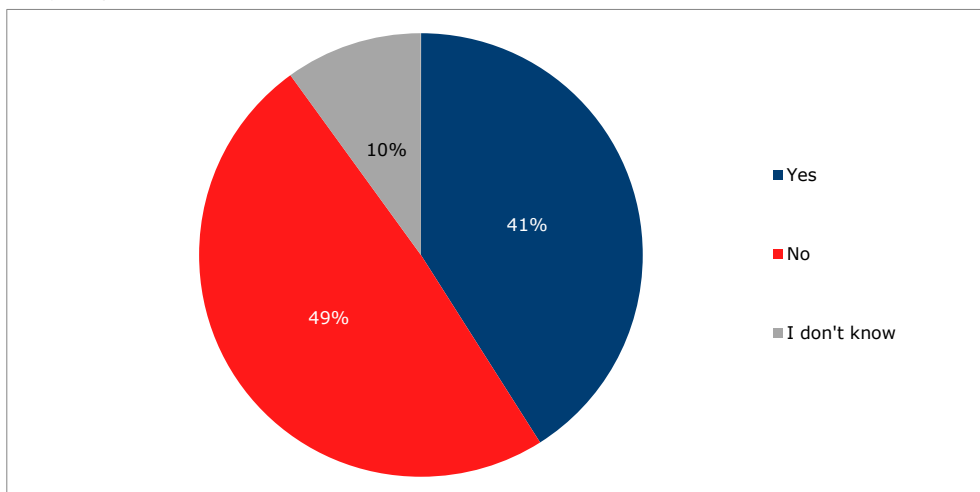
The survey looked at the learning conditions at faculties, including libraries, books, study rooms, workshops and seminars. Other indicators were access to the faculties' technical equipment for practice and students' access to it.

It is important to note that in terms of learning conditions at Albanian universities there is a significant difference depending on university – either state / public or private ($\chi^2=18.80$, $df=2$, $p<0.01$). The learning conditions at private universities are consistently perceived as better than those at public / state universities (see Chart 16 and 17). Public / state universities are underfunded and operate without any significant investment. The same holds true of access to the technical equipment available for practice. However, in terms of the quality of journalism education, the number of unsatisfied students increases significantly at private universities.

Concerning the technical equipment available to faculties and access to it for practical tutorials, there is, to a degree, a balance in the opinions expressed by students whose expectations were satisfied (46.9 percent) and those whose expectations were not (44.5 percent). Furthermore, 8.2 percent of respondents could not provide an answer as to their satisfaction with the technical equipment available at faculties ($\chi^2=28.94$, $df=2$, $p<0.01$). The high chi-square was probably due to the difference in the number of respondents who gave a Yes / No answer and those who did not give an answer. Concerning the technical equipment at faculties, it is important to note that when answering another question on access to equipment intended for practice, the number of unsatisfied students increases and that of satisfied students registers a decrease. Thus, the findings show that 41 percent out of the total number of Albanian students were satisfied with access to the technical equipment available at their faculty for practice. Meanwhile for 49 percent of students it is difficult to access the technical equipment for practice. There is also a further 10 percent of respondents who did not know if access to the technical equipment was satisfactory or not ($\chi^2=25.46$, $df=2$, $p<0.01$) (see Chart 6).

Chart 6: Students' level of satisfaction with access to the technical equipment available at faculties for practice (N=101)

Question: Are you satisfied with the access to your faculty's technical equipment that you are using for practice?

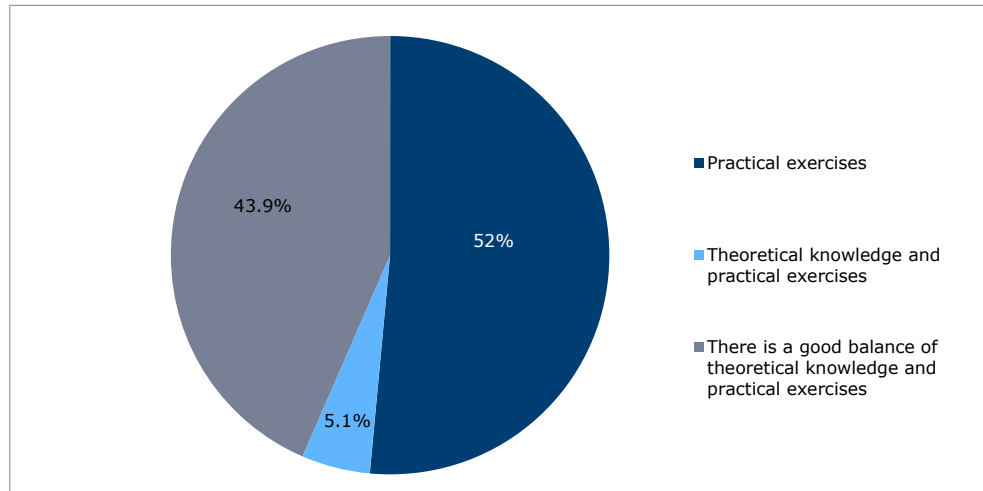


Given that all students attending private university were happy with the technical equipment at their respective faculty and their access to it, a generalisation that would apply to all Albanian universities is a difficult proposition. At this point, it is also difficult to give an overview of the state-of-play in terms of technical equipment available to faculties. Public / state universities and their private counterparts operate in fundamentally different contexts. If the number of public / state universities were to be increased on account of high demand for journalism education in other Albanian cities, the same cannot be said about most private universities. Almost all private universities that offer degree courses in journalism and communication have closed their branches, with exception of Beder University, which does not offer education in journalism *per se* but rather a course in communication science, which also includes practical components. The reason for this was that all lecturers teaching at these universities mostly come from the Department of Journalism in Tirana. As the double employment of academic staff at public universities is no longer allowed, such tutors have ceased teaching at the private institutions, forcing the closure of several departments of journalism. Therefore, we cannot say that in the field of journalism, technical equipment is essential as compared to human resources. This means that further research should be conducted to highlight the differences between public / state and private universities in Albania. The Department of Journalism at University of Tirana – a public educational institution – offers practical training to students at the laboratories of television channels and radio stations, multimedia, and in Public Relations (PR) and marketing. The equipment in these labs has been partially financed by the university and by local and international donors, which the department has implemented several joint projects with.

To better understand whether the expectations of the students have been satisfied, the respondents were asked to assess their level of satisfaction with theoretical knowledge and practical tutorials at the faculty where they were enrolled. The findings show that the expectations of students about the theory taught at their faculties were almost satisfied. Students responded that the lacking ingredient at most faculties were practical exercises (52 percent) (see Chart 7). Only 5.1 percent of the students felt that both theory and practice were inadequate, while 43.9 percent responded that there was a good balance between the two ($\chi^2=36.61$, $df=2$, $p<0.01$) (see Chart 7).

Chart 7: Deficiencies in theory and practice at faculties (N=101)

Question: Complete the following sentence: The faculty of journalism where I am enrolled lacks...



In addition, most students (97 percent) think that guest lecturers, such as professional journalists or other media practitioners, are important while only 3 percent considering the opposite to be the case ($\chi^2=89.36$, $df=1$, $p<0.01$). As universities place greater emphasis on theoretical knowledge, guest lecturers, professional journalists and other media practitioners are seen as an extension of the need for courses with a strong practical bias. Most surveyed students from University of Tirana (18 out of 25 students), University of Elbasan (15 out of 26) and University of Shkodra (12 out of 22) required more practical training. Others required better opportunities to gain more practical skills, such as cooperation with local media, project work, analysis, conferences and other workshops involving students. Among others, most of the students from University of Tirana (17 out of 25 students), 50 percent of the students from Beder University (14 out of 28) and almost half of the students from the University of Elbasan (12 out of 26) required additional courses in investigative journalism. In total, more than half of the respondents required a course in investigative journalism, followed by those who expressed a desire for a course on media ethics, media market and multimedia.

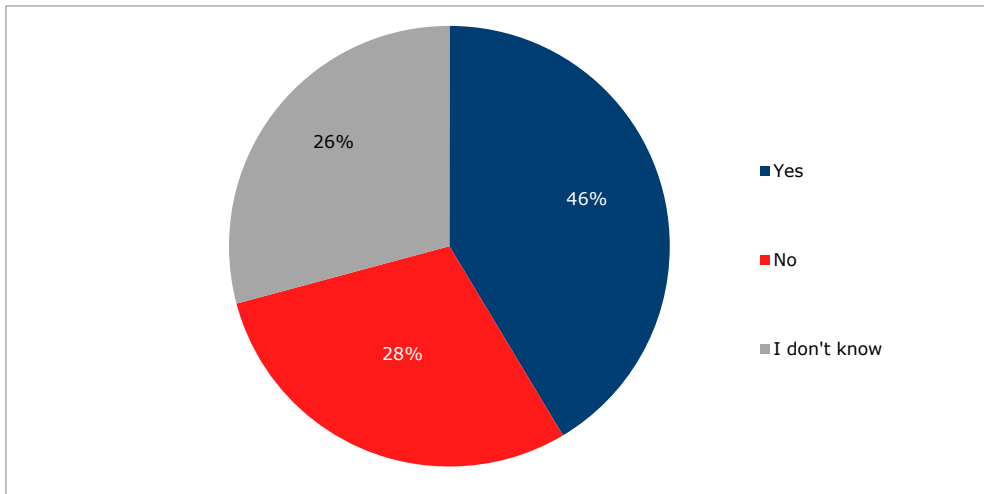
4. RELATIONS BETWEEN EDUCATION AND PRACTICE

Despite the theoretical knowledge gained at the faculty, the quality of the journalism education was also assessed from the standpoint of practical training. The survey thus intends to explore the relation between education and practice by, for example, appraising cooperation between faculties and local / national media outlets. In addition, to better understand the relationship between theory and practical training, students have been asked if they had an opportunity to apply the knowledge acquired at the faculty in practice.

Regarding cooperation between faculties and local / national media outlets, the results show that most students (46 percent) assessed this aspect positively. In their opinion the faculties cooperated well with local / national media outlets, with 28 percent having a negative opinion. For the latter group cooperation between their faculty and local / national media outlets was inadequate. Twenty-six percent of students did not know if their faculty cooperated well with local / national media outlets ($\chi^2=7.28$, $df=2$, $p<0.05$) (see Chart 8).

Chart 8: Faculty cooperation with local / national media outlets (N=101)

Question: Do you think that your faculty cooperates well with local / national media outlets?



Despite the overall satisfaction of students with the knowledge taught at their faculties, 55 percent had not had a chance to apply it in practice. The findings show that among all students, 16 percent have not applied the skills they learned at faculty in practice and 39 percent had not yet held a job. However, most respondents (45 percent of survey respondents) had applied the knowledge acquired at their faculty in practice ($\chi^2=14.06$, $df=2$, $p<0.01$) (see Chart 9).

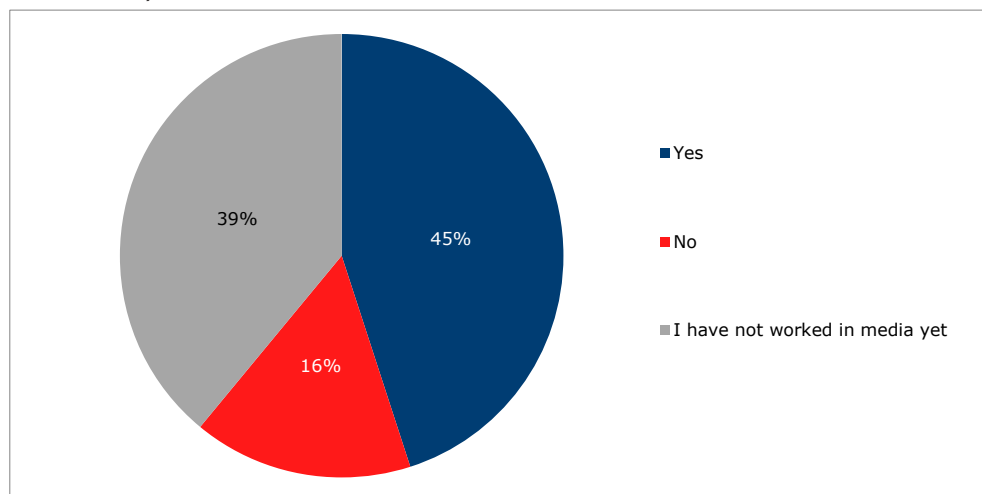
In general, it can be posited that the relationship between universities and media outlets, although existing, has not been institutionalised. Internships are no longer an obligatory component of the curriculum, which hardly helps students to join media outlets on a regular basis. Students typically find employment and internships with media outlets within a few months, either on their own or through a personal recommendation from a professor. The journalism departments at the Universities of Shkodra and Elbasan have not established systematic cooperation with local media in their respective cities. Conversely, during the last two decades the Department of Journalism at University of Tirana, has created, albeit in a non-institutional manner, internship opportunities for its undergraduates in most national and local media newsrooms in Tirana. At the Department, several well-known

journalists and moderators help students to obtain full-time jobs in the media for which they work. Other departments of journalism, albeit to a lesser extent, also rely on this *modus operandi*. The University of Beder has established collaboration with several TV channels operating in the capital.

Internships, exchanges and other initiatives that help students to put their knowledge of theory to practice are considered very important for 'a fair balance between journalism fundamentals, a good general knowledge of social sciences, technological skills and practical on-the-job training' (Guyot, Aubert and Zagyi 2014: 16). These inclusive initiatives targeting students of journalism can be seen as 'a good opportunity to share experience and innovation through workshops, theoretical or methodological seminars, communication on research programmes, relationship with local media or social networks.' (*Ibid*: 17)

Chart 9: Applying university knowledge in practice (N=101)

Question: Have you ever applied the knowledge you acquired at your faculty in practice (in the field of media)?



Regarding the experience of students with internships at media outlets, a significant majority (69 percent) had no experience with internships, with 31 percent of respondents having had an opportunity for an internship at a media outlet ($\chi^2=14.44$, $df=1$, $p<0.01$). Since there are no written contracts for organised internships at media outlets, finding paid internships in Albania is difficult. Indeed, most internships are unpaid. They typically last between one and three months (sometimes up to six months), which is why students typically prefer other paid jobs, albeit not in the media domain, such as waitressing or working in call centres.

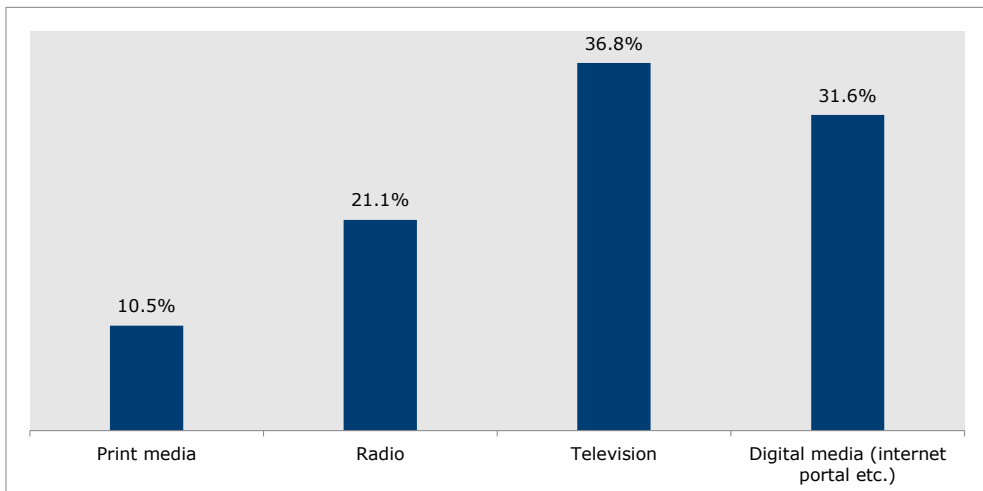
It should firstly be noted that working to gain work experience in Albania is relatively uncommon. This is further emphasized by the lack of organised internships at media outlets. Secondly, most students feel insecure and exploited when working as an unpaid

intern on account of there not being a contract that guarantees them a job at the end of the internship. During the last two decades, media owners have tried to take advantage of the employment of students, exploiting them without payment. Although a student may do well during an internship, employers ultimately prefer to hire a new intern to keep staff costs in check. Thirdly, most students prefer to be financially independent from their families during their studies.

In the group of students who work in media, most (36.8 percent) worked in television, 31.6 percent in digital media, 21.1 percent in radio, and 10.5 percent in print media (see Chart 10). The survey did not register significant differences in terms of the types of media outlets where respondents worked ($\chi^2=3.105$, $df=3$, $p>0.01$). This tallies with students' preferences regarding their desired job paths in journalism following graduation. This can also be explained by the media preferences of students. According to the survey on journalism education in Albania conducted in public universities (N=465) by Godole and Karçanaj (2015), television was considered the most influential media, which almost 30 percent of students who used it several times a day and 40 percent of students using it daily. Television was followed by news published on various websites, with 38.5 percent of students following them daily and 24.3 percent using them several times a day (Godole and Karçanaj 2015). Meanwhile, most students read magazines (45.6 percent), listen to radio news (39.6 percent) and the print copy of newspapers (38.4 percent) only once or twice per week (*Ibid.*).

Chart 10: Types of media outlets students work for (N=18)

Question: For what kind of media are you working?

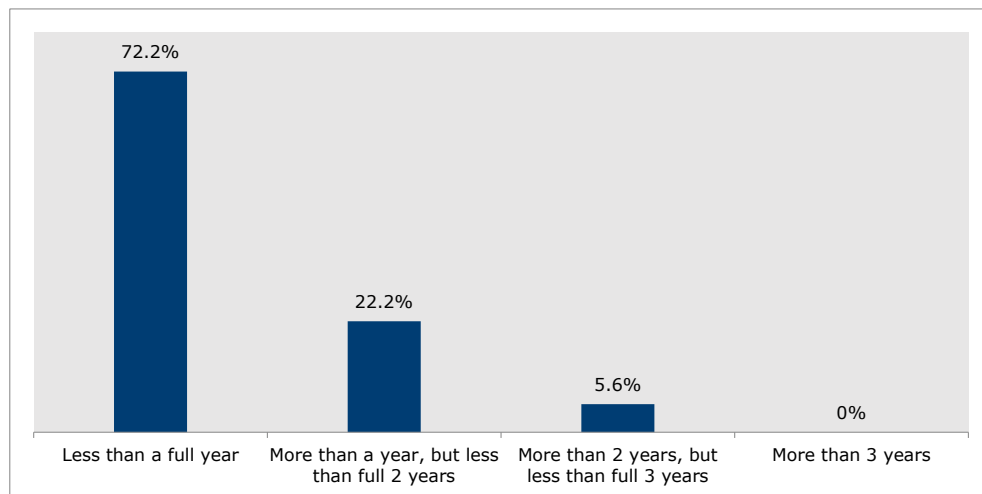


Among those who reported work experience gained at different media outlets, most respondents had worked for less than a year (72.2 percent) or for a longer period, but less than two years (22.2 percent) ($\chi^2=28.09$, $df=3$, $p<0.01$), with only 5.6 percent of

students having worked for more than two years, but less than three years, and none the respondents having work experience in media longer than three years (see Chart 11). This can be attributed to different reasons, such as salaries for students, dynamics in media newsrooms, uncertainty as to the nature of job offered and pressure to compromise with the principles of the profession. There might have been also students who had gained work experience in jobs outside of media prior to their studies.

Chart 11: Students' length of working experience in media (N=18)

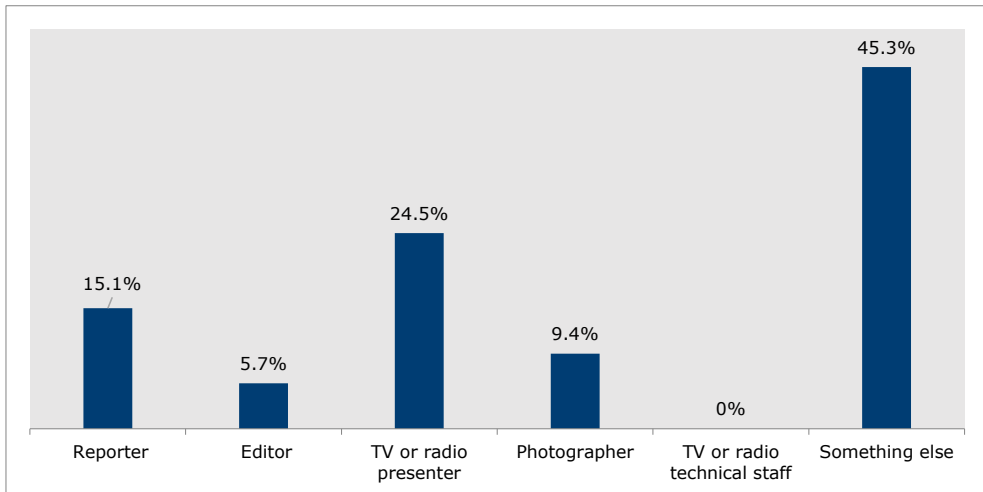
Question: *For how long have you been working in media (work experience)?*



In addition, there are different types of jobs that students have done both during and prior to the survey. Among them 24.5 percent had worked as TV or radio presenters, 15.1 percent as reporters, 9.4 percent as photographers, and 5.7 percent as editors. Most survey respondents (45.3 percent) had prior work experience in a field other than those listed above (see Chart 12). As already mentioned, many students prefer to do a paid job, even though it might not be in their chosen professional area. In Albania, unemployment is high, especially among young people. The fact that many students are not working in their chosen profession does not only demonstrate the problems on the labour market regarding the future of journalism as a profession, but also presents a broader view of the overall situation *vis-à-vis* the employment of young people. Obtaining a degree in Albania and facing unemployment means that most young people no longer consider having a profession a priority. The first concern of many students is to find a paid job, working in their chosen professional area being a secondary consideration.

Chart 12: Types of jobs done by students (N=53, multiple answers possible)

Question: *What type of work are you currently doing or did in the past?*



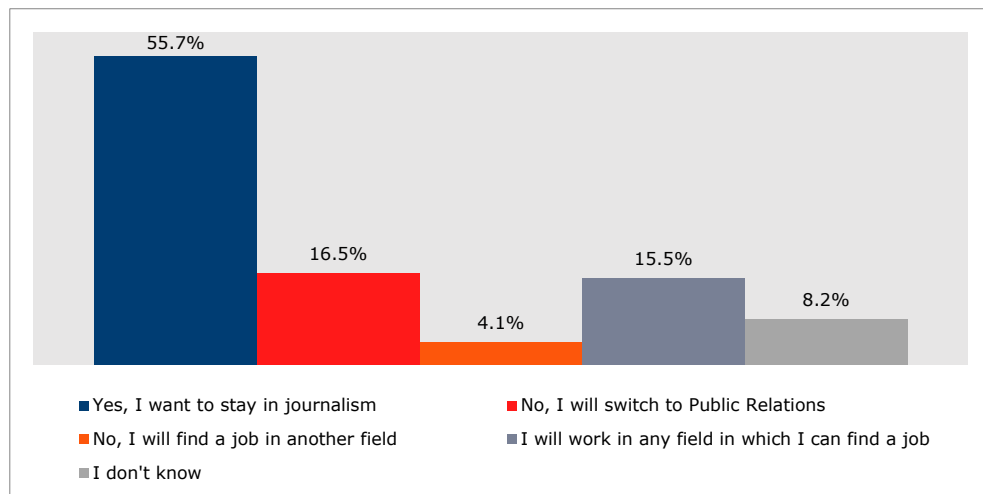
5. PROFESSIONAL PROSPECTS

Students' aspirations to pursue a career in journalism are very important for the understanding of how they see their future. On the one hand, when choosing whether to pursue a career in journalism or not, students reflect on the quality of journalist training and the general situation on the labour market. On the other hand, by choosing to do something different following graduation they have an opportunity to explore and expand their interests – a decision influenced by many factors, such as the labour market, salaries, comfort at work, etc. If students in Albania want to continue to work as journalists following graduation, this is typically due to the overall level of satisfaction with the quality of education and learning conditions at their faculty. This is so because in order to be able to find a job, students need to be well-prepared for the labour market. A solid educational background, supported by good learning conditions at faculties and access to such faculties, boosts students' confidence in finding a job in their preferred professional area.

Differences were found in terms of students' career plans following graduation ($\chi^2=82.33$, $df=4$, $p<0.01$). The findings show that the majority (55.7 percent) want to continue to work in journalism, with 20.6 percent wishing to explore other fields of which 16.5 percent want to pursue a career in PR and 4.1 percent to simply find a job in another field. Among all the students, 15.5 percent stated willingness to work in any field in which they can find a job. This means that students are not optimistic about their job prospects following graduation – the reason why finding a job gains priority over working in their chosen profession. There were also 8.2 percent of the students who were uncertain, and they did not yet know whether they wished to continue in the field of journalism (see Chart 13).

Chart 13: Students' professional prospects (N=101)

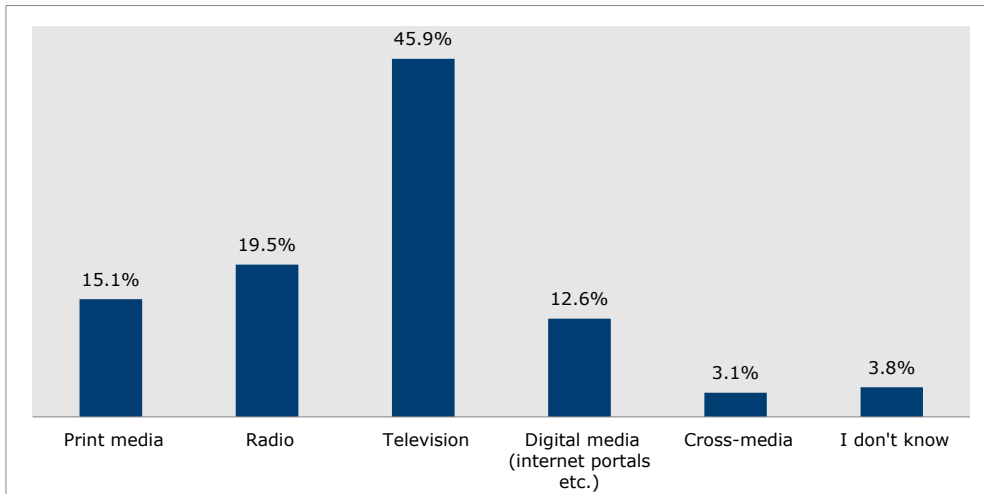
Question: *Will you continue to work in journalism after graduating from university?*



In addition, 45.9 percent of the students who stated a preference for working as journalists said they would like to continue working for a TV channel. Working for a radio station came in second, with 19.5 percent of Albanian students' preferences in journalism. A previous survey conducted at Albanian universities showed that students specifically wanted to work as TV hosts. In Albania, there is a widespread perception that TV hosts are well paid. In addition, some of the students wish to gain popularity, which is why they tend to be drawn to television and radio, considering that most journalists who started in radio later switched to TV. There are many presenters on Albanian television who started their careers in radio, which is why radio is considered a good start. Print media (15.1 percent) was ranked as the third most desired job. Digital media, such as news web portals, is regarded as an attractive job by 12.6 percent of students. The findings also demonstrate that the least favourite job in journalism for students following graduation is cross-media. Cross-media is seen as a desired job path in journalism by only 3.1 percent of students, with 3.8 percent undecided as to the type of media outlet they would like to work for following graduation (see Chart 14).

Chart 14: Most desired career paths in journalism (N=159, multiple answers possible)

Question: *In what kind of media would you like to work after you graduate?*

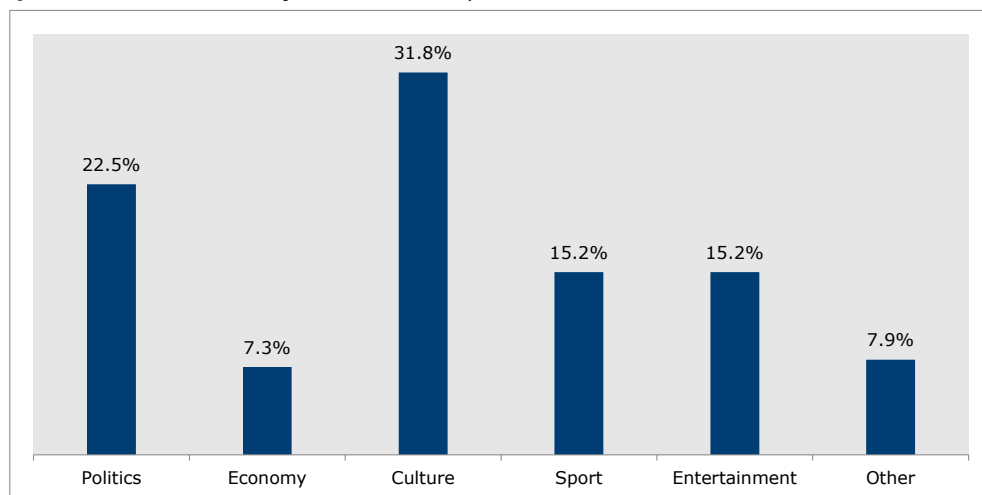


With regard to the areas of journalism in which students would like to work in most, culture came first. The results reveal that 31.8 percent of students would like to work in culture following graduation, and that 22.5 percent would like to cover politics. One reason why the highest share of students chose culture may be that most respondents were female who mainly work in this section or cover social issues in media. Meanwhile, entertainment and sports share equal preference, with 15.2 percent of students stating this as their preferred field in journalism. It is important to note that economy is the least favourite field in journalism. Only 7.3 percent of students prefer to work in it as journalists, with 7.9 percent stating a preference for working in another area of journalism (see Chart 15).

In addition, regarding the prospects of getting a job as a journalist after finishing university, students have expressed many doubts. This also affects their expectations about being able to make a living as a journalist. Most students hope to be able to do so, but feel uncertain about it.

Chart 15: Most strongly preferred fields in journalism for students (N=151, multiple answers possible)

Question: *In which field of journalism would you like to work?*



6. COMPARISONS BETWEEN STUDENTS' PERSPECTIVES

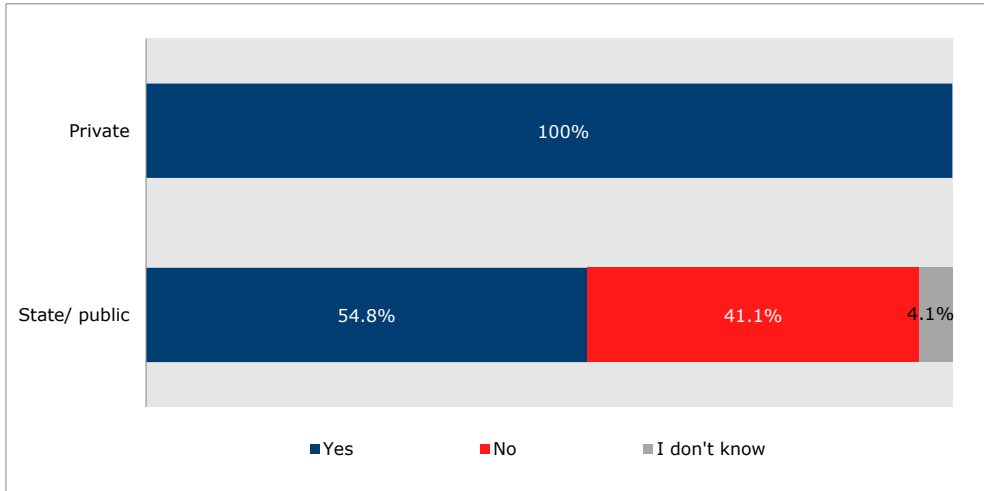
As the survey was conducted exclusively among BA students, the sample does not provide data about the differences, considering the level of study. However, in the Albanian sample the differences in the answers provided by students regarding gender and the type of university can be discussed.

Differences between universities

It is important to note that in terms of cross analysis there were significant differences in the level of satisfaction with learning conditions between the private Beder University and public universities in Albania, respectively University of Tirana, University of Shkodra and University of Elbasan ($\chi^2=24.704$, $df=6$, $p<0.01$). The highest proportion of satisfied students attends Beder University, followed by those attending University of Tirana. The results show that 100 percent of the students attending Beder University were satisfied with the learning conditions at their faculty (see Chart 16).

Chart 16: Differences in the level of satisfaction with learning conditions at the faculties of private and public / state universities (N=101)

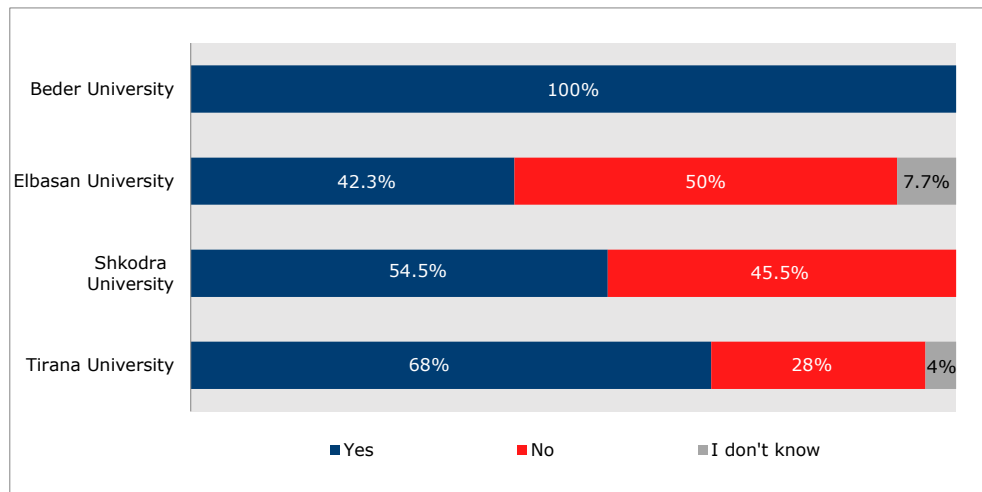
Question: *Are you satisfied with the learning conditions at your faculty (library, books, study rooms, workshops and seminars)?*



Most students (68 percent) from University of Tirana were also satisfied with the learning conditions available at their faculty. The lowest share of satisfied respondents was registered at University of Elbasan (42.3 percent), followed by University of Shkodra (54.5 percent). In total, only 54.8 percent of students attending public / state universities were satisfied with the learning conditions available at the respective faculties as compared to 100 percent of the students being satisfied with the conditions at private universities ($\chi^2=24.70$, $df=6$, $p<0.01$) (see Chart 17).

Chart 17: Differences in the level of satisfaction with learning conditions at the universities (N=101)

Question: Are you satisfied with the learning conditions at your faculty (library, books, study rooms, workshops and seminars)?

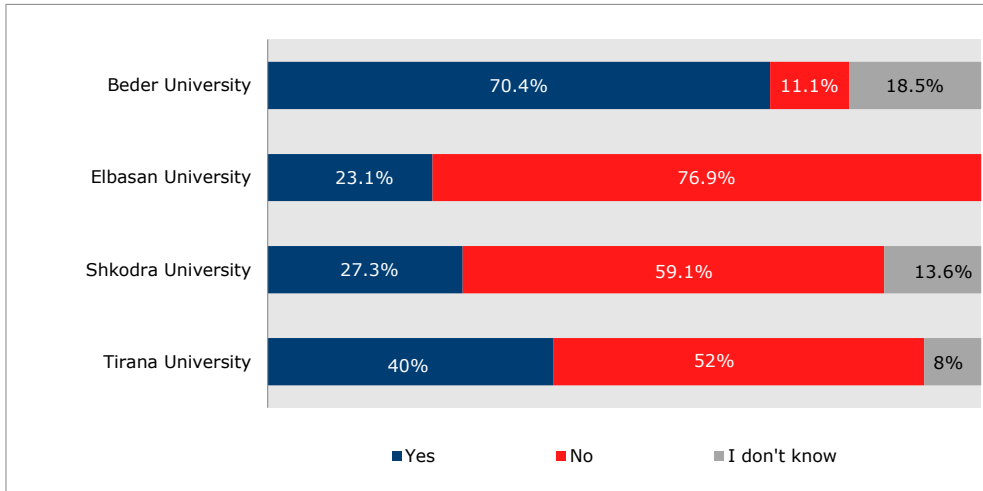


There were also significant differences in the level of satisfaction with the technical equipment available at faculties, which students use for practice, depending on university. Out of the total number of students at Beder University, 92.6 percent were satisfied with the technical equipment, followed by 44 percent of those attending University of Tirana. The lowest level of satisfaction among Albanian students was registered at University of Shkodra with 18.2 percent, followed by 26.9 percent of the students attending University of Elbasan ($\chi^2=40.62$, $df=6$, $p<0.01$).

When it comes to access to the technical equipment available to faculties, the share of satisfied students decreases at both private and state / public universities. However, in Albania a difference between public and private university was also registered in terms of access to the available technical equipment ($\chi^2=21.30$, $df=2$, $p<0.01$). A higher share of respondents from the private Beder University reported that they were satisfied with access to the technical equipment, followed by University of Tirana with 40 percent of its students being satisfied. University of Shkodra came next, with 27.3 percent of satisfied students. The lowest share of students satisfied with their access to the technical equipment available to their faculty was registered at University of Elbasan (only 23.1 percent) (see Chart 18).

Chart 18: Satisfaction with access to the faculty's technical equipment (N=101)

Question: Are you satisfied with the access to your faculty's technical equipment that you are using for practice?



In Albania, a difference between respondents from private and public universities was registered in terms of the respondents' opinion on the deficiencies of the faculty of journalism they were enrolled in ($\chi^2=45.53$, $df=2$, $p<0.01$). Thus, for most students (71.8 percent) attending a public / state university, insufficient practical tutorials were identified as a most serious shortcoming. Meanwhile most students (96.4 percent) attending private university stated that there was a balance between theory and practice.

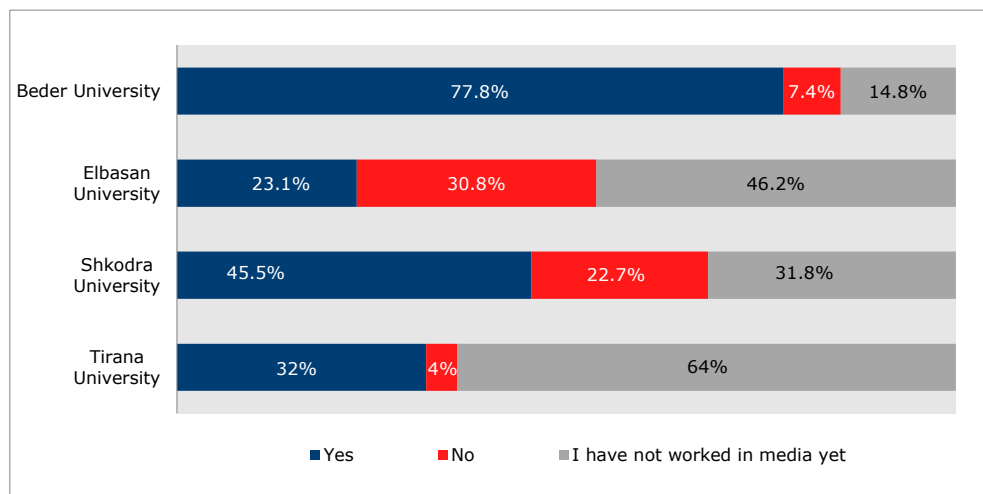
In addition, when considering students' expectations in Albania, the group studying at private universities had the same expectations in terms of the importance of guest lecturers as that studying at public / state universities. Students from both types of universities expressed an overwhelmingly positive attitude towards guest lecturers. There was no significant difference between the students at private university and public / state university regarding this point ($\chi^2=1.208$, $df=3$, $p>0.01$).

Another major difference between private and public / state universities in Albania was found in the cooperation between the faculties and national / local media outlets ($\chi^2=18.33$, $df=2$, $p<0.01$). Most students attending private university (85.7 percent) thought there was good cooperation between their faculty and national / local media outlets. University of Shkodra, with 40.9 percent of students who responded that there was good cooperation between their faculty and national / local media outlets, came second. Meanwhile most students attending University of Elbasan (53.8 percent) think that cooperation between their faculty and national / local media outlets is poor. This group is followed by the students at University of Tirana.

There is also a difference between Albanian universities in terms of the relationship between education and practice ($\chi^2=16.09$, $df=2$, $p<0.01$). Thus, 77.8 percent of students attending private university have had the chance to apply the knowledge acquired at the faculty in practice, followed by 45.5 percent of the students attending Shkodra University (see Chart 19). Elbasan University had the lowest share of students who have had an opportunity to apply their knowledge in practice, followed by those from University of Tirana.

Chart 19: Differences in the application of knowledge in practice between different universities (N=101)

Question: *Have you ever applied the knowledge you acquired at your faculty in practice (in the field of media)?*



In Albania, a difference was found between the respondents from private and public universities regarding their plans to continue working in journalism following graduation ($\chi^2=15.01$, $df=4$, $p<0.01$). The seemingly contradictory aspect is that despite the higher level of satisfaction of students attending the private university with the faculty conditions and available equipment and access to it, private educational establishments still had the lowest share of students wishing to pursue a career in journalism following graduation. Only 25 percent of students attending Beder University expressed a desire to do so. The highest share of students who stated that they wished to continue working in journalism following graduation was registered at University of Shkodra, followed by University of Tirana, and University of Elbasan.

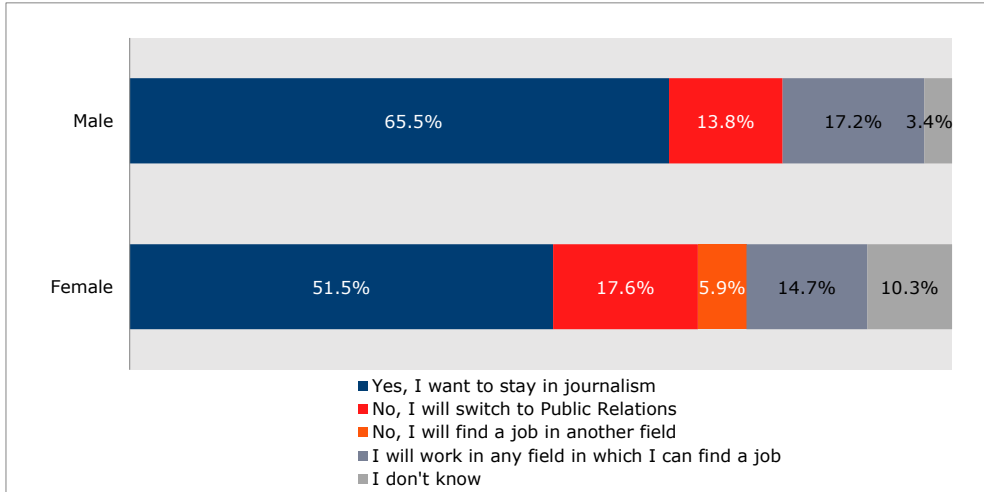
Gender differences

There are significantly more females than males in the Albanian sample ($\chi^2=13.6$, $df=1$, $p<0.01$), specifically 68 percent vs. 32 percent. There were no significant gender differences in the Albanian sample regarding continued work in journalism following graduation

($\chi^2=3.849$, $df=4$, $p>0.01$). Most stated that they did not wish to leave journalism, with 65.5 percent of male respondents and 51.5 percent of the female respondents stating that they wished to remain in the profession ($\chi^2=3.85$, $df=4$, $p>0.05$) (see Chart 20).

Chart 20: Gender differences in terms of dedication to a career in journalism (N=101)

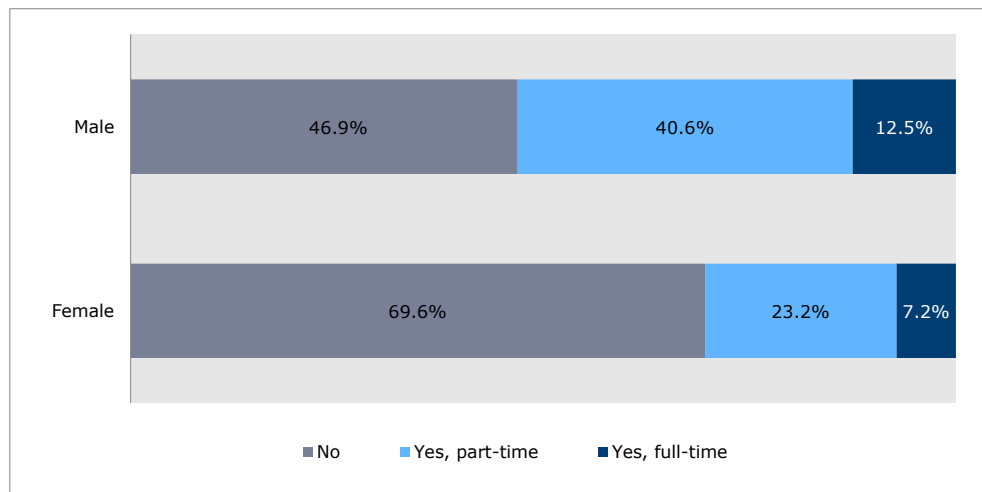
Question: *Will you continue to work in journalism after graduating from university?*



As for working in parallel to their studies, 69.6 percent of female students and 46.9 percent of the male students stated that they did not have a job ($\chi^2=4.80$, $df=2$, $p>0.05$). A higher share of male students stated that they had jobs as compared to female respondents. These findings show that the number of male students was higher in both cases, including for part-time jobs (40.6 percent) and full-time jobs (12.5 percent) as compared to female students. Only 7.2 percent of female students stated that they worked full-time, with 23.2 percent holding part-time jobs (see Chart 21).

Chart 21: Gender differences in the employment status of students (N=101)

Question: *Are you working alongside your studies (any kind of job)?*



7. RECOMMENDATIONS

The data obtained from the survey provides outsiders interested in a brief overview of the state-of-play of journalism higher education in Albania as perceived by the students (students, researchers) with a valuable insight. It is not hugely helpful in explaining the specificities of the country because it does not contain details of the curriculum or a presentation of its most important aspects, which in the survey are limited to theoretical and practical knowledge. Furthermore, the survey does not explore the journalistic culture in which the media and students operate.

Below are some of the recommendations for the improvement of journalism education based on the analysis of the Albanian sample.

- Based on students' insights, there is an urgent need to foster a dialogue between educational institutions and local media;
- In addition, based on the suggestions received from students more practical classes are necessary;
- More initiatives that involve students and help them to improve their practical skills, such as projects, analyses, conferences and other workshops, are necessary;
- These initiatives should expand beyond the national level; in this sense, the experience that comes from involvement in regional or international projects could help in sharing experiences and identifying differences or similarities with other countries;
- An added value of such student initiatives could be the adoption of regulations making provisions for organised internships for university students;

- Internships should not be limited to local media. They should rely on cooperation with other non-media professional organisations associated to NGOs, associations and social networks;
- A positive approach to technological change must be embraced in Albania and ways should be identified to benefit from them;
- New tools should be viewed as a real opportunity for journalism studies and integration as a main trend for determining the future orientation of journalistic practice;
- By learning how to properly use the benefits of social networks in the digital era students would better understand the application of new technologies, focusing on the main objective: learning to find and write stories thereby improving their writing skills – an essential aspect of journalism;
- Journalism education should not be understood as an institution that produces students who go on to become journalists. It must be clear that journalism schools are not simply training courses and jumping boards for a career in journalism;
- In addition, they should encourage all relevant faculties to conduct long-term research, write and publish papers relating to journalism;
- The share of workshops in the curricula of universities must be questioned (in the case of Albania, the Department of Tirana they make up more than 1/3 of the study programme, in fact almost half of the BA curriculum);
- A careful revision of curriculum would help us to see how much the universities where journalism is taught combine thought, practice and know-how to attract students;
- It is important to note that students' needs and wishes must be taken into account when revising the curriculum. Thus, as clearly stated in the survey, students require additional courses in investigative journalism, followed by courses on media ethics, media market and multimedia.
- Journalism education must be seen in light of labour market developments. Therefore, a comprehensive study on the state-of-play of the labour market in Albania is very necessary.
- The accreditation review process must also be reformed, including by placing a greater emphasis on quality.

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BULGARIA: REPORTING IS A DREAM JOB FOR MANY – BUT FOR WHICH MARKET?

Orlin Spassov

1. INTRODUCTION

In Bulgaria, journalist training was introduced during the academic year 1952-1953 with a degree course in journalism at Sofia University 'Saint Kliment Ohridski'. At this early stage, journalism education was primarily based on literary approaches, focusing on the study of journalism genres. Since the very beginning training had a strong practical component. Initially, the courses were available from the Journalism Chair at the Faculty of Modern Languages of Sofia University. Two groups of students were admitted to the course in journalism during the first academic year: first-year students and a second group, comprising 60-70 students who had already studied other majors for two years at the university (Zlateva 2007).

The early model of teaching and curriculum development was largely influenced by two sources. The first one was modelled on the practice of journalism faculties in the Soviet Union, mostly at the Lomonosov Moscow State University and the Leningrad State University (later Sankt Petersburg State University). The second model was influenced by the professional background of the first tutors in journalism. Three of them had been educated in Vienna (Zlateva 2007). This relationship with the German-speaking world predetermined both the close links and the academic exchange of the newly-established Chair with the Faculty of Journalism at the University of Leipzig in GDR (the German Democratic Republic). The curriculum of the five-year programme was drawn up following meetings with representatives of other Eastern European countries (Manliherova et al. 2009).

The combination of the two practices – of the Soviet Union and the GDR – was enriched with academic culture imported from Austria since the very beginning. Thus, the personal background of some of the first professors contributed to fostering a broader intercultural foundation for journalist training (Zlateva 2016). Quite naturally, the new Faculty of Journalism and Mass Communication would later retain its close ties not only with the universities in Eastern Europe but also with in Vienna, Leipzig, etc.

Between 1969 and 1973 a new model of journalism education was adopted in response to the need for broader instruction in humanities and specialist training. New academic disciplines were introduced and specialist education in different media categories became available for the first time. In 1974, a separate Faculty of Journalism was established,

including a postgraduate programme (Sofia University 2014). At the time, it was the only faculty of its kind in Bulgaria (Manliherova et al. 2009).

In 1991, the Faculty of Journalism was renamed the Faculty of Journalism and Mass Communication – a name that describes the enriched and expanded curriculum more accurately. After 2000 the academic curriculum and programmes were gradually reformed (in 2004 and 2008) to comply with European practice and achieve alignment with the Bologna process; among other developments, such as the introduction of a credit points system followed suit (Sofia University 2014).

In addition to its journalism programme, the Faculty of Journalism offers two additional study programmes in Public Relations and Book Publishing. The Public Relations programme was launched in the academic year 1994-1995 and the Book Publishing programme – in the academic year 1997-1998.

The Faculty of Journalism and Mass Communication at Sofia University has a press training studio, an audio-visual training laboratory with radio and television studios and facilities, a cinema and a video centre, a photo laboratory, and a specialist library and computer rooms. Its facilities allow the production of student printed material and online publications, and radio and television programmes.

Journalist training tries to find a balance between theory and practical orientation. Despite this, standards are not fully adequate in terms of content and relevance. An additional reason for this is the lack of adequate technical resources. Most technical equipment at universities is obsolete and far removed from the actual working environment in media (especially television).

At the same time, historical and theoretical instructions are often viewed as being of lower utility on account of not having a direct link to practice. The specialist libraries have, as a general rule, inadequate subscription budgets and rarely order new international publications in sufficient numbers. As a result, education pays little heed to the current state of global research in the field of media and journalism.

There are two methods of student admission to the faculty. In principle, admission to Sofia University is based on entrance exams (a written essay on a topic announced at the beginning of the exam and an oral interview on current affairs). Admission to most other universities is based solely on the ranking of applicants by the grades in their secondary education degrees.

There is little cooperation between universities and media outlets. It was only in the last few years that prominent journalists, producers and presenters started being invited to teach courses at universities (typically elective ones).

As a rule, finding a job in a media outlet is relatively easy, even for undergraduates. This is due to a quantitatively well-developed media market in Bulgaria. According to National Statistical Institute (NSI) data in 2015 there were 116 licensed TV broadcasters and 84 radio broadcasters, and in 2014 there were 295 newspapers in Bulgaria (NSI 2015). This said, the Bulgarian media market is small in financial terms. This misbalance has produced major distortions that have inescapably affected journalism.

The aggressive commercial approach of most media outlets and the insufficient qualifications of young journalists emerged as serious threats to the quality of journalism in Bulgaria. Other problems stem from the declining prestige of the profession (particularly print press), low pay, and an overall climate of growing political and economic pressure on media, which acts as a straightjacket for the free and creative exercise of the profession (Spasov 2014).

The other Bulgarian universities programmes in journalism largely follow the model established by Sofia University. In addition to Sofia University, study programmes in journalism are available from five Bulgarian universities – three of which are state-owned (the Veliko Tarnovo University 'Saint Cyril and Saint Methodius', Shumen University 'Constantine of Preslav' and the University of National and World Economy in Sofia). The list is complemented by two private universities (the New Bulgarian University in Sofia and the Burgas Free University), plus the American University in Bulgaria (AUBG) in Blagoevgrad. These programmes annually turn out a total of 1 057 graduates. Out of these, 800 graduate from state universities and 257 from private universities. A total of 915 acquire a Bachelor (BA) degree (including 257 at private universities) and 142 students a Master (MA) degree (exclusively at state universities).

The survey for Bulgaria was conducted in March 2015. It involved 107 students from 3 universities pursuing an MA degree in journalism: Sofia University 'Saint Kliment Ohridski', the Veliko Tarnovo University 'Saint Cyril and Saint Methodius' and the New Bulgarian University. The oldest interviewed students were born in 1981 and the youngest – in 1995. Their average age is 24 years (the age of the students born in 1991). Out of all respondents, 74 percent were female and 26 percent were male ($\chi^2=24.3$, $df=1$, $p<0.01$). This relative disproportion reflects the gender imbalance among students of journalism in Bulgaria.

The distribution of the interviewed students by university shows that almost half of the respondents attend the Faculty of Journalism and Mass Communication of Sofia University (49.5 percent), followed by those enrolled at the Faculty of Philology of Veliko Tarnovo University (32.7 percent). The lowest number of respondents attends the Mass Communications Department of the private New Bulgarian University (17.8 percent) ($\chi^2=16.2$, $df=2$, $p<0.01$). The distribution of the respondents aims to reflect the relative share of the three universities in terms of graduates ($\chi^2=44.5$, $df=1$, $p<0.01$).

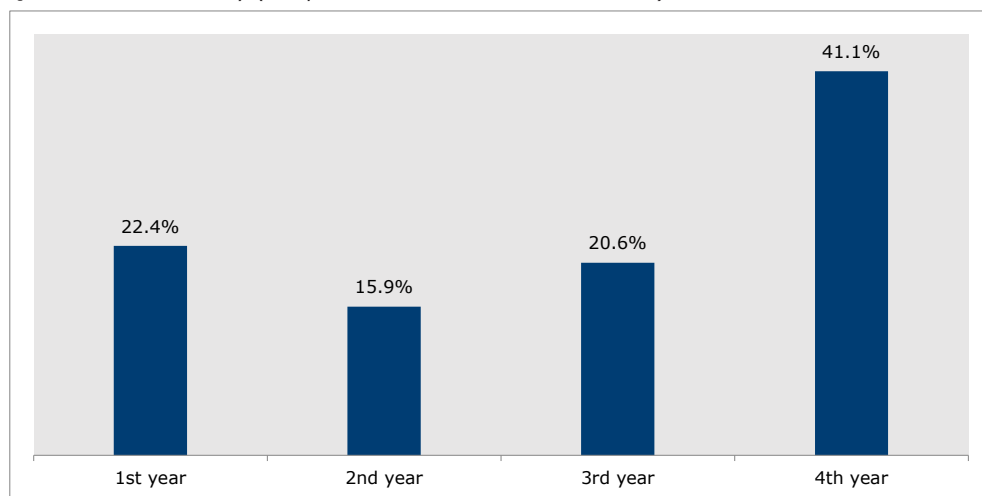
A significantly higher number of students are enrolled in state / public universities (82 percent) as compared to private universities (18 percent) ($\chi^2=44.5$, $df=1$, $p<0.01$). The ratio between students enrolled in BA programmes (82 percent) and MA programmes (18 percent) is the same ($\chi^2=44.5$, $df=1$, $p<0.01$).

A relative expression of the real ratio between the two groups of students was sought during the course of the study.

The highest share of respondents reported that they were in their fourth year of study, followed by those in the first and third year, respectively. The lowest share of respondents comprised students in their second year and there were no respondents in their fifth year ($\chi^2=15.8$, $df=3$, $p<0.01$) (see Chart 1). In fact, because of the length of the MA study programme of up to two years, all MA students (18 percent respondents) were in their fifth or even sixth year of study, despite the students stating that they were in their first or second year. This is due to the fact that answers were received exclusively from students pursuing an MA degree (the length of BA programmes in Bulgaria is four years).

