Teaching Journalism in Ukraine: Between Formal and Non-Formal Education

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Abstract: Formal journalism education in Ukraine has been criticized for quite a long time for still being affected by the old Soviet theory-based teaching model, rather than adhering to internationally accepted best practices.

The system of teaching students at journalism departments has not changed significantly since Ukrainian independence in 1991 and many Ukrainian journalists have entered the profession with largely inadequate training. For instance, the practice of on-the-job training has been implemented only by some journalism departments, or is partly implemented by some lecturers. On the other hand, graduates of journalism programs in Ukraine say that more practical trainings help their professional growth.

This article, then, aims to explicate the advantages and disadvantages that exist in Ukrainian journalism education, and it seeks to reveal whether Ukrainian journalists prefer formal or non-formal education for their profession. The findings are based on an analysis of 10 focus groups conducted with a total of 92 Ukrainian journalists (both with and without journalism degrees) and nine in-depth interviews with Ukrainian lecturers and Ukrainian media representatives.

Keywords: journalism education, formal and non-formal journalism education, Ukrainian departments of journalism, graduates, media market, profession of a journalist

Introduction and Background

Many scholars have written about problems in journalism education (Buskirk, 2010; Fedchenko, 2007; Holubev, 2016; Kutovenko, 2016; NGO Detector Media, 2018; NGO Telekrytyka, 2016; Weibull, 2009 etc.) and debates over whether journalism education does or does not meet the definition of a profession surface regularly (Lewis, 2016; Hromadske Radio, 2018). In order to provide a common understanding of what skills should be taught in journalism programs, educators who gathered at the World Journalism Education Congress in 2007 developed 11 principles of journalism education. They proposed different competences and qualifications that graduates of journalism schools should have upon their graduation (World Journalism Education Council, 2007; Freedman & Shafer, 2008; Cobden, 2010; WJEC-3 Syndicate Report, 2013). Among those qualifications are the follo-

wing skills: graduates of journalism programs should be able to use new media tools and be proficient with the hardware used in the profession; take responsibility for their product; know market conditions; be reliable; have a good general knowledge; discover newsworthy issues on the basis of in-depth research; know the characteristics of different media; and maintain a commitment to society and the public (EJTA, 2006).

In Ukraine, the Ministry of Education and Science has a commission that sets standards for higher education. The team of educators who make up the commission worked on the following legislation in 2017: the law "On Higher Education" (2014), the National Qualifications Framework (Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, 2011), the List of Specializations (Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, 2015b), two draft documents of *Passport of Profession* project: Professional Standards for Qualifications of Multimedia Journalists (SCM, 2012a) and Professional Standards for Qualifications of Multimedia Editors (SCM, 2012b), and the draft document of competences and qualifications for specialization 061 "journalism" (Rizun et al., 2017). The standards have not been revised or approved. Thus, journalism education in Ukraine continues to look for a national standard of what media professionals should learn (Sirinyok-Dolgaryova, 2016: 27).

There are two ways of educating journalists in Ukraine: formally (in journalism schools) and non-formally (on-the-job training). The formal programs offer bachelor's and/or master's degrees, and their curricula are heavily regulated by the Ukrainian state. The non-formal journalism education can be found in various training programs, usually conducted in a non-institutionalized environment and supported mostly by foreign NGOs or organized by national mass media.
It is not known exactly how many journalism departments existed in Ukraine before 2015. The number varies from 39 to 71 departments (Rizun, 2012). According to data from the national higher education entrance system "Konkurs" (*Contest),* in the 2015-2016 academic year journalism was taught at 39 Ukrainian universities (Piddubna, 2016). Of these, 30 offered both bachelor's and master's degrees in journalism, while two of them offered a master's degree only, and 37 offered only a bachelor's degree.

