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JOURNALISTS IN  
THREE MEDIA SYSTEMS

Polish, Russian and Swedish journalists  
about values and ideals,  
daily practice and the future

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## Changing journalistic cultures

*Gunnar Nygren*

When the Swedish journalist, Isidor Kjellberg, returned from the USA in 1872, he brought a new kind of journalism with him. He started a radical newspaper in his hometown, Linköping, where he could practice these new methods – among them investigative reporting and using interviews as a way to create a sense of presence. He was also the first Swedish journalist to use the interview method to accuse the state governor of sending the military against striking workers in 1879 (Johannesson 2001).

This is not the only example of how Swedish journalism has been influenced by journalism in other countries. During the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Swedish newspapers were heavily influenced by German and continental traditions and political parties. In order to develop a style of journalism that was closer to the readers, the legendary editors at Dagens Nyheter, Anton Karlgren and Oscar Hemberg, introduced in 1908-09 the “Americanisation” of the newspaper with a new design and headlines and a new way of writing (Lundström 2001). Thirty years later, another editor, Carl Adam Nycop, developed a new, US-inspired journalism in the picture magazine, SE, and the daily tabloid, Expressen (Sandlund 2001). As a last example, during the 1950s and 1960s, Swedish television developed the public service ideology taken from the British BBC to create a distance to political power. This ideology gained influence in journalism and was an important factor in the decline of political influence in media in general (Djerf-Pierre/Weibull 2001).

This is not a book about the history of Swedish journalism. These examples are given to show the basic assumptions in the project, “Journalism in change”:

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There are clear differences between journalistic cultures in different media systems.

These journalistic cultures are in constant change. They influence each other and develop new values and practices.

The “Journalism in change” project researches how the journalistic cultures in Poland, Russia and Sweden are influenced by media convergence and globalisation. These two assumptions are carried throughout the project – there are differences in the way journalists think and work, but these differences are not static. A culture is always undergoing change, sometimes slowly and sometimes quickly due to changing conditions in society and the surrounding world.

### **Three different media systems**

The project includes three countries that differ in their media systems, historical and political backgrounds and sizes – Sweden, Russia and Poland. Professional cultures among journalists are analysed in relation to the differences in societies as well as in relation to the different levels of change within the media systems.

The three countries were chosen because they represent different historical backgrounds and political traditions. The project also has a multidisciplinary approach since researchers in journalism, media sociology and political science participated in the project (researchers from Södertörn University, Moscow State University and University of Wrocław in Poland worked together on the project and the writing of this report). This comparative and multidisciplinary design makes it possible to analyse journalistic cultures in relation to different kind of variables:

- Professional traditions in journalism and the culture of the country.
- Political systems and political traditions from the past in relation to media and journalism.
- The level of technological development in society, both among audiences and in the media system.
- Commercial demands with regard to media as an industry, economic pressure from owners and powerful groups.
- Globalisation and European integration, cross-border ownership and new forms of cross-border media.

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The basic question in the project is whether there is a process of convergence between journalistic cultures in different countries and how different factors influence this process. Are the journalistic cultures becoming less national, and, if this is the case, what is changing and what is not?

### **Journalistic culture and the profession**

Culture is defined in many ways. In social and humanistic research, culture is a “whole way of being”, common ideals and practices in a group that separate it from other groups. A culture is socially constructed and carried by the people living in the culture as values, ideals and tacit knowledge hidden in the daily routines. This means that culture is not only a question of ideology, but it is also visible in practices – in journalism it also materializes in the working processes. As said by researcher Barbie Zelizer (2005):

“For recognizing journalism as a culture – a complex web of meanings, rituals, conventions and symbol systems – and seeing journalists... as its facilitators offers a way to think about the phenomenon by accounting for its changing, often contradictory dimensions”

In news production, the journalistic culture is visible at three levels – on a cognitive level (the way journalists see the world in, for example, the selection of news), in professional ideologies and at the performative level in journalistic practices (Hanitzsch 2007). The journalistic culture is an arena where different ideologies and practices can compete and live side by side. These journalistic cultures has some common traits, but also big differences. They can be visible from the global level to national journalistic cultures, down to cultures in different media companies.

Most of the research on how journalism has changed as media developed has been conducted in the US and Western Europe (Mitchelstein/Bozkowski 2009, Singer/Quandt 2009). The results are seldom related to differences in media systems and journalistic cultures; it is often taken for granted that these results are valid in all kinds of media systems. There is a lack of empirical results in comparative research about changes in journalistic cultures. Most of the research on journalists has been done at the national level,

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for example “The American Journalist” (Weaver et al 2007) and “The Swedish Journalists” (Asp 2008).

Comparative research on professionalization and journalistic culture is often based on this national research. Some exceptions are “The Global Journalist” (Weaver 1998), with results from 21 countries around the world, and the World of Journalism project (Hanitzsch et al 2010), with results from 18 countries. There are also some regional comparative studies that are relevant for this project that focus on Central Europe. Some of this research argues that there is stronger homogeneity and convergence among journalists both nationally and internationally – due to commercialisation and increasing editorial control (Donsbach 2010).

The purpose of this project is to conduct comparative analyses of changes in the journalistic cultures in three countries. We use similar methods and tools to get empirical data fit for comparative analysis. The notion of “journalistic culture” is deconstructed into three areas of research – three levels of analysis in which culture is articulated (Hanitzsch 2007):

- At a *cognitive level*, the way journalists shape the world, the interpretation of news and news work in general.
- *Journalistic ideals* – beliefs and values about the role of journalists, the relation to external power and owners (political and economic), the relation to the audience and the role of journalism in a new media environment, professional ethics among journalists.
- *Journalistic practices* – the daily work and what a journalist is supposed to do (multiskilling, news room organisation), autonomy and decision processes (the grade of power in the work), norms and routines in the work (tacit knowledge), what the journalists think about changes in the work.

A fourth area that is analysed in this work is the *position of journalists in society*, the autonomy of journalists in relation to other groups. In this area, the research will also provide an overview of the professional institutions, for example media legislation and the self-regulating system, journalism education and journalistic standards, unions and other professional associations. This is also a question of the degree of professionalization of journalism – or if there is a de-professionalization going on with unclear borders around journalism (Nygren 2008).



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A goal for the project is to identify the parts of a transnational journalistic culture that are shared as well as the common changes in journalism in different media systems in general, but also the differences between the three countries. The results are also related to national differences in history and culture, with the purpose to analyse the relation between globalisation and national differences.

One **hypothesis** is that there are a lot more similarities than what is visible on the surface – changes in the position of journalism and globalisation are bringing the professional cultures closer to one another. The daily work is done the same way and the economic demands look the same. The liberal ideals in journalism are getting stronger with market liberalism; a global media culture is emerging (Hallin/Mancini 2004).

A **counterhypothesis** can be the opposite – that the similarities are mostly superficial. Other research shows that social institutions like journalism are hesitant to abandon their conventions, even in the “age of the net” when communication patterns in society are changing (O’Sullivan/Heionen 2008). A professional culture is sluggish and moves slowly despite changes in its surroundings – technical, economic and political. Journalists are often seen as conservative, and research shows that fast changes also promote a reaction to defend old values (Witschge/Nygren 2009).

### **Perspective of the journalist**

The aim of the “Journalism in change” project is to research professional journalistic cultures in three countries that are considerably different – in size (both population and area), history, economic structure and political traditions. The general differences between the countries will make it quite easy to find differences in journalism and the professional journalistic cultures. More of a challenge will be to identify similarities among the journalists in the three countries, similarities in how journalists experience media development and changes in their professional culture.

The perspective of this project is that of the journalist. When studying a professional culture, it is necessary to start from those who carry the culture in their daily lives, experiences and values. This research starts with daily work – work content, the tools

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being used and the amount of independence in the work. Some of these questions concern the borders of journalistic work in relation to other groups inside and outside the media company. There are also issues related to values, the relationship between values and ideals and the conditions for daily work, the size of the gap between ideals and reality and how journalists can bridge this gap in their daily routines (Ekström/Nohrstedt 1996). There are also issues related to how autonomy starts in the daily work, both about ideals relating to autonomy and how these ideals are perceived in daily work, as well as how they are constrained.

In this report the results of a survey of 1,500 journalists in the three countries are presented country-by-country. The chapters have the same structure to enable comparisons. In the last chapter some preliminary conclusions are made.

In a coming report in 2014, all of the three parts of the project will be analysed together – the survey, the interviews with 60 journalists and the case studies on the relationship between journalism and social media in the three countries.

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## Professionalization and autonomy

*Gunnar Nygren*

First, we need to make a distinction between the two closely related words professionalism and professionalization. The word *professional* is often used to describe a skilful person, a person producing something of high quality. Professionalism is something that journalists embrace or pursue as a description of quality in their work (McQuail 2005, Hanitzsch 2009).

The process of *professionalization* is something else – it is when an occupation gradually develops into a profession that has all the characteristics of an independent profession. This process is described in sociology, where research has mostly analysed classical professions, such as lawyers and medical doctors.

Sociologist Eliot Freidson has defined a profession as “a set of institutions which permit the members of an occupation to make a living while controlling their own work” (Freidson 2001:17). Professional logic gives control over the work to the professionals, in contrast to two other competing kinds of logics – market logic, which has consumer control and bureaucratic logic, which has control through rules and laws. The key question is the control of the work, the power to decide in daily work. In reality, these three kinds of ideal logics are mixed, and the question is what kind of logic dominates.

Freidson defines the elements of the ideal type of classical profession (pp. 127-129):

- Specialized work, grounded in a body of knowledge and skill that is given special status in the labour force.
- A division of labour that is controlled by occupational negotiation.

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- A sheltered position in the labour market based on the qualifying credentials created by the occupation.
  - Training programs in higher education that are controlled by the occupation.
  - An ideology that asserts greater commitment to doing good work than to financial gain, to the quality rather than the economic efficiency of work.

Together, these elements give a profession some kind of autonomy, both as a group in society and for the individual members. Being part of a profession gives the individual professional power in his or her work. A profession as a group has influence and power in society in relation to other social groups.

Journalism is not a full profession, according to the criteria of Eliot Freidson. During the 20th century, journalism developed into a kind of “semi-profession”, according to journalism research (Weaver et al 2007). Journalism has strengthened some of the elements of a profession – there is a specialized body of knowledge and formal training for journalists, there are professional standards and formal institutions of journalism in many countries, journalists struggle for independence and there is an ideology of journalism serving society (Shoemaker/Reese 1996).

In American journalism, professionalization was closely connected to commercialisation. When the newspapers cut their connections to political parties, the occupation of “journalists” became organized through a set of self-governing professional norms and practices (Schudson 2003). This group was also able to achieve some degree of autonomy from publishers.

In comparative studies of journalism, the degree of professionalization is one of the most important variables. In the analyses of media systems in 18 European and North American countries, Hallin and Mancini take professionalization as one of four variables. They focus on three dimensions of professionalization (Hallin/Mancini 2004:34-37):

- The degree of autonomy and the control over the work process.
- Distinct profession norms such as news evaluation, ethical standards and professional integrity.

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– Public service orientation – journalism as a public trust and not primarily as a source of profit for the owners.

To summarize, professionalization has been a key concept in journalism studies for the last 40-50 years, but more as a process than as a question of whether journalism is a full profession or not. Most researchers conclude that journalism cannot be a full profession that requires some kind of licensing – it would contravene freedom of speech to demand a licence from those who want to express themselves in the media (Engblom 2001, McQuail 2005).

*Different kind of ideals and roles*

Even if the process of professionalization has been similar in many countries, this does not mean that professional norms and standards are the same. Comparative journalism studies have found both similarities and differences in journalistic values and roles. Different roles have been described as “active/participant” and “neutral/informative”, as well as a kind of “interpretative” role between these two options (McQuail 2005). These different roles are connected to national traditions and news cultures, for example American “objectivism” and a European continental tradition of a commentary and more literary kind of journalism. Researcher Jean Chalaby calls journalism an “Anglo-American invention” when he describes the factual and information-centred kind of journalism that developed in the US press, contrary to French journalism, which is much less concerned about drawing a line between facts and commentary (Chalaby 1996, Schudson 2003).

Also, other researchers have discussed the differences between the detached and non-partisan journalism in the USA and a European journalism that is more involved in politics. German journalists have a greater desire to influence political processes, and a stronger aspiration to increase their own participation (Hanitzsch 2009), in contrast to their American colleagues, who are more neutral reporters. This can also be described as a difference between journalists who want to be active participants in social processes and journalists who prefer to be passive observers. Both of these kinds of ideals can be regarded as different forms of journalistic professionalism. Also, the active participant journalist is seeking autonomy and working to serve society (Hallin/Mancini 2004).

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On a global level, Weaver found some common ideals during the 1990s. The role of getting the news out to people as fast as possible is common to most journalists, but other ideals – such as being a watchdog over those in power – were not as common in the 21 countries researched (Weaver 1998). He found more disagreement than agreement on the roles of journalism in society, and the differences could be connected to political history and the current political situation. In Weaver's surveys, there was some agreement among journalists in different countries on the importance of autonomy and on the protection of news sources, but in other areas there were big differences. Weaver concludes "no country or territory has a monopoly on professionalism among journalists" (Weaver 1998:479).

Since the 1990s, the process of globalisation has influenced journalism around the world. New global media, like satellite TV channels and media websites, have confronted audiences with new kinds of journalism, and the question is how this has influenced journalism. Some researchers describe it as stronger influence on the Anglo-Saxon ideals of objectivity, separation of facts and commentary and the ideal of the journalist as a distanced observer (Hallin/Mancini 2004).

This gets some support from a recent survey of 1,800 journalists in 18 countries to find "a general cultural understanding that is shared by most journalists around the world" (Hanitzsch et al 2010). However, there are still differences between a detached and neutral Western understanding of journalism and the more active promotion of values and social change connected to "development journalism" in developing countries and partly non-democratic countries. At the same time, the ideal of separation between facts and opinion among US journalists might be changing as they put stronger emphasis on interpretation in news coverage, for example on channels like Fox News. This means that the old "objective" American journalism may also be changing.

To summarize, earlier research shows that journalistic ideals and values differ between countries. There is a change over time, where "western" ideals grow in importance, but there are still differences between media systems and countries. However, even if values and ideals in journalism differ, journalists in different media systems have a common goal: autonomy in

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relation to society (Weaver 1998). The question is how strong this goal is and how it is perceived among journalists.

### **Professional autonomy on different levels**

Professional autonomy for journalists is hard to define. It is a question of relationships between the profession as a group and power in society (external autonomy), but also of autonomy for journalists in their daily work in relation to the media organisation (internal autonomy). Autonomy on these two levels is related, but basically professional autonomy developed in the organisation of work.

In general, professions developed as a result of the division of labour. Sociologists have defined two kinds of work specialisation (Freidson 2001):

- Mechanical specialisation: when the worker executes tasks decided by managers, a job with very little space for independent decisions.

- Discretionary specialisation: when the process demands that the worker make independent evaluations and decisions, a job with the potential for innovation and creativity.

There is no clear line separating these two kinds of specialisations; many kinds of work have both. However, the latter often demands formal training, and the skill of these workers is a mix of codified formal knowledge from school/university and working knowledge from experience. This working knowledge can be both verbalized and a tacit knowledge that is not described in words. Professions developed from this discretionary specialisation; autonomy in daily work was necessary for these kinds of professionals to be successful. This need for autonomy that is based in the working process has also been defined in journalism studies (Weaver et al 2007).

For journalism, autonomy was initially a question of *external autonomy* in relation to power in society (see also chapter 4). Development differed greatly due to historical circumstances. In countries with strong liberal traditions, newspapers were able to achieve an independent position early; for example in the USA and Sweden at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. In other countries with a tradition of a strong state and a more authoritarian rule, this



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external autonomy has been a much longer process; for example in Germany and Russia. Important issues in the struggle for external autonomy have been censorship and direct control by state power. But even if external autonomy is achieved, it is not a given forever; pressure from external powers to control the media can increase at times of crisis. The means of this control may be laws and regulations, financial pressure and an expanding PR machinery (Schudson 2003, McQuail 2005).

*Internal autonomy* for journalism is about the position of journalists in relation to the owners and other departments of the media company. Historically, the party press in Europe created strong links between media owners, parties and political power. The journalist was supposed to share the political beliefs of the newspaper (Hallin/Mancini 2004). Internal autonomy can also be a question of financial pressure from owners and other departments in the company. “Market-driven journalism” can be a powerful constraint on internal autonomy for journalism when the “wall” between the newsroom and marketing department is broken down (McManus 2009).

Internal autonomy for journalism developed with the commercialisation of news and the break-up of the party press. Together with a strong (at least in Western Europe) public service on TV and radio, the ideal of an independent journalist developed during the process of professionalization in the second half of 20<sup>th</sup> century. In Sweden, this has been manifested in the general agreement between the Swedish Union of Journalists and the newspaper publishers, where the third paragraph states:

“A member of staff may not be imposed upon to write against his/her conviction or to carry out humiliating assignments. When to decide what is ‘humiliating’, the Ethical Guidelines for press, radio and TV should be taken into consideration” (General agreement 2010-2012).

This paragraph is very seldom used, but its very existence gives the individual journalist a certain degree of autonomy in relation to editors and the media company. It also emphasizes the strong link between internal autonomy, ethical standards and responsibility.

Having common ethical standards and guidelines is one important trait of a profession. In Sweden, these have developed

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within the profession since 1878 in order to strengthen the credibility of and public trust in the media and journalism. The Press Ombudsman and the Press Council still have a strong position in “legacy media” providing common standards for professional ethics (Weibull/Börjesson 1995), but ethical standards are not enough. Journalists must have the power to follow these standards. Without a degree of internal autonomy, giving the individual journalist power in his or her work, the journalist cannot be held responsible for following the ethical standards.

### **Two kinds of professionalism**

There are different traditions in research on professions. In the 1960s the emphasis was (in the Anglo-American tradition) on analysing the specific traits that constitute a profession, such as mechanisms to exclude outsiders from the profession. In the last 20 years, the emphasis has shifted to the dynamic processes through which occupations gain professional status. Now the important issues are not whether a profession fulfils all the conditions of an ideal typical profession, but rather how professionalism is used to change and control an occupation. The process of professionalization is what is most important: “the social process through which journalists struggle to claim professional status” (Schudson/Andersson 2009:90). Research on this approach also considers the influences of specific cultural and historical traditions in different countries (Tumber/Prentoulis 2005).

British sociologist Julia Evett explicates two different perspectives that are adopted when discussing professions (Evett 2003):

- As a normative value system created and upheld by the profession itself, giving the profession a collective identity – a positive interpretation;
- As an ideology used as a mechanism for social order and discipline among professionals – a more negative interpretation.

The question is how the notion of professionalization is used in an occupation. Professionalization can come from *within*, when the professionals themselves can exert control and form the values and norms of the profession, but it can also be used by *outside* groups (owners, state and organisations) to change

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an occupation and use professionalization as a system of control and discipline. The latter interpretation can replace bureaucratic control and can be used by external forces to promote change in the profession (Evetts 2003). In an analysis of the concept of professionalism in journalism, Evetts and Aldridge (2003) conclude that the “professionalism” discourse is used as a tool to separate the producers from the product and that change is legitimized by referring to the “professional” nature of it. This can lead to arguments like “you have to do this job because it is professional”. At the same time, the professionalism developing among journalists gives them their identity and belonging.

Journalism can be analysed as an ongoing negotiation between these two sides of professionalism: between the *organisational* demands of standards, routines and goals for the media company and the *occupational* professionalism – values, norms and identity that are developing among journalists themselves (Örnebring 2009). These two sides of professionalism also relate to autonomy for the profession, both on an individual level and for the profession as a group in media companies and society. Autonomy for the individual journalists gets its strength from occupational professionalism, the values and identity rooted among colleagues, whereas autonomy for the profession as a group can be based on a mix of both kinds of professionalism – both as a defence against pressure from outside and as a way of keeping the professional order within the professional community.

This dual perspective on professionalization can be used to analyse change – what kind of changes are motivated by organisational arguments (economic, technical), and what kind of changes are motivated by occupational arguments (to defend and strengthen professional values). How are these kind of changes related to each other?

### **Autonomy under pressure in the daily work**

It is difficult to measure professional autonomy. In surveys it is possible to research the opinions of journalists on their autonomy, both perceived autonomy in daily work and more generally about influence in the newsroom. By comparing changes in time or in answers in different countries, it is possible

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to draw conclusions about differences in the perceived autonomy and evaluation of daily work among journalists.

Surveys among US journalists that ask questions about autonomy in their daily work have been conducted four times during the period 1971-2002 (Weaver et al 2007). These surveys have covered all kinds of media and different areas of the US; the last survey in 2002 consisted of telephone interviews with 1,149 journalists. Two of the questions were related to perceived autonomy, and both of these indicators show a clear decline since 1971. The share of the reporters saying they have almost complete freedom to select stories has declined from 60 to 40 per cent, and the share that say they have almost complete freedom to decide the emphasis has declined from 76 to 42 per cent. But there are big differences between journalists – young journalists in big news organisations have much less influence over their work than experienced journalists in small newsrooms. Reporters in TV have less freedom than reporters in radio and on weeklies. Hallin/Mancini also noticed a decline in journalistic autonomy in the “liberal model”, including the US, mostly associated with the increasing influence of business motives in media companies (Hallin/Mancini 2004).

There are also differences between countries and media systems. In the “Global journalist” project, perceived autonomy is found to be lower in countries with less press freedom (Weaver 1998). These differences are clear in a survey comparing reporters in Russia and Sweden. In Russia, the reporters more seldom choose their own ideas for reporting, and they also talk of political pressure both from owners and politicians when choosing subjects, as well as how political pressure is a common obstacle to publication. But still, both in Sweden and Russia, the professional interest of the journalist is the most important factor in selecting subjects in daily work, according to the journalists (Nygren/Degtereva 2011).

There can be many reasons for decreasing professional autonomy for journalists. Weaver mentions some trends that are linked to greater financial pressure within media companies: the commercialisation of news and the erosion of the wall between business and journalism. In addition, new media technology and the increasing speed of news work have an influence: “traditional professional values such as proportion, verification and relevance

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have given way to a perceived need to get an assertion into public circulation as quickly as possible” (Weaver 2007:73). In countries with limited press freedom, like Russia, pressure comes from political interests according to the journalists.

Another kind of pressure on professional autonomy comes from media development, and the fact that journalists now have to compete with other kinds of information and content on the net – social media, blogs and websites offering alternative pictures of news events. Journalists have to handle many kinds of interactivity with their audience, both regarding new types of sources and the audience as an amplifier of media content when it is re-distributed through social networks such as Facebook and Twitter:

“Journalists in a network must acknowledge that they will retain power only to the extent they share it; without facilitating the broad exchange, and not merely the delivery, of information, they will find themselves increasingly irrelevant to the conversation taking place around them” (Singer/Quandt 2009:141).

Professional autonomy is under pressure from all of the challenges in media development and the network society’s creation of new patterns of communication. However, it is also possible for media development to create alternative public spheres and a new kind of journalism that can strengthen autonomy for parts of the profession, whilst other parts of the journalistic profession experience diminishing autonomy.

### **Political and economic pressure**

What kind of constraints are there on the professional autonomy of daily work? The survey of US journalists from 2002 gives some answers (Weaver et al 2007). The results indicated four groups of limitations for the individual journalist:

- From agents outside the news organisation, for example sources.
- Professional conventions that most journalists follow, like ethical guidelines.
- Lack of resources and commercial demands in profit-making media companies.

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– Editorial policies and processes in the news organisation.

In the US survey, the highest levels of perceived autonomy in daily work were found among reporters covering a beat (who have their own specialty) and reporters in small news organisations, mostly in weekly newspapers and in radio.

In Swedish surveys conducted in 1995 and 2005, journalists were asked if the influence on media content has changed for different groups over the last ten years. According to the answers, the influence of journalists had diminished significantly and the influence of advertisers, the audience and politicians had grown. Also, the journalists feel themselves to be losing influence internally in favour of the advertising department and the management of the company. Still, the strongest influence comes from the editors – both when it concerns editorial policy and daily decisions (Asp/Johansson 2007).

Both of these surveys provide some clues about the constraints in the autonomy of the individual journalist. There seems to be strong commercial pressure and limitations within the newsroom organisation. There is also strong pressure from the outside, from sources and the PR industry; this influence has grown rapidly (Schudson 2003). The relationship between journalists and their sources is often described as a negotiation in which both parts have something to give and something to gain (Berkowitz 2009). When the power balance between the two parts of this negotiation changes, it will influence the results. Stronger sources reduce the autonomy of a professional journalist when he/she becomes more dependent on the sources.

### **Political parallelism and autonomy**

The relationship between journalism and politics has a long history. Many newspapers started as political voices for parties and movements, and newspapers in Europe are still labelled by political colours. Hallin/Mancini (2004) describe what they call a *political parallelism* that has been very strong in the European media systems. This system has several components:

- The media content reflects distinct political orientations.
- There are organisational connections between the media and political movements, for example in ownership.