Chart 1: Year of study (N=107)

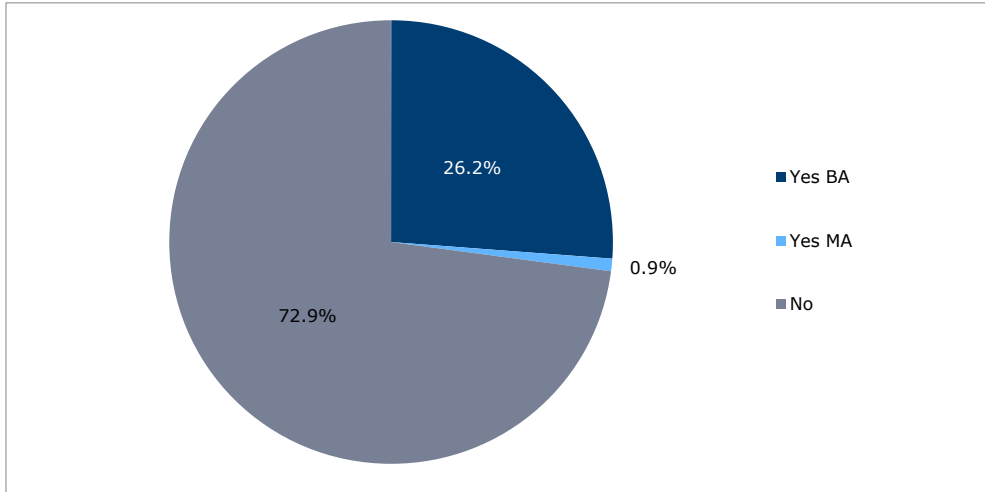
Question: Year of study (compared to whole duration of studies)



The majority (72.9 percent) of respondents from Bulgaria had not completed another course of study (other than journalism) prior to their enrolment in the journalism programme. Only 26 percent had acquired a BA degree (in an area other than journalism) and the rest – less than 1 percent – had an MA degree in an area other than journalism ($\chi^2=88.360$, $df=1$, $p<0.05$) (see Chart 2).

Chart 2: Respondents according to previous completed study programmes (N=107)

Question: *Have you finished another course of studies (in an area other than journalism)?*

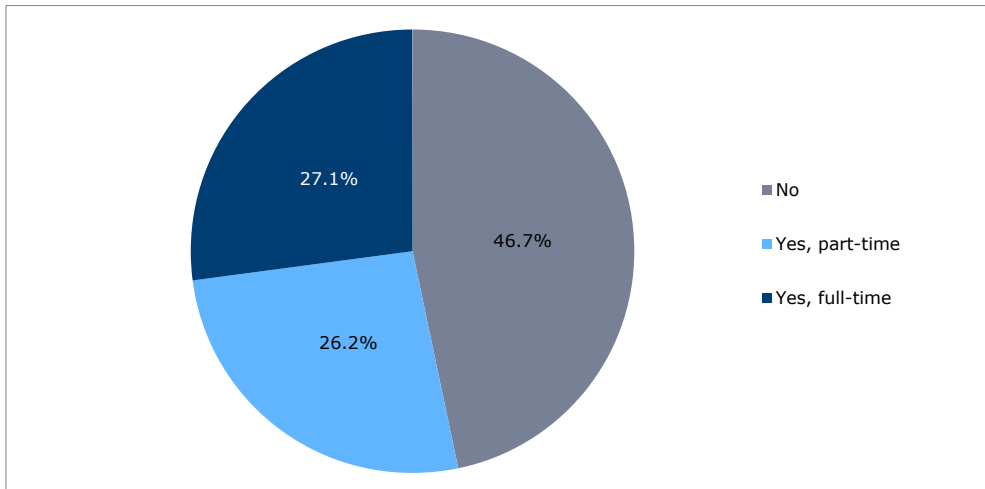


It should be noted that for almost all students enrolled in BA programmes journalism was the first major. Only 13 of respondents were enrolled in another BA degree programme before switching to a BA course in journalism.

Almost half of the respondents from Bulgaria stated that they did not work in parallel to studying, with a slightly higher total percentage stating that they had a part-time or full-time job ($\chi^2=8.65$, $df=2$, $p<0.05$) (see Chart 3).

Chart 3: Students doing part-time or full-time jobs in parallel to their studies (N=107)

Question: *Are you working alongside your studies (any kind of job)?*



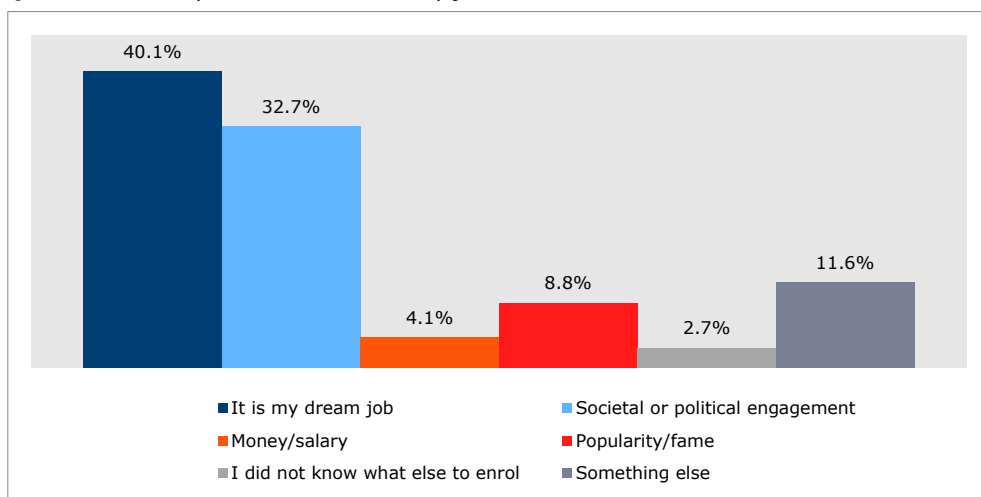
The overall number of students working in parallel to studying (53.3 percent) is high. While having a part-time job is acceptable to a degree in that it is not considered detrimental to studying, the fact that more than one-quarter of the respondents work full-time raises concerns. All respondents were full-time students (as opposed to part-time or evening students). This means that workplace commitments often prevent them from fully participating in the study process. Even where students work as journalists in parallel to their studies, not being present during lectures and tutorials affects the overall level of qualification and may ultimately result in lower performance. Despite this, most universities do not place any restrictions on students working in parallel to their studies. This may be attributed to the lack of requirements for mandatory attendance of lectures and tutorials, loose control or other social reasons (need to support oneself through university; other compelling reasons to work; and the small number of students who can rely on bursaries or financial support from their parents). Finally, faculties are often forced to turn a blind eye on account of the risk of losing students and, consequently, subsidies for the programmes they offer. Given the high numbers of working students, journalism education risks becoming a pure formality pursued with the sole purpose of having a degree.

2. STUDENTS’ MOTIVATION AND REQUIREMENTS

Data about the motivation of students and their requirements provides a valuable insight into their attitudes to studying and to the profession itself. The answers to the question ‘What is your motivation to study journalism?’ reveals an interesting picture (see Chart 4).

Chart 4: Motivation to study journalism (N=147)

Question: *What is your motivation to study journalism?*



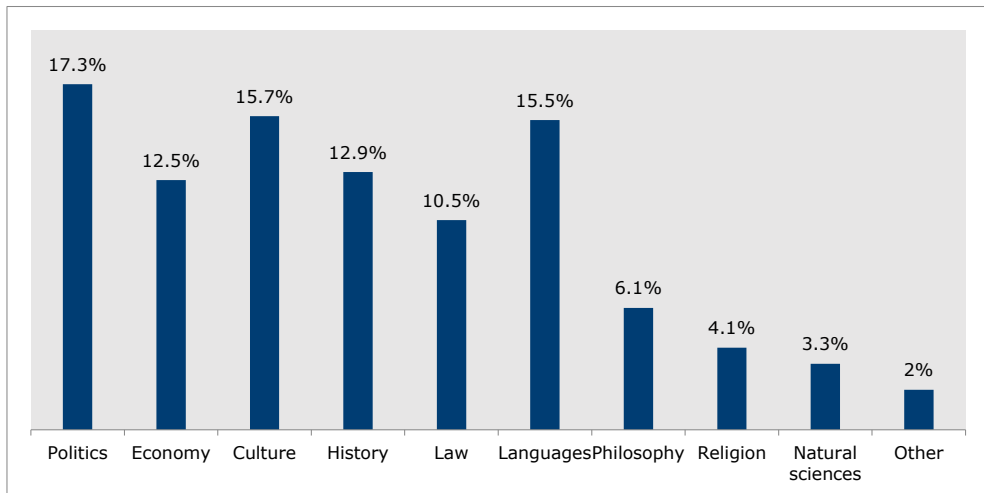
The most important outcome is that 40.1 percent of respondents described journalism as their dream job. Journalism education continues to attract a high number of motivated young people. Furthermore, 32.7 percent of respondents see journalism as an opportunity for social or political engagement.

Regardless of the crisis in the quality of Bulgarian journalism in the recent years and the strong dependence of the profession on outside influence and pressure, young people continue to recognise it as socially important. Their motives predictably include a chance to gain popularity and fame through the profession (8.8 percent). However, this motive lags far behind a host of other reasons for choosing journalism (here we should recall that the survey was anonymous – a fact, which further underlines the impartiality of the stated opinions). A possibility to earn good money / high salary was cited as a reason by only 4.1 percent of respondents. Finally, we saw a prevalence of both more idealistic motives and the influence of the level at remuneration in most media in Bulgaria, which remains low, particularly for younger journalists (Spasov 2014: 73; 78). The motives described in the section entitled 'Other' include opportunities for creative development, improvement of creative writing skills, establishing networks of contacts, strong career development opportunities, curiosity, etc.

The distribution of the answers to the question about general knowledge, which students consider important for a journalist, complements the picture of the motives to study journalism and indicates willingness to see more of these aspects of knowledge introduced into the curriculum (see Chart 5).

Chart 5: Important general knowledge for a journalist (N=542, multiple answers possible)

Question: *What kind of general knowledge is important for journalists in your opinion?*



In addition to the high importance attached to knowledge of politics, culture and the economy, a sound command of foreign languages and expert knowledge of law are

also appreciated. In general, foreign language teaching at the faculties at journalism faculties is considered inadequate. Similarly, law has low prominence in the curriculum. In this context, the high value attached to knowledge of foreign languages, history, law, philosophy, religion, natural sciences, etc. may be interpreted as the result of their poor presence in current curricula. The subjects that stood out among those pointed out in the section entitled 'Other' include geography, literature, technologies, etc. The type of general knowledge pointed out as important for journalists clearly indicates that the students' idea about the profession involves a sound and broad general knowledge and, equally, a high level of literacy.

The great majority (87 percent) of respondents from Bulgaria had not taken additional courses relating to journalism outside of their faculty, with only 13 percent having participated in additional courses ($\chi^2=57.4$, $df=1$, $p<0.01$).

A total of 11 students (enrolled in BA and MA programmes) at Sofia University 'Saint Kliment Ohridski' stated that they had attended additional courses relating to journalism, outside of their faculty as compared to only two students from the Veliko Tarnovo University 'Saint Cyril and Saint Methodius' and one from the New Bulgarian University (53 of respondents attended Sofia University, followed by 35 respondents attending Veliko Tarnovo University, and 19 attending the New Bulgarian University).

The following courses, among others that students attended should be mentioned: a master class in journalism at the Goethe Institute in Sofia, courses in creative writing and investigative journalism, participation in an editorial journalism workshop, a course entitled 'Introduction to Modern Art', a six-day training on 'Discrimination in the Media' in Serbia with participants from other Balkan countries, a course on TV script writing, photo journalism, etc.

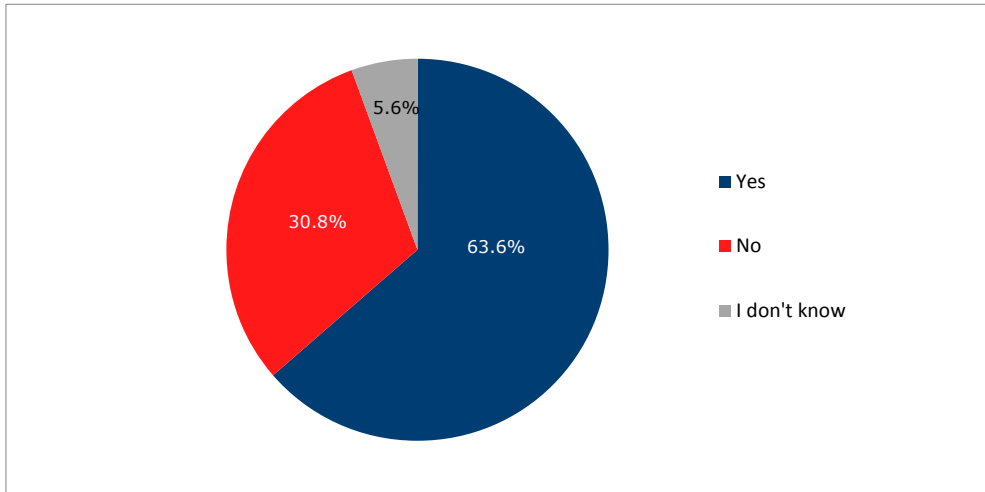
The low attendance of additional courses can be attributed to the limited supply of such training opportunities, a low level of student awareness of available courses, and reluctance or lacking motivation to attend. Another possible explanation may be the level of student satisfaction with study programmes (see Chart 6), which lowers the need to take additional courses outside of universities.

3. HAVE THE EXPECTATIONS OF STUDENTS BEEN MET?

Most respondents from Bulgaria stated that they are satisfied with the learning conditions at their respective faculties. Approximately 6 percent stated that they could not give an answer to the question (see Chart 6).

Chart 6: Satisfaction with the learning conditions at the faculty (N=107)

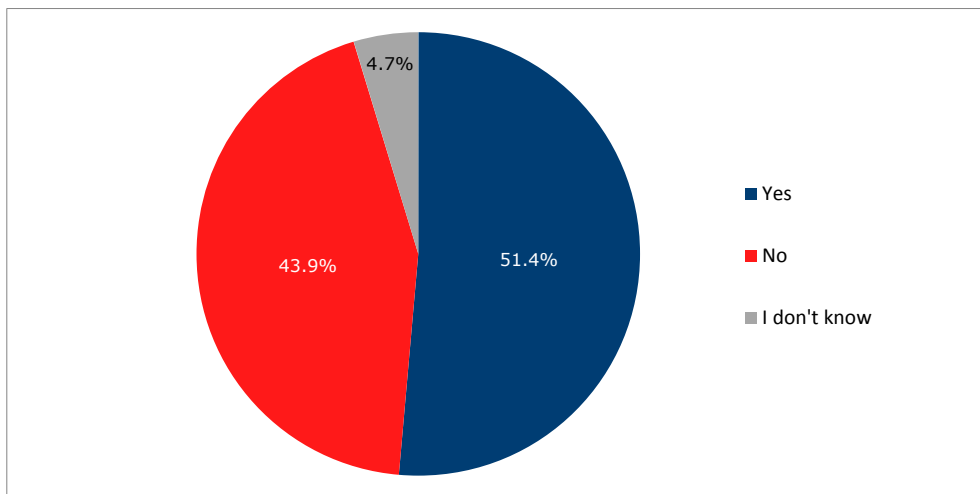
Question: *Are you satisfied with the learning conditions at your faculty (library, books, study rooms, workshops and seminars)?*



Regardless of the relatively high number of respondents having expressed satisfaction, almost 31 percent expressed unequivocal disappointment with the learning conditions at the faculties ($\chi^2=54.2$, $df=2$, $p<0.01$). This entails a clear criticism of the general level of education in terms of both content and technical equipment. A widespread feeling of disappointment undermines the motivation to study and pursue a career in journalism. According to the Bulgarian sample approximately half of the respondents stated that they are satisfied with the faculty's technical equipment for practical training. However, 44 percent reported dissatisfaction, with approximately five percent being undecided (see Chart 7).

Chart 7: Satisfaction with the faculty's technical equipment (N=106)

Question: *Are you satisfied with your faculty's technical equipment that you are using for practical classes?*

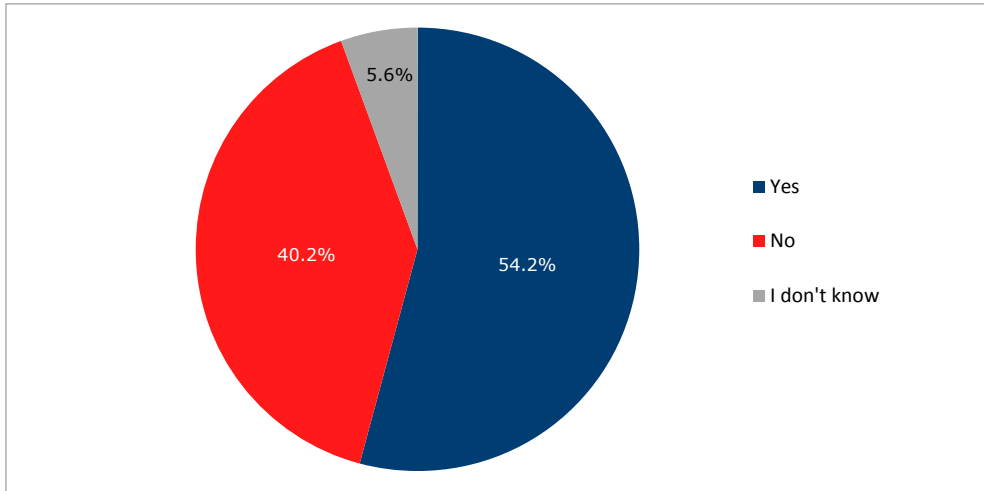


There is evidently a high level of general dissatisfaction with the quality of available technical equipment (43.9 percent) ($\chi^2=40.45$, $df=2$, $p<0.01$) (see Chart 7). At most faculties, subpar facilities are still being used for tutorials. This is most often due to chronic underfunding but can sometimes be attributed to lacking initiative on the part of senior faculty staff who could be more flexible and improve the technical aspects of education by implementing projects, fostering partnerships with media outlets, etc.

Most respondents from Bulgaria stated that they were satisfied with access to the technical equipment available to their faculty and that they were using it to gain practical skills. Forty percent of students stated that they were unsatisfied, with nearly 6 percent being unable to give an answer ($\chi^2=40.17$, $df=2$, $p<0.01$) (see Chart 8).

Chart 8: Satisfaction with the access to faculty's technical equipment (N=107)

Question: *Are you satisfied with the access to your faculty's technical equipment that you are using for practice?*

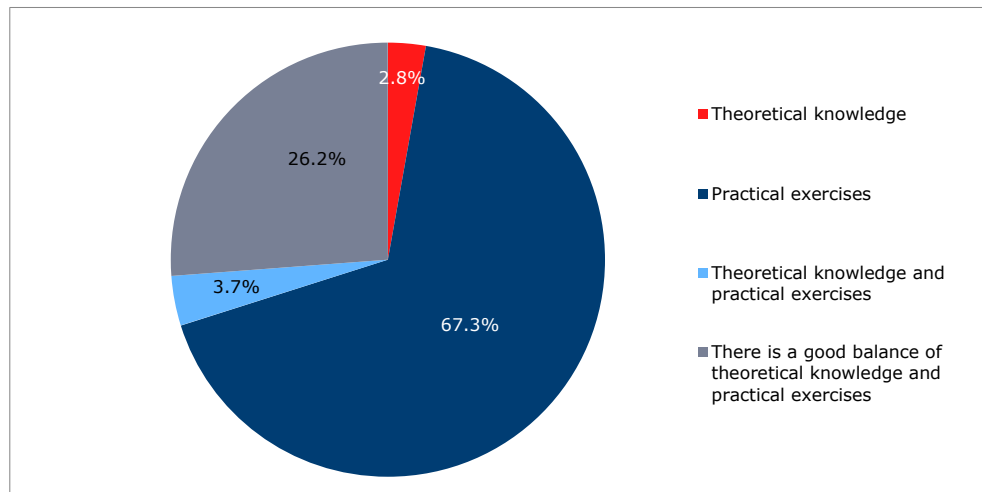


The low level of satisfaction with the technical equipment available to faculties matches the responses to the question concerning access to it. The numbers of students who consider the equipment subpar and dated (Chart 7) and of the students who stated dissatisfaction with access are almost the same (Chart 8). In many cases, the radio and television studios or training newsrooms of faculties have limited capacity (small halls and a limited number of computers, cameras and other devices). Training facilities are therefore typically overcrowded. The possibilities available to students to use the equipment for independent work (outside of planned group work hours, including for individual projects, etc.) are severely constrained.

Striking a balance between theory and practical knowledge is one of the greatest challenges for the faculties offering journalist training. Most Bulgarian respondents stated that the faculty of journalism they were enrolled in did not offer sufficient practical tutorials, with 26 percent agreeing that there was a good balance between theory and practice and only four percent stating that both theory and practice fail to meet their requirements. Three percent of students stated that their faculty did not provide adequate theoretical knowledge ($\chi^2=117.04$, $df=3$, $p<0.01$) (see Chart 9).

Chart 9: Deficiencies in theory and practice at faculties (N=107)

Question: Complete the following sentence: The faculty of journalism where I am enrolled lacks...



The fact that only around a quarter of respondents considered that there was a good balance between theory and practical training is indicative of the serious misbalance between the two key aspects of tuition. The inadequacy of practical assignments at journalism faculties largely stems from budgetary constraints (Spasov 2014: 78) and the cost of maintaining advanced technical equipment and guaranteeing access to it for the greatest possible number of students (see charts 7 and 8). On the other hand, the programmes of the faculties attach greater importance to the theoretical component of training. There are various reasons for this. For example, some faculties are experiencing a shortage of tutors with sufficient hands-on experience in journalism. In addition, attracting outstanding journalists as tutors is still relatively uncommon.

Against this background, it is hardly a coincidence that almost all respondents in the Bulgarian sample state that guest lecturers are important, with less than 1 percent stating the opposite.

Answering the question 'What kind of additional courses would you like to attend at your faculty (i.e. media law, media ethics, media policy, media market, investigative journalism, multimedia journalism, etc. – please specify)?', the respondents from the different faculties point out the following additional courses for which they have the strongest preference:

At Sofia University 'Saint Kliment Ohridski' (both BA and MA programmes) students would like to attend courses in investigative journalism (18 students); media ethics (13 students); multimedia journalism (11 students); and media law (8 students).

The answers of the students from the Veliko Tarnovo University 'Saint Cyril and Saint Methodius' were as follows: investigative journalism (17 students); multimedia journalism (7 students); sports journalism (6 students); media ethics (6 students).

Students from the New Bulgarian University would like to attend courses in investigative journalism (12 students); media policy (3 students); sports journalism (3 students); and media law (3 students).

The prevailing answers clearly show that students overwhelmingly wish to attend additional courses on investigative journalism. This demonstrates the inadequate availability of such courses. The reasons include the faculties' failure to attract top investigative journalists to work with the students as tutors and guest lecturers and the short supply of well-trained full-time tutors. There is a shortage of top quality investigative journalism on the media market in general (Spasov 2014: 13). The same deficit applies to multimedia journalism, media law and the other additional courses, which students consider desirable.

The answers to the question 'What else in your studies do you think should be improved?' provide exceptionally important information about the deficiencies across faculties.

At Sofia University 'Saint Kliment Ohridski' (for both the Bachelor and Master degree programmes) almost half of the students (26 out of a total of 53) point out the need for more practice to improve the training. In addition, some consider the technical equipment, the updating of the content of study programmes and the presence of more younger generation lecturers of major importance for the better quality of education.

At the Veliko Tarnovo University 'Saint Cyril and Saint Methodius' many students (13 out of a total of 34), like their colleagues from Sofia University, consider a stronger emphasis on practical training in journalism a major prerequisite for improvement and further identify a need for better equipment and facilities. Only three students believe that there is no need for any improvement. By way of comparison, none of the students at Sofia University 'Saint Kliment Ohridski' has given such an answer.

The students at the New Bulgarian University also consider the lack of sufficient practice-oriented courses a shortcoming of the study programme. Although the university is private, which presumes a better financial situation and higher standard of the facilities for practical training, one of the respondents points out the need for improvement as a prior condition for a better standard of education. Only two students were fully satisfied with their education, with others indicating deficiencies in evaluation and unavailability of internships for certain groups of students among the reasons for the inadequate quality of tuition.

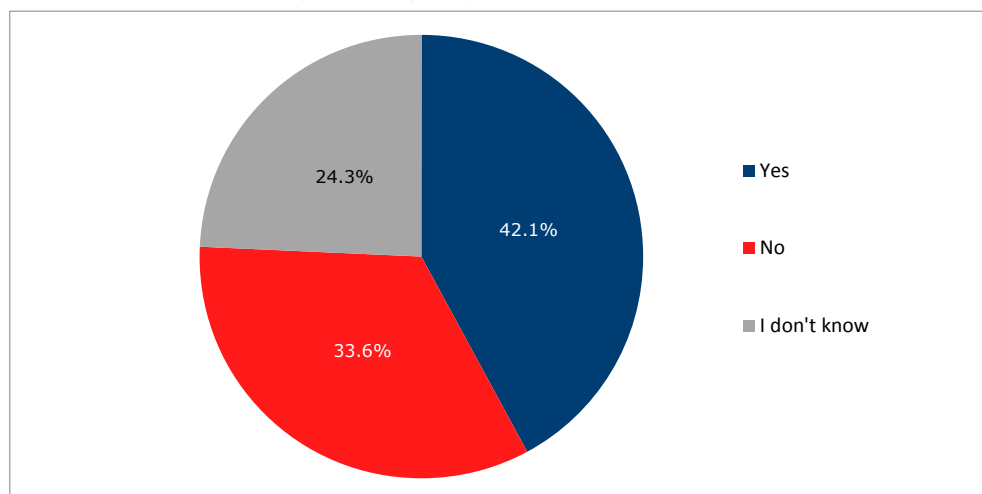
The fact that students from both state and private universities often mention the same reasons warrants the conclusion that journalism education in Bulgaria generally needs more practice-oriented courses and better technical facilities.

4. RELATIONS BETWEEN EDUCATION AND PRACTICE

Interaction between the faculties that offer journalism training and the media is an important indicator of the openness of university education to practice. The question about the students' satisfaction with the interaction of their faculties with local / national media outlets outlines the following picture (see Chart 10).

Chart 10: Faculty cooperation with local / national media (N=107)

Question: *Do you think that your faculty cooperates well with local / national media outlets?*



The fact that 33.6 percent of students are dissatisfied with the level of cooperation ($\chi^2=5.06$, $df=2$, $p>.05$) demonstrates a need to step up the efforts to promote cooperation between faculties and the media. However, the problem does not lie exclusively in the journalism faculties. Practice shows that media outlets are often reluctant to cooperate. This may be attributed to underfunding, a heavy workload for both journalists and editors, and a general lack of highbrow media willing to accept proposals for cooperation from journalism faculties. There is a short supply of high-quality media in Bulgaria and where they exist, they already interact with journalism faculties anyway. This applies specifically to public broadcasters (Spasov 2014: 79). However, they have relatively limited capabilities, which fall short of students' expectations for greater dynamics in faculty / media relations.

The answers to the more specific question: 'If not, how can this cooperation improve?' are distributed as follows:

A significant part of the students (16 out of a total 53) at Sofia University state that the faculty needs to provide more internships at media outlets, better technical equipment and more guest lecturers.

At Veliko Tarnovo University 'Saint Cyril and Saint Methodius' only 6 out of a total of 34 students state that they would like to see a change for the same reasons as those mentioned by their peers from Sofia University 'Saint Kliment Ohridski'. More specifically, they express a wish for more internships, guest lecturers and better technical equipment with easier access to it.

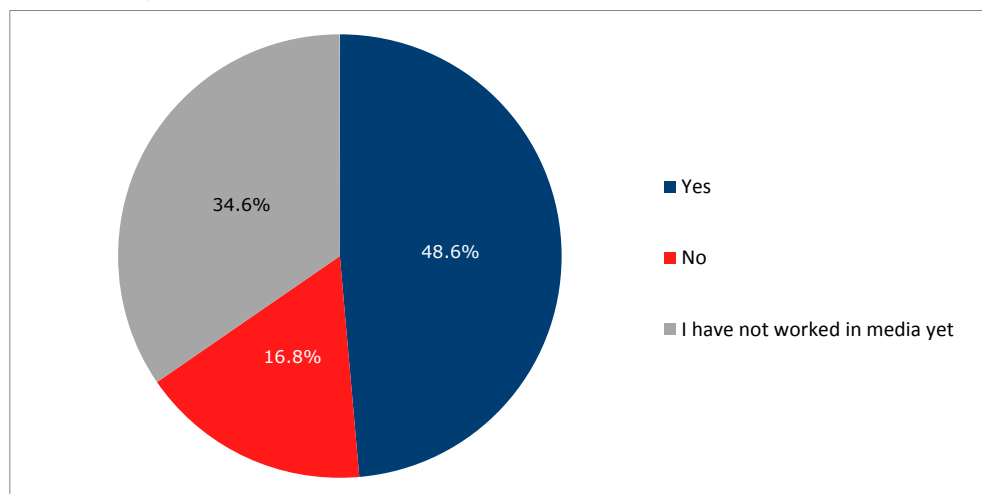
The only thing which the students from the New Bulgarian University wish to see an improvement in (pointed out in the questionnaire by three of a total of 18 respondents) is the availability of more journalism internships.

The comparison of the answers given by the respondents from the three universities shows that the students from Sofia University 'Saint Kliment Ohridski' have a considerably greater desire for improved cooperation between their faculty and national media. This may be due to the better cooperation between regional and national media and Veliko Tarnovo University 'Saint Cyril and Saint Methodius' and the New Bulgarian University, which explains the absence of specific answers / proposals in the questionnaires. On the other hand, the journalism students from Sofia University comprise the largest group, meaning that it is often difficult for them to arrange internships at reputable media outlets. Such internships are partially provided by the Faculty of Journalism, although demand clearly exceeds supply.

An exceptionally important indicator for the quality of journalist training is the application of theoretical knowledge in future practice. Considering the Bulgarian sample, a significantly greater number of respondents apply the knowledge obtained at the faculty in practice as compared to those for whom the acquired knowledge has not been of any use ($\chi^2=16.28$, $df=2$, $p<0.01$). More than one-third of respondents report that they have no experience of working at a media outlet yet (see Chart 11).

Chart 11: Applying knowledge acquired at the faculty in practice (N=100)

Question: *Have you ever applied the knowledge you acquired at your faculty in practice (in the field of media)?*



Nearly half of the respondents state that the knowledge acquired at university is useful in their practice as journalists. It should also be noted that their replies refer to working as journalists in parallel to their studies. This 'symbiosis' demonstrates that at the time of the survey the faculties' programmes are largely relevant and in line with modern standards of journalism. Nevertheless, 16.8 percent of those interviewed, who work as journalists in parallel to their studies, gave a negative answer to the question about the practical application of the knowledge obtained at university ($\chi^2=16.28$, $df=2$, $p<0.01$). Against the backdrop of an increasing number of working students, the faculties should reconsider not only their relationship with media outlets, but also their curricula and tutorials. The division of students in two large groups – working and non-working – is a significant challenge to journalist training.

Students' experience with internships is in turn indicative of the cooperation between faculties and media outlets. Significantly more respondents (61 percent) in the Bulgarian sample reported that they have some experience with internships at media outlets, with 39 percent not having such experience ($\chi^2=5.43$, $df=1$, $p<0.01$).

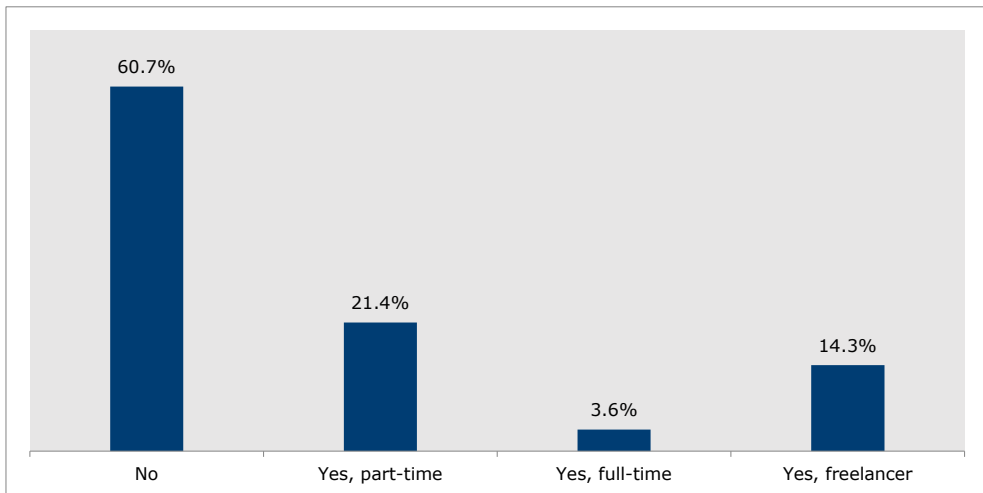
Asked to determine their overall satisfaction with internships, if any, on a scale from 1 to 5 (1=very poor, 5=very good), students gave an average rating of 3.52. A conclusion may be drawn that although 61 percent of students have some experience with internships at media outlets, their satisfaction is medium. Besides, the number of students who stated that they have not had any internship (39 percent) is high, especially considering that out of 100 students who answered the question, only 24 were in their first year of study when internships are less common. Faculties should endeavour to offer the highest

possible number of students work experience through internships. They should also ensure feedback about students' performance during internships at media outlets rather than having them as a pure formality (without any serious tasks being assigned to students) as is often the case.

We considered the answer to the question 'Are you working alongside your studies (any kind of job)?' in part 1 (see Chart 3) and asked a more specific sub-question: 'If yes, are you working at a media outlet (excluding internships)?' A high number of respondents from Bulgaria stated that they were not working at media outlets, followed by those who reported working part-time ($\chi^2=20.86$, $df=3$, $p<0.01$) (see Chart 12).

Chart 12: Students working at media outlets (N=28)

Question: *If yes, are you working in media (excluding internships)?*

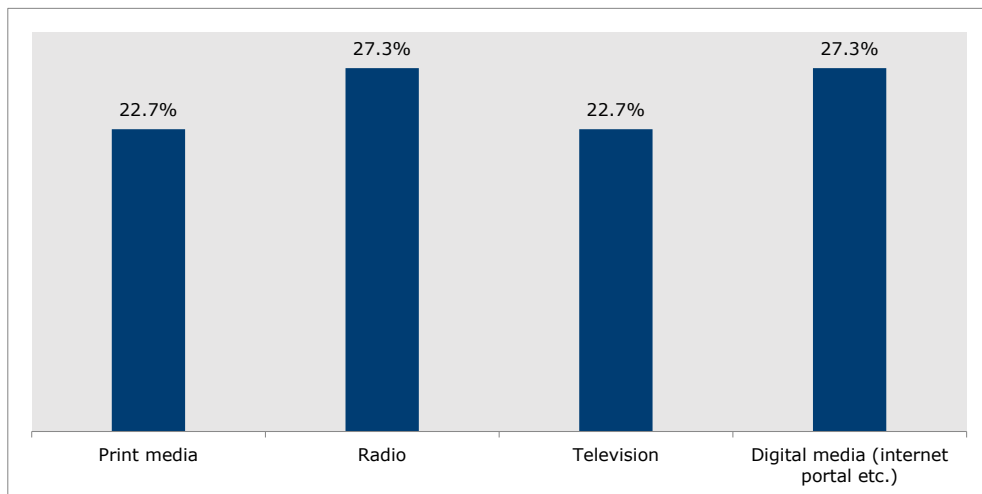


The answers outline an interesting trend. In total, approximately 40 percent of the working journalism students are employed by media outlets. The rest hold other jobs. Out of those working for media outlets, the greatest share (21.4 percent) works part-time, while 14.3 percent work as freelancers. Only around four percent of those who give a positive answer stated that they worked full-time (see Chart 12). The fact that most working journalism students do not work for a media outlet may be interpreted in different ways. On the one hand, this may be a sign of insufficient motivation among students to accept a job at a media outlet. On the other hand, it may be indicative of the limited number of available vacancies (during the past couple of years the Bulgarian media market has shrunk considerably and many media outlets had to close) (Spasov 2014: 78). The access of young journalists to the profession has therefore become harder as compared to the flourishing media market in previous years. Therefore, students often work low-skilled jobs outside of journalism (see the comments to Chart 15).

As far as specific media are concerned, no significant differences were found in Bulgaria regarding the type of media for which the survey respondents worked ($\chi^2=0.182$, $df=3$, $p>0.01$) (see Chart 13).

Chart 13: Type of media outlet for which the student works (N=22)

Question: For what kind of media are you working?

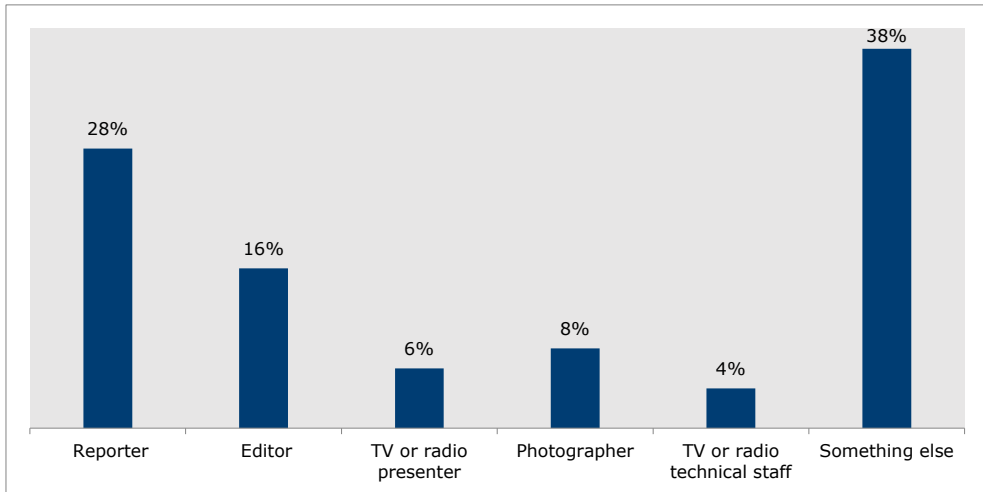


Clearly, print media, radio, television and electronic media enjoy relatively similar popularity in students' preferences. It would be for another study to determine the extent to which the different types of media are open to offering jobs to undergraduates.

Regarding the nature of the work currently or previously done by students, the following results emerge (see Chart 14):

Chart 14: Current or previous work experience (N=100)

Question: *What type of work are you currently doing or did in the past?*



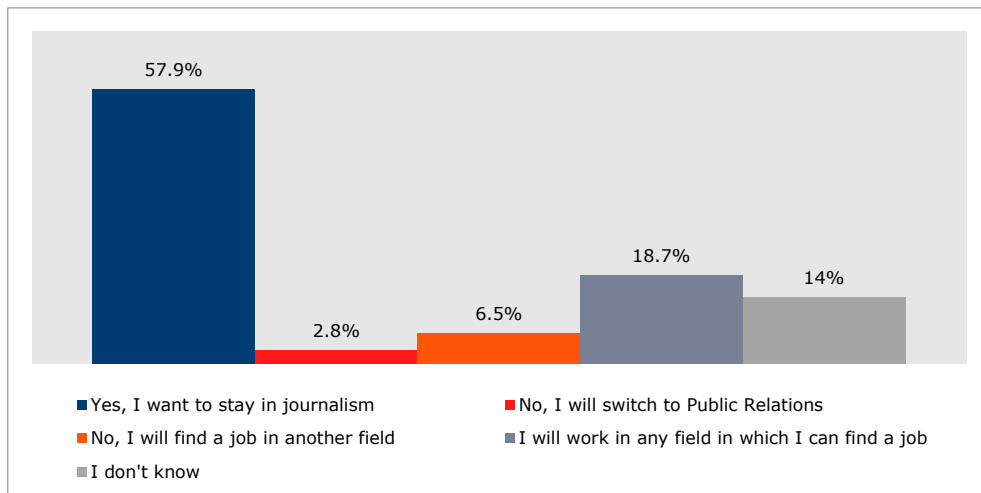
The highest number of students with (current or past) worked as reporters for media outlets, followed by editors, photographs, TV or radio presenters, and TV or radio technical staff. The fact that students are often recruited as editors by professional media outlets reflects the low editorial standards at many Bulgarian media outlets (this is especially true for online media).

Only eight of those who filled in the 'Other' section (a total of 30) stated that they worked in journalism (a position, different from those shown in Chart 14). The other 22 students had worked mostly in the services sector (barman, waiter, shop assistant, promoter, etc.). This means that many students do low-skilled jobs.

5. PROFESSIONAL PROSPECTS

The opinion of the respondents on their future career prospects provides valuable information about the level of connectedness between faculties and the labour market for journalists. Differences were found in Bulgaria in terms of the career plans of respondents following graduation. Most respondents stated that they wished to stay in journalism, while some wished to find a job in Public Relations ($\chi^2=104.54$, $df=4$, $p<0.01$, see Chart 15).

Chart 15: Attitudes towards staying in journalism following graduation (N=107)
 Question: *Will you continue to work in journalism after graduating from university?*

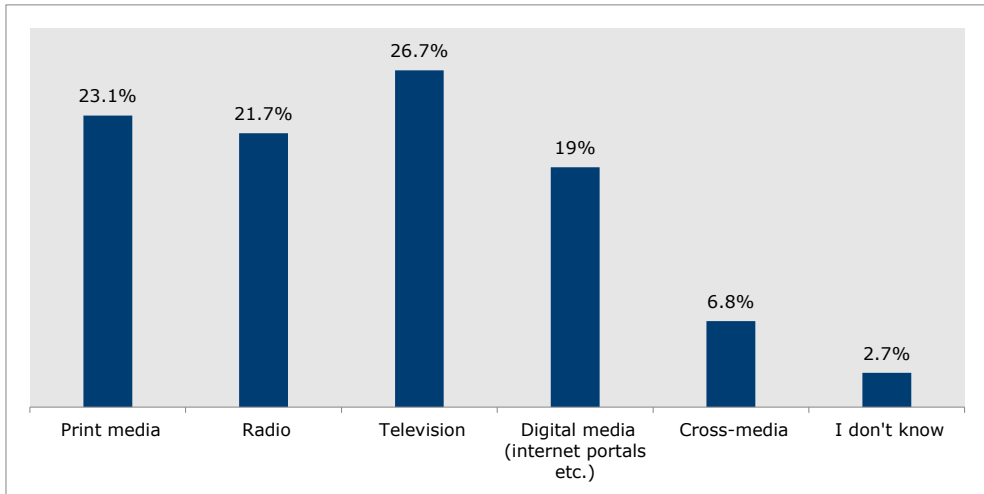


While 57.9 percent of students stated that they planned to work in journalism, a relatively high percentage does not see prospects for career development in the area. These results reflect the uncertainty and volatility of the media market in Bulgaria, which has shrunk considerably against the backdrop of bankrupt media and permanent underfinancing. The percentage of those who state a desire to work in any area where jobs are available is markedly high. Finally, having a degree in journalism is not a guarantee for finding a job in journalism – a trend that has been on the rise for some time. At the same time, journalism remains an attractive university course (as evident from the introduction).

The distribution of the interviewees’ preferences for work at certain media outlets following graduation is as follows (see Chart 16).

Chart 16: Most strongly preferred fields in journalism for students (N=221)

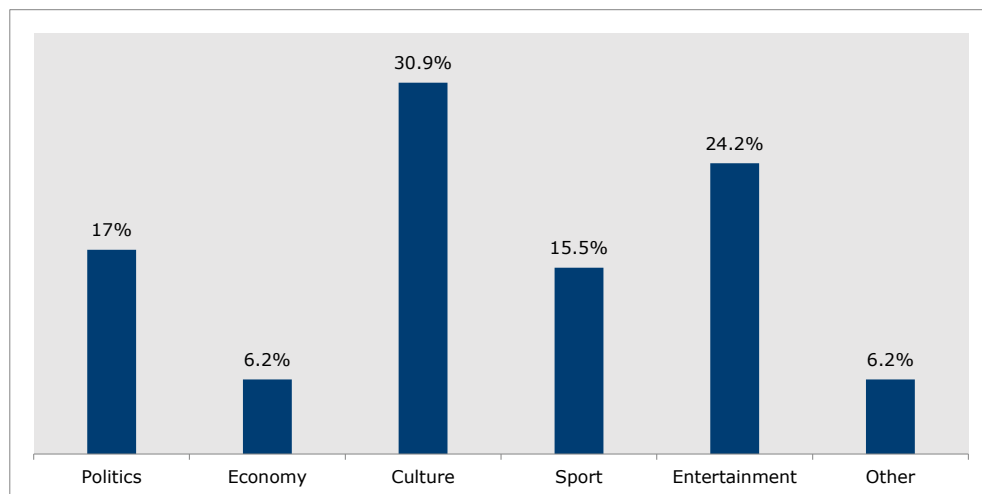
Question: *In what kind of media would you like to work after graduation?*



Television has predictably emerged as the most attractive future career option for students. Over several years to date, it has firmly enjoyed the highest popularity in Bulgaria while evoking, in parallel, the highest level of trust (Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung and Market Links 2015). Print media, radio and electronic media enjoy relatively equal popularity among students as a future career. The preference for television may stem from expectations for better pay, faster promotion and the promise of popularity.

Regarding the attitudes to future work in various fields of journalism, respondents have pointed out the following preferences (see Chart 17).

Chart 17: Preferred field of journalism to work in (N=194)
 Question: *In which field of journalism would you like to work?*



Students found culture and entertainment the most interesting fields. Journalism work in the field of politics was considered far less attractive. Interest in politics was almost the same as that in sports journalism as a possible future career. Interest in the economy was even lower. This distribution of preferences may be interpreted as an expression of students' disappointment with political and economic journalism. This may be attributed to the high level of media dependence on these fields and the general low standard of journalism that characterises them (Spasov 2014: 10). Against this backdrop, entertainment and culture were predictably the most preferred options for career development on account of providing greater freedom and independence.

A handful of students (12 of a total of 107) have given a supplementary reply (in the section entitled 'Other'), with almost half (5 of 12 students) saying that they would like to work in social journalism. The other fields that they pointed out related to culture and entertainment: culinary journalism, fashion journalism and photojournalism.

6. COMPARISONS BETWEEN STUDENTS' PERSPECTIVES

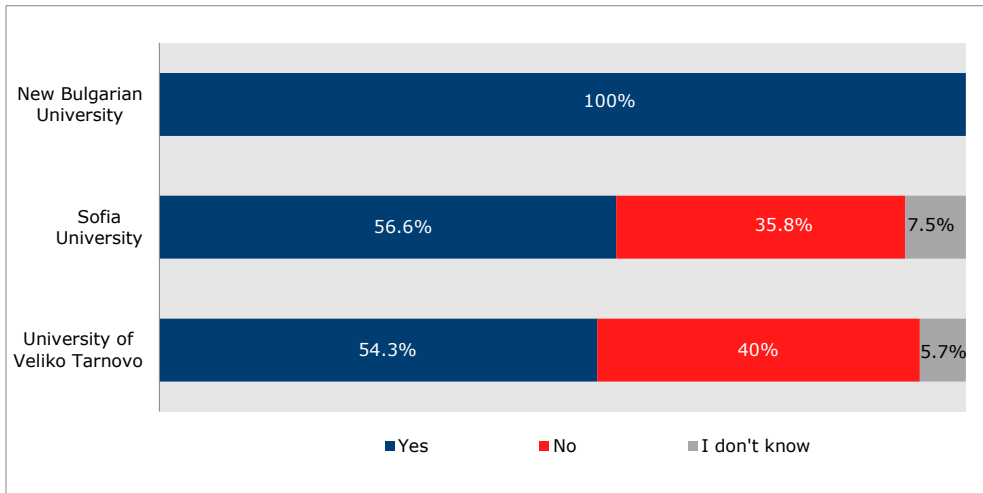
The possibility to discern certain links between answers allows a further more detailed analysis.

For example, there are major differences between various parts of the answers given by the students at the three universities.

There are differences in the level of satisfaction with learning conditions between different universities in Bulgaria (see Chart 18).

Chart 18: Satisfaction with learning conditions at the different universities (N=107)

Question: *Are you satisfied with the learning conditions at your faculty? (library, books, study rooms, workshops and seminars)?*



Significantly, the highest share of satisfied respondents attends the New Bulgarian University while an almost identical share of satisfied respondents was found at University of Veliko Tarnovo (54.3 percent) and Sofia University (56.6 percent) ($\chi^2=13.25$, $df=2$, $p<0.01$). The variation in the answers reflects the differences in the overall conditions of training at the faculties. At large universities, respectively faculties, it is more difficult to create good conditions, while smaller educational establishments are more flexible, better administrated and well-funded. The significantly higher share of satisfied students at the private university demonstrates that state educational establishments should reconsider their attitude to the overall context of studies (including administrative service delivery to students, better maintenance of libraries, etc.) to remain competitive. Naturally, the learning conditions are not a direct indicator of the quality of the process of study but are nevertheless an important prerequisite for it.

There were also differences in the level of satisfaction with the technical equipment available at different universities in Bulgaria. The highest share of satisfied respondents attends the New Bulgarian University (94.7 percent) while the highest share of dissatisfied respondents attends Sofia University (69.8 percent) ($\chi^2=35.08$, $df=4$, $p<0.01$). Many respondents from University of Veliko Tarnovo (68.6 percent) stated that they are satisfied with the level of technical equipment available at their faculty. There is an alarmingly high level of dissatisfaction among students from Sofia University. In recent years, due to the chronic underfunding of the oldest higher educational institution in Bulgaria, the possibilities for upgrading the equipment of the training radio and television studios and newsrooms were severely constricted.

There were also differences in the level of satisfaction with access to the faculty's technical equipment between the different universities in Bulgaria. The largest group of satisfied respondents attends the New Bulgarian University (89.5 percent) and the highest share of dissatisfied respondents attends the Sofia University (58.5 percent) ($\chi^2=20.91$, $df=6$, $p<0.01$). Many respondents from University of Veliko Tarnovo (65.7 percent) expressed satisfaction with access to technical equipment. The Faculty of Journalism and Mass Communication of Sofia University experiences problems in this area. Inadequate access is due to the limited availability of technical equipment. Equipped training studios and halls often have a limited capacity and are overcrowded.

Respondents from the different universities in Bulgaria have varying opinions about the deficiencies of the respective faculties of journalism, which they attend. The highest share of respondents from Sofia University (90.6 percent) and University of Veliko Tarnovo (45.7 percent) state that practical tutorials are insufficient, while most respondents from the New Bulgarian University (57.9 percent) find that there is a sound balance between theoretical knowledge and practical tutorials. The correlation between outdated and hard-to-access technological equipment (mostly at Sofia University) and the stated insufficiency of practical tutorials has been clearly recognised. Having said this, many students from the private New Bulgarian University, where the level of satisfaction with technical equipment and the access is high, state that they would like more practical tutorials (42.1 percent) ($\chi^2=35.80$, $df=6$, $p<0.01$).

Differences were also registered in the practical applicability of knowledge acquired at university. Most students from the New Bulgarian University (63.2 percent) and Sofia University (56.6 percent) stated that they can apply the knowledge acquired at university in practice. Conversely, most respondents from University of Veliko Tarnovo (54.3 percent) state that they have never held a job in media. Only 28.6 percent stated that they had applied the knowledge, as part of the programme of studies in their work as journalists ($\chi^2=15.57$, $df=4$, $p<0.01$).

There was also a difference in the share of students who work in parallel to their studies ($\chi^2=26.25$, $df=4$, $p<0.01$). The highest share of students who held jobs in parallel to their studies is from Sofia University (41.5 percent full-time; 32.1 percent part-time) and the lowest share from University of Veliko Tarnovo (8.6 percent full-time; 11.4 percent part-time). From the respondents enrolled at the New Bulgarian University 21.1 percent stated that they held full-time jobs, with 36.8 percent working part-time. The fact that the student population of University of Veliko Tarnovo accounted for the highest number of non-working students shows that the possibilities to find work outside the capital are severely constrained. On the other hand, most students from University of Veliko Tarnovo were probably residents of Veliko Tarnovo proper or the surrounding areas and could, therefore, live in the homes of their parents during their studies. This considerably reduces the pressure for students to work to earn extra money, allowing them to cover accommodation costs. Many students enrolled at university in the capital come from

other parts of the country and have higher living costs, which forces most to work in parallel to their studies.

The respondents from Bulgarian universities do not differ in their opinion of the importance of guest lecturers ($\chi^2=3.086$, $df=4$, $p>0.01$). Most students found them essential, regardless of university.

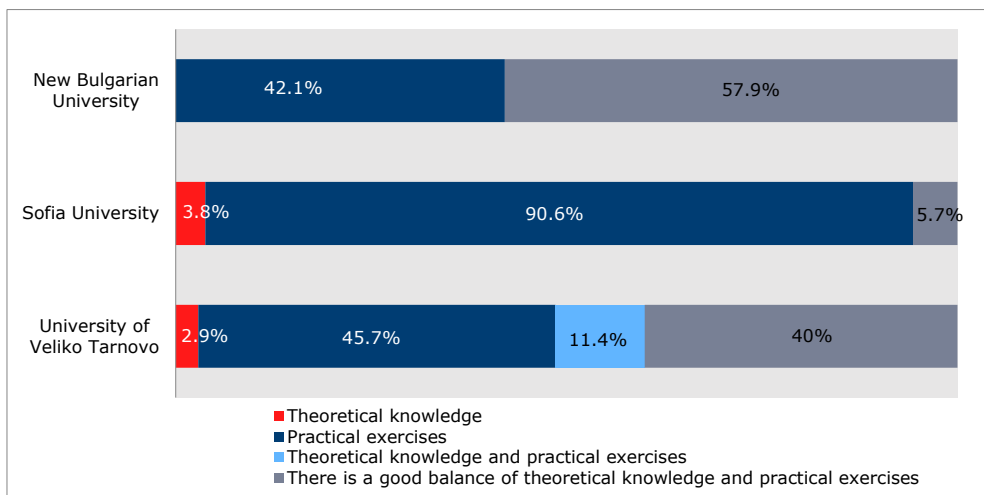
There were, however, major differences between the responses of students depending on the type of university. In Bulgaria, the difference exists between public and private universities in terms of the level of satisfaction with the technical equipment available to the respective faculties. A higher share of respondents from the private university (94.7 percent) stated that they were satisfied with the quality and availability of technical equipment. This compares to only 42 percent of respondents from state / public universities who declared such satisfaction ($\chi^2=18.61$, $df=2$, $p<0.01$).

A corresponding difference between public and private universities was found in the answers concerning access to the faculty's technical equipment ($\chi^2=32.09$, $df=2$, $p<0.01$). A higher number of respondents from the private university (89.5 percent) stated satisfaction with access to the technical equipment as compared to 46.6 percent of students from state / public universities.

A difference was also found between the respondents from private and public universities with respect to the balance between theoretical knowledge and practical tutorials at the faculty of journalism where they are enrolled ($\chi^2=32.09$, $df=2$, $p<0.01$) (see Chart 19).

Chart 19: Deficiencies in theory and practice at faculties (N=107)

Question: Complete the following sentence: The faculty of journalism where I am enrolled lacks...



While most respondents from public universities stated that their faculty lacked practical exercises (45.7 percent for University of Veliko Tarnovo and 90.6 percent for Sofia University), most students from the private New Bulgarian University reported that the balance between theory and practical tutorials at their faculty was adequate (57.9 percent). The correlation between the level of satisfaction with technical equipment and the imbalance between theory and practice stands out: availability of technical equipment of a high standard at faculties is a precondition for better balance between these aspects. However, this is not sufficient in and of itself. This is evident from the fact that 42.1 percent of respondents from the private New Bulgarian University consider practical tutorials at their faculty insufficient.

In Bulgaria, no difference was found between the respondents from private and public universities as regards cooperation between the faculties and local / national media ($\chi^2=3.307$, $df=2$, $p>0.01$); practical application of knowledge acquired during studies ($\chi^2=4.928$, $df=2$, $p>0.01$); experience with internships at media outlets ($\chi^2=0.033$, $df=1$, $p>0.01$); plans to pursue a career in journalism following graduation ($\chi^2=4.887$, $df=4$, $p>0.01$); working in parallel to studying ($\chi^2=1.424$, $df=2$, $p>0.01$); and working in media ($\chi^2=3.431$, $df=3$, $p>0.01$).