In the 2017-2018 academic year 58 Ukrainian higher education institutions were licensed to offer the journalism specialization "061". Of these, 12 have bachelor degree programs in journalism, 43 offer bachelor's and master's degrees, and three offered only a master's degree in journalism. Based on this information, we can see that, over the course of two years, 19 additional journalism departments opened in Ukraine.

Figure 1: Higher Education Establishments specializing in journalism as licensed in 2017/18

Infographic by Karolina Uskakovych

Ukrainian journalism departments do offer scholarships and students can attend either by winning a scholarship or paying on their own. In order to win a scholarship an applicant must apply for competitive awards. The procedure to enter a program differs from school to school. Bachelor's degree students are accepted according to their results in the external independent testing (EIT). EIT is an examination for admission to universities – it was tested from 2004 to 2007 and adopted on a regular basis as a prerequisite of entry to higher education in 2008 (Ukrainian Centre for Educational Quality Assessment, 2016). Applicants who want to study in a master's program should have a bachelor's degree in journalism or another specialty and pass a series of entrance exams (written, oral and a presentation of their achievements in journalism). Roughly 6,500 students are accepted into journalism programs annually (Piddubna, 2016).

Non-formal journalism education in Ukraine began several years after the collapse of the Soviet Union when Ukraine became an independent state in 1991. Different NGOs with international financial support and locally-granted projects started to work in Ukraine, conducting a new style and approach to teaching. The following are examples of such organizations conducting non-formal training in Ukraine and the respective starting and closing date:

* Academy of Ukrainian Press (AUP), 2001
* Internews Ukraine, 1992
* Centre for Democracy and Rule of Law (CEDEM**)** – formerly MLI, 2005
* Institute of Mass Information (IMI), 2002
* Digital Future of Journalism (DFJ), 2007 - 2015

- The New Ukraine School of Professional Journalism, 2008-2014
- Digital Media for Universities (DMU), 2011-2014

among others. International donors supporting journalism education in Ukraine helped reorient the field in terms of applying internationally accepted best practices. These programs have received high praise from Ukrainian journalists because they focus on teaching the practical skills required by the profession in Ukraine (Kutovenko, 2016).

Meanwhile, the overwhelming majority of Ukrainian journalism programs include in their curricula a lot of theoretical disciplines that very often focus on philology (for example, Ukrainian and foreign literature), as it remained from Soviet times. This is the case because the teaching staff is mostly a legacy of the Soviet tradition – these are people with academic degrees who were taught and defended their thesis in a Soviet teaching paradigm. The practical journalism programs are offered mostly by professional journalists who make up a new generation of journalists that were educated in the period since Ukraine's independence. These journalists do not necessarily have university degrees in journalism (Holubev, 2016; Kutovenko, 2016).

Moreover, Ukrainian mass media does not trust the education provided by journalism departments throughout the country (Kutovenko, 2016; NGO Detector media, 2018), and many editors in the country refuse to employ students who graduate from many journalism departments because they seem to be poorly prepared. Thus, big Ukrainian media holding companies started to offer non-formal journalism education, too. For example, the television channels *Ukraina, Inter, 1+1,* and the newspaper *Day* all provide on-the-job training. However, the TV channels are owned by Ukrainian oligarchs and their content is criticized as propaganda and they do not uphold professional standards (Zubchenko, 2018).

The crisis of formal journalism education in Ukraine and the criticism it receives calls for empirical research. Such a research needs to provide solid data to point out strengths and weaknesses of the current practices of journalism education. The goal of this research is twofold. First, it seeks to explore the advantages and disadvantages of contemporary journalism education in Ukraine as assessed by the journalists themselves. Second, it asks whether veteran journalists in Ukraine prefer new colleagues who received either formal or non-formal journalism educations to evaluate their respective chances in the job market.

The following chapter provides context knowledge about the historical development of journalism education in Ukraine. Afterwards the methodology and sample of research will be explained. Finally, results of the interviews will be presented and conclusions on tendencies and perspectives will be drawn.