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- A tendency for journalists to be active in political life, alternative career paths shaped by their political affiliation.
  - Partisanship in the audiences who choose the media closest to their own opinions.
  - Journalistic practices with a more activist tradition and stronger emphasis on comments.

This kind of political parallelism has gradually become weaker in Europe, at the same time as journalism has become more professionalized. Ties between newspapers and parties are weaker in the western countries analysed by Hallin/Mancini, and political influence on television has decreased with the growth of commercial television. However, this does not mean that political parallelism is dead – this dimension is still alive in different forms and levels.

In general, professionalization in journalism and political parallelism are in conflict with each other. But Hallin/Mancini also see a kind of journalistic autonomy within a system of political parallelism; autonomy for the activist journalist within a system according to the tradition of European intellectuals (2004:41). So, there is no simple relationship between politics and journalism.

From an American perspective, Michael Schudson comes to the conclusion that commercialisation encouraged professionalization among journalists when news became a commodity and not a political tool. Professional standards and practices were developed by commercial newspapers, giving them independence in relation to parties and politics. But commercialism also offers constraints for journalism, causing a conflict with professional values (Schudson 2003).

There is also a third possibility – a combination of strong political and financial pressure. The media system that is developing in China has a combination of strong political control in the media and strong commercial pressure in the media companies. In this kind of system, commercialisation gives no freedom for journalism, at least in the area of politics (Schudson 2003:130).

### **Hybridisation?**

In a new volume, Hallin and Mancini gather researchers from other countries to make new comparisons (2012). When it comes to media systems, Hallin/Mancini in their final chapter prefer to

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label the development *hybridisation* instead of homogenisation. With globalisation, professional norms and values from the liberal model are spreading. But the result is not a convergence or homogenisation, but a birth of hybrid systems closer to “political pluralism” than the “liberal model”. Imported norms are adapted to local political structures and practices, and partisanship still dominates over western objectivism in most of the world. They also suggest that the concept of professionalism has to be “unpacked and relativized”; it has different dimensions and should not always be associated with the American objectivity norm. Professionalism is not always equal with “objectivism” (Hallin/Mancini 2012:290).

One example of such a hybrid system is Russia, which has a media system labelled as “Eurasian” by the Russian researcher Elena Vartanova (2009). She concludes that Russia has adopted many elements of a commercial media system in a market economy. At the same time Russia still has strong state regulation and influence on media, links between the political elite and journalists and an instrumental use of media by the state and political clans. “By embracing political and business elites the state becomes the main driving force in media policy whatever goals it pursues and audiences (or the public) are mostly left aside” (Vartanova 2009:109). This results in a lack of transparency in the media market, corruption of journalists by politicians, suppressed commercial motives in media and an instrumental use of media by the state-market complex.

Another example of a hybrid system is Poland, which has a mix of the Mediterranean model and the Liberal model. There has been a low level of professionalization in journalism and an instrumentalisation of media by political elites since the fall of communism. At the same time there is strong commercialisation and a move towards a Liberal model (Dobek-Ostrowska 2012).

### **A profession under pressure?**

Rapid media development influences the professional autonomy of journalists. There is a lot of research into how journalism is changing due to new media and new technology (Deuze 2007, Michelstein/Boczkowski 2009, Singer/Quandt 2009). A short overview based on this research shows trends that can both strengthen and weaken professional autonomy.



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- *Changes in journalistic practices:*

- Internet- and computer-assisted reporting (CAR) gives journalists access to many more sources than before. It is possible to aggregate and analyse information on a scale never seen before, and this can make journalists less dependent on traditional sources.

- Multiskilling describes journalistic work in today's newsrooms. Journalists must do a lot of the technical production and be able to handle the whole process, including photography, editing and writing/producing. This can give the individual journalist greater control of the work process, but also a stronger focus on production and less on research and verification.

- The demands to produce are increasing; each journalist has to produce more, which limits research and working autonomy. Less of the work is outside the newsrooms and more is about recycling content already circulating in the content management systems (CMS).

- The labour market for journalists is changing in the same way as the rest of the labour market – more temporary jobs, outsourcing production to freelancers and production companies. This can make journalists more dependent on editors, but also gives strong journalists the ability to choose where to publish.

- *Changing media markets:*

- In the media companies, the wall between newsrooms and business has eroded, and journalists work more in cooperation with other groups in the company. This can reduce the autonomy of journalism, but also increase the influence of journalists when cooperating with other departments in the media company.

- Strong competition and commercial demands increase the need for effective production. This can make newsrooms more dependent on content produced by others, for example PR and other sources. The time for verification shrinks, especially in online journalism with constant deadlines.

- New media companies and new markets can increase pluralism in the media sector. At the same time, concentration and consolidation among media companies is reducing pluralism. This is both good and bad for professional autonomy, which can benefit from many channels.

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- *Unclear journalistic borders:*
    - PR and communication is expanding, and many journalists partly work in this sector. This can reduce their autonomy, limiting their role as watchdogs.
    - Media content on the border between journalism and commercial messages is growing, with advertorials and product placement. For the audience it is often difficult to differentiate between journalism and other types of content.
    - New kind of content is developing on the Internet and in social media; some could be regarded as journalism but without professional values and ethics. The border between producers and consumers is blurred – who is a journalist on the Internet? At the same time a new kind of autonomy is growing on the Internet, but it is not necessarily professional journalism.

There is no simple answer to how professional autonomy is influenced by media development. The trends mentioned above are some aspects of change – some of them can strengthen autonomy, in other aspects it can become weaker.

A summary of this could conclude that there are differences between the autonomy of the individual and of the profession as a group. Individual journalists might gain from many of the changes, but for the profession the borders become blurred with other professions and groups in media production. To answer this question, the profession as a group has to be analysed.

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## A cross-national survey

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The “Journalism in change” project is based on a “most-different-design”. We know from the start that there are clear differences between journalistic cultures in the three countries. This brings two basic questions in the project:

What similarities can we find in the professional cultures in the three countries?

What kinds of changes are possible to see? In the eyes of the journalists and in the analysis of different generations of journalists? What parts of the professional cultures are converging, and what is still different?

An important part of the project is the cross-national survey conducted in the spring and summer of 2012. The survey covers different areas of the professional culture:

- A social profile of the journalists – age, gender, social background and professional institutions.
- The daily work – conditions and practices.
- Values and norms in journalism, the role of journalists in society.
- Relationships with other areas, such as politics, PR, business and sources.
- Interactivity and journalists’ use of social media.
- Changes the last 5-10 years as perceived by the journalists.

The survey was constructed in collaboration with the researchers to make the questions relevant for journalists in all three countries. The survey was originally created in English and then translated into Polish, Russian and Swedish before distribution.

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### **A representative sample – as far as possible**

The survey was conducted during the spring and summer of 2012. It was organized and carried out by teams in each of the three countries. There are no registers on journalists in the three countries and therefore it is not possible to create a random sample of the population. Instead quota sampling was used to select participants in the survey, to build a sample as representative as possible for journalists in each country (Lavrakas 2013). Drawing on previous knowledge about the media structure and where journalists work, a quota of journalists was decided for each media type with the goal of collecting 500 surveys in each country. Surveys were sent to a wide range of newsrooms in different parts of the country and different types of media, both on paper (mostly Sweden and Poland) and by e-mail with links to a web-based survey (mostly Poland and Russia). When the quota for each media type was filled, the survey stopped. The results show that the sample became quite close to other recent surveys (like Weaver/Willnat 2012). Finally, the results were collected in a database and analysed using SPSS software.

Here are some of the details about the survey in each country:

**Poland** – The number of journalist was estimated on the basis of the Almanac of Media and phone calls to editorial offices. This estimate determined how many journalists were needed from each group, and surveys were sent to the editorial offices both in a print version and as e-mails with links to a web survey. Surveys were sent until the required number was reached. In total, more than 1,000 print versions of the surveys were sent along with a few hundred e-mails with links to the web survey.

*Table 1*

#### **Basis for the selection of Polish respondents**

<b>Type of media</b>	<b>Percentage of journalists</b>	<b>Number of surveys</b>
National newspaper	10	50
Regional newspaper	16	80
Magazine	24	120
Radio – channel (public service)	11	55

Radio – channel (commercial)	8	40
TV-channel (public service)	8	40
TV-channel (commercial)	9	45
Online media	3	15
News agency	3	10
Freelancer	8	45
Total	100	500

*Source:* The "Journalism in Change" Project, 2012.

**Russia** – In Russia there are about 150,000 journalists according to an estimate from the mid-2000s, but there is no central media or journalist register. For this reason, a typological approach was chosen for the creation of the survey. The main criterion for sampling was **medium type**. Typological sampling presumes that the universum has been divided into homogeneous parts according to the type of medium from which further selections of respondents were randomly made. The relationship between the types of registered media was maintained while sampling. Official statistical information was used as a basis for the sampling. In 2011, there were more than 90,000 media organisations (registered and re-registered): 67,727 printed media, 21,234 audio-visual media and 1,564 news agencies. The remaining media in the sample was online media.

*Table 2*

**Basis for the selection of Russian respondents**

Type of media	Percentage of journalists	Number of surveys
Print media	67	335
TV and radio	21	105
Online media	8	40
News agencies	2	10
Production companies	2	10
Total	100	500

*Source:* The "Journalism in Change" Project, 2012.



From a **geographical point of view**, the sample includes journalists from 6 federal districts (out of the 8 in Russia), excluding the Siberian and North Caucasian federal districts. Respondents live in Central Russia and the Southern, North-Western, Volga (Privolzhskiy), Ural and Far Eastern regions.

**Sweden** – earlier research on journalists at Gothenburg University (Asp m fl 2007) was used to define the proportion of respondents in different kind of media. Newsrooms in all different categories were chosen and the survey was distributed on paper with an attached envelope to send in the answers. All of the journalists in the survey had to send in the answers themselves completely anonymously, but it was possible to identify from which newsroom the survey was sent. Surveys were also distributed to freelance journalists through cooperative groups of freelancers and with the help of the Union of Journalists. In total, about 1,400 surveys were distributed until the required number of respondents in each category was reached.

*Table 3.*

**Basis for the selection of Swedish respondents**

Type of media	Percentage of journalists*	Percentage of respondents
Local/regional newspapers	32	29
Big city newspapers	14	14
Free newspapers	3	6
Magazines	17	13
SR (public service radio)	12	9
SVT (public service TV)	10	7
Commercial TV and radio	4	5
Production companies	1	2
News agencies & online only	6	6
Other	2	10**
Total:	100	100

*Source:* The "Journalism in Change" Project, 2012.

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\* Journalists employed by media companies in 2005. This does not include about 13% of all journalists, since they were working as freelancers in 2005.

\*\* Many of these are freelancers working for different kind of media, many of them for magazines.

The answers come from the entire country: 51% from journalists in Stockholm, 10% from the two other big cities, Gothenburg and Malmo, and 34% from regional and local media. This reflects the proportion of journalists in different parts of the country, according to the Union of Journalists.

Looking at gender, the respondents quite close reflect the statistics from the Union of Journalists: 53% of the respondents are female compared to 52% among the members of the Union.

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## **Polish journalists – from politics to market**

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In Poland, during the two decades following the collapse of communism, the level of journalistic professionalism was perceived by many scholars to be lower than in the Democratic Corporatist and Liberal models. As far as autonomy, public interest service and instrumentalisation were concerned, it was much closer to the Polarized Pluralist model (Dobek-Ostrowska, 2012:49; 2011a:25; 2011b:194-195). However, Poland has never been a copy of Spain, Italy, Portugal or Greece. The biggest media conglomerates based on industry have never been set up in Poland or entered it from abroad. Since they do not exist here, it is not possible to talk about integration or the link between media and journalists and big business.

In the 2000s, the analysis of journalistic professionalism in Poland suggested that at the legal level as well as the level of accepted regulations it had a lot of features typical to the Democratic Corporatist model or the Liberal model, but this could be a misleading assumption. Despite economic reforms, democratisation, de-monopolisation, autonomisation and decentralisation, professionalism is still essential for maintaining the free media (Jakubowicz, 2002). Despite the fact that some elements of professionalization had already appeared, the tradition of politicized journalism was still deeply rooted in Poland in the 2000s. The majority of journalists were far from objective and represented a biased political stance.

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Paradoxically, the journalists were convinced that their civic responsibility demanded their personal involvement in the political course of events. K. Hadamik (2005) claimed that it was a kind of combination of ‘the old and the new’ elements of journalistic professionalism. She believed that, on the one hand, a lot of traditional values of the journalistic culture still existed but, on the other hand, this culture evolved and modernized itself under the influence of global development trends.

Journalistic professionalization is a process and some deep changes have been observed in Poland during the last years. Polish journalism, which is not an isolated island on the world map, is affected by all global problems, such as de-professionalization, interpretative journalism, the lowering of journalistic standards due to commercialisation – a tendency towards tabloidization of the political content, sensationalisation, exposure of conflicts and the horse race-pattern coverage. Global trends are reflected in the culture of Polish journalists, who, despite the ongoing process of structure flattening (Donsbach, 2010), are still considerably different as far as institutional roles within the range of the extent of intervention of political actors, the distance to authorities and the adaptation of the market model are concerned. Significant distinctions are noticeable in the area of journalistic skills and in the application of professional rules, such as objectivism, neutrality, truth, factuality, reliability, honesty, or source balancing (McQuail, 2001:169).

The data, which we received in 2012 thanks to a comparative project, “Journalism in change: Professional journalistic culture in Poland, Russia and Sweden”, help us understand Polish journalists better and evaluate the quality of their job and note changes in the profession in the third decade after the fall of communism. We analyse seven main topics such as the social profile and the structure of the profession, ideals and values as presented by journalists, their daily work practices, relations between journalists and politicians, the use of social media, the journalists’ future plans and dimensions of autonomy. We predict that:

H1: Significant changes have taken place in Polish journalism as a result of influences from the fields of politics and economy.

H2: The journalistic profession is in a phase of erosion.

### Social profile and the structure of the profession

From research by Z. Bajka (1991) conducted at the beginning of the 1990s, we learn that at that time some 11,000 journalists worked in Poland. 10 years later, there were ca.18,000 people employed in the profession (Bajka, 2001). The calculations made by the University of Wroclaw in 2011 for the 'Media Accountability and Transparency in Europe' (www.mediaact.eu) project showed that the number of journalists employed on contracts fluctuated was about 12,000. Each calculation was approximate and done with the use of different methodology, so they are of little value from the point of view of statistics, but for media experts they might be a kind of starting point and help with the description of the professional group of journalists.

Table 1

Structure of the journalistic population in Poland in 2012  
(approximate data)

<i>In what kind of media company are you working today? (if you work for different types of companies, please identify your main employer)</i>	<b>Number of employees</b>	<b>Employees, excluding freelancers (%)</b>	<b>Employees, including freelancers (%)</b>	<b>Number of surveys</b>	<b>Percent of surveys</b>
Dailies	2310	25,4	23	<b>130</b>	<b>26</b>
including:					
<i>national</i>	659	7,2	6,5		
<i>regional</i>	1651	18,2	16,5		
Magazines	2542	28	25,4	<b>120</b>	<b>24</b>
Public radio	1157	12,7	11,6	<b>55</b>	<b>11</b>
Private radio	808	8,9	8,1	<b>40</b>	<b>8</b>
Public television	758	8,3	7,6	<b>40</b>	<b>8</b>

Private television	926	10,1	9,3	<b>45</b>	<b>9</b>
Online media	350	3,9	3,5	<b>15</b>	<b>3</b>
Press agency	249	2,7	2,5	<b>10</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Total (excluding freelancers)</b>	<b>9100</b>	<b>100</b>			
Freelancers	910		9,00	<b>45</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Total (including freelancers)</b>	<b>10010</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: The "Journalism in Change" Project, 2012.

Approximate calculations, made for the 'Journalism in change' project in the spring of 2012, show that the number of journalists excluding freelancers amounted to 9,100 (table 1). Thus, it might be concluded that the number of journalists is decreasing due to, among other things, the economic crisis. Media companies, faced by decreasing profits, have reduced employment, and technological changes in the media all over the world at the end of the first and second decade of the 21st century had an impact. Thanks to new technology, one person is able to do a task that required several journalists in the past. The confirmation of this tendency is also clearly visible in research results. Journalists have pointed out that in the last five years the number of journalists employed in their media company has decreased (76,8 per cent) (table 2).

Table 2

**Changes of editorial staff during the last 5 years**

<i>During the last five years, has the size of your editorial staff grown or shrunk?</i>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Per cent</b>
Grown much	47	9,4
Grown a little	62	12,4
The same	1	0,2
Shrunk a little	53	10,6

Shrunk much	331	66,2
No answer	6	1,2
Total	500	100

Source: The "Journalism in Change" Project, 2012.

It might then be said that in the last five years a tendency to reduce employment in Polish editorial offices has been visible. It is felt more and more acutely by journalists, who are feeling frustrated, as indicated by a comment from one of respondents:

*“My problem is that I am more and more depressed because of what is going on in my profession and I think of changing jobs every single day. Today my publisher starts firing people and it is going to last for the next 4 months. In this situation, I have nothing constructive, or even good, to say”.*

Almost half the journalists worked for printed media (dailies – 23,10 per cent, magazines – 25,42 per cent), 11,57 per cent were employed in public radio, 8 per cent in private radio and almost 17 per cent worked in television (7,58 per cent in public television and 9,26 per cent in commercial television). Online media employed 3,5 per cent and press agencies 2,45 per cent. Because of difficulties in obtaining reliable data on the group of freelancers, the project participants assumed that they represented 10 per cent of the people employed in the media, which constituted 9 per cent of all observations.

The respondents to the ‘Journalism in Change’ survey in Poland constitute 57,4 per cent men and 40 per cent women (2,6 per cent did not answer the question regarding their gender). More than 42 per cent of the respondents are under the age of 35, which is the biggest age group in the Polish population (table 3). The journalists between the ages of 36-50 comprise the second largest group (39 per cent), but the difference between the youngest and the middle group is only 3 percentage points. The eldest age group, 51+, is about half the size (18 per cent) of the others, which can be explained by two reasons. Firstly, journalists retire, and secondly, as is the case particularly in Poland, they leave the profession.

Table 3

**Three age groups of journalists in Poland**

<b>Age group</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Per cent</b>
≤35 years	195	42,4
36-50 years	181	39,3
≤51 years	84	18,3
Total	460	100
No answer	40	

*Source:* The "Journalism in Change" Project, 2012.

When we asked Polish journalists where they would like to work in five years, more than half (52,6 per cent) replied in the same company; 16,8 per cent said that they would like to work for a different media company. Only a very small percentage (4,8 per cent) would give up the profession. The journalists' age is correlated to their seniority. More than 70 per cent have been working for less than 20 years, and 25 per cent of these have been working for 6-10 years. Journalists gradually leave their profession after 15 years, and only a small percentage retire.

The obtained data show that 53 per cent of those surveyed have some form of journalistic education (academic, non-academic, professional training in a media company). Only 38 per cent have indicated that their education was at the university level. Eleven per cent of those surveyed have completed some form of professional training in a media company and 4 per cent have stated that they have a journalistic education, but not at the academic level. As many as 41 per cent had no journalistic education at all. Higher journalistic education, in the opinion of journalists, is not an attribute necessary to do the job, and a few respondents in the survey even expressed the opinion that higher journalistic education is useless and impedes the act of practicing the profession.

In response to the question about their form of employment, 66 per cent of the journalists indicated that they are permanently hired by a media company and 11 per cent that they are temporarily employed. Among those surveyed, freelancers, self-employed or



people employed in a different company (for example, during their professional training in a media organisation) constituted 9 per cent. Permanent employment in a media company has turned out to be the dominant form of employment.

In Poland, small-sized editorial teams dominate. Almost a third of the respondents are employed in editorial offices where the number of full-time journalists does not exceed 10, and 10 per cent work in offices of up to 20 journalists. Eleven per cent work in large editorial offices employing more than 75 journalists. A significant percentage of those surveyed (27 per cent) did not answer that question (table 4). The distribution of the obtained data is the result of the fact that almost half of the employed journalists work in printed media, where small-size magazine offices dominate. Also, regional dailies have significantly reduced employment.

*Table 4*

**The number of full-time journalists employed in editorial offices**

<b>Number of employees in editorial offices</b>	<b>Number of respondents</b>	<b>Per cent</b>
0–10	152	30
11–20	49	10
21–30	40	8
31–40	30	6
41–50	26	5
51–75	17	3
76–100	30	6
101–150	3	1
151–200	8	2
201–250	4	1
Over 250	5	1
No reply	136	27

*Source:* The "Journalism in Change" Project, 2012.

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Regarding the question dealing with the structure of payment, most of those surveyed (79 per cent of journalists) replied that it is possible to manage on their income from journalism. Among them, 23 per cent have declared that they can save some money. The third group of the respondents (28 per cent) answered that there are enough financial resources for basic necessities and 28 per cent claim that they can live on their salaries. A negative response was indicated by 19 per cent of journalists, 13 per cent of whom also had other sources of income, and for 6 per cent of the respondents journalism constitutes only a minor part of their income. According to the majority of respondents, it is possible to manage on the income from journalism.

A small group, only 17 per cent, declared that they belong to a journalistic association. Of the respondents, 38 per cent indicated lack of membership in this type of organisation, and as many as 45 per cent did not answer the question. It might be assumed that the last group consists of journalists who are not members of professional journalistic associations. The data indicate not only low interest among Polish journalists in this form of activity, but respondents also mentioned a negative opinion regarding associations and a lack of trust in them.

### **Ideals and values**

The majority of journalists (68 per cent) are proud of their profession. The same percentage of respondents sees journalism as a mission. Almost 45 per cent of respondents agreed with the opinion that their job gives them an opportunity to start a career in another profession, which is especially important when we compare these declarations with the data concerning their seniority and the fact that journalists leave the profession after fifteen years.

Forty-five per cent of the respondents did not agree with the opinion that the main motive for taking up the job was salary. However, when this answer is compared with replies to the question about the most important reasons for choosing a career, salary is in fourth place for 74 per cent of the respondents. Among those surveyed, 60 per cent had come to the conclusion that the job is not more important than family and leisure time.

The obtained data indicate that the surveyed journalists believe that the most important issues when choosing their job were, in order: the chance to develop a specialty, freedom at work, the atmosphere at the workplace, the chance to serve the public interest, the chance for a better career and salary. Further down on the list, but still highly mentioned, were: the editorial policy of the organisation, job security and the chance to influence society. Issues such as the chance to develop a specialty, freedom or the atmosphere at the workplace, which were selected by more than 80 per cent of the respondents, turned out to be decisive (table 5).

Table 5

**The important reasons for choosing a career as a journalist**

<i>How important are a number of things when choosing your job?</i>	<b>Number of answers: important and very important</b>	<b>Per cent</b>	<b>Mean</b>
Chance to develop a speciality	425	85	4,4
Freedom in the work	413	83	4,4
Atmosphere in the workplace	409	82	4,3
To serve the public interest	370	74	4,2
Salary	368	74	4,1
Chance for a better career	359	72	4,0
Editorial policy	322	64	3,8
Job security	315	63	3,8
Chance to influence society	296	59	3,7
Fringe benefits	210	42	3,1

Source: The "Journalism in Change" Project, 2012.

The overwhelming majority of respondents (91 per cent) answered that it is important for a media company to have common

ethical rules. Political influence on the media is unacceptable for 76 per cent of those surveyed and 62 per cent have not supported cooperation with representatives of marketing departments and PR departments at external companies. Of those survey, 59 per cent said that it is objectionable for journalists to accept gifts. Thus, journalists are of the opinion that politics and business should be separated from journalism and editorial offices should have common codes of ethics.

Among the duties of a journalist, the most important are: providing information objectively (93 per cent), bringing forward various opinions (also 93 per cent), standing free of special interests (91 per cent), criticizing injustice (also 91 per cent). Objectivism and pluralism have been mentioned, too, as well as the control function of the media. The least important are ensuring that media companies do well (41 per cent) and providing entertainment (also 41 per cent). These two categories significantly stand out and are not considered to be essential professional duties according to the majority of journalists (table 6).

Table 6

**The importance of journalistic responsibilities**

<i>How important are the following professional duties for a journalist in your country? (Give your opinion on a scale 1-5, only answers 4 and 5 are given) Journalists should...</i>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Per cent</b>
Bring forward various opinions	467	93
Provide information objectively	464	93
Stand free of special interests	457	91
Criticize injustice	455	91
Control public authorities	441	88
Tell the truth regardless of the consequences	437	87

Educate the public	429	86
Investigate government claims	425	85
Represent diverse social groups	415	83
Simplify and explain	394	79
Be neutral reporters	389	78
Stimulate new ideas	381	76
Mobilize people to act	378	76
Influence public opinion	286	57
Ensure that media business does well	207	41
Provide entertainment	205	41

*Source:* The "Journalism in Change" Project, 2012.

Only 29 per cent of those surveyed believe that journalists in Poland fulfil their responsibilities to society. A little more, 32 per cent, are of a different opinion. However, the most numerous group is the group of journalists who did not answer this question (39 per cent of those surveyed). It is difficult to determine why there is a reluctance to answer this question. However, it does not change the fact that less than a third of the respondents believe that Polish journalists fulfil their responsibilities to society.