There are considerable disproportions in the responses regarding the differences between levels of study.

A difference was found between respondents enrolled in BA and MA programmes regarding their satisfaction with the learning conditions at the faculties. A higher percentage of MA students were satisfied with the learning conditions (89.5 percent). Against this backdrop, only 58 percent of students enrolled in a BA programme reported satisfaction ($\chi^2=6.83$, $df=2$, $p<0.05$). Higher enrolment numbers require more resources, with their unavailability resulting in a higher level of dissatisfaction among students.

A difference was also found between respondents enrolled in BA and MA programme regarding working in parallel to their studies ($\chi^2=11.09$, $df=2$, $p<0.01$). A higher share of respondents enrolled in BA programmes responded that they did not work (51.1 percent), while a higher share of respondents enrolled in MA programmes responded that they worked full-time (57.9 percent) and part-time (15.8 percent). In fact, most working students were pursuing MA degrees. Many MA programmes directly adapt their lectures and tutorials to students' working commitments, scheduling the latter at convenient evening hours.

In Bulgaria, no difference was found between the respondents enrolled in BA and MA programmes regarding taking additional courses in journalism outside of the faculty ($\chi^2=0.145$, $df=1$, $p>0.01$); the importance of guest lecturers ($\chi^2=0.440$, $df=2$, $p>0.01$); the significance of faculty's cooperation with local / national media outlets ($\chi^2=2.867$, $df=2$, $p>0.01$); experience with internships at media outlets ($\chi^2=0.737$, $df=1$, $p>0.01$), etc. These shared values (practices) outline some of the key preferences connected to journalism training.

However major differences were found between the respondents who take part in additional courses related to journalism and those who do not, regarding satisfaction with the faculty's technical equipment ($\chi^2=7.64$, $df=2$, $p<0.05$). A higher number of respondents who took additional courses in journalism responded that they were not satisfied with faculty's technical equipment (64.3 percent), while respondents who did not take such courses predominantly responding they were satisfied with the faculty's technical equipment (56.5 percent). The difference clearly shows that the institutions, offering additional courses in journalism often have better technological equipment than the faculties where journalism is taught.

Besides, the different levels of satisfaction with internships show no difference in terms of pursuing work in journalism.

Against this general backdrop, there were no gender differences in the Bulgarian sample in reporting experience with internships at media outlets; continued work as a journalist following graduation; in working in parallel to studying; and working in the media sector.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

The quality of university journalist training depends on the quality of the overall media environment. Teaching high professional and ethical standards contrasts the state-of-play of the media market, which is dominated by brutal commercial principles and the pursuit of quick profit through media products of a light entertainment / tabloid type. There is an increasing lack of highbrow journalism in Bulgaria. In this sense, the realities on the media market are in a state of permanent contradiction with the key values promoted and affirmed as being universal at faculties of journalism. Journalism education is not sufficiently open to cooperation with high-quality media outlets. The main obstacle is underfunding. The lack of resources hinders the possibilities to invite top journalists to teach courses at universities.

Journalism education in Bulgaria, albeit of generally satisfactory quality, is often out of step with the practice of integrating specific skills (for example, in investigative journalism) and the pace of development of new communication platforms and citizen journalism.

Overall, the Bulgarian education system lags far behind the leading world standards. In the QS World University Rankings for 2015 only one Bulgarian university – Sofia University 'Saint Kliment Ohridski' – found a place (in the group of 700+ out of 863 universities in the world) (Sofia University 2016). Overall, journalism education in Bulgaria trails at a similar distance behind the leading international achievements in theory, research and teaching practices. Over the past few years, many graduates in journalism have sought other fields of employment, being reluctant to work in the media sector. The reasons lie equally in the shrinking media market but also in the declining prestige of the profession (especially in the press), the low salaries and overall climate of growing political and economic pressure

on the media, which strongly constrains the possibilities for free and creative exercise of the profession. This naturally erodes the attractiveness of the profession.

Against this general background, the main problems identified in the analysis of the students' questionnaires allow us to formulate certain useful recommendations.

It is necessary to clearly stipulate the conditions under which students can work in parallel to their studies (mandatory attendance of lectures and tutorials, stricter control over participation in the learning process, more current assignments during studies, etc.). An improvement in the overall environment of journalism education, including administrative service delivery to students and access to information about the workings of faculties, would also be of great benefit. This is particularly applicable to state / public universities.

It is also necessary to improve the quality of teaching (both theory and practice) – upgrading and optimising the content of study programmes, which are often archaic (one of the reasons being the lack of adequate library resources to provide teachers with access to the latest achievements in journalism). The appointment of more young lecturers who would complement and refresh the aging teaching staff at certain faculties would also be useful.

An overall strengthening of the practical aspects of studies and addressing the imbalance between theory and practice in training are particularly important. Against this background, it is necessary to ensure more lecturers and specialists to implement the practical aspects of studies. Additionally, there is a need to increase the relative weight of some preferred courses relating to the curricula: foreign languages, law, history, philosophy, religion. Expanding the volume and improving the quality of courses to acquire professional journalism skills such as investigative journalism, media ethics, media law, multimedia journalism, and sports journalism would also be helpful.

There is an urgent need to provide funding to expand and upgrade the technical equipment used for practice, particularly at state universities. It is also important to improve students' access to the technical equipment available at faculties, including for independent work (outside the academic classes) to enable the implementation of individual projects, etc.

It is necessary to increase the number of guest lecturers (from other universities, including international tutors, outstanding journalists, media experts, specialists in media law, etc.). Promotion of courses in journalism by institutions outside of the faculties (foundations, media, etc.) to showcase the highest standards of journalism by organising master classes in journalism, specialist courses in investigative journalism conducted by top journalists, including foreign journalists, would also be highly useful. We should also note the need to attract prominent investigative journalists to the faculties who are willing to share their experience with students in the framework of courses or separate talks (as guest lecturers)

and highlight the potential benefits of encouraging interaction between the faculties and regional / national media outlets with the purpose of fostering stronger relations between journalism education and practice.

Other possible recommendations concern the more active commitment of faculties to the provision of high-quality student internships at media outlets (signing of agreements between faculties and highbrow media for the admission of more interns) and improving the internship reporting system following completion; faculties should seek to obtain more detailed information about the student's work during the internship and the level of his / her satisfaction.

In general, it is necessary to foster and nurture a closer relationship between journalism education and practical career opportunities and encourage the commitment of faculties to monitor the career possibilities available to students.

In addition to these specific recommendations formulated on the basis of student responses to the questionnaire, more general recommendations relating to journalism education in Bulgaria and to the overall condition of journalism as a profession can be made.

The problems do not only affect journalist training at the respective faculty. At most media outlets in-house training courses are rare, particularly in print media. Training courses for journalists organised by NGOs have become increasingly rare in recent years (Spasov 2014: 79). It is necessary to promote these parallel forms of education and the possibilities to improve the skills of practicing journalists.

Teaching does not sufficiently rely on the state-of-the-art capabilities of multimedia and modern ICT. The faculties should ensure training for their lecturers and a more systematic use of these instruments in the curricula.

The specialised faculty libraries (particularly at state universities) do not have sufficient subscriptions and rarely acquire new international publications. An online access (free of charge for students and lecturers) to the most important international magazines in the field of journalism, media and communications is hardly ever given. An urgent change in and provision of the necessary financing are needed. Faculties should more actively pursue publishing (of specialised magazines, collections, monographs, translations, etc.) to provide better investigative and information basis for the training of students.

There is little cooperation between universities; effectively, there is no sharing of experience between the lecturers at different faculties teaching journalism. Conferences, round tables and other forums should be organised more frequently to discuss the condition of journalism training at national level. The involvement of international lecturers with the purpose of exchange of experience would also be useful. Graduates in other subjects (Western languages, Bulgarian, history, sociology, etc.) are also making inroads

into professional journalism. Journalism faculties should develop measures to enhance their competitiveness.

In Bulgaria, alumni networks are few and far between and most are maintained at an institutional level. It was only during the last couple of years that more serious attention has been given to systematic tracking of professional careers and maintaining contact with alumni following graduation (especially at private universities). There is no independent ranking of universities showing the percentage of graduates who enter the job market and entry-level salaries. Therefore, assessing the relative weight of the different faculties and programmes in finding employment presents a challenge. The faculties should encourage senior university staff to create possibilities for better independent rankings. There should be greater publicity in the work of the senior staff of faculties, including more transparency of the disbursement of available funds.

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CROATIA: JOURNALISM – STILL A POPULAR PROFESSION, AND INCREASINGLY FEMALE

Viktorija Car and Marin Bukvić

1. INTRODUCTION¹

Journalism education dates to the mid-90s when Croatia was part of the Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia. The first journalism programme became available from the Journalism School of the Croatian Journalists' Association (*Viša novinarska škola*) in Zagreb in 1950. However, the programme in question was short-lived, having run for only two years until 1952. Since 1962 a handful of Croatian journalists attended a three-month training course for journalists in Belgrade organised by the Yugoslav Journalism Institute (*Jugoslavenski institut za novinarstvo*). Still the most highly regarded school of journalism at the time (between 1964 and 1970) was the School of Journalism (later renamed to Centre for Journalism Education, *Centar za izobrazbu novinarskih kadrova – CINK*) of the *Vjesnik* Publishing House, which played an important role in the training of future professional journalists. This was the most prominent in-house school for journalists at the time. Almost all big names in Croatian journalism were students of the so-called 'Vjesnik School of Journalism' (Malović 2001).

The first university programme for journalists was established at the Faculty of Political Science (FPS) of University of Zagreb in 1971 as an upgrade on a major field of studies in, for example, political science, economics, sociology, literature, etc. The focus was not so much on journalism but almost exclusively on political science. In 1986, the programme evolved into a fully-fledged four-year study programme in journalism, remaining dominated by political science.

Since Croatia gained independence in 1991, liberalisation of media market has shone a new light onto journalism training programmes. Numerous non-governmental and professional associations began to offer occasional workshops for journalists. An important role was played by the International Centre for Journalist Education (*Međunarodni centar za obrazovanje novinara*, ICEJ), with head office in Opatija, which operated between 1998 and 2008. Numerous training programmes were delivered in form of workshops, conferences, roundtables, etc. However, due to financial and legal irregularities the prominence of the Centre has been in steady decline since 2008.

¹ Data on historical background and present overview on journalism education in Croatia are from the interviews and research done for the country report (Car and Bukvić 2014).

Journalism and media studies also began to develop at university level. In 1996, the Centre for Croatian Studies (HS) at University of Zagreb introduced a three-year training programme in journalism. A new curriculum was introduced at the Faculty of Political Science (FPS) in 2002, with less emphasis on political science theory and more practice-oriented courses on journalism. Another two-year programme in journalism was introduced at the FPS, specifically for journalists who had already completed a two-year training programme in another field. For this group this was a path to a university degree without completing a new full four-year course of study. The higher education system in Croatia embarked on harmonisation with the European Higher Education Standards and the Bologna Process in 2001 and, by 2005, every university programme had been aligned to the Bologna standards. The journalism programme at the HS evolved into undergraduate and graduate study programmes in communication science, while the Study of Journalism at the FPS was extended to 5 years – three years of undergraduate studies (BA) and two years of graduate studies (MA), respectively.²

Today, there are seven public and three private universities in Croatia three of which offer degree programmes in journalism (at BA and MA level). Two are public – the University of Zagreb and the University of Dubrovnik. The University North was founded as a private initiative but is presently owned by the municipalities of the cities Varaždin and Koprivnica. In addition to attending university, journalists can also obtain a degree from the private school of professional higher education VERN and attend occasional workshops, seminars and programmes on topics relating to journalism organised by different professional or non-governmental organisations.

Most university programmes in journalism, except for the BA programme at the FPS, are based exclusively on theoretical knowledge of journalism without a practical component, which is a major disadvantage of journalist training. At the Faculty of Political Science numerous curriculum improvements have been made since 2002 (especially by introducing more journalism courses to replace political science, which was given priority in previous curricula). The problems at other faculties are essentially financial and organisational, such as the unavailability of adequate equipment for the teaching of practical skills.

The Faculty of Political Science offers students the opportunity to work at several students' media, such as *Televizija Student* (Student Television), *Radio Student* (Student Radio), the

² In 2003, the Communication Department of the University of Dubrovnik (UNIDU) started to develop today's undergraduate (BA) programme in Media and Social Culture Studies and the Master programme in Media Studies. The Faculty of Philosophy of the University of Zadar (UNIZD) introduced two-year graduate studies (MA) in Journalism and Public Relations in 2007. In the same year, NCL Media Group (at that time owner of the *Nacional* weekly news magazine) started a three-year BA programme in journalism. In 2011, it was merged with the private school of professional higher education University of Applied Sciences VERN'. A year later, in 2012, the Media University in Koprivnica was established with an undergraduate programme in Journalism Studies. Today it is known as the University North.

student newspapers Global, the blog platform *Studosfera.net*, and the FPS social network profiles on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.

At university level, the standards for teaching methodologies and materials are high. These may sometimes vary depending on teachers' abilities, some being more into theoretical approaches and others prioritising practice-oriented ones. Private education institutions in Croatia face up the challenge of attracting quality tutors as university lecturers are not allowed to work in the public and private sector at the same time. Nevertheless, working for a university is far more prestigious and carries major opportunities for research and international cooperation.

In Croatia, the number of students enrolling into journalism programmes is considered too high (see Chapter 5 'Professional prospects', pp. 82). More than 200 students annually graduate from the BA programmes in media and journalism, and approximately 250 students from the MA programmes in media and journalism. During the academic year 2015 / 2016, a total of 400 students were enrolled in their first year of BA studies and more than 240 in their first year of MA studies.

Table 1: Journalism and media programs in Croatia

University/ School	State / private	Name of Faculty	Name of Programme (s)	Graduated in 2012/13 BA/MA	Graduated in 2013/14 BA/MA	Graduated in 2014/15 BA/MA	First time enrolled in 2015/16 BA/MA
University	State	Faculty of Political Science University of Zagreb	Journalism	189 / 176	119 / 168	117 / 156	135 / 147
University	State	Centre for Croatian Studies University of Zagreb	Communication Science	57 / 79	65 / 102	42 / 63	52 / 44
University	State	Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences University of Zadar	Journalism and Public Relations (only MA)	15	14	20	39
University	State	University of Dubrovnik	Media and Social Culture / Media	25 / 5	15 / 11	32 / 5	45 / 13
Higher Education Institution	Private	University of Applied Sciences VERN'	Journalism (only BA)	21	13	14	44
University	Private	University North	Journalism (only BA)	0*	0	13	74

* The first generation of 50 students entered the programme in 2012/2013, and second generation of 30 students entered in 2013/2014.

Due to the high number of students, most do not have the opportunity to gain any practical experience during their studies, meaning that this group often encounters real journalism only after graduation. A possible solution to this problem may be better cooperation between higher education institutions and local / national media outlets. In-house mentoring is uncommon. Only at the public service broadcaster – the Croatian Radio and Television (HRT) – some funding is available for internships and mentoring, with the quality of internships in most media depending exclusively on the motivation and enthusiasm of individual editors and journalists tasked with mentoring interns.

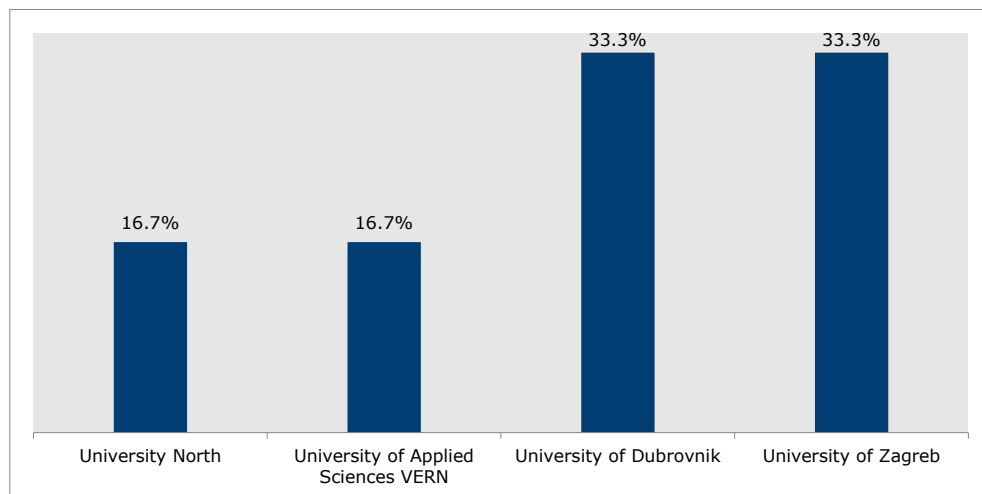
Each journalist in Croatia can, but is not obliged to, become a member of the Croatian Journalists' Association (HND). It is thus impossible to provide a complete picture of the education of individuals working as journalists in Croatia. It is difficult to identify a realistic number of journalists with higher education on account of newsrooms being open to all who an editor or editorial board decides to appoint. According to the 2014 membership report of the HND 59 percent or 1 503 out of 2 540 members received a formal university education (MA, or higher – MSc, PhD). The average age of HND members in 2014 was 51 and 57 percent (1 459) of members were male.

A non-probability (convenience) sample was used to conduct the survey. A sample of 120 students (N=120) of whom 80 from BA programmes (40 public and 40 private) and 40 from MA programmes at public universities was used. The survey involved students from two public universities: University of Zagreb, Faculty of Political Science (20 BA and 20 MA students, respectively) and University of Dubrovnik, Media and Social Culture (20 BA and 20 MA students, respectively), along with two private higher education institutions: the University of Applied Sciences VERN' (20 BA students) and the University North (20 BA students)³ (see Chart 1). Therefore, two-thirds (66.7 percent) of students in the sample were from public universities and one-third (33.3 percent) from private higher education institutions. The same ratio applies to BA and MA students (66.7 percent: 33.3 percent).

³ Authors wish to express their gratitude to colleagues from these four institutions who helped organising the survey.

Chart 1: Distribution of survey participants (N=120)

Question: Please write the full name of the university you attend

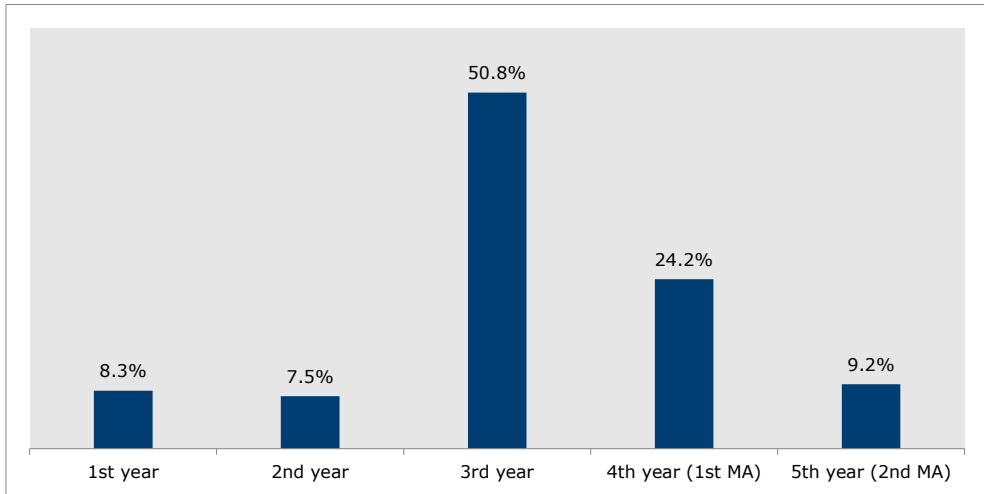


The first group of questions referred to the demographic characteristics of students, such as age and gender, along with general information about the programme in which students were enrolled. Out of 120 students, the oldest was born in 1984 and the youngest was born in 1996. There were significantly more female students (79.2 percent) than male students (20.8 percent) ($\chi^2=40.8$, $df=1$, $p<0.01$). The gender split is interesting because as per the data provided by the Croatian Journalist's Association for 2014 male journalists outnumber their female colleagues. The ratio shows that there is a disparity between the number of women at higher education institutions (where there are significantly more women) and the number of female members of the Croatian Journalist's Association (where men outnumber women).

In the sample (see Chart 2) there were 8.3 percent (10) first-year BA students, 7.5 percent (9) second-year BA students, 50.8 percent (61) third-year BA students, 24.2 percent (29) fourth-year (first year of MA) students and 9.2 percent (11) fifth-year (second year MA programme) students ($\chi^2=82.7$, $df=4$, $p<0.01$).

Chart 2: Year of study (N=120)

Question: Year of study (compared to whole duration of studies)



The survey looked at whether students had completed training or study in other fields before studying journalism and the type of studies completed. Only seven BA students (5.8 percent) had completed another course or study (e.g. political science, interior design, Croatian language and comparative literature).

Furthermore, half of the students from the sample (50.8 percent) did not work in parallel to their studies. From those who did 43 (35.8 percent) worked part-time and 16 (13.3 percent) had full-time jobs.

2. STUDENTS' MOTIVATION AND REQUIREMENTS

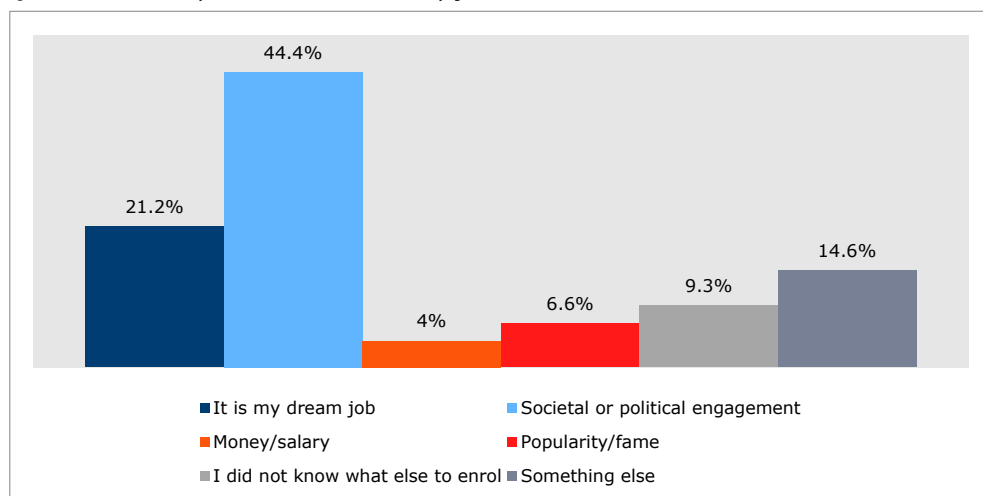
A survey involving 2 000 first-year students and high school graduates was conducted via the high school and university students' web portal 'Srednja.hr' and University College Algebra. It showed that 82 percent of students follow their own inclinations when selecting a faculty to enrol in. For 54 percent, it was important to choose those faculties with programmes that will provide respondents with the best opportunities to be competitive on the EU labour market. Nevertheless, 49 percent of students expressed hopes their future job will be in Croatia. In addition, 49 percent of students from the sample were strongly motivated to study for a profession that will allow them to earn a good living, with only 9.5 percent of them choosing colleges where their friends wanted to study (Srednja.hr 2015).

In Croatia, since the academic year 2009 / 2010 all high school graduates must pass a matriculation exam⁴ as a condition for university admission. The candidates who successfully pass the exam and satisfy all relevant criteria earn a place at the state faculty for which they competed, where tuition is (mostly) free of charge. In contrast, when applying for admission to private higher education institutions, candidates must pass entrance exams with or without regard to the matriculation exam. In 2015, '93 percent of [...] college freshmen were admitted to the faculty which was one of their top three choices, with as many as 61 percent being admitted to the faculty of their first choice.' (Srednja.hr 2015)

To assess the motivation of students to study journalism, the respondents were given a list of possibilities and multiple choice answers. Chart 3 shows that the motivation to study journalism is based on the wish for societal and political engagement (67 responses), with 32 responding that journalism was their dream job, 14 not knowing where else to enrol, ten aspiring to be famous, six wanting a good salary, and 22 stating other reasons, e.g. to work in Public Relations on account of liking communications, writing and researching, the belief that through writing they can do good, make a change or even make the world a better place.

Chart 3: Journalism study motivation (N=151, multiple answers possible)

Question: *What is your motivation to study journalism?*



Ines Jokoš and Igor Kanižaj conducted research in 2012 which, among other things, sought students' opinions on the role of journalists in society. The total sample (N=623) of respondents consisted of BA and MA journalism students from the Faculty of Political

⁴ 'The matriculation exam is a set of exams entailing certain school subjects which students were being taught in during a minimum of four years during their secondary education. The aim of matriculation is to evaluate students' knowledge and skills, acquired through education in line with prescribed education curricula.' (MZOS 2015)

Science and students of Communication Studies from the Croatian Studies Centre. According to the findings 90 percent of the students 'think that Croatian journalists should criticize irregularities and inform citizens of their rights' (2012: 110), with 70 percent stating that a journalist should be 'the interpreter of social events and processes and a spokesman of the people' (2012: 111).

Jokoš and Kanižaj state that 60 percent of students mostly or completely agree that journalists must be intermediaries between citizens and politicians while 40 percent state that they should also assume the role of teachers and educators. Twenty percent express the opinion that journalists should participate as spokesmen for the government – to promote government's political goals in the media. The remainder moderately agree with this claim and the highest share of students has the opposite opinion. The claim, which brought up disagreement between the students in both studies, is that journalists should be versatile entertainers. One-third believes this to be true, the other third disagrees, with the rest being undecided about the claim (2012: 111).

The extent of students' future professionalism as journalists also depends on their desire for progress and professional development outside of the university. 'The general knowledge, which is assumed to have been acquired while studying social sciences or journalism, do contribute, but do not, however, guarantee a success in the professional approach to informing the public about events.' (Vilović 1999: 204) Possibilities to acquire additional journalistic knowledge is available through seminars, workshops and summer schools organised by different institutions and organisations outside of the universities (e.g. Matrix Croatica (*Matica hrvatska*), the Agency for Electronic Media (*Agencija za elektroničke medije*), Croatian Journalist's Association (*Hrvatsko novinarsko društvo*)). Regardless of the availability of such opportunities, as many as 90.8 percent (109) of respondents ($\chi^2=80.0$, $df=1$, $p<0.01$) had never taken any additional courses relating to journalism outside of their faculty. Only 11 students (9.2 percent) had taken courses, such as media events organisation, creative writing, rhetoric school, different types of journalistic workshops, photography courses and workshops, etc. It might be that information about the courses, seminars or workshops on offer is poorly disseminated and fails to reach students who should be better informed by their faculties.

Journalism is a highly interdisciplinary profession, which requires broad knowledge. 'To develop journalists' knowledge about media, education in the broadest sense is required – from mastering the skills and 'secrets' of the occupation, to the development of social sensibility and sensitivity for the issues that promote social democracy.' (Turčilo and Vočkić-Avdagić 2006: 346)

In our survey, we asked students, allowing them a possibility to choose between multiple answers, to consider which type of general knowledge is the most important for journalism. A total of 623 responses were given (see Chart 4).

Chart 4: Students' opinion on the type of knowledge required in journalism (N=623, multiple answers possible)

Question: *What kind of general knowledge is important for journalists in your opinion?*

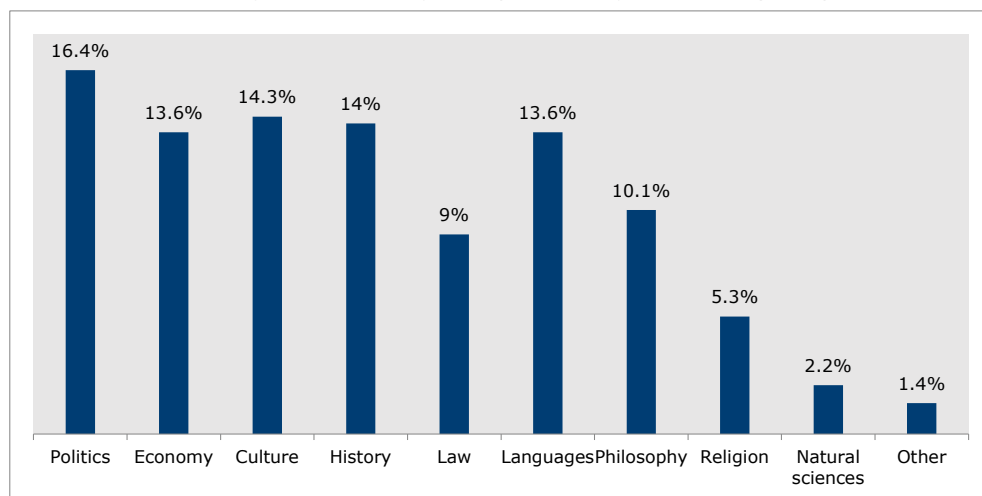


Chart 4 indicates that no specific area was found to be dominant. Thus, the list of the most important types of general knowledge include politics 16.4 percent (102 responses), culture 14.3 percent (89 responses), history 14 percent (87 responses), economy and languages 13.6 percent each (85 responses for each answer), followed by philosophy, law, religion, with the smallest percentage of the responses including natural sciences 2.2 percent (14 responses). The remainder of the respondents (1.4 percent) mentioned sociology, pedagogy and rhetoric, IT, language, grammar and ethics, and four students mentioned the importance of broad general knowledge.

3. HAVE THE EXPECTATIONS OF STUDENTS BEEN MET?

Criticism on the quality of higher education system in Croatia was very loud before the implementation of Bologna Declaration principles, and remains so to date.

'Some of the basic characteristics of the Croatian higher education at the beginning of the 21st century, such as mass enrolment in combination with low efficiency of studying, non-flexible organisational and program structure of the system unable to meet the labour market requirements, dominance of theoretical and a lack of practical work in the classroom, poor equipment and lack of quality control, emphasize the need for changes and improvement.' (Milat 2003 cf. Reić Ercegovic and Jukić 2008: 284)

Croatia signed the Bologna Declaration (EUR-Lex 2015) in 2001. To ensure full respect for the provisions of the Declaration, study programmes were harmonised with the Bologna process in 2005, at least at a formal level. Still, the process is ongoing with continuous

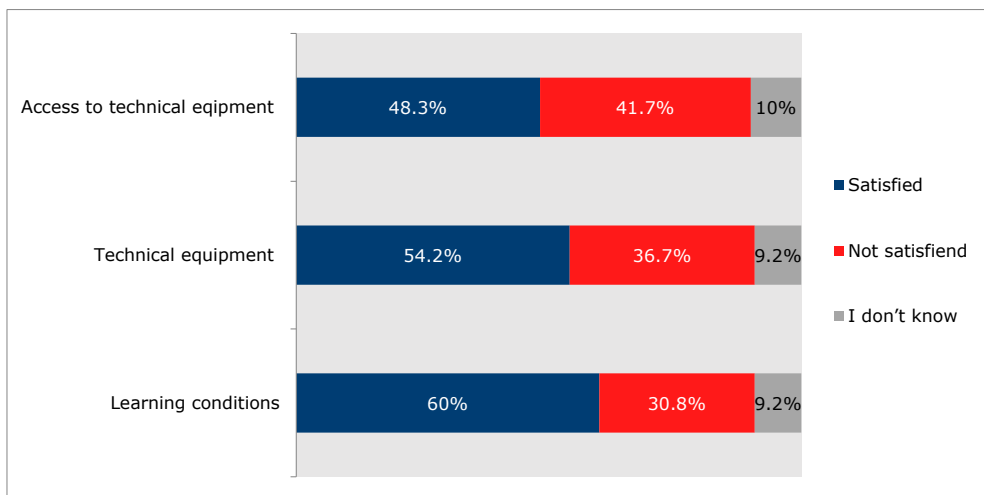
being made for further improvement. The development of the Croatian Qualifications Framework (CQF) commenced in 2006. The CQF is 'a reform instrument for regulating the system of qualifications at all levels in the Republic of Croatia through qualifications standards based on learning outcomes and following the needs of the labour market, individuals and society.' (CQF 2015)

Once the competences required for a qualification were defined, it became easier for students to understand the kind of skills and knowledge they should expect out of the study programme they were enrolled in. Yet at the beginning of their studies, students had their own personal expectations of different competences they needed to acquire for their future occupation – both theoretical and practical knowledge to be applied daily once they have found work in newsrooms.

In this section of the survey we were first interested in finding out if students were satisfied with learning conditions at their faculties (libraries, books, study rooms, workshops, and seminars). Most students (60 percent) reported that satisfaction with the learning conditions at their faculty, while 30.8 percent were of the opposite opinion. It is interesting to note that 9.2 percent of students were undecided (learning conditions: $\chi^2=46.9$, $df=2$, $p<0.01$; technical equipment: $\chi^2=37.05$, $df=2$, $p<0.01$; access to technical equipment: $\chi^2=40.17$, $df=2$, $p<0.01$; see Chart 5).

Chart 5: Journalism students' satisfaction with learning conditions, technical equipment for practical classes and access to technical equipment (N=120)

Questions: Are you satisfied with the learning conditions at your faculty (library, books, study rooms, workshops and seminars)? Are you satisfied with your faculty's technical equipment that you are using for practical classes? Are you satisfied with the access to your faculty's technical equipment that you are using for practice?



The survey showed that 54.2 percent of students were satisfied with the faculty's technical equipment available for practical classes; 36.7 percent are not; and 9.2 percent were undecided.

The next question was similar. It concerned students' satisfaction with access to faculty's technical equipment for practice (e.g. television cameras, microphones, mobile sets for audio-video editing). Slightly less than half of the sample or 48.3 percent expressed satisfaction; 41.7 percent expressed dissatisfaction and 10 percent were undecided.

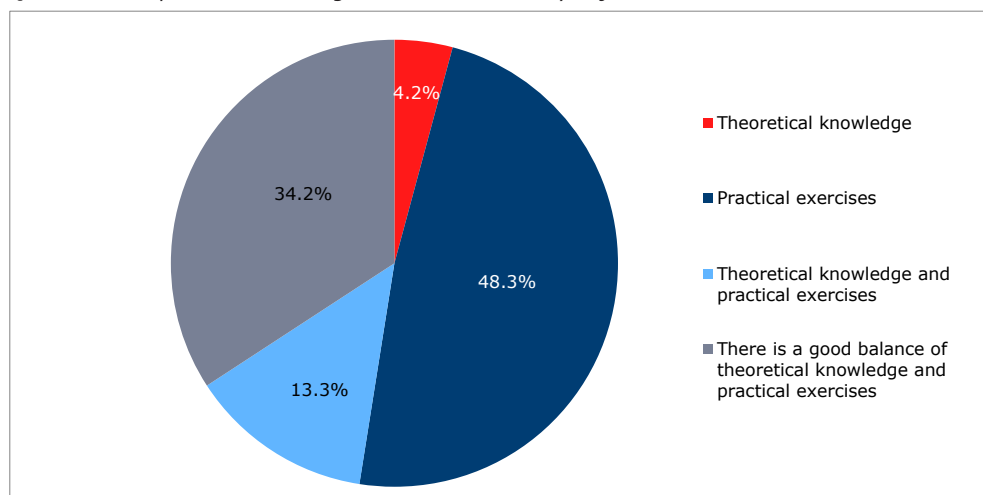
To find out whether the students were satisfied with the balance of theoretical knowledge and practice within study programmes, they were asked to finish a sentence with one of the following answers. The sentence was as follows:

'The faculty of journalism where I am enrolled lacks: (1) theoretical knowledge, (2) practical exercises, (3) theoretical knowledge and practical exercises, (4) there is a good balance of theoretical knowledge and practical exercises.'

Almost half of the respondents in the Croatian sample or 48.3 percent reported that the faculty of journalism where they were enrolled lacked practical exercise; 34.2 percent stating that there was a good balance of theoretical knowledge and practice; and only 13.3 percent stating that the faculty lacked in both theory and practice. Only 4.2 percent of respondents thought that the faculty lacked theoretical knowledge ($\chi^2=57.53$, $df=3$, $p<0.01$, see Chart 6).

Chart 6: Journalism students' opinion on the balance between theory and practice within study programs (N=120)

Question: Complete the following sentence: The faculty of journalism where I am enrolled lacks...



Most students from the sample (82.5 percent) thought that guest lecturers (e.g. professional journalists or other media practitioners) were important, while 10 percent disagreed. The remainder (7.5 percent) were undecided ($\chi^2=130.650$, $df=2$, $p<0.01$).

When asked about any additional faculty courses they would like to attend, most students point out investigative journalism (43 students). The next important course mentioned by 25 students was media production, with 21 students opting for multimedia journalism. Twenty-one students suggested that more courses should be available in the field of media law and media policy, while other stated a preference for media ethics (eleven students), media market (ten students), psychology (seven students), communication skills (four students), Public Relations (four students), sports journalism (three students), etc.

Besides additional courses, we also asked students what else should be improved in the study programme they attend. Almost half (56) responded that curricula need to include more courses with practical orientation. Eleven students believed that the study programmes should not insist on courses that are not related to journalism, with ten stating that tutors should be further educated and expand their practical knowledge.

To conclude, students were generally satisfied with learning conditions, technical equipment for practical classes and access to technical equipment, but were very critical towards the lack of practical courses in study programmes.

4. RELATIONS BETWEEN EDUCATION AND PRACTICE

In this section, the survey considered how students saw the relationship between journalism education and practice. Theory, without a possibility for its simultaneous practical testing, could be a worthless approach. Unfortunately, it is often the case that faculties do not have the appropriate technical conditions for practical classes while cooperation between universities and local or national media outlets has not been institutionalised and largely depends on private initiative.

Besides the opportunity for a hands-on approach in the newsrooms during internships, another added value of cooperation between the universities and media outlets is the approach to disseminate information about job openings or additional longer-term internships. Although there is no clear strategy on cooperation that is of interest to both sides, it is encouraging that 63.9 percent of students already had some experience with internship at media outlets ($\chi^2=9.15$, $df=1$, $p<0.01$). We asked them to rate their overall satisfaction with the internship on a scale from 1 to 5⁵. Students rated it with an average rate of 3.55 (std. deviation = 1.063).

⁵ 1 = very poor, 5 = very good

In Croatia, only students at the Faculty of Political Science of University of Zagreb have an opportunity to gain work experience in television, radio and newspapers within the faculty. There is *Radio Student* with a local broadcasting license for Zagreb, which first started broadcasting in 1996; *Television Student* (the first equipped studio opened doors in 2002 exclusively for practical classes while 2012 *Television Student* became IPTV television, and currently broadcasts 24/7, 4 hours of new programme content every day); the students' newspapers *Global* (fully prepared and edited by students and published a few times per semester), along with a number of the Faculty's social network groups (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram) and blog platforms like *Studosfera.net* (Car and Bukvić 2014 :26).

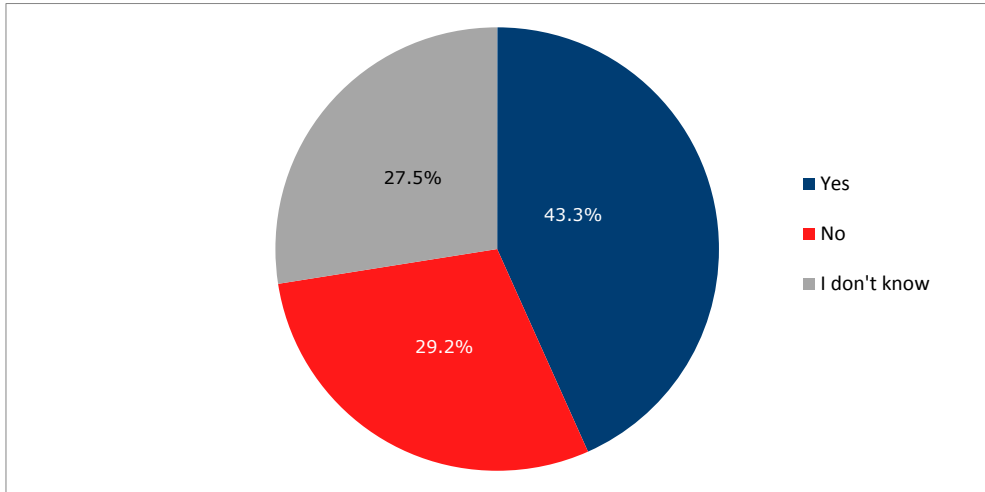
An additional possibility for gaining practical knowledge is the 'Erasmus+' Programme, which enables students to apply for internship in other countries. Student exchange is possible at all levels of study (BA, MA and PhD) and can last between 2 and 12 months. The students are required to do full-time practice at a media outlet (e.g. TV station, local newspapers, etc.) for 6 to 8 hours a day.

Students were asked their opinion on the cooperation between their faculty and media outlets. Although most of them thought that cooperation between the faculty and media outlets was good (43.3 percent), almost a third (29.2 percent) disagreed, with 27.5 percent not knowing whether cooperation is good or not ($\chi^2=5.45$, $df=2$, $p>0.05$, see Chart 7).

Students who expressed a poor opinion on cooperation between faculties and media outlets shared certain ideas on the possible improvement. Thus, 19 students believed that there should be more opportunities for student practice at local media and a better developed information platform to connect them with local media. They found it important that the faculty and the media signed dedicated cooperation agreements. Another solution suggested by (seven) students referred to lectures held by guest lecturers – journalists while three students emphasised the need for better cooperation between the faculties in the form of guest lecturers and student exchange.

Chart 7: Students' opinion on cooperation between their faculty and local / national media outlets (N=120)

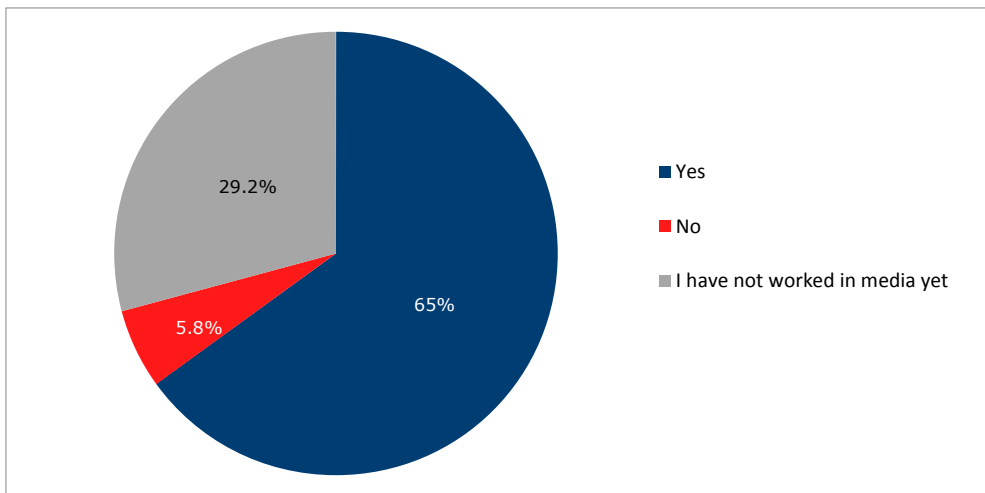
Question: *Do you think that your faculty cooperates well with local / national media outlets?*



Fortunately, most students from the sample (65 percent) stated that they had applied the knowledge acquired at the faculty in practice. Only 5.8 percent of students stated the opposite, with 29.2 percent of them not having had a job in media yet ($\chi^2=63.95$, $df=2$, $p<0.01$, see Chart 8).

Chart 8: Applying university knowledge in practice (N=120)

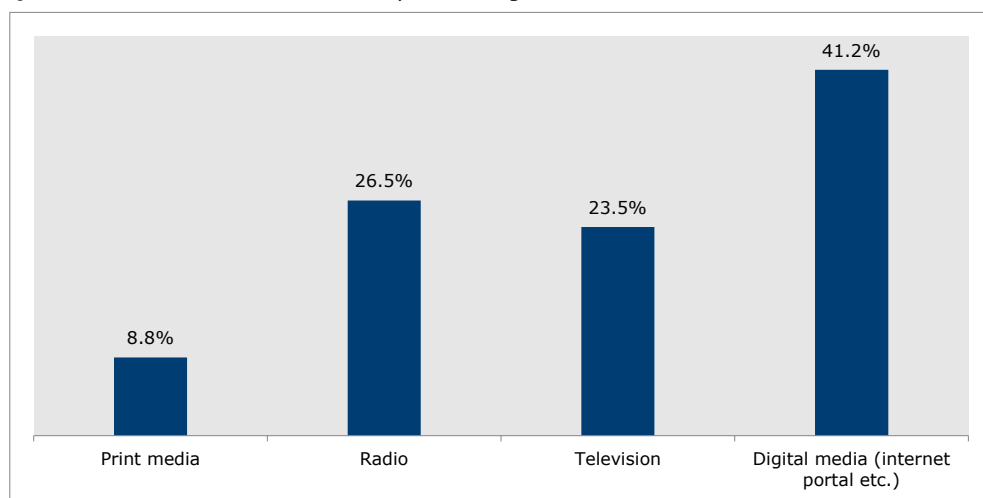
Question: *Have you ever applied the knowledge you acquired at your faculty in practice (in the field of media)?*



Only 17 students answered they worked in media (eleven as freelancers, five part-time, and only one full time). Most worked for digital media, such as websites (41.2 percent), 26.5 percent for radio and 23.5 percent for television, with the lowest share working for print media (8.8 percent) ($\chi^2=7.176$, $df=3$, $p>0.05$, see Chart 9).

Chart 9: Working in media (N=34)

Question: For what kind of media are you working?



Only 16 students answered the question how long they had been working in media. Most (six students) had worked for less than a year; five of them for more than a year, but less than two years; three of them for more than two years, but less than three years, while only two of them work longer than three years.

Most students working in media were news reporters (41.2 percent). Photojournalists was the second most common occupation (15.8 percent), followed by TV or radio presenters (14 percent), editors (14 percent), TV or radio technical staff (10.5 percent), or individually they work as community manager, assistant in production, news-desk manager, etc.

Although most students thought that cooperation between their faculty and media outlets was good, most having already gained some experience with internship at media outlets, a need for better organisation of mentoring, monitoring and evaluation of students' internships or other practical work at media outlets was identified. Without journalists and editors to act as mentors to students during internships and standardised monitoring and evaluation of both students' and mentors' work, it would be impossible to reach any conclusion on the quality of students' practical work and experience as journalists during their internships at media outlets.

5. PROFESSIONAL PROSPECTS

Following graduation, students typically expect to find a job in their chosen professional field. However, they often end up doing different jobs. A major problem for Croatia since the beginning of recession in 2009 has been the steady rise of unemployment, especially among the young and well educated. Croatia has a population of 4 253 000. The peak of unemployment was in 2013 when there were 345 112 unemployed, while the number in November 2015 decreased to 285 946 persons (HZZ 2015a). The official unemployment rate in October 2015 stood at 17.2 percent (DZS 2015). In October 2015, youth unemployment in Croatia was among the highest rates in EU, with a growth rate of 43.1 percent in the third quarter of 2015 (Eurostat 2015).

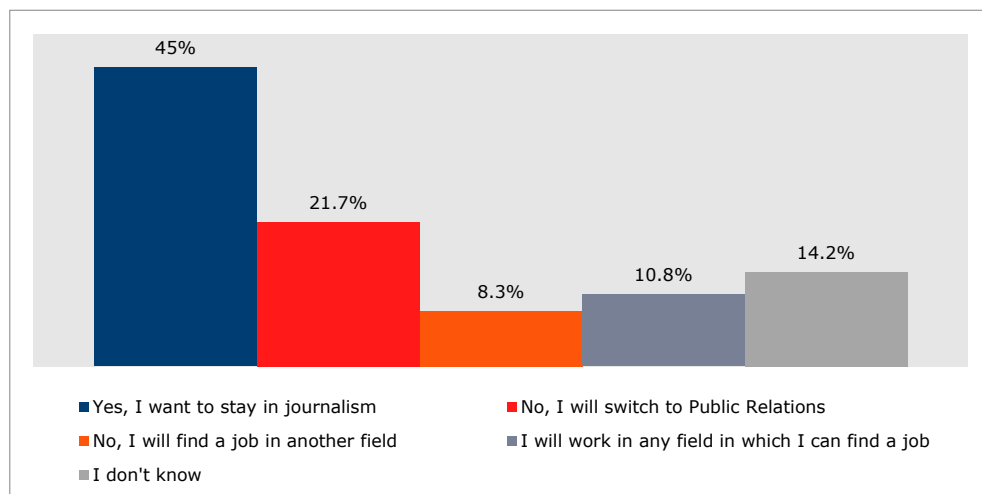
Because of the strongly negative unemployment trend more and more young people decide to look for jobs abroad, especially in Western Europe, Canada and the US. Unfortunately, there is no precise data on the number of Croatian economic migrants as no institution is responsible for collecting and analysing such data. However, it is estimated that in 2013 and 2014 approximately 30 000 people left the country as economic migrants (Romić 2015).

According to Croatian Employment Service data (HZZ 2015b) in November 2015 there were 667 unemployed journalists. There were two times more unemployed women journalists than men (450:217). The largest group of unemployed journalists was aged between 25 and 29 (190) years, followed by those between 30 and 34 years (156), which makes up 52 percent of the total number of unemployed journalists. 71.4 percent of unemployed male journalists had completed education higher than secondary school, holding a graduate or higher degree, while the numbers for women were significantly higher – 92 percent. As for the duration of unemployment, data shows that most unemployed journalists (230) had been unemployed for less than 3 months, followed by the next group (130) of those who had been unemployed between one and two years, and 29 persons who had been unemployed for more than five years. It is hardly surprising that among the 667 of unemployed journalists, the largest number (170) had no prior work experience (HZZ 2015b).

If the total number of unemployed journalists is taken into account, the future for those who will soon complete their studies in journalism or media appears somewhat bleak. We therefore asked students whether they wished to pursue a career in journalism after graduation. Forty-five percent of respondents said that wanted to continue working in journalism, with 21.7 percent wanting to change to Public Relations, 14.2 percent not knowing what they wanted to do in the future, 10.8 percent saying they would do any kind of job available, and the lowest percentage of students (8.3) wanting to pursue a career in another field ($\chi^2=52.92$, $df=4$, $p<0.01$, see Chart 10).

Chart 10: Continuing to work in journalism after graduation (N=120)

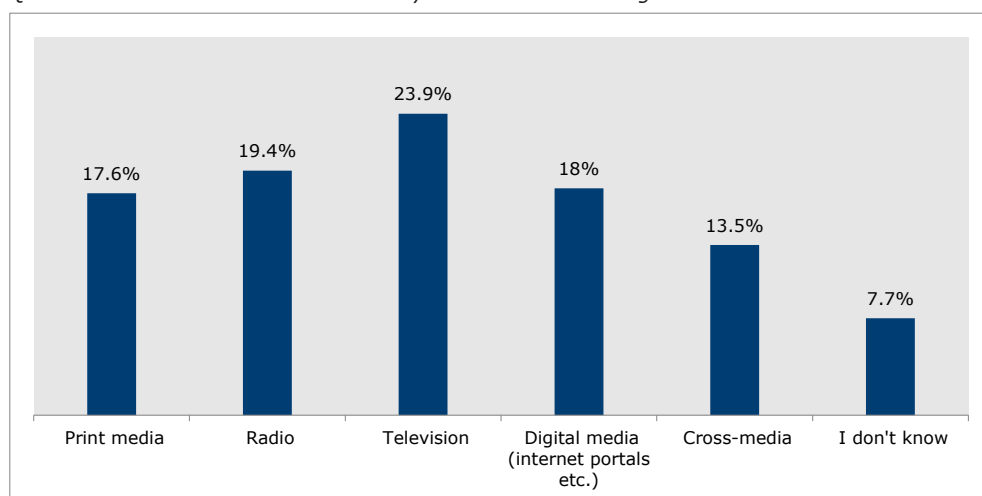
Question: *Will you continue to work in journalism after graduating from university?*



We further asked students what type of media they wished to work for following graduation. They could choose between print media, radio, television, digital media or cross-media with a possibility for multiple answers. Chart 11 shows that students were mostly interested in working in television (23.9 percent), followed by radio (19.4 percent), digital media (18 percent), print media (17.6 percent) and cross-media (13.5 percent). It is important to note that 7.7 percent of students did not know what type of media they preferred to work for.

Chart 11: Student's interest in media (N=222, multiple answers possible)

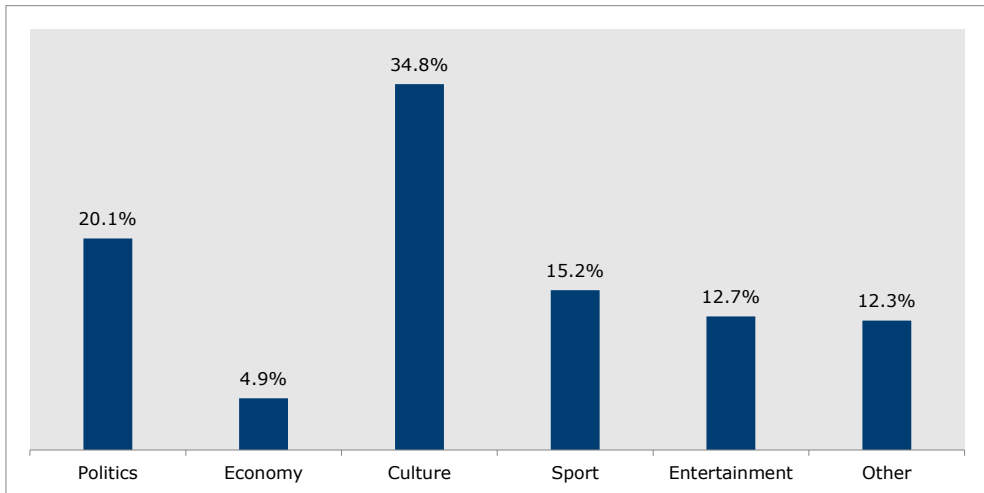
Question: *In what kind of media would you like to work after graduation?*



In our survey students were offered a list of different areas of specialisation within journalism and asked in which they would like to work. Multiple answers were allowed. Most students chose culture (34.8 percent), followed by politics (20.1 percent), sports (15.2 percent), entertainment (12.7 percent) and other, i.e. lifestyle, travel, trivia, fashion, technology, psychology, etc. (12.3 percent), and economy (4.9 percent) (see Chart 12).

Chart 12: Student interest in specific fields of journalism (N=204, multiple answers)

Question: *In which field of journalism would you like to work?*



It is interesting to compare the students' wishes with the 'real world' of journalism in which culture in the media is almost non-existent. Srećko Lipovčan (2003) wrote an academic article on culture and the media, stating that there are four basic levels of relationship between the media and culture. All of them are compatible, but functionally very different. The first one is providing information about culture. The second one is critical reception of cultural values. At the third level media provides an environment for the realisation of cultural forms. Finally, at the fourth level – which understands the content of the first and the second level as a common structure – media serves as a source for understanding cultural values. (Lipovčan 2003: 912)

This understanding the role of media assumes that most students are attracted to culture as a social area important enough to be present in the media. But in 'media reality' culture is almost absent, including on television and in the newspapers. Maybe culture should rather be regarded as an underdeveloped media field with a potentially bright future. On the other hand, the low interest of students in economy and the inadequate level of interest in politics should sound an alarm bell for teachers and curricula planners.

6. COMPARISONS BETWEEN STUDENTS' PERSPECTIVES

In this chapter, cross-sectional data analysis will be presented on the basis of the results showing a notable difference between gender, universities, types of university, levels of study, differences based on taking additional courses relating to journalism outside of the faculty, differences in internship experience, satisfaction with internships, differences in plans to pursue a career in journalism, and differences in the preferred media to work for.

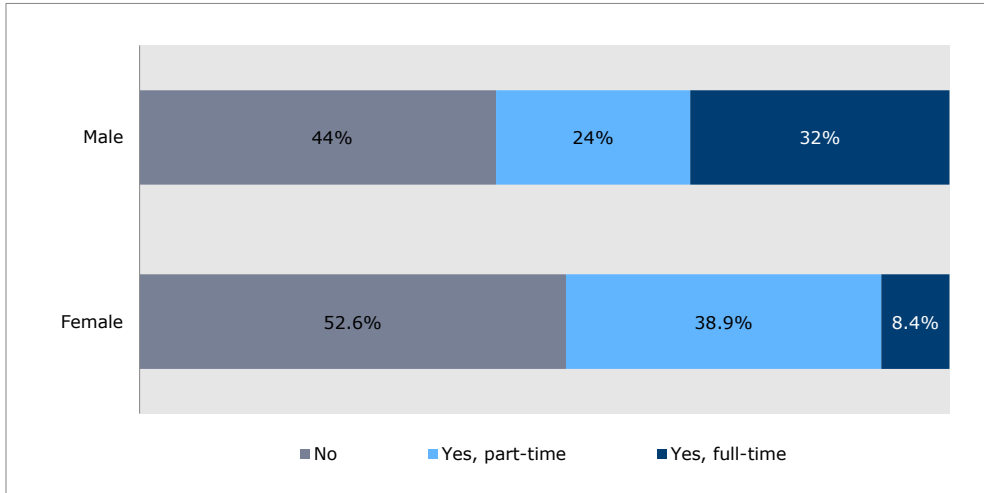
Gender differences

As already noted in the introductory part (pp. 71), the Croatian sample comprises 79.2 percent female students and 20.8 percent male students, which points to journalism becoming a female profession, if it hasn't already done so. One of the research questions in this survey was whether there were any gender differences in attitudes towards the practical work and experience during the study, and possible differences in future preferences.