Historical development of journalism education in Ukraine

During the Soviet era (1923 – 1991) there were only three institutions of higher education that had journalism programs in Ukraine, namely Kyiv University, Lviv University, and the Lviv Higher Military and Political School. They were located within philological departments. The main task of journalists during that time was to be an observer of the Communist Party and report about its achievements. An easy way to fulfill this task was to find heroes who were examples of the "correct Communist strategy" of that time and to describe the party's successful policies with attractive and simple words. As a result, the journalist was a person who had a talent in writing and very often shared the Communist Party's ideology (Zdorovega, 2000: 47). Editors-in-chief and managers were trained separately at Communist Party schools (Zdorovega, 2000: 22). Thus, journalism education under the Communist system was defined as political education and it was coupled with propagandistic techniques that were used in both print and broadcast media (Gross, 1999: 149).

Once Ukraine gained its independence, the country had to write and adopt new laws. The educational sphere was no exception. Since 1991, many changes have been made to Ukraine's educational system. The most significant happened in 2005, when Ukraine joined the Bologna process and signed the Bologna Declaration, obliging the country to reform the educational system and adjust itself to European standards (Kovtun and Stick, 2009).
Ukraine's system of higher education is now regulated by the Constitution of Ukraine, the Laws of Ukraine "On Education", "On Higher Education", "On Scientific, Research and Development Activity", by ministerial and central government orders, and by international agreements which Ukraine made in compliance with domestic and international law.

On 29 April 2015, the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine approved the new list of education departments, which took effect on 1 September 2016. Many professions were converted into educational programs. For example, profession 061 "journalism" encompasses educational programs for "journalism", "advertising and public relations", "publishing and editing", and "media communications" (Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, 2015a). This was and continues to be criticized by Ukrainian educators and media experts, because they believe that public relations and advertising have nothing in common with journalism and its professional values (NGO Detector media, 2018).

Some steps were taken between 2011-2013 to foster collaboration between universities, the media market, and the Ukrainian Ministry of Education with essential support from NGOs and foundations. For example, the project *Passport of profession* (a collaboration between nine journalism departments, representatives of the media market, and the Ukrainian Ministry of Education with essential support from NGOs) identified the skills and knowledge which the Ukrainian media job

market needs from students in journalism departments. This information helped lecturers from universities and media experts to provide recommendations for journalism departments regarding their curricula. In parallel, the project was created on the basis of the Mohyla School of Journalism program *Digital Media for Universities (DMU)* in order to teach lecturers how to implement new skills within the developed educational standards at journalism programs. Nevertheless, as Oleksandr Vlasenko, former coordinator of the project *Passport of profession,* underlined, the attempt to improve journalism education to better address the needs of the profession was not successful. The project was not completed because of political events in eastern Ukraine in 2014: the Revolution of Dignity, the annexation of Crimea by Russia, the self-proclamation of the so-called DNR ("Donetsk People's Republic") and LNR ("Luhansk People's Republic") and the ongoing war between Ukraine and Russia in eastern Ukraine. The Ukrainian Ministry of Education ignored the results of the project (NGO Telekrytyka, 2016).

Another fact also complicates the process of improving the content of journalism education in Ukraine: different stakeholders (students, lecturers, deans of journalism schools and departments, journalists and the heads of media organizations) who are involved in the process of journalism education and the profession have different views of how journalism education in Ukraine should be organized. The diversity of ideas is not bad, as it provides a variety of ideas. Still, these ideas exist in divergent realities, and the communication among the participants mentioned above does not take place on a regular basis and is very often destructive (Kutovenko, 2016). For example, representatives of the media market accuse departments of journalism of not preparing students adequately. Meanwhile, lecturers say that representatives of the media market have not stipulated what they need from Ukrainian journalism education. Moreover, graduates of journalism departments criticize both universities and the media industry for their unwillingness to cooperate with each other and improve both the educational and professional fields (NGO Detector media, 2018).