Most journalists pointed out that the quality of journalism in Poland has decreased in the last 5–10 – an opinion that was expressed by 62 per cent of journalists. Eleven per cent believe that the quality has increased and 18 per cent believe it has remained the same. In the case of journalism quality, it can be said that a definite downward tendency is observable among those surveyed. The lower quality of journalism is only one of the fundamental problems to which respondents have referred. Another is the aforementioned low level at which journalists fulfil their responsibilities to society.

### **Daily work practices**

The analysis of a journalist's daily work focused on two aspects. The first is concerned with the characteristics of a formal aspect like, for example, the form of employment or a

journalist's role in the editorial office. The second is to show what the surveyed journalists think about the changes that have taken place or might take place in their profession, in the process of material preparation and in the journalistic work itself.

Polish journalists have claimed that on average their work week exceeds 41 hours a week. It is an interesting result if one takes into account that one-fifth of the respondents in Poland work part-time.

In response to the question about their main role in the editorial office (table 7), almost half of the respondents said that they work as reporters or correspondents. Eighteen per cent of those surveyed are editors-in-chief or managers. It is worth emphasizing that the question was structured as a multiple choice question, which shows that journalists combine managerial functions with ordinary journalistic work. This is caused by the dominance of small-sized editorial offices, which make journalists perform more tasks and, as a result, combine different functions. The least frequent roles are those that are directly linked to the sphere of the business. Research results also show that few journalists carry out specialized roles that demand extra costs, such as those of a researcher or photographer. In fact, respondents are in agreement that in the last 10 years there has been clear progress in all areas of journalistic material production. Technological changes have greatly improved the quality of graphic materials and photography.

Table 7

**Professional roles in the newsroom  
(total respondents = 487)**

<i>What are your main functions in your media organisation (maximum three alternatives)?</i>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Per cent</b>
Reporter	230	47,2
Editor	91	18,7
Online editor	77	15,8
News anchor	67	13,8

Commentator	62	12,7
Researcher	40	8,2
Editorial writer/columnist	35	7,1
Producer (radio/TV)	28	5,7
Photographer/cameraman	15	3
Subeditor/layout	14	2,9
Work with ads	10	2
Economy/management	1	0,2
Other roles	107	22

*Source:* The "Journalism in Change" Project, 2012.

More than 60 per cent of those surveyed pointed out that there have been developments in material editing and layout, and 59 per cent emphasized the improvement in research and verification of information. Almost half of the respondents agreed that there has been an improvement in contacts journalists have with their audiences. Polish journalists are worried about an increase in the work tempo and time pressures, which will result in them having fewer opportunities to do their work tasks outside the newsroom. This is why one-fifth of the Polish journalists have come to the conclusion that the level of work tasks outside the newsroom has deteriorated. The changing conditions of work have also influenced the evaluation and discussion on journalistic materials in the editorial team, which have deteriorated according to 23 per cent of Polish journalists.

A very important issue, which researchers attempted to investigate in the project, is the attitude of journalists towards multiskilling. This term refers to journalists who fulfil a number of functions at the same time, and as a result, have the multiple skills that are necessary to do so. An example includes e.g., using modern technologies in the process of preparing and publishing the news. From the obtained data, it can be concluded that multiskilling is not a new phenomenon for Polish journalists. The majority of respondents (66 per cent) consider themselves multi-reporters. Almost 80 per

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cent of respondents think that it is what their superiors expect from them. More than 80 per cent of those surveyed believe that multiskilling is the direction in which the profession is heading. They agree with the statement that in the future the number of multiskilled journalists will increase, which will be caused by a decreasing level of employment and increasingly fewer editorial offices. This will, in turn, result in overloading a single journalist with additional duties. Multiskilling is also evident in one more aspect of journalistic work – in the thematic range of the produced materials. As many as 73 per cent of the surveyed journalists have dealt with different thematic areas. The varied subject matter of the prepared materials demands that the journalist gain knowledge of different subjects. In reality, however, journalists do not have time to prepare the materials well. This is why it has become so important to be able to look for information on the Internet or contact the source of information through new technologies. It is worth noting that despite certain positive aspects of multiskilling such as, for example, more space for creativity, 43 per cent of the respondents think that multiskilling will lower the quality of the produced materials.

### **Journalists and politics**

Relations with the world of politics were the main topic of research by Daniel C. Hallin and Paolo Mancini, and political parallelism constituted one of the four dimensions of the media system (Hallin&Mancini, 2006, 2012). The results presented below help verify the hypothesis which assumes that Poland is closer to the Polarized Pluralist model (Mediterranean) than to the Liberal or Democratic Corporatist models (Dobek-Ostrowska, 2011a, 2011b, 2012). In this part of our deliberations, we will analyse political preferences of journalists and think how they influence their journalistic work.

The empirical data show us a balance among the political preferences of journalists (Figure 1). One-third of respondents have admitted having left-wing and centre-left views (30 per cent). Right and centre-right values are declared by more than one-quarter of the respondents (27 per cent). Centre views have



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been declared by 24 per cent of the respondents. Thus, it can be said that there is a slight dominance of people with left-wing and centre-left preferences over right-wing and centre-right (3 percentage points more) and centre (6 percentage points more) oriented journalists. It might come as a surprise that 97 respondents (19 per cent) replied: 'I choose not to answer', 'I do not know', or have not chosen any answer at all (Figure 1). The highest percentage of those who chose not to respond is employed in public broadcasting – as many as 31,6 per cent of journalists employed in Polish Radio (PR) and 41,3 per cent employed in Polish Television (TVP) (table 8). This might be an indication of a lack of confidence in their employers, which many times as political power has changed hands, has 'awarded' or 'punished' them for declarations of clear political views, so this lack of response might be a result of the survival strategy.

Journalists employed in the press are not afraid to declare their political views. The percentage of respondents who chose not to answer was the lowest among national dailies (6 per cent) and magazines (12 per cent), sectors which are traditionally characterized by external pluralism evident in clear editorial policy and also by the highest level of politicisation (table 8). Some national dailies as well as a lot of opinion weeklies address their product to audiences with clearly defined preferences. In this context, clear and publicly declared political views of journalists are valuable. There are also no mechanisms here (like in the case of public broadcasting) that might cause journalists to hide them. Slightly more than 37 per cent of respondents from daily newspapers and 35 per cent of those working for magazines admitted having left-wing and centre-left views. Thirty-three per cent of those working for daily newspapers and 28 per cent of those working for magazines have right-wing and centre-right views. Thus, we can talk about rather balanced political pluralism in these two media sectors (differences of 4 percentage points in daily newspapers and 5 percentage points in magazines between left- and right-oriented journalists).

Against the background of national newspapers and magazines, regional dailies stand out. Most respondents employed there declared centre views (35 per cent), and it is the highest

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percentage in this category among all sectors. The difference between people with left-wing/centre-left (25 per cent) and right-wing/centre-right (23 per cent) preferences is balanced. This might be explained by the fact that in different country's regions (voivodeships) there is, in fact, a monopoly of one title and its political involvement might adversely affect the position of the newspaper on the market. Under such conditions, one title should be addressed to and reach every reader regardless of their political views. This is why owners (German Polskapresse and British Media Regionalne<sup>1</sup>) do not get involved in politics and avoid supporting any political actors. Thus, it can be assumed that clearly stated political opinions of journalists employed there, contrary to national dailies, are not in agreement with the expectations of the owners of regional titles.

In the case of broadcasting media, regardless of the ownership status, no clear overrepresentation of supporters of left-wing/centre-left or right-wing/centre-right views has been noted. The biggest, a 6 per cent difference, has been noted in the case of private television, in that more than 33 per cent of the respondents admitted having left-wing/centre-left views. In the case of public radio the difference is about 5 per cent. Public television (TVP) is an exception where the percentage of journalists with right-wing/centre-right views and left-wing/centre-left views are the same.

Interesting features have been noticed in respondents working for online media. A little more than 7 per cent (which constitutes the lowest percentage in this category) state having centre views. More than 51 per cent (and this is the highest percentage in this category) declared left-wing and centre-left preferences. The difference between the left-wing/centre-left and right-wing/centre-right is about 25 percentage points. The structure of political preferences of journalists working for online media differs significantly from the structure of journalists employed in the other sectors, which might come as a surprise. The differences appearing in traditional media can be explained, but in this case it is not clear and straightforward for the researcher (table 8).

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<sup>1</sup> The British company Mediacom, the owner of Media Regionalne, withdrew from Poland in March 2013.

Table 8

**Political preferences of journalists in different media sectors**

Where would you place yourself on a political scale from left to right? (All journalists with freelancers 500=100%)														
Media sector	Left		A little bit left		Centre		A little bit right		Right		No answer		Total number of journalists	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	without freelancers	with freelancers
National dailies	2	3,9	17	33,3	12	23,5	10	19,7	7	13,7	3	5,9	50	N51=100%
Regional dailies	5	6	15	19	28	35	13	16	6	7	14	17	80	N81+100%
Magazines	12	9,4	33	26	31	24,4	20	15,7	16	12,6	15	11,9	120	N127=100%
Public radio	3	4,6	12	18,7	17	26,6	10	15,6	2	3	20	31,6	55	N64=100%
Private radio	3	7,5	6	15	12	30	9	22,5	1	2,5	9	22,5	40	N40=100%
Public television	1	2,2	10	21,7	5	10,9	7	15,2	4	8,7	19	41,3	40	N46=100%
Private television	3	5,8	14	26,9	11	21,2	14	26,9	0	0	10	19,2	45	N52=100%
Media online	3	10,3	12	41,4	2	6,9	6	20,7	1	3,5	5	17,2	15	N29=100%
Press agency	0	0	2	20	2	20	3	30	1	10	2	20	10	N10=100%
Total	32	6,4	121	24,2	120	24,2	92	18,4	38	7,6	97	19,4	N455 = 91 %	N500=100%

Source: The "Journalism in Change" Project, 2012.

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According to 86 per cent of the respondents, a journalist should not get involved in politics while working as a journalist, and almost 76 per cent think that political influence on the media company is unacceptable. When asked about the influence of political connections on the functioning of the media company in which they are employed, 58 per cent of journalists pointed out that it is low, or neither low nor high, and 61 per cent expressed the same opinion about the influence of political actors outside the media company. More than 72 per cent of the respondents claimed that they never experienced pressure from political actors outside the media company during their professional practice, and more than 71 per cent claimed there have never been any problems at work resulting from the political interests of the media owners. It is also significant that more than 17 per cent of the respondents did not answer the question about the political connections of the company, and 23 per cent did not answer the question about the influence of strong political actors outside the media company.

However, when we compare the responses of all of the respondents with the opinions of journalists in particular sectors concerning the connections between the media company and political actors – politicians and parties – then the picture is not as clear and straightforward. Such relationships between the media organisation and the world of politics have been indicated, to the largest extent, by journalists in magazines (32 per cent) and daily newspapers (29 per cent). Online media journalists are again an interesting example, 33 per cent indicated a high prevalence of connections, but almost 43 per cent indicated low political connections. A comparison of these results with political preferences of journalists confirms again that, in the case of these sectors, political involvement of the media and political views of journalists are combined. Quite surprising are the responses given by journalists employed in public radio and television, which have indicated low connections between their media and the world of politics, which is rather in contradiction to the results of the analysis of the information program content (Dobek-Ostrowska, 2011a:131-166). Additionally, only 8,6 per cent of respondents indicated that journalists in their media company faced pressure from political actors outside company, and 59 per cent never or very rarely face this obstacle (table 9).

Table 9

**Pressure from political actors outside the media company**

*A journalist can face various obstacles before the final publishing/broadcast. How often do journalists at your media company face pressure from political actors outside the media company? (range your answers on a scale 1-5) N500=100%*

Media sector	Total number with freelancers		Never and very rarely (1-2 )		Often and very often (4-5)	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
National daily newspapers	51	10,2	24	4,8	2	0,4
Regional daily newspapers	81	16,2	45	5	7	1,4
Magazines	127	25,4	76	15,2	10	2
Public radio	64	12,8	36	7,2	8	1,6
Private radio	40	8	27	5,4	2	0,4
Public television	46	9,2	23	4,6	9	1,8
Private television	52	10,4	37	7,4	2	0,4
Online media	29	5,8	17	3,4	3	0,6
Press Agency	10	2	8	1,6	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>293</b>	<b>58,6</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>8,6</b>

*Source:* The "Journalism in Change" Project, 2012.

About one-third of the respondents said that the influence of politicians on the media has stayed the same over the last 10 years (more than 30 per cent) or has not increased (15 per cent), but 23,4 per cent noticed an increase. Interestingly, more than 25 per cent did not answer the question. However, if we compare the opinions with the responses to the question about

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the influence of politicians on the media company in particular sectors in which the respondents are employed, the picture is a bit different. An increase in the influence of politicians has been noted by more than 18 per cent of journalists employed in national dailies (10 per cent more than those of a different opinion) and more than 30 per cent in magazines (almost 20 per cent more than those claiming that the influence has decreased). In the case of these two sectors, the data once again confirms the close connections between the world of politics and the media and a high political involvement of an editorial office. The same conclusions concern public television – more than 18 per cent say there is an increase and only 2 per cent say there is a decrease in the influence.

The respondents assess the level of press freedom in Poland to have become much better in the last 10 years. According to 30 per cent of the respondents, the level has increased, although 25 per cent claim that it has decreased. Thirty-three per cent say it has stayed the same. It is worth comparing this data to Poland's position in the Press Index Freedom, which in the last decade has been highly unstable (2002 – 29th position, 2006 – 58th, 2011–2012 – 24th, 2013 – 22nd) (*Press Index Freedom 2002, 2006, 2011–2012, 2013*). It is important to underline that Poland had its lowest ranking in 2006 and its best ranking in 2013.

### **Journalists and social media**

Communication in contemporary society is dynamically changing due to technological development. Internet access and mobile technologies have become a natural part of the human environment. Social media, defined as “(...) a group of Internet-based applications that are built on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content” (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010), are one of the most popular types of websites. Although the social media landscape in Poland is dominated by foreign companies, such as Facebook and Google (which owns Youtube, Blogger and Google+), Polish social networking services, such as nk.pl and blogging platform blox.

pl, are trying to stay competitive and still top popularity rankings (table 10). The case of blip.pl (Polish equivalent of Twitter) shows that not every idea can be easily adapted in Poland. Almost one-third of Polish Internet users prefer Facebook. It is obvious that such social representation in social media was noticed by nearly all professions, including journalists, and became a regular tool in a daily routine of their work.

*Table 10*

**Polish social media market (March 2013)**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Real users in million</b>	<b>Per cent of users</b>
Facebook	Social network service	13,7	68,7
Youtube	Video sharing social network service	14,4	68,7
Nk.pl	Social network service	8,04	40,1
Blogspot.com	Bloggging platform	6,2	31
blox.pl	Bloggging platform	3,4	17,2
Twitter.com	Micro-bloggging platform	2	10
blog.pl	Micro-bloggging platform	1,5	7,4

*Source:* [http://www.wirtualnemedi.pl/artykul/top-300-stron-internetowych-w-polsce\\_\(30.05.2013\)](http://www.wirtualnemedi.pl/artykul/top-300-stron-internetowych-w-polsce_(30.05.2013))

How are social media used by Polish journalists? Our data show that the basic idea behind creating social networking services is to build a new tool which can be used to share content and communicate. All generations of Polish journalists use e-mail as a primary tool of communication. Social media is most popular among the younger generation of journalists, but it is still not a dominant way of communicating. The eldest group of respondents consider the use of social media for dialoguing with the audience to be less attractive – 15 per cent of the respondents aged over 51 (table 11).

Table 11

**Journalists' instruments of communication  
with readers/viewers/listeners**

<i>How often do you communicate with readers/ viewers/listeners? (sometimes and many times each day)</i>	<b>Number</b>	<b>≤ 35</b>	<b>36-50</b>	<b>≥51</b>
Telephone	392	32%	39%	21%
E-Mail	454	40%	45%	22%
Comments on the web	369	32%	35%	22%
Social-media	320	31%	29%	15%
Direct meetings	373	29%	37%	21%

Source: The "Journalism in Change" Project, 2012.

More than 63 per cent of Polish journalists use social media, but the frequency and types of social networking services used for professional purposes depends on the age (table 12). Facebook is the most popular social media used in the daily routine of all age groups, although we can observe a downward trend in terms of daily usage – on the one hand 84 per cent of the youngest generations use Facebook but on the other one only 60 per cent if we look at the age group 51+. Microblogging is still not as popular as regular blogging, but surprisingly, the middle-aged generation uses Twitter for professional purposes the most, as stated by 26 per cent of the respondents. Writing a personal blog is not popular at all – on average only 5 per cent of Polish journalists write blogs.



Table 12

Frequency of social media use (in per cent)

<i>How often do you use different types of social media? (Give your answers on a scale 1-5)</i>	$\leq 35$	36-50	$\geq 51$	Total respondents
Read blogs daily (4-5)	31	36	31	33
Less frequently or never (1-2)	69	64	69	67
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>
Write personal blog at least weekly	4	6	5	5
Less frequently or never	96	94	95	95
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>
Use Facebook daily	84	62	60	72
Less frequently or never	16	38	40	28
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>
Use Twitter daily	18	26	5	19
Less frequently or never	82	74	95	81
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: The "Journalism in Change" Project, 2012.

In terms of purposes of using social media in work, Polish journalists find Facebook most useful for dialoguing with the audience (table 13). The second reason to use Facebook as part of work is to find information in journalistic investigation. About 24 per cent of Polish journalists read blogs to generate ideas and almost as many use them for researching topics. Twitter does not seem to be a popular tool for journalists, and it is used by 14 per cent of the research population for finding information.

Table 13

**Purpose of social media use of respondents using each platform  
(in per cent)**

<i>For what purposes do you use different kind of social media? (you can choose as many options as you want)</i>	<b>Facebook</b>	<b>Twitter</b>	<b>Blogs</b>
Getting ideas	32	7	24
Finding information	38	14	23
Dialogue with audience	42	6	6
Self-promotion	30	5	5
Money making	6	0	3
Social/political discussion	25	6	8

Source: The "Journalism in Change" Project, 2012.

Changes in society caused by media development have forced journalists to become more interactive in terms of contacting the audience. The majority of Polish journalists believe it is important to listen to the audience, and more than half of them agree that there is a strong connection between interactivity and the process of news selection. Such a disposition shows that journalists in Poland easily adapt to changes, and in their work they are focused on the audience's needs and expectations.

Half of the respondents point out that interactivity can positively affect the quality of journalism, and only 17 per

cent seem to be aware of the dangers of decreasing quality of the produced news. The contemporary audience wants to be entertained before being informed. There is a strong risk that the connection between interactivity and the selection of the news will lead to tabloidization. It could be even more alarming if we take into consideration the answers to the next question, where 60 per cent of journalists disagreed and only 14 per cent agreed with the statement that “*A journalist should not listen too much to opinions among the audience*”. On the other hand, almost 60 per cent of Polish journalists agree or do not have a clear opinion on the statement that “*Contacts with audience take too much time from work tasks*”. If compared with the results about the importance of listening to the audience, it may seem inconsistent (table 14).

Table 14

**Interactivity -and media development (per cent)**

<i>Interactivity is often discussed in connection to media development. Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?</i>	<b>Disagree (1-2)</b>	<b>No clear opinion (3)</b>	<b>Agree (4-5)</b>
Increased interactivity influences the selection of news	14	22	55
It is important to listen to the opinions of the audience	3	11	83
Increased interactivity can improve the quality of journalism	17	24	52
Contacts with audience take too much time from the working time	37	29	30
A journalist should not listen too much to opinions among the audience	60	22	14

Source: The "Journalism in Change" Project, 2012.

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### **Future plans and relations to other areas**

When asked about the future of journalism as a profession, journalists pointed to different possible variations. The most, 37 per cent of those surveyed, leaned toward the thesis that the profession will transform into another form of activity. Journalists who have claimed that the profession will flourish constituted 28 per cent of the surveyed population. The assumption that the profession will slowly vanish was made by 14 per cent of the surveyed journalists. A slightly smaller group expressed the opinion that the profession will stay the same in the future – this is the opinion of 11 per cent of surveyed journalists. Thus, it is noticeable that an overwhelming majority of the journalists are convinced that journalism is a profession which will undergo change. However, there is no single vision that is shared by the majority about the direction in which the changes will be heading. Pessimism in the journalists' visions of the future of the profession is clearly visible. Only 28 per cent think that journalism as a profession will flourish.

Journalists have also presented their view of their own future career. When replying to the question about where they would like to work in five years, they often said that they would like to work for the media company in which they are currently employed. Exactly half of the respondents chose this answer. More than 16 per cent of those surveyed would like to work for a different media company. The same number of journalists pointed out that they do not know where they would like to work in five years. Among the surveyed journalists, there is also a group that would like to work in a different profession. Journalists planning a change of profession constitute 13 per cent of the surveyed population. Five per cent of journalists said that they will have already retired in five years. Among journalists who want to move their professional activity to another field in the future, some indicated a concrete area in which they would like to work. Most often, journalists indicated their interest in public relations. Other professions were mentioned more rarely, e.g. screenwriting, the advertising sector, writing. Some journalists also expressed their interest in self-employment, scientific work or work for the local government.

As far as the relationship between journalism and public relations is concerned, the surveyed journalists were critical

of the fact that this sphere permeates journalism. Of those surveyed, 62 per cent think that it is wrong to assume that cooperation between journalists and representatives of marketing departments and PR departments at external companies is not a problem. Journalists have mostly been critical of these types of practices. Lack of support for combining the aforementioned activities has also been expressed in responses to the question about the most serious threat to the independence of journalism. The influence of lobbyists and PR specialists is considered to be a factor threatening the independence of journalism by 54 per cent of journalists.

### **Dimensions of autonomy**

In this part of research, attention was concentrated on two main aspects of journalistic autonomy. The first is concerned with the production of materials and the influence of different factors on the selection or structure of materials. The second is the influence of people or factors outside the media company on the daily work of a journalist.

From the obtained data we learn that Polish journalists themselves have a decisive influence on the production process and content (table 15).

*Table 15*

### **Autonomy in production of materials**

	<i>How often are you able to get a subject covered that you have proposed? (N 493=100%)</i>		<i>How often does your editor/chief change something in what you produce? (N 483=100%)</i>	
	N	%	N	%
Almost always	291	59	19	4
More often than not	149	30	51	11
Only occasionally	41	8	200	41

I don't make such proposals Almost never	9	2	205	42
Don't know	3	1	8	2
No data	7		17	

*Source:* The "Journalism in Change" Project, 2012.

Of those surveyed, 59 per cent almost always can realize the subjects they have suggested, and about one-third of journalists are able to get the subject they proposed. Of the respondents, 42 per cent have almost never experienced that their editor changed their material. Forty-one per cent of journalists have had the problem occasionally.

Another factor supporting the hypothesis about high journalistic autonomy as far as material preparation is concerned is the influence of the journalists' interests on the selection of subjects. Seventy-five per cent of the respondents consider it to be the most important factor. It is not, however, the most frequent answer, since 82 per cent have pointed to audience interest. Such a high result shows that the media are subjected to the tastes and likings of the audience, which in turn leads to the commercialisation of Polish media. Journalists and media owners know perfectly well that a larger number of viewers/listeners/readers attracts advertisers and higher profits. The problem of direct influence of advertisers on prepared materials has been noticed by 39 per cent of those surveyed.

The changes taking place in the area of journalistic autonomy in the process of material preparation are visible in the answers to the question about the influence of different factors on media content over the last 10 years. More than a quarter of those surveyed indicated that the influence of journalists themselves on this content has decreased. Politicians and interest groups also have a smaller influence. However, there has been a significant increase in the influence of economic factors. More than 55 per cent of respondents pointed to an increase in the influence of advertisers, 44 per cent to an increase in the influence of the audience, and 40

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per cent to an increase in the influence of media owners, who as a rule expect profits. On the one hand, the data show a decreasing range of journalistic autonomy in the last decade, but on the other hand they indicate the progressive commercialisation of the media.

A separate research problem was the influence of external factors on journalistic autonomy and journalistic work. Most often, the respondents (72 per cent) pointed to personal sources of information, i.e. gathering information directly from individuals involved and knowledgeable about the problem described by the journalist. Activities of public relation departments have also been very important. Journalists are eager to take part in press conferences and as many as 67 per cent admitted using the information obtained there. In the case of 60 per cent of those surveyed, ready-made materials provided by marketing departments and workers have been a source of information. The obtained data show that active PR is accepted by journalists and it does not pose, in their opinion, any threat to their independence.

Significantly enough, the surveyed journalists indicated that they have had to face obstacles from the world of politics much more rarely than obstacles from the world of business. In the case of economic obstacles, economic interests of the media company (28 per cent of responses) and advertisers (23 per cent of responses) are considered to be the most frequent. The respondents are fully aware of the increasing significance of the influence of economic factors on journalistic work. As many as 77 per cent consider the profit expectations of owners and the influence of advertisers (64 per cent) a serious threat to journalistic independence.

