



Country Report

Journalists in Croatia

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20 October, 2016

Backgrounds of Journalists

The majority of journalists in Croatia is female (53.9 percent). On average, the age of journalists in Croatia is 44.69 ($s=9.75$) and half of them are younger than 44. More than 70 percent of the journalists in Croatia have a university degree: 67.5 percent hold a Master's degree (or an equivalent, due to changes in higher education, earlier university four-year BA is equivalent to present-day MA) and an additional 3.0 percent have a Bachelor degree. Another 1.3 percent of the journalists have obtained a doctoral degree, and 22.2 percent had undertaken some university studies but did not complete them. More than half of the journalists in Croatia have majored in journalism or communication (53.0%). 37.2 percent of journalists in Croatia majored in journalism, 10.3 in other fields of communication studies and 5.4 in journalism and communication.

Journalists in the Newsroom

Journalists in Croatia have on average 19.73 years of work experience ($s=9.28$). Half of the journalists have more than 20 years of work experience. The majority of interviewed journalists is in full-time employment (80.3%); 15.0 percent are freelance journalists and 1.3 percent in part-time employment. Most journalists do not work on a specific desk (14.7%) but cover various topics and subjects (85.3%). Journalists in Croatia worked on average in 1.63 newsrooms ($s=1.79$). 21.0 percent of journalists in Croatia said they had another paid job besides journalism. 46.5 percent are members of a professional organization.

The majority of journalists from the sample work in a daily newspaper (26.0%). 23.7 percent work in television, 19.2 percent in radio, 12.6 in stand-alone online outlets and 8.1 in weekly newspapers. Fewer journalists worked in online newsrooms of traditional media (5.1%), magazines (3.0%) and news agencies (2.3%).

Journalistic Roles

Journalists in Croatia primarily see their roles in the classical (western) "watchdog" function of providing analysis of current affairs, monitoring and scrutinizing political leaders, and business. These values are followed by public-forum roles of the media through letting people express their views and provide information people need for making political decision. Several of the values that reach high means (4.0 and higher) might be related to the (relatively) recent democratization and the view that the media should assist in this change. This particularly relates to the belief that journalists should advocate social change, motivate people to participate in political activity, and support national development. A large number of respondents (between close to 50% to almost 70%) think that it is somewhat important that journalists influence public opinion, set the political agenda, and provide orientation and direction in daily life to their audiences. As we go down the list with

the least supported statements and shares of supporters, the homogeneity of the answers also decreases, while the most highly placed values having smaller standard deviations. The minority of journalists thinks that their work entails a support of government policy or to convey a positive image of political leadership (12 and 13.2 %, respectively), and a similarly small number thinks they should take an adversarial role to the government.

Table 1: Roles of journalists

	N	Percentage saying "extremely" and "very important"	Mean	Standard Deviation
Report things as they are	553	96.0	4.75	.55
Provide analysis of current affairs	552	90.4	4.48	.72
Monitor and scrutinize political leaders	550	88.4	4.51	.79
Monitor and scrutinize business	550	87.5	4.50	.77
Let people express their views	553	86.4	4.42	.78
Provide information people need to make political decisions	551	83.7	4.27	.91
Be a detached observer	551	83.1	4.39	.94
Advocate for social change	545	75.6	4.08	1.03
Motivate people to participate in political activity	551	72.1	4.00	1.03
Support national development	540	71.9	4.01	1.11
Influence public opinion	543	68.0	3.90	.99
Set the political agenda	522	51.5	3.47	1.19
Provide advice, orientation and direction for daily life	550	49.5	3.40	1.12
Provide the kind of news that attracts the largest audience	548	38.5	3.02	1.28
Provide entertainment and relaxation	543	25.0	2.57	1.29
Be an adversary of the government	521	18.4	2.34	1.31
Convey a positive image of political leadership	537	13.2	1.85	1.23
Support government policy	526	12.0	1.88	1.21

Question: Please tell me how important each of these things is in your work. 5 means you find them extremely important, 4 means very important, 3 means somewhat important, 2 means little importance, and 1 means unimportant.