The survey found that male students have more work experience (any kind of job) while studying as compared to female students ($\chi^2=9.78$, $df=2$, $p<0.01$, see Chart 13). Thirty-two percent of male students worked full-time in parallel to their studies, with 24 percent working part-time. On the other hand, as many as 52.6 percent of female students stated that they were not working.

The Chi-square ($\chi^2=4.8$, $df=3$, $p>0.05$) indicates that there is no significant difference between male and female students working in media: 50 percent of male students work in media (28.6 percent full-time and 21.4 percent as freelancers) as compared to 40 percent of female students (8.9 percent full-time; 11.1 percent part-time; and 20 percent as freelancers). As female found part-time work more often than male students, it seems that the latter have an advantage here: more are working and doing so in full-time jobs.

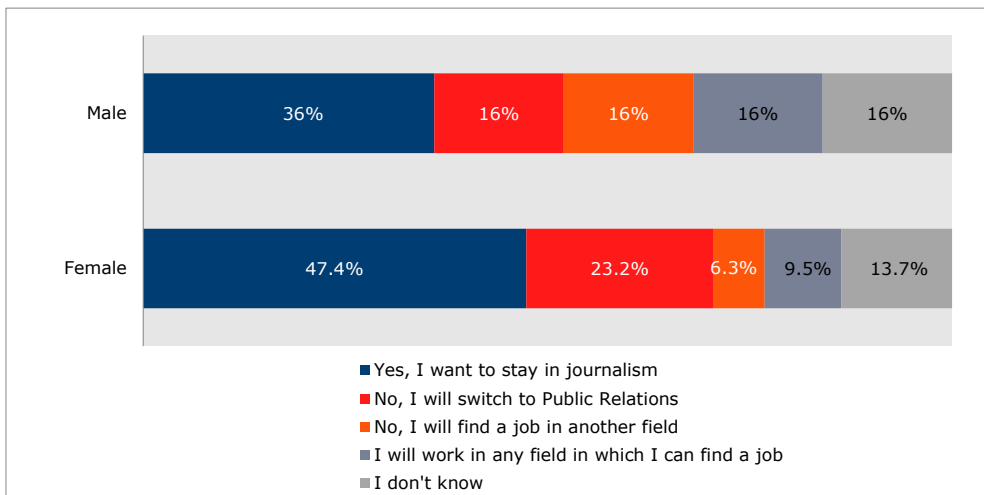
Chart 13: Differences in students' gender and work experience while studying (N=120)



There were no gender differences in internship experience, regardless of the media outlet. The same percentage of female (63.8 percent) and male (64 percent) students took internships ($\chi^2=0.00$, $df=1$, $p>0.05$).

There was also an equal split between the male and female students to stated that they wished to pursue a career in journalism ($\chi^2=4.12$, $df=4$, $p>0.05$, see Chart 14).

Chart 14: Continuing to work in journalism following graduation (N=120)



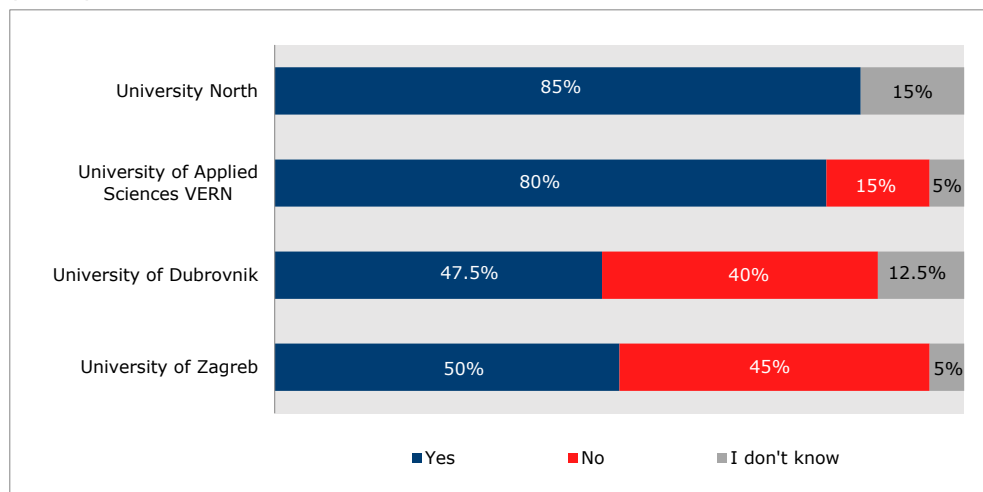
In the framework of a future study it would be interesting to investigate the reasons why women students work less frequently than men in parallel to their studies.

Differences between universities – quality of study programmes

In this section, we will compare the differences between the four universities in the sample in terms of their public or private status. Recalling what we already noted in the Introduction (pp. 70), the survey was conducted on a sample of 120 students (N=120), including 80 students from public universities (University of Zagreb, Faculty of Political Science and University of Dubrovnik, Media and Social Culture) and 40 students from private higher education institutions (the University of Applied Sciences VERN' and the University North). Therefore, two-thirds (66.7 percent) of the sample were students at public universities and a third (33.3 percent) from private higher education institutions.

Students from private universities were more satisfied with learning conditions as compared to public universities students ($\chi^2=19.00$, $df=6$, $p<0.01$, see Chart 15). Importantly, the highest share of satisfied respondents attended the University North, followed by those attending the University of Applied Sciences VERN', matched by an almost equal share of satisfied respondents from the University of Dubrovnik and the University of Zagreb. The students from the Faculty of Political Science of the University of Zagreb voiced the strongest criticism (45 percent answering they were not satisfied with learning conditions), followed by those from the University of Dubrovnik (40 percent of students voiced dissatisfaction), with the largest percentage of uncommitted students (12.5 percent) being from the University of Dubrovnik.

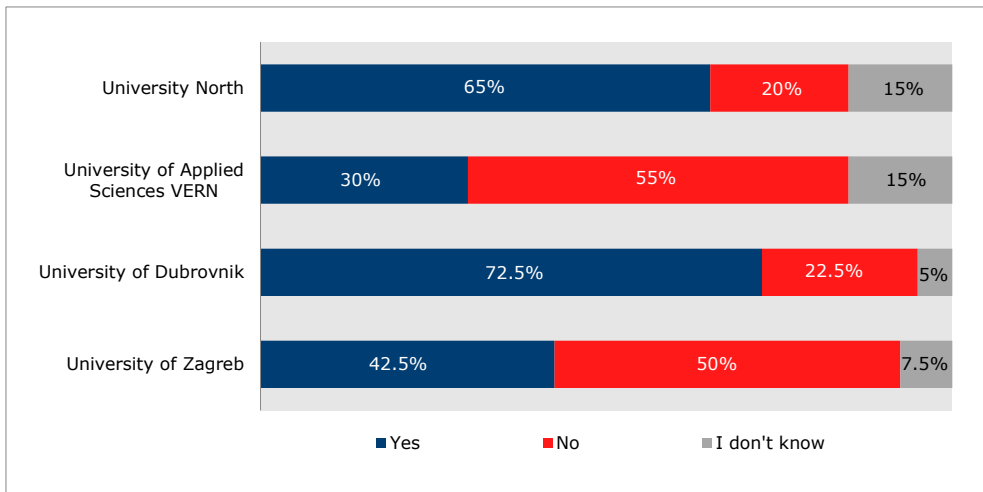
Chart 15: Differences in the level of satisfaction with learning conditions (library, books, study rooms, workshops and seminars) of the students from different university colleges in Croatia (N=120)



When we asked students if they were satisfied with the technical equipment available for practical training at their faculties, opinions were divided and we cannot tell whether public or private school students were more satisfied ($\chi^2=31.13$, $df=8$, $p<0.01$, see Chart 16). The highest proportion of satisfied respondents attended the University of Dubrovnik (72.5 percent), while the highest share of dissatisfied respondents attending the University of Applied Sciences VERN' (55 percent). It is interesting to note that the second most dissatisfied group comprised students from the Faculty of Political Science of the University of Zagreb (50 percent of dissatisfied students); although it is the only faculty with its own fully-equipped television studio, radio studio and newspaper. It would be interesting to investigate the reasons for such criticism.

When we asked students if they were satisfied with access to available equipment, the answers were almost identical. The only difference was noted in the student population from the University of Dubrovnik. Despite a generally high level of satisfaction (72.5 percent) with the technical equipment available at the faculty, only 55 percent of respondents expressed satisfaction with access to the equipment.

Chart 16: Differences in the level of satisfaction with the technical equipment used for practical tuition between state / public and private universities (N=120)

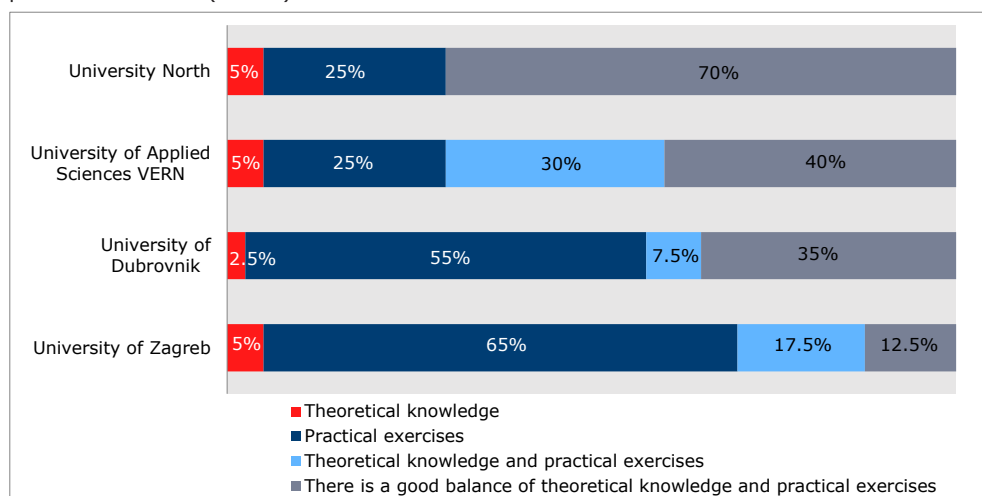


Although the students of the Faculty of Political Science have the best and the most advanced technical media equipment, those of the University of Dubrovnik were the most satisfied with the technical equipment available at their faculty. When we asked them what the programme they study lacks, most students from the two faculties answered that the greatest deficiency was the lack of practical tutorials. This probably means that students are not satisfied with the opportunities for practice. Both faculties are public ($\chi^2=29.17$, $df=9$, $p<0.01$, see Chart 17).

On the other hand, the students of all faculties thought that there is a lack of theoretical knowledge, except for VERN' students who responded that a combination of theoretical knowledge and practical exercises (30 percent) was missing. The students from the University North were the most satisfied, with 70 percent believing that there is a good balance of theoretical knowledge and practice.

A general comparison between the four institutions at the public / private level reveals that only 23.8 percent of students at public faculties think there is a good balance of theoretical knowledge and practical exercises, with 55 percent of students at private schools thinking that there is not the case ($\chi^2=14.61$, $df=3$, $p<0.01$). Again, it would be important to investigate the reasons for (dis)satisfaction to see if their satisfaction is related to the quality or easiness of the of study programmes (less to study, better grades).

Chart 17: Differences in students' opinion on the balance between theoretical knowledge and practical exercises (N=120)



All students agreed on the importance of guest lecturers in overwhelming numbers: 90 percent at VERN' students, 85 percent of students at the University North and the FPS of the University of Zagreb; and 75 percent at the University of Dubrovnik ($\chi^2=5.96$, $df=6$, $p>0.05$).

Differences between universities – quality of studying outside the faculty's facilities and working experience

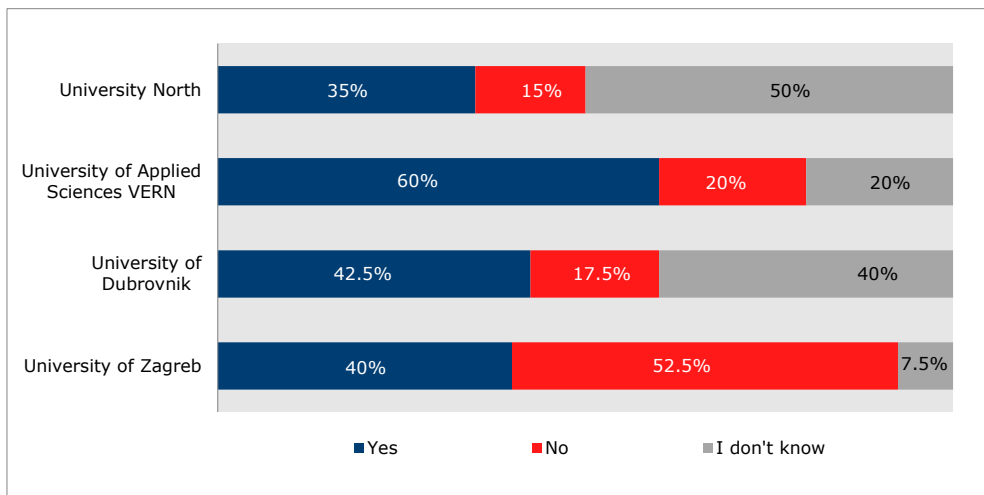
Earlier in the report we already noted the importance of knowledge and experience, which students can receive outside of the study programme. This can be organised through internships or can be independent from the study programme, such as a real job or hands-on experience at a media outlet. There are different individual approaches to media outlets

and many students do not need official guidance. However, the general results are better where institutional agreements and standards for internships have been put in place. Cooperation with national or local media provides a good platform for students' practical work and hands-on learning.

The insignificant chi-square ($N=120$, $\chi^2=4.27$, $df=2$, $p>0.05$) indicates that private and public school students do not differ in satisfaction in terms of the cooperation between their faculties and media outlets.

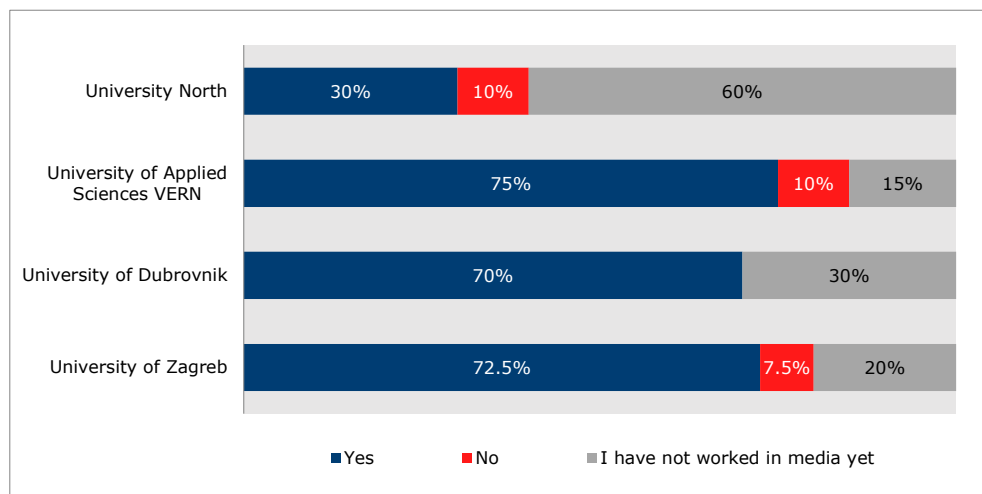
VERN' students form the highest share of those who responded that cooperation between university and local media was adequate (60 percent), with students from the University North (50 percent) and the University of Dubrovnik (40 percent) not knowing the answer and most FPS students (52.5 percent) being dissatisfied with the cooperation between university and local or national media as well ($\chi^2=25.18$, $df=6$, $p<0.01$, see Chart 18).

Chart 18: Differences in students' opinion on the cooperation between their faculties and local / national media outlets (N=120)



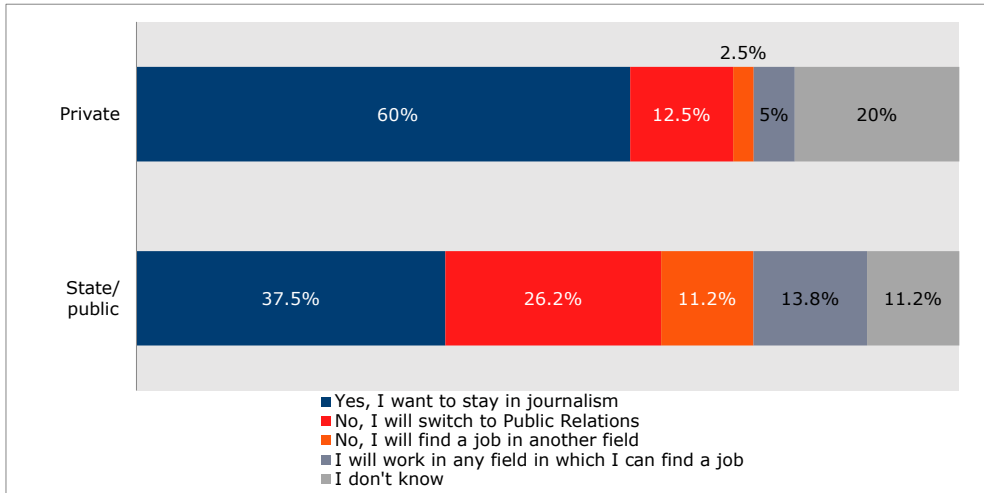
It is important for students to have an opportunity to apply the knowledge acquired at the faculty in practice, be it in the newsroom or at a different media outlet. Although students were critical when complaining of lacking practical work, when asked if they have ever applied learned knowledge and skills in practice, most students at three faculties (70 percent and more) answered that this was indeed the case ($\chi^2=17.35$, $df=6$, $p<0.01$, see Chart 19). Only the students from the University North gave a negative answer as 60 percent of them had not had a job in media yet. In this case, public universities seem to be in a better position. Moreover, more students from public universities had the opportunity to take an internship (69.6 percent) against 52.5 percent from private schools having had this opportunity ($N=119$, $\chi^2=3.37$, $df=1$, $p<0.01$).

Chart 19: Differences in students' practical application of the knowledge acquired while studying at different Croatian universities (N=120)



Students from private universities had a stronger motivation to continue pursuing a career in journalism following graduation ($\chi^2=11.10$, $df=4$, $p<0.05$, see Chart 20). Sixty percent stated that they wished to stay in journalism (the same percentage was registered both at VERN' and at the University North), with 25 percent of VERN students wanting to work in Public Relations (no one from the University North gave this answer). At the public universities, only one-third of students (37.5 percent) wanted to remain in journalism – this is more valid for FPS students (47.5 percent) than for Dubrovnik University students (27.5 percent). One-quarter of public university students (26.2 percent) stated that they wished to work in Public Relations. This time, the University of Dubrovnik had the highest share of such students (32.5 percent). The results for each university are as follows ($\chi^2=24.44$, $df=12$, $p<0.05$).

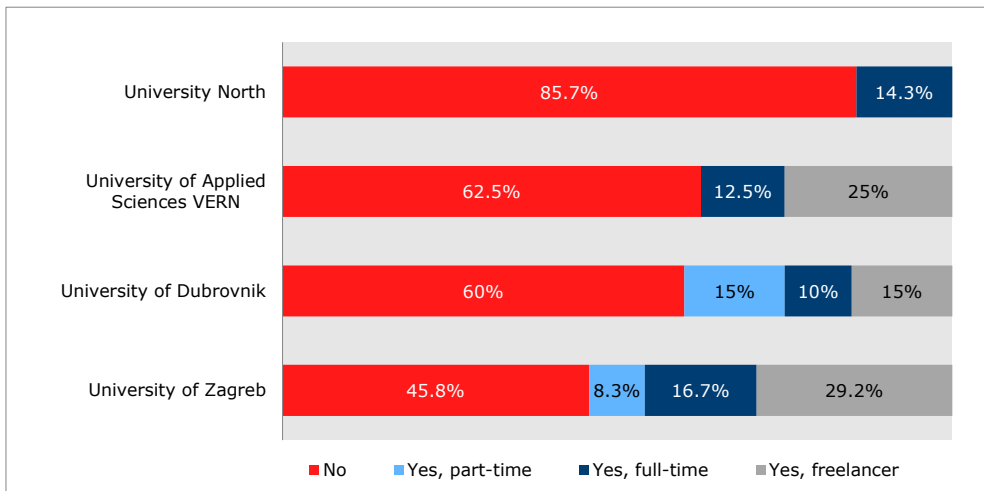
Chart 20: Public / private university students' motivation for a career in journalism (N=120)



There was no significant difference between the shares of journalism students who worked in parallel to studying in Croatia. There were 60 percent of students from FPS who did so (out of that 25 percent working full-time) and 50 percent of students from University of Dubrovnik (out of that number only 10 percent worked full-time). In addition, 40 percent of VERN' students and 35 percent of University North students also worked ($\chi^2=8.95$, $df=6$, $p>0.05$).

Not all students had jobs in media. From the population of working students (N=59), most had jobs in media at public universities. Out of all students working in media, most were freelancers ($\chi^2=6.94$, $df=9$, $p>0.05$, see Chart 21).

Chart 21: Working in media while studying (N=59)



As only 25 students responded to the question about the type of media they worked for, the results are not representative. However, it is important to mention that most of the 25 students (10) responded they worked for digital media (other options were print media, radio and television).

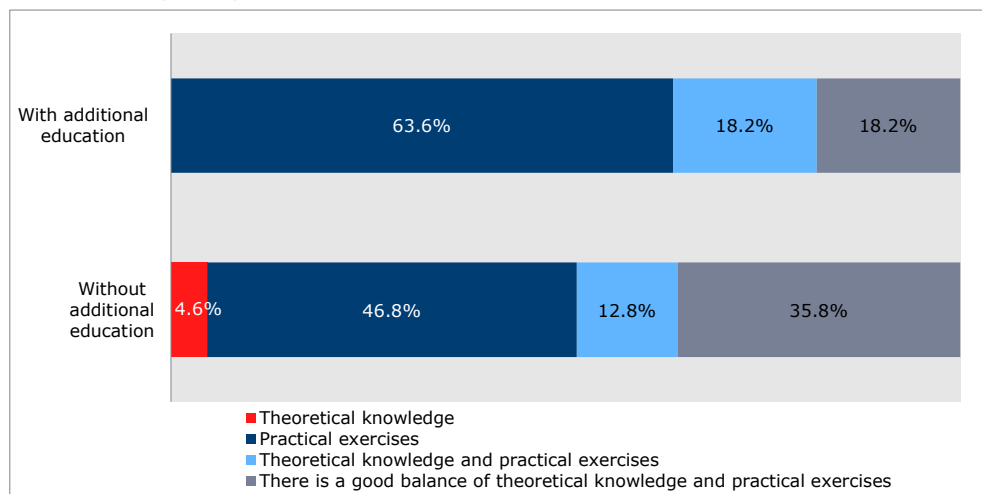
Differences between BA and MA students

Predictably MA students had a stronger interest in journalism and have more extensive work experience than BA students.

Still, students at both MA and BA level took additional courses relating to journalism outside of their faculty with equal frequency ($N=120$, $\chi^2=2.45$, $df=1$, $p>0.05$).

The students who took additional courses in journalism were generally completely satisfied with the balance of theoretical knowledge and practical tutorials but were very critical of the latter – 63.6 percent believed that the programme they are enrolled in lacked a focus on practical work. On the other hand, students who did not take any additional courses, were much less critical, with 35.8 percent believing that there was a good balance between theory and practice at their faculty ($\chi^2=2.21$, $df=3$, $p>0.05$, see Chart 22).

Chart 22: Differences between students with and without additional education outside of the faculty and their opinion on the balance between theoretical knowledge and practical work at their faculties ($N=120$)

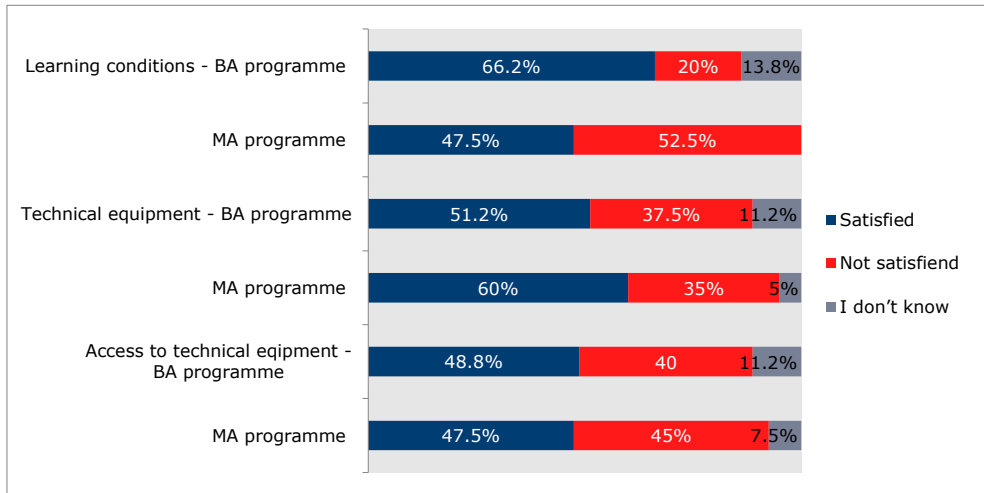


As expected, MA students were more critical of learning conditions – more than half reporting dissatisfaction (52.5 percent) as compared to BA students ($\chi^2=16.20$, $df=2$, $p<0.01$). Both BA and MA students were satisfied with the technical equipment available for practice ($\chi^2=1.56$, $df=2$, $p>0.05$) and no significant difference was found in BA and MA

students' criticism of access to the technical equipment available at the faculties ($\chi^2=0.54$, $df=2$, $p>0.05$) (see Chart 23).

Chart 23: BA and MA journalism students' satisfaction with learning conditions, technical equipment for practice and access to it (N=120)

Questions: Are you satisfied with the learning conditions at your faculty (library, books, study rooms, workshops and seminars)? Are you satisfied with your faculty's technical equipment that you are using for practical classes? Are you satisfied with the access to your faculty's technical equipment that you are using for practice?

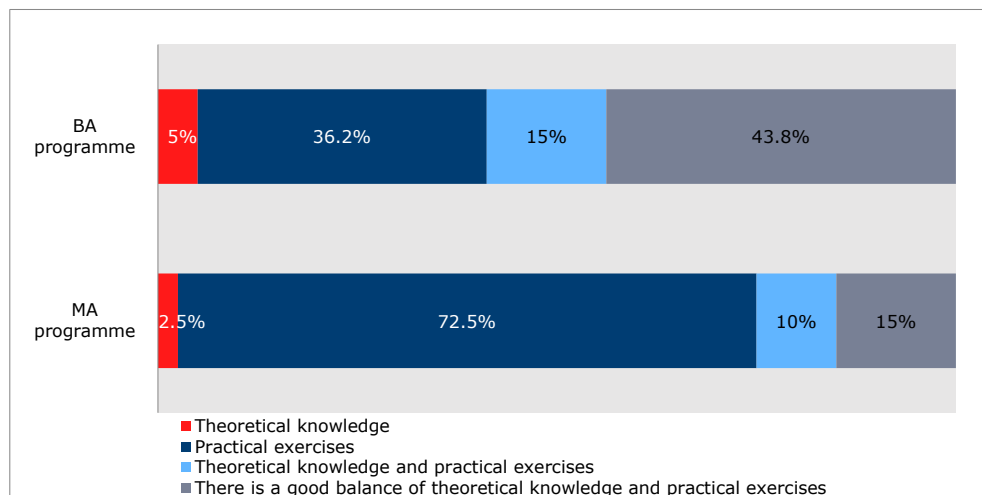


We further tested if two groups of students (those who took and did not take additional courses) differed in certain attitudes (level of satisfaction). Those students who took additional courses relating to journalism were more satisfied with faculty's technical equipment (63.6 percent) (learning conditions: $\chi^2=0.18$, $df=2$, $p>0.05$; technical equipment: $\chi^2=7.04$, $df=2$, $p<0.05$; access to technical equipment: $\chi^2=1.51$, $df=2$, $p>0.05$).

There was no significant difference in the level of satisfaction of students who did not take additional courses relating to journalism with learning conditions ($\chi^2=0.18$, $df=2$, $p>0.05$) technical equipment ($\chi^2=7.04$, $df=2$, $p<0.05$) and access to technical equipment ($\chi^2=1.51$, $df=2$, $p=0.05$).

When we asked students what type of training is unavailable at their faculty, again MA students were more critical than BA students. Most BA students (43.8 percent) believed that there was a good balance between theory and practice, with almost three-quarters of MA students (72.5 percent) wanting more practice ($\chi^2=14.60$, $df=3$, $p<0.01$, see Chart 24). Both groups of students agreed on importance of guest lecturers, with 88.8 percent and 70 percent for BA and MA students, respectively (N=120, $\chi^2=7.64$, $df=2$, $p<0.05$).

Chart 24: Differences in BA and MA students' opinion on the distribution between the theoretical knowledge and practical exercises (N=120)

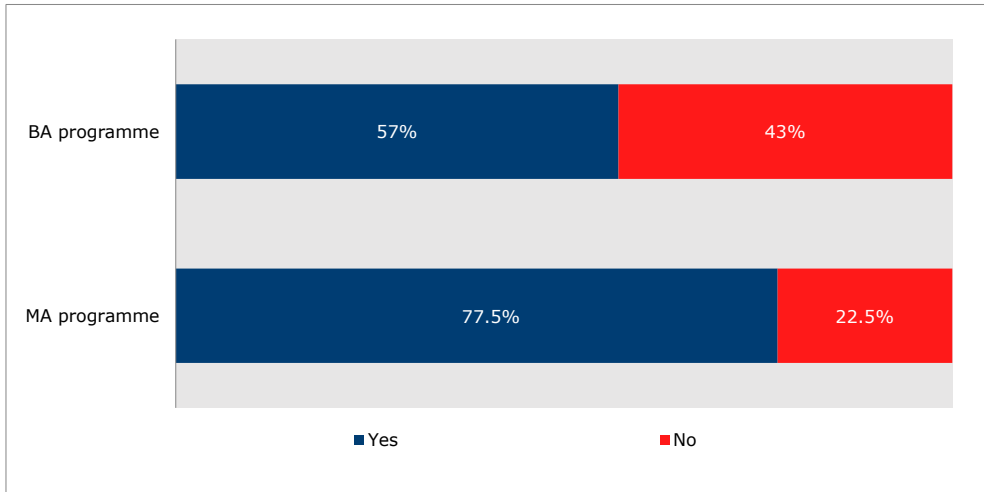


In Croatia, no significant difference was found between respondents enrolled in BA and MA programme in terms of their opinion on the cooperation between their faculty and local / national media outlets. One-third (35 percent) of MA students and almost half of BA students (47.5 percent) thought that their faculties cooperate well with local or national media outlets but, importantly, one-third (32.5 percent) of MA students and 25 percent of BA students had no opinion on this ($N=120$, $\chi^2=1.744$, $df=2$, $p>0.05$).

More MA students (75 percent) than BA students (60 percent) had already applied the knowledge acquired at the faculty in practice (in the field of media). Furthermore, as expected, a higher share of MA students (77.5 percent) had experience with internship at media outlets ($\chi^2=4.85$, $df=1$, $p<0.05$, see Chart 25).

Chart 25: Differences in BA and MA students' internships (N=120)

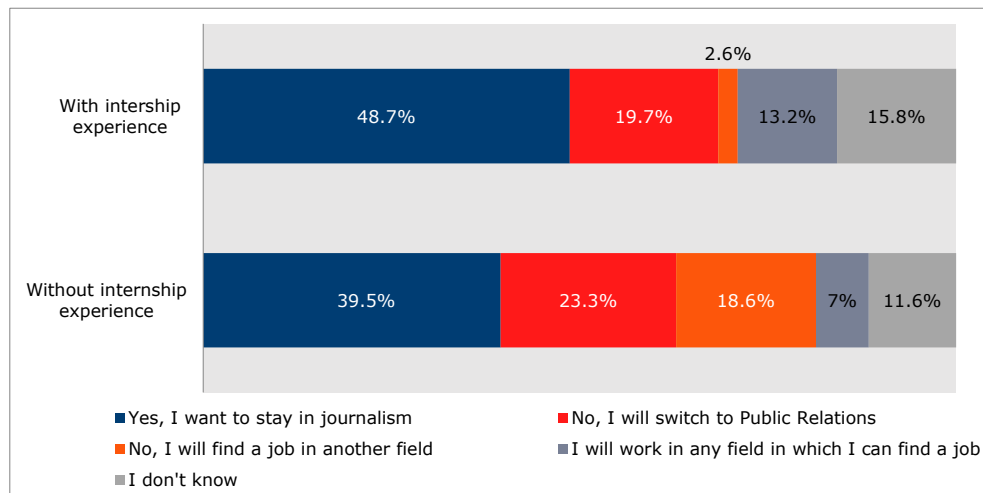
Question: *Do you have any experiences with internships at media outlets?*



MA students have more work experience than BA students. While studying, 65 percent of MA students work (two-thirds of working MA students work part-time). 41.3 percent of BA students work alongside studies (N=120, $\chi^2=7.48$, $df=2$, $p<0.05$).

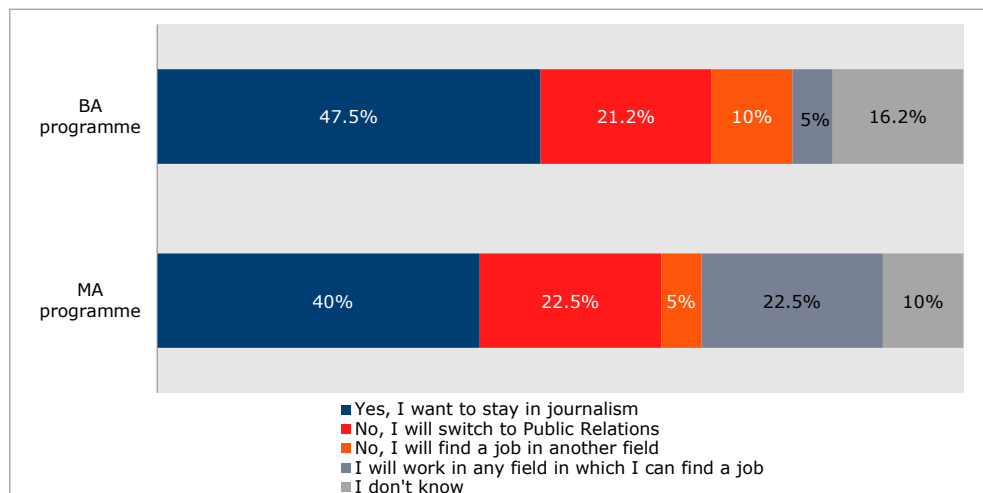
Furthermore, the current survey shows if there are any differences between students' experience with internships in media and their wish to continue working in journalism after graduation. Regarding plans to continue working in journalism after graduation, students who had experience with internships at media outlets reported in higher proportion that they want to stay in journalism (48.7 percent), while respondents who did not have experience with internship at media outlets reported in higher proportion that they want to find job in another field (18.6 percent) ($\chi^2=10.30$, $df=4$, $p<0.05$, see Chart 26). No difference between students that rated internship satisfaction from 1 to 5 regarding their plans to continue working in journalism was found (N=120, $\chi^2=24.60$, $df=20$, $p>0.05$).

Chart 26: Differences between students who had experiences with internship and their wish to continue building a career in journalism after graduation (N=119)



Albeit more experienced, MA students seemed more disappointed in journalism. This perception could well be rooted in having more experience. Only 40 percent wanted to continue working in journalism following graduation. One-quarter stated that they would like to work in Public Relations, with another quarter being happy to accept a different job proposal. On the other hand, almost half of BA students (47.5 percent) stated that they would like to work as journalists following graduation ($\chi^2=9.43$, $df=4$, $p=0.05$, see Chart 27).

Chart 27: Building a career in journalism following graduation – differences in the opinions of MA and BA students (N=120)



There was no significant correlation between students' experience of working in media and their decision to pursue a career in media following graduation.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

The results of mapping journalism education in Croatia (Car and Bukvić 2014) and the survey conducted on a sample of 120 BA and MA students in journalism or media studies from public and private universities (FPS – University of Zagreb, University of Dubrovnik, VERN' and the University North) warrant some general conclusions about students' perceptions of journalism education in Croatia, along with recommendations that might be considered in the future.

Our first conclusion is that journalism in Croatia is becoming an increasingly female occupation (see also Knežević and Car 2011: 80). From a gender perspective, it would be interesting to conduct future research on how the profession has changed and developed as increasingly feminine. It would also be important to investigate the reasons why journalism has been transformed from exclusively male into a predominantly female profession. How that can be explained from a social perspective? Is there a link to salaries?

The availability of courses and programmes on journalism at different levels, which is considered adequate, is generally handled by public or private institutions in Croatia. This said, their quality varies on a wide scale. As we did not evaluate programmes and curricula, we cannot give recommendations on improvement of deficiencies, but can emphasize that indicators point to a need for improvement.

The motivation of young people to study journalism is high. This is evident from the fact that during the academic year 2015 / 2016 a total of 400 students enrolled as first-year BA students of journalism and media studies and more than 240 enrolled as first-year MA students of journalism and media studies. This brings the total to 640 students. However, Croatian Employment Service data shows that this number almost corresponds to the 667 registered unemployed journalists. A comparison between the two figures reveals a lack of communication between universities and private higher education institutions on the one side and the Croatian labour market on the other side. This demonstrates that either the numbers of students pursuing degrees in journalism should be reduced or that the competences students acquire must change. The Croatian Qualifications Framework (CQF 2015) is a reform instrument for regulating the system of qualifications at all levels across the country through qualifications standards based on learning outcomes and aligned to the needs of the labour market, individuals and the society. CQF should provide the platform for future evaluation of the number of enrolled students and the qualifications that are required to achieve during the course of study. It is important to improve the communication between universities and higher education institutions, on the one hand, and labour market for journalists, on the other hand.

Having this in mind, it is hardly surprising that less than a half of students (45 percent) from the survey expressed willingness to pursue a career in journalism, with almost 22 percent of them thinking of transitioning from journalism to Public Relations. Students from private universities have stronger motivation to pursue a career in journalism following graduation. The survey also found that MA students predictably had a stronger interest in journalism, coupled with more work experience than BA students.

The high number of students means that most do not have an opportunity to gain practical experience during the course of study, with their first encounter with real journalism only after graduation. A possible solution to the problem may be improved cooperation between higher education institutions and local / national media outlets.

Survey data shows that only 9.2 percent of students had taken additional course relating to journalism outside of their faculty (i.e. media event organisation, creative writing, rhetoric school, different types of workshops for journalists, photography courses and workshops, etc.). It would be important to investigate whether this is due to the low student motivation, poor availability of seminars, workshops and courses or the failure of information to reach students. On the other hand, faculties are to develop internal evaluation of studying programmes to be able to continuously improve learning conditions and access to the technical equipment needed for practice. Students are particularly unsatisfied with the practical training aspect of study programmes. Faculties should therefore offer more opportunities and platforms for hands-on learning – both within faculties (student media) or cooperation with local or national media outlets.

The students who take additional courses in journalism were completely satisfied with the balance of theoretical knowledge but were strongly critical of practical training – 63.6 percent believing that the programmes they were following were deficient in this respect. Students of public universities were more critical when evaluating learning conditions and cooperation with media outlets. It is important to evaluate all journalism programmes in Croatia in qualitative terms. It is equally important to foster a stronger connection between theory and practice as a means of improving current curricula.

Students were offered a list of different fields of specialisation within journalism and asked in which they would like to work. Most students chose culture (34.8 percent) and politics (20.1 percent). It will be important to research the quality of knowledge on culture and politics students receive at faculties of journalism and, more generally, the content of learning material on media and cultural industries, media production and media management. These fields always appear to lag behind, the question being where the relevant expert who teach the subjects are being educated. It is also important to boost students' motivation and expand the opportunities available to them to specialise in topics relating to the economy, along with other important journalistic topics and fields.

Students are mostly interested in working for television (23.9 percent), radio (19.4 percent), digital media (18 percent), followed by print media (17.6 percent) and cross-media (13.5 percent). It would be interesting to investigate why television, being a traditional media, is still very popular among students. Further research could investigate if journalistic study programmes in Croatia are sufficiently modern to prepare journalists and media content creators for work in multimedia and cross-media environments in line with the notion that open access information platforms and general connectivity prioritise the social dimension of media. Moreover, future research should focus on the media market, technology and content provision and examine whether contemporary university programmes in journalism educate journalists and media developers for the twenty-first century, and not for the traditional media of the twentieth century.

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ROMANIA: STUDENTS ASKING FOR NEW TEACHING METHODS AND BETTER EQUIPMENT

Liana Ionescu

1. INTRODUCTION

In Romania, journalism programmes have enjoyed great prominence in university education during the last 26 years. Sparked by a real need on the media market and confronted with a lack of academic tradition, formal journalism education had to satisfy a high demand. During the communist regime journalism studies at university level did not exist. Only one programme was available from the School of the Communist Party, named Academia 'Ștefan Gheorghiu', where the so-called students in journalism were prepared to become media propagandists for the communist regime.

Since 1990, when the first journalism education programme was introduced at the Faculty of Journalism and Communication Studies from the University of Bucharest, other journalism programmes of higher education have also been established. The number of students has been increasing annually, with thousands of graduates during the first two decades. 'Journalistic education turned into a successful business.' (Coman 2010)

The availability of study programmes in journalism was significant in terms of number, but hardly comprehensive in terms of the quality of instruction (Ionescu 2014). Naturally, year by year important steps have been made towards improving teaching methods and materials (technical equipment, textbooks) to involve professors with a background in journalism. Since they were first introduced, journalism curricula have been extensively modified.

From the academic year 2005 / 2006 onwards, the Bologna Process in which Romania participated has created the framework for the application of a common, EU-wide approach. The reforms were mainly aimed at restructuring all degree programmes to correspond to a three-year course of study for BA degrees (undergraduates), a two-year course of study for MA degrees (graduates), and a three-year postgraduate course for PhD degrees in communication studies. For the BA study programme restructuring meant a simplification of the study process: one-year courses became six-month courses; general knowledge disciplines, such as 'Culture and Civilization' were carved out. In other words, BA journalism programmes became more akin to vocational school, delivering media workers for the labour market in a short period of time. The MA programmes are better suited to those who would like to improve their knowledge and qualifications. However, many MA students have jobs already and cannot devote

sufficient time to their studies. Their goal is to obtain a MA degree in order to be able to advance in their career.

Having a common vision of teaching journalism, Romania now also has a national curriculum, which is followed by all departments and faculties with programmes in journalism. For example, foreign languages, digital media and media ethics courses, which did not exist before 2005, are currently a common requirement and feature of all programmes. The national journalism curriculum places a stronger emphasis on practical instruction, teaching methods and materials being adapted to practical approaches. Although the Ministry set up the national curriculum as a requirement for obtaining accreditation for journalism programmes, there are differences in application between the institutions. The faculties where journalism is the main area of study are more skills-oriented than those operating within a larger faculty, such as a faculty of communication studies or foreign languages (Ionescu 2014).

With a handful of exceptions, the journalism programmes are organised as departments or lines of study embedded within faculties where Literature, Political Science, Foreign Languages or Communication and PR are taught. During the last five academic years, many departments had to close their doors: the number of students decreased each academic year as the media market experienced increasing constraints in parallel. On the other hand, according to academic and public debate, media quality is far from high journalistic standards. Media are losing their credibility and journalism education is undoubtedly part of the problem.

Professors, practitioners, analysts in the field and representatives of media outlets all agree that a better quality of journalism requires improvement of journalism education (Rosca 2011, 2013; Vlad and Balasescu 2010). A reliable starting point is to survey the perceptions and expectations of the students enrolled in academic journalism programmes. What was their motivation to enrol? Are they satisfied with the learning conditions and technical equipment at their faculty? What are their aspirations in the profession of a journalist and how their plans about their future career in journalism are shaping? These are some of the questions, which the present survey aims to provide answers to.

The study of the perceptions and expectations of Romanian students of journalism was conducted between February and March 2015 using a questionnaire containing 30 questions. Students from four different universities with journalism faculties or departments participated in the survey.

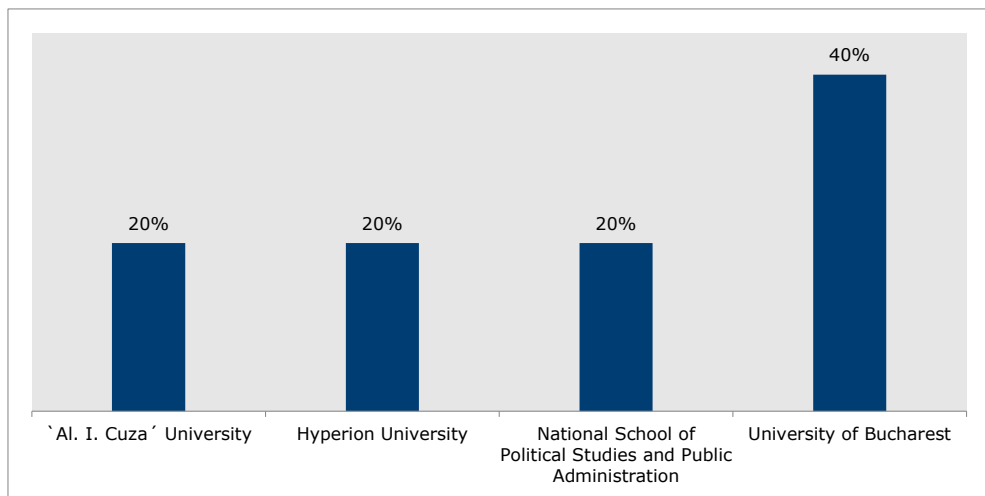
A non-probabilistic convenience sample was used. The research was conducted on a sample of 100 students (N=100) of whom 60 were enrolled in a BA programme (three-year undergraduate programme) and 40 in an MA programme (two-year graduate programme). The representation of BA and MA journalism students corresponds to the actual ratio of students enrolled in BA / MA programmes.

The survey involved students from three public universities: the University of Bucharest (Faculty of Journalism and Communication Studies), the National School of Political Studies and Public Administration (Faculty of Communication and Public Relations, Bucharest), the 'Al. I. Cuza' University (Faculty of Letters, Department of Romanian Language, Journalism, Communication Studies and Comparative Literature, Iași) and students from the private Hyperion University (Faculty of Journalism, Psychology and Sciences of Education, Department of Journalism, Bucharest). There were significantly more respondents who attended public universities (80 students) in the sample as compared to those who attended private university (20 students) ($\chi^2=36.0$, $df=1$, $p<0.01$).

Most respondents (40 students) attended the University of Bucharest, Faculty of Journalism and Communication Studies; there was an equal number of respondents (20 students) who attended the other universities ($\chi^2=12.0$, $df=3$, $p<0.01$, see Chart 1). In the sample, the students from private universities were slightly underrepresented, which reflects the actual situation.

Chart 1: Distribution of survey participants (N=100)

Question: Please write the full name of the university you attend



The first group of questions referred to the demographic characteristics of students, such as age and gender, and sought to elicit general information about the programme students were enrolled in.

Out of 100 students, the oldest student was born in 1967 and the youngest student was born in 1995. The average year of birth was 1991 (Mean 1991.86; Standard deviation 3.712).

In the sample, female respondents (79) outnumbered male respondents (21) ($\chi^2=33.6$, $df=1$, $p<0.01$), reflecting the current stage of students pursuing studies in journalism in

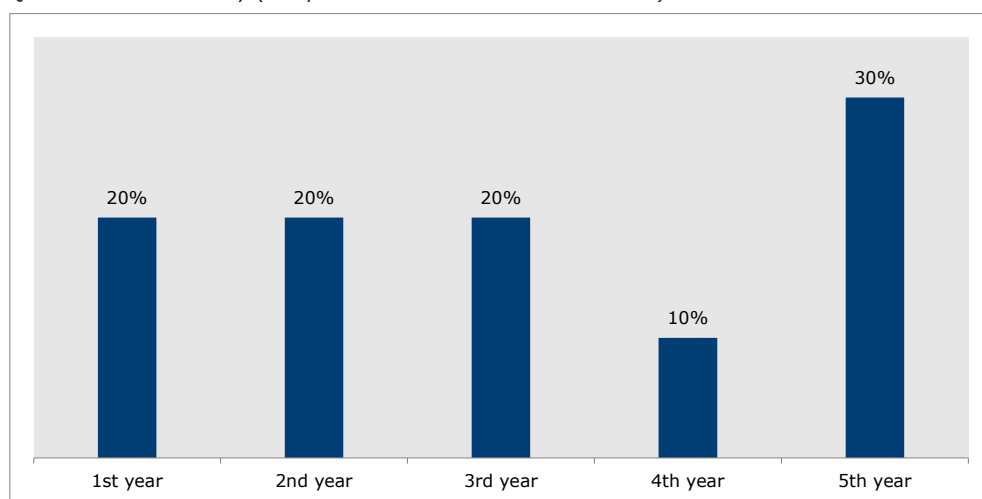
Romania: female students make up the majority of the students' population. In Romania, women in the professional group of journalists are also a majority. We can thus say that both journalism studies and newsrooms are female dominated.

In the sample, significantly more respondents were enrolled in BA programmes (60 students) than in MA programmes (40 students) ($\chi^2=4.0$, $df=1$, $p<0.05$).

According to the entire duration of studies, most respondents (30) report that they are enrolled in their fifth year of study, followed by those in their first year (20), second year (20) and third year (20) of study, respectively. The lowest number of respondents (10) report that they are in their fourth year ($\chi^2=10.0$, $df=4$, $p<0.05$, see Chart 2).

Chart 2: Year of study (N=100)

Question: Year of study (compared to whole duration of studies)

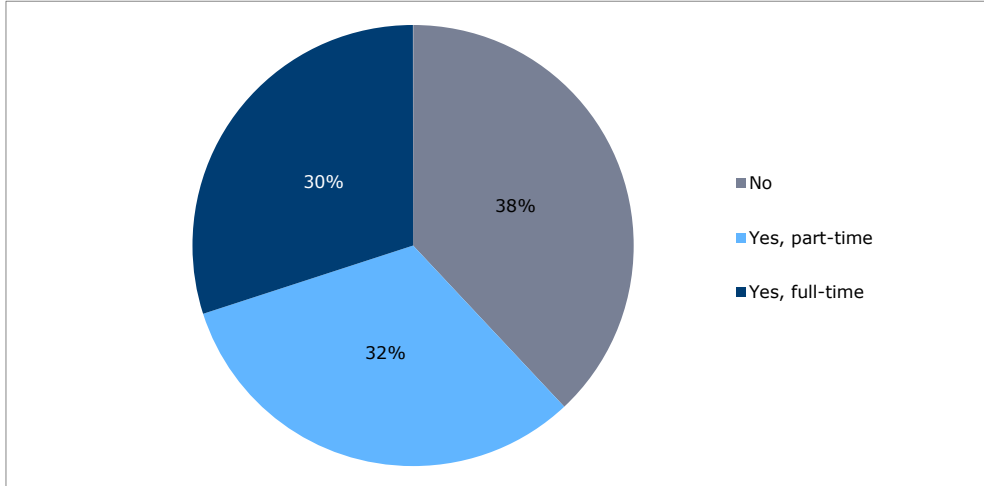


The survey looked at whether students had completed any other courses or study in another field prior to studying journalism and the type of such previous studies. Most respondents (86) have not completed another course or study. Only 11 respondents had first obtained a BA degree, and 3 had obtained a MA degree ($\chi^2=125.780$, $df=2$, $p<0.05$).

Furthermore, most students (62 percent) were working in parallel to their studies (any type of job). Thirty-two percent worked part-time and 30 percent had a full-time job ($\chi^2=1.04$, $df=2$, $p>.05$, see Chart 3).

Chart 3: Working status of students (N=100)

Question: Are you working alongside your studies (any kind of job)? If yes, part-time or full-time?

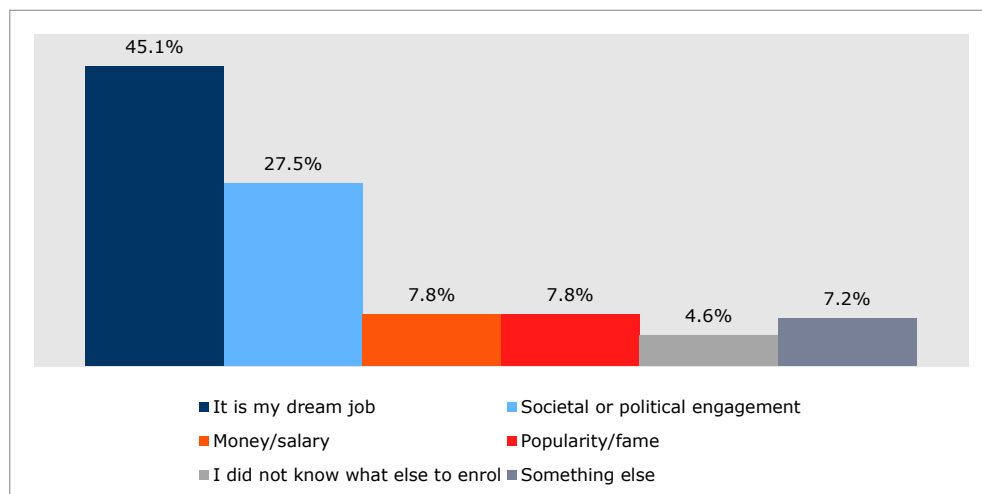


2. STUDENTS' MOTIVATION AND REQUIREMENTS

The motivation of students to enrol in university programmes of journalism varies. To assess that motivation, students in the survey were given a list of options and multiple choice answers. Chart 4 shows that many students (45.1 percent) consider journalism a dream job. This perception dominates the imagination of young people. Naturally, there are many reasons to consider journalism as a dream job. The wish for societal or political engagement (27.5 percent) is another strong reason for choosing to study journalism, followed at some distance by money / salary and popularity and fame (7.8 percent for each reason). The explanation for such a low percentage of students citing money as a reason is that salaries in journalism are generally low. The 'popularity and fame' aspect is probably the main reason underlying the students' perception of journalism as a dream job. Some students (4.6 percent) pursued journalism studies because they 'did not know what else to enrol'.

Chart 4: Motivation to study journalism (N=153, multiple answers possible)

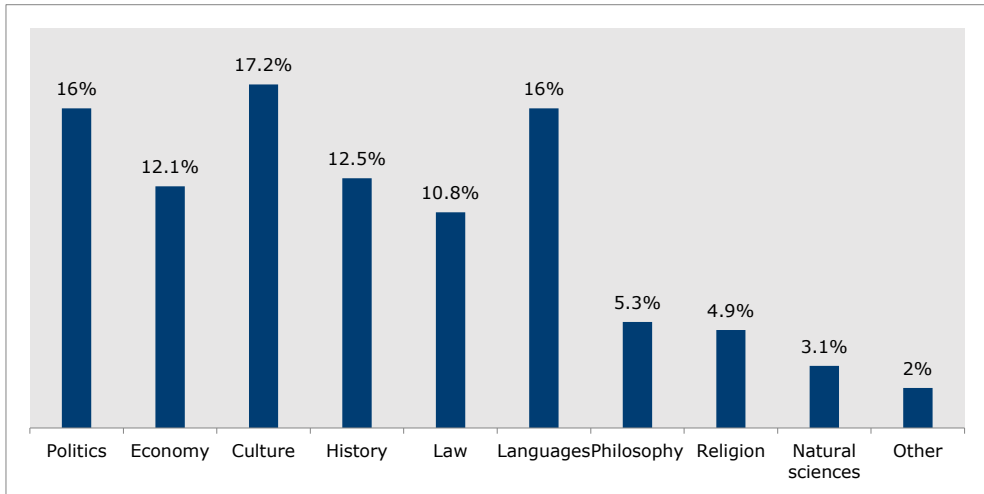
Question: *What is your motivation to study journalism?*



During their studies at university most students in the sample (77 percent) did not take any additional courses relating to journalism outside of their faculty, with 23 percent taking external courses and attending different types of workshops or schools: TV, radio, film and investigative journalism courses, conferences on journalism and leadership ($\chi^2=29.2$, $df=1$, $p<0.01$).