A low level of professional ethics has been indicated as the greatest threat to journalistic independence in the 21st century (78 per cent). A threat in the form of increasing work tempo, which has been noted by 70 per cent of the journalists, is a significant factor adversely affecting the quality of materials. The influence of foreign ownership and threats to individual journalists are considered relatively harmless. Political influence, which will be discussed later, is further down on the list, but it still has been mentioned by 60 per cent of the respondents, which should be considered a serious threat.

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## **Conclusion**

Two hypotheses have been presented in the introduction. It has been assumed that, firstly, significant changes have taken place in Polish journalism and, as a result, there has been a shift in the source of influence from the field of politics to the field of business, and secondly, that the journalistic profession is in a phase of erosion. In order to verify these hypotheses, research results concerning seven problems were compared: the social profile and the structure of the profession, ideals and values presented by journalists, their daily work practices, relations between journalists and politicians, the use of social media, journalists' future plans and dimensions of autonomy.

The research has unequivocally confirmed a tendency toward the reduction of employment in the profession and a lack of stability and showed the frustration of many journalists, who are aware that their profession does not guarantee a secure future or work until they retire and that they will either leave or be fired. Despite the fact that most journalists are permanently hired by a media company, it has become obvious in the last five years that there is a tendency toward reducing the number of workers in Polish editorial offices. This is most commonly the case in printed media – national and regional daily press – which is suffering from the economic crisis, a drop in readership, and, as a result, a reduction of profits. The economic problems of media companies affect the working conditions of journalists and their work. These problems result in not only the reduction of employment but also have a serious effect in that the standards of work and work ethics are lowered, multiskilling becomes a requirement and journalists face time pressures. Journalists have not hidden their rather pessimistic visions concerning the future of the profession. Among them, 37 per cent of the respondents said that the journalistic profession will transform into another form of activity, but 14 per cent of those surveyed claimed that the profession will disappear. Twenty-eight per cent of journalists believe that the profession will flourish. According to 11 per cent, the profession will not change. It might be concluded that journalists, in the vast majority, are convinced that journalism is going to change but they do not have a uniform vision of the



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direction in which it will be heading. Here as well we can find arguments confirming the validity of the second hypothesis.

The section on the research of ideals and values does not leave any doubts. The vast majority of respondents indicated that in the last few years the quality of journalism in Poland had decreased, and only one-tenth of them expressed a different opinion. There is definitely a downward trend, which has also been observed by the respondents. A decrease in the quality of journalism is only one of the significant problems indicated by the respondents. Another is the aforementioned low level at which journalists fulfil their responsibilities to society. This part of the research confirms the second hypothesis.

The section of the research devoted to autonomy shows that journalists still have a considerable amount of freedom in preparing materials, although in the last 10 years this autonomy has been gradually reduced. More than anything else, the respondents blame this situation on economic factors – interests of the owners and pressure from advertisers. There has been an increase in the influence of the audiences on the media content. It is the result, however, of economic calculations, since higher audience share means higher profits. The data confirm that economic pressure is very significant and that it has many more consequences for the daily work of a journalist than political pressure. This part of the research has provided arguments confirming both hypotheses.

Significant changes have taken place in the relationship between the media, journalists and the world of politics. Together with the deepening commercialisation of and increasing competition on the market, business factors, and not political factors, are deciding the future of the profession and the way it is practiced. The economic calculation – profit and loss – is a more important advisor for the media owners than contacts with political actors and their suggestions or guidelines. However, differences have been noted in this area between media sectors. Printed media, with the exception of regional dailies that have chosen the strategy of escapism from the world of politics dictated by economic factors, are characterized by external pluralism. Journalists have noticed an increase in press freedom in Poland, especially in radio, television and online

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media. An increase in political pressure in the last decade has been felt by journalists employed in editorial offices of national daily newspapers, magazines and public television. After difficult experiences with the politicisation of Polish Radio (PR) and Polish Television (TVP) during the years 2006 – 2010, journalists employed there do not want to reveal their political preferences. About 60 per cent of the respondents have not noticed any connections between the medium they work for and political parties and strong political actors. Journalists do not approve of active involvement in politics while working as a journalist, either.

However, political pressure does not pose the biggest threat to the identity of the profession in the opinion of the respondents. They feel the pressure from economic factors more acutely. Interests of media owners and the world of business, mainly advertisers, have been most prominent in the editorial offices of magazines and online media. The problem of the pressure from foreign ownership has been stressed mostly by journalists employed in sectors dominated by external media companies, like regional dailies (Verlagsgruppe Passau GmbH), magazines (mainly German ones – Bauer) and online media (mainly German/Swiss Ringier Axel Springer and German Bauer). In this part of the analysis there has been a lot of evidence verifying both hypotheses.

The data collected and presented above confirm the presumptions made in the introduction. They leave no doubts about the role of economic pressure, which influences the quality of Polish journalism and leads, to a large extent, to the erosion of journalism. Nevertheless, one needs to be aware that these processes are happening worldwide and that Poland is no exception.

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## **Russian journalists: inclination toward moderate evaluations**

*Maria Anikina,  
Elena Johansson<sup>1</sup>*

The new century has introduced a wide range of research questions and defined new horizons of research. Information and technological development has widened the research scope, brought about new thematic streams and revised the methodological approaches in studies of professional journalistic cultures. Since the 1990s, a rich database of experiences from international studies has been gathered. The research community now has the methodological and statistic material needed to draw a portrait of the media professional that underlines the transitional nature of profession and sometimes can appear contradictory and eclectic.

Within the framework of “Journalism in change”, the opportunity presented itself to gather information about modern Russian journalists and to compare this information with the information about other European media systems. Important findings were made with regard to the professional duties and social functions of modern journalists, in the field of epistemological orientations and common ethical standards, and with regard to new information and communication usage. These findings will be presented in the following text.

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<sup>1</sup> Elena Johansson is author of paragraph “Russian journalists and social media”, pp. 99-106.

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### **Social profile and the structure of the profession**

One of the most serious problems for Russian research context is the problem of figures. The representatives of the Federal Agency on Press and Mass Communications of the Russian Federation do not present reliable current statistic data in this field. General calculation made in mid-2000s included approx. 150,000 journalists working in the media industry. It was possible to divide the journalistic community into homogeneous parts according to the type of medium. The relationships that were found between the numbers of registered media from these general calculations were kept during the survey and reflected in the diffusion of the answers from different kind of media companies.

*Table 1*

#### **Media company type**

<i><b>In what kind of media company are you working today?</b></i>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Per cent</b>
National newspaper/big city newspaper	110	22
Specialized magazine	66	13,2
Regional newspaper/local newspaper	63	12,6
Popular/weekly magazine	58	11,6
TV-channel – public service/state	43	8,6
Online publishing company	40	8
TV-channel – commercial	38	7,6
Other newspaper/magazine	21	4,2
Radio-channel – commercial	18	3,6
Production company for radio/TV/film	10	2
News agency	10	2
Free newspaper	8	1,6

Production company for print	8	1,6
Radio-channel – public service/state	7	1,4

*Source:* The "Journalism in Change" Project, 2012.

One of the features of the Russian media system that we should stress is the lack of public broadcasting. The practice of public media has not yet established itself in Russia. For instance, a second attempt to create public TV in Russia is currently underway but it cannot yet be considered a success. Given this situation, a methodological decision to study state and public TV and radio channels as a single group was deemed reasonable. The study reflected great variety within print press – it is evident that respondents work in both magazines of general interest and specialized magazines and in both national and local newspapers. Logically, there are fewer journalists from production companies and news agencies, although it is worth noting that the latter are no longer part of the professional infrastructure that provides journalists with information. Today, news agencies have become significant for the mass audience and in some cases are better examples of modern convergent newsrooms than traditional media.

Three **age groups** were studied in the project. The proportion of the age groups in relation to the gender of respondents is presented in table 2.

*Table 2*

**Age and gender among Russian journalists**

Age	Female (% in relevant age group)	Male (%in relevant age group)	Total (% of all)	Number
≤35	70,9	29,1	69,4	347
36–50	59,8	40,2	23,4	117
≥51	47,2	52,8	7,2	36

*Source:* The "Journalism in Change" Project, 2012.

In recent years a discussion has been underway about the gender transformation within the journalistic profession – it is really becoming a predominantly female profession. This is evident in the gender breakdown of practicing media professionals as well as in the gender breakdown among journalism students.

It is seen from the survey data that, generally speaking, journalism is not a hereditary profession or family job in Russia (see table 3). As shown by the data, 10% of the journalists are linked to the profession through a husband or wife, less people declare that they have parents or some other close relative in journalism. Two-thirds of the respondents confirmed that none of their relatives work as journalists. On the one hand, the data mean the absence of succession in professional development or the absence of inheritance in career building models. On the other hand, it also points to the fact that journalists can create their own professional strategy without any prescribed pattern or prepared base.

Table 3

**Relations to profession**

<i>Is any of your relatives working (or has been working) as journalists?</i>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Per cent</b>
No	355	70
Wife/husband	68	14
Parents	39	8
Other close relatives	4	1
Children	34	7
Total	500	100

Source: The "Journalism in Change" Project, 2012.

The conducted survey showed that some new forms of employment were continuing to develop but others were still alien in Russia (table 4). The Russian journalistic community is quite traditional in such formal things as its relationship with



editorial offices – the majority of respondents (69%) state that they have regular employment in a media company.

Table 4

**Type of employment**

<i>What kind of main employment do you have today?</i>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Per cent</b>
Regular employment in the media company	364	72,8
Freelance/your own company	77	15,4
Temporary employment	54	10,9
Temporary job agency	1	0,2
Other	4	0,7
Total	500	100

Source: The "Journalism in Change" Project, 2012.

Freelance is spreading actively – almost one-fifth of the respondents selected this option during the survey. Only every tenth respondent has temporary employment, for example, working on projects or replacing colleagues. The most uncommon way for Russians to find a job in journalism is to use job agencies – this is a consequence of professional specifics and the character of the labour market.

Table 5

**Working time conditions**

<i>How many hours are you working as a journalist an average week?</i>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Per cent</b>	<b>Average working day (hours/week)</b>
Full-time job	341	68,2	45,7
Part-time job	159	31,8	19,1

Source: The "Journalism in Change" Project, 2012.

As the data in table 6 show the majority of Russian media professionals have regular employment and work hard in their newsrooms. Two-thirds have a full-time job and spend more time at work than what is prescribed by Russian labour law. The norm in Russia is 40 hours per week – we see that representatives of the creative journalistic profession dedicate more time to their employment. The journalists who have a part-time job (more than 30%) spend normally half a day on their professional duties. Each situation varies and there are exceptions where journalists spend a lot of time at work, but the average results presented below are confirmed by other survey data – for media professionals, their job is often not the most important thing in the world (see table 12).

The conducted survey clarifies that Russian journalists cannot be considered multiskilled in the complete sense of this term. The table below confirms that, quite often, Russian journalists do not view themselves to be *multiskilled*.

Table 6

**Attitudes in relation to “multiskilling”  
in the journalistic work**

<b>(mean on a scale 1-5, 1 – “not important”, 5 – “very important”)</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Number of answers</b>
Multiskilling means more space for creativity	3,64	490
Multiskilling gives more power to the individual journalist	3,56	478
In the future more journalists will be multiskilled	3,53	477
Journalists in my media organisation are expected to be multiskilled	3,34	494
I feel like a multiskilled reporter	3,18	490

Source: The "Journalism in Change" Project, 2012.

More popular statement as data show is that the ability to use diverse technologies and to work on different platforms helps to discover the creative potential of journalism professionals and allows them to develop personally. The responses predict the multiskilled future to journalistic profession – this seems natural and logical given the fact that technologies are spreading widely and having an impact on various spheres of e.g. social life and information exchange. A few small contradictions were found in survey results. As we know, the access to fast information and the acceleration of the communication process thanks to the Internet leave less time for verification of material, which, consequently, means that changes and corrections in the texts must sometimes be made to material that has already been published. To a certain extent, this corrupts the quality of journalistic material, but as seen from table 6, respondents do not perceive multiskilling to be a serious threat to the quality of journalism.

Table 7

**Work at different platforms**

<i>Journalists producing for different platforms (at least each week)</i>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Per cent</b>
Paper	346	69,2
Online	219	43,8
TV	105	21
Radio	40	8
Mobile	32	6,4
Total	742	148,4

Source: The "Journalism in Change" Project, 2012.

On average, a journalist works on 1,5 platforms to present his or her text (table 7). This figure is not very high and we see that the respondents are demonstrating some form of media specialisation. The results indicate a shift to online journalism

and to the idea of convergent editorial boards. This shift started several years ago. Some journalists successfully combine work for a traditional medium with publication of the text on new platforms – here the experience of “Komsomilskaya pravda” publishing house could be mentioned as an example. The hierarchy of diverse platforms in the survey leads to the assumption that it is easier to combine new and traditional platforms than to combine different traditional platforms – but this idea must be confirmed through further analysis.

Table 8

**Thematic specialisation of Russian journalists**

<i>Do you usually cover one particular subject area, or do you cover different things?</i>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Per cent</b>
different topics and subjects	273	54,6
particular area or subject, e.g.*	227	45,4
Culture	36	15,9
Economy/business	36	15,9
Politics	22	9,7
Sports	19	8,4
Society and social issues	14	6,2
Science	12	5,3
Entertainment/glamour	11	4,8
Crime and law	7	3,1
Family/human stories	7	3,1
Lifestyle	6	2,6
Foreign news	4	1,8
Other	53	23,3

\* only one alternative is possible, N = 227

Source: The "Journalism in Change" Project, 2012.

The diversity of the professional work of Russian journalists is also apparent in the thematic orientation (table 8). More than half of the respondents (54,6%) work as universal journalists and cover different topics. The rest have a *specialized* theme, and the range of these specialisation is wide – from equally represented *culture* and *business* to social, family issues, etc. The number of diverse topics correlates to some trends in the information sphere, the profession and the media market itself. It is possible to see low mean of foreign news thematic stream. This is symptomatic. As Franks (2005: p. 1) explains, ‘globalisation, the interdependent nature of modern society and the precarious state of international relations post 9/11’ sharpen the social, audience interest to foreign affairs coverage. We can find most acute topics in current issues of foreign politics and Russia is not an exception here. It seems that the popularity and importance of foreign correspondents’ work have to increase. But global processes and trends of media economics lead to the crisis of this institution, causing specific studies in this field<sup>2</sup>. As the echo of this trend we are seeing in Russia a shrinking number of foreign correspondents of Russian media working abroad and a decrease in the number of journalists covering foreign news.

At the same time we see bigger amount of respondents covering science what correlates to the revival of popular scientific journalism in Russia and to the growth of the relevant segment of Russian media system. And we are seeing that this number is even larger than the number of media professionals working only with entertainment or lifestyle topics.

Table 9

**Professional roles in the newsroom\***

<b>Roles</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Per cent in each role</b>
Reporter	267	53,4
Editor	155	31
Commentator	97	19,4

<sup>2</sup> One of examples is the project “Mapping Foreign Correspondence in European Countries” started in 2012.

Subeditor/layout	81	16,2
Online editor	63	12,6
Editorial writer/columnist	52	10,4
Photographer/cameraman	47	9,4
Researcher	34	6,8
News anchor	29	5,8
Producer(radio/TV)	26	5,2
Work with ads	21	4,2
Economy/management in the company	10	2
Other roles	1	0,2
Total	883	176,6

\* Each respondent could select a maximum of three alternatives.  
Total 500 respondents.

Source: The "Journalism in Change" Project, 2012.

The idea of the *universal journalist* realizes itself more evidently in the allocation of professional roles in Russian media (table 9). As shown by the data, quite often each person in the news room has more than one concrete role. The study's spectrum included mostly so-called traditional roles that are typical for classic media and left out new roles from online media (Stechkin 2010). Most often, the respondents work as reporters (53,4%) and editors (31%). Links to the segment of online media mean that quite a significant number of professionals work as online editors (12,6%). Generally speaking, the division of the duties in the standard newsroom in Russia is still close to the classical one described in theoretical works on journalism and reflected in Russian law on mass media – creative work with the texts, editorial work and organisational activity (Prokhorov, 2007, Law on Mass Media). Some trends in this area are also manifested in the results – such as the shift toward personal journalism, the value of a journalist's/columnist's opinion in modern Russian media (columnists and commentators are quite popular roles) and the lack of research activity in diverse media, which can be explained to a certain extent by the fact that this requires different skills and qualifications from professionals.

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### **Proud to be a journalist**

The survey of 500 journalists in Russia based on a typological sample that takes into consideration the general relationship between the different media types described above, indicates a high level of education among Russian journalists, as presented in table 10.

*Table 10*

#### **Education level**

<i>What is the highest level of your education?</i>	<b>Number (N=500)</b>	<b>Per cent</b>
University or other higher education	478	95,6
Secondary school	22	4,4

*Source:* The "Journalism in Change" Project, 2012.

This data are supported by the results of other similar projects. For instance, researcher Svetlana Pasti, a member of several international projects from Tampere University (Finland), writes that in 1990–2000 the number of journalists with high education in Russia stayed constantly high (86%) (Pasti 2011: 35-36).

*Table 11*

#### **Education profile**

<i>Do you have a special education in journalism?</i>	<b>Number (N=500)</b>	<b>Per cent</b>
Yes, on academic level	373	74,6
No	81	16,2
Yes, on non-academic level	30	6,0
Yes, professional training in media	16	3,2

*Source:* The "Journalism in Change" Project, 2012.

It is important to point out that the general education level does not strictly correlate to the quality of the journalistic work and its result. This gives the experts a reason to discuss the decrease in the quality of journalism in Russia. This reflection is shared and supported by Russian journalists taking part in the survey – almost half of the respondents express such an idea. Qualitative studies and diverse discussion analysis show that experts are placing the blame on journalists. It is probably linked to the lack of professional education for some of the Russian journalists (table 11). Nevertheless, the data clarify that editorial boards' collaborators who do not have specialized journalistic education are not significant, thus indicating that qualitative decline is caused by other reasons.

It is necessary to stress here that the majority of respondents are proud to be journalists (table 12). For these people, professional status has great value. Many journalists share the idea that their profession is their mission.

Table 12

**Attitude to the profession**

<i>Here are some statements about your relation to your profession. Do you agree or disagree to the statements? (mean on a scale 1-5, 1 – “disagree”, 5 – “fully agree”)</i>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Number of answers</b>
I am proud to call myself a journalist	3,90	489
My profession is the mission in my life	3,78	480
My work means more to me than family and leisure time	2,32	492
Working as a journalist is a step in my career to other areas	2,45	487

Source: The "Journalism in Change" Project, 2012.



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It is easy to find support for this statement from the results of previous studies as well as from an analysis of the debates within the professional community dedicated to journalism profession and its mission in modern society (this discussion took place at the beginning of 2013). At the same time, even though journalists take into consideration the significance of their profession and perceive their own activity as a mission, they quite often are not ready to ignore free-time activities; they are not ready to ignore their families and spend all of their time at work. The results lead to the assumption that practicing journalists are satisfied with their professional choice and everyday tasks, but that this work is viewed realistically and cannot replace their personal lives.

Besides this in some cases the respondents state that their professional activity in the field of journalism and mass communication is a step on the way to other forms and types of activity. The idea of journalism as social lift is not new and original for Russian context. A review of existing works about this concept and previous sociological studies show that in earlier decades this was not entirely possible. As S. Pasti points, “in Soviet times, a change in the working place did not mean that a journalist advanced in terms of his/her career, but rather stayed on the same level with the same status. Such horizontal mobility meant that there was a lack of prospects for professional development. Today, career changes mostly depend on the journalists themselves”<sup>3</sup>. In Russia, some journalists see a future in public relations, advertising, and politics as well as in academia, education and creative industries. It is possible that the perception of journalism as a temporary job to earn social capital weakens the professional responsibility and results in the professional community belonging feeling and the loose of «professional ethos» because it forms the attitude to journalism as to the Mean but not as to the Goal» (Pasti 2011: 38).

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<sup>3</sup> Pasti S. (2011) ‘Sovremennye rossijskie zhurnalisty: otnoshenie k professii’ (Contemporary Russian Journalists and their attitudes to the profession), Vestnik MSU, Moscow, Moscow State University, Zhurnalistika, n. 4 July-August, 22-41. P. 38.

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### Financial issues

The inconsistency of modern Russian journalists to a certain extent is demonstrated in the discussion of financial parameters that are traditionally a quite sensitive and difficult topic in sociological studies.

Obviously, it is difficult to compare the financial conditions for journalists working in different media located in diverse regions of the country. Nevertheless it seems possible to make some generalisations (table 13).

Table 13

#### Financial conditions

<i>Is it possible to manage on your income from journalism? (one alternative)</i>	<b>Number (N=500)</b>	<b>Per cent</b>
Yes, I can do well and provide extra things	83	16,6
Yes, I can provide all necessary things	200	40,0
Yes, I can survive	108	21,6
No, I have to get money from other jobs	70	14,0
No, journalism is only a minor part of my income	39	7,8

Source: The "Journalism in Change" Project, 2012.

As shown by the data, journalism provides sufficient income for a significant part of the Russian media professionals included in the study. Only one-fifth of the respondents estimated their income for journalistic work to be a small part of their income in general. The remaining journalists are able to survive and provide the necessities. For a small number of journalists, the profession also enables them to afford some extras (16,6%).

At the same time, one interesting thing to note is that the respondents in general do not list money as the main reason to choose the profession (average score of the motivation for

choosing the profession is not the highest but significant – see table 14).

Table 14

**Factors influencing the choice of working place**

<i>What is important for you in choosing place of work? (mean on a scale 1-5, 1 – “not important”, 5 – “very important”)</i>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Number of answers</b>
Chance to develop a specialty	4,39	491
Atmosphere in the workplace	4,31	493
Freedom in the work	4,15	492
Editorial policy	4,13	496
Salary	4,07	499
To serve the public interest	3,92	495
Chance for a better career	3,77	488
Influence society	3,46	445
Job security	3,32	482
Benefits	2,95	479
Other	4,34	44

Source: The "Journalism in Change" Project, 2012.

Journalists do not list money as the main attraction for choosing their profession in general, but it is an important factor in choosing which media company to work for. The explanation behind such a contradiction can probably be found in the difference between general estimations and individual decisions made in everyday situations – similar to the difference between real and ideal modes of behaviour in discussion about professional norms and values in journalism. When speaking about their profession and their position in it, the journalists often stress the social mission aspect; when describing personal choice they count pragmatic things. Thus, what appears to be

a contradiction is more likely evidence of the sincerity of the respondents rather than a sign of their inconsistency.

Looking at the list of reasons for choosing the profession and the place of employment, it is possible to note that the opportunity to influence society or to serve social needs are not high on the lists – journalists do not place high value in them. A weak relationship to social and civil participation differentiates the Russian professional journalistic culture from some other professional cultures. Concrete working conditions such as the atmosphere at the place of employment, the editorial policy of the media organisation or the level of professional freedom are more important for Russian media professionals.

To a certain extent, the same feelings apply to journalists' perception of significant professional duties.

Modern Russian journalists have taken on several principles that are typical for Western journalistic cultures. The data clarify that objectivity and impartiality score high as professional standards (table 15).

*Table 15*

**How important are the following professional duties  
for a journalist in your country?  
(mean on a scale 1-5, 1 – “not important”, 5 – “very important”)**

<i>Journalists should...</i>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Number of answers</b>
...be a neutral reporter	4,38	496
...provide information objectively	4,30	487
...stand free of special interests	4,26	488
...bring forward various opinions	4,26	492
...criticize injustice	4,02	492
...educate the public	3,96	483
...represent diverse social groups	3,88	486
...stimulate new ideas	3,79	485

...simplify and explain	3,53	488
...control public authorities	3,50	486
...influence public opinions	3,49	492
...tell the truth regardless of the consequences	3,28	493
...mobilize people to act	3,18	475
...ensure that media business do well	3,17	482
...investigate government claims	3,03	486
...provide entertainment	2,81	456

*Source:* The "Journalism in Change" Project, 2012.

The idea of journalism as a segment of creative industries was confirmed during the study. The task of formulating new ideas was marked as significant by the respondents.

Control of authorities, social participation and mobilisation were not strongly supported by Russian journalists during the study. Journalists are also not ready to educate the public or to provide entertainment – the former appears first in the middle of the list and the latter is last according to the data. The intention to educate society is weaker than it was during previous decades when this niche was better developed than it is today. Today, we are seeing a gradual revival of enlightening and educational media, but this revival has not yet seriously changed the professional consciousness of journalists and it is not viewed as brightly in the respondents' evaluations as it could have been. The weak position of media entertainment role can be explained by a kind of tiredness from the light, entertaining character of journalism in Russia over the past few decades.

The practical realisation of ideal values is linked to information activity of journalists and can be analysed through professional epistemology (table 16).