Professional Ethics

A great majority of journalists agree that no matter the context or situation, they should always adhere to the codes of professional ethics. Still, there are more than a third of journalists who think their personal judgment or a specific situation might mitigate the professional code (these statements have a larger deviation, though, showing these ideas are contested).

Table 2: Ethical orientations of journalists

	N	Percentage saying "strongly" and "somewhat agree"	Mean	Standard Deviation
Journalists should always adhere to codes of professional ethics, regardless of situation and context	555	94.4	4.69	.66
What is ethical in journalism depends on the specific situation	547	38.0	2.57	1.55
What is ethical in journalism is a matter of personal judgment	546	37.4	2.60	1.54
It is acceptable to set aside moral standards if extraordinary circumstances require it	544	23.2	2.09	1.42

Question: The following statements describe different approaches to journalism. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree. 5 means you strongly agree, 4 means somewhat agree, 3 means undecided, 2 means somewhat disagree, and 1 means strongly disagree.

Regarding controversial reporting methods, we find that more than 70 percent of journalists find it always or sometimes justified using government of business

documents without authorization (could be seen as an extension of the monitoring role in circumstances of low institutional trust and cynicism about politics). Also high percentages of respondents approve of using actors in dramatizations of news (an indication of commercialized logic), getting employed in a company in order to write a story, or using illicit recordings. The smallest percentage (less than 5.5%) approves of taking money for stories, but 12.0 percent think it is sometimes or always justified to publish stories with unverified content.

Table 3: Justification of controversial reporting methods by journalists

	N	Percentage saying "always justified"	Percentage saying "justified on occasion"
Using confidential business or government documents without authorization	487	18.7	55.9
Using re-creations or dramatizations of news by actors	452	11.5	59.5
Getting employed in a firm or organization to gain inside information	485	9.5	51.5
Using hidden microphones or cameras	488	6.4	52.9
Paying people for confidential information	484	6.2	36.2
Claiming to be somebody else	490	5.9	41.0
Exerting pressure on unwilling informants to get a story	493	5.3	28.8
Making use of personal documents such as letters and pictures without permission	493	3.7	23.5
Accepting money from sources	493	3.7	1.8
Publishing stories with unverified content	495	3.0	9.1

Question: Given an important story, which of the following, if any, do you think may be justified on occasion and which would you not approve of under any circumstances?

Professional Autonomy and Influences

The majority of journalists in Croatia declared a high degree of professional autonomy. A great majority of journalists (85.0%) believe they have complete or great deal of freedom in selecting stories. Even more, 86.6 percent state that they have complete or great deal of freedom in emphasizing certain aspects in the story. More than half of the journalists have an opportunity to participate in editorial coordination (57.3% reported they participate very often and always).

Only one fifth of the journalists or less think that business people, public relations, politicians, government officials and pressure groups are "very" or "extremely" influential in their work. The biggest divergence is found in views about influences of owners, profit expectations, or advertising expectations. This might be related to the type of the media respondents work in (i.e. public service broadcaster would have lesser pressures of this kind, and probably differences exists also between specific commercial media).