In our survey, we asked students, allowing them the possibility of choosing multiple answers, to consider which type of general knowledge was the most important for journalists. A total of 511 answers were given (see Chart 5). We found that no specific area was dominant. Students did not have a consistent opinion about the type of knowledge needed to be well prepared for a future job in journalism. The list of the most important types of general knowledge thus includes culture (17.2 percent), politics and foreign languages (16 percent), history (12.5 percent), economy (12.1 percent), and law (10.8 percent). Less important for the general knowledge of a journalist are natural sciences (3.1 percent), religion (4.9 percent), and philosophy (5.3 percent). In 'other' types of knowledge some respondents mentioned 'Romanian language', referring probably to Romanian grammar.

Chart 5: General knowledge important for journalists (N=511, multiple answers possible)
 Question: *What kind of general knowledge is important for journalists in your opinion?*

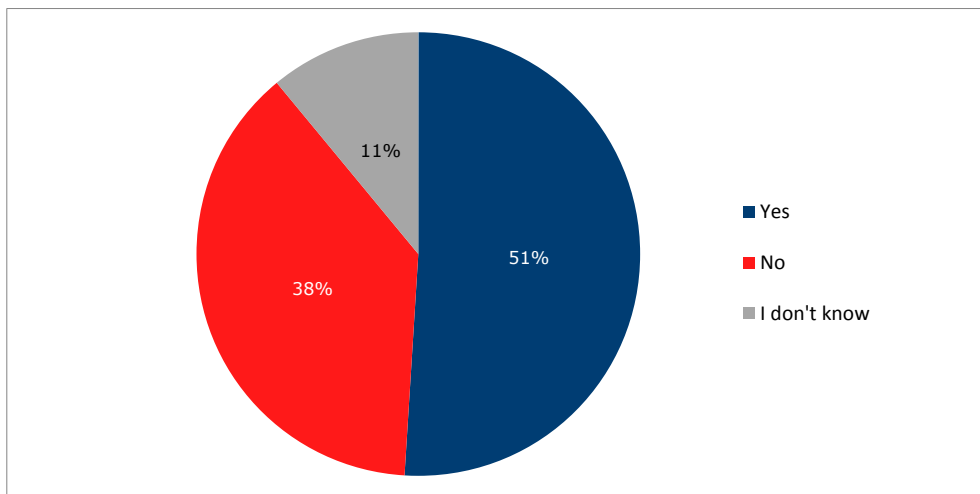


3. HAVE THE EXPECTATIONS OF STUDENTS BEEN MET?

In this section of the survey, we first aimed to find out if the students were satisfied with the learning conditions at their faculties (libraries, books, study rooms, laboratories, workshops and seminars). Half of the respondents reported that they were satisfied with the learning conditions at their faculty, with the other half reporting dissatisfaction or being unable to provide an answer ($\chi^2=24.98$, $df=2$, $p<0.01$, see Chart 6). It is interesting to note that 11 percent of students did not know whether they were satisfied

Chart 6: Satisfaction with learning conditions at the faculty (N=100)

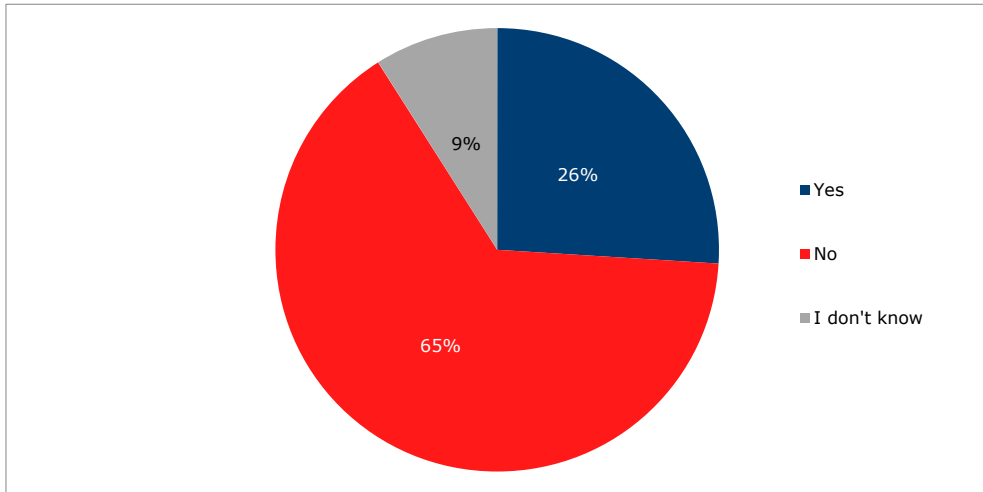
Question: Are you satisfied with the learning conditions at your faculty (library, books, study rooms, workshops and seminars)?



A large majority of students in Romanian sample (68 percent) were not satisfied with technical equipment available for practical training while 30 percent reported satisfaction (N=100, $\chi^2=65.84$, $df=2$, $p<0.01$). The reasons for dissatisfaction might be related to the limited access to the existing technical equipment available for practice, according to the next question (see Chart 7). Sixty-five percent of the respondents were dissatisfied with access to equipment, such as microphones, television cameras and mobile sets for audio-video editing (N=100, $\chi^2=49.46$, $df=2$, $p<0.01$). In reality, most faculties have proper technical equipment, but its capacity is insufficient to serve the high number of enrolled students.

Chart 7: Satisfaction with the access to the technical equipment in faculties (N=100)

Question: *Are you satisfied with the access to your faculty's technical equipment that you are using for practical classes?*



To find out whether students were satisfied with the balance between theoretical knowledge and practical training within their study programme, they were asked to finish a sentence using one of the suggested answers. The sentence was as follows:

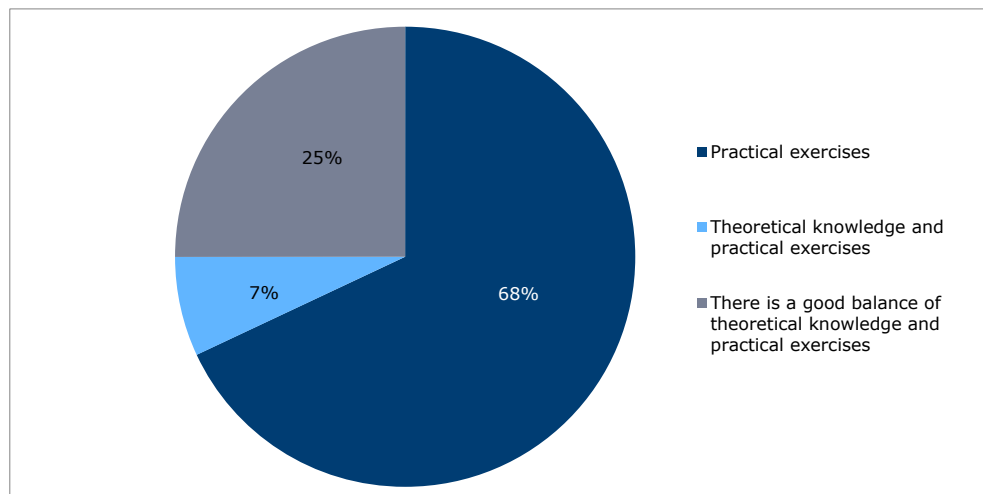
'The faculty of journalism in which I am enrolled lacks: (1) Theoretical knowledge; (2) Practical exercises; (3) Theoretical and practical exercises; (4) There is a good balance of theoretical knowledge and practical exercises.'

The large majority of the respondents in the Romanian sample (68 percent) reported that their faculty lacked practical training. Theoretical knowledge was not chosen as an answer by any of the respondents while 25 percent considered that there was a good balance between theoretical knowledge and practical exercises ($\chi^2=58.94$, $df=2$, $p<0.01$, see Chart 8).

Most university programmes in journalism, even after the implementation of the Bologna rules, remain based on gaining theoretical knowledge about journalism, which is one of the disadvantages in journalism education at BA level. On the other hand, many improvements have been made toward adopting a more practice-oriented approach. Nevertheless, faculties still face financial and organisational problems. Rooms, laboratories and equipment for practical training remain insufficient.

Chart 8: Journalism students' opinion on the balance between theoretical knowledge and practical exercises within study programmes (N=100)

Question: Complete the following sentence: The faculty of journalism where I am enrolled lacks...



When asked about additional courses they would like to attend, students listed international affairs journalism, war journalism, more classes on diction and, as elective courses, grammar, persuasion techniques and voice-over lessons. The problem is that universities do not have tutors for some of the desired courses or, in some cases, the demand for them is too small. Students in the sample also suggested that laboratories should be considered an important discipline and conducted by more professors with a background in journalism.

In line with this, most students (87 percent) thought guest lectures (i.e. professional journalists or other media practitioners) were important. They agreed that such guests are a valuable source of important theoretical and practical knowledge. Only 4 percent disagreed and 9 percent stated that they did not know ($\chi^2=129.98$, $df=2$, $p<0.01$). From this perspective, faculties should organise more courses and workshops with professional journalists and other media practitioners as a good way to meet students' expectations and improve the practical aspects of journalism education.

4. RELATIONS BETWEEN EDUCATION AND PRACTICE

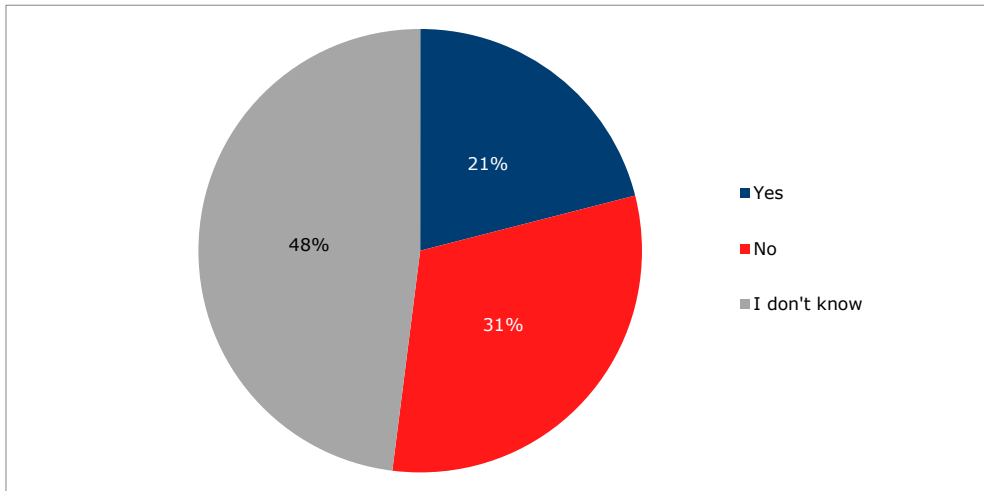
The academic rules mandated by the Ministry of Education emphasise the necessity for a stronger link between theory and practice in the new digital environment. In this section, the survey considered how students see the relation between journalism education and practice. In addition to the opportunity to follow a practice-oriented approach through laboratories and seminars, the opportunity of internships in newsrooms was identified as an excellent practical approach for future professionals in journalism. Regrettably, there is no clear strategy for cooperation or common platform between universities and national or

local media outlets. Neither are there any institutional agreements and standards for the evaluation of internships. Faculties are typically pushing media outlets to accept students for internships, but media representatives claim that they do not have the time to monitor and supervise students.

For this reason, a significant number of respondents in the Romanian sample (48 percent) answered that they had no knowledge of cooperation between their faculty and media outlets ($\chi^2=11.18$, $df=2$, $p<0.01$, see Chart 9). Twenty-one percent of the respondents stated that cooperation between faculties and media outlets was good, mostly taking into consideration individual approaches that do not rely on official guidance. There is a need for better organisation of mentoring and evaluation of student internships at media outlets.

Chart 9: Students' opinion on the cooperation between their faculty and local / national media outlets (N=100)

Question: *Do you think your faculty cooperates well with local / national media outlets?*



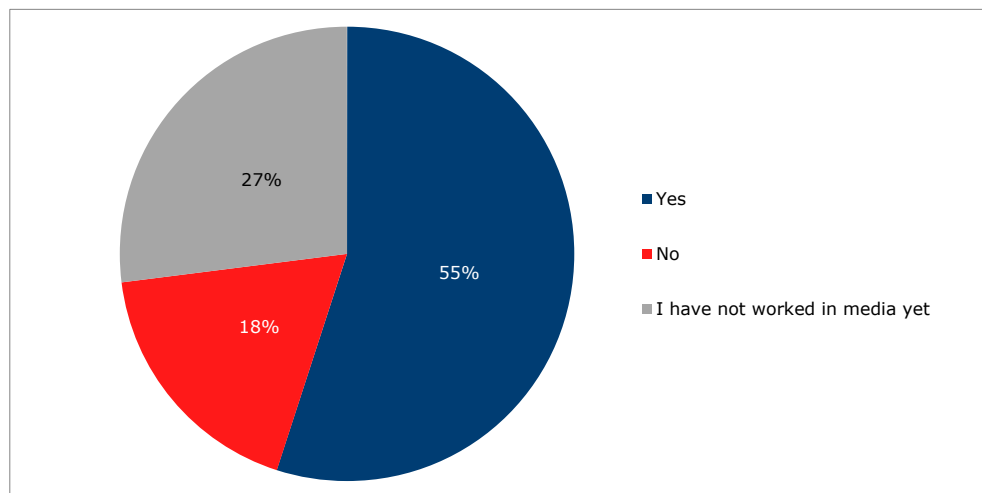
Students were further asked to provide ideas about possible ways to improve cooperation between their faculty and media outlets. Faculties should thus strive to persuade media practitioners to consider students as potential applicants / future journalists. This might require a degree of promotion. Practical experience gained at different media outlets is a good way to foster better understanding of the fields of journalism that best fit individual students. Other suggestions refer to the contracts signed between faculties and media outlets as a serious framework for internships. According to respondents another way of improving cooperation was the joint organisation by faculties and media outlets of networking events with the participation of students.

More than a half of the students in the sample (55 percent) stated that they had applied the knowledge acquired at the faculty in practice, with 18 percent answering negatively.

Twenty seven percent of the interviewees had not had an opportunity to work in media yet ($\chi^2=22.34$, $df=2$, $p<0.01$, see Chart 10).

Chart 10: Applying university knowledge in practice (N=100)

Question: *Have you ever applied the knowledge you acquired at your faculty in practice (in the field of media)?*



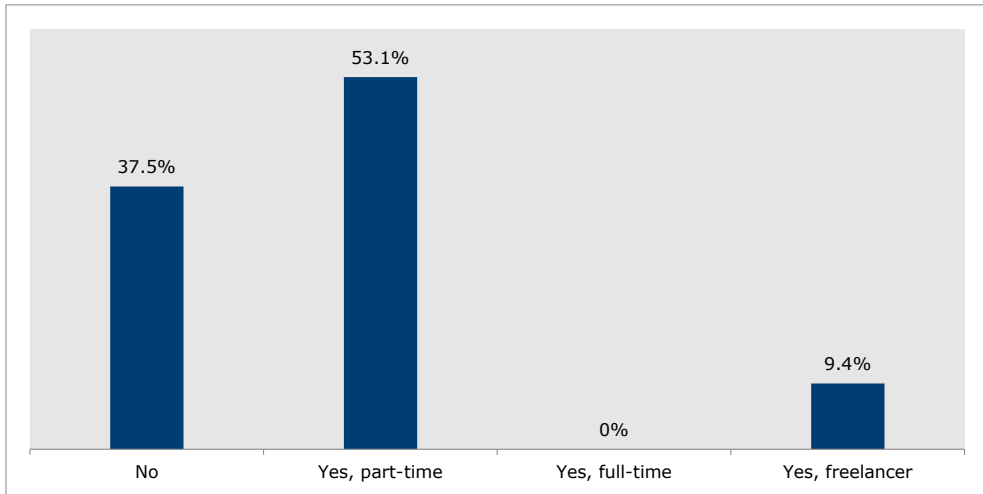
It was encouraging to see that 64 percent of students in the sample had already gained some experience with internships at media outlets ($\chi^2=7.84$, $df=1$, $p<0.01$). No data is available as to whether internships were arranged by the students or obtained with assistance from the university. Still a significant 36 percent of students had no experience with internships at media outlets.

Those 64 students were invited to evaluate their experience with internships by grading them from 1 (very poor) to 5 (very good). One student graded his internship as very poor and five students gave a score of 5 (very good) (average rate is 3.53, with standard deviation of 1.126). Students were generally satisfied with the internships, but noted that they only asked to assist working journalists without being effectively involved.

Thirty two students in the sample reported that they worked in media in parallel to their studies (doing a proper job as opposed to an internship). The highest number (more than a half of the respondents or 53.1 percent) stated that they worked in media part-time, followed by those who reported not working (37.5 percent), and 9.4 percent who worked as freelancers ($N=32$, $\chi^2=9.44$, $df=2$, $p<0.05$, see Chart 11).

Chart 11: Student employment status (N=32)

Question: *Are you working alongside your studies in media (excluding internships)?*

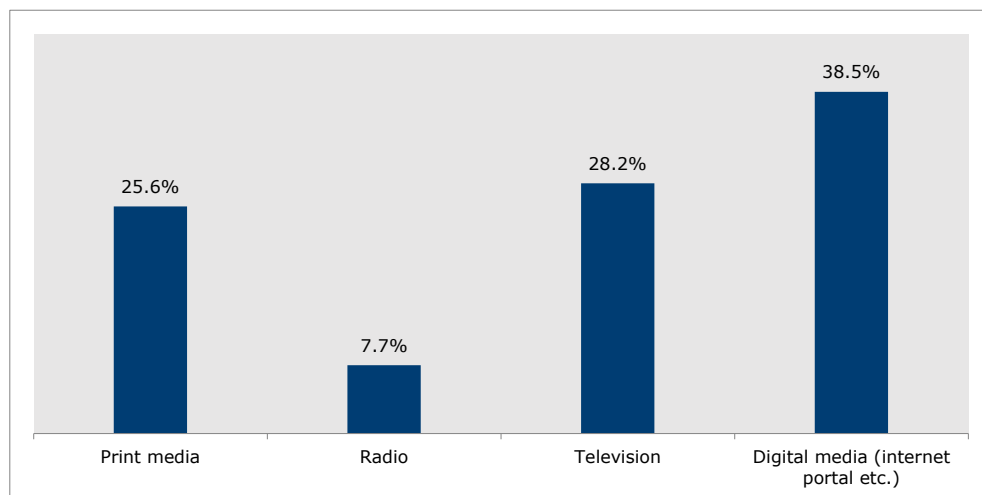


The highest share of respondents stated that they work alongside their studies in digital media (38.5 percent), with the lowest share responding that they worked at the radio (7.7 percent) (statistical significance: $\chi^2=7.67$, $df=3$, $p=0.05$, see Chart 12). Digital media were quite popular among Romanian students: internet affords easy access and high speeds. It should be noted that for newcomers to the newsroom digital media duties consisted mainly of selecting, re-arranging and posting information discovered on the internet, and after gaining some experience, publishing original pieces. Radio was not found very popular among students. This may be due to continually shrinking audiences and young people having a general preference for digital media, with TV watching being associated with older generations as suggested by the majority of answers received. It is worth mentioning that in Romania there is an 'inflation' of TV channels¹. This inevitably implies a link to opportunities for work in television available to future professional journalists.

¹ In 2013, in The Romanian Trade Registre there were enrolled 363 TV channels.

Chart 12: Students working in journalism in parallel to the studies: types of media (N=39)

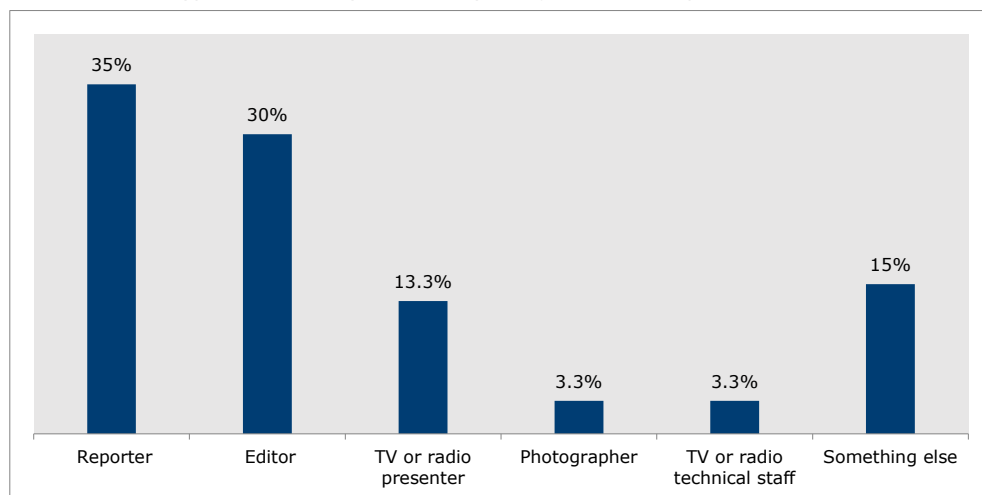
Question: For what kind of media are you working?



Most students with past work experience in media (multiple answers possible) stated they had worked as reporters (35 percent) and editors (30 percent), followed by TV or radio presenters (13.3 percent) (see Chart 13). 'Editor' must not be understood with its classical / traditional meaning as a senior journalist in the newsroom or on an editorial board but rather as the person who selects and posts information online in a digital media outlet.

Chart 13: Types of jobs in media done in the past (N=60, multiple answers possible)

Question: What type of work are you currently doing or did in the past?

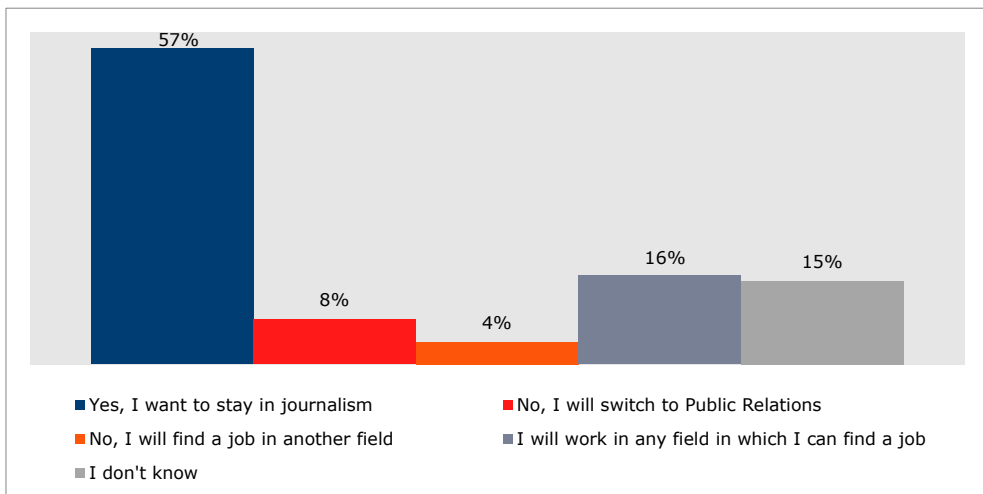


5. PROFESSIONAL PROSPECTS

The career plans of most students in the Romanian sample involved work as journalists following graduation (57 percent). Sixteen percent were aware of the difficulties of finding a job in journalism due to media market saturation. They thus stated that they were prepared to work in any field in which vacancies were available ($\chi^2=90.5$, $df=4$, $p<0.01$, see Chart 14). For students, this was a long way from their initial expectations at the time of enrolling to study journalism and simply the reality that developed during their studies. It should also be noted that 15 percent of respondents were strongly disoriented chose the 'I don't know' option as an answer. A minority of 8 percent stated that they would like to switch to a job in Public Relations.

Chart 14: Career plans following graduation (N=100)

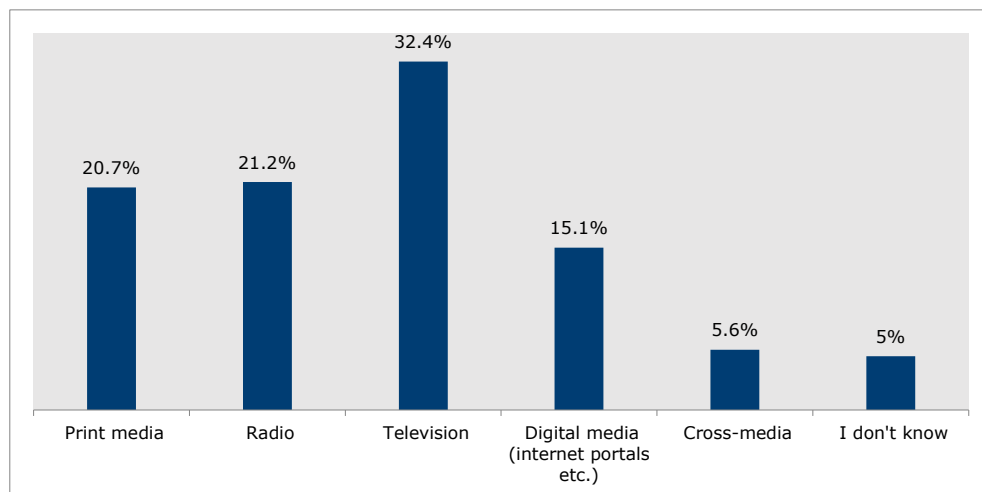
Question: *Will you continue to work in journalism after graduating from university?*



Students in the sample were further asked about the type of media they would like to work for following graduation. They had to choose between print media, radio, television, digital media and cross-media (multiple answers were possible). Chart 15 shows that a job in television was the most desired career in journalism following graduation (32.4 percent), followed by radio (21.2 percent), print media (20.7 percent), digital media, news portal, etc. (15.1 percent) and cross-media (5.6 percent). A career in television fitted better with the respondents' motivation to study journalism, having been described as a 'dream job' and getting fame and celebrity. Five percent of students in the sample did not know what type of media they preferred to work for.

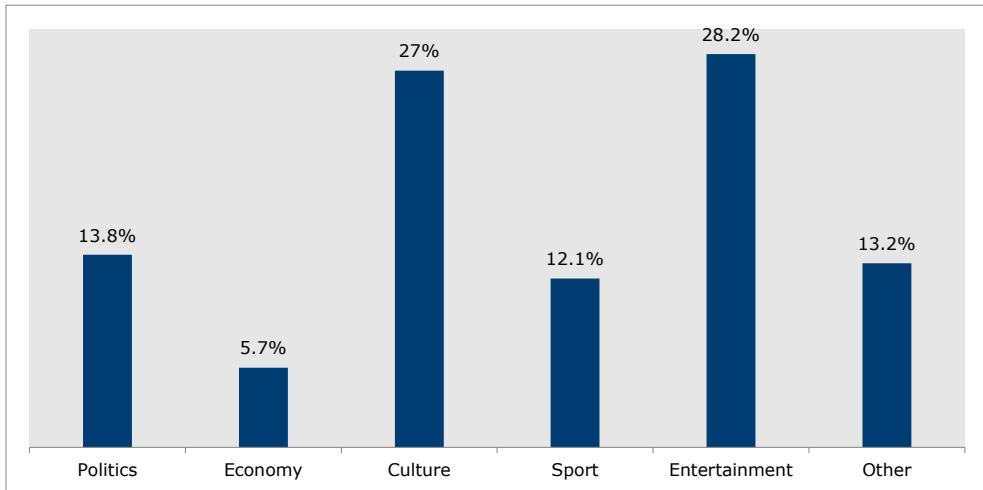
Chart 15: Most desired career paths in journalism (N=179, multiple answers possible)

Question: *In what kind of media would you like to work after graduation?*



In our survey students were offered a list of different fields of specialisation within journalism and were asked in which field of journalism they would like to work following graduation (multiple answers were possible). The most desired journalistic fields to work were entertainment (28.2 percent) and culture (27 percent). Entertainment is attractive because it has a strong connection with television, which has the biggest audience with shows about celebrities, talk shows and reality shows. A big audience also means high salaries for journalists. As noted before, there are numerous TV channels in Romania. Students are strongly drawn to culture because it is an important field to present on television. Almost 14 percent of students stated that they would like to work in the field of politics and 12.1 percent in sport. Thirteen percent indicated other preferences, such as lifestyle, press for women, travel, international relations, public affairs and investigative journalism. Students had the lowest interest for economy, with only 5.7 percent indicating it as a preference (see Chart 16).

Chart 16: Students' interest in specific fields of journalism (N=174, multiple answers possible)
 Question: *In which field of journalism would you like to work?*



6. COMPARISONS BETWEEN STUDENTS' PERSPECTIVES

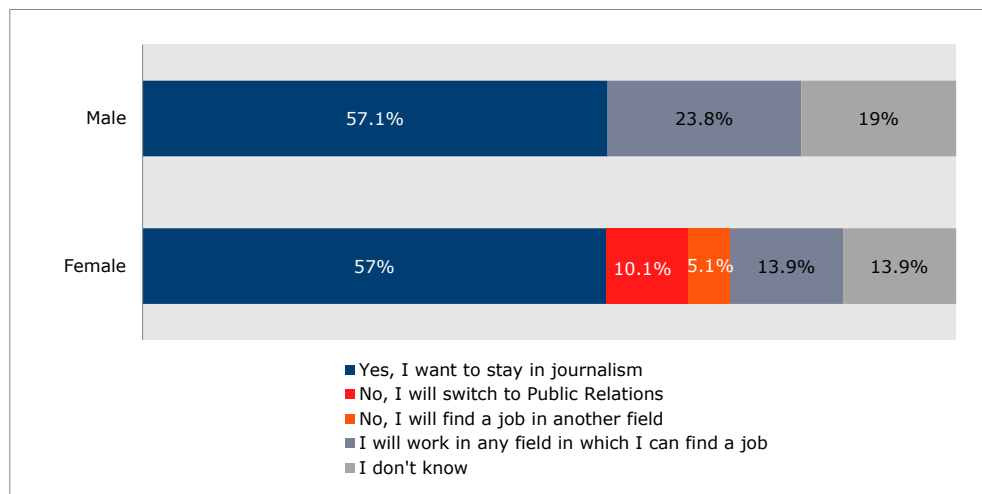
On the basis of data cross-analysis, in this chapter we present the significant differences between gender, universities (quality of study programmes, cooperation between faculties and media outlets, students' plans to work in journalism following graduation), institutional characteristics of different types of universities and level of studies (BA and MA programmes). The differences in students' internship experience will also be analysed.

Gender differences

Gender differences were significant in the sample mainly in relation with career plans following graduation and working status. In the Romanian sample women (who represent 79 percent of all respondents) had clearer career plans than men (21 percent), and the same determination as men to stay in journalism following graduation: around 57 percent for both genders ($\chi^2=4.49$, $df=4$, $p>0.05$, see Chart 17).

Chart 17: Gender differences in dedication to a career in journalism (N=100)

Question: Will you continue to work in journalism after graduating from university?

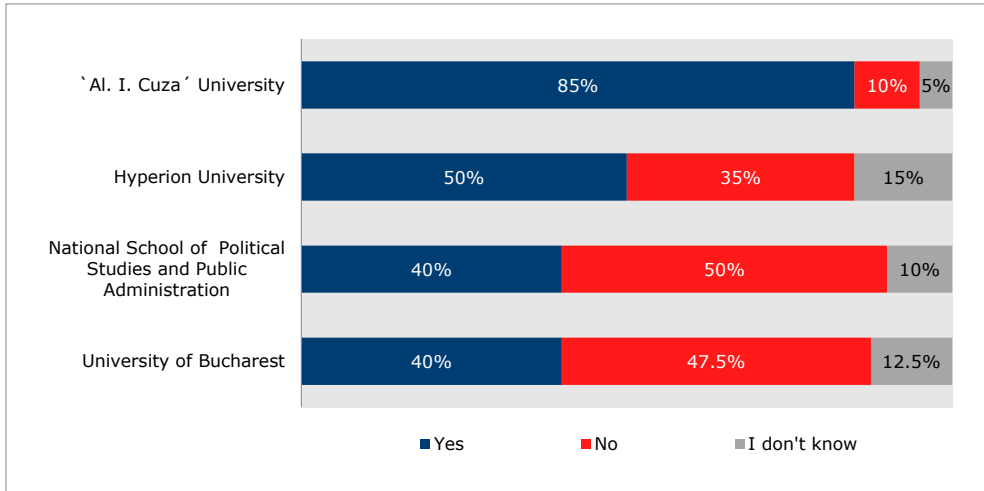


The survey shows that women prefer to work in the field of cultural journalism. For men, sport and politics were the most desired fields.

Differences between universities – quality of study programmes

In this section of the survey we compare differences between the four universities from the sample, mainly regarding their public or private status. The research was conducted on a sample of 100 students (N=100), 80 belonging to three public universities and 20 – to one private university. Most students from 'Al. I. Cuza' University who were in the first year of study said that they are satisfied with learning conditions, which makes them the most satisfied group. The largest percentage of respondents who were MA students and not satisfied with the learning conditions are from the National School of Political Science and Public Administration (50 percent) ($\chi^2=12.89$, $df=6$, $p<0.05$, see Chart 18). The explanation is that the expectations of the students belonging to the public universities are bigger face their university than for those from the private university.

Chart 18: Differences in the satisfaction with learning conditions at the universities (N=100)
 Question: *Are you satisfied with the learning conditions at your faculty (library, books, study rooms, workshops and seminars)?*

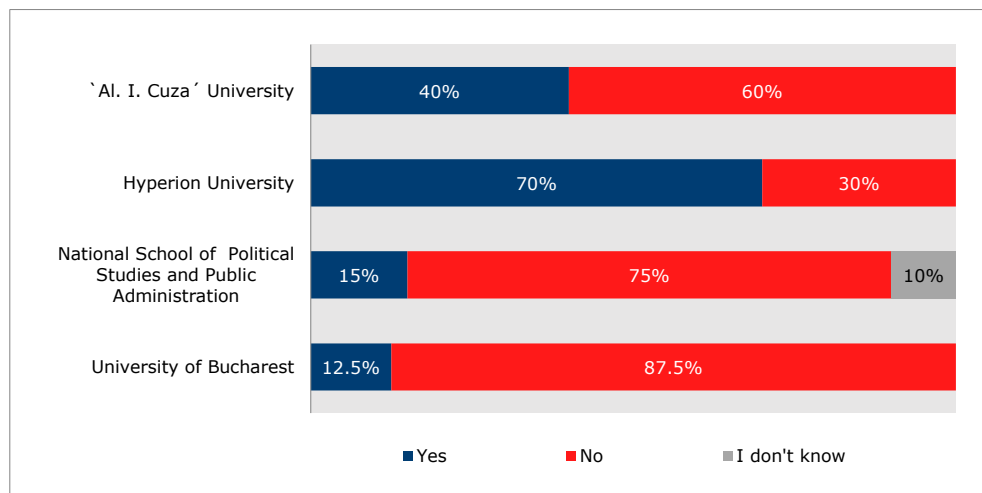


There were differences in the satisfaction with the technical equipment between different universities in Romania. Highest proportion of satisfied respondents attended Hyperion University (70 percent), while the highest proportion of dissatisfied respondents attended University of Bucharest (87.5 percent) ($\chi^2=31.73$, $df=6$, $p<0.01$, see Chart 19).

The private University Hyperion raised funds for building, for example, radio and TV laboratories with advanced, high-quality technical equipment in which students can put the knowledge acquired to the test. It is well known that the funding of state universities is insufficient to improve the equipment used in the learning process.

Chart 19: Differences in the level of satisfaction with the technical equipment available at the faculty (N=100)

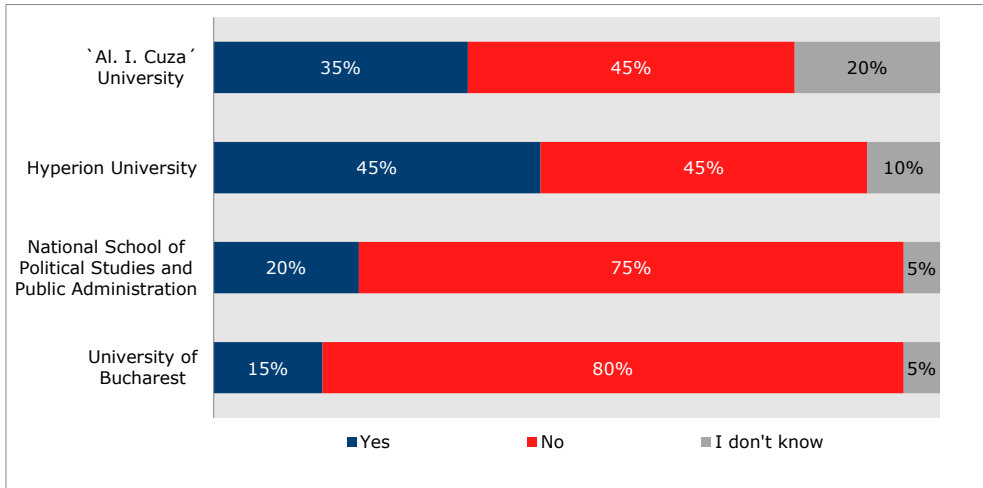
Question: *Are you satisfied with your faculty's technical equipment that you are using for practical classes?*



When we asked students if they were satisfied with access to the technical equipment we received almost identical answers. The highest share of satisfied respondents attended the Hyperion University (45 percent), with the highest share of dissatisfied students attending the University of Bucharest (80 percent). The dissatisfied students attending the National School of Political Studies and Public Administration had a similar percentage (75 percent) ($\chi^2=13.47$, $df=6$, $p<0.05$, see Chart 20). The share of dissatisfied students could be examined in relation to the demand for more practice. However, sometimes there are objective reasons for limited access to technical equipment, such as the high number of students enrolled in journalism programmes. In Romania, public university funding depends on the number of enrolled students. Therefore, public universities 'hunt' for students, which has resulted in less rigorous exam criteria.

Chart 20: Differences in the level of satisfaction with access to the faculty's technical equipment (N=100)

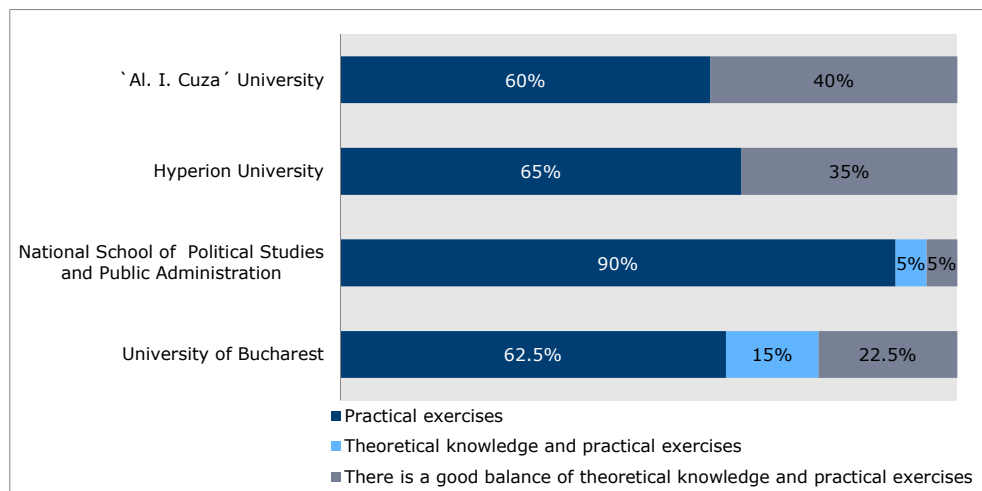
Question: *Are you satisfied with the access to your faculty's technical equipment that you are using for practice?*



Here public universities have a poor score regarding practice ($\chi^2=14.29$, $df=6$, $p<0.05$, see Chart 21). The National School of Political Studies and Public Administration has the lowest score with 90 percent of its students dissatisfied with practice. However, most students in the sample from this university are MA students and their demand for more practice was not aligned to the specificities of the Bologna educational process, which states that MA is a step towards a PhD – a level mostly focused on theoretical knowledge. Similarly, twenty students in the sample from the University of Bucharest were MA students. Demand for more practical exercises is not in line with the Bologna rules and with curricula for this superior level of journalism studies.

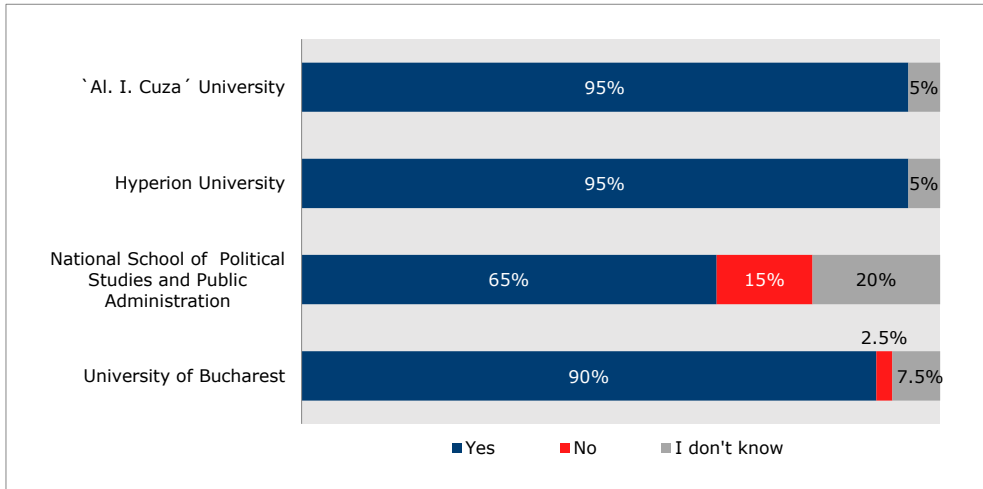
Chart 21: Differences in students' opinion on the balance between theoretical knowledge and practice (N=100)

Question: Complete the following sentence: *The faculty of journalism where I am enrolled lacks...*



Respondents from Romanian universities in the sample differed in their opinion as to the importance of guest lecturers ($\chi^2=12.82$, $df=6$, $p<0.05$, see Chart 22). A smaller share of respondents from the National School of Political Studies and Public Administration (65 percent) responded that guest lecturers were important as compared to other Romanian universities. The failure of obtaining a positive answer to the question from a higher share of students is surprising, given the stated demand for practical exercises.

Chart 22: Differences in students' opinion about the importance of guest lecturers (N=100)
 Question: *Do you think guest lecturers are important, e.g. professional journalists or other media practitioners?*

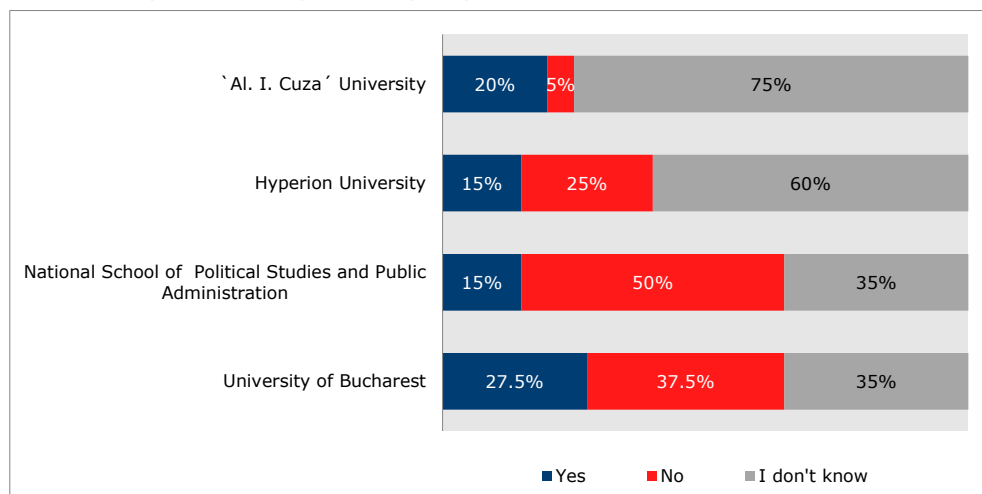


Cooperation with local / national media outlets

There were differences in opinion as to faculty cooperation with local / national media outlets between the universities in Romanian sample ($\chi^2=14.72$, $df=6$, $p<0.05$, see Chart 23). The highest share of students from the Hyperion University and 'Al. I. Cuza' University responded that they did not know whether their faculty cooperated well with local media. A small share of respondents from all universities thought that cooperation between their faculty and local media was good.

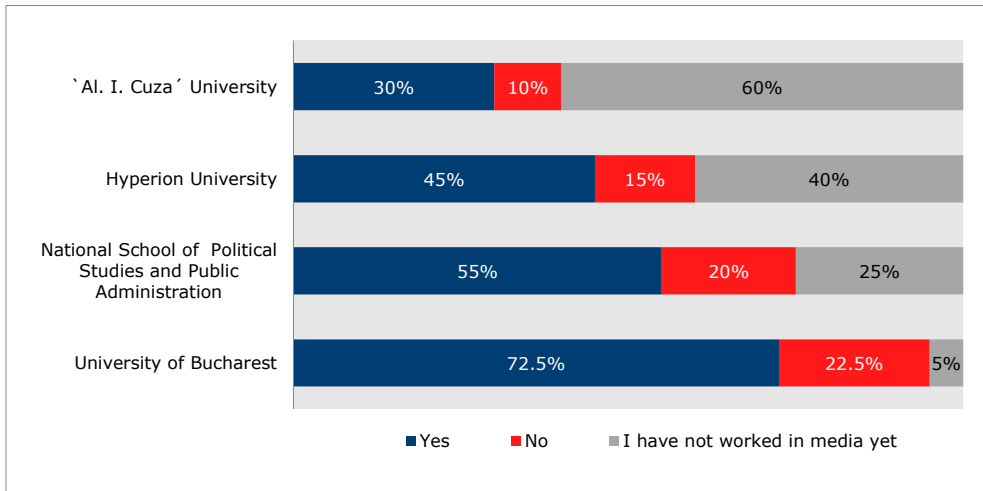
Chart 23: Differences in students' opinion on cooperation between their faculties and local / national media outlets (N=100)

Question: *Do you think that your faculty cooperates well with local / national media outlets?*



It is important for students to be able to apply the knowledge acquired at the faculty in practice, regardless of whether in newsrooms or another type of media outlet. Although the students were generally critical and complained about lacking practice, those from three universities stated that they had applied the learned knowledge in practice, the highest share comprising the group of students from the University of Bucharest. The respondents from the fourth university, 'Al. I. Cuza' in Iași, responded that they had not applied their knowledge in practice. This was due to the population comprising first-year students in their first semester who had not yet worked in media or had any internships. This is the explanation for the differences found in the Romanian sample on the question referred to the practical application of knowledge acquired during studies, in practice ($\chi^2=22.69$, $df=6$, $p<0.01$, see Chart 24).

Chart 24: Differences in students' opinion on the application of knowledge in practice (N=100)
 Question: *Have you ever applied the knowledge you acquired at your faculty in practice (in the field of media)?*

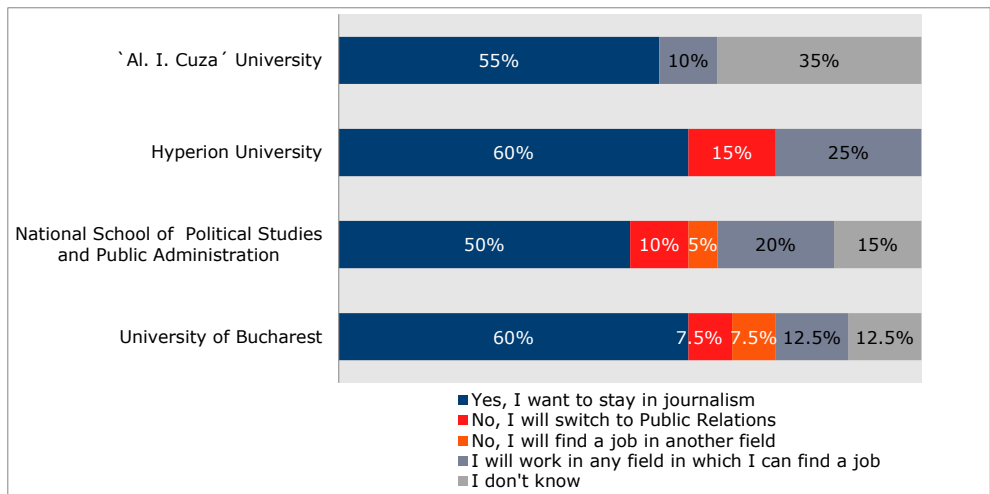


Working in journalism following graduation

Students from the state University of Bucharest (60 percent) and from the private Hyperion University (60 percent) had a strong motivation to pursue a career in journalism following graduation. That was predictable because both faculties have a strong focus on journalism studies. A large share of students from the 'Al. I. Cuza' University (35 percent) answered that they did not know. This, again, is understandable because the sample comprised first-year students in who had probably had not yet planned for the future. In the sample, 15 percent of the students from the Hyperion University stated that they would like to switch to Public Relations maybe because finding a job in this field is relatively easier. Ten percent of the students from the National School of Political Science and Public Administration stated that they would also like to switch to PR, the motivation being that they are already working in journalism and a possible dissatisfaction with working conditions ($\chi^2=16.56$, $df=12$, $p<0.05$, see Chart 25).

Chart 25: Motivation for a career in journalism of students from public and private universities (N=100)

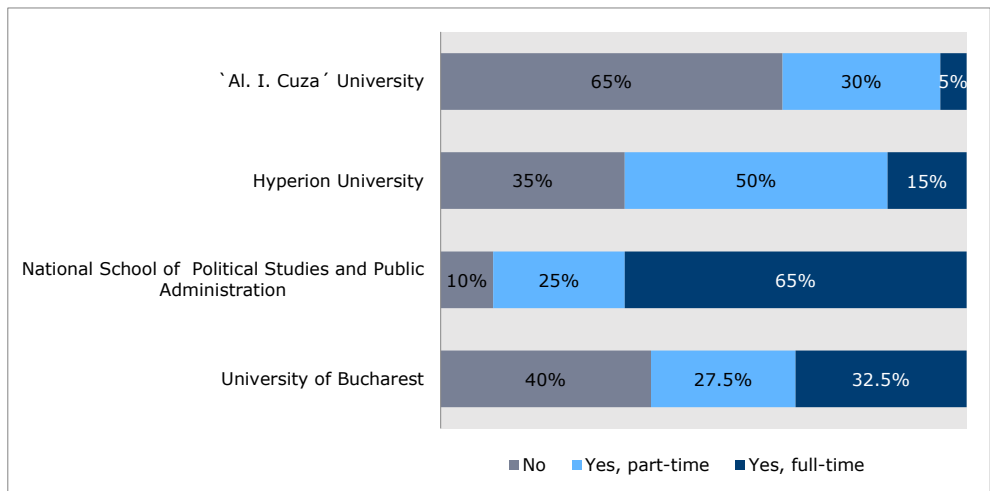
Question: Will you continue to work in journalism after graduating from university?



There was a difference in the share of students who worked in parallel to their studies ($\chi^2=24.58$, $df=4$, $p<0.01$, see Chart 26). The highest share of students who did so was from the National School of Political Studies and Public Administration (90 percent) because they were enrolled in an MA programme. The lowest share of students who worked in parallel to their studies was from the 'Al. I. Cuza' University (35 percent) because they were in their first year of study.

Chart 26: Working in parallel to studies (N=100)

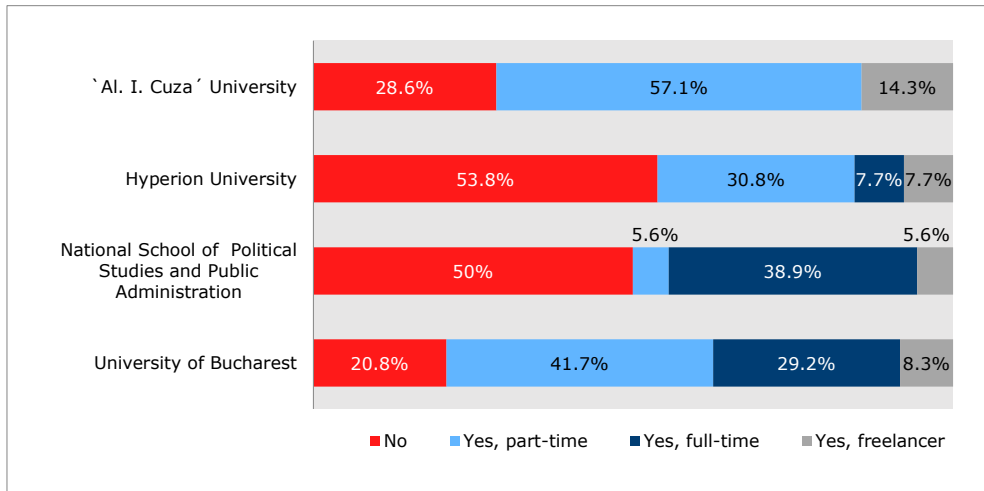
Question: Are you working alongside your studies (any kind of job)?



However, not all students worked in media in parallel to their studies. From those who did work in media, holding a job as opposed to an internship, almost 80 percent were from the University of Bucharest. This is normal because this faculty from the state University of Bucharest has a primary focus on journalism and not on communication studies in general ($\chi^2=15.38$, $df=9$, $p>0.05$, see Chart 27).

Chart 27: Working in media in parallel to studying (N=62)

Question: *Are you working in media alongside your studies (excluding internships)?*



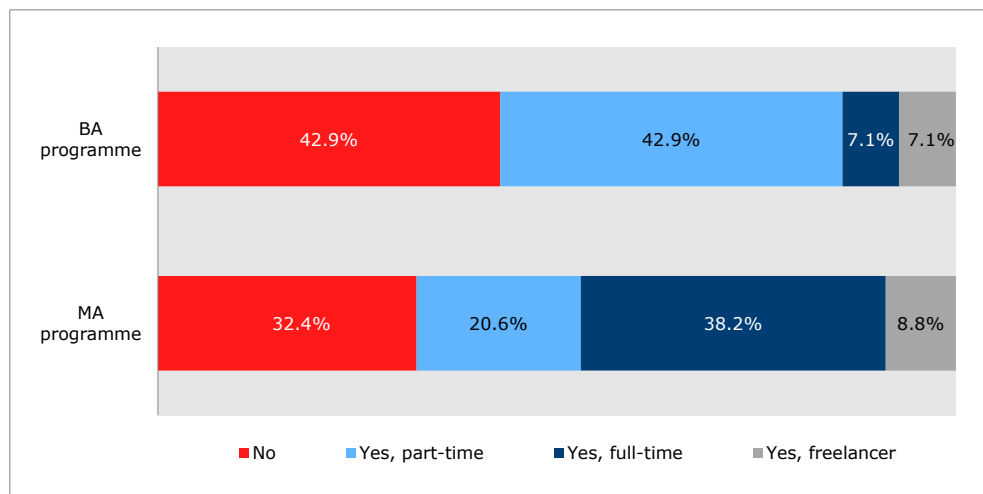
Differences between BA and MA students

Predictably, BA students were generally more interested in practical exercises and having more working journalists and practitioners as guest lecturers.

It was also predictable that MA students had more work experience in media (67.6 percent, 34 students) than BA students (60 percent, 28 students), including work experience in media ($\chi^2=9.13$, $df=3$, $p<0.05$, see Chart 28). Moreover, a high percentage of MA students worked full-time in media (38.2 percent).

Chart 28: Working in media in parallel to studying (N=62)

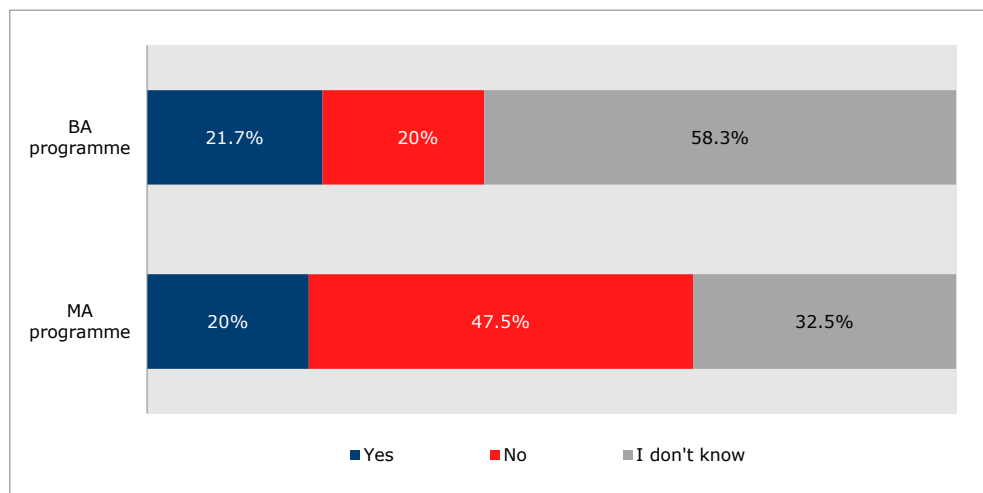
Question: Are you working in media (excluding internships)?