Table 16

## Verification of information

<i>The need to verify and the need to publish news as fast as possible are two basic journalistic values that can be in conflict with each other. Do you agree or not agree with the following statements? (mean on a scale 1-5, 1 – “disagree”, 5 – “fully agree”)</i>	Mean	Number of answers
In my news organisation, news are equally verified in all channels (print, online, radio, tv)	3,93	493
The audience has lower demands on verification in online news than in our main channel (newspaper, TV or radio)	2,98	474
Online journalism is more of a process, and the verification can be done during the process and not before publishing	2,95	465
Incorrect facts are often published because of to less control	2,53	475
It is better to publish unverified information than to be more slowly than our competitors	1,88	473

Source: The "Journalism in Change" Project, 2012.

This research approach deals with the data work, relationships with sources of information, ways to present the data, etc. (Hanitzsch et al, 2010). Transformations in the work with data and information sources took place in the last 5-7 years, as pointed out by respondents. It is still more important for media professionals to check the information than to inform the audience as fast as possible in highly competitive conditions. According to the Russian journalists, typological specifics of the medium does not yet have a serious influence on their work with the information. Convergence

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as a modern trend in Russian media system probably plays a role in the formation of standards in work with information. The so-called 3Cs (choice-consistency-continuity) concept has been proposed for modern media companies by global research and advisory company Forrester Research<sup>4</sup> as a tool to attract and to attend more information consumers. This leads to a need to provide the audience with materials of the same high quality and with the same level of service regardless of platform or medium. This global trend has some influence on the professional consciousness of journalists and makes them to verify the information they publish in diverse media.

At the same time destructive power of new technologies could be seen in obtained responses. For a part of Russian journalists it is possible to publish unverified information in striving to be faster than competitors. The first wave of “The Worlds of journalism” study in mid-2000s has shown that time has become one of the most significant factors influencing the process and quality of journalistic work in modern society. In current project we see the how developing technologies and intense competition in media market continue transforming professional epistemology in new decade.

But presented epistemological model is not always realized in complete and full way in journalists' practice. In their real work Russian journalists quite often use doubtful sources of information and publish unproved facts<sup>5</sup>.

Relations with the audience lay on the bases of media production process. As the survey clarifies it is one of the most significant actors in editorial board work and the communication with readers, listeners and viewers came through serious transformations (see further).

Journalists' choice in the ways to communicate with the public in many respects stays traditional (table 17). If we look at everyday typical communication means there are still phone calls and even direct meetings with media consumers (this practice was widely spread in past decades of media system). Direct meetings as a way to exchange opinions with the audience is suitable also for rare occasions. For fast communication new channels are used – social media, e-mail or even media web-page comments

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<sup>4</sup> <http://www.forrester.com/home/>

<sup>5</sup> This fact is also reflected in materials and presentations based on “The worlds of journalism” project's data <http://worldsofjournalism.org/>

are used daily and many times a day. This communication profile seems relevant to changing practices of newsrooms in Russia – this questions will be reflected later on in this text as well – specifics of age-related practice of contacts with the audience is presented in table 32.

Table 17

**Means to communicate with audience**

<i>How often do you communicate with readers/viewers/listeners? (%)</i>	Never	Some-times	Every week	Every day	Many times a day	Don't know
By e-mail	11,8	36	18,4	19,4	13	1,4
With social media	25,2	31,2	12,6	15,6	13,6	3,6
By telephone	21,6	37,2	16,4	13,6	10,4	0,8
With comments on the media website	24	35,2	15,6	13,6	9,6	2
Directly by meeting people	31	38,2	16,4	9	3,2	2,8
Other	0,03	0,04	0,06	0,07	0,1	14,6

Source: The "Journalism in Change" Project, 2012.

**Journalism, ethics and politics**

Theoretically speaking journalism as profession realized in socially oriented activity should attract people with reflected and evident social civic position. Social functions of journalism and mass media are studied carefully and described in details. Modern situation in Russian society makes us to look at political interests, social and political activity of Russian journalists, interest in politics and political questions in society.

Conducted survey lets say (table 18) that the major part of journalistic community is interested in politics. It is difficult to separate the information process from political activity, really impossible to be a journalist and not to be involved somehow into social and political life. The degree of this involvement differs in different cases but in general only 16,2% are not interest in politics.



Table 18

**Journalists' interest in politics**

<i>How much interested are you in politics and political questions in society? (mean on a scale 1-5, 1 – “not interested”, 5 – “very interested”)</i>	1	2	3	4	5	Don't know
Number (N=500)	24	57	133	132	141	13
Per cent	4,8	11,4	26,6	26,4	28,2	2,6

Source: The "Journalism in Change" Project, 2012.

But at the same time being actively interested in political affairs Russian journalists are quite moderate in their political preferences. Major part places themselves in the center, a bit left and a bit right on the scale of political position – we see less than 10% of journalists with left and right views in politics. The data give the reason to name Russian journalists careful people – almost 1/3 (28,2%) of respondents refuse to answer this question or select option “Don't know” what hid real views of journalistic community.

Table 19

**Political position of Russian journalists**

<i>Where would you place yourself on a political scale from left to right?</i>	Left	A bit left	Center	A bit right	Right	Don't know / No answer
Number (N=500)	37	67	131	83	38	144
Per cent	7,4	13,4	26,2	16,6	7,6	28,8

Source: The "Journalism in Change" Project, 2012.

It is possible to see here typical for all respondents and described in methodological literature fear to answer so-called sensitive questions what looks a bit strange if we speak about such public and socially oriented people as journalists. But the quick glance back to the history of the country and its citizens could give some explanations of this unwillingness to discuss political questions.

Anyway such a position does not exclude for journalists the opportunity to be included into political life of Russian society. More that a half of respondents (50,2%) see the chance to become active in political sphere (table 20).

Table 20

**Journalists and politics**

<i>Is it an alternative for you to be active in politics (voluntary or as employed)</i>	<b>No</b>	<b>Perhaps</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Don't know</b>
Number (N=500)	209	193	58	40
Per cent	41,8	38,6	11,6	8

Source: The "Journalism in Change" Project, 2012.

This fact reveals the debates about media as a space of symbolic capital existence and the field where it is real to get and to convert the capital of publicity (Fomicheva 2012). It is also makes to think about the core and goals of journalistic activity as they are perceived by media professionals. The idea of journalism as social lift described in different works and studies (Pasti) is closely connected to the opportunity to enter politics discovered in Russian segment of "Journalism in change" project and deals with the future seen by Russian journalist (see futher paragraphs).

Giving evaluations of Russian journalists' participation in neighboring spheres it is possible to note that relations to politics or PR sphere are not clear and unambiguously reflected by respondents.

In their own work respondents divide PR-activity and PR as communication sphere on the one hand and journalism itself as professional activity – on the other hand. But they do see how PR influences journalism in general.

For some of Russian media professionals it is possible to interfere political sphere and to act both in journalism and PR (this statement was evaluated 2,63 out of 5). But at the same time Russian journalists are not ready in general to perceive political influence in media company.

Table 21

**Journalism, ethics and politics**

<i>Here are some statements on journalists, ethics and politics. Do you agree or not? (mean on a scale 1-5, 1 – “disagree”, 5 – “fully agree”) (% of the respondents)</i>	1	2	3	4	5	Don't know	Mean
A journalist cannot himself be active in politics during the same time as he is working as a journalist.	16,8	14,6	22,8	19	22,4	3,4	3,13
It is no problem for a journalist to work with PR and information	31,8	17,8	17,4	13,8	16	3,2	2,63
As a journalist, it is OK to receive gifts from sources as long as it not influence my professional work.	25	25,2	16,6	17,2	12	4	2,71

It is very important to have common ethical rules among the journalists in the media company.	5,8	11,8	21,2	25,8	33,6	1,8	3,71
As a journalist one has to accept political influence in the media company	20,6	23,8	30,6	15,4	5	4,4	2,59

*Source:* The "Journalism in Change" Project, 2012.

The obtained data clarify the understanding of the fact that to receive gifts and presents or to get some paid services is not good demonstrated by journalistic community. This is also could be found in responses to other questions of the survey – and it is possible to say that such practices are not typical for Russian journalists (or – this is not discussed widely, in an open way).

Relativism dominance as the base of perception and reflection on the world of journalism in Russia leads to weakening of internal relations in professional community. The necessity to elaborate the system of common ethical rules and standards is described by Russian journalists as insignificant – an average mean is 3,71 out of 5. This score is the highest in the survey segment dedicated to journalism, ethics and politics, but it is not high if we look at it separately, and it is lower than in Sweden and Poland. Previous studies of journalistic community gave close results – traces of relativism ideology were found out in Russian part of “Worlds of journalism” study.

### **Independence and influence in journalistic work**

The following table demonstrates that to certain extend Russian journalists feel themselves independent in the main aspects of daily routine – in subject selection, in covering the stories and managing of working time.

Table 22

**Freedom in daily work of a journalist (%)**

<b>Question</b>	<b>No freedom - Some freedom</b>	<b>A great deal of / Almost complete freedom</b>	<b>Don't know</b>
How much freedom do you have in selecting the stories you work on?	38,6	60,4	1
How much freedom do you usually have in deciding which aspects of a story should be emphasized?	28,8	69,2	2
How much freedom do you have to manage your own time in your work?	33,4	65,6	1

*Source:* The "Journalism in Change" Project, 2012.

More freedom is given to media professionals in the "details" – more than 2/3 of them (69,2%) are free to decide what angle to choose in order to present concrete story in a better way. Almost the same figure we see in estimation of the ability to configure working time of a journalist. Thus we could see the specifics of creative profession. Less freedom is granted when it is necessary to find a story to cover. It is explainable – as conducted study and previous ones clarify – editorial policy in 2000s stays one of the most influential factors forming daily work of journalists (see table 23 and 26 for instance).

Generally speaking the meaning and significance of diverse factors influencing the selection of subjects in daily journalistic work is more evident than estimations given by respondents in many other questions during the survey.

Table 23

## Factors influencing daily work of media organisation

<i>Different factors influence the selection of subjects in the daily work of your media organization. How could you evaluate the significance of the following factors in the work on your news organization? (Give your opinion on a scale 1-5, 1 – “insignificant”, 5 – “very significant”) (% of the respondents)</i>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>Don't know</b>	<b>Mean</b>
Professional interest of journalist	2,6	5,8	20	41	29	1,6	3,89
The editorial policy of the media company	1,4	2	16,6	40,6	38	1,4	4,13
The political connection (affiliation) of the media company	10,2	15,2	26,4	23,4	18,2	6,6	3,26
Strong political actors outside the media company	17	19,8	26,4	17,6	8,6	10,6	2,79
Audience interest	2	4,4	19,2	36,8	36,4	1,2	4,02
Needs and interests of society	3	8,4	28,2	30,6	25,2	4,6	3,7
Those who advertise in the media	15,8	16,4	24,2	18,2	13	12,2	2,95

Economical power outside the media company (big companies etc.)	22,4	23	18,2	14,4	6,8	15,2	2,53
Other	1	0	1,8	1	0,6	95,6	3,05

Source: The "Journalism in Change" Project, 2012.

State influence on media system and journalism is perceived as strong. But we consider this factor dealing more with general issues and less – with details and daily routine, it is seen in evaluation of political actors outside medium (2,79 put of 5) and even in influence of political affiliation on subjects' selection that is not the strongest one (3,26 out of 5).

Results of the survey give the reason to name journalist decision-maker in subject selection process. Media professional appears in the top of the most influential factors' list along with audience and editorial policy. High significance of information consumers looks quite positive in general context. But this could mean both the formation of audience-oriented journalism which provides socially needed contents and the need to attract wider audience in order to get financial profit. Thus it is early to speak about the consequences of such an ambivalent situation which at the first glance seems optimistic.

The hierarchy of factors to certain extent repeats the list of responses on the open question about the influence obtained in 2007 (Anikina, 2013:293). That list included *editorial policy*, *specifics of medium (channel)*, *time* and *policy in general*. From methodological point of view these studies are not completely compatible but some succession is evident.

The reasons of dependent position which journalism has today quite often are complicated and different. Several actors within and outside professional community play their role. The question about influence put during the survey reveals some contradictions in journalists' consciousness. Respondents perfectly see problems connected to commercial nature of modern media production, threats going descended from journalistic circles and the State (table 24).

Table 24

## Factors influencing journalist's independence

<i>The independence of journalism can be influenced by different factors. How do you evaluate the influence of following factors? (Give your opinion on a scale 1-5, 1 – “insignificant”, 5 – “very significant”) (% of the respondents)</i>	1	2	3	4	5	Don't know	Mean
The owners demand for profits	3,4	4,6	24,8	36,2	30	1	3,86
Increasing work tempo	7,6	9,2	27,8	35,6	18,6	1,2	3,56
Foreign ownership	17	21	29	16	10,6	6,2	2,8
Threats against individual journalists	9,4	16,2	24,6	23,8	22,4	3,6	3,34
State influence (laws and ownership)	2,6	10,8	26,4	24	34,4	1,8	3,78
Advertisers influence on content	7,6	18,8	27,4	23,6	20	2,6	3,3
Political influence in media companies	3,2	13,6	26,2	25,2	28,8	3	3,65
Weak professional ethics	4	7,8	25,2	28,2	32,4	2,4	3,79
Source activity (PR/ lobbyists)	6,2	15,8	33,8	26,6	10	7,6	3,2

Source: The "Journalism in Change" Project, 2012.

Leading positions belong to such factors as commercial demand of media owners, lack of common ethic standards and state influence. This set of factors is explainable in certain sense. The State fixes the rules and proposes juridical frames of professional journalistic activity – it is hardly possible to underestimate this factor on both – general and concrete – aspects. If we look at the State as media owner the situation would be clear as well. It is worth



to stress that journalists according to the data are worried about ethics. Further analysis shows that this reflection in many cases does not go far and does not lead to any consequences, to formation of stable and respected codes and their further realization. The same situation was found out by Finnish researchers and named the paradox of “marriage of liberalism and authoritarianism” when “on the one hand, media reveal the same logic of commercialization and concentration as in the West moving to homogenization, but on the other hand, market liberalism of the Russian media successfully co-exist with the authoritarian approach of the government” (Pasti, Nordenstreng, 2013:244).

It is notable that here some coincidence with previous studies is obvious – increasing working tempo obtained high evaluations during the study.

Overview of the opinion of Russian journalists about tools used to influence journalists and the output of media companies clarifies that methods linked to information exchange have more weight in real practice than other ones (tables 25).

Table 25

**Methods of influence**

<i>Various methods are used to influence journalists and the output of media companies. How often do you deal with the following methods of influence at your working place? (Give your opinion on a scale 1-5, 1 – “never”, 5 – “very often”) (% of the respondents)</i>	1	2	3	4	5	Don't know	Mean
Press material delivery, e.g., text and pictures/ film	20,4	15,4	22,4	22	13,8	6	2,93
Press conferences	11,4	13,4	27,4	23,4	18,4	6	3,26

Personal information for journalists selected by the sources	18,2	18	24,2	18,6	11	10	2,85
Information from agents on behalf of a hidden source	21,6	24	21,4	13,6	6,8	12,6	2,54
Gifts to the journalists (also travels etc)	36,4	21,2	16,6	7	6,4	12,4	2,22
Pressure and threats against an individual journalist	44,6	21,4	10,2	3,4	1,8	18,6	1,73
Pressure and threats against the media company	39,2	21,8	12	4,4	2	20,6	1,84
Other	2	0,8	1,8	0,2	0,8	94,4	0,15

Source: The "Journalism in Change" Project, 2012.

Gifts, paid services and other additional benefits appear less often than activity of journalists' counter-partners in spreading information. Nevertheless the meaning of this factor (2,2 out of 5) makes us to think about changing nature of mass information processes, about the confluence of journalism and PR which takes place in some situation and is seen as one of possible scenarios for future of profession.

It is also remarkable that different forms of threats towards both individual professionals and media companies have low means. This fact could have different interpretations. On the one hand such forms of pressure and real risks could be more an exception than a sad norm. But on the other hand according to statistics the number of attacks towards journalists is increasing and in this situation low rate of respective statements could be the sign of journalists' concern – media professionals may leave these methods unspoken or describe them as insignificant. Unwillingness to discuss these matters could be found in the number of obtained responses – it is lower than in any other statements proposed to respondents in this question.

Paradox of commercial orientation of media companies in conditions of strong state influence realizes itself in the hierar-

chy of obstacles journalists face in media companies (table 26). As well decreasing power of advertisers is seen in the data, the source of information unexpectedly appear as weak factor here.

Table 26

**Obstacles in daily work of a journalist**

<i>How often do journalists at your media company face the following obstacles? (Give your opinion on a scale 1-5, 1 – “never”, 5 – “very often”)</i>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Number of answers</b>
Economic interests of the media company	3,02	454
Limits in the editorial policy of the media company	2,85	479
Political interests of the owners of the media company	2,7	446
Pressure from political actors outside the media company	2,51	429
Pressure from the sources of information	2,5	441
Pressure from advertisers	2,46	434
Other	0,3	447

Source: The "Journalism in Change" Project, 2012.

**Russian journalists and social media**

Growing social media has become not only a way for private communication but also an important professional tool for journalistic work, both on the institutional level (media outlets represented in the social media) and individual level (journalists). Certainly not all of the journalists are familiar with these new Internet technologies in their work; some media professionals are quite sceptical about social media and avoid Twitter, Facebook and blogs. However, a majority of the journalists regularly utilize social media.

Web 2.0 appears to be a helpful tool for the professional work of journalists, including Russian journalists, primarily for social interaction. Indeed, the Russian journalists are highly active in their use of social media: 76% per cent in the sample use it for professional purposes (see table 27). They are predominately young and middle-age professionals (81% and 72% respectively).

Table 27

**Use of social media in the journalistic profession**  
*(per cent represented in age groups  
and total of combined age groups)*

<b>Sample Age</b>	<b>≤35</b>	<b>36-50</b>	<b>≥51</b>
Use social media for professional purposes; per cent	81	72	39
Number of answers	347	117	36
Total use of social media; per cent	76		
Number of respondents	500		

Source: The "Journalism in Change" Project, 2012.

The most popular social networking sites in Russia are Russian-language Odnoklassniki and VKontakte (see table 28). They are well ahead of LiveJournal, Twitter and Facebook. The trend where local-language User Generated Content media (UGC) is more popular than global media is common in the post-Soviet countries, as well as in several Islamic countries. However, LiveJournal, Twitter and Facebook are of great interest for media professionals because they are global and, consequently, appeal to users from all over the world.

Table 28

**Number of daily users of some  
of the top social networking sites in Russia  
(thousand people)**

Social media	Type	Year of launch	Users (thousand) May 2012	Users (thousand) March 2013
Vkontakte	Contact social networking site	2006	26016	27866
Odnoklassniki	Contact social networking site	2006	18002	19003
Facebook	Contact social networking site	2004	3276	3884
LiveJournal.com	Blog platform	1999	2549	2597
Twitter	Micro blog	2006	1439	1516
LiveInternet	Blog platform	2002	1305	-

Source: TNS Gallup Media<sup>6</sup>

### Frequency of using of different UGC platforms

Russian journalists are actively using *profile-driven social networking sites* like global Facebook and local Russian-language VKontakte and Odnoklassniki for professional needs. Micro-blog Twitter is also one of the popular sites, but most Russian media professionals prefer blog platforms (the most popular LiveJournal).

<sup>6</sup> TNS Gallup Media <http://www.tns-global.ru/rus/data/ratings/index/index.wbp>

According to the results of the survey, Facebook appears to be a favourite online social networking site for Russian journalists: 72% use it at least once per day or more (see table 29). Russian journalists are also active in using blogs: 59% of the Russian journalists who are “active” read blogs at least once per day and 25% write in an individual blog daily or more often. It is important to note here that the most popular blog platform in Russia is LiveJournal. Generally, Russian journalists are less interested in Twitter – only 30% use it. The Russian journalists also has some interest in using other types of online communities, predominantly Russian-language, profile-driven online contacting networks Odnoklassniki and VKontakte (30%).

Table 29

**Frequency of use of some social media platforms**  
*(% within age groups and within active users of the social media group)*

Social media		≤35	36-50	≥51
Blogs/read	Once per day or more	61	52	57
	Less frequent or never	39	48	42
<b>Total use once per day or more</b>	<b>59</b>			
Blogs/write	Once per day or more	27	21	21
	Less frequent or never	72	79	79
<b>Total use once per day or more</b>	<b>25</b>			
Facebook	Once per day or more	75	61	72
	Less frequently or never	26	39	28
<b>Total use once per day or more</b>	<b>72</b>			

Twitter	Once per day or more	35	18	7
	Less frequently or never	66	80	93
<b>Total use once per day or more</b>	<b>30</b>			
Other communities	Once per day or more	35	15	21
	Less frequently or never	51	65	71
<b>Total use once per day or more</b>	<b>30</b>			
Number of answers		285	84	14

*Source:* The "Journalism in Change" Project, 2012.

In the Russian sample of this survey, the number of younger Russian journalists (up to 35 years old) using social media is about 69% while the middle age group is only 23%. The share of the older group (51+) is insignificant for Russia – only 7%. The younger journalists are generally more active in using online social networking sites, probably because younger people are more open to new technologies; this tendency is present in all of the countries in the survey, but in the case of Russia it is especially clear.

### **What they use it for**

The ways that social media and online social networking platforms are used for professional journalistic needs, both institutional and individual, can vary. First of all, it might link information or be a helpful tool for communication, professional discussions with colleagues and so on. The financial aspect is also important in the use of social media: media companies and individual journalists can carry out marketing, branding and earn money.

Each social media platform has several advantages and disadvantages. For example, Twitter is restricted to 140 characters and is therefore not appropriate for long texts. Blogs (LiveJournal) are unlimited and better for longer texts but the most popular blog site in Russia, LiveJournal, for example, does not have an iPhone application, which makes it less mobile. Facebook is at the top in terms of being mobile and unrestricted, but it is easier to lose information in the constantly updated news flow. The journalists

often have at least one account in each UGC media because certain social media platforms fit better for certain goals and complement one another. Moreover, different platforms are merged together and usually integrated to online media (Web 1.0).

The Russian journalists use Facebook mainly for keeping in contact with colleagues and their audience (82% and 76% respectively) and for getting ideas (81%). Blogging is more preferable for finding topics for research and investigations (78%) and for dialog with audience (feedback) and it is irreplaceable for publishing content that is restricted by editorial policy (51%). Twitter is better for fact checking (66%), getting ideas (60%) and dialog with the audience (53%) (table 30).

*Table 30*

**Purposes of using different social media platforms  
(% active social media users)**

<b>Purposes</b>	<b>Facebook</b>	<b>Twitter</b>	<b>Blogs</b>
Get ideas	81	60	73
In research/investigation (to find information)	71	66	78
Have a dialog with the audience	76	53	41
Keep in contact with colleagues	82	48	33
Editors expects me to	35	31	22
Publish content besides regular work	63	40	51
Get more readers/viewers, self-promotion	69	51	40
Strengthen the trademark of my media company	60	45	25
Professional discussions	64	32	37
Making money by advertisement or PR	21	14	15



Discuss social and political questions in general	68	40	40
Number of answers	367	248	344

Source: The "Journalism in Change" Project, 2012.

### Increased interactivity

Indeed, the development of social media increases interactivity. 67% of the Russian journalists think that interactivity is very important, and the same percentage thinks it is important to listen to the opinions of the audience and allow this to influence the selection of news. 51% strictly believe that increased interactivity can improve the quality of journalism. The journalists as a whole do not think that communication with the audience takes too much time away from work (see table 31).

Table 31

### Interactivity and media development

<i>Interactivity is often discussed in connection to media development. Do you agree or disagree with the following statements? (% of answers on a scale from 1 to 5)</i>	<b>Disagree (1-2)</b>	<b>No clear opinion (3)</b>	<b>Agree (4-5)</b>	<b>Total</b>
Increased interactivity influence the selection of news	10	23	67	100
It is important to listen to the opinions of the audience	11	22	67	100
Increased interactivity can improve the quality of journalism	19	30	51	100

Contacts with audience take too much time away from work activities	37	32	32	101
A journalist should not listen too much to opinions among the audience	55	21	24	100

Source: The "Journalism in Change" Project, 2012.

The social media platforms have become a significant method of communication for the Russian journalists. The journalists also use e-mails with almost the same frequency. They contact readers/viewers/listeners via media websites less often. Despite the fact that Internet communication has become a part of everyday life, the Russian journalists have not forgotten traditional means of contact with their audience, such as the telephone. Direct contact by meeting people is even less common (see table 32).

Table 32

**Means of communication with audience**

<i>How do you communicate with your readers/viewers/listeners? (per cent that communicate daily or more often in different ways)</i>	≤35	36-50	≥51	Number
By telephone	25	22	8	499
By e-mail	34	31	25	500
With comments on the media website	25	21	8	500
With social media	30	22	23	500
Directly by meeting people	12	11	14	500

Source: The "Journalism in Change" Project, 2012.

**Changes in journalism  
and future prognosis**

Table 33

**Changes in difference spheres of professional activity**

<i>During the last 5-10 years the daily journalistic work has changed in many ways. How do you evaluate these changes in different areas, according to your own experience? (1 – much less, 5– much more, N=417)</i>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Number of answers</b>
Editing/layout	3,93	399
Contacts with the audience	3,69	404
Writing/producing	3,5	409
Work outside the newsroom	3,49	383
Research and verification	3,42	395
Evaluation and discussion	3,41	389
Photography	3,38	380
The amount of production	3,34	387
Cooperation in the newsroom	3,02	392
Other	3,74	35

Source: The "Journalism in Change" Project, 2012.