Table 4: Perceived influences

	N	Percentage saying "extremely" and "very influential"	Mean	Standard Deviation
Journalism ethics	549	84.3	4.28	.97
Information access	554	75.6	3.98	.91
Time limits	552	70.7	3.84	1.09
Your personal values and beliefs	550	69.8	3.88	1.33
Availability of news-gathering resources	551	63.9	3.71	1.07
Media laws and regulation	550	59.6	3.59	1.08
Editorial policy	545	55.0	3.43	1.22
Feedback from the audience	554	50.7	3.42	1.06
Relationships with news sources	541	44.4	3.18	1.25
Editorial supervisors and higher editors	546	41.0	3.14	1.19
Owners of the news organization	538	35.9	2.82	1.44
Profit expectations	535	34.8	2.69	1.47
Audience research and data	539	34.3	2.92	1.20
Advertising considerations	541	33.3	2.62	1.44
Managers of the news organization	541	32.7	2.78	1.36
Friends, acquaintances and family	553	30.9	2.77	1.30
Competing news organizations	552	30.8	2.79	1.21
Censorship	540	28.0	2.60	1.37
Your peers on the staff	545	25.7	2.64	1.23
Colleagues in other media	553	25.3	2.67	1.18
Business people	536	20.5	2.24	1.34
Public relations	541	20.1	2.43	1.27
Politicians	537	20.1	2.20	1.33
Government officials	537	17.9	2.11	1.31
Pressure groups	530	17.2	2.03	1.30

Question: Here is a list of potential sources of influence. Please tell me how much influence each of the following has on your work. 5 means it is extremely influential, 4 means very influential, 3 means somewhat influential, 2 means little influential, and 1 means not influential.

Journalism in Transition

Croatian journalists find that technical changes most influenced their work in the past five years. The greatest increase of importance for the work of Croatian journalists was in the use of search engines and regarding their own technical skills. The change in journalists' working hours, as the next largest change, should be viewed in conjunction with the technological changes. The largest decrease was noted in the time available for researching stories, and in the credibility of journalism (these two also seem to be associated, but descriptive statistics do not sustain a conclusion about relationships between variables).

Table 5: Changes in journalism

	N	Percentage saying has "increased"	Percentage saying has "decreased"
The use of search engines	527	87.5	2.7
Technical skills	524	81.5	9.4
Average working hours of journalists	515	81.4	4.5
Interactions of journalists with their audiences	506	41.3	33.4
The relevance of journalism for society	518	33.0	43.2
Having a university degree	515	23.3	30.7
Journalists' freedom to make editorial decisions	502	14.7	48.2
Having a degree in journalism or a related field	520	13.8	33.1
The credibility of journalism	517	8.7	77.8
Time available for researching stories	514	5.3	83.7

Question: Please tell me whether you think there has been an increase or a decrease in the importance of following aspects of work in [country]. 5 means they have increased a lot, 4 means they have somewhat increased, 3 means there has been no change, 2 means they have somewhat decreased, and 1 means they have decreased a lot.

Also, commercial influences seem to predominate in relation to pressures or influences on journalism: pressure toward sensational news, profit making pressures, user-generated content such as blogs, and competition, account for between 77.9 and 89.8 percent of statements. Over 75 percent also think that ethical standards of journalism have weakened in the past five years.

The questions about changes in journalism were only presented to journalists who had five years or more of professional experience.

Table 6: Changes in influences on journalism

	N	Percentage saying has "strengthened"	Percentage saying has "weakened"
Pressure toward sensational news	529	89.8	1.3
Profit making pressures	524	88.4	1.3
User-generated contents, such as blogs	505	79.2	4.2
Competition	524	77.9	9.9
Social media, such as [add 1 or 2 examples]	511	66.9	12.3
Public relations	515	65.6	9.5
Audience involvement in news production	515	64.7	12.4
Advertising considerations	521	62.0	26.5
Audience feedback	517	58.2	15.5
Audience research	503	40.0	23.7
Journalism education	521	21.1	42.8
Ethical standards	527	7.4	75.7

Question: Please tell me to what extent these influences have become stronger or weaker during the past five years in [country]. 5 means they have strengthened a lot, 4 means they have somewhat strengthened, 3 means they did not change, 2 means they have somewhat weakened, and 1 means they have weakened a lot.

Methodological Information

<i>Size of the population:</i>	2,797 working journalists (estimated)
<i>Sampling method:</i>	Convenience sampling for newsrooms and for journalists within newsrooms
<i>Sample size:</i>	561 working journalists
<i>Interview methods:</i>	mail/e-mail and online
<i>Response rate:</i>	21%
<i>Period of field research:</i>	12/2013-01/2014