A difference was found between respondents enrolled in BA and MA programmes in terms of their opinion about their faculty’s cooperation with local / national media outlets. As expected, MA students were more critical of cooperation with local / national media outlets: 47.5 percent were unsatisfied and only 20 percent expressed satisfaction, with 58.3 percent of BA students answer they did not know and only 32.5 percent of MA students giving the same answer ($\chi^2=9.22$, $df=2$, $p>0.01$, see Chart 29).

Chart 29: Cooperation with local / national media outlets (N=100)

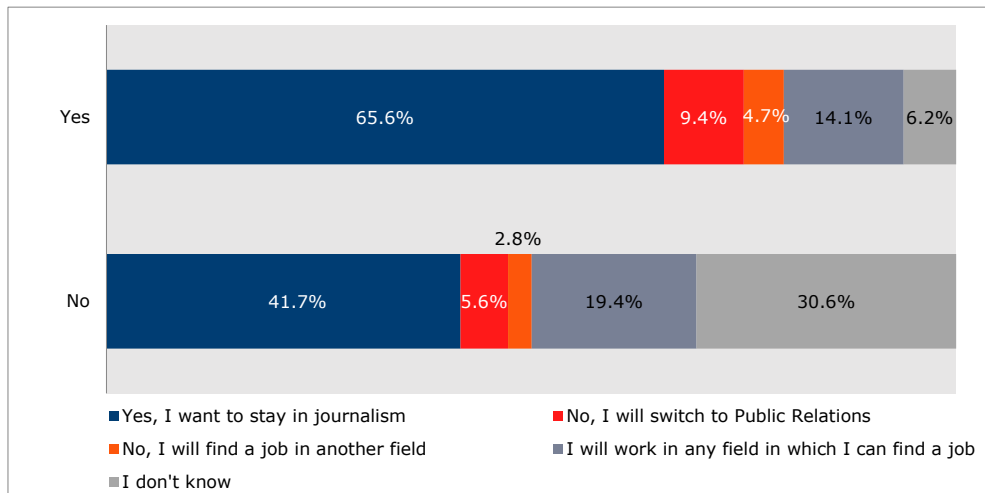
Question: Do you think that your faculty cooperates well with local / national media outlets?



The survey also highlights the differences, where they exist, between students' experience with internships at media outlets and their plans to continue working in journalism following graduation. In the Romanian sample, a higher share of respondents who had experience with internships at media outlets (65.6 percent) stated that they wanted to remain in journalism. Respectively, 41.7 percent of the respondents who did not have any experience with internship at media outlets gave the same answer ($\chi^2=12.44$, $df=4$, $p=0.01$, see Chart 30).

Chart 30: Differences between students who had experience with internship and their wish to continue pursuing a career in journalism following graduation (N=64)

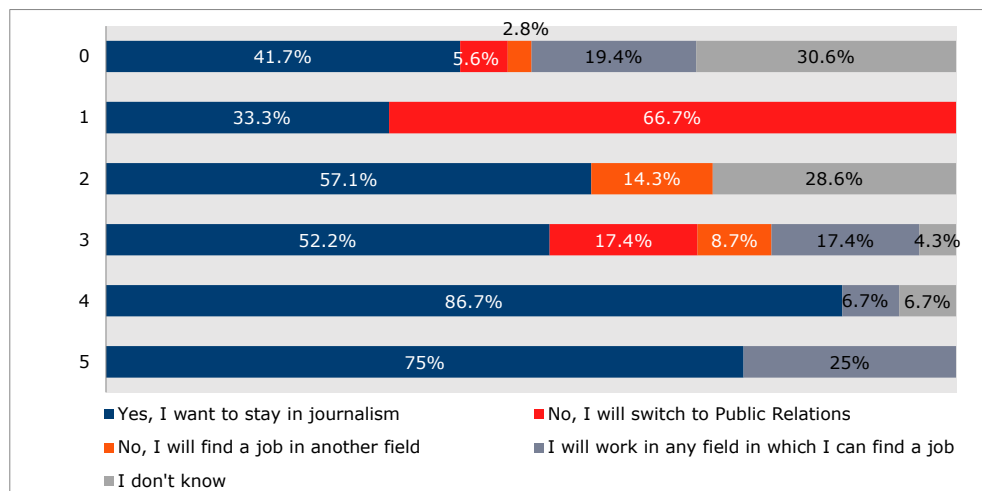
Questions: 'Do you have any experiences with internships in media outlets?' related with: 'Will you continue to work in journalism after graduating from university?'



As expected, a higher share of respondents (86.7 percent and 75 percent, respectively) who had rated internship satisfaction higher (giving it a score of 4 or 5 on a scale from 1 to 5) stated that they wished to continue working in journalism ($\chi^2=43.94$, $df=20$, $p<0.01$, see Chart 31). The critics of journalism internships who gave their experience a score of 1 were prepared to switch to Public Relations (66.7 percent).

Chart 31: Differences in students' level of satisfaction with internships in relation to working in journalism following graduation (N=64)

Questions: 'Please mark and rate your overall satisfaction with internships' (1 = very poor, 5 = very good) related with 'Will you continue to work in journalism after graduation?'



Almost half of the respondents (49.2 percent, N=62) who worked in media in parallel to their studies had plans to stay in journalism following graduation. Most students who did not work in media in parallel to their studies had plans to switch to Public Relations or find a job in another area.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

There is a consensus among media professionals, NGOs and university professors that academic journalism education has a significant contribution to improving media quality in Romania and delivering media workers not only with a degree in journalism but enabling to practice journalism at a high standard (Roşca 2011, 2013; Vlad and Balasescu 2010). Furthermore, in a democratic society a high standard of education and professional training of journalists is a fundamental precondition for free and pluralistic media. The current survey, conducted on a sample of 100 BA and MA journalism or media studies students from three public universities and one private university, provides conclusions on the perception of journalism education by journalism students, along with some recommendations that might be taken into consideration in the future.

One conclusion is that journalism remains an attractive profession but the aspirations and career path of the new generations of students have changed. The old generations wanted to become journalists to change society, having a clear social and a political project (Coman 2012; Ionescu 2014). The survey shows that the new generation of students of journalism choose to speak about a 'dream job' – maybe a reference to celebrity status,

fame and glamour of this profession. Under the impact of the media industry labour market MA students are somewhat more realistic, stating readiness to switch to PR or finding a job in another field following graduation. In Romania, many trained journalists are currently working as PR experts, using journalism studies as a platform to become the spokesperson of a minister or a member / chief of a communication bureau at a ministry. Faculties of journalism must follow this trend by offering PR trainings and seminars.

Most students in the Romanian sample (57 percent) plan to remain in journalism following graduation. Students have a strong interest in working for television and digital media. Other areas of specialisation within journalism in which they would like to work include entertainment and culture as the top preferences. Politics is no longer a favourite, and economy is absent from students' preferences. The educational process and curricula could take these options into account and provide corresponding contents and training methods, keeping the balance between the preferences of students and the needs and requirements for the profession. More courses dedicated to digital and online journalism would be welcome. This should also be reflected in the curricula. Moreover, all universities should offer internal practical training on multimedia / cross-media skills.

Students from public and private universities are generally satisfied with journalism courses and programmes at both BA and MA level. However, they have made numerous suggestions for improving the quality of study programmes. For example, courses should be updated to keep up with current developments in the media industry; in addition to the concept of theory as a stand-alone concept, there are others that should be used in practice relying on technical equipment; courses should be understandable for the students and adapted to the profile of the faculty, e.g. English should be taught using examples from the field of journalism and media communications. Students ask for more open discussions during the classes and help to develop fluent speaking skills. They have also suggested improving theoretical knowledge with courses on psychology, Public Relations, and specialised journalism on justice, economics, and healthcare.

Students in the sample would like to attend as additional courses, i.e. international affairs, war journalism, diction and, as elective disciplines, grammar courses, persuasion techniques and voice-over lessons. They also suggest that practical exercises should be considered important and conducted by more professors with a background in journalism. In line with this, most students (87 percent) thought guest lectures (i.e. professional journalists or other media practitioners) were important.

According to the students in the sample the teaching methodology should be more engaging, with stronger focus on practice and examples from the journalistic activity in the media outlets. We agree that the teaching requirements for courses and seminars must be more challenging for students, inviting not only minimal intellectual effort but also students' creativity. For example, the method based on an excessive demand for essays written by the students outside of school is not recommended because it transforms

students into a 'puzzle players' who just jot down lines on a piece of paper without any logic and sometimes without any connection to the topic. Working in classes, discussing and debating the topics, analysing different journalism products, working in groups are all more efficient and useful for future professional journalists. Judging from my own experience as a professor a handful of students are interested in open discussions or emulating tutors as role models to learn as much as possible from his / her professional experience as a journalist. Students often prefer a virtual dialog with their professors, sending e-mails or other electronic messages to gather the information they need. At the sentence level, they have the same discourse about improvement of the teaching methodology as the students in the survey sample.

The balance between theory and practice is an important factor for better qualified graduates, but there are different opinions on how to best achieve this outcome. Students of journalism usually aim – and our survey confirms this finding – that there is a greater need and demand for practical exercises. For BA students this is a normal expectation because, according to academic rules stated by the Ministry of Education, the first three years of study are dedicated to developing the skills and abilities necessary in a newsroom or another media outlet. The MA students in the sample also ask for practical exercises. However, the two-year MA degree programme is considered a precondition for the PhD level studies, and from this perspective, it logically follows that practical exercises have a limited usefulness. Traditionally, universities are regarded as 'temples of ideas' and their mission is to educate accordingly. A strong emphasis put on practical approaches entails risks because it could transform journalism studies into vocational school.

Moreover, theory plays an important role in counterbalancing the challenges of the internet. Google and Wikipedia are often tempting students and journalists to not read thoroughly and conduct broad research on topics, which are necessary for any deeper analysis. Students worldwide are currently not avid readers (Pells 2016). At journalism faculties, professors do recommend bibliographies but only a handful of students put in the effort to complete their reading assignments. I noticed that reading academic books requires an intellectual effort that is seldom associated with journalism studies.

In this context, our research tried to find out the students' opinion about the kind of general knowledge considered the most important for a journalist. We found out that the list of the most important types of knowledge include, in this order, culture (literature, music, and theatre), politics, foreign languages, history, economy, and law. As a result of the implementation of the Bologna process, some courses have had to be eliminated, such as culture and civilization. The survey findings show that faculties are recommended to organise, with BA and MA students, discussion and debates on cultural topics to compensate this lacking component and satisfy student expectations.

Predictably, a large majority of students in the sample (87 percent) were in favour of more lectures and discussions with the media practitioners to be offered by their faculties.

Visiting professors, journalists and other prominent practitioners from media outlets should continue to be invited to share their experience. To further the achievement of the same goal, workshops with journalists and other specialised media workers can also be organised.

Journalist internships, based on better cooperation between universities and media outlets, are recommended for improving practice-oriented approaches. Universities are currently more open to such cooperation than practitioners at media outlets. Media owners and practitioners continue to see the academic journalism education as pointless, the vocational component of the profession being the only method of evaluating the journalist performance (Roşca 2013). In our survey students' perceptions of the cooperation between their faculties and media outlets were rather negative. Students suggest that institutional agreements between faculties and media outlets be signed to be assured of an official guidance for practice at media outlets. To meet students' expectations, faculties should establish closer ties with stakeholders and make better arrangements for the mentoring of students during internships at media outlets.

The sector journalism education is still technically and financially weaker and is not yet playing an important role in equipping students with the necessary skillsets and practical knowledge. Technical equipment in the faculty should be sufficient for all students and keep pace with the developments in journalism and society. The students should have access to the technical equipment in order to be able to work effectively.

Students from public universities ask for better material conditions, such as a well-equipped TV studio and radio studio. Students from the public University of Bucharest even asked for a new building because – they said – the current does not have enough classrooms. Other students from public universities pleaded for a radio channel at the faculty, better access to the technical equipment, because sometimes – they noted – the students face difficulties and have to use their own equipment (i.e. mobile phone, camera photo). Students in the sample also ask for more study rooms and reading halls.

An important indicator for the quality of journalism education is how far students can apply the theoretical knowledge acquired during their studies in practice. For 55 percent of the students who work / worked in media the knowledge acquired at the faculty was useful. This means that the faculties' programmes and training process are relevant to practice. The evaluation of the success and practical relevance of courses requires a systematic tracking of career paths and development. Universities need instruments to stay in touch with alumni.

To conclude, academic journalism education must adapt to students' expectations and media environment changes, to be coupled by improvements to both existing curricula and the quality of teaching.

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SERBIA: A MARKET PUSHED BY DIGITAL MEDIA – A CHALLENGE FOR CURRICULA

Miroљub Radojković and Ana Milojević

1. INTRODUCTION

Milestones of journalism education

University education in journalism has a special tradition in Serbia. Former Yugoslavia was the only socialist country in which the training of professional journalists was not under the surveillance of the Communist Party's ideological departments as an activity exclusively intended for confidential party members. As a former federal unit, Serbia inherited this legacy. As soon as the Faculty of Political Sciences was established in 1968, the Department of Journalism opened doors. The curriculum at the new faculty largely consisted of the adapted political science curriculum but after the second year of study courses dedicated to journalism theories and skills were introduced. The same model was applied at other federal units with the introduction of political science faculties in Ljubljana, Zagreb and Sarajevo.

After an early beginning, higher education in journalism grew in strength with an increase in the number of curriculum courses. Today, journalism is taught at fully-fledged departments at several Serbian universities. Since the beginning of the twenty-first century this educational endeavour has been exposed to the influence of two external factors – the transformation of media and that of education. Like in other former socialist countries, the fall of the one-party system was followed by an explosion of media outlets. The number of media in Serbia skyrocketed to more than 1 000, creating a sudden demand for journalists. At that time, there was a short supply of university educated professionals on the market. Instead, most journalists had completed secondary school (56 percent in the age group 21-30 years and 38 percent in the age group 31-40 years) (Matić et al. 2007: 9). However, having seen a generational shift, today's workforce is dominated by degree-educated journalists. Concerning the educational transition, a crucial turning point occurred when the Serbian higher education system joined the Bologna process in 2005. The Act on Higher Education (2005) has paved the way for undergraduate and graduate studies in journalism at universities. Due to alignment of the study model with other humanities, journalism undergraduate studies (BA) last four years and graduate (MA) studies one year, regardless of the faculty. At the same time, private universities have made full use of the higher interest of young people in journalism, opening profitable courses. BA degree programmes opened as soon as they were allowed to offer them in 2003. The peak of journalism departments was in 2007 when it was possible to study

journalism at a total of twelve state and private universities. Over time, the number of journalism departments decreased. Due to a lack of qualified staff, high tuition fees and a shrinking labour market some private departments have been forced to close. By the academic year 2012 / 2013 the number of journalism departments in Serbia had dwindled to five – three at state and two at private universities (see Table 1).

Table 1: Universities offering programmes in journalism in Serbia

University/ school	Legal status	Name of the faculty	Name of the department	Graduate per year	On board
University of Belgrade	State	Faculty of Political Sciences	Journalism	160	700
University of Novi Sad	State	Faculty of Philosophy	Journalism	70	295
University of Niš	State	Faculty of Philology	Journalism	50	269
Megatrend University, Belgrade	Private	Faculty for Media and Communications	Journalism and Media Management	100+150	900
Singidunum University, Belgrade	Private	Faculty for Media and Communications	Journalism and Public Relations	25+25	200
Total:	5	5	5	580	2364

Due to the failed economic transition and the world economic crisis in 2008, the number of media outlets in Serbia has been steadily decreasing. Demand for journalists on the market is correspondingly low. There is a current oversupply of graduates in journalism on the labour market. Therefore, at least for the time being, some have abandoned the pursuit of their intended career and accepted jobs in PR and public administration or act as spokespersons of political parties, corporations and other organisations.

Prevalent standards in journalism education

The education model applied at different departments depends on the profile of the institution, which the respective journalism department is organisationally associated with. At the Faculty of Political Sciences at the University of Belgrade, the journalism curriculum covers humanities, communications, political science, economy, languages and philosophy. Private universities offer more management-related courses and vocational training. In short, curricula at all presently active departments contain more than 100 courses. However, in many cases the courses differ only in title and not in content. There are only three common study topics in all programmes: communications, computer literacy and professional ethics. None of the existing departments offers specialisation in print, radio or

television. Some include photo and news agency journalism. All practical courses are mostly taught by distinguished working journalists engaged as expert tutors at the departments. A common weakness of all existing journalism curricula is the course in online journalism, which is underdeveloped due to the lack of adequately prepared lecturers.

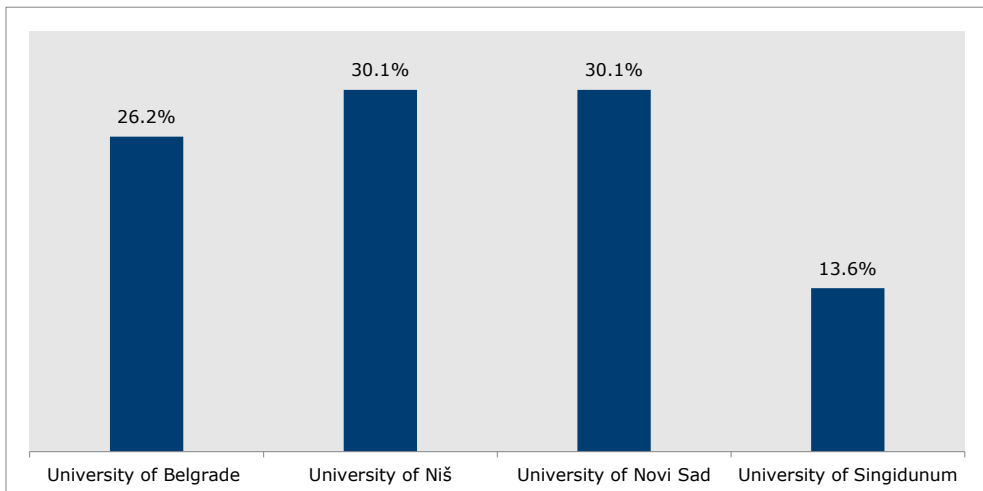
Compared to private educational institutions state universities offer students with better library collections, including course-specific resources, textbooks, books and subscription to journal databases. However, departments at private universities have more advanced in-house facilities for print, radio and TV media training and production. It is understandable having in mind that their students pay tuition fees for the duration of their study. Therefore, private journalism departments have more financial resources.

Survey conducted among the students

Students from four Serbian universities with journalism departments participated in the survey. However significant differences in the number of respondents between different universities were found ($\chi^2=7.56$, $df=3$, $p>0.05$). Most respondents attended University of Niš and University of Novi Sad, followed by those at University of Belgrade, Faculty of Political Sciences and at Singidunum University, Faculty of Media and Communication (see Chart 1). Therefore, students of the private universities were significantly underrepresented in the sample ($\chi^2=54.61$, $df=1$, $p<0.01$). This can be justified by several reasons. Firstly, besides a lacking tradition, education at private universities relies mostly on temporarily hired scholars. Secondly, the programmes at private universities are relatively impermanent. Since 2007 several programmes have either been closed or changed due to the low number of students enrolled.

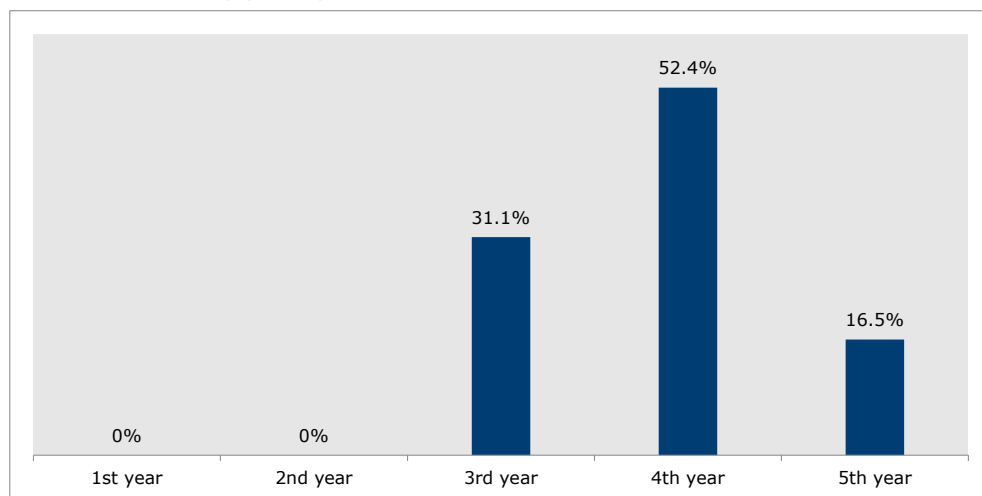
Chart 1: Distribution of survey respondents (N=103)

Question: Please write the full name of the university you attend



Most students in the Serbian sample reported they were in their fourth year of study, followed by those in their third and fifth year (see Chart 2). None of the respondents was in their first or second year ($\chi^2=20.18$, $df=4$, $p<0.05$). Therefore, all respondents were well acquainted with the teaching facilities and the standard of teaching of tutors at their respective faculties. The answers about the usefulness of knowledge acquired, the quality of courses offered and accessibility of technical equipment were therefore quite reliable, since they are based on several years of personal experience. Moreover, most respondents had experience of internships, which are obligatory between the sixth and eighth semesters, gaining additional insights relevant to this survey.

Chart 2: Year of study (N=103)



Significantly more respondents were enrolled in BA programmes (83 percent) than in MA programmes (17 percent) in the Serbian sample ($\chi^2=46.22$, $df=1$, $p<0.05$). The representation of undergraduate (BA) and graduate (MA) students of journalism corresponds to the actual ratio of students enrolled in BA / MA programmes. A MA programme (as noted above, this is the fifth year of study) at Serbian universities is attended by 20-30 students on average. For example, the Faculty of Political Sciences annually enrolls 160 BA journalism students and up to 30 students at MA level.

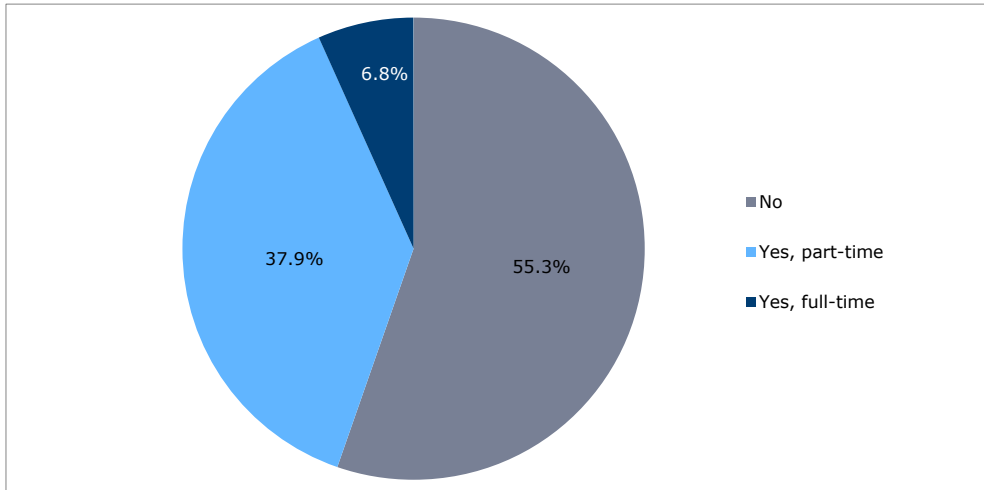
There are significantly more females (79 percent) than males (21 percent) in the Serbian sample ($\chi^2=33.80$, $df=1$, $p<0.01$), female students representing the majority of the students' population. This finding correlates with the current gender imbalance in the journalism profession. According to a recent survey conducted among working journalists in Serbia (Milivojević et al. 2011), women represent more than half of the professional group (52 percent). Regarding this aspect, Miroљub Radojković reminds the following:

'In the last decades journalism was mostly a masculine occupation. Therefore, at the end of the twentieth century an affirmative action was initiated to enlarge the number of women in journalism. Today the situation is opposite. Both journalism studies and newsrooms are feminized.' (Radojković 2011: 26)

According to the findings shown in Chart 3 most respondents did not work in parallel to their studies; this group is followed by those who reported working part time. The lowest number of survey respondents reported working full-time ($\chi^2=37.36$, $df=2$, $p<0.01$).

Chart 3: Students' working status (N=103)

Question: *Are you working alongside your studies (any kind of job)?*



2. STUDENTS' MOTIVATION AND REQUIREMENTS

During their time at university most students (87 percent) did not pursue additional training opportunities. Only a handful (13 percent) took external courses to supplement their primary studies ($\chi^2=56.627$, $df=1$, $p<0.01$). This finding might suggest that students are satisfied with the practical and theoretical knowledge offered by their faculties or that the reason for avoiding additional learning by attending ad hoc courses may be the lack of money and motivation. As it will be seen later, this comment is confirmed by the answers given to more specific questions dealing with students' requirements and expectations.

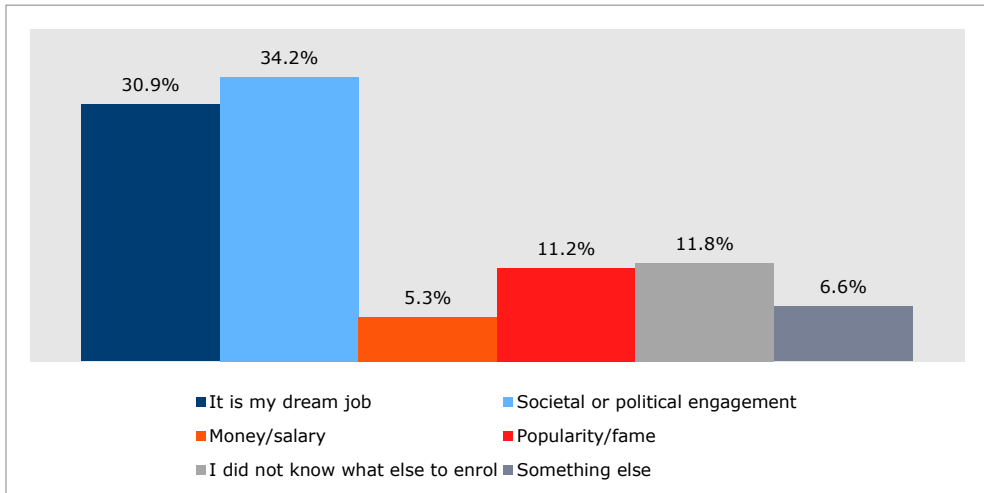
Students' motivation to pursue a university degree in journalism varies greatly (see Chart 4). The strongest motivation is 'societal or political engagement' (34 percent). This corresponds to the 'normative model of journalism', which according to John Nerone (2013) has hegemony in the West. Nerone (2013: 446) argues that the model 'assumes that news organizations are relatively autonomous from the state and that individual journalists are independent agents engaged in an agonistic relationship to power while representing the

people by, among other things, giving expert accounts of affairs of public importance. It assumes that journalists' capacity for independence is provided by the media organizations that employ them'. This model is deeply rooted in the 'journalism / democracy nexus' and ascribes a 'watchdog' role to journalists. However, the model has recently been put into question (Löffelholz 2008; Nerone 2013; Zelizer 2013). Barbie Zelizer (2013: 469) suggests that it is time for 'retiring the notion of democracy in its exclusive and exclusionary relationship with journalism'; while Nerone (2013: 446) stresses that the usefulness of the 'normative model of journalism' has diminished at the end of the twentieth century due to 'the rise of a new news environment with new news practices'. All stakeholders are currently searching ways to redefine journalism, even daring to rethink its relationship with democracy. This means that the primary motivation among students could be challenged upon their first entry of a newsroom. In the Serbian context, students' motivation to be socially or politically engaged could be underpinned by another aspect of the media scene. Widespread sensationalism and tabloidization of the Serbian press could mislead students by giving them an impression that journalists have the power to discipline and punish social and political actors. Students easily mistake the scandals made public by media for true investigative journalism. But, as a recent research of Vaclav Štětka and Henrik Örnebring (2013) confirms, investigative journalism is generally weak across the entire CEE region for two reasons. Firstly, only a handful of media institutions are financially able to sustain investigative endeavours. Secondly, the number of journalists willing to delve into in-depth investigations is dwindling because prevalent journalism culture does not favour critical reporting and the impact of such reports on power holders has been rather limited (Štětka and Örnebring 2013). These findings correspond with the situation in Serbia, although the country was not included in the quoted study.

An almost equal number of students (31 percent) considers journalism a 'dream job'. Such attitude may stem from the old, romanticised image of journalism, which now truly belongs to the past. However, at the beginning of the new millennia the so called 'heroes of the profession' were replaced by 'copy-paste' or 'desk' journalists, investigating real life on their computer screens. 'Popularity and fame' was chosen as the primary motive for studying journalism by 11 percent of respondents, with 'money / salary' being the least important incentive for students (5 percent). The motive 'fame' typically underpins self-respect and realisation; the next finding, which is recognised as a weakness, is due to the low socio-economic status of journalism as a profession in Serbia. Based on a recent survey conducted among journalists, Radojković, Milojević and Ugrinić confirmed that journalists' salaries are generally low, with half of respondents earning between 150-450 Euro monthly, which is below or equal to the average salaries in Serbia (Radojković, Milojević and Ugrinić 2014: 139).

Chart 4: Students' motivation to pursue a degree in journalism (N=152, multiple answers possible)

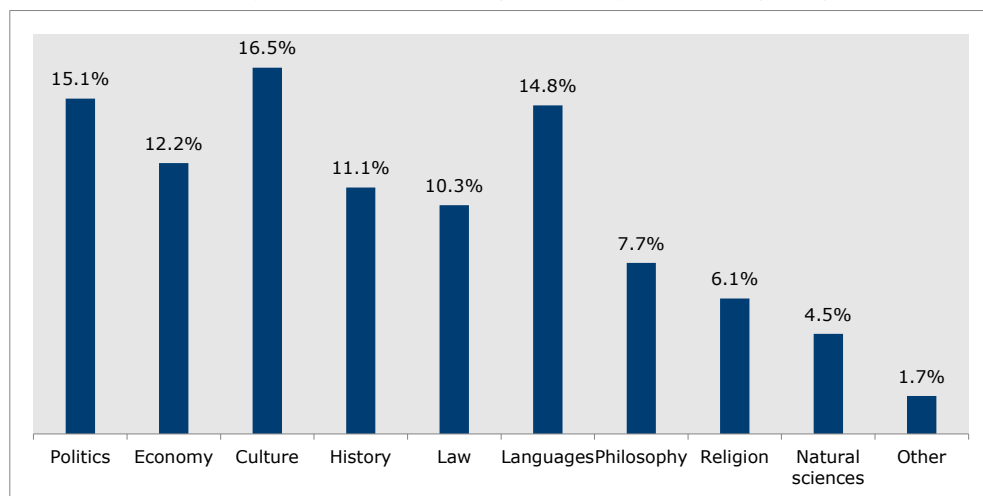
Question: *What is your motivation to study journalism?*



Some students (12 percent) joined journalism departments because they 'did not know what else to enrol'. This attitude might mirror a common perception of journalists as 'universally knowledgeable individuals'. According to criteria from the domain of sociology of occupations (cf. Radojković and Stojković 2003), journalism is repeatedly categorised as a semi / quasi professional or occupational group. Journalism has never successfully defined its 'body of knowledge' or the skillset to be mastered in order to enter this profession (McQuail 2013). Therefore, not having any specific education was never an excluding condition for entering the profession. This was reflected in the students' indecisiveness about the 'knowledge' they need to acquire to qualify as journalists. Most students had no consistent opinion about the type of knowledge needed to be well prepared for their future job. Their answers were scattered across the options offered in the questionnaire (see Chart 5).

Chart 5: Students’ reflection on knowledge important for journalism (N=575, multiple answers possible)

Question: *What kind of general knowledge is important for journalists in your opinion?*

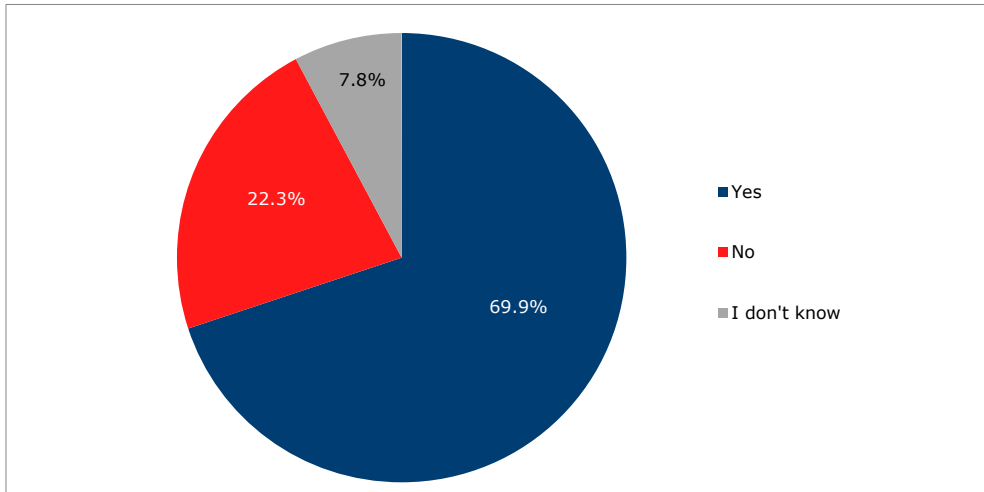


3. HAVE THE EXPECTATIONS OF STUDENTS BEEN MET?

Most respondents from Serbia reported that they were satisfied with the learning conditions at their faculty. Approximately 8 percent did not know how to answer the question ($\chi^2=65.26$, $df=2$, $p<0.01$). A high level of overall satisfaction with the learning conditions (70 percent) must be taken as a relevant indicator since the students surveyed have had at least one year of education. Their evaluation was good news for journalism departments (see Chart 6). This can also be linked with their motivation to study journalism understood as 'being socially and politically engaged'. To achieve this ambition, students need a sound grasp of social and political structures and processes. The curricula of journalism departments show that students will be mostly thought about normative constructions and political theories supporting the idea of journalism as a pillar of modern democracy. Therefore, theoretical education fits well with the students’ main motivation to study journalism.

Chart 6: Students' satisfaction with the learning conditions at faculties (N=103)

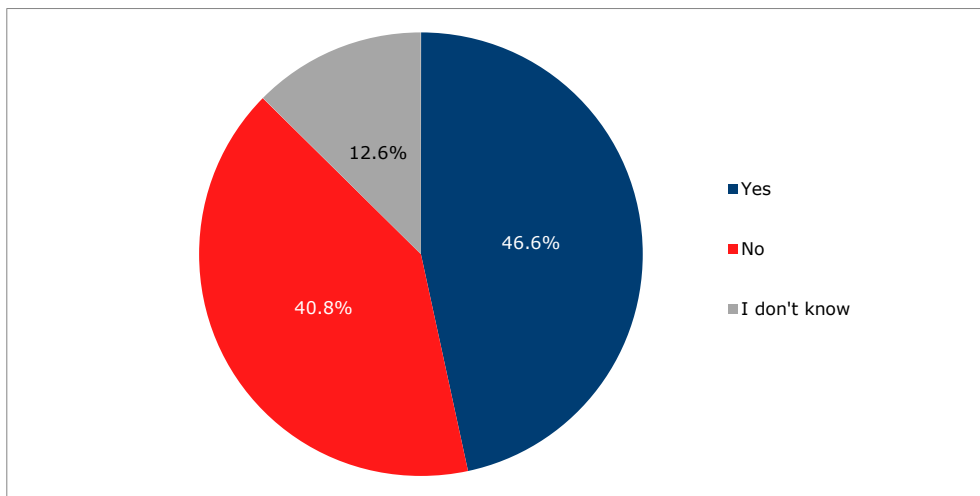
Question: Are you satisfied with the learning conditions at your faculty?



However, 50 percent of the respondents claim that they are unsatisfied with the technical equipment available for practical training (They have answered 'no' to the question: Are you satisfied with your faculty's technical equipment used for practical classes?). The remaining 42 percent reported that they were satisfied, with approximately 8 percent not knowing how to answer ($\chi^2=31.48$, $df=2$, $p<0.01$). The reasons for dissatisfaction are closely related to the limited access to existing technical equipment (see Chart 7). While 47 percent of the respondents reported being satisfied, the remaining 41 percent were disappointed with access to their faculty's technical equipment and almost 13 percent did not know how to answer the question ($\chi^2=20.41$, $df=2$, $p<0.01$). Most faculties have radio studios, cameras and cutting desks enabling production of radio and television programmes and solid hardware supporting desk publishing and online journalism. Still, the capacity of educational technical equipment is insufficient for high number of students enrolled in some faculties. In our opinion, dissatisfied students (41 percent) must be those deprived of using cameras, radio studio or editing gear. For example, at the Faculty of Political Sciences at the University of Belgrade 160 third-year students should produce at least one TV report, while those in the second year of the studies (also 160) should make at least one radio package per term. It is hard to manage technical and human resources to enable this for every student. Therefore, FPS students who had the chance to work on existing equipment most probably belong to 47 percent of students evaluating access to the technical equipment positively.

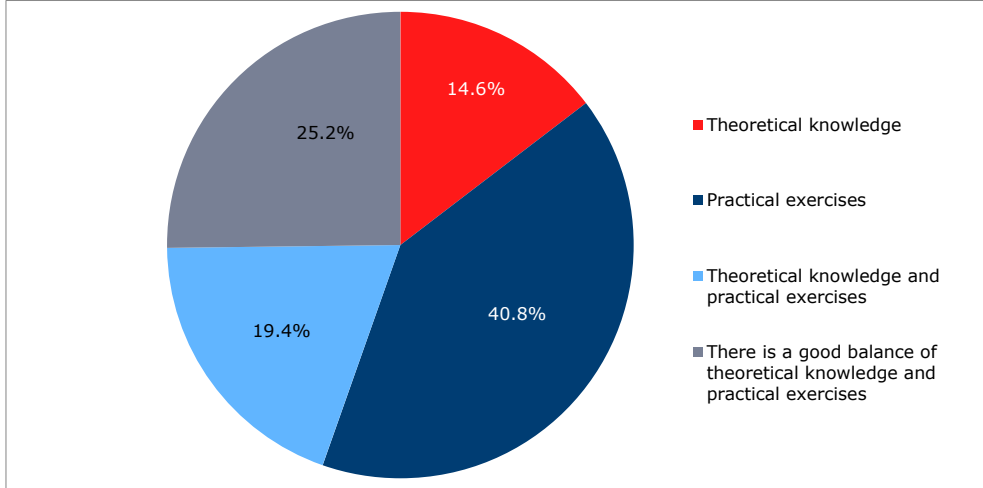
Chart 7: Students’ satisfaction with the access to technical equipment (N=103)

Question: *Are you satisfied with the access to your faculty’s technical equipment that you are using for practice?*



Previous comments co-relate with students’ estimation of departments providing a sound theoretical knowledge basis, but failing to equip students with practical skills (see Chart 8). Most of the respondents in the Serbian sample reported that the faculty of journalism at which they study lacked practical exercises (41 percent). Only 25 percent find that there was a good balance of theoretical knowledge and practical exercises. More than 19 percent thought that the faculty lacked both theoretical knowledge and practical exercises and more than 14 percent stated that their faculty lacked theoretical knowledge ($\chi^2=16.03$, $df=3$, $p<0.01$). In other words, despite most practical courses being delivered by lecturers who have experience at media outlets, students still think that practical training should be given greater prominence in the classroom. This imbalance is partly levelled out by obligatory internships which students are required to take at different mass and digital media. However, the lack of theoretical knowledge noted by 14 percent of the respondents and ‘the lack of both theoretical knowledge and practical experience’ ticked by 19 percent are bad news for journalism departments.

Chart 8: Students' evaluation of attained theoretical knowledge and practical exercises (N=103)
 Question: Complete the following sentence: The faculty of journalism where I am enrolled lacks...

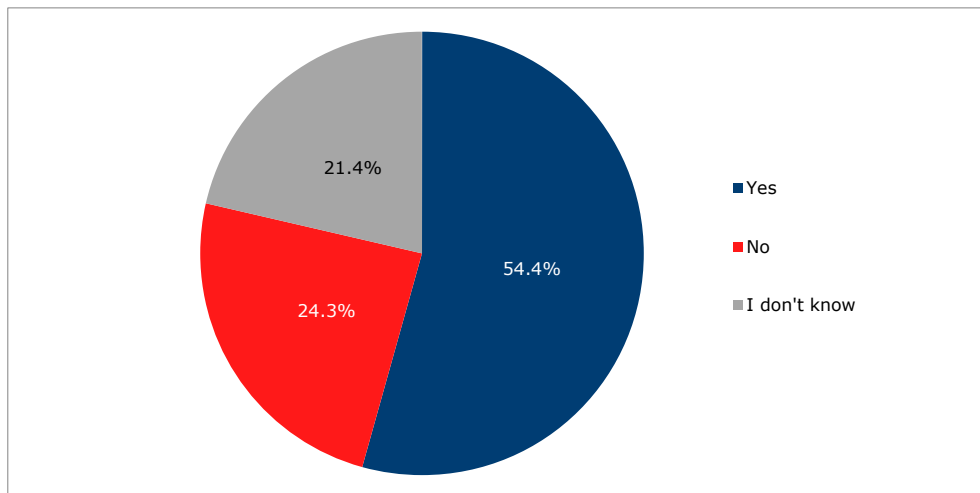


More than 95 percent thought guest lecturers were important and only 2 percent disagreed, while 3 percent did not know how to answer the question ($\chi^2=177.11$, $df=2$, $p<0.01$). In other words, nearly all students agree that international guest lecturers are a valuable source of important theoretical and practical knowledge. In addition, they appreciate professional journalists and other media practitioners sharing their experience in the classroom. Therefore, establishing alumni, cultivating close ties with different media, and organising workshops with practitioners is a good way for faculties to meet students' expectations and improve the practical aspect of journalism education.

4. RELATIONS BETWEEN EDUCATION AND PRACTICE

The suggestions above are supported by students' attitudes to the universities' ties with the media industry (see Chart 9). There were significantly more respondents who claimed that their faculty cooperates well with local / national media outlets, compared to those who disagreed and those who did not know how to answer the question ($\chi^2=20.64$, $df=2$, $p<0.01$).

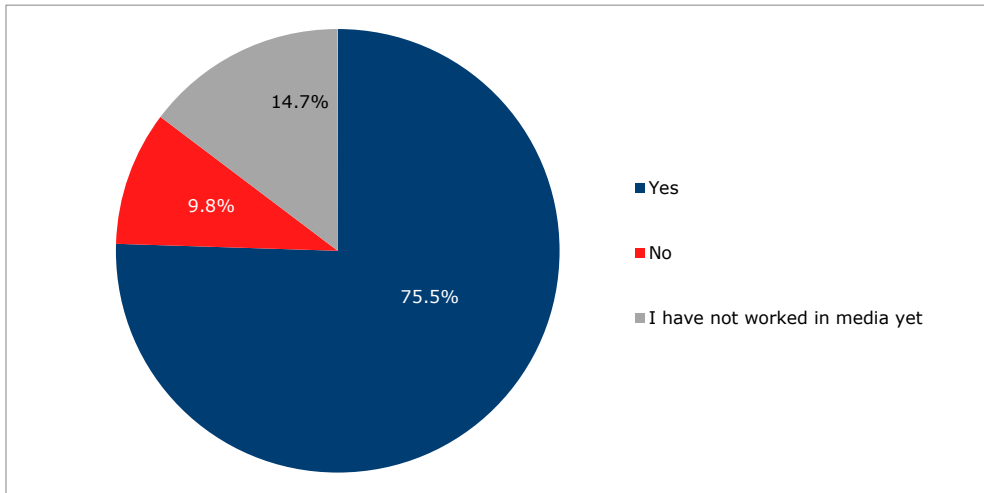
Chart 9: Students' evaluation of cooperation between faculties and media outlets (N=103)
Question: *Do you think that your faculty cooperates well with local / national media outlets?*



The assessment of the applicability of knowledge acquired at the faculties partially contradicts earlier expressed attitudes about insufficient practical exercises during university education (see Chart 10). Significantly more respondents had used the knowledge acquired at faculty in practice. Approximately 15 percent of respondents reported that they had not worked in media yet ($\chi^2=81.94$, $df=2$, $p<0.01$). However, the chance to apply acquired knowledge could have been provided by the faculties during education. For example, students of the Faculty of Political Sciences produce radio and television programmes, which are broadcast on local radio and television station in Belgrade (one hour of radio programme aired every day, and a TV broadcast once a week). They can also write for the faculty newspaper and online portals. Those involved are selected at internal competitions supervised by the students. The Faculty of Media and Communication of the Singidunum University provides an internet protocol radio station ran by students. Despite of these examples, many students still complain about practical education. Students' expectations regarding the practical aspect of journalism education may be too high, since journalism skills could never be attained completely outside of newsrooms. In other words, becoming a journalist requires a socialisation process in the newsroom in addition to theoretical knowledge. This dimension of journalism is equally important as general education and cannot be fully accomplished in other environments, such as faculties, vocational courses or, indeed, through other types of training.

Chart 10: Applicability of the knowledge acquired at faculties (N=103)

Question: *Have you ever applied the knowledge you acquired at your faculty in practice (in the field of media)?*



The curricula at journalism departments give ECTS credits for internships. Most students confirmed having some experience with internships at media outlets ($\chi^2=12.13$, $df=1$, $p<0.01$). This finding is logical, because internship is an obligatory element of the curricula and most students (68 percent) in the Serbian sample were in their senior years at university. The remaining 32 percent who had no experience of internships could be the graduate (MA) students who are not required to obtain internship credits.

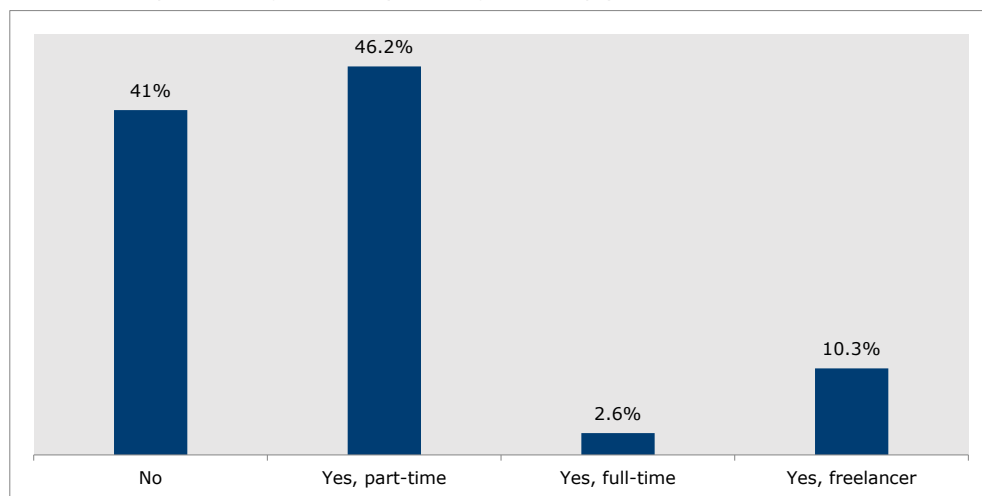
The answers to the question about the type of students' employment (see Chart 11) show that finding a job in media is currently difficult. It could be said that an equal number of respondents from Serbia had not worked or were working part-time in media. Those who reported having a full-time job comprise the lowest share of respondents ($\chi^2=22.23$, $df=3$, $p<0.01$). Their entrance into media organisations was typically enabled by internships. If a student performs well after one month of obligatory internship, they are offered a part-time employment contract (46 percent) or an opportunity to continue working for the media as a freelancer (10 percent). This finding corresponds with global trends. 'Due to commercial pressures and higher profit expectations, there is a broader trend in journalism to lower the variable costs involved in news production by using more short-term contracts, freelance work, outsourcing and impersonal relations between writers and outlets or low-paid news work in content farms.' (van Dalen 2012: 649)

However, working and studying at the same time entails risks because students may be prevented from finishing their studies in a timely manner. Being employed, students extend the period of study, with some giving up completely and never obtaining a university degree. Therefore, cooperation contracts among journalism departments and internship

providers must eliminate this risk. It must be noted that the 'no' answers presented in Chart 11 were given by students who had jobs but not in the media industry.

Chart 11: Students' employment type (N=39)

Question: *Are you working in media (excluding internships)?*



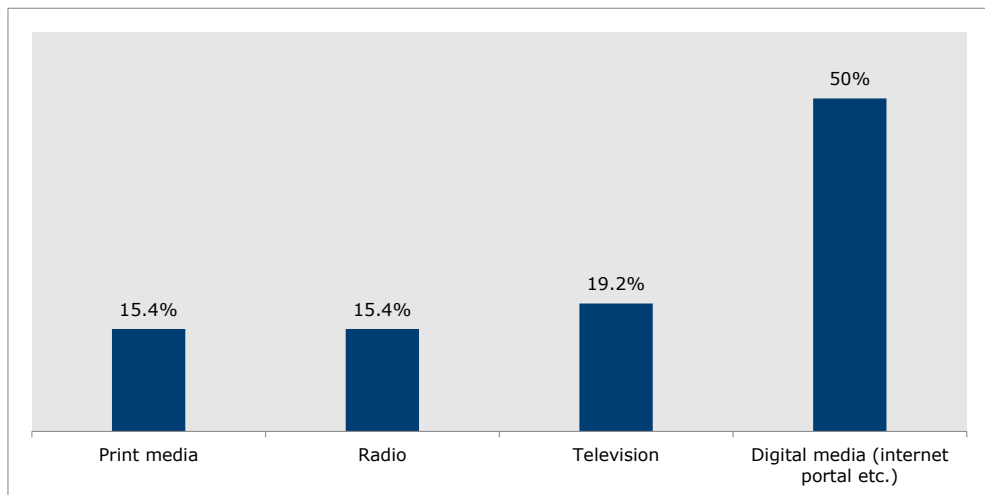
A look at the media for which students worked in parallel to studying (see Chart 12) points to the conclusion that newspapers and radio are becoming obsolete in the 'contemporary media ecosystem'. Technological innovations in radio and print additionally decrease workforce demand. As van Dalen (2012: 649) warns, 'with the introduction of machine-written news computational journalism entered a new phase. Each step of the news production process can now be automated: "robot journalists" can produce thousands of articles with virtually no variable costs.' Television continues to retain the leading position in mass communication, with TV stations offering somewhat greater numbers of vacancies for students (a total of 19.2 percent work in television). Digital media are the most likely employer of future journalists. Compared to traditional media, their digital counterparts can be established and maintained at a much lower cost – interfaces cost next to nothing, technology prices are getting lower on a daily basis and the same is true for internet domains. With internet and mobile gadgets use on the rise, digital media audiences are continually expanding. For this reason, almost half of the students interviewed logically expected to work in digital media.

During the last several decades, information technology has entered the newsrooms, reshaping all phases of news production, so van Dalen (2012: 649) rightly argues that 'journalism and computer science are becoming more closely integrated.' Örnebring (2010) underlines that the general journalistic competencies like good writing and information gathering skills have been traditionally valued more than technical skills which are specific to the medium, due to the fact that journalists work has been mostly separated from the

technical know-how of the news production. Örnebring (2010: 64) warns that this process has significantly accelerated in the twenty-first century: 'Nowadays, journalists are more and more expected to have technical skills in computer-based and digital technologies of production.' Many research studies show that the introduction of digital news production systems requires journalists to have new skills, and in particular technical proficiency and computer literacy (Liu 2006; Lowery and Becker 2001; Marjoribanks 2000). Therefore, existing media organisations expect to hire multi-skilled journalists capable of serving their multimodal production. According to Mark Deuze (2009, 2004) contemporary news work requires professionals capable of performing 'many different tasks throughout the organization' (2009: 85). Therefore, current students of journalism seen as 'digital natives' and valued for their high computer literacy are a welcome addition to digital media. There is a lesson for journalism departments: superior computer literacy becomes equally or even more important than journalists' general knowledge in humanities.

Chart 12: Type of media outlet students work for (N=26)

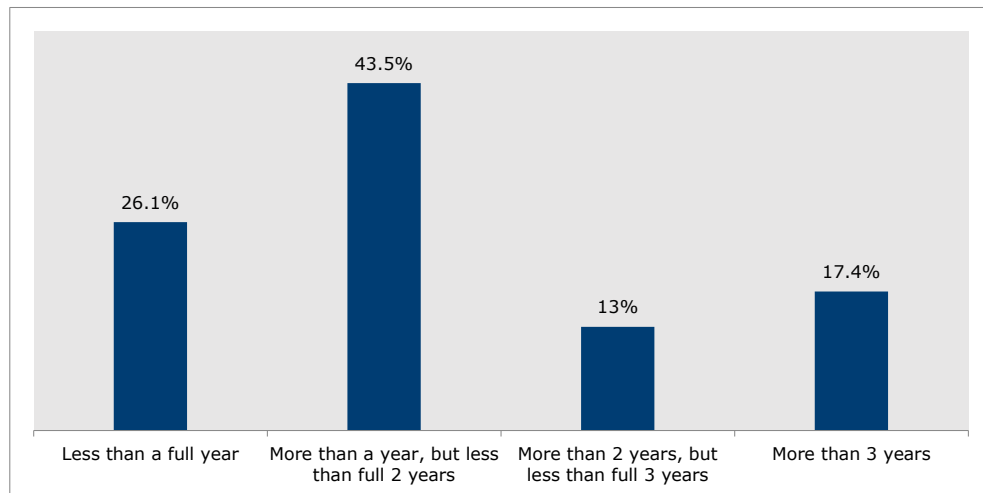
Question: *For what kind of media are you working?*



The general expectation for journalism students to start their careers during final years of faculty education is not supported by the findings of the survey (see Chart 13). Most respondents in the survey were third or fourth-year students and a third had already been working for more than two years (13 percent) or even longer (17.4 percent). This finding sheds more light on the comments about students' media job orientation.

Chart 13: Length of students' work experience (N=23)

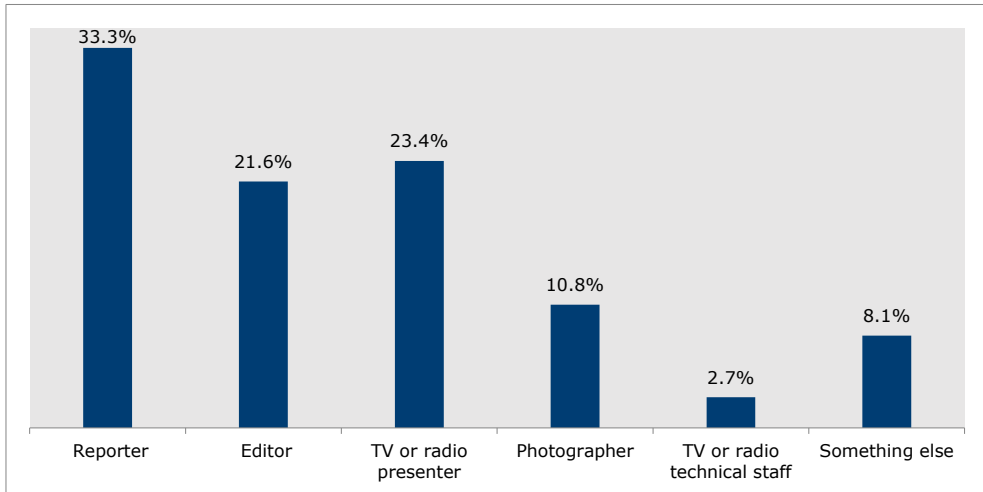
Question: *For how long have you been working for the media (work experience)?*



Of course, most of the media still operate on the principle that journalists should climb the 'professional ladder' (Soloski 1989) so the first job assigned to newcomers in the newsrooms is usually that of a reporter. It was therefore highly surprising that 22 percent of respondents stated that they worked as editors (see Chart 14). This is most likely the result of semantic confusion rather than fact. Most duties in today's digital media consist of selecting, re-arranging and posting of information discovered on the internet. In Serbian these activities are described by the word '*uređivanje*', which corresponds to 'editing' in a literal translation into English. However, web portal 'editors' cannot be equalised with editors in the traditional sense. The latter act as gatekeepers, have a senior position, coupled with great responsibility in hierarchically arranged editorial groups.