Major changes are caused by technological development. As the respondents pointed out, the editing process and layout survived the most serious transformations. Confirmation of this fact can be found in the actual practices of modern editorial offices of Russian media, which more and more often are demonstrating the convergence idea realization ("Komsomolskaya pravda", RIA Novosti and "Rossiyskaya gazeta" could be examples of this process). But, at the same time, changes correlate with the transformations in the ideology of media consumption and they are linked to modern trends in information sphere (such as visualization, etc.). An area such as contacts with the media

audience is undergoing both a technological and a fundamental transformation – and this change is considered to be serious (3,69 out of 5). The data show that the less changeable sphere – relationships and cooperation with colleagues within the framework of the newsroom – also changed in recent years. It is possible to assume that the Russian journalists partly use social media for cooperation with colleagues and this is one of the reasons why the professional use of new communications was reflected earlier in this text. But, according to the journalists' responses, changes in this area are not as drastic as some of the changes in other practices.

Table 34

**Transformations in diverse factors' influence on media content**

<i>The changes in influence on media content in your news organization from the following actors in last 5-10 years (% , 1 – decreased, 5 – increased, N=417)</i>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Number of answers</b>
Journalists	3,57	398
Audiences	3,54	406
Media owners	3,53	391
Politicians	3,2	392
Other groups in the media company	3,18	390
Interest groups	3,17	371
Advertisers	3,01	379
Private business	2,54	339
Other	0,4	347

Source: The "Journalism in Change" Project, 2012.

In the last 5-10 years, the role of advertisers in forming of media content has decreased. Those respondents who have

sufficient professional experience confirm that this influence has become less significant. This fact could be caused by the development of the media economy and the appearance of stable working mechanisms for getting financial benefits, which allow advertisers to keep their distance from the process of producing content.

The data shows the growing importance of journalists and the audience as the ruling actors in information production, which has been mentioned earlier. It is notable that a wide number of factors of influence were identified by a varying number of respondents – for instance the majority of the journalists mentioned the audience or professional community’s role, but fewer respondents in the survey were ready to rate the private business group, which indicates some uncertainty in the journalists’ attitude towards this actor and its position in the modern media system in Russia.

Pessimistic conclusions could be drawn about the development of journalism in the last 5-10 years (table 35).

*Table 35*

**Changes in the quality of journalism**

<i>Do you think the quality of journalism in your country has increased or decreased the last 5-10 years?</i>	<b>Decreased</b>	<b>Stays the same</b>	<b>Increased</b>	<b>Don't know</b>
Number	238	153	84	25
Per cent	47,6	30,6	16,8	5

*Source:* The "Journalism in Change" Project, 2012.

Both the quality of the profession and the level of press freedom in Russia have decreased, as indicated by almost half of the respondents.

Table 36

**The level of press freedom in Russia**

<i>Do you think the level of press freedom in your country has increased or decreased the last 5-10 years?</i>	<b>Decreased</b>	<b>Stays the same</b>	<b>Increased</b>	<b>Dont know</b>
Number	234	158	86	22
Per cent	46,8	31,6	17,2	4,4

*Source:* The "Journalism in Change" Project, 2012.

It is remarkable that Russian journalists consider themselves to be independent (according to other questions in the survey) taking into consideration the negative general context. Probably what we are seeing here is a model of adaptation or ability to find the window for freedom and fresh air in a very strict framework. Another way to explain the data is to view it as a conflict between the subjective and objective, internal and external meanings typical for the professional consciousness of Russian journalists and public opinion in Russia in general. The way Russian journalists think and express their perception correlates with the position Russian citizens demonstrated recently during a public opinion poll. For example, Russian citizens said that the modern Russian population was more independent than in the Soviet era, at the same time it is more dependent on authorities (Levada Center, 2013).

Contradictory perceptions and opinions gathered during the study confirm that the professional community is to a certain extent still in transition – responses clarify both the traits of the traditional model of journalistic work and traits of the new model. This transitional status is also reflected in the future plans of practicing journalists and their view of the future of profession (tables 37, 38).

Table 37

**Future of journalism as profession**

<i>What kind of future awaits journalism as a profession in Russia in your opinion?</i>	<b>Per cent</b>
The profession will vanish step by step	34,4
The profession will flourish	32,8
The profession will transform to another activity	22,8
It will remain the same as today	3
I don't know	7

*Source:* The "Journalism in Change" Project, 2012.

A small percentage of the respondents thinks that the profession will stay the same. More often, the journalists tend to be more pessimistic about the future. This is not new to the research community – several years ago this idea appears during a survey of journalism students Russia (Nygren, Degtereva, Pavlikova, 2010).

Table 38

**Personal future seen by the jouranalists**

<i>Where would you like to be working in five years from now? (one alternative)</i>	<b>Per cent</b>
In the same media company as present	36,6
In some other field than journalism	24,8
In some other media company	22,8
I will be retired	2,2
Don't know	13,6

*Source:* The "Journalism in Change" Project, 2012.

One-fourth of the respondents are ready to change their profession in the near future. Open answers that supplemented the responses show that the preferred spheres are PR, politics, science and teaching. This confirms the idea of journalism as a social

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lift and an environment that supports communication with other people but does not promise fast development and career success.

It is quite difficult to draw final conclusions and generalisations based on the data of the “Journalism in change” project. It is only possible to describe the factors shaping the profile and national peculiarities of the journalism culture in Russia.

The perception of a journalist “as an instrument for materializing the people’s right to true information – the truth being understood as objective reality to be discovered and communicated to the public as accurately and comprehensively as possible” (Nordenstreng, 1989) as described two decades ago is acute for the Russian media reality to a certain extent. As the survey shows, Russian journalists are familiar with the standards typical for the classical liberal model of journalism.

At the same time, the previous history of journalism in Russia and the USSR played a role in professional reflection and the vision of important aspects of professional activity. And, of course, journalism in Russia could be considered to be under transformation seen the changes the profession has undergone since the turn of the new century.

Sometimes it is quite difficult to make comparisons with previous studies of journalistic culture in Russia due to methodological specifics – methods and instruments that have been used in various projects have differed. However, it is still possible to see some coincidences and some specific features of portraits depicted in recent years within the framework of these different research projects. Analyzing the data, we see confirmation of the social lift concept in relation to journalism, which was described earlier and presented as typical for media professionals – modern Russian journalists partly consider their professional activity as a way to enter the public sphere and build a career in another field.

Other similar characteristics could be seen in professional dependency and freedom, e.g. strict limitation of pressing news deadlines and audience/consumer’s influence on media content was found out in both the “The Worlds of Journalism” and the “Journalism in change” studies; complicated influence coming



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from the State, on the one hand, and other economic actors, on the other hand, was pointed out in Finnish surveys conducted by Tampere University and the “Journalism in change” project. Some replication of attitudes is seen in the future expectations for the media community. General assessments are quite far from positive – this idea was formulated in the study of journalism students and young media professionals in 2009–2010 and confirmed in the current survey in that many media professionals gave journalism a negative prognosis, saying that the profession would disappear or transform into other type of activity.

At the same time, we do see some peculiarities in the obtained results. For instance, the picture of the so-called universal journalists, who cover different topics and types of stories, has been partly undermined in the “Journalism in change” project – more articulated thematic and channel specialization of modern Russian journalists was discovered in 2012. Some shifts in the sphere of information use, professional epistemology and journalism ethics are seen on the basis of the results, and some contradictions and discrepancies in the perception of personal conditions and general professional contexts could be identified.

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## Swedish journalists – a profession in decline?

*Gunnar Nygren,  
Jonas Appelberg<sup>1</sup>*

There is no clear figure on how many journalists there are in Sweden. The Swedish Union of Journalists listed 13,512 active members in December 2012, a decline of about 5% in five years. In addition, there are some one thousand journalists who are not members of the union as well as “media workers” who mix journalism with other kinds of media work. In total, there might be approximately 16-17,000 active journalists in Sweden.

This group is quite well researched from an academic perspective. The first academic study was made in 1969 on 400 journalists in different media organisations. The study noted an increasing professionalization among journalists, but also big gaps concerning values between generations (Furhoff 1970). Since 1989, a group of researchers at Gothenburg University has conducted regular surveys among the members of the Union of Journalists. The last survey was conducted in 2011 and is reported in “Svenska journalister 1989–2011” (Asp et al 2012). These surveys provide an important picture of the development of the profession, both as a social group and in terms of the values among journalists. In the recent anthology “The Global Journalist” edited by Weaver/Willnat (2012), results from a survey conducted at Mid-Sweden University are presented. Many of the questions in this survey were also used in other countries, which provides valuable opportunities for comparison (Stromback, Nord, Shehata 2012).

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<sup>1</sup> Jonas Appelberg has written the part about journalists and social media.

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Common for most of the research on Swedish journalists is the focus on journalists as a social group, their values and their role perceptions. There is not so much research on the journalistic practices, norms and experiences from the daily work. There are some minor surveys and ethnographic studies on journalistic work (for example Hultén 1993, Löfgren-Nilsson 1999, Nygren 2008, Hinderson 2013), but no major study on changes in daily journalistic practices.

### **Social profile and the structure of the profession**

The survey in “Journalism in change” includes questions about journalists as a social group, values and the journalistic practice in the three countries. This makes it possible to also compare experiences of journalists in their own daily practice, e.g. how they evaluate the changes in daily work in times of rapid media development.

First, some basic figures on journalists as a social group:

Journalists in Sweden are quite old, nearly 40% are 50 years old or older. The average work experience is 18.4 years (and the mean is 17 years). Only 10% of the respondents in the survey are under 30 years old. These figures are confirmed by other recent surveys, for example the big survey to members in the Union of Journalists in 2011, which showed that 41% of the journalists are older than 50 (Asp et al 2012).

In the first big national survey on journalists 1989, the situation was the opposite. The profession had expanded during the 1970s and the number of members in the Union of Journalists nearly doubled from 6,000 to 12,000. In 1989, only 19% of the journalists were 50 or older and 44% were under 40. In the last ten years, the profession has experienced the opposite development and the number of members in the union declined by ten per cent (Nygren 2012). Those staying in the profession are becoming older, and the share of young journalists is declining.

*Table 1*

<b>Age</b>	<b>Female (%)</b>	<b>Male (%)</b>	<b>Total (% of all)</b>	<b>Number</b>
≤29	66	34	10,5	50
30-39	55	45	27,8	132
40-49	59	41	21,9	104
50 – 59	45	55	24,9	118
≥60	40	60	14,8	70
Total	52	48	100	474

*Source:* The "Journalism in Change" Project, 2012.

One big change in the last 20 years is the increasing share of female journalists. In 1989, this share was 34%; it is now a majority with 52% female respondents in the survey. This is also visible in the age groups – among the youngest under 30, two-thirds of the journalists are female. In the group over 50, the majority are still male.

The social background for half of the journalists is middle class. Nearly half have parents with an academic education. Many of the Swedish journalists also have relatives in journalism, according to the survey:

- 6 per cent have parents who are/were journalists,
- 17 per cent are married to a journalist, and
- 18 per cent have other close relatives in journalism.

This gives many journalists a close network in the profession.

### **Professional institutions**

Professional education and organisations like unions are regarded as important professional institutions. Other institutions can be ethical councils and guidelines, etc. (Freidson 2001).

For Swedish journalists, professional institutions are very important. Ninety per cent of all of the journalists in the survey have some kind of academic education, and a clear majority also have a professional education in journalism on an academic level. Another big group have undergone vocational journalism training

(for example “folkhögskola”). Professional training has a strong position in all age groups, especially among the young journalists.

*Table 2*

**Journalism education on different levels**

	≤35	36-50	≥51	Total (%)	Number
No	10	15	16	14	65
Yes, professional training in media	2	4	10	6	26
Yes, on non-academic level	18	29	26	25	117
Yes, on academic level	70	52	48	56	261
Total	100	100	100	100	469

*Source:* The "Journalism in Change" Project, 2012.

In the past 10-15 years there have been signs of a decline in membership in professional organisations like trade unions. Among young journalists five years after graduation from university, about 60% are members in the union, much below the average of about 85%. Also, special groups like journalists in online journalism and production companies show lower shares of members in the Union of Journalists (Nygren 2012). Still, the Swedish Union of Journalists shows a very strong position compared with other countries. In the survey, 86% of the respondents answer that they are members of a union for journalists (nearly all in Union of Journalists).

*Table 3*

**Membership in unions for journalists  
(% of all journalists)**

	Yes	No	Number
Printed paid newspapers	92	8	204
Magazines	88	12	65
Public service TV/radio	87	13	76

Commercial-free media*	86	14	58
Subcontractors**	83	17	82

\* TV, radio, free papers, online.

\*\* News agencies, productions companies, freelancers.

*Source:* The "Journalism in Change" Project, 2012.

There are also other professional organisations for journalists in Sweden, and 29% of the respondents in the survey are a member of at least one of them. One of the two largest is Publicistklubben, which was founded in 1874 to discuss current issues in journalism and raise ethical standards. The other is the Swedish Association for Investigative Journalism (Grävande journalister), which has approximately one thousand members. Its annual prize, "Guldspaden", has become an important professional event.

Common ethical rules are another important part of being a profession. Among Swedish journalists, support for ethical rules and integrity for journalists is strong in all age groups. There are very small differences in the survey in the answers to the statements:

- It is important to have common ethical rules in the media company – 90-92% agree in all age groups.
- I can receive gifts as long as it does not influence my professional work – 80-95% disagree in all age groups.

### **Work and conditions in employment**

The printed press has dominated the Swedish media market for a long time. Sweden, together with Norway and Finland, has one of highest readerships of printed newspapers, and the most common type is the local and regional newspaper. In 2010, there were 95 titles published 3 days or more a week, but many of them are in increasing extent cooperating and sharing content, so it is sometimes difficult to determine which newspapers are independent and which are not (Nygren/Zuiderveld 2011).

Other strong sectors are public service radio and TV, which are financed by licence fees and with no advertisements. A commercial sector in radio and TV has grown since the mid 1990s, but there are still only a few journalists employed in

this entertainment-dominated sector. Another growing sector includes different kinds of subcontractors – journalists producing content outside the media houses. They are freelancers, news agencies and different kinds of production companies both for print and TV. Online publishing is mostly integrated into the big media companies and not “stand alone” companies.

The share of the respondents in the different sectors is not a result of the survey, but rather a result of the selection of the newsrooms and journalists for the survey. The distribution of respondents in different sectors correlates with random selections of the members of the Union of Journalists (organizing about 85% of Swedish journalists). The distribution of respondents represent the media sector as we know it by other research (Asp et al 2012, Stromback et al 2012).

*Table 4*

**Type of media company**

<i>In what kind of media company are you working today?</i>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Per cent</b>
National/big city newspaper	67	14
Local/regional newspaper	143	29
Free newspaper	28	6
Magazine	66	13
Online news	8	2
TV – public service	37	7
TV – commercial	20	4
Radio – public service	42	9
Radio – commercial	3	1
News agencies	21	4
Production companies	12	2
Other*	50	10
Total	497	101

\* Most of them are freelancers and many work for different kind of magazines

*Source:* The "Journalism in Change" Project, 2012.



It is also possible to make another division between the parts of media based on the business model. This division places the largest part of journalists in the printed paid newspaper (mostly subscribed) sector. The magazine sector is quite small, but many of the freelancers in the subcontractors sector are working for magazines. The public service sector is large; more journalists work there than in the ad-paid commercial media sector (free papers, commercial radio and TV, online only).

Age differs between sectors in the media landscape. The largest and oldest group of journalists work in printed paid newspapers. Journalists in public service TV/radio are a little bit younger, and journalists in commercial media are clearly much younger. Also, the journalists among subcontractors are quite young – perhaps an effect of lower demands for entry in this sector and a higher circulation in and out of the profession.

*Table 5*

**Ages in different kind of media  
(% in each age group)**

	≤35	36-50	≥51	Total (%)	Number
Printed paid newspapers	21	33	47	43	203
Magazines	20	41	39	14	64
Public service TV/radio	26	39	35	15	72
Commercial-free media*	44	46	11	12	57
Subcontractors**	36	32	33	16	76
Total	126	170	176	100	472

\* TV, radio, free papers, online.

\*\* News agencies, productions companies, freelancers.

*Source:* The "Journalism in Change" Project, 2012.

The labour market for journalists is changing. There are more temporary jobs, more outsourcing of the production and

more demands on being flexible (Deuze 2007, Nygren 2012). In Sweden, staffing companies have started hiring journalists for newsrooms in recent years.

This development is also visible in the survey, especially among those under 35. In this group, only 49% have a steady job and 30% hold different kinds of temporary jobs. Staffing companies employ 6% and 15% are freelancers. Among the journalists over 35, around 80% have a steady job.

*Table 6*

**Types of employment in different age groups (%)**

	≤35	36-50	≥51	Total
Steady job	49	79	81	72
Temporary job	26	6	3	10
Staffing company	6	2	0	2
Freelance	15	13	16	15
Other	4	0	0	1
Number of answers	126	170	178	474

*Source:* The "Journalism in Change" Project, 2012.

There are also clear differences between sectors of media. Older types of media that are shrinking, like printed paid newspaper, have a big share of the journalists who are employed with a steady job. Other sectors, like public service TV/radio and commercial free media, have bigger shares of the temporarily employed.

Even if employment is insecure for many young journalists, the income seems to be good for all age groups. Nearly four out of five say that they can do well and provide extra things with their income from journalism. Only 9% have problems earning enough money from journalism.

Most journalists, 90%, work full-time. On average they work 39.5 hours a week – the normal working time in Sweden. Those working part-time are still spending most of their work time on journalism activities, 27 hours a week.

**Financial conditions**

*Table 7*

<i>Is it possible to manage on your income from journalism? (%)</i>	<b>≤35</b>	<b>36-50</b>	<b>≥50</b>	<b>Total</b>
No, journalism is only a minor part of my income	2	0	1	1
No, I have to get money from other jobs	3	2	2	2
Yes, I can survive	6	5	7	6
Yes, I can provide all necessary things	12	11	14	12
Yes, I can do well and provide extra things	78	82	77	79
Number of answers	125	169	175	469

*Source:* The "Journalism in Change" Project, 2012.

During 2012-2013 there have been cutbacks in most newsrooms of Swedish newspapers and hundreds of jobs have disappeared. The survey was conducted before the most recent wave of cutbacks, but a clear majority still answer that their newsrooms have been shrinking in the past five years. For the big group working in printed paid newspapers, nearly half work in newsroom that has “shrunk much”.

However, the development is uneven. In the sector of commercial free media, the groups working in shrinking or growing newsroom are equal. Also, subcontractors are experiencing a growth in their workplaces.

*Table 8*

**Changes in staffing in different kind of workplaces (%)**

	<b>Shrunk much</b>	<b>Shrunk a bit</b>	<b>No change</b>	<b>Increased a bit</b>	<b>Increased much</b>	<b>Don't know</b>
Printed paid newspapers	47	41	6	2	1	1

Magazines	31	31	18	9	6	6
Public service TV/radio	13	49	8	10	1	20
Commercial-free media*	27	14	0	31	10	19
Subcontractors**	3	14	28	31	10	14
Total	33	36	9	10	3	10
Numbers	134	145	35	40	14	39

\* TV, radio, free papers, online.

\*\* News agencies, productions companies, freelancers.

Source: The "Journalism in Change" Project, 2012.

### Some conclusions on professional structure

Swedish journalism is an aging profession with an average work experience of 18,4 years. The journalists are well educated and have strong professional institutions in education, the trade union and other professional organisations. There is also a strong professional identity and good income that give nearly all journalists a safe everyday life.

But this old profession is having problems – it is shrinking. The Union of Journalists is showing a declining number of members, and nearly half of the respondents from the dominant printed paid newspapers say that their newsrooms have shrunk a lot in the last five years. The old core sector of journalism – paid newspapers and public service radio/TV – employ fewer journalists, but at the same time news sectors like commercial free media and subcontractors producing content for media are growing. These growing sectors attract young journalists; they have more temporary jobs and a more unsecure position, and they are also less organized in the Union of Journalists. This development also demonstrates that the borders of journalism are unclear. Some of the new journalists work in companies producing both journalism and information/PR.

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### Ideals and values

The ideals and values of Swedish journalists have been surveyed using the same questions since 1989. These surveys show that there are very stable ideals with some small changes. Ideals connected to a passive “mirror-ideal” have gradually become weaker, while the active “watchdog-ideals” have gradually become stronger. But this is an ideal of a detached journalist, and the drive to influence public opinion has become weaker (Wiik 2010).

The journalists taking part in the Journalism in change survey demonstrate a multi-dimensional approach to their ideals and values, both when it comes to what is important for them personally and what is important for society. In their choice of workplace, personal dimensions like atmosphere and freedom in their work is at the top of the list. Job security and editorial policy of the media are also important, while pure material factors like benefits and chances for a better career are placed quite low.

Table 9

#### Factors influencing the choice of working place

<i>What is important for you in choosing your place of work? (mean on a scale 1-5 where 1 is not important and 5 is very important)</i>	Mean	Number of answers
Atmosphere in the workplace	4,4	477
Freedom in the work	4,2	483
Editorial policy	4,1	480
Job security	3,9	475
Chance to develop a speciality	3,9	479
To serve the public interest	3,8	477
Chance to influence society	3,7	476
Salary	3,7	481
Chance for a better career	3,5	479
Fringe benefits	3,2	471

Source: The "Journalism in Change" Project, 2012.

In a factor analysis, the ten different factors in choosing the place of work are connected into groups. The analysis places factors with a strong correlation in the same group – journalist who put high importance on one factor are also likely to give high value to other factors in the group. This method results in three clear groups of factors, and the mean on the most important factors indicate how important the dimension is for the journalists.

The most important dimension for the Swedish journalist in choosing a workplace is connected to the altruistic motives of journalism, like influence on society, editorial policy and their own freedom in their work. Individual factors like career and the development of a speciality are on almost the same level as salary and other material factors.

*Table 10*

**Dimension reduction – factors in choosing a workplace\***  
*(mean on a scale 1-5 where 1 is not important and 5 is very important)*

<b>Dimension</b>	<b>Factors</b>	<b>Mean</b>
Social reform factors	- influence society, serve the public interest, editorial policy, freedom in the work	3,96
Individual factors	- chance for a better career, develop a speciality (negative on atmosphere in the workplace and editorial policy)	3,66
Material factors	- salary, fringe benefits and job security (negative on influence society and serve the public interest)	3,58

\* The factor analyses are carried out on all 10 statements in table 8 as a principal component analysis, using Varimax rotation.

*Source:* The "Journalism in Change" Project, 2012.

When asking about the role of journalism in society, 16 statements were given in the survey. The most important of these roles were those connected to the classic liberal role of the “fourth estate” – to be a watchdog on government and power in society, stand free from special interests and to provide information and bring forward various opinions. Other roles, such as giving entertainment and being an active mobilizer in society, were regarded less important. The role of being part of a commercial company and ensuring that the company is reporting good results was the least important.

There are very small differences between generations; the ideals are keeping the profession together across different generations. The only general pattern in the differences is that the older generation seems to put more emphasis on an active role to influence public opinion and stimulate new ideas. The younger generation puts more emphasis on the demand that journalists should represent different social groups.

*Table 11*

**How important are the following professional duties  
for a journalist in your country?  
(mean on a scale 1-5 where 1 is not important  
and 5 is very important)**

<i>Journalists should...</i>	≤35	36-50	≥51	Total
...investigate the powerful in society	4,7	4,8	4,6	4,7
...provide information objectively	4,5	4,8	4,6	4,6
...stand free of special interests	4,2	4,6	4,7	4,5
...bring forward various opinions	4,3	4,7	4,5	4,5
...simplify and explain	4,4	4,5	4,6	4,5
...scrutinize government claims	4,5	4,6	4,4	4,5
...criticize injustice	4,5	4,5	4,5	4,5
...be a neutral reporter	4,2	4,2	4,2	4,2
...tell the truth regardless of the consequences	4,1	4,2	4,2	4,1

...educate the public	3,9	4,2	3,9	4,0
...stimulate new ideas	3,8	4,0	4,1	4,0
...represent diverse social groups	4,1	3,8	3,4	3,8
...provide entertainment	3,4	3,2	3,3	3,3
...influence public opinions	3,1	3,1	3,5	3,2
...mobilize people to act	3,1	3,1	3,2	3,1
...ensure that media business do well	2,5	2,6	2,8	2,6

*Source:* The "Journalism in Change" Project, 2012.

When these ideals are reduced through a factor analysis, they form three distinct dimensions. There are clear correlations between high scores on the ideals within each dimension:

- **Independent observer and investigator** – this is close to the classic liberal ideal of journalists as detached observers and independent watchdogs in society. This dimension has both the active investigator and the journalist bringing forward various opinions to the audience. This journalist is not taking a side in politics, but merely bringing the news and being an independent scrutinizer.