As noted by Ukrainian media expert Diana Dutsyk, there are still more minuses than pluses in Ukrainian journalism education (Hromadske Radio, 2018). The gulf between the media market's needs and the ability of higher educational institutions to qualitatively train specialists has grown for years (Fedchenko, 2007; Dovzhenko, 2015; Holubev, 2016; Kutovenko, 2016; Hromadske Radio, 2018).

Still, solid research that accurately examined the state of Ukrainian journalism education largely did not exist up until 2016. During that year the Ukrainian NGO *Detector Media* conducted a pilot analysis of the state of journalism education in Ukraine. The results underlined that criticism from journalism departments and schools' concerning teaching practices in Ukraine cannot be ignored while reforming higher education (NGO Detector media, 2016). Also, in 2016, Sirinyok-Dolgaryova, a professor from Zaporizhzhya, surveyed 94 graduates from journalism schools in the Ukrainian capital Kyiv, Lviv in western Ukraine, and Za-

porizhzhya in eastern Ukraine. The results of her study indicated that Ukrainian journalism education needs to offer more practical courses and address the needs of the market-driven media industry in Ukraine (Sirinyok-Dolgaryova, 2016). Meanwhile, Ukrainian journalists state that non-formal journalism education offers more practical skills than the overwhelming majority of Ukrainian departments of journalism (Kutovenko, 2016). The following study aims to complement this research.

Methods and sample of research

For this article, 10 focus groups (comprised of 92 Ukrainian journalists) and nine in-depth interviews with Ukrainian lecturers and representatives of the Ukrainian media industry were completed. They were conducted between January 2013 and December 2017. This long time span was chosen to see whether results of two reform projects that started in 2011 unfolded their effects on journalism education.[1] However, both projects were stopped in 2014 due to war between Ukraine and Russia in eastern Ukraine, and their preliminary results ignored by the Ukrainian Ministry of Education. Thus, the long time span chosen was initially meant to reflect possible changes in education, however, now it rather shows the continuing problems of journalism education.

To collect data, focus groups with Ukrainian journalists who entered the profession with formal or non-formal journalism education were set up to explore whether either type of education is more efficient for contemporary journalists in Ukraine.

The respondents of the first five focus groups were journalists who took part in non-formal, vocational education provided by the following Ukrainian NGOs and educational programs:

- Internews Ukraine (http://www.internews.ua/),
- DFJ (http://j-school.kiev.ua/dfj/about/),
- Centre for Democracy and Rule of Law (CEDEM) – former MLI (http://cedem.org.ua/),
- Academy of Ukrainian Press (http://www.aup.com.ua/en/mission/), and
- The New Ukraine School of Professional Journalism.

Participants were selected according to the following criteria: age, sex, region where they live, company in which they work, and their personal motivation to take part in training. The selection was made proportionally to every criterion, according to the organizers of non-formal journalism education. The first five focus

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[1] These projects were 1) *Passport of profession* (a collaboration between nine Ukrainian journalism departments, representatives of the media market, and the Ukrainian Ministry of Education with essential support from NGOs, started in 2011 and ended in 2014), 2) the *Digital Media for Universities (DMU)* program, a project on the basis of the Mohyla School of Journalism in order to teach lecturers how to implement new skills within the developed educational standards in journalism programs.

groups (comprised of 46 journalists) were organized with the help of these NGOs and educational programs.

The remaining five focus groups (numbers 6-10) were conducted by the researcher with the help of personal contacts in the following Ukrainian cities: Kyiv, Cherkasy (central Ukraine), Chernivtsi (western Ukraine), Mariupol (eastern Ukraine), and Odessa (southern Ukraine). Forty-six participants came from the following journalism programs:

- the Kyiv-Mohyla School of Journalism, National University Kyiv-Mohyla academy, Kyiv
- Institute of Journalism, Kyiv International University, Kyiv
- Department of Trade and Marketing, Chair of Marketing and Advertising, Kyiv National University of Trade and Economics, Kyiv
- Institute of Journalism, Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv, Kyiv
- Department of Journalism and International Relations, Kyiv National University of Culture and Arts, Kyiv
- Institute of Journalism, Borys Grinchenko, Kyiv University, Kyiv
- Department of International Relations, Chair of Journalism, Advertising and PR, National Aviation University, Kyiv
- Department of Ukrainian Philology and Writing, Andrii Malyshko, Chair of Journalism, Mykhailo Dragomanov National Pedagogical University, Kyiv
- Institute of Publishing and Printing, Chair of Publishing, National Technical University of Ukraine "Kyiv Polytechnic Institute", Kyiv
- Department of Journalism, Odessa National Academy of Law, Odessa
- Institute of Information Society Issues, Chair of Political Science, Sociology and Social Communications, O. Popov Odessa National Academy of Telecommunication, Odessa
- Department of Humanities, Chair of Information Activities and Media Communications, Odessa National Polytechnic University, Odessa
- Department of Journalism, Advertising and Publishing, I. Mechnykov Odessa National University, Odessa
- Department of Philology, Chair of Journalism, Yuriy Fedkovych, Chernivtsi National University, Chernivtsi
- Department of Philology and Mass Communications, Mariupol State University, Mariupol, Donetsk Oblast
- Institute of Ukrainian Philology and Social Communications, Chair of Journalism, Advertising and PR Technologies, Bohdan Khmelnytskyy Cherkasy National University, Cherkasy.

Journalists who participated in these 10 focus groups ranged in age from 22 to 33 and represented different regions of all parts of Ukraine. They work in different types of Ukrainian media (private and state-owned): television, radio, online me-

dia, and print media (weekly, monthly, and daily). There were journalists who worked in news production or investigative journalism, while others were interested in social, cultural, economic, or political topics, and some were involved in entertainment journalism. Each focus group interview took nearly 1 hour and 45 minutes. The researcher recruited participants to the focus groups from among the participants of trainings conducted by the NGOs mentioned above. Only those journalists who agreed to take part in the research were involved in the focus groups.

The researcher conducted in-depth interviews with Ukrainian lecturers from journalism departments, well-known Ukrainian media experts, representatives from NGOs in the country and media that organize various non-formal training programs. The method of in-depth interviews was chosen because it allowed the researcher to best gather information on journalism education (both formal and non-formal) from the people who are responsible for educating Ukrainian journalists. Participants were selected according to their authority and experience in both formal and non-formal journalism education in Ukraine. Nine educators agreed to take part in an in-depth interview conducted by the researcher.

They represented the following institutions:

- the NGO Centre UA
- the Rinat Akhmetov Foundation Development of Ukraine
- the television channel Inter
- Hromadske.TV
- the newspaper Day
- Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv (Institute of Journalism)
- Petro Mohyla Black Sea University (Institute of Philology, Chair of Journalism)
- V.N. Karazin Kharkiv State University (Department of Philology, Chair of Journalism)
- the Ukrainian Catholic University (UCU School of Journalism).

Each in-depth interview lasted nearly two hours and took place in Kyiv. The researcher used open-ended questions in order to deeply explore the respondents' feelings and perspectives on the subject being researched (Diehl, Guion, and McDonald, 2011: 1).
To analyze the data and describe the results, the researcher used a qualitative content analysis of the responses generated by the focus groups and in-depth interviews.

Results of research

The goal of this research was twofold. First, it sought to explore the advantages and disadvantages of contemporary journalism education in Ukraine as perceived by the journalists themselves. And, second, it asked whether veteran journalists in Ukraine prefer new colleagues who receive either formal or non-formal journalism educations.

Focus groups on formal education
According to the data gathered and analyzed in this research, the core problem of formal journalism education in Ukraine regards teaching practices at Ukrainian journalism departments. This is the assertion of journalists who entered the profession with a degree in journalism. The overwhelming majority said that the years they spent studying at journalism departments was lost time:

> "I use mostly nothing from what we were taught at the university. I entered the department but I lost my interest after getting acquainted with the teachers and first disciplines. Because almost nothing was about journalism, much less was about current trends in our profession" (focus group 7, Department of Philology and Mass Communications, Mariupol State University, Mariupol, Donetsk oblast, eastern Ukraine).