Chart 14: Type of students' work experience (N=111)

Question: *What type of work are you currently doing or did in the past?*

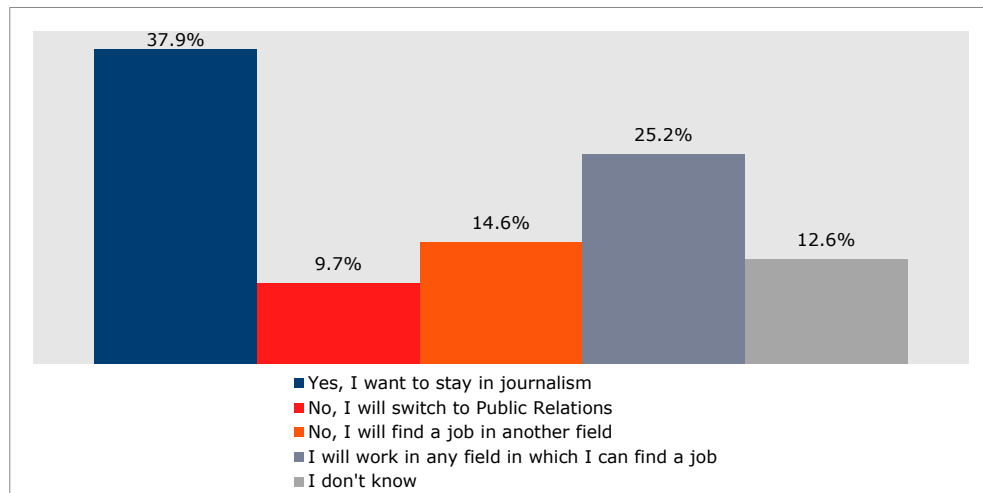


5. PROFESSIONAL PROSPECTS

Differences were found in the respondents' career plans following graduation ($\chi^2=27.63$, $df=4$, $p<0.01$). The highest share of respondents stated that they wish to stay in journalism or work in any field in which they can find a job. The smallest number stated willingness to switch to Public Relations. Taking professional aspirations (see Chart 15) and market realities for journalists into consideration, the surveyed students can be divided into three clusters. The first comprises the 'enthusiasts' determined to pursue a career in journalism by all means. This description fits most respondents – 38 percent. The second cluster comprises those who have already given up journalism and made the decision to search for a job in another field (15 percent) or switch to Public Relations (10 percent). The third cluster can be labelled 'realists' because they had no idea where they will work (13 percent) and were willing to consider any job proposal (25 percent). We have called them 'realists' having in mind the high level of unemployment in Serbia (19.7 percent), which is even higher among young university graduates.

Chart 15: Dedication to a career in journalism (N=103)

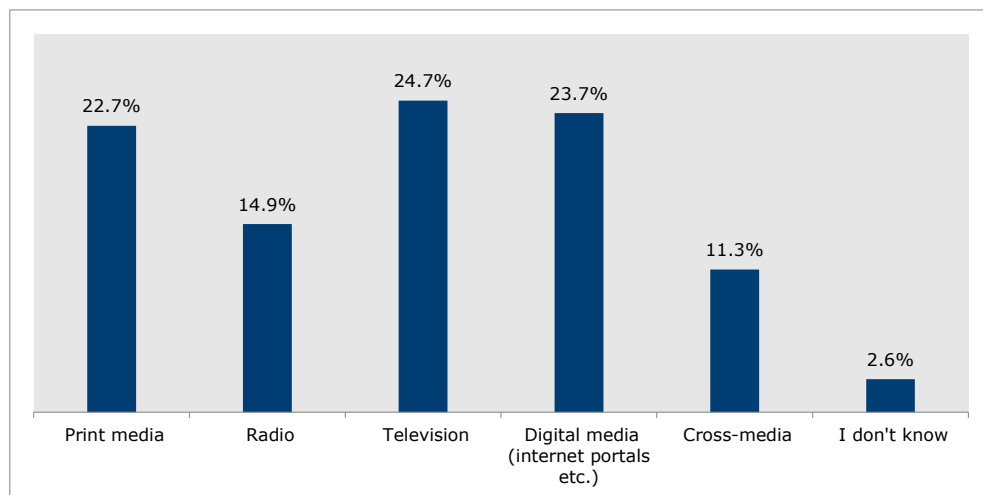
Question: Will you continue to work in journalism after graduating from university?



Except for cross-media (11 percent) and radio (15 percent), which were selected as the least desired areas of work for students, the remaining media are almost equally attractive. Print media are desired by 23 percent, television attracts 25 percent, while digital media were picked out by 24 percent of the survey respondents (see Chart 16). Since multiple answers were possible the numbers shown do not express the students' ultimate choice.

Chart 16: Most desired job paths in journalism (N=194, multiple answers possible)

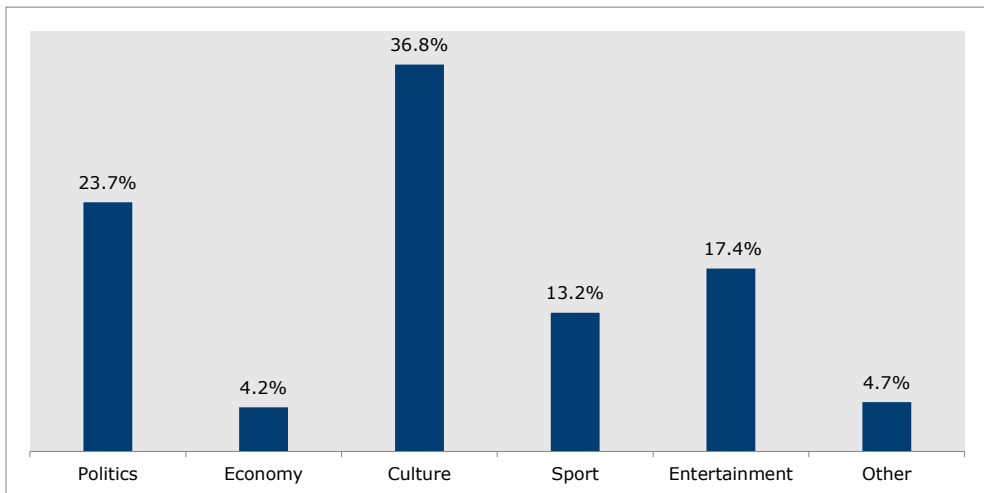
Question: In what kind of media would you like to work after graduation?



When it comes to areas of social life which journalism students would like to cover (see Chart 17), culture is the most desirable field (37 percent). Those interested in politics (24 percent) and economy (4 percent) may well be the respondents motivated to study journalism for reasons of 'societal and political engagement'. Those who wish to cover entertainment were likely aware of the prevalence of 'infotainment' over news across all types of contemporary commercial media. Maybe this preference is also linked to higher expected salaries. For the so-called talk show 'star journalists' in Serbia salaries depend on attracting advertisers for the programme. Other sources of extra income are clearly in the credits after the show, which mention various sponsors (hairdressers, boutiques, flower shops, etc.).

Chart 17: Most desired journalism fields (N=190, multiple answers possible)

Question: *In which field of journalism would you like to work?*



6. COMPARISONS BETWEEN STUDENTS' PERSPECTIVES

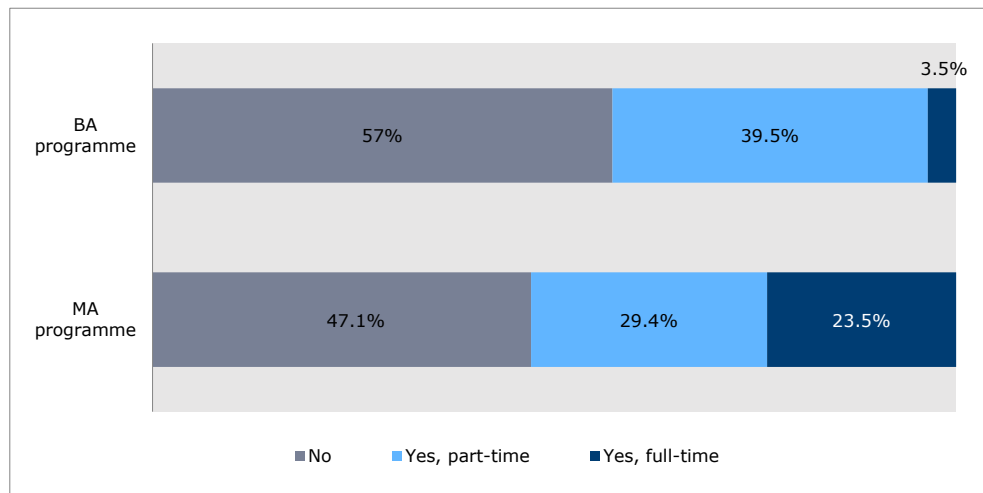
The Serbian case study presented reveals some topics of interest for further discussion. For example, the type of university or institutional characteristics and the level of studies (BA or MA) were identified as significant differentiating factors by the statistical tests performed on the country sample.

Differences between levels of study

A significant difference emerged regarding the employment status of respondents enrolled in undergraduate (BA) and graduate (MA) programmes, both overall ($\chi^2=66.55$, $df=2$, $p<0.01$) and in the Serbian sample ($\chi^2=9.03$, $df=2$, $p<0.05$). A higher share of undergraduate (BA) level respondents reported working part-time, while a greater share of graduate (MA) level respondents responded that they worked full-time (see Chart 18).

Chart 18: Difference in working status between BA and MA students (N=103)

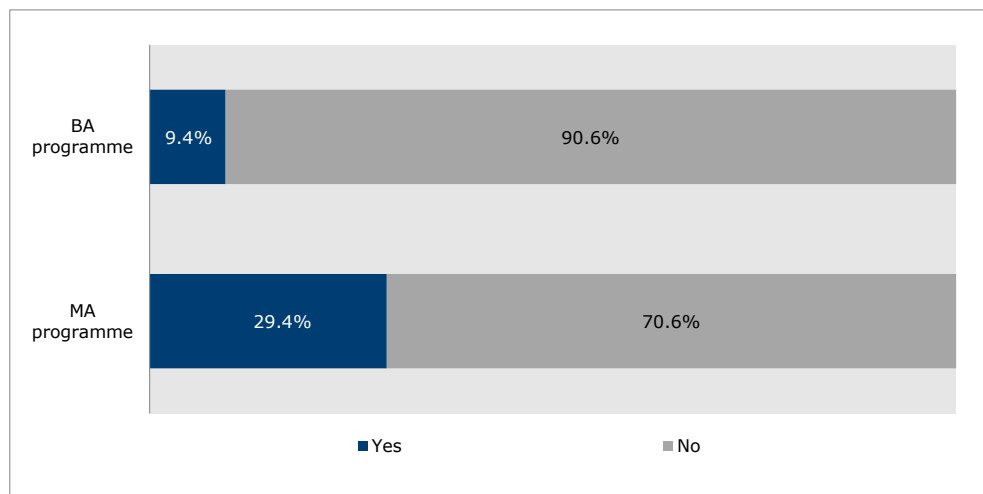
Question: Are you working alongside your studies (any kind of job)?



If students were employed, their steady incomes reflected on their ability to pay for additional training courses outside of the university (see Chart 19). Respondents enrolled in graduate (MA) programme reported a significantly more extensive use of additional courses relating to journalism ($\chi^2=5.10$, $df=3$, $p<0.05$).

Chart 19: Difference in affiliation to non-university journalism education between BA and MA students (N=103)

Question: Did you take up any additional courses related to journalism outside your faculty?

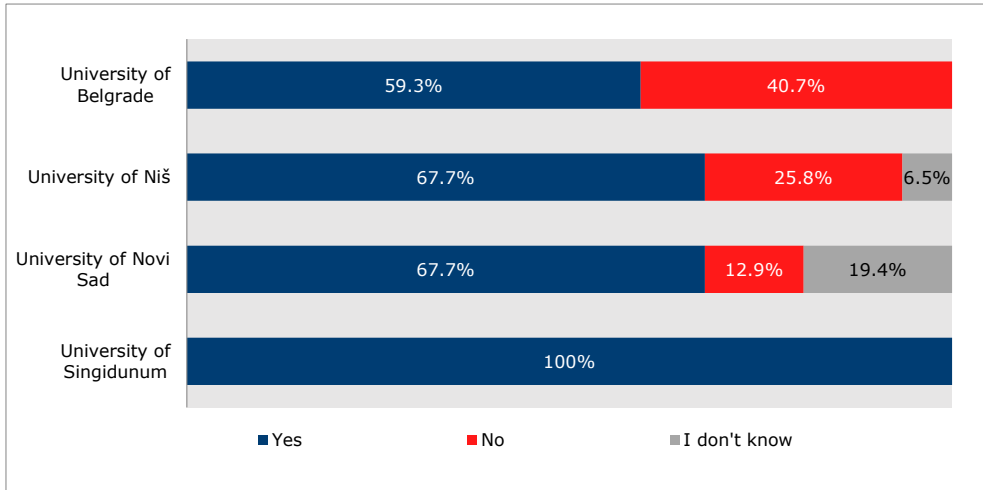


Differences between universities

The levels of satisfaction with the learning conditions between state and private universities in Serbia also differ (see Chart 20). The highest share of satisfied respondents attended the Singidunum University, followed by those attending University of Novi Sad and University of Niš ($\chi^2=19.53$, $df=6$, $p<0.01$).

Chart 20: Differences in the level of satisfaction with learning conditions between state / public and the private universities (N=103)

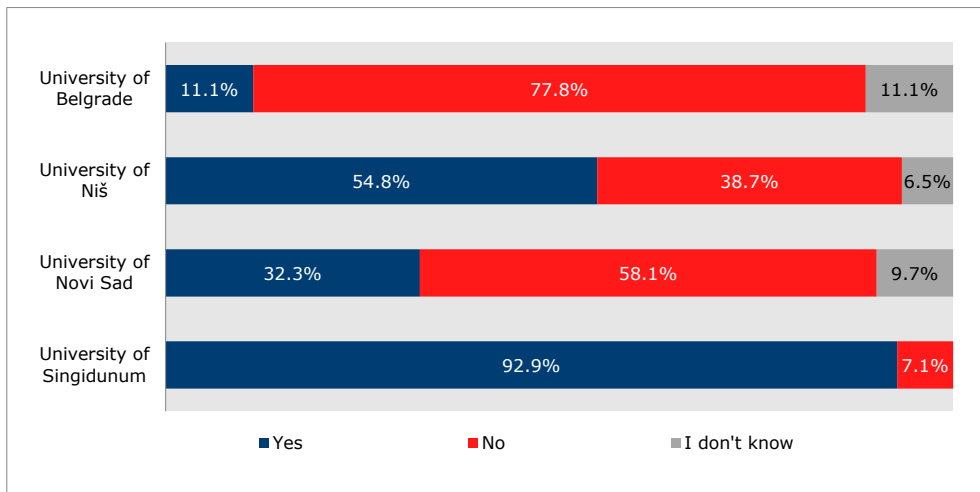
Question: *Are you satisfied with the learning conditions at your faculty (library, books, study rooms, workshops and seminars)?*



Students' dissatisfaction with practical exercises during the course of study is a complaint that has been repeatedly voiced over the years. Although digital equipment for media operations is currently cheap to obtain, there is a significant difference in this regard between state and private universities in Serbia (see Chart 21). The highest share of satisfied respondents attends Singidunum University, while the highest share of dissatisfied attends the University of Belgrade ($\chi^2=28.86$, $df=6$, $p<0.01$). However, this finding must be reconsidered considering the number of students annually enrolled. The University of Belgrade enrolls 160 undergraduate (BA) and 30 graduate (MA) students each year, while the Singidunum University only enrolls 25 BA journalism students at the start of each academic year. Providing access to technical equipment to only two dozen of students enrolled at the private university is therefore much more manageable and the same applies to the facilities and qualified staff.

Chart 21: Differences in the level of satisfaction with the technical equipment used for practical classes between state/public and private universities (N=103)

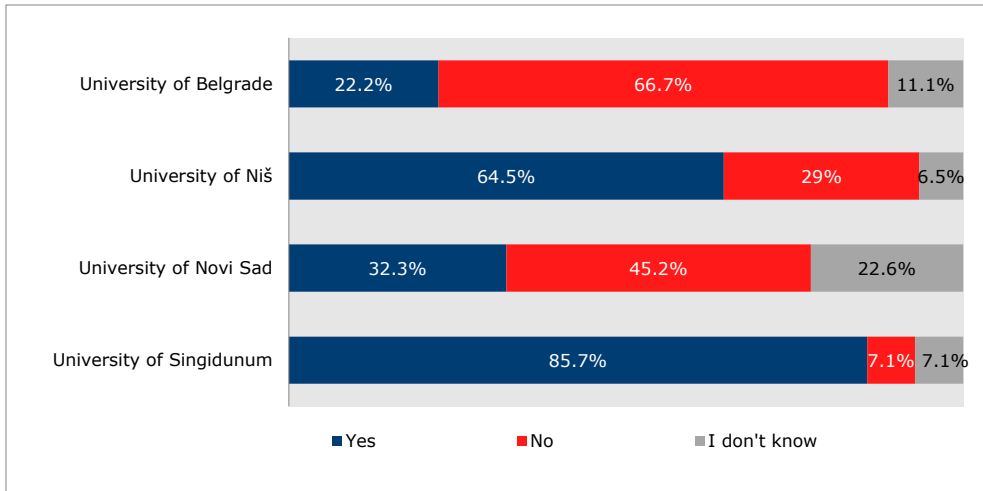
Question: Are you satisfied with your faculty’s technical equipment that you are using for practical classes?



The previous conclusion is supported by the students’ evaluation of access to the faculty technical equipment (see Chart 22). The greatest number of satisfied survey respondents again attended Singidunum University, while the greatest number of dissatisfied students attended the University of Belgrade ($\chi^2=24.81$, $df=6$, $p<0.01$). It can therefore be argued that inadequate access to available technical and studio resources at the University of Belgrade is the result of an inappropriately high number of students enrolled.

Chart 22: Differences in the level of satisfaction with access to technical equipment used for practical classes between state/public and private universities (N=103)

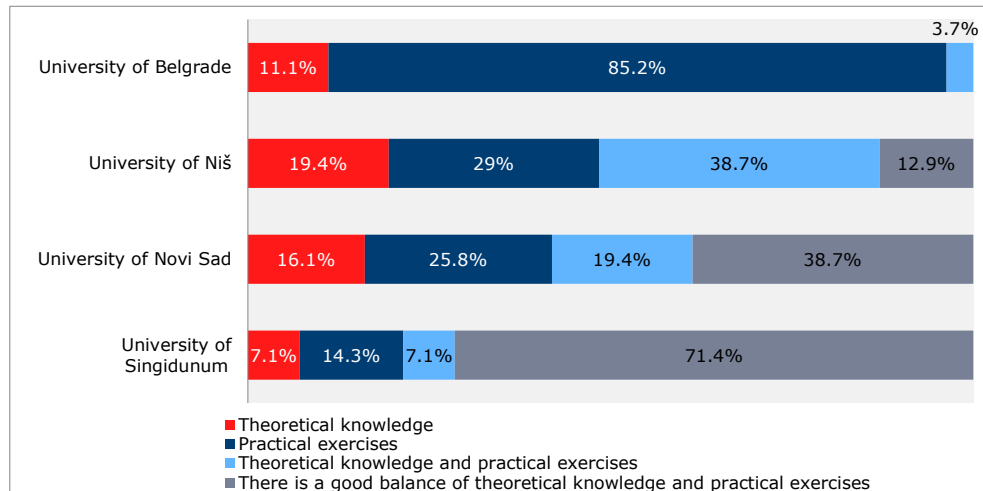
Question: *Are you satisfied with the access to your faculty's technical equipment that you are using for practice?*



There was also a significant difference in the assessment of the theoretical module of training at public and private universities (see Chart 23), which is reflected in the students' answers to the question what their departments of journalism lacked ($\chi^2=52.72$, $df=9$, $p<0.01$). The highest share of respondents from University of Belgrade responded that they lacked practical exercises, whereas the highest share of respondents from University of Niš responded that they lacked both theoretical knowledge and practical exercises. The highest share of respondents from the University of Novi Sad and Singidunum University responded that there was a good balance of theory and practice. This data can also be discussed from another angle, arguing that the University of Belgrade and Singidunum have better teaching staff and literature resources than the other two public universities. More specifically, compared to 85 percent of the students at University of Belgrade who thought that the journalism faculty lacked practical experiences, students at the other two public universities were not satisfied with the theoretical knowledge (16 percent at University of Novi Sad and 19 percent at University of Niš). Both theoretical courses and practical exercises were reported to be lacking the most at the two state departments (19 percent students at University of Novi Sad and 39 percent of students at University of Niš).

Chart 23: Differences in the perception of the weaknesses of journalism education at state/ public and private universities (N=103)

Question: Complete the following sentence: The faculty of journalism where I am enrolled lacks...



The data and discussions presented in this chapter contain an analysis of the current state-of-play of university education of journalists. Like other professions, journalism is facing the risk of becoming extinct in the future. The new century ushered in a new era of 'self-mass communication' (Castels 2009) in which all individuals, networked digitally on the Web, can take the roles of communicators and recipients simultaneously and by their own choice. Therefore, journalism has been facing a severe crisis since the beginning of this century (Barnett 2002; Bennett 2011; Blumler 2010; McChesney 2003; Russial et al. 2015) and all stakeholders are involved in searching for a new journalism training model, or for a way which can re-invent its education alike (e.g. Cohen 2015; Pavlik 2013). Journalism as a profession (or occupation) is changing rather dramatically, so educational programmes will have to keep pace with these fast developments, becoming significantly more adaptive and flexible. University education, including that of journalists, must embark on a substantial restructuring process. Hopefully, the survey indicators presented can at least suggest a direction for change.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

The results of the survey of Serbian students in journalism warrant several recommendations.

Recommendations based on students' attitudes regarding their perception of faculty education, and in particular their dissatisfaction with the practical aspect of tuition:

- Curricula should maintain a 50:50 ratio between theoretical and practice-oriented courses.

- Curricula should be prepared by qualified tutors with a solid background and relevant references in their field of teaching.
- Most stakeholders, including media owners, editors and working journalists should be involved in the process of curriculum development and in the accreditation process of journalism departments.
- All parties involved should be included in the process of evaluation of accredited institutions to maintain permanent quality control.
- The number of institutions offering journalism training should be further reduced to concentrate the best teachers, especially for the graduate (MA) and PhD levels.

To meet students' expectations and improve overall performance, faculties have to maintain close ties with stakeholders:

- Alumni associations are an underestimated resource. Since almost no department has them, they should start to register and follow the career path and development of degree holders.
- Faculties must continue to offer classes by prominent local and foreign practitioners in the field on account of the positive evaluation of guest lecturers by students.
- Departments should organise frequent thematic workshops with journalists, editors and other specialised media workers.
- Special attention must be paid to cooperation with media on internships. Journalism departments must insist on the return of students after internship period to eliminate the risk of extension of study periods or the prevention of the abandonment of studies.

Strategies in the context of the technical equipment attainability:

- Practice-oriented courses must be organised for small groups of attendants.
- Journalism must be separated from other modules such as PR, media management, media production etc. Thus, the number of students will be aligned with appropriate technical resources.
- Teachers' competences must be continually improved.
- Faculties must provide hardware and software for students enabling them to obtain and improve their computer skills.

Journalism studies must adapt to the accelerated pace of changes in the media environment:

- Considering the market demand, the number of unemployed journalists and technical and human resources of the faculties the total number of students enrolled must be decreased.
- A medium-term strategy for university education of journalists should be developed.
- The strategy must take into account current restructuring underway in the information society, media audiences and media institutions.

- Sub-specialisation in mass media or specific areas of modern life seems to be unavoidable. But whether such journalists are recognised by the labour market should be carefully monitored.

Two more general recommendations can be added. As the students who participated in the survey work for both digital and traditional media, educational institutions must introduce more courses dedicated to digital and online journalism. Because of the rising phenomena of citizen journalism and the advent of internet influencers in the virtual public sphere (blogosphere, twitter sphere) it would also be wise to add courses such as entrepreneurial journalism to the curricula. The most important motive for studying journalism, as reported by students, was being socially and politically engaged. This finding calls for sustainability or strengthening of the traditional courses at high education institutions such as journalism ethics, investigative journalism, basics of political science, etc. in addition to employing an innovative approach. Overall, the results of this survey demonstrate that although journalism is technologically renewed and performed online, the essence of the profession and core values must continue to be upheld in the future.

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COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE: THE COMMON CHALLENGES IN SOUTH EAST EUROPE

Viktorija Car

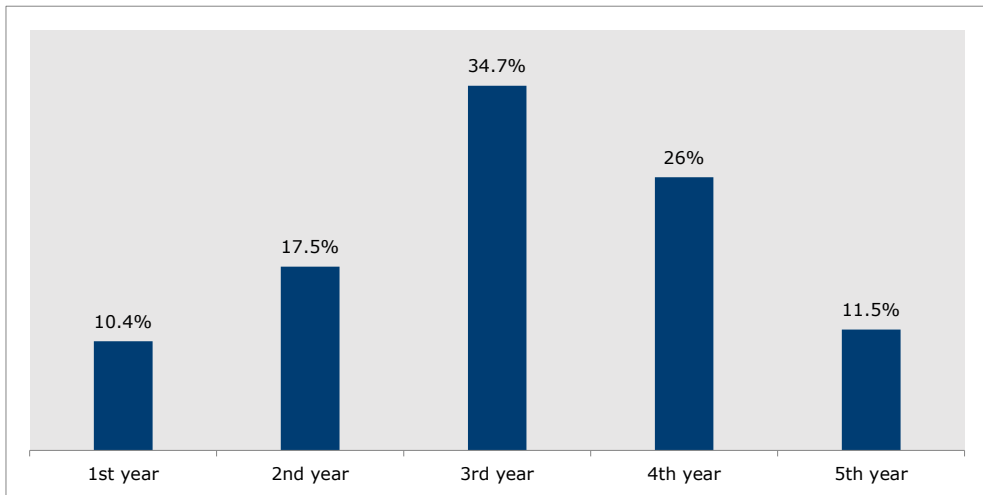
The idea behind this survey, which was conducted in five SEE countries (Albania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Romania and Serbia), is to compare and better understand the qualities and failures of journalism education as seen and criticised by BA and MA journalism students at both public / state and private universities and higher education institutions.

From the very onset of the survey we could predict that there would be solid common ground between the countries (see Introduction, pp. 1-10). Students' insights can help journalism educators to better understand the educational approaches students prefer and the reasons why, their work experience as journalists, and their requirements and expectations to be better prepared 'for a world in which they will occupy a growing share of the wider journalistic (or perhaps post-journalistic) ecosystem' (Allen et al. 2015: 157). These findings can help journalism educators define and deploy better strategic approaches in the future education of journalists in SEE countries, developing curricula that will support students' mobility between journalism programmes in the region, and building journalism skills for the twenty-first century that will also support upholding journalism standards.

The overall sample consisted of 531 Bachelor (BA) and Master (MA) students from public/state (77 percent) and private (23 percent) universities ($\chi^2=157.29$, $df=1$, $p<0.01$)¹, with significantly more students being enrolled in BA programmes (78 percent) than in MA programmes (22 percent) ($\chi^2=167.56$, $df=1$, $p<0.01$). The oldest student in the overall sample was born in 1967, whereas the youngest student was born in 1996. The student distribution within the five-year journalism programmes is based on the Gaussian distribution function (see Chart 1) – most of students reported they were in their third year of study, followed by those in their fourth and second year of study, while the lowest number of students reported they were in their first and fifth year of study ($\chi^2=112.08$, $df=4$, $p<0.01$).

¹ Methodological framework including the sample of this research is described in detail in the Introduction chapter pp. 5-9.

Chart 1: Year of study (compared to entire duration of studies) (N=531)



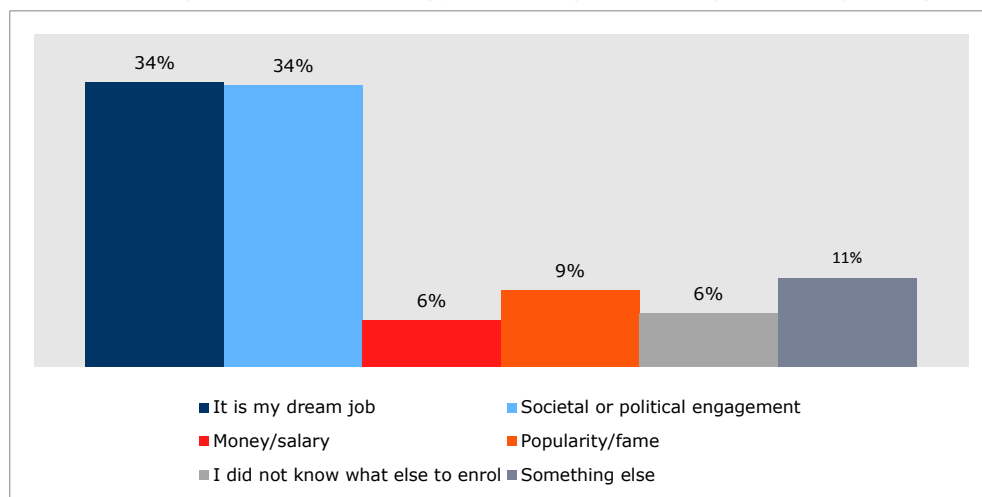
A large majority of the respondents (89 percent) ($\chi^2=747.64$, $df=2$, $p<0.01$) had not finished any other course or study before nor had they taken any additional courses relating to journalism outside of their faculty (84 percent) ($\chi^2=244.56$, $df=1$, $p<0.01$).

Journalism as a 'dream job' and an opportunity for societal and political engagement

'The students' motivation for choosing a particular field of study can be described as the intentions which students display during their schooling, resulting from an acquired knowledge, skills and belief patterns, values and feelings that govern their behaviour.' (Potočnik 2008: 265)

In all five countries, journalism has been declining as a profession in terms of job security, salaries, and developed labour and media markets (OSF 2014). Globally, despite growth and improvements in journalism education, the old challenges in the profession are still present: ideology, censorship, dependence, and conflict ethics (Josephi 2010). The media sector is struggling – despite the fast development of media industries, journalism as a profession has somehow remained encapsulated in the forms and formats of the twentieth century (see Introduction, pp. 1). When it comes to investigative journalism, it seems that enthusiasm is the most important motivation as funding for such serious work is, regrettably, insufficient. At the same time, digitally skilled laypersons are seizing the opportunity and practicing 'citizen journalism'. The results of this survey confirm that students are aware that the salaries / fees in this profession are inadequate. Their motivation to study journalism is primarily an opportunity for societal or political engagement (34 percent) or they choose to study journalism because it is their dream job (34 percent) (see Chart 2).

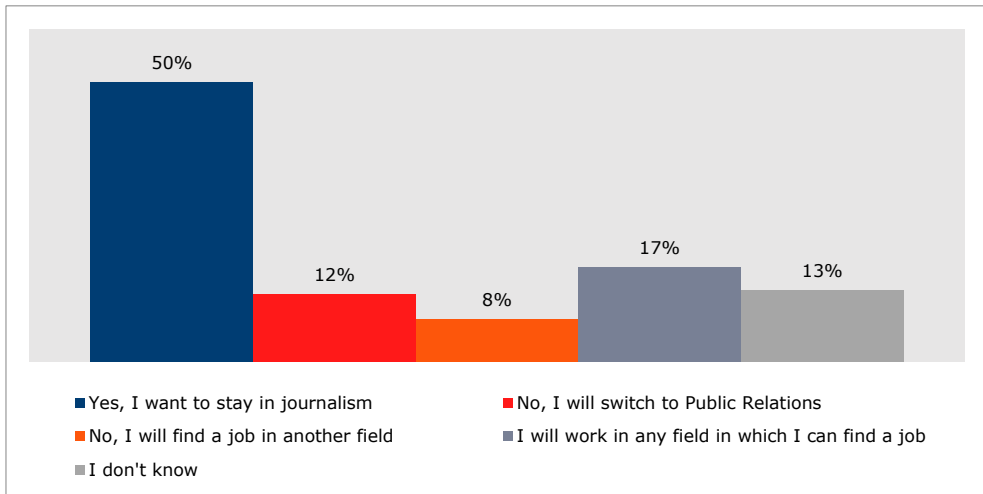
Chart 2: What is your motivation to study journalism? (N=736, multiple answers possible)



Differences were found in the overall sample regarding students' career plans following graduation ($\chi^2=317.87$, $df=4$, $p<0.01$). After students graduate only half of the respondents from the overall sample would like to continue to work as journalists (see Chart 3). The second half will work in any field in which they are offered a job (17 percent); switch to Public Relations (12 percent); try to find a job in another field (8 percent); or cannot give an answer to the question (13 percent).

The largest group of students who wanted to stay in journalism are in Bulgaria (57.9 percent) and Romania (57 percent), while the smallest share of students who wished to remain employed as journalists was from Serbia – only 37.9 percent. Further, only 7.1 percent of students from Serbian private universities stated that they would like to remain in journalism, with 42.7 percent students from Serbian public universities stating the same wish. It is important to highlight here that students from Serbia have the most experience of working in media (see Chart 13), but seem the most discouraged to remain in the profession. One of the reasons underlying the decisions in question, which the authors of the Serbian report call 'realistic' (pp. 152) could be the high unemployment rate in Serbia (19.7 percent), which is even higher among young university graduates.

Chart 3: Will you continue to work in journalism after graduating from university? (N=527)



Regarding students' plans to continue working in journalism following graduation, in the overall sample no difference was found between students enrolled in BA and MA programmes ($\chi^2=2.74$, $df=4$, $p>0.05$) and between those from private and public universities ($\chi^2=1.82$, $df=4$, $p>0.05$). Nevertheless, in Albania there was a higher share of students from public universities (65.8 percent) who stated that they wished to stay in journalism following graduation ($\chi^2=15.01$, $df=4$, $p<0.01$), while in Bulgaria more students from private universities stated the same wish (73.7 percent). The seeming contradiction in Albania is that despite students attending the private Beder University being the most satisfied with learning conditions in their faculty and with the faculty's equipment and the access to it, only 25 percent wanted to continue working in journalism following graduation.

The survey further sought to establish whether there were any differences between students who had and students who had no experience with internships at media outlets regarding their plans to continue working in journalism following graduation. Only in Croatia students who had experience of internships at media outlets reported in higher numbers that they wished to stay in journalism (48.7 percent), with students who did not have any experience reporting in higher numbers that they want to find job in another field (18.6 percent) ($\chi^2=10.30$, $df=4$, $p<0.05$). In Romania students who had experience with internships at media outlets also reported in higher numbers that they wanted to stay in journalism (65.6 percent). There is a host of reasons for this outcome, including the fact that in the two countries students had better experience with internships at media outlets where editors gave them a real opportunity to apply a hands-on approach. Students in all five countries gave the same average rate for their overall satisfaction with internships, with a mean of grade of 3.53 (standard deviation = 1.111).

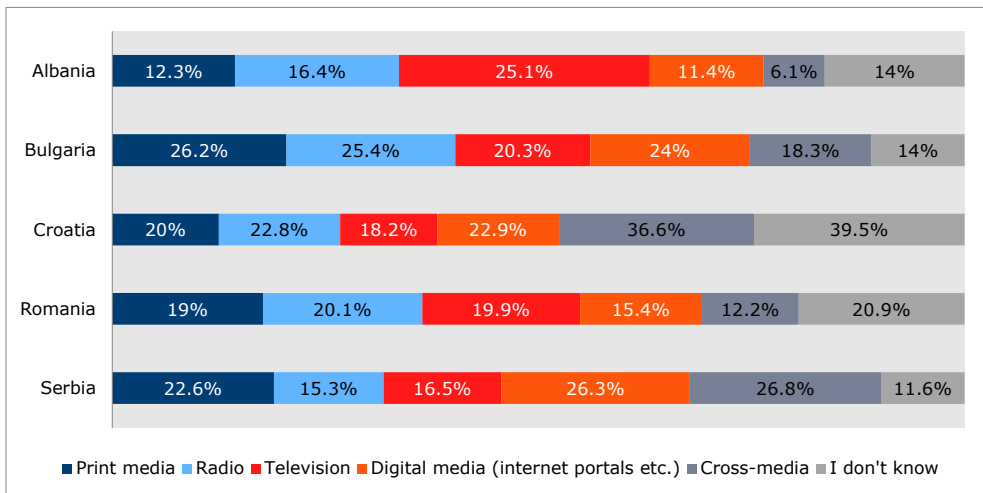
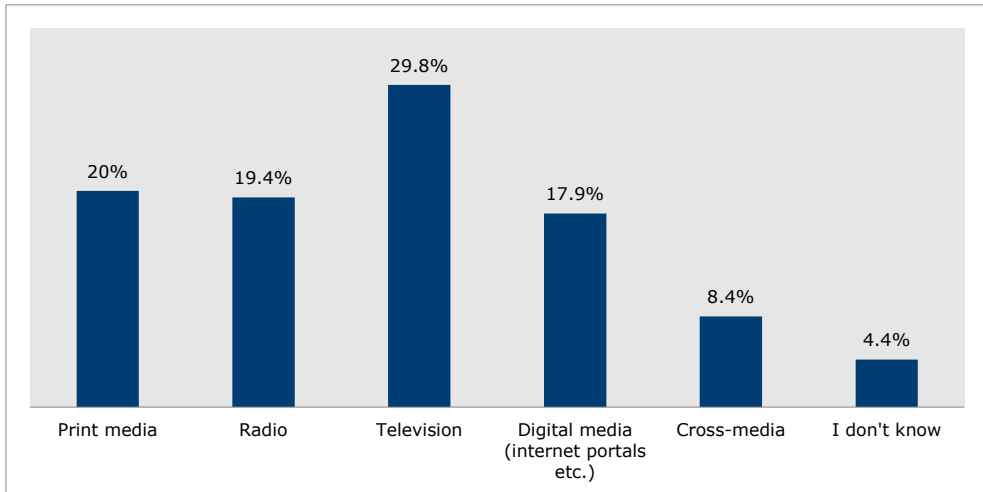
Television is the most popular job prospect

After the first decade and a half of the twenty-first century television remains the most popular mass media. Mike Proulx and Stacey Shepatin (2012) agree that the internet did not kill the television; instead it became its best friend. 'It is a companion for the growing masses of television viewers who are simultaneously going online while tuning in to their favourite shows' (*Ibid: 3*). Television is rapidly converging with the web and with social media, and definitely affecting the way in which audiences experience programming, but still the traditional television survives and remains attractive to large majority of journalists, producers and other media specialists.

This survey confirms that television remains the most attractive media for most students in SEE countries – almost 30 percent would like to work as television journalists (see charts 4 and 5). Cross-media is the least attractive for students. Although in all countries in the sample television enjoyed top position in terms of student interest, the level varied from 25 percent in Albania to 16.5 percent in Serbia. According to an earlier survey conducted in Albania, students would specifically like to work as TV hosts. In Albania, it is widely perceived that TV hosts are well paid (pp. 25). The career of many current presenters on Albanian television started on radio, which is why radio is considered a good start and is the second most popular media among Albanian students. The highest interest of Albanian students in television was also confirmed by data on the type of media most students worked for – 36.8 percent reporting that they did so in television (see Chart 14).

Interest in print media is the highest in Bulgaria (26.2 percent) and the lowest in Albania (12.3 percent). Interest in radio is the highest in Bulgaria (25.4 percent) and the lowest in Serbia (15.3 percent). Interest in digital media is the highest in Serbia (26.3 percent) and the lowest in Albania (11.4 percent), while interest for cross-media is the highest in Croatia (36.6 percent) and the lowest in Albania (6.1 percent). Croatian students demonstrate the strongest orientation towards digital and cross-media (almost 60 percent), while students in Albania demonstrate the strongest orientation towards traditional media (53.7 percent). Traditional media markets in all five countries are shrinking, especially for print media and television, while digital media provides many opportunities for young entrepreneurs in the media industry. However, only the interests of Croatian students are aligned with this trend. There are some successful examples of sustainable web portals founded by students already, such as Srednja.hr and Zih.hr. Both were created by students who following their graduation continued to develop them, employing more young journalism graduates.

Charts 4 and 5: In what kind of media would you like to work after graduation? (N=975, multiple answers possible)



Students' criticism of learning conditions, the faculty's technical equipment used for practice and access to the technical equipment

In the twenty-first century, technological innovation and digital media development are challenging the information monopolies formerly held by journalists and agency news providers. The advent of the internet age, Web 2.0 technology, and the ubiquity of smart phones has continued to fuel competition in news and information distribution (Car 2014: 213; Picard 2015: 4-5). Since the internet provides an illusion of omnipresent information, these changes have created high expectations that new media technologies will systematically enhance civic engagement and better develop national and global political cultures (Car

2014: 213). Therefore, the idealised, romanticised view of journalism can be an obstacle in creating curricula for journalism education. Modern pedagogy emphasises the necessity of a stronger connection between theory and practice in new digital environment, and especially highlights the importance of media ethics. A need has emerged for new reforms and the improvement of the existing curricula. 'The students are smarter because of the connections to the outside world made possible by digital technologies. They are better communicators, although not necessarily better journalists.' (Self 2015: 2)

Robert G. Picard argues that journalism of the twentieth century has helped reinforcing 'dominant perceptions of issues, people, and countries, especially those perceptions held by editors and social elites. It consistently missed the emergence of major stories – financial crises, developing international conflicts, and political scandals – until they emerged as full-blown calamities and disgraces.' (2015: 4) From his point of view, 'journalism training has far too often uncritically accepted and promoted the ideas that journalism makes democracy function and that democracy is not possible without journalism.' (2015: 4-5)

The purpose of this study was to obtain the critical perspective of students on the quality of journalism programmes available from their faculties on learning conditions, the faculty's technical equipment used for practice and access to that technical equipment. It is not uncommon to hear from students that they are not allowed to use the technical equipment without professional supervision and there are no such employees at the faculty or there is a person who is not daily available to students.

While 62.4 percent of students in the overall sample of the survey are satisfied with the learning conditions at their faculty (students in Serbia were the most satisfied with 69.9 percent) ($\chi^2=243.03$, $df=2$, $p<0.01$), less than a half of the overall sample (45 percent) are satisfied with faculty's technical equipment used for practice ($\chi^2=173.54$, $df=2$, $p<0.01$)². Students in Romania (68 percent) were the least satisfied with the faculty's technical equipment. As written in Romanian report, most journalism faculties have proper technical equipment but its capacity is insufficient to serve the high number of students enrolled (see pp. 109).

In the overall sample, no difference was found between students enrolled in BA and MA programmes regarding their satisfaction with learning conditions ($\chi^2=5.02$, $df=2$, $p>0.05$) and the technical equipment in their faculties ($\chi^2=0.65$, $df=2$, $p>0.05$). In Bulgaria, students enrolled in MA programmes (89.5 percent) are the most satisfied with learning conditions, while in all other countries BA students are more satisfied than their peers pursuing an MA degree. It is common for BA students to have more idealistic view of the programme, with MA students being more critical on account of having more experience. In the overall sample, no significant difference was found between students who took additional courses

² Significant Chi-Square was probably due to the differences in number of students who answered Yes / No, and those who did not know the answer.

relating to journalism and those who did not in terms of satisfaction with the learning conditions at their faculty, with the faculty's technical equipment ($\chi^2=0.13$, $df=2$, $p>0.05$) and access to that equipment ($\chi^2=4.85$, $df=2$, $p>0.05$). Only in Albania the students who took additional courses relating to journalism responded in higher numbers that they are satisfied with learning conditions (91.3 percent) and with faculty's technical equipment (78.3 percent), while students who did not take additional courses relating to journalism responded in higher numbers that they are not satisfied with faculty's technical equipment (52 percent) or that they do not know how to answer the question (9.3 percent) ($\chi^2=11.49$, $df=2$, $p<0.01$). Unlike Albanian students, in Bulgaria students who took additional courses relating to journalism responded in higher numbers that they are not satisfied with faculty's technical equipment (64.3 percent), while students who did not do so responded in higher numbers that they are satisfied (56.5 percent) ($\chi^2=7.64$, $df=2$, $p<0.05$). In Serbia, students who did not take additional courses relating to journalism responded in higher numbers that they are satisfied with learning conditions (73.3 percent).

Students were further asked if they were satisfied with access to the faculty's technical equipment intended for practice, with 47 percent of students answering that they are not satisfied and 9.4 percent that they did not know how to answer the question ($\chi^2=137.143$, $df=2$, $p<0.01$)³. Students in Bulgaria were the most satisfied (54.2 percent), while their Romanian counterparts were the least satisfied (65 percent). In the overall sample, no difference was found between students enrolled in BA and MA programme in terms of their satisfaction with access to faculty's technical equipment ($\chi^2=0.60$, $df=2$, $p>0.05$).

Differences in students' criticism between public / state and private universities

In the five countries covered by the study there are differences in the quality of teaching standards between public / state universities, on one hand, and private universities, on the other hand. In Albania, the learning conditions in private universities are better than in public / state universities on account of higher investment. Hence better technical equipment for practice is available at private universities (pp. 29). The situation in Romania is identical. There the private Hyperion University raised funding for building radio and TV media labs with modern technical equipment to enable students to practice journalism. On the other hand, the funding of state universities is inadequate and does not allow acquisition of technical and other equipment needed for the learning process (pp. 109).

In Bulgaria, students from both state and private universities frequently mention the same reasons for being unsatisfied with the learning conditions and technical equipment. The radio and television studios and training newsrooms at the faculties offer students limited capacity for work (small halls or rooms, a limited number of computers, cameras and other devices). These training areas are therefore often overcrowded. The possibilities available

³ Significant Chi-Square was probably due to the differences in number of students who answered Yes / No, and those who did not know the answer.

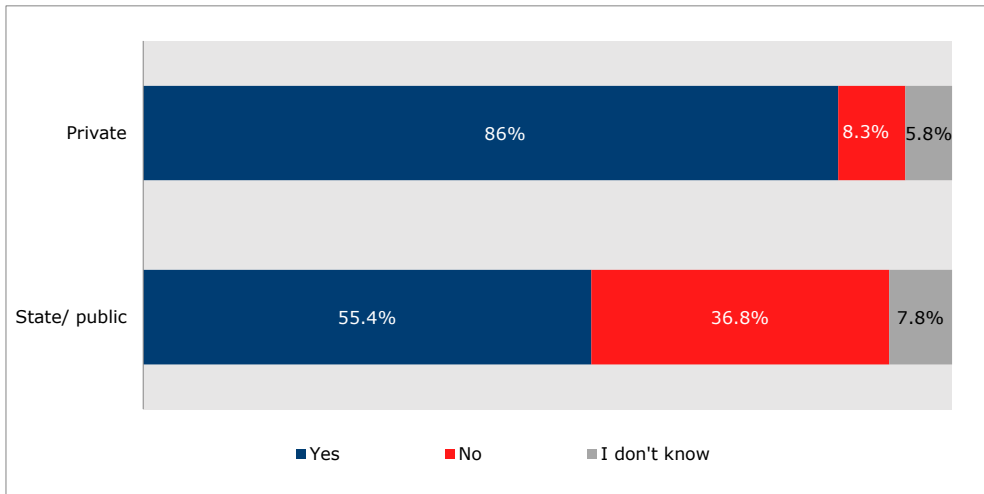
to students to use the equipment for independent work (outside of planned hours for group work, i.e. for the implementation of individual projects, etc.) are limited (pp. 46). The inadequacy of practical exercises is largely due to underfunding (Spasov 2014: 78), which erodes the ability to maintain modern technical equipment and provide access to it to as many students as possible. Yet, the significantly higher share of satisfied students from private universities shows that public educational establishments should reconsider their attitude to the overall context of studies (including administrative service for students, better maintenance of libraries, etc.) to raise their competitiveness (pp. 58).

As compared to Albania, Bulgaria and Romania, the situation in Croatia is the opposite because only the students of the state Faculty of Political Science of the University of Zagreb have an opportunity to gain experience working in television and radio and newspapers within the faculty. There is *Radio Student* with local transmitting license for the area of Zagreb, the IPTV *Television Student*, which broadcasts 24/7, the student newspapers *Global* (fully prepared and edited by students and published several times per semester), and a number of Faculty's social network groups (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram) and blog platforms like *Studosfera.net* (Car and Bukvić 2014: 26).

In Serbia, all departments with journalism programmes have modest facilities for print, radio and TV practice and production on their premises. Students at the Faculty of Political Sciences, which is a department of the state University of Belgrade, produce a radio programme broadcasted daily by the local radio-television station in Belgrade 'Studio B', and a TV programme with one weekly broadcast by the same station (Radojković 2014: 49).

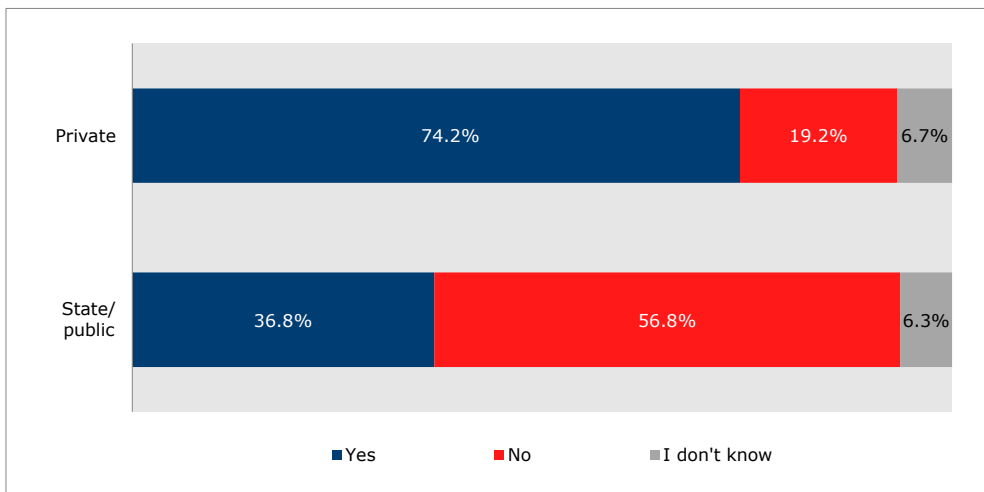
As already mentioned, students were asked if they were satisfied with the learning conditions at their faculty (library, books, study rooms, workshops and seminars). In the overall sample, students from private faculties are more satisfied (86 percent) than their peers from public / state faculties (55.4 percent) ($\chi^2=39.68$, $df=2$, $p<0.01$) (see Chart 6).

Chart 6: Satisfaction with the learning conditions of the faculty (N=531)



In the overall sample, the difference between public / state and private faculties was found in terms of satisfaction with the technical equipment of the faculty ($\chi^2=55.86$, $df=2$, $p<0.01$). A higher share of students from private universities (74.2 percent) reported satisfaction with technical equipment (see Chart 7).

Chart 7: Satisfaction with the technical equipment available at the faculty (N=530)

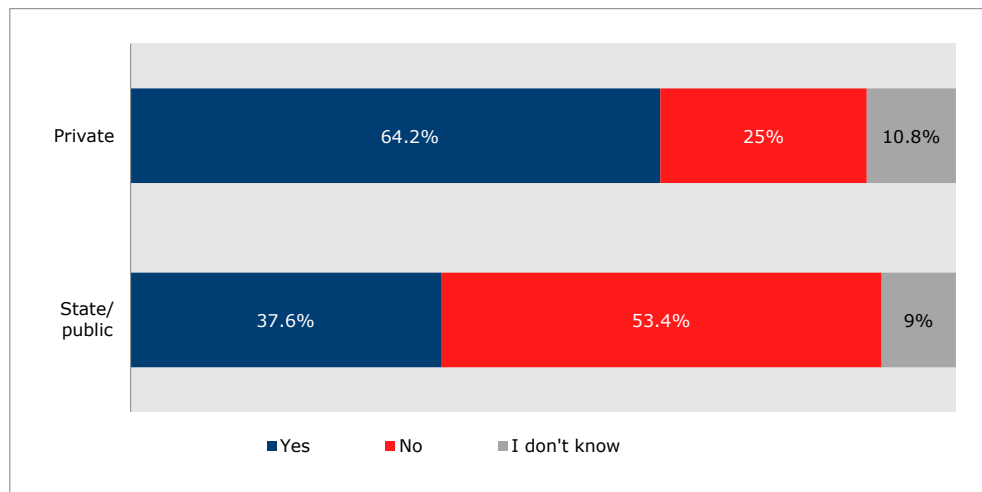


In Bulgaria, dissatisfaction with the level of technical equipment is higher than dissatisfaction with the learning conditions in general. At most faculties, the material conditions for tutorials are still below standard. The reason is chronic underfinancing, but also the lack of sufficient initiative on the part of senior faculty staff who could be

more flexible and improve the technical aspects of education by applying for projects, developing partnerships with media business, etc. (pp. 45).

In the overall sample, a higher share of students from private universities reported that they were satisfied with access to technical equipment ($\chi^2=31.35$, $df=2$, $p<0.01$) (see Chart 8).

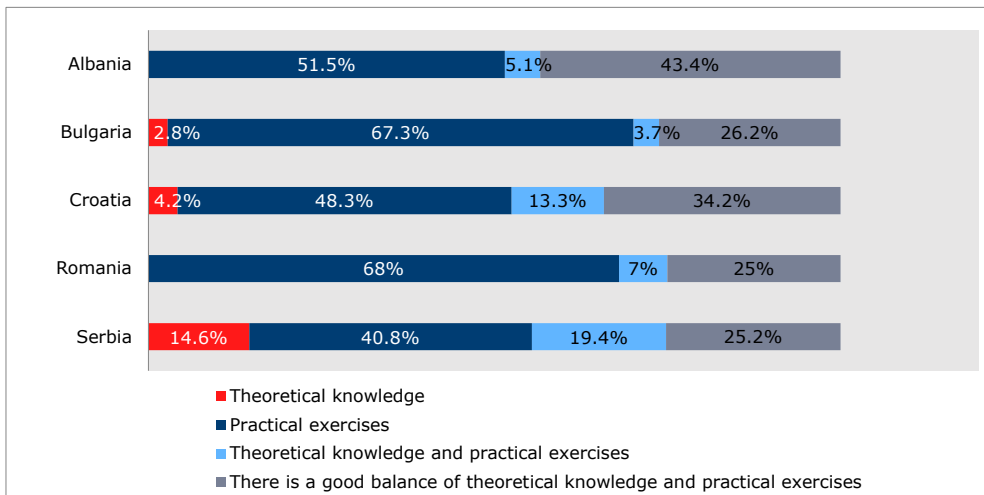
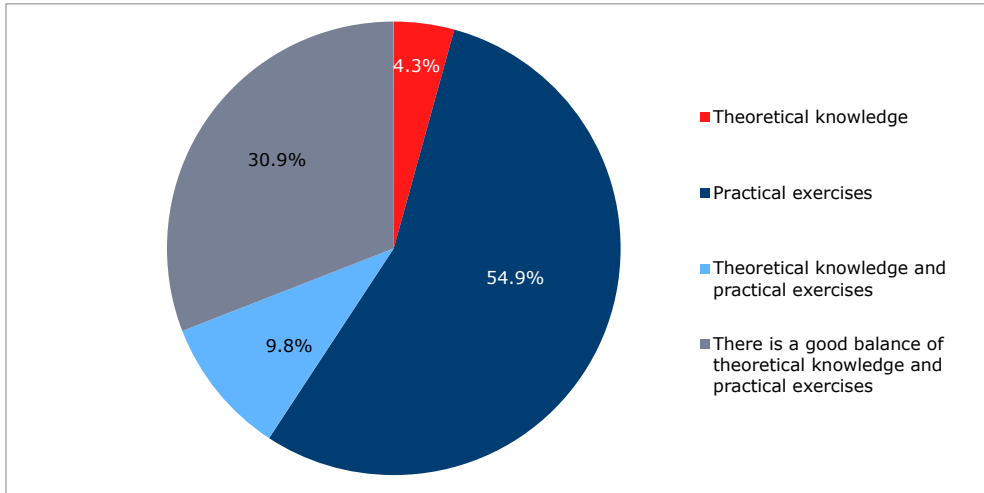
Chart 8: Satisfaction with access to the faculty's technical equipment (N=530)



Practical exercises are lacking in journalism education

To investigate students' (dis)satisfaction with journalism programmes in detail, we had to compare the quality of theoretical knowledge and practical exercises during the study programme. Only one-third of students (31 percent) believe that there is a good balance of theoretical knowledge and practice at the faculty where they study journalism (see charts 9 and 10). Four percent would like a stronger emphasis on theoretical knowledge (the largest criticism in this regard comes from Serbian students – 14.6 percent). The lack of practical training has generally received the strongest criticism (55 percent of the overall sample), with the strongest critics being in Romania (68 percent) ($\chi^2=336.49$, $df=3$, $p<0.01$). The reason is that most university programmes in journalism in Romania, even after the implementation of the Bologna rules, are based on gaining theoretical knowledge about journalism, seen as one of the disadvantages in journalism education at BA level. Although some improvements have been made toward adopting more practice-oriented approaches, the faculties are still confronted with financial and organisational problems. There are no sufficient rooms, laboratories and equipment for practical journalistic teaching (pp. 110).