- **Social mobilizer** – this is an old ideal that can be traced back to the party press, when journalists were supposed to take a stand and try to influence public opinion, and in some cases even mobilize. This dimension is clearly weaker than the classic liberal ideal, but it still has some strength among Swedish journalists.

- **Entertainer** – this ideal can be connected to the entertaining parts of media industry, and in the survey it is correlated to commercial demands. This dimension is clearly weaker among the Swedish journalists, at least as an ideal.

There are small differences between the age groups when it comes to ideals. The oldest group (50+) give higher values to the ideals in the “social mobilizer” dimension; 46% think it is important to influence public opinion. Among the youngest journalists under 35, the same figure is 27%. Instead, the young journalists give high value to more classic liberal ideals as being a “neutral reporter”.



Table 12

**Dimensions in ideals on the role of journalism in society**  
*(mean on a scale 1-5 where 1 is not important and 5 is very important)*

<b>Dimension</b>	<b>Factors</b>	<b>Mean</b>
Independent observer and investigator		4,58
	- Investigate the powerful	4,68
	- Give objective information	4,64
	- Bring forward various opinions	4,54
	- Scrutinize government claims	4,48
Social mobilizer		3,42
	- Stimulate new ideas	3,98
	- Influence the public opinion	3,21
	- Mobilize people to act	3,08
Entertaining		2,96
	- Provide entertainment	3,31
	- Ensure that media business do well	2,62

\* The factor analyses are carried out on 16 statements on the role of journalism. They are conducted as a principal component analysis, using Varimax rotation.

*Source:* The "Journalism in Change" Project, 2012.

Another question in the survey was if the respondents think that journalists fulfil their responsibilities towards society. The answers show that Swedish journalists are quite satisfied with their own work – 58% say yes and only 12% show some criticism towards their own profession. This is also equal in all age groups, with a little more self-criticism among the oldest group.

Table 13

**Journalists and society**  
*(Do you think journalists fulfil their responsibilities towards society? (% of the respondents))*

Age	1 (No)	2	3	4	5 (Yes)	Number
≤35	3	8	27	46	13	125
36-50	2	8	26	47	15	170
51+	4	11	31	36	17	176
Total	3	9	29	43	15	471

Source: The "Journalism in Change" Project, 2012.

At the same time, however, Swedish journalists are critical about the development in the level of quality in journalism. Nearly half of the journalists think that the level of quality has decreased the last 5-10 years. This is especially clear in the more "market driven" parts of media – magazines and commercial-free media – where the journalists are very critical. There is less criticism among the journalists in printed newspapers; in spite of the shrinking newsrooms (table 7) 30% of the journalists in these papers say that the quality in Swedish journalism has increased. If we look at the details in the analysis, journalists at newspapers with the hardest cutbacks (big city dailies) also are those that most rank quality as increasing.

Table 14

**Changes in the quality of journalism**

<i>Has the quality in journalism increased or decreased the last 5-10 years?*</i> (% of the respondents)	Decreased	No change	Increased	N=
Printed paid newspapers	37	33	30	185
Magazines	57	29	14	58

Public service TV/radio	43	32	25	65
Commercial-free media	50	31	19	48
Subcontractors	59	29	12	66
Total	46	32	23	422

\* Those with less experience did not answer the question.

*Source:* The "Journalism in Change" Project, 2012.

So what is influencing quality according to the journalists in the survey? An analysis of correlations between changes in the daily work (table 19) and the opinions on changing quality give a correlation on only one dimension – the time for research and verification. Those who think that the quality has decreased also say they have less time for research and verification.

Verification is “the essence of journalism” according to the classic Anglo-Saxon ideal (Kovach/Rosenstiel 2001). The need for correct facts and verification is a core value in journalism. In online journalism with a constant deadline, this value is challenged daily for journalists. How much verification is necessary before publishing?

In the survey, some of the statements were intended to measure the attitudes on verification in online journalism. The purpose was to gather some information about how strong the core value of verification is among journalists 2012. The results show that verification is still a strong value, but that there are also big groups of journalists who are ambivalent when it comes to verification in different channels.

One-third of all respondents do not agree that verification is equal on all platforms, and a big group also avoided answering the question. Of the respondents, 28% also say that incorrect facts often are published because of less verification, and 30% say that the audience has lower demands on verification online.

Even if most journalists still have the classic ideal of verification, we can assume that there is uncertainty among one-third of the journalists when it comes to the new online channels. There are very small differences between age groups in the attitudes towards verification. It is not a question of verification but of general uncertainty if online journalism changes the values on verification.

Table 15

**Attitudes on verification in relation to online publishing  
(% of the respondents)**

	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>No clear opinion</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>N=</b>
In my newsroom verification is equal in all platforms	34	21	45	386
Incorrect facts are often published because of less verification	48	24	28	440
It is better to publish unverified information than to be slower than the competitors	86	10	3	447
Audience has lower demands on verification online	51	19	30	410
Online journalism is a process and verification can be done during the process	62	19	20	417

Source: The "Journalism in Change" Project, 2012.

**Some conclusions on ideals and values**

The most important ideals among Swedish journalists are connected to the classic liberal model – the detached observer and watchdog on society. Other ideals of journalists playing an active role in society are not so important, at least not among the young journalists.

When it comes to personal factors, things like freedom in the work and atmosphere in the newsroom are the most important in

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choosing the place of work. Factors connected to more altruistic motives like serving the public interest are also important.

Swedish journalists are critical about the decreasing quality in journalism. One important factor in quality is verification – and the development of online publishing has created uncertainty among many journalists about the need for verification. This is a core value in classic journalism, and a clear majority still believe in the old value of the need for verification. However, about one-third of the journalists are ambivalent to the level of verification in online media.

### **The daily work**

In journalism, there are many different professional roles and specialisations. The development within media has made journalist increasingly mix these different roles and take part in different parts of the production process (Deuze 2007, Nygren 2008). This is clearly visible in the survey, where each journalist on average has 1,7 roles in the newsroom. The most common role among Swedish journalists is to be a reporter (59%), but many also work as editors (20%) or take part in production as subeditors (13%). Six per cent work as photographers and 5% as online editors or researchers. Only a few are working with editorials, comments and columns (in total 5%). This shows that journalism in Sweden is very much about reporting and not about opinions.

*Table 16*

**Professional roles in the newsroom\***

<b>Roles</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Per cent in each role</b>
Reporter	292	59
Editor	167	20
Subeditor/layout	110	13
Photographer/cameraman	54	6
Online editor	46	5
Researcher	42	5

Producer (radio/TV)	25	3
Commentator	22	3
News anchor	19	2
Editorial writer/columnist	14	2
Economy/management	12	1
Work with ads	2	0,2
Other roles	52	6
Total	857	173

\* Each respondent could give a maximum of three alternatives. Total 496 respondents.

*Source:* The "Journalism in Change" Project, 2012.

Journalists today also work for different platforms. On average each journalist works for 1.9 platforms. The most common is paper, but online is almost equal to paper. This means that most journalists today work with cross-platform publishing and combine one "old" platform, like paper, TV and radio, with new digital channels (online and mobile). This shows that "multichannel strategies" are working for most journalists (Nygren/Zuiderveld 2011).

Very few journalists in this survey work for media companies in only the online category (1.6%). This is also the case in other surveys to members of the Union of Journalists, where there were no journalists in the "online only" category (Edstrom 2012). The reason behind this can also be that those working in different online media do not define themselves as journalists (and are consequently not members in a union for journalists).

*Table 17*

#### Work at different platforms

Journalists producing for different platforms (at least each week)	Number of journalists	Per cent of journalists
Paper	360	75
TV	84	17

Radio	64	13
Online	321	67
Mobile	85	18
Total	914	189

*Source:* The "Journalism in Change" Project, 2012.

Many journalists have a speciality, but earlier research shows a decreasing share. In 12 large newsrooms in Sweden, the share of reporters covering a specialized area fell from 65% to 61% from 1990 to 2010 (Sjöström 2011). The figures in the present survey show a continuing decline and journalists are becoming more generalists without a speciality.

Among all of the journalists in the survey, 36% cover a special area. In relation to reporters, the share is higher but still only 53%. The largest shares of specialists are working in magazines, which is quite natural since most magazines are niche products for special areas. The lowest shares of specialized reporters are found in public service radio/TV and commercial-free media – sectors with many small newsrooms and high demands in production.

*Table 18*

**Thematic specialisation of Swedish journalists  
(Journalists covering a special area)**

Medium type	% covering a special area	Number
Printed paid newspapers	40	68
Magazines	50	28
Public service TV/radio	28	20
Commercial-free media	19	10
Subcontractors	39	29
Total	36	155

*Source:* The "Journalism in Change" Project, 2012.

The most common areas for special reporters are business (13%), culture, politics and society/social matters (11% each) and sports (7%).

### More production and less discussion

Most journalists are experiencing shrinking newsrooms (table 8), and this can be a reason behind the declining share of specialized reporters. It can also be one of the explanations behind the changes in the daily work in the last 5-10 years as reported by the journalists:

- The level of production has increased, according to 71% of the journalists. They write/produce more and they are also involved more in subediting and photography.
- The time spent in contact with the audience has increased, perhaps as a result of social media development.
- There is also more of a cooperation in the newsroom, often needed in the complex cross-platform production. In spite of more multiskilling, journalists also cooperate more.
- As the demands on production increase, many journalists feel they have less time to leave the newsroom for reporting. There is also less time for evaluation and discussion among journalists.

*Table 19*

### Changes in the daily work the last 5-10 years

	Less	No change	More	Balance	N*
Work outside the newsroom	44	39	18	-26	351
Research and verification	28	46	27	-1	380
Writing/production	10	42	49	+39	366
Editing/layout	14	40	36	+13	337
Contact with the audience	23	40	36	+13	362
Cooperation in the newsroom	17	44	39	+22	365



Level of production	6	22	71	+65	374
Evaluation and discussion	42	33	25	-17	369
Photography	18	40	42	+24	326

\* Only those who have at least 5-10 work experience could answer the question.

*Source:* The "Journalism in Change" Project, 2012.

There are also important differences between different kinds of media. The trend is the same everywhere with increasing production, but when it comes to contact with the audience, journalists in public service radio/TV also report a clear increase. Journalists in printed newspapers and magazines have less time for work outside the newsroom, but journalists in commercial-free media report a slight increase.

### **Journalists are supposed to be multiskilled**

Multiskilling is the way to increase production in the media companies. Multiskilling can be defined as doing all the links in the production, for example, in television the reporter is called "video reporter" and is doing everything from research, interviews and handling the camera to editing and perhaps also presenting the news in the programme. Another way to define multiskilling is that a reporter is able to work for different platforms – a reporter provides both the text and pictures for the assignment, writes a short and fast version for the web and produces a story for television as well as a longer text for the printed newspaper (Deuze 2007, Nygren 2008).

Multiskilling is a clear trend, but not all Swedish journalists are comfortable with it. Half of the journalists say that they are expected to be multi-skilled, but only 37% say they feel like a multi-skilled reporter. Nearly all (87%) believe more journalists will be multi-skilled in the future.

The attitudes towards the consequences are divided. One-third believe multiskilling will give more space for creativity, but one-third disagree. Four out of ten of the journalists think that

multiskilling will give them more power, but an equal share also fear that it will decrease the quality of journalism. One reason behind the divided attitudes could be the fact that multiskilling is introduced at the same time as the newsrooms are shrinking and the level of production is increasing. Journalists feel that multiskilling is a way to make every journalist work harder, and not to develop new innovative forms of content (Quinn 2005).

Another question shows that there are no negative attitudes towards technology. New technology makes the work process faster and more creative and has not been used to its full potential, according to the journalists. Another important observation is that there are only small differences between age groups when it comes to technology and multiskilling.

Table 20

**Attitudes in relation to “multiskilling”  
in the journalistic work**

	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>No opinion</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>N</b>
I feel like a multiskilled reporter	47	16	37	469
Journalists in my media organisation are expected to be multiskilled	27	23	51	476
Multiskilling means more space for creativity	34	29	36	463
Multiskilling will decrease quality in journalism	33	25	41	464
Multiskilling gives more power to the individual journalist	38	29	43	456
In the future more journalists will be multiskilled	2	10	87	475

Source: The "Journalism in Change" Project, 2012.

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### **Autonomy in the daily work**

A certain degree of professional autonomy is important for journalists in all countries. Earlier comparative research shows that “job autonomy” is the single most important job aspect, and there is a clear correlation between freedom in the work and job satisfaction (Weaver/Willnat 2012).

The Swedish journalists report a highly perceived autonomy in their daily work. Of the journalists, 30-31 per cent say they have almost complete freedom to decide what stories they should work on and what aspects of the stories should be emphasized and 47-51 per cent say they have a great deal of freedom. For a majority of the journalists, the editors never change anything in what they produce. These figures are almost equal to earlier research with the same questions, or even a few per cent higher (Stromback, Nord, Shehata 2012).

*Table 21*

#### **Perceived autonomy in the daily work of the individual journalist**

<i>How much freedom do you have...</i>	<b>No freedom</b>	<b>Some freedom</b>	<b>A great deal of freedom</b>	<b>Almost complete freedom</b>	<b>N</b>
...in selecting stories you work on	4	18	47	31	481
...in deciding which aspects of a story should be emphasized	2	17	51	30	481
...to manage your own time in your work	10	34	35	22	486

	<b>Almost always</b>	<b>More often than not</b>	<b>Only occasio- nally</b>	<b>Almost never</b>	
How often does your editor change anything in what you produce?	4	5	34	55	480

*Source:* The "Journalism in Change" Project, 2012.

There are some differences between different kinds of journalists – temporarily employed journalists have less freedom to choose their subjects and manage their own time and journalists in commercial ad-paid media have less freedom in general. On the other hand, freelancers and journalists in small newsrooms report a greater degree of freedom in the daily work.

There are also clear differences between age groups. Older and experienced journalists report a greater perceived autonomy in their work than younger colleagues report. Older journalists seem to have a stronger position in the newsroom than the younger ones.

*Table 22*

**Perceived autonomy in different age groups  
(% answering a great deal and almost complete freedom)**

<b><i>How much freedom do you have...</i></b>	<b>≤35</b>	<b>36-50</b>	<b>≥51</b>
...in selecting stories you work on	69	79	84
...in deciding which aspects of a story should be emphasized	70	82	87
...to manage your own time in your work	53	57	61
How often does your editor change anything it what you produce? (% answering almost never)	35	57	67
N=	118	170	169

*Source:* The "Journalism in Change" Project, 2012.

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Is this much autonomy or not? The same questions have been put to US journalists since 1971, and the level of perceived autonomy is sinking in these surveys (Weaver et al 2007). In the latest survey, the share declaring they have almost complete freedom to select stories and decide angles is still 40-42 per cent, clearly above the Swedish level. On the other hand, the share reporting that their stories are not being edited by others is very low – the US tradition in news production is to have a strong emphasis on editing. In Sweden, the process includes less editing and more direct publication.

### **Factors influencing content production**

Many factors can influence media content, and the professional decisions of the journalists are only one of these factors. This influence also comes in different forms and at different times during the production process. The influence on content is also perceived to be different in different kinds of media.

In general, the professional interest of the journalist is the most important factor when it comes to selection of subjects in the daily work of the journalists in the survey, although the perceived audience interest is equally important – and in commercial ad-paid media more important than the interest of the journalist.

Editorial policy and the needs and interest of society are very important factors in public service radio/TV and paid newspapers. They are clearly less important in magazines and ad-paid media.

Far lower on the scale comes the business interests of the media company and advertisers. They have little influence in the daily decisions, but other questions show that business interests and advertisers generally are perceived to be increasing their influence on media content (see table 26).

Political influence on the daily media content is close to zero, according to the Swedish journalists, both when it comes to political actors in society and political connections of the media company. The era of party press appears to have passed.

Table 23

**Factors influencing the choice of subjects in the daily work  
in your media organisation**  
(mean on a scale 1-5 where 1 is insignificant  
and 5 is very significant)

	<b>Paid papers</b>	<b>Maga- zines</b>	<b>Public service</b>	<b>Commer- cial free media</b>	<b>Sub- contr.</b>	<b>All</b>
Journalists' professional interest	4,0	4,2	4,1	3,7	3,9	4,0
Audience interest	4,0	4,2	3,9	4,1	4,0	4,0
Editorial policy	3,4	3,4	4,0	3,7	3,5	3,6
Needs and interest of society	3,6	3,0	3,8	3,4	3,5	3,5
Business interest of the media company	2,1	2,1	1,5	2,1	2,1	2,0
Advertisers	1,8	2,6	1,1*	2,1	1,9	1,8
Political actors outside the media company	1,8	1,8	1,7	1,9	1,8	1,8
Political connection of the media company	1,6	1,9	1,4	1,6	1,7	1,6
N=	204	62	77	54	68	467

\* Public service radio/TV in Sweden has no advertisements.

Source: The "Journalism in Change" Project, 2012.

This influence on daily work can take different forms. The most important is to send press material (text, pictures, etc.) to the newsroom and arrange press conferences. For the sources, one important way to influence media content is also to give information directly to a journalist; 42% of the journalists says this happens quite often or very often in their newsroom.

Gifts and threats are not as common methods of influencing journalism in Sweden. About one-third of the journalists report that in some cases there have been threats and gifts to influence the journalists and two-third answer “never”. It does not happen often, but gifts and threats can still have an influence just because they are possible.

Table 24

**Methods to influence journalists**

<i>How often are you dealing with the following methods to influence journalists at your work place? (on a scale 1-5 where 1 is never and 5 is very often)</i>	2-3	4-5	Mean	N
Press material delivery (texts, pictures, etc.)	16	80	4,3	480
Press conferences	31	59	3,6	477
Personal information from a source	54	42	3,3	473
Information from agents on behalf of a hidden source	60	10	2,1	439
Pressure on and threats against an individual journalist	34	0	1,4	453
Pressure on and threats against the media company	36	1	1,5	431

Source: The "Journalism in Change" Project, 2012.

Generally, there are very few obstacles before final publication, according to the journalists. The most important obstacles are the editorial policy and pressure from sources. Half of the journalists have experienced this kind of pressure, but not particularly often. Also, the economic interests of the media company can be an obstacle for publication and one-third has had this experience at some time and 8% say quite or very often.

There are also some differences between media types. Pressure from sources is the most important obstacle for journalists in paid newspapers and among subcontractors. The editorial policy is a bigger obstacle in public service and ad-paid commercial media. The economic interests of the media company can be an obstacle for journalists in magazines.

But again, even with these differences, Swedish journalists quite seldom report that there are obstacles before final publication.

Table 25

**Obstacles the journalists face before final publication**

<i>How often do journalists at your media company face the following? (on a scale 1-5 where 1 is never and 5 is very often)</i>	<b>2-3</b>	<b>4-5</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Number</b>
Limits in the editorial policy	56	6	1,9	453
Pressure from sources	58	4	1,9	452
Economic interests of the media company	31	8	1,7	455
Pressure from advertisers	23	3	1,4	451
Pressure from political actors outside the media company	21	2	1,3	451
Political affiliation of the media company	16	1	1,2	456

Source: The "Journalism in Change" Project, 2012.



These figures show a high degree of perceived professional autonomy in the daily work of the Swedish journalists, but the journalists also indicate that there have been changes in the last 5-10 years. Their own influence is not changing much, but other groups are increasing in influence.

The perceived influence from the audience has increased sharply in all kinds of media. This can be the result of increasing interactivity in online media, but also a sign of a more “audience-oriented” journalism. In harder competition, journalists have to listen more carefully to what the audience wants to consume.

Influence from other groups in the media company has also increased. This includes market and advertisement departments and the fact that the old “wall” between the newsroom and commercial parts of these companies has been torn down in many ways.

Influence from politicians has decreased sharply, according to the journalists.

Table 26

**Changes in diverse factors’ influence on media content**

<i>If you look back 5-10 years, how would you evaluate the changes in influence on media content in your news organisation from the following actors? (Balance = those who answer “increased” minus those who answer “decreased”)</i>	<b>Paid newspapers</b>	<b>Magazines</b>	<b>Public service</b>	<b>Ad-paid free media</b>	<b>Sub-contractors</b>	<b>All groups</b>
Journalists	-6	-11	+4	+12	-11	-4
Other groups in the media company	+28	+26	+30	+22	+42	+29
Media owners	0	+22	-10	+20	+39	+8
Politicians	-30	-31	-18	-10	-26	-25
Audiences	+55	+23	+58	+59	+22	+48
Advertisers	+2	+34	*	+3	+24	+3
Number	17	54	53	33	35	346

\* Public service radio/TV in Sweden has no ads.

Source: The "Journalism in Change" Project, 2012.

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### Journalists, politics and media business

Even if the Swedish journalists report a very small and even decreasing political influence on media content, they are very interested in politics themselves. Nearly half of the journalists say they are very interested in politics and political matters. There are clear differences between generations of journalists – among 50+ group, 56% are very interested compared with only 37% in the group younger than 35. In the youngest group, one-third rated their interest as medium or lower.

Table 27

#### Journalists and politics

<i>How interested are you in politics and political questions in society? (% of all answers)</i>	$\leq 35$	36-50	$\geq 51$	Total
1 – not interested	3	1	0	1
2	5	3	2	3
3	24	11	10	14
4	31	39	32	34
5 – very interested	37	46	56	47
Number of answers	125	169	176	470

Source: The "Journalism in Change" Project, 2012.

The Swedish journalists are interested in politics, but they draw a clear line in relation to being active in politics themselves. A majority say No to being active in politics, but there is also a minority of 20% saying Yes. The group that left the question open is largest among the young journalists. The young journalists are less interested in politics, but at the same time more open to taking part in politics themselves. This can be a sign of a less strict detachment of journalists in relation to politics and other areas.

Table 28

**Journalists' potential activity in politics**

<i>Is it an alternative for you to be active in politics (voluntary or as employed)?</i> (% of all answers)	≤35	36-50	≥51	Total
No	48	54	57	54
Maybe	33	26	21	26
Yes	20	20	22	21
Number of answers	120	165	170	455

Source: The "Journalism in Change" Project, 2012.

The relationship with politics is also measured in two statements given in the survey. The journalists give a very clear standpoint regarding political influence in media companies – this is not accepted at all. But around 25% of the journalists accept journalists to be active in politics, and another 10% have no clear opinion. One explanation behind this can be the interpretation of the concept “politics” – it can be wider than just activities within parties and may be connected to top levels of civil society and NGOs.

Table 29

**Attitudes on relations between journalism and politics**

<i>(on a scale 1-5 where 1 is Don't agree and 5 is Agree completely)</i>	1	2	3	4	5	N
A journalist cannot himself be active in politics during the same time as he is working as a journalist.	14	12	10	16	48	490
As a journalist one has to accept political influence in the media company	79	13	6	1	1	476

Source: The "Journalism in Change" Project, 2012.

Earlier research has shown journalists to be “leftists”, in that they placed themselves on a political scale much more left of the population in general (Asp 2012). This survey confirms these results showing nearly two-thirds of the journalists leaning to the left and only 17% to the right. There are some differences between the age groups – the youngest and oldest groups are a little more left than the middle group.

Does this mean journalism in Sweden has a “left bias” in the daily reporting? Other questions in the survey show that most journalists draw a clear line between their work and the political system – they do not accept political influence and do not want to take part in politics themselves. Professional values are most important to them when selecting content in addition to their assumptions of what their audiences want. Also, other research shows that professional values and media logic are more important for journalists than their own political preferences (Asp 2012). With these arguments, the political attitudes of journalist have a minor influence on media content.

Table 30

**The journalists’ position in politics**

<i>Where would you place yourself on a political scale from left to right? (% of all answers in each age group)</i>	<b>≤35</b>	<b>36-50</b>	<b>≥51</b>	<b>Total</b>
Left	36	21	22	25
A bit left	29	37	42	37
Centre	19	21	23	21
A bit right	11	16	12	13
Right	5	5	2	4
Number of answers	100	136	148	384

Source: The "Journalism in Change" Project, 2012.

The state and politics are not considered to be a threat to independence of journalism, according to a general question in the survey. Only a small minority say that state and political influence can influence the professional independence. Only in public service radio/TV did a substantial group consider this to be a danger for their independence (31%).

Instead, the threats perceived by the Swedish journalists are mostly connected to economic and commercial pressure in the media companies:

- Increasing work tempo and the owners' demand for profit is a great danger for professional independence, according to a clear majority.

- Weak professional ethics and advertisers' influence is also a big threat, especially for journalists on magazines and those working as freelancers (often for magazines).

- PR-consultants and lobbyists working for sources are also perceived as a danger for many journalists, especially for freelancers.

- Foreign ownership is not a big threat. This can be explained by the fact that the major foreign media companies are from other Nordic countries with similar cultural backgrounds.

- Threats against individual journalists can be a danger, but less than one-third say so.