> "There is no adequate education system and we cannot feel the value base which is necessary for the system to exist at the administrative level at my department. I noticed this mostly in the master's program because, frankly speaking, the master's program was a profanity" (focus group 10, Institute of Ukrainian Philology and Social Communications, Chair of Journalism, Advertising and PR-technologies, Bohdan Khmelnytskyy Cherkasy National University, Cherkasy, central Ukraine).

Most of the respondents also said that journalism programs do not have enough technical equipment to match the number of students in their programs. For example, in one instance, there was one computer for five students, one audio recorder for eight people, and there was no camera for 53 people who wanted to learn photography. At other journalism departments, students had either no or limited access to cameras, computers, and audio recorders:

> "I entered the University in 2011. We had old computers. Their programs were from the beginning of the year 2000. For my benefit, I could afford the laptop on which I learned to edit films, work in Photoshop. Others who could not afford a laptop faced difficulties" (focus group 6, Department of Philology, Chair of Journalism, Yuriy Fedkovych Chernivtsi National University, Chernivtsi, western Ukraine).

> "Upon two months, I immediately bought a voice recorder and a tab for myself, because to get a technical equipment even to use it within the university, you had to join a queue, to sign up for the studio, and only then to work there and read aloud your text" (focus group 7, Department of Humanities, Chair of Information Activities and Media Communications, Odessa National Polytechnic University, Odessa, southern Ukraine).

> "We had very poor technical resources – old cameras with limitations, little of batteries, they did not record well, and the quality was poor. To get to the editing room, we had join a

very long queue. There was no technical base in the condition we wanted it to be. Most students could not get a camera on hands to use it outside the university because, roughly speaking, there was a supply and maintenance manager who would better be sure that 15-year old cameras lie safely than give them to a student to practice something outside the Institute" (focus group 8, Institute of Journalism, Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv, Kyiv).

There was a total imbalance between practice and theory at many departments, with the latter often being significantly superior:

> "We absolutely lacked practice. For some reason, we studied many outdated things, too many useless theoretical courses, and did not understand why we wrote course works on some chronicles that had been a long time ago and not on contemporary topics. We did not have online journalism, data journalism, investigative journalism. And it has been already 2013! During my formal journalism education, we talked about anything but not about things happening in editorial offices, in the Ukrainian media. We may have remembered the BBC standards, some famous journalists, but we did not know how journalists worked at editorial offices" (focus group 6, Department of Trade and Marketing, Chair of Marketing and Advertising, Kyiv National University of Trade and Economics, Kyiv).

Mostly all the respondents agreed that Ukrainian journalism education in universities is about philology and not about journalism. For instance, many participants said they studied the history of journalism for an entire year but there was no time at all – some said one semester at most – for online journalism in the program, and lectures were comprised of a lecturer reciting information from an outdated textbook:

> "There were a lot of subjects not related with journalism, for example, literature, some history of aviation, ethics but not a journalistic one, general, religious studies, etc. Besides, they tell us that this is a Bologna system but at the same time, they do not allow choosing these subjects. There are 20% of subjects relating to journalism and 80% of them not relating to journalism. The reason why this university is not very successful is that many lecturers teach subjects they do not know well" (focus group 9, Department of International Relations, Chair of Journalism, Advertising and PR, National Aviation University, Kyiv).