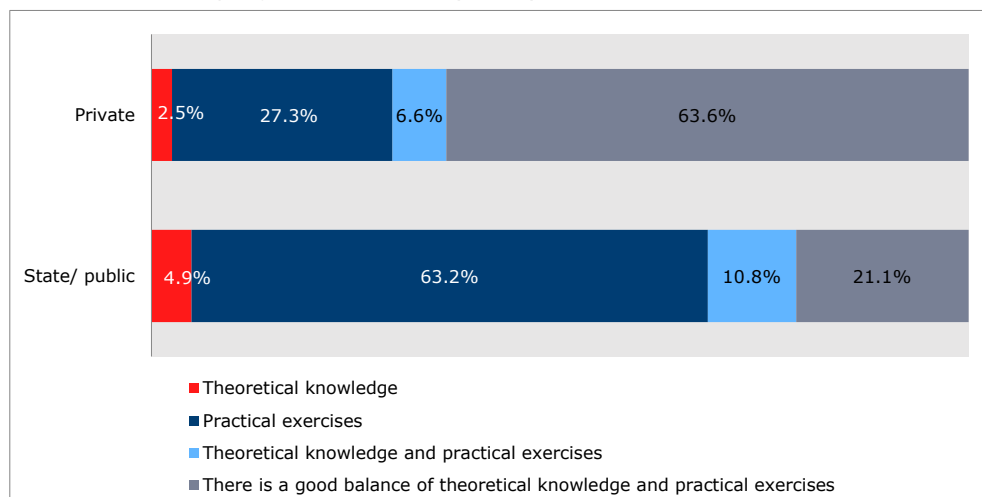
Charts 9 and 10: The faculty of journalism lacks... (N=529)



Regarding this question, in the overall sample a difference was found between students enrolled in BA and MA programmes ($\chi^2=25.96$, $df=3$, $p<0.01$). A higher share of students enrolled in MA programmes responded that their faculty lacks practical training (73.3 percent), with a higher share of students enrolled in BA programmes responding that there is a good balance of theoretical knowledge and practical exercises (35.9 percent).

Furthermore, in the overall sample a difference was found between students from private and public universities ($\chi^2=79.71$, $df=3$, $p<0.01$). While the higher share of public university students reported that their faculty lacks practical exercises, most students from private universities reported that their faculties had a good balance of theoretical knowledge and practice (see Chart 11).

Chart 11: The faculty of journalism lacks... (N=529)

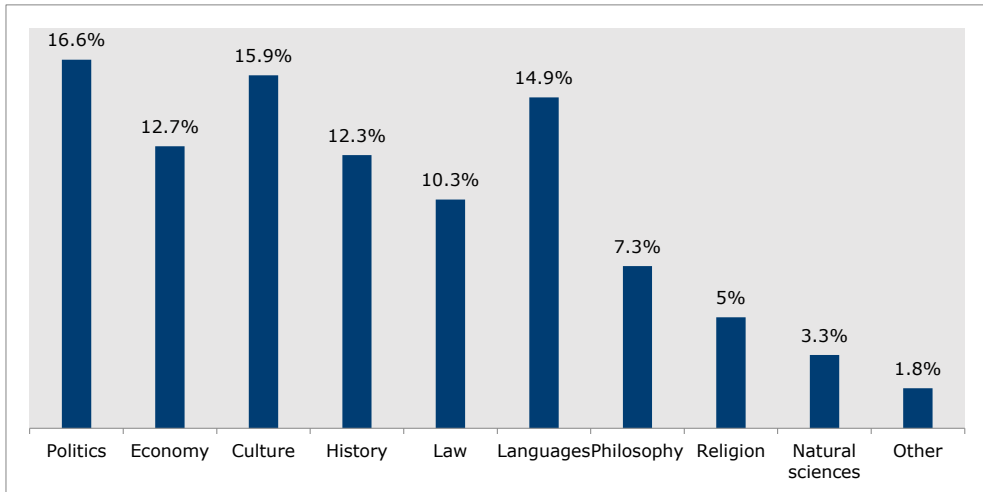


While in Albania students at public faculties lack practical exercises (71.8 percent), 96.4 percent of students from the private Beder University think there is a good balance of theoretical knowledge and practice. The same type of criticism comes from Bulgarian, Croatian and Serbian universities, while students in both public and private Romanian universities agree on the lack of practical exercises.

On the other hand, regarding this question there was no difference between students who took additional courses relating to journalism and those who did not in the overall sample ($\chi^2=4.38$, $df=2$, $p>0.05$). There are some differences in Albania – a higher share of the students who took additional classes relating to journalism reported that there is a good balance of theoretical knowledge and practice at their faculty (82.6 percent) and a higher share of those who did not take any additional courses relating to journalism responded that their faculty lacked practical exercises (63.5 percent) ($\chi^2=19.47$, $df=3$, $p<0.01$).

Asking about the type of general knowledge, which students consider important for journalists, the respondents mostly agreed on politics (16.6 percent), culture (15.9 percent) and languages (14.9 percent), there being no significant differences between the countries (see Chart 12).

Chart 12: What kind of general knowledge is important for journalists? (N=2674, multiple answers possible)



For example, while many journalism programmes teach media history far less attention is given to how media messages construct reality; while some journalism programmes teach how to use specific technologies, almost no attention is given to why the practices relying on these technologies produce a stronger impact on audiences than others. These are just a few examples, but no conclusions can be drawn from them because no curricula analysis was done in the framework of this study.

It is encouraging that 58 percent of students have applied the knowledge acquired at the faculty in practice (in media). Only 13 percent of students who work in media gave a negative answer, i.e. they did not find such knowledge useful in practice ($\chi^2=165.25$, $df=2$, $p<0.01$). Again, the most satisfied are students from Serbia (75.5 percent), and the largest group of unsatisfied students is in Romania (18 percent). Regarding this question, in the overall sample no difference was found between students enrolled in BA and MA programmes ($\chi^2=4.00$, $df=2$, $p>0.05$) nor between students at private and public universities ($\chi^2=2.23$, $df=2$, $p>0.05$). However, in Albania the students from private universities reported in greater numbers (77.8 percent) that they have had the chance to apply knowledge acquired at the faculty in practice ($\chi^2=16.09$, $df=2$, $p<0.01$), while students from public universities in Serbia (75.5 percent) and Croatia (71.2 percent) stated that they have had a chance to apply the knowledge acquired at the faculty in practice.

Students want guest lecturers

A large majority of the overall sample (91.7 percent) agrees that guest lecturers are important (e.g. professional journalists or other media practitioners). Only in Croatia students' perception are somewhat weaker (82.5 percent) ($\chi^2=816.38$, $df=2$, $p<0.01$).

A higher share of students enrolled in BA programmes stated that guest lecturers are important (95.4 percent) ($\chi^2=34.38$, $df=2$, $p<0.01$).

Students' experience as journalists – towards a hands-on approach

Students are usually eager to gain practical experience. Learning by doing is a common approach in teaching different skills and there are many journalistic skills to learn before becoming a professional journalist. Journalism educators should be initiating creative classes that provide students with opportunities to develop concrete tools and techniques that they can use to challenge journalistic tasks they will be assigned in the future. An international experience in journalism education is that it is beginning to shift from theoretical training towards hands-on experience (Self 2015: 3). 'Training younger journalists can instill values in young entrepreneurs who may work within existing media or even create new media systems online.' (*Ibid*: 1) The Bologna Process recommends that university programmes foster a stronger connection between theory and practice in the new digital environment.

The best way to obtain hands-on experience during the course of study is practical training at faculty's media labs and radio and television studios, but even better experience can be gained by providing internships in different media newsrooms. Regrettably, in all five researched countries there was no clear strategy of cooperation or a common platform between universities and national or local media outlets. In-house mentorships are uncommon. Neither have institutional agreements and standards for internship evaluation been put in place. It is typically the faculties pushing media outlets to accept students for internships, with editors usually saying that they do not have time to monitor and supervise the students. In Croatia, for example, the high number of students means that most do not have the opportunity to gain any practical experience during the course of study, with students often encountering real journalism only after graduation. A possible solution to this problem may be better cooperation between higher education institutions and local / national media outlets.

Yet most students from the sample (41.5 percent) had a positive opinion on their faculty's cooperation with local and national media outlets, with 29.2 percent not knowing the answer and the same number (29.2 percent) thinking that the faculty does not cooperate well with local and national media outlets ($\chi^2=15.94$, $df=2$, $p<0.01$). Students in Serbia had the highest level of satisfaction (54.4 percent), with the least satisfied students being in Romania (only 21 percent). In the overall sample, no difference was found between students enrolled in BA and MA programme in terms of their opinion on their faculty's cooperation with local / national media outlets ($\chi^2=2.51$, $df=2$, $p>0.05$). However, there is a difference between students from private and public universities ($\chi^2=19.58$, $df=2$, $p<0.01$). Students from private universities reported in greater numbers that their faculties cooperated well with local / national media. Still, in Romania and Serbia students from state universities were more satisfied.

In the overall sample, 58 percent of students have some experience with internships at media outlets ($\chi^2=12.78$, $df=1$, $p<0.01$). Again, the most experienced students were in Serbia (67.3 percent) where internships are an obligatory element of the curriculum and students receive ECTS credits for internships. The least experienced students were in Albania (31 percent). As in all other SEE countries, in Albania it is also difficult to find paid internships. They last between one and three months (sometimes even six months), meaning that students mostly prefer to find other jobs in which they can be paid, even though they may not be in media, such as waitressing or working in call centres (pp. 21).

An additional possibility for gaining practical knowledge in all five countries is the 'Erasmus+' Programme, which enables students to apply for internships in other countries. Student exchange is possible at all levels of studying (BA, MA and PhD) and can last between 2 and 12 months, the students being required to do full-time practice at a media outlet (e.g. television station, local newspapers, etc.) for 6 to 8 hours a day.

Students that have some experience with internships at media outlets rate their overall satisfaction with the internships with the average grade of 3.5. Regarding experience with internships at media outlets in the overall sample, no difference was found between students enrolled in BA and MA programmes, nor between students from private and public universities. But again, in Albania students from private universities reported in greater proportion (77.8 percent) that they had experience with internships at media outlets ($\chi^2=37.84$, $df=1$, $p<0.01$), as well as Romanian students (90 percent) from private universities ($\chi^2=7.34$, $df=1$, $p<0.01$).

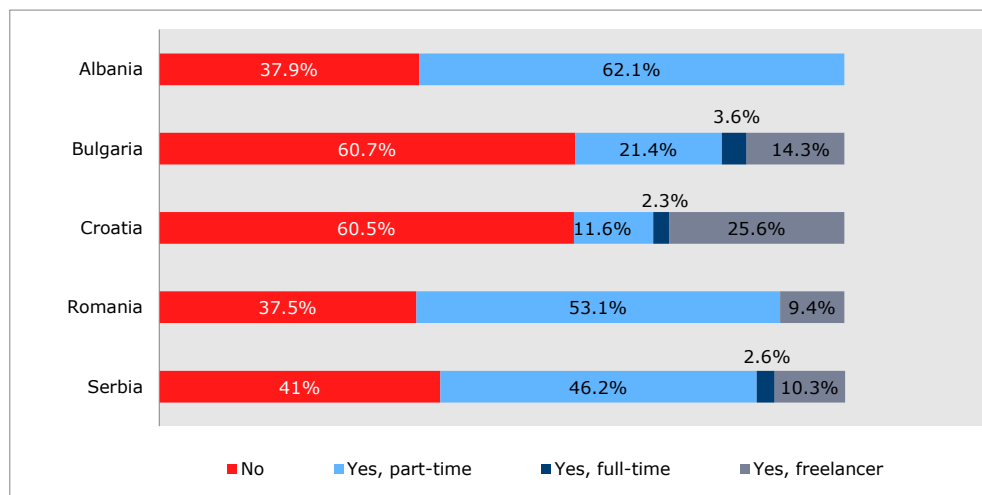
Although most students think that cooperation between their faculty and media outlets was good, most already having gained some experience with internship at media outlets, there is a need for better organisation of mentoring, monitoring and evaluation of students' internships or other practice at media outlets. Without journalists and editors who mentor students while practicing and standardised monitoring and evaluation of both students' and mentors' work, it is not possible to reach conclusions on the quality of students' practical work as journalists and their experience during internships at media outlets. Better partnerships between faculties and media outlets could substantially contribute to a better standard of professional training.

Considering the overall sample, it could be said that half of the students (49.3 percent) reported working in parallel to their studies (any kind of job), with the other half reporting they did not work. This significant difference was due to the differences in the number of those who did not work compared to those who worked part-time (32.2 percent), or full-time (17.1. percent) ($\chi^2=89.81$, $df=2$, $p<0.01$). It was expected that in the overall sample a difference would be found between students enrolled in BA and MA programmes regarding working alongside studies ($\chi^2=66.82$, $df=2$, $p<0.01$). A higher share of students enrolled in BA programmes responded that they did not work (57 percent), while higher shares of students enrolled in MA programmes responded that they worked full-time (41.4 percent).

However, in this study the focus was exclusively on students' working experience at media outlets.

Out of these working students, almost half (48 percent) had not worked in media yet, with 52 percent having jobs in media: 37.4 percent working part-time, only 1.8 percent working full-time, and 12.9 percent working as freelancers ($\chi^2=93.63$, $df=3$, $p<0.01$). While most working Bulgarian and Croatian students do not work in media, in Albania, Romania and Serbia the majority work in media part-time (see Chart 13).

Chart 13: Are you working in media (excluding internships)? (N=171)



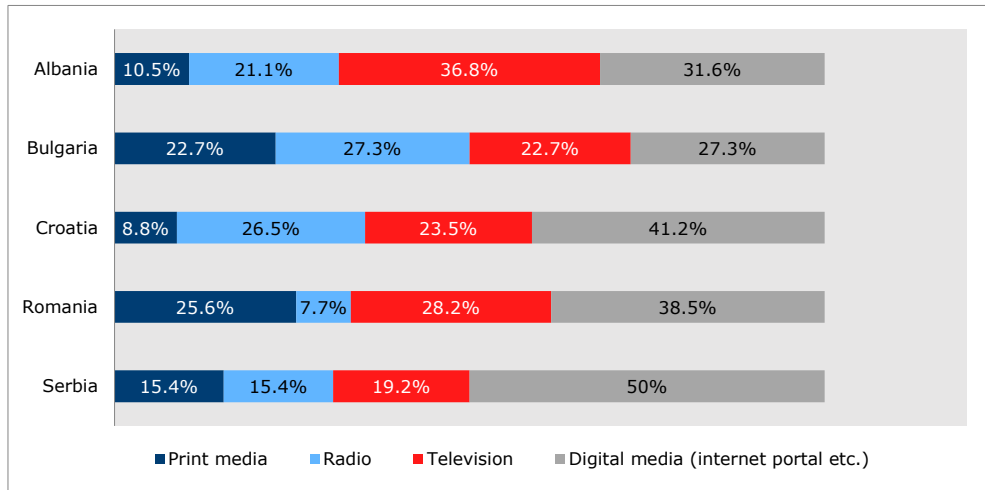
Students from Romania, Albania and Serbia are more experienced than students from Croatia and Bulgaria. This can be interpreted, on one hand, as a lack of sufficient motivation or, on the other hand, as the result of the limited capacity of media to offer vacancies due to the shrinking of media markets in recent years and the significant number of media outlets that have had to close (Spasov 2014: 78).

Regarding their reporting about working in media in the overall sample a difference was found between students from private and public universities ($\chi^2=8.01$, $df=3$, $p<0.05$). Students from public universities reported in higher proportion that they worked in media (54.9 percent). For example, in Serbia not even one student from a private university works in media. Further, regarding this same question, in the overall sample a difference was found between students enrolled in BA and MA programmes ($\chi^2=8.82$, $df=3$, $p<0.05$): higher proportion of BA students reported that they work part time in media (30.5 percent), whereas higher proportion of MA students reported that they work full time in media (21.4 percent). In Bulgaria, more BA students than MA students work in media (44.2 percent v. 21.4 percent), while in Croatia and Romania MA students are slightly more experienced than BA students.

Among those who reported they have been working for some type of media, in the overall sample a significantly greater number had worked less than a full year (45.5 percent); 30.7 percent worked more than a year, but less than full two years; 13.6 percent work more than two years, but less than full three years, with only 10.2 percent of students having gained extensive experience by working in media for more than three years ($\chi^2=28.09$, $df=3$, $p<0.01$). The less experienced students are in Albania (72.2 percent) and Romania (65 percent) where the average length of work experience was less than a year. There are no students in the sample of these two countries with the work experience longer than three years. The most experienced are students in Bulgaria where 54.6 percent had worked in media for more than two years (out of that number, 27.3 percent of students worked for more than three years).

Because of the trend in media sector which follow the technical and digital developments, somehow it was expected that the largest group of students that work in media work for digital media (38.6 percent), while 25.7 percent of them work for television, 18.6 percent for radio and 17.1 percent work in print media ($\chi^2=16.11$, $df=3$, $p<0.01$) (see Chart 14). Digital media are the most popular within Serbian, Croatian and Romanian students, and equally as radio popular within Bulgarian students, while for Albanian students television is the most popular media.

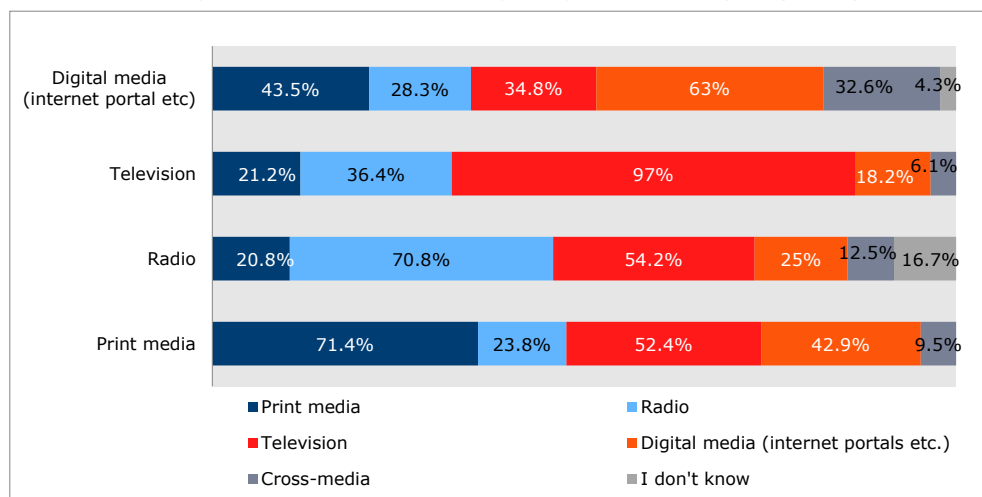
Chart 14: What type of media are you working for? (N=140)



It was expected that previous experience of working for a particular type of media (print media, radio, television or digital media) would reflect the media students wish to work for in the future. Our initial assumption has been confirmed: previous work experience does shape students' future workplace aspirations. If we look at the numbers for each group, the highest percentage is for a workplace similar to the students' previous experience. Perhaps this could also mean that students obtained their first job in a certain type of

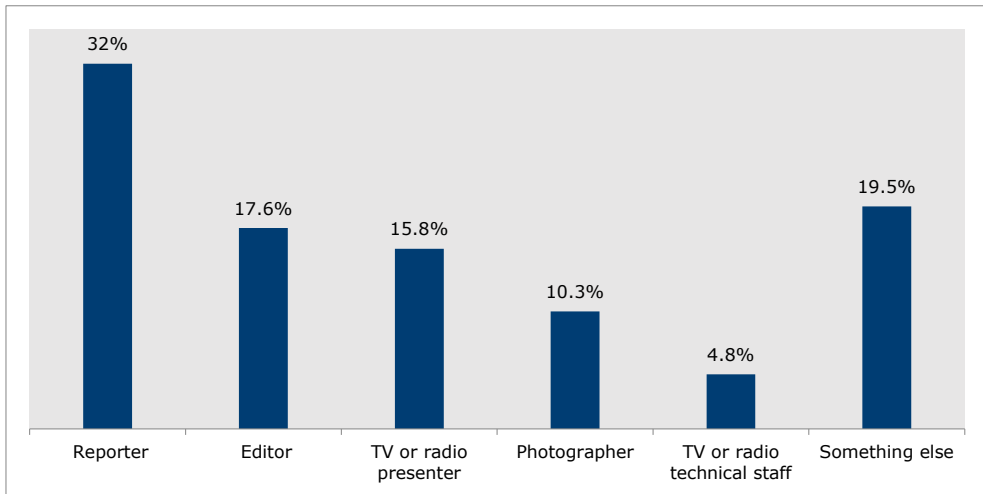
media because they had preferred for that type of media, which might reflect long-term job aspirations. Alternatively, it can be argued that the student’s first experience at a certain media outlet was that good as to causing the student to decide to continue working for the same type of media. Based on available data, we cannot test this assumption statistically, but it can be considered as an option. Compared to other students, the highest shares of students who work in digital media are willing to change their newsroom with print media or cross media newsroom (see Chart 15). The reason for their interest might be the complexity of work in digital media that includes journalistic skills for both written and audio-visual media. Students who work for the radio would like to stay in this professional field (70.8 percent), with television ranked in the second place with 54.2 percent. Students who work in print media newsrooms would like to work mainly in the print sector, television and digital media are ranked as next.

Chart 15: Work experience at a media outlet regarding future career path (N=124)



From the list of media jobs (see Chart 16) offered to students , most respondents from the Albanian sample work as a TV or radio presenters (24.5 percent), while in all other countries most students are reporters: in Bulgaria 28 percent, in Croatia 41.2 percent, in Romania 35 percent and in Serbia 32.7 percent. In the overall sample 32.2 percent of students work as reporters.

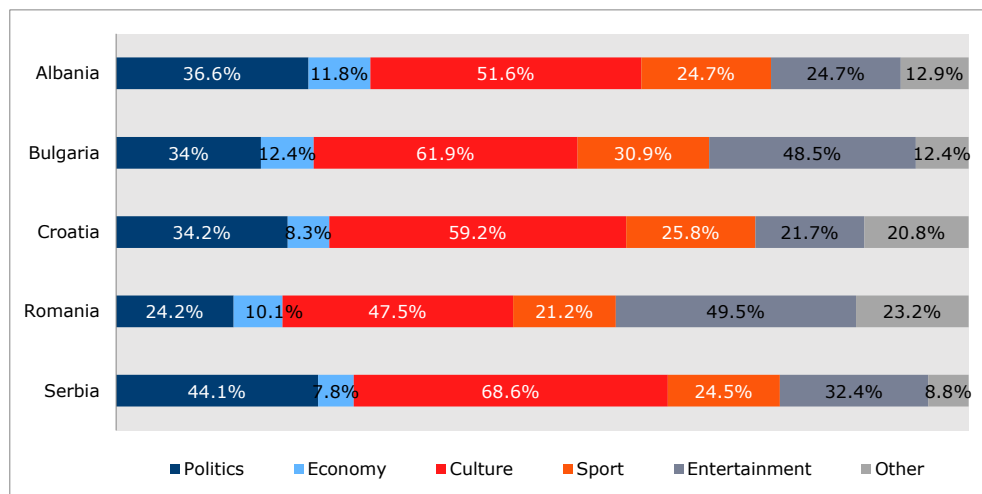
Chart 16: What type of work are you currently doing or did in the past? (N=437)



Students could choose more than one field of journalism in which they would like to pursue a career in the future. The largest interest among Albanian, Bulgarian, Croatian and Serbian students is for culture, while in Romania majority of students from the sample wanted to work in entertainment (see Chart 17). The interest in culture (32.4 percent of the overall sample) is encouraging, but raises the question why students find less attractive journalistic work in the fields of politics or the economy? The distribution of preferences may be interpreted as an expression of students' disappointment with politics. It may be attributed to high media dependence on politics and the economy and the deficit of high-quality journalism (Spasov 2014: 10). Against this backdrop, quite predictably, entertainment and culture win students' preferences as a possible career field providing more freedom to act independently.

Chart 17: In which field of journalism would you like to work?

(N=914, multiple answers possible)



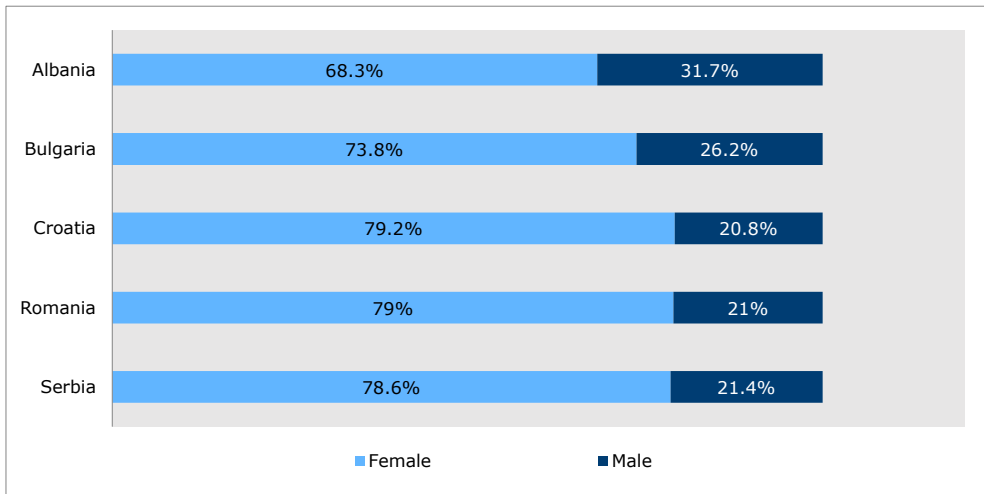
Journalism as a female profession

Many studies have already pointed out that journalism has become a female profession in a way that there are more women than men journalists in the newsrooms (de Bruin 2000; Edström 2011; Hermes 2012; Knežević and Car 2011: 80; Ross and Carter 2011; Vochocova 2008).

‘Thus, when it comes to symbolic power in the field, gender balance is still far from a reality (Robinson 2008) with newsroom culture still organised around a ‘man-as-norm and woman-as-interloper structure’ (Ross 2001: 535).’ (cf. Hanitzsch and Hanusch 2012: 258) No matter the fact that there are more women than men in newsrooms, women’s influence on the news content stays negligible (Lavie and Lehman-Wilzig 2003: 8-9).

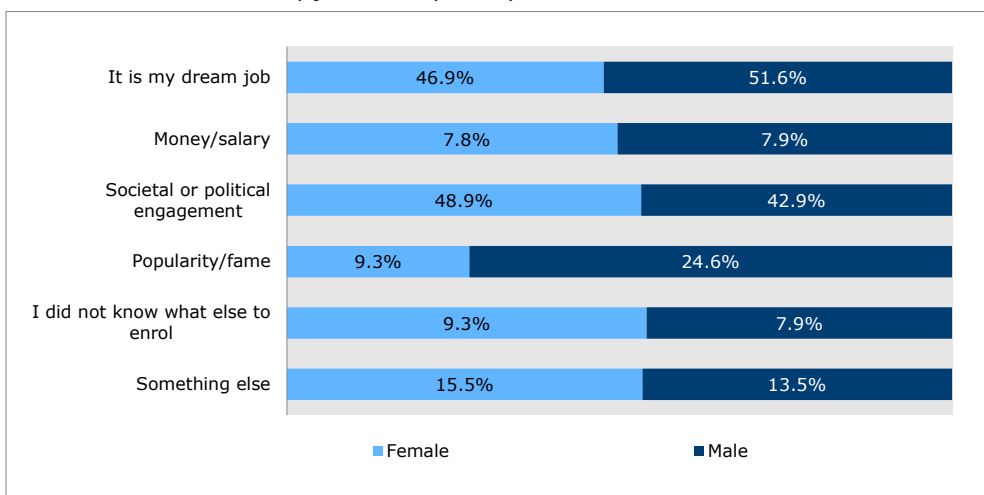
This survey confirms that there are more female (76 percent) than male (24 percent) students enrolled in journalism programmes ($\chi^2=142.24$, $df=1$, $p<0.01$) (see Chart 18). We can therefore realistically predict that the trend of feminisation of the profession will continue. This raises more questions about lower wages and other negative trends following the wake of feminisation of any profession (more in Adamović et al. 2014).

Chart 18: Female and male students enrolled into journalistic programmes (N=531)



It is indicative to highlight the motivation of female and male students to study journalism. While female students are highly motivated by reason of societal or political engagement (48.9 percent), followed by journalism being their dream job (46.9 percent), male students decide to study journalism because it was their dream job (51.6 percent) or because of societal or political engagement (42.9 percent). Male students are more interested in popularity and fame (24.6 percent) as compared to only 9.3 percent of female students (see Chart 19). Both groups are not motivated by money (less than 8 percent).

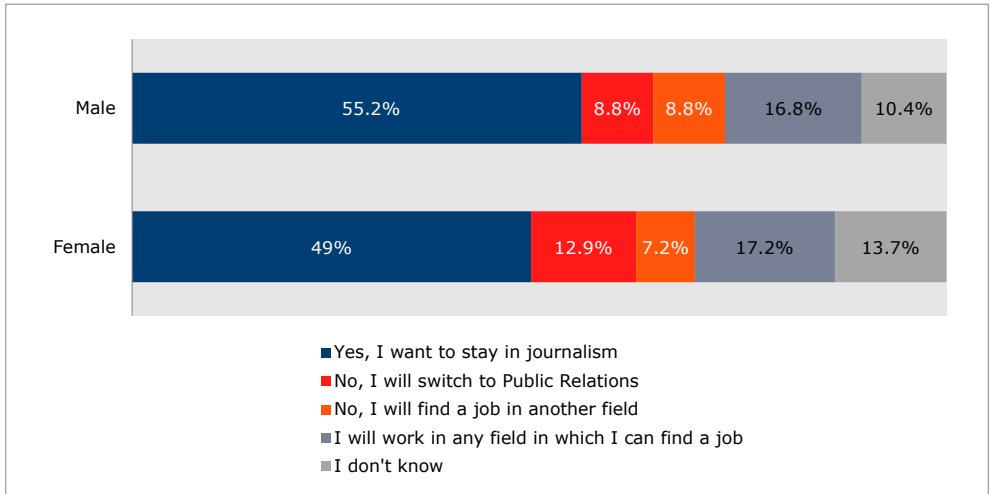
Chart 19: Motivation to study journalism (N=525)



In the overall sample female and male students are equally experienced with internships at media outlets (about 58 percent), and in the same ratios in all countries except Albania, where male students are more experienced than female students (40.6 percent; 26.5 percent) ($\chi^2=0.04$, $df=1$, $p>0.5$).

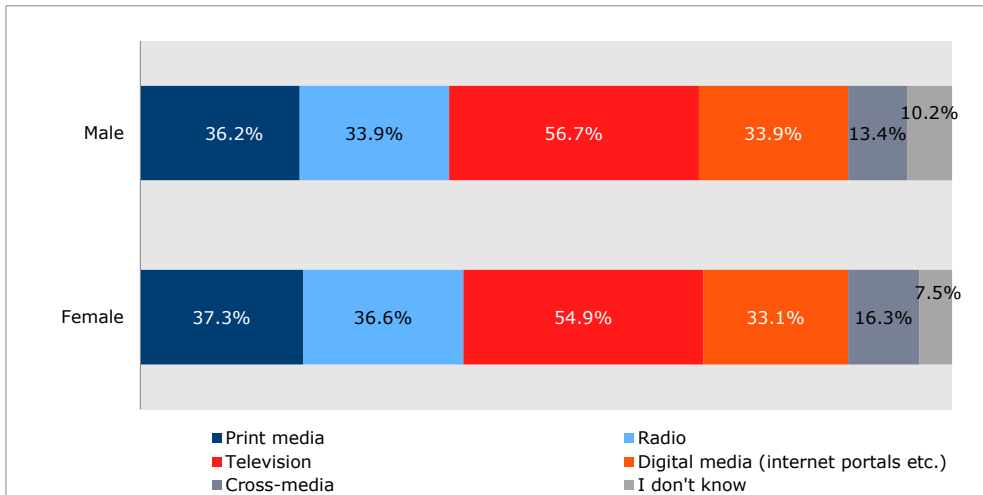
Motivation to continue to work in journalism following graduation is higher, although not significantly ($\chi^2=3.21$, $df= 4$, $p>0.05$), among male students (55.2 percent), with female students being more motivated than male students, albeit the difference is insignificant, to switch to PR (12.9 percent) (see Chart 20). Male and female students from different countries do not differ in their motivation to continue to work in journalism ($\chi^2=8.62$, $df= 4$, $p>0.05$).

Chart 20: Will you continue to work in journalism after graduating from university? (N=527)



When asked in what type of media would they like to work in following graduation, in the overall sample female and male students had the same results – most wanted to work as television journalists, followed by print media, radio and digital media (see Chart 21).

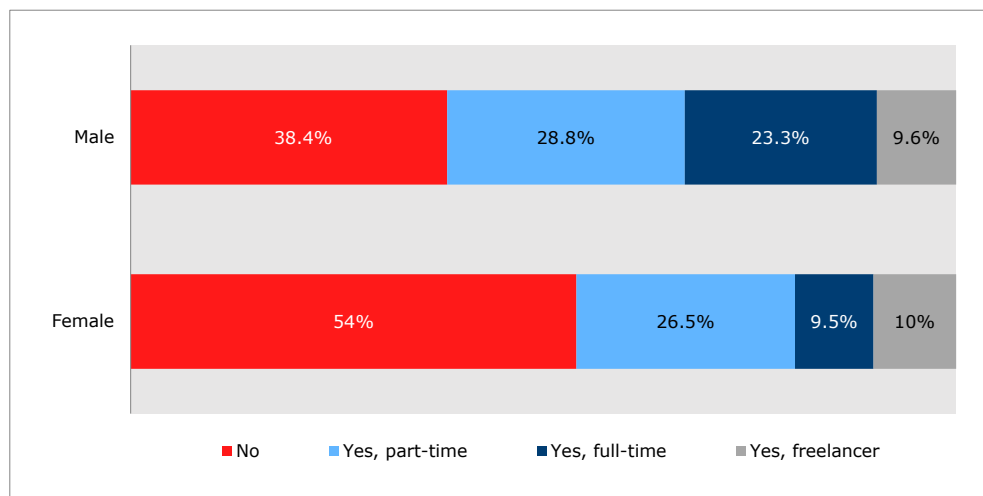
Chart 21: In what kind of media would you like to work after graduation? (N=526)



There were gender differences in the overall sample as to working in parallel to studying. More men, compared to women, reported working full-time. Also, a higher share of women (53.1 percent), compared to men (43 percent), reported not working ($\chi^2=6.92$, $df=2$, $p<0.05$). Only in Bulgaria female students are a little more experienced, 54.4 percent of working full-time or part-time, the share for male students being 50 percent. Still, more male than female students in the overall sample work in media (61.7 percent: 46 percent) (see Chart 22).

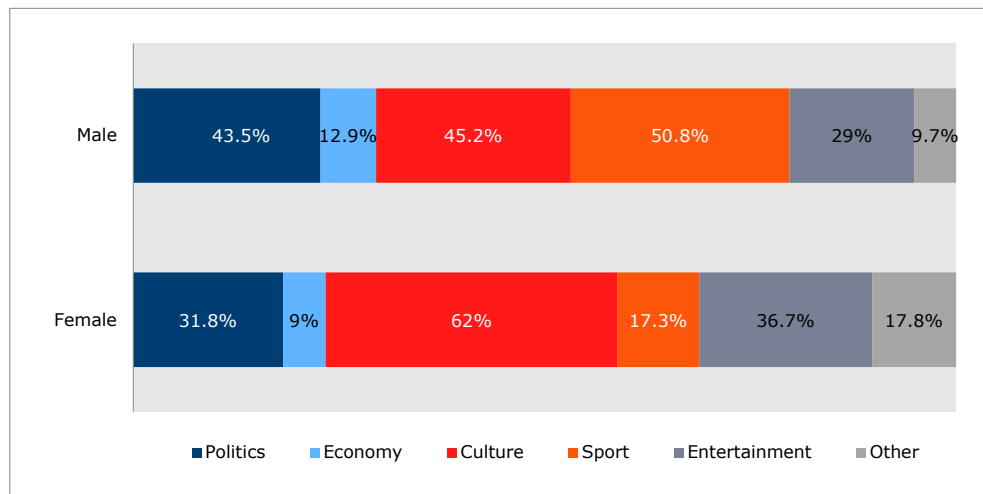
More men, compared to women, reported working full-time in media. Also, a higher share of women, compared to men, stated that they did not work in media ($\chi^2=10.17$, $df=3$, $p<0.05$). It should be noted that these gender differences only became apparent when analysing the entire sample, and not when analysing each country separately, most probably due to the small sample size in each country.

Chart 22: Are you working in media? (N=262)



Male students’ ambitions are to work in sport journalism ($\chi^2=55.82$, $df=1$, $p<0.05$), culture ($\chi^2=9.83$, $df=1$, $p<0.05$) and politics ($\chi^2=5.95$, $df=1$, $p<0.05$), with female students wishing to work in the field of culture, entertainment and politics (see Chart 23).

Chart 23: In which field of journalism would you like to work? (N=511)



Instead of a conclusion: Toward a new curriculum in journalism programmes in SEE countries

Many researches and studies conducted in the last ten years show that media markets across SEE countries share many similarities, including problems stemming from non-transparent media ownership, media independence, media freedom and accountability, media pluralism, media ethics, professional journalism standards, the labour market for journalists, etc. (Petković et al. 2004; Hećimović and Milanović-Litre 2014; OSF 2014; UNESCO 2015). The goal of this study was to compare and better understand the characteristics and failures of journalism education in five SEE countries (Albania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Romania and Serbia) through the eyes and criticism of students.

After comparing students' evaluation of journalism programmes on BA and MA levels of both public / state and private universities and institutions of higher education, it is clear that the study confirms the existence of solid common ground between the countries.

Firstly, it encourages that there is a big interest among young people to study journalism. Although there are lot of different types of journalism education programmes within universities and institutions of higher education or within non-government organisations and professional associations in form of schools, workshops, seminars, conferences, round tables and similar activities, the interest to participate in programmes for education in journalism is usually bigger than the offer (Rusch et al. 2014). This research proved that the motivation to study journalism is primarily idealistic – students see it as an opportunity for societal or political engagement or they choose to study journalism because it is their dream job.

But what happened once when highly motivated and inspired young people enrol journalism programmes, become challenged with first journalistic practical task, and face the 'real world' in the newsroom? This research proved that after they graduate only half of the students from the overall sample would like to work as journalists. The largest groups of students that want to stay in journalism are in Bulgaria (57.9 percent) and Romania (57 percent), while the smallest proportion of students that want to stay in journalism come from Serbia – only 37.9 percent. The next question that arises after facing this fact is: why students become such discouraged to stay in the profession for which they used to be highly motivated?

The purpose of this research was to get students' criticism on the quality of journalism programmes of the faculties where they study – on learning conditions, on faculty's technical equipment that students use for practical classes, and on the access to that technical equipment.

While 62.3 percent of students in the overall survey sample are satisfied with learning conditions at their faculty (the most satisfied students are in Serbia, with 69.9 percent), less than a half of the overall sample (45.3 percent) are satisfied with faculty's technical equipment

used for practice, with 46.9 percent of students answering that they are not satisfied with access to the faculty's technical equipment to be supposedly used for practice. This should sound an alarm bell for educators and managers in academia, showing them there is plenty of room for improvement of the learning conditions, and an urgent need to invest into media labs and technical equipment to enable students to apply a hands-on approach.

Students are longing for more practical exercises. Only one-third of the students (30.7 percent) believe that there is a good balance of theoretical knowledge and practical exercises at the faculty where they study journalism. They do not miss more theoretical knowledge (only 4.3 percent of them miss it), they want more practical exercises (55 percent), and they believe (91.7 percent) that guest lecturers (e.g. professional journalist or other media practitioners) are important to help improve the quality of classes. Unfortunately, in all five countries there is not a clear strategy of cooperation or a common platform between universities and national or local media outlets where students can get hands-on experience throughout internships. In-house mentorships are not standard. Neither there are institutional agreements and standards for evaluation of the internships. Therefore, only 58 percent of students have some experience with internships at media outlets. How is it possible to obtain a graduate degree in journalism without having had the possibility to see how it feels in the 'real world of journalism', in a newsroom? Good examples are universities in Serbia where internship is an obligatory element of the curriculum and students receive ECTS credits for internships.

To conclude, defeating an often-voiced criticism of journalism schools focusing too narrowly on producing and educating future journalists described as 'news factory workers who can be dropped into a slot at a journalism factory' (Allen et al. 2015: 156), students from SEE countries are willing to have programmes which place a stronger focus on producing rather than theory.

Certainly, a need has emerged for new reforms in journalism education and for improvement of the existing curricula in SEE countries. Because of all the common attributes in these five countries, there is a reasonable need for an emerging SEE regional standard of journalism education – coordinated curricula, which will help standardize a better quality of journalism education, support students' mobility between journalism programmes in the region including universities and media outlets, and ensure better exchange of knowledge and experience of educators, etc.

The students' insights collected in this study can help journalism educators to better understand the education approaches students prefer and why, their work experience as journalists, and their requirements and expectations, in order to become more meaningfully engaged in the training of outstanding journalists. The findings can help journalism educators formulate better strategic approaches in the future education of journalists in SEE countries, developing curricula that will support building journalism skills for the twenty-first century and support professional and labour standards in journalism.

The role of education cannot be substituted by talent alone. Journalism is not a hobby but a profession with standards which must be learned and practiced.

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CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Miroљub Radojković

On the basis of the results obtained from the survey conducted with students in journalism in five SEE countries, several recommendations will be derived. Their aim should be to attract the attention of all stakeholders engaged in and around university education in journalism. Hence, recommendations that follow are addressed to the state, because of its role in educational system generally and in state faculties particularly; to the organisations and representatives of media industry, because they are the future employers e.g. marketplace for youth holding the university degree in journalism; and to the institutions of higher education e.g. faculties and journalism departments, because their staff and students must be better equipped to face the unavoidable changes in university education in journalism that they are going to encounter along the bumpy road ahead. With the coming of information society many social changes are taking place. Among them, numerous professions in all spheres of social life are facing the risk of disappearance. Digital information and communication technology makes manpower obsolete firstly in organisations dealing with collecting, processing and disseminating of information. In line with this, media institutions and journalism profession are at stake too. Therefore, it is logical that a debate about the sustainable strategy of university training in journalism, if not its development, has to be open. It is unimportant if the debate will be initiated by the state educational bodies, professional journalism associations, media owners or university teachers. The dispute has to be focused on the question: what kind of university education for journalism can survive in the environment of information society in the twenty-first century? As the survey presented in this book indicates, this kind of higher education lags behind profound social changes. It is still not clear what kind of knowledge body and practical skills could be the winning strategy for the future. Fast growth of information technologies, convergence of mass media with telecommunications and appearance of new media as manifold, multimodal platforms could open two roads of university training reform. Either to educate future 'journalists' capable of managing a wide range of duties concerning information flow and media operation, or to prepare narrowly specialised journalists being able to perform a journalistic job of excellence. This dilemma is visible in case studies published in this book, which means that the issue resolving did not start yet and the delay extends.

University journalism education is squeezed between decreasing demand for new workforce in the media units and the right of youth to be educated according to its own choice. As it is known, mass and especially print media are losing their audience and income what causes firing of employees and sale of real estate. Cross and digital media are growing, but they operate in the way which demands less manpower educated specifically to work as journalist. On the other hand, modern states do not dare to limit the access to

university education which is one of guaranteed social benefits. In all reports presented in this book (except Albania) there are utterances telling that number of studying and graduating journalists goes far above demand at the marketplace. Clearly, there is not a cooperation bridge between higher education on one side and media industry institutions, which create the journalism labour market, on the other. Some measures in order to limit enrolment by state decision could be introduced only in case of state faculties. Even then, state faculties are free to extent admission quotas accepting additional students in order to increase the revenue. In this way, the number of students grows by aspirants who are ready to pay tuition fees and to take the risk of not finding a job afterwards. Private faculties are free to enrol as many students as they will. As a consequence, after getting the degree in journalism majority of graduates usually switch to other occupations like PR, spokespersons, administrative clerks. Another option is to wait for a job an uncertain time what happens by the rule in all countries treated in this book. Considering the market demand, the number of unemployed journalists and teaching resources of the faculties, the total enrolment of journalism students must be reduced. Also, the smaller number of institutions offering journalism education could be the useful way to concentrate the best teachers at fewer places, especially for MA and PhD educational levels.

Another argument in favour of decreasing admission at journalism departments came out from the survey. Students' dissatisfaction with practical training at the faculties is a constantly repeated fact. Almost one half of respondents in all case studies complain about having no opportunity to use faculty equipment for practical courses aimed to teach them in journalistic skills (studios, cameras, editing units, special computers, etc.). By Bologna standards every course can last one term only. If the number of students is high, the exercising with the teaching tools is simply impossible for all of them. Of course, the best solution for faculties would be to attract new state or private investments in order to multiply modern teaching technology. But, it means that the number of qualified technicians who instruct students how to use media technology has to be increased at the same time. This would have been an enlargement of non-academic staff, which in case of state faculties is not calculated in their budgets. New expense for non-teaching staff is exactly what both state and private faculties want to avoid. Thus, too much theoretical knowledge about journalism seems to be one of long lasting disadvantages of university education.

Still, here are some additional recommendations in order to make practical education much better. Following the assessment of students surveyed, curricula for university education of journalists must be re-arranged. They should uphold the 50:50 ratios between so-called theoretical and practical courses. The practical courses must be organised for very small groups of attendants. Journalism must be separated from other modules such as PR, media management, media production, etc. In this way the number of journalism students will be more in accordance with technical resources at the disposal. However, all faculties have to continue acquirement of contemporary, digital tools and platforms for hands-on learning. Possession of modern teaching technology must become one of top criteria for

their accreditation. Faculties are obliged to provide hardware and software for students to perform and improve computer literacy, too.

Faculties possessing media technology must encourage the biggest possible number of students to work for their TV, radio, print media and digital platforms. Students themselves should elect editors and the staff of faculty media by an open contest. They will enter practically in mass communication if faculty's broadcasting media use internet protocol (streaming) for diffusion. If not, the best products done at the faculty media could be offered as ready made – for free – to the official media in order to be disseminated. Of course, these efforts have to be evaluated as professional achievements and a number of ECTS credits must be allotted to every student-author. Partners for students' media products publishing could be found among media outlets willing to cooperate with faculties enabling students' internships and other forms of collaboration. Even more, these potential faculty partners could donate some of unused media equipment to the journalism departments.

Inappropriate practical training during university journalism education could be partly levelled down by students' involvement into media industry. Internships and other forms of collaboration with operating media offer many benefits (testing of knowledge acquired, learning about the real working environment, acquainting with working journalists, probing of personal talent, etc.). Therefore, all journalism departments should build into the study programmes practical work outside the faculty as obligatory. It must be treated as any other form of education bringing adequate number of study credits to the students. On the other hand, it is necessary to regulate clearly the terms of reference and time span under which students can work alongside their studies (mandatory attendance of lectures and tutorials, stricter control over students' participation in the learning process, more current assignments in the course of studies, etc.). Journalism departments have to sign contracts with media, engaging students into their production process. Special attention must be paid to cooperation with media in the case of internships. The journalism departments must insist on the return of students after internship period, in order to eliminate the risk of extension of study time or degree loss. It would be necessary, even by payment, to nominate mentors among working journalists responsible for a student during her or his internship. This could improve the reporting system to the faculties demanding more detailed information about activities during the internship and the level of students' satisfaction.

As it was seen in chapters above, the most significant motivation to study journalism was students' wish to be socially and politically engaged. This finding calls faculties to adapt themselves to the recent social changes by applying the innovative approach in the study programme reform. Changes of the curricula fit well into middle range strategies which have to be decided in every round of the faculty re-accreditation after five years. The strategy must take into account the current restructuring of the information society, media audiences and media institutions. Curricula have to be realised by qualified lecturers who

have relevant references in the field which they are supposed to teach. Generally, study programmes should consist of greater number of modules. The module should be a specific combination of basic and practical disciplines. Some of the study clusters could lead towards specialisation in accordance with the media type (analogue, digital, audio-visual, print, etc.); others could meet different job profiles (PR, advertising, media management, etc.); there could be also modules leading towards research abilities or to academia (MA, PhD, agencies for public opinion polls, etc.). In any case, the choice of a module must be the free decision done by students. In this way they are taking the destiny in their hands as early as possible. Sub-specialisation in mass media or specific areas of modern life (not only in culture as it is preferred by students) seems to be unavoidable. But whether such journalists will be recognised by the labour market must be followed carefully.

Curricula courses have to be divided in two classes. Firstly, some of them should be elected as 'core' and therefore obligatory. The purpose is to enable sustainability or strengthening of the theoretical knowledge and humanity sciences appropriate to university education. Although the results of many recent researches point out that journalism is technologically renewed and performed online, the essence of the profession and core values must be upheld in the time to come. Second group of courses, by which modules will differ, will be optional ones. These courses should be carefully grouped in order to keep all modules in balance so far the students' learning effort is concerned. The number of optional courses must be limited in order to keep in balance basic and general education to be thought. Since students who participated in the survey would like to work both for traditional and digital media, the educational institutions must introduce more classes dedicated to the digital and online journalism. It is recommendable, therefore, to invent the greatest number of optional courses dealing with new professional abilities and skills grouped in modules with the same ECTS credit value such as online journalism, entrepreneurial journalism, media management, internet PR, advertising on internet, digital photo journalism, etc. Again, it will be the students who choose preferred optional courses from the modules offered in the curricula.

Who should participate in the process of study programmes reform?

This will be on first place the task of faculties providing university journalism education. For, only they are entitled to compose curricula which could encompass some of changes recommended above. Study plans have to be approved through the accreditation process led by the national educational authorities. This means that relevant ministry can't be circumvented in the study plans innovation. So, the state is the stakeholder which is through accreditation approval deciding about reform of both state and private faculties. However, it is extremely important to invite distinguished representatives of media industry and associations of journalists to participate in new curricula profiling. Media owners, editors and working journalists are currently excluded from the process of curriculum development and accreditation of journalism departments. Their inclusion could stop the bad practice of faculties and media driving on separate, parallel tracks. Also, all parties involved should be

invited to make evaluation of the accredited institutions, in order to maintain permanent quality control. As said above, accreditation happens every five years. But, some smaller changes, up to 10 percent of curriculum, are allowed yearly. Therefore, if stakeholders are eager they could make fine tuning of journalism university education continuously.

There are also some other ways for making university education of journalists better. Alumni associations are an underestimated resource. Since none of the faculties participating in our survey have an alumni association, they should start to register and follow the career of degree holders. It means that the faculties need to start developing relevant databases, in order to collect feedbacks about the dynamics of the labour market from alumni. In many cases graduates hold important posts and could facilitate the reforms of their faculties in many ways. Faculties have to preserve the good practice offering classes delivered by prominent local and foreign experts in the field. Students have evaluated the guest lecturers very positively. Professors from other domestic and foreign universities, visiting teachers, outstanding journalists, media researchers and specialists in media law have been welcomed enthusiastically by both state and private faculties. Unfortunately, in some countries presented in this book, exchange of teachers between state and private universities is forbidden. Still, journalism departments could organise frequent thematic workshops with journalists, media researchers and representatives of state educational authorities in order to facilitate needed upheavals. The courses related to journalism offered by institutions outside the faculties (foundations, media, etc.) could be also exploited in form of workshops and round tables. This is an additional channel in order to present the highest journalistic standards to regular and specialised classes in journalism departments. Faculties should take the advantage from publishing activities – by publishing scientific journals about media and communication, readers, monographs, translations, etc. This will make an important database providing the source for students' self-education and self-training performing individual investigation and information.

APPENDIX

QUESTIONNAIRE ON JOURNALISTIC EDUCATION IN SOUTH EAST EUROPE

To whom it may concern,

This questionnaire constitutes a part of the activities of the **Media Program South East Europe of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS)** in order to improve the framework conditions for journalism education.

The purpose of the questionnaire is to detect the motives of students to study journalism and their preferences according to the study programs. We guarantee anonymity of your answers, which will be used for statistical purposes and as a trend indicator for the education of journalists. Please answer the questions honestly, because only in this way the research will fulfil its purpose.

We thank you in advance for your time and participation!

1. Year of birth _____

2. Sex

Female

Male

3. Please write the full name of the university and faculty you attend.

4. What kind of university do you attend?

State/public

Private

Other (e.g. public/private): _____

5. Level of studies

BA programme

MA programme

6. Year of study (compared to whole duration of studies)

1

2

3

4

5

- 7. Have you finished another course of studies (in an area other than journalism)?
If yes, what kind of and which level (BA or MA)?**

Yes, _____ No

- 8. Did you take up any additional courses related to journalism outside your faculty? If yes, what kind of courses/workshops/school?**

Yes,

No

- 9. What is your motivation to study journalism?
– Multiple answers possible –**

- It is my dream job
 Money/salary
 Societal or political engagement
 Popularity/fame
 I did not know what else to enrol
 Something else (please add): _____

- 10. Are you satisfied with the learning conditions at your faculty (library, books, study rooms, workshops and seminars)?**

Yes No I don't know

- 11. Are you satisfied with your faculty's technical equipment that you are using for practical classes?**

Yes No I don't know

- 12. Are you satisfied with the access to your faculty's technical equipment that you are using for practice?**

Yes No I don't know

13. Complete the following sentence: The faculty of journalism where I am enrolled lacks:

- Theoretical knowledge
- Practical exercises
- Theoretical knowledge and practical exercises
- There is a good balance of theoretical knowledge and practical exercises

14. Do you think guest lecturers are important, e.g. professional journalists or other media practitioners?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

15. What kind of additional courses would you like to attend at your faculty? (e.g. media law, media ethics, media policy, media market, investigative journalism, multimedia journalism, etc. – please specify)

16. What else in your studies do you think should be improved?

17. What kind of general knowledge is important for journalists in your opinion? – Multiple answers possible –

- Politics
- Economy
- Culture (e.g. literature, music, theatre)
- History
- Law
- Languages
- Philosophy
- Religion
- Natural sciences (mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology)
- Other: _____

18. Do you think that your faculty cooperates well with local/national media outlets?

- Yes No I don't know

19. If no, how could such cooperation be improved?

20. Have you ever applied the knowledge you acquired at your faculty in practice (in the field of media)?

- Yes No I have not worked in media yet

21. Do you have any experiences with internships at media outlets?

- Yes No

22. If yes (question 21), please mark and rate your overall satisfaction with the internships (1 = very poor, 5 = very good).

- 1 2 3 4 5

23. Will you continue to work in journalism after graduating from university?

- Yes, I want to stay in journalism
 No, I will switch to Public Relations
 No, I will find a job in another field
 I will work in any field in which I can find a job
 I don't know

24. In what kind of media would you like to work after graduation?

– Multiple answers possible –

- Print media
- Radio
- Television
- Digital media (news portals etc.)
- Cross-media
- I don't know

25. Are you working alongside your studies (any kind of job)?

- Yes, part-time
- Yes, full-time
- No

26. If yes, are you working in media (excluding internships)?

- Yes, part-time
- Yes, full-time
- Yes, freelancer
- No

If no, please skip questions 26, 27 and 28.

27. For what kind of media are you working?

- Print media
- Radio
- Television
- Digital media (internet portal etc.)
- I am not working in media

28. For how long have you been working in media (work experience)?

- less than a full year
- more than a year, but less than full 2 years
- more than 2 years, but less than full 3 years
- more than 3 years

29. What type of work are you currently doing or did in the past?

– Multiple answers possible –

- Reporter
- Editor
- TV or radio presenter
- Photographer
- TV or radio technical staff
- Something else (add): _____

30. In which field of journalism would you like to work?

– Multiple answers possible –

- Politics
- Economy
- Culture
- Sport
- Entertainment
- Other: _____

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