Table 31

**Factors influencing the independence of journalism**

<i>The independence of journalism can be influenced by different factors. How do you evaluate the influence of the following factors in Sweden? (the greatest dangers first)</i>	<b>1-2 (no danger)</b>	<b>3 (middle)</b>	<b>4-5 (some or great danger)</b>	<b>N</b>
Increasing work tempo	4	16	80	482

The owners' demand for profits	15	19	66	461
Weak professional ethics	20	34	46	473
Advertisers' influence on content	28	28	43	461
Source activity (PR/lobbyists)	31	29	40	466
Foreign ownership	40	31	29	405
Threats against individual journalists	41	30	29	452
State influence (laws and ownership)	44	32	25	457
Political influence in media companies	54	30	16	458

*Source:* The "Journalism in Change" Project, 2012.

### **Journalists and social media**

The interplay between social media and journalism are getting more and more definite as social media develops. We live in a convergence culture where the audience is more mobile and harder to grasp and where journalism is more of a two-way communicative process than ever before (Nygren & Zuiderveld, 2011). Sweden has almost 5 million Facebook users<sup>2</sup> and around 500,000 Twitter users<sup>3</sup> in a population of around 9 million. The results from the survey show how the journalists relate to this social sphere of communication.

On the question of how the journalists communicate with their audience, we can see that daily communication as a whole is relatively low at around 15-30%, but also that social media and web commentary stand up well in competition with the more traditional telephone and e-mail (table 32).

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.checkfacebook.com/> 2013-05-23 11:38

<sup>3</sup> <http://twittercensus.se/twittercensus2013/> 2013-05-23 11:40

Table 32

## Means to communicate with audience

<i>How do you communicate with your readers/viewers/listeners? (% that communicate daily or more often in different ways)</i>	$\leq 35$	36-50	$\geq 51$	Mean*	Number
By telephone	20	21	35	2,99	485
By e-mail	27	26	38	3,25	488
With comments on the media website	12	7	4	2,37	470
With social media	17	13	8	2,37	475
Directly by meeting people	7	5	11	2,49	484

\* Mean on a scale 1-5 where 1 is Never and 5 is Many times a day.

Source: The "Journalism in Change" Project, 2012.

Looking at Sweden, we can draw the conclusion that social media is an accepted tool for journalism and something that is here to stay. In this study, 67% of the journalists say that they use social media in their profession (table 33). There is a descending curve, however, throughout the age groups from 78% of usage in the younger generation to 57% in the older 50+ group. Given the average age of the Swedish journalists, as mentioned earlier, the numbers are still quite high, pointing to a pretty wide spread of social media usage and, thus, a more digital future.

Table 33

**Do you use social media in your profession?**  
 (% represented in age groups and total of combined age groups)

	≤35	36-50	≥51	Total
Yes	78	68	57	67
No	22	32	43	33
Total	100	100	100	100

Source: The "Journalism in Change" Project, 2012.

The social media platform used the most by Swedish journalists is Facebook, with 61% of journalists who are socially active using Facebook on a daily basis. Twitter is a bit less popular with 33% for all age groups. Blogs are popular to read but not to write, and 29% of the journalists read blogs on a daily basis. Writing a personal blog is far less common and only 11% of the journalists do so once a week (table 34).

One consistency that can be found here is that younger journalists are more frequent users of social media and use it on a daily basis (table 34). This reflects the general population (Findahl, 2012), which could be the simple explanation. Younger people have not had to learn anything new to implement social media in their workflow; they have simply needed to take what they already know into a new environment.

Table 34

**Frequency of social media use**  
 (% within age groups and combined total of respondents)

	≤35	36-50	≥51	Total
Read blogs daily	40	25	21	29
Less frequently or never	60	75	79	71
Total	100	100	100	100



Write personal blog at least weekly	11	12	8	11
Less frequently or never	88	88	92	89
Total	99	100	100	100
Use Facebook daily	75	61	46	61
Less frequently or never	25	39	54	39
Total	100	100	100	100
Use Twitter daily	45	35	17	33
Less frequently or never	55	65	83	67
Total	100	100	100	100

*Source:* The "Journalism in Change" Project, 2012.

On the question about the purpose of the different social media platforms, a staggering 83% of social media users say that they use Facebook to keep in contact with their colleagues. Besides that, the main reason to use any type of social media is to get ideas and do research. Numbers are generally low when it comes to actively taking part in the social media flow. Only around half of the journalists are using social media to strike up a dialog with their audience, about as many use it for branding purposes (table 35).

*Table 35*

**Purpose of social media use  
(% of respondents using the different kinds of social media)**

	<b>Facebook</b>	<b>Twitter</b>	<b>Blogs</b>
Get ideas	61	73	86
In research/investigation (to find information)	45	52	60
Have a dialog with the audience	56	55	18

Keep in contact with colleagues	83	54	12
Editors expects me to	18	26	11
Publish content besides regular work	27	23	17
Get more readers/viewers, self-promotion	49	59	22
Strengthen the trademark of my media company	42	52	17
Professional discussions	36	50	14
Make money by advertisement or PR	2	0	1
Discuss social and political questions in general	37	36	16
Number of answers	292	202	242

Source: The "Journalism in Change" Project, 2012.

The Swedish journalists put value in listening to their audience and producing journalism adapted to what the audience wants. On a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 is Disagree and 5 is Completely agree, 65% agreed that *It is important to listen to opinions of the audience* (table 36). This attitude points to a generally social journalist who is not just working out of their own head but rather gives the audience considerable importance.

Of course, this could be both positive, in that the journalist is adaptable and has an ear to the ground, and negative, if the journalist puts too much trust in the audience and in the end forgets to do proper journalistic news evaluations, thus producing PR in the end. The new media environment is full of competition with newspapers trying to survive by partly moving to the web or with TV news channels that nowadays have to compete with Youtube to get the viewers, just to take two examples. The public has more and more options and as a result is less loyal since it can choose exactly what it would like to consume from the wide selection of media outlets. In effect, this could lead to

a journalistic click culture that listens in on what the audience wants and then packages this desire into a nice product, setting aside the journalistic mind and giving the audience what it wants instead of giving it what it needs.

Of the respondents, 62% agreed that the increased interactivity that comes with the current media developments could influence the news selection, which further emphasizes this attitude (table 36).

Table 36

**Interactivity and media development**

<i>Interactivity is often discussed in connection to media development. Do you agree or disagree with the following statements? (% of answers on a scale from 1 to 5)</i>	<b>Disagree (1-2)</b>	<b>No clear opinion (3)</b>	<b>Agree (4-5)</b>	<b>Total</b>
Increased interactivity influence the selection of news	12	26	62	100
It is important to listen to the opinions of the audience	8	27	65	100
Increased interactivity can improve the quality of journalism	24	38	38	100
Contact with the audience takes too much time from work activities	54	31	15	100
A journalist should not spend too much time listening to the opinions of the audience	50	30	20	100

Source: The "Journalism in Change" Project, 2012.

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### Future plans and relations to other areas

The professional ideals of journalists in Sweden create an identity of an independent journalist standing beside society, detached, which at the same time scrutinizes society. Interested in society but not taking part, not mobilizing but just observing and “telling the truth”. This identity is visible in some questions in the survey about attitudes towards their profession – but there are also some differences between generations.

Most journalists in all age groups are proud to be a journalist, three out of four agree to this statement. Some also say that the profession is the mission of their lives, and very few agree to the statement that salary is the main reason to become a journalist. There are other factors that make people choose journalism, such as professional ideals, freedom in their work and opportunities for personal development (see also table 9).

Few of the journalists say that journalism is a step in the career to other areas, but there is also a clear difference between the group of journalists under 35 and the rest on this issue. This difference is also clear when it comes to work in PR and communications. Nearly one-fifth of the young journalists see no problem in working in this area. This can be a sign of an increasingly blurred border between journalism and PR. Other studies have shown that a large number of young journalists go to the PR sector. It is common to spend several unsecure years as a journalist, and then get a steady and well-paid job in PR and communications. Five years after graduating, about 30% of former journalism students work in PR and communications, according to one survey (Nygren 2012).

*Table 37*

#### Attitudes in relation to professional identity

(% that answer 4-5 on a scale 1-5 where 5 is fully agree)	≤35	36-50	≥51-	Total	N
I am proud to call myself a journalist	75	81	80	79	469

My profession is the mission in my life	23	22	13	19	469
The main reason for working as a journalist is the salary	2	3	3	2	470
Working as a journalist is a step in my career to other areas	11	5	3	6	457
It is no problem for a journalist to work in PR and information	18	11	11	13	462

Source: The "Journalism in Change" Project, 2012.

Most of the journalists want to stay in journalism. Two-thirds of the respondents want to still be a journalist five years from now, most of them at the same media company. Some will be retired and some answered Don't know. Only 10% say they would like to work in another area in five years.

This may be what the journalists say they want, but other studies show an increasing flow through the profession. Many are coming in, and many are leaving the profession at some time between the ages of 30 and 40. The most common reason to leave journalism is unsecure employment and low opportunities for personal development. At the same time, half of the journalists leaving the profession can imagine themselves returning to journalism if the conditions improve (Nygren 2011).

Table 38

**Personal future of the journalists**

<i>Where would you like to be working in five years from now? (%)</i>	<b>≤35</b>	<b>36-50</b>	<b>≥51</b>	<b>Total</b>
In the same media company as present	46	57	43	49
In some other media company	31	17	4	16
In some other field than journalism	10	12	8	10
I will be retired	0	0	32	12

I don't know	13	13	12	13
Number of answers	125	169	173	467

*Source:* The "Journalism in Change" Project, 2012.

The results in this survey show that journalism has a strong attraction for those working in the profession. They want to stay, but many journalists are at the same time pessimistic about the future of the profession in general. This question has a high degree of internal drop-out; about one-fourth chose not to answer. Among those who did answer, 39% believe the profession will transform into something else or disappear. An almost equal share think it will remain the same as today and only 24% believe their own profession will flourish in the future.

The figures are the same in all age groups – the prospects of the future are not affected by the generation, but are more a question of the spirit of the times. The professional identity contains many contradictions; both in pride of being a journalist and an uncertainty about the future, both in a clear separation from other areas such as PR and less of a perceived separation among the young generation.

*Table 39*

#### **The future of journalism as profession**

<i>What kind of future awaits journalism as a profession?</i>	<b>≤35</b>	<b>36-50</b>	<b>≥51</b>	<b>Total</b>
Transform into another activity	36	39	30	35
Vanish step by step	1	4	6	4
The same as today	37	34	40	37
The profession will flourish	26	23	24	24
Number of answers	95	137	154	386

*Source:* The "Journalism in Change" Project, 2012.

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### **Conclusions – dimensions of autonomy?**

Sweden has one of the oldest laws on freedom of the press, which dates back to 1766. It was approved by Parliament to serve as a tool for the enlightenment of society – censorship was abolished in all areas except religion. Since then, media have struggled for *external* autonomy in relation to the state and journalists have struggled for *internal* autonomy in relation to other groups in the media company (Hök 2012).

Swedish journalists have become a strong profession, especially during the latter part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, but the survey shows that the profession is under pressure. Newsrooms are shrinking, the number of journalists is declining, the profession is growing older and in the newsroom journalists feel a steady pressure to increase production and support the economic goals of the media company. Among young journalists, the borders towards other professions are increasingly blurred – a shrinking share are members of professional institutions like the union and an increasing share of young journalists show more open attitudes towards PR and communications. Also, young journalists to greater extent hold temporary employment and are under pressure to be more flexible. They become more like “media workers” than the old type of pure journalists.

In general, the values and ideals of the role of journalism in society are stable – the dominant professional role is closely connected to the classical liberal ideal of detached journalists giving impartial information and various opinions as well as scrutinizing power. The role of journalists as a social mobilizer is much weaker.

At the same time, other kinds of values are under reconsideration. Verification is “the essence of journalism” in the classic sense, but this is questioned in today’s online journalism. There is an ongoing negotiation between the need for verification and the need for immediate publication on the website. This reflects a changing perception of journalism – from journalism as a product to be published, for example, once a day, to journalism as a process where verification is done in public during the process (Karlsson 2010). About one-third of

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the journalists in the survey show uncertainty about the issue of verification, for example that the demands are lower in online publishing.

Another area where values are under discussion is the consequence of increasing interactivity with the audience. The journalists in the survey say that interactivity influences the news selection, and they say it is important to listen to the audience. At the same time, audiences are becoming more influential on content and the choice of subject, according to the survey. This influences the balance between the publishing tasks (according to the ideals of the role of journalism in society) and the perceived need of giving the audience what it wants. In times of easily counted clicks on the website, this increases the pressure from market-driven journalism.

Many journalists are concerned over the decreasing quality of journalism. This concern shows no correlation with shrinking newsrooms, but some correlation with decreasing time for research and verification.

### **Changing journalistic work**

Most journalists today work on more than one platform, and most journalists have more than one task in the organisation. The need for more effective production forces journalists to be multi-skilled, and the attitudes towards this are ambivalent. Many journalists think this can increase creativity, but many also have doubts about the consequences for quality. There are fewer reporters covering specialty areas and journalists are expected to be generalists both when it comes to areas to cover and the different stages of production.

Another important change is the increasing use of social media for professional purposes. They are mainly used for getting ideas and research, and communication mostly with colleagues takes place on social network sites like Facebook. Swedish journalists are not really using the social network for publication, they have to publish, and can publish, in their regular workplaces. But this is also a generational issue; young journalists communicate with their audience much more via social networks than their older colleagues do.



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There is also a polarisation among journalists – between the young groups doing everything and which can be replaced at any time and the older, more experienced groups with steady jobs and more time for specialisation. This polarisation is clearly visible in different kinds of employment.

In their daily work, journalists report a great degree of autonomy. They have considerable freedom to decide subjects and angles and their professional interest is the single most important factor when deciding subjects (beside the perceived interest of the audience). Journalists seldom meet any obstacles before publication in their daily work.

Still, journalists report increasing pressure from the commercial parts of the media company and an increasing tempo in their work to be threats to their independence. Together with weak professional ethics and pressure from sources, these are perceived as the greatest threats to professional autonomy.

### **A profession under pressure**

Journalism in Sweden has a history of close connection to political parties and state influence in public service. Today, this influence is gone, according to the journalists. If there was any influence, it disappeared in the last 5-10 years. There is also no external political influence on media content in terms of the choice of subjects or as obstacles before publication, according to the journalists.

Instead, the pressure comes from inside media companies that are engaging in hard competition for audiences and income from advertisements. The journalists have to produce more and content is more adapted to what the perceived audience wants. The ideals are under pressure, especially in terms of verification and the mission of journalism in relation to the market-driven development of media companies.

Swedish journalism has experienced a period of professionalization since the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century – a period during which the profession has been stronger and more independent. Today, this development is in question. The professional institutions are still strong, but they are gradually weakening, especially among young journalists. The borders with

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other areas, such as PR and communications, are softer, and more content production is taking place outside the media companies.

The question is if the professionalization has been reversed and become a process of de-professionalization. This is visible in other areas of professional work as teachers and public officials (Hasselberg 2009). Journalism also show some of these signs of deprofessionalization – the professional identity becomes weaker as the profession becomes more diverse, the borders with other areas become softer and demands for economic efficiency and profits overrule professional values. The professional control of the work, in these cases, is diminishing and professional logic is replaced by market logic.

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## Towards new questions

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The journalistic cultures in Poland, Russia and Sweden have developed within different kind of media systems, with different history and traditions. This is the starting point in the research project, *Journalism in change*, which investigates the existing differences between journalism in the three countries.

Our questions start with media development – with technology and new communication systems, globalisation and commercialisation. How is this development influencing journalism in our three countries, what is still different and what is changing in the same direction? Is journalism more similar in the new media world of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, or are there still old differences – and new differences developing?

In the project, a survey of 1,500 journalists in the three countries was conducted during 2012. About 60 interviews and special studies on the journalist's professional use of social media were also conducted as part of the project. An anthology with comparative studies of all empirical results will be published during 2014.

In this report we present the results from the survey for each country. We also state some of the preliminary findings about differences and similarities in journalistic cultures in relation to media development, and try to define some questions for the final report from the project.

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### **Journalists as a profession and a social group**

There are clear differences in the position of journalists as a social group and in the degree of professionalization. In Sweden, journalists are still a quite homogenous group and nearly all of them have a professional education and belong to professional organisations. The group is quite old, well paid and over 70% have steady jobs.

In Poland and Russia, journalism has undergone a major transformation since its relatively privileged position during the communist regimes. The journalists today are young and, at least in Poland, many of them lack professional education. The trade unions are weak, and many journalists have to get money from other types of jobs to subsist. For many young journalists, the profession is a kind of “social lift” to other, better paid areas in PR, communications or business (Pasti 2011).

The differences between Sweden and Poland/Russia are clear when looking at the group of journalists as a whole, but among the young journalists in Sweden the tendencies are the same as in Poland/Russia. The borders of journalism are more unclear, a shrinking share are members of professional organisations and a growing share are temporarily employed and mixing journalism with other kinds of media work.

One preliminary conclusion could be that journalists in Sweden are taking the same path as in Poland/Russia, but at a much slower speed. Strong professional ideals among Swedish journalists are working in the opposite direction to preserve journalism as a profession.

### **Ideals and values among journalists**

More than 20 years after the fall of communism, there are many similarities in the professional ideals and values among journalists in the three countries.

The same factors are important for journalists in choosing their place of work – freedom in their work, the chance to develop a speciality and the atmosphere in the work place. These

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factors are connected to the personal career, and factors like opportunities to influence society are ranked lower in the list. Journalists are looking for a career (also salary is high on the list in Russia and Poland, where salaries are lower).

Many of the most important professional ideals are also the same – to provide information objectively, to stand free of special interest and bring forward various opinions. All of these ideals are connected to the classic liberal model of journalism – a detached journalist giving the news impartially to everybody. Least important in all countries are to provide entertainment and ensure that the media business is performing well.

However, there are also important differences between ideals in the three countries:

In Sweden, duties like investigating the powerful and scrutinizing government claims come high on the list. The ideal of being a watchdog is very strong among Swedish journalists.

In Russia, the Swedish ideals are low in the list. Instead, ideals such as to be a neutral reporter and provide information are high on the list. Also, ideals connected to criticizing injustice and educating the public are quite important.

In Poland, the ideals also are more neutral and connected to detachment.

These differences may reflect traditions in the three countries. For example, the Russian tradition of journalism may be that it is an educator in society. The ideals of journalism as an independent watchdog are obviously weaker in Russia.

But are these ideals being fulfilled? There are clear differences in the opinions among the journalists when it comes to this question and to the question of quality and press freedom. The Russian journalists are much more critical about themselves, and half of them say that freedom of the press has declined in the last 5-10 years. The Swedish and Polish journalists are more satisfied with their work, and they are more positive about national developments in freedom of the press. But in Poland, journalists are also very critical towards decreasing quality in journalism, 68 % of the journalists in the survey say that quality in journalism has decreased the last 5-10 years.

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### **Daily work of journalists**

There are many similarities in the daily work of journalists. The tools are the same, the formats are the same and the processes are similar. When asked about perceived autonomy in daily work, the figures are very close to one another. It is clear that the journalistic process demands a great degree of professional autonomy in the daily work, and that journalists in the three countries experience this autonomy.

Media development is also changing the daily work. In Sweden and Poland, journalists are experiencing higher demands in their daily work in the newsroom in the form of more production with fewer people. Multiskilling is one way to deal with this, i.e. that journalists handle the entire process. Attitudes towards multiskilling are more positive in Russia and Poland and many think that this gives them more power in their daily work. In Sweden, journalists are more negative – for them multiskilling might just be a way to increase production. The Swedish journalists also give the lowest figure on freedom to manage their own time at work.

### **Journalists, politics and media business**

The relationship between journalism and politics in Eastern and Central Europe has been described as having a lot of “political parallelism” – a system where politics and media are bound together and use each other for their own purposes (Hallin/Mancini 2012). In Sweden, the ties between politics and media were also very strong with the party press, but starting in the 1960s they became weaker and were replaced by an increasing commercialism (Strömbäck et al 2012).

These relationships with politics and the commercial goals of media are also visible in the survey. When it comes to influence on content, the most important factors are the same in all three countries – the professional interest of journalists and the audience interest. In Russia, there is also a clear political influence both on selection of subjects and political obstacles for publishing. In Poland, the political influence is lower, but influence from advertisers and media owners is bigger.



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In all three countries, journalists experience a major commercial influence on media content. This is clearly visible in the priority of audience interest, owners and other parts of the media company. In Russia, the political influence is added to this commercial influence, placing double pressure on the professional decisions of the journalists. On the other hand, the group that has increased its influence on content the most in the last 5-10 years is the Russian journalists, at least according to the journalists themselves. Among Russian journalists there is a positive correlation between increasing influence for the journalists and the media owners, strong owners give influence to journalists. In Sweden and Poland this correlation is negative – journalists perceive increasing influence for the owners to be negative for themselves.

The picture is complicated – many actors want to influence media content and the professional interest of journalists is just one of these. One question is how commercial and political influences relate to each other and to the position of journalists in media production.

### **Journalism and social media**

Journalists in all three countries are using social media as a tool in their daily work. Young journalists use it more frequently, but older journalists are also using this new platform.

However, there are important differences. In Russia, the general level of social media use among journalists is higher than in the other two countries. The Russian journalists also use social media to a much greater extent for publishing their own material than their colleagues in Sweden and Poland. Half of the Russian journalists who are using social media are also publishing content in addition to their regular work on blog platforms like Livejournal or via links on Facebook.

It seems like the Russian journalists use social media as a way to compensate for high political (and commercial) pressure in their daily work. This gives them a new space for expression and for journalistic work outside the old frames. In Sweden and Poland, social media are more incorporated in the regular work in the newsroom and have not changed the processes in a radical way. At least not yet.

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### **Autonomy in different dimensions**

The degree of autonomy is a key factor in professionalization of journalism. This autonomy defines the social field of journalism in relation to other social fields, it can be regarded as weak or by other researchers as to strong and closed (Benson/Neveu 2005). This autonomy also have different dimensions – in society it is a question of the media system in relation to state and politics, in the media companies it is a question of the position of journalists as a group in relation to owners, market and other departments. It is also a question about autonomy (real or perceived) in the daily decisions in the work for the individual journalist.

The results in the survey show conflicting results when it comes to the degree of autonomy:

- As a social group, journalists are becoming more difficult to define. The professional institutions are weaker, and many journalists go in and out of the profession. The borders towards other areas within media are unclear, in relation to PR and communication. In Russia the profession is young, and by researchers regarded to be “a social lift” on the way to other areas. In Sweden the profession is old and quite homogeneous – but difficult to enter for young professionals who becomes a floating temporary workforce. The development of social media and net-based media like blogs gives the individual journalists a new kind of autonomy, new ways for publishing and new spaces for journalism. But at the same time – who is a journalist in these social media spheres? The professional roles are increasingly difficult to separate.

- There are clear ideals about an independent and autonomous journalists in all three countries. But there are also clear differences in the gap between ideals and perceived reality – even if the professional interest of the journalist is the most important factor in selecting subjects in all countries, also political and economic power outside and inside the media company influence the work of journalists. Especially in Poland, the pressure from owners and advertisers is strong. Press Freedom Index shows that Polish journalist have had more autonomy every year (the 58<sup>th</sup> position on the list in 2006 and the 22<sup>nd</sup> in 2013) . In Russia, the political pressure is strong on journalists and the external autonomy (press freedom) is decreasing.

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- In the daily work, there are small differences in the perceived autonomy in decisions about subjects and angles. It seems like journalism demands a great deal of autonomy in the everyday work. New practices like multiskilling are considered to increase this autonomy in Poland and Russia, but not in Sweden where the journalists are under hard pressure to produce. The freedom to manage their own time at work has the lowest level among journalists in Sweden.

Professional autonomy is under pressure in all three countries, but in different dimensions and levels. Media development make the borders of journalism as a social field blurred, but at the same time it can give the individual journalist a greater autonomy in daily work and in social media networks.

### **Some questions**

The survey provides a lot of information about journalists in the three countries, for example about the journalists themselves and how they perceive their daily work and about their values and how these values are fulfilled in the work according to their own experiences. This short, concluding remark offers a point of departure for some of the questions to be analysed in the coming reports from the project:

Are we going to talk about journalists in the future, or just about “media producers” or “media worker”? Is a de-professionalization currently underway that makes it more difficult to describe journalists as a social group with common values and practices?

Many of the ideals are common among journalists in the three countries. Are the differences in ideals going to be less visible, or are there still important differences under the surface of journalism in different media systems? For example in how the ideals are interpreted?

The daily work is changing in the same direction. But how does this influence the position of journalist in media production? Is it possible that changes in the daily work can have different effects in different media systems? Multiskilling can give more space for creativity and more power to the individual journalist – and the opposite in a different setting.

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The pressure from commercial interests within and outside the media company influence journalism in all three countries, and political pressure is also perceived clearly in at least Russia. How is the political and commercial influence related to each other, and how can journalists balance these kinds of pressure in their daily work?

Can social media be more than just another tool in the journalistic toolbox? Can it give journalists new spaces for autonomy and new relations to the audience in a media sphere where both the political and commercial pressures are less evident?

These are some of the questions that will continue to be discussed as part of the Journalism in change project. They will be discussed and analysed in future reports that will go deeper into comparative analyses of the survey as well as into the interviews that were conducted in all three countries and other special reports on, for example, social media.

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about values and ideals,  
daily practice and the future**

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