> "I graduated in 2016, and at many courses, lecturers demanded notes of their lectures on which we passed exams or tests. Very often they asked us to buy their books with information relevant to no later than 2000. Also, these were mostly philological courses during two years of a bachelor program and they did not help us much in our profession. It was a waste of time!" (focus group 7, Institute of Journalism, Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv, Kyiv)

> "We studied Oriental literature for several years, i.e. there also were many strange subjects not clearly necessary for us. I so understand that our rector just had a lot of familiar teachers and he just called them to his institute. The teachers were not very professional, too. If they worked earlier in journalism, it was long ago in the Soviet Union" (focus group 9, Institute of Journalism, Kyiv International University, Kyiv).

Many students were surprised that at the departments of journalism textbooks printed during Soviet times and republished with the same content in independent Ukraine were dominating. They said that usually these were Russian-language

textbooks. Often, students themselves told teachers that foreign literature was available, showing them databases where books on the subject could be found. However, foreign sources did not appear on the list of literature for years, as many of respondents pointed out (focus groups 8, 9, 10).

Many of those interviewed noted that a lot of journalism departments lack teachers and lecturers who currently practice journalism. Moreover, respondents believe that many lecturers are not qualified to teach:

> "We had a teacher who intensively taught us journalistic investigations for a year and a half but he had not made a single investigation in his life. That is why I do not understand what we were doing there" (focus group 7, Institute of Journalism, Borys Grinchenko Kyiv University, Kyiv).

Moreover, many departments did not include in their curricula topics that can help journalists address professional challenges:

> "Teaching at the departments of journalism should be relevant to the modern challenges of the profession. If there is a war in the east of Ukraine, a hybrid war, then how one could not talk about such things. They told us something briefly but there was not enough sense in that. I intended to go to Eastern Ukraine to cover the events of 2014 but I attended the course "Work in high risk and combat actions areas" held by Internews before. It helped me a lot. For example, they just kicked us out to a field and shot us from airsoft guns. They explained us what to do in such cases. They told us that when coming to the place of combat you should know the types of weaponry in order to cover the information correctly. And it was non-formal education, not at my department" (focus group 8, Department of Journalism, Odessa National Academy of Law, Odessa).

The practice of student exchanges with the journalism departments of other countries is less common in Ukraine. So, these foreign exchange programs, which is one of the conditions of the Bologna process, has not yet been implemented in the field of journalism training in Ukraine. The practice of Ukrainian students studying at foreign universities has usually taken place on the students' own initiative, according to many of the respondents (focus groups 6, 7, 8, 9, 10).

However, in the opinion of the participants in this research, there was definitely a silver lining to the poor education that they felt to have received at journalism departments. They said that the situation pushed them to start looking for work in media where they could learn on the job. The situation also pushed students to engage in type of self-education. That is to say that they attended courses, trainings, and schools that offered a non-formal education (focus groups 1, 3, 5, 8, 9, 10).

Many practicing journalists said they had a basic knowledge of a broad swath of topics but they did not have the knowledge how to write, for instance, about economy or medicine (focus group, 10). According to the research participants, the curricula of bachelor's programs should be significantly reduced, and programs should focus instead on offering certain specializations after the second year of study. These programs should then train students in journalism and media com-

munications at the master's level (focus groups 8, 10).

Research participants listed the following as advantages of a formal journalism education in Ukraine: particular teachers, concrete interesting subjects, a wide range of acquaintances with interesting people (both classmates and guest lecturers), and opportunities for self-development (opportunities for free schedule, practice in media, and for attending different courses, exchange programs, etc.).

Only two institutions in formal journalism education were highly evaluated by respondents: the Mohyla School of Journalism at the National University of "Kyiv-Mohyla Academy" (established in 2001) and two master's programs in the Ukrainian Catholic University in journalism (established in 2010) and in media communications (2012). Research participants said that these schools offered both formal and non-formal education (focus groups 6, 8, 10).

> "Our School has a profound technical basis, well-experienced lecturers, disciplines include a lot of practice and they are coherent with media market trends. I can state that all my groupmates were satisfied by the formal education we received here!"(focus group, 6, the Kyiv-Mohyla School of Journalism, National university Kyiv-Mohyla academy, Kyiv).

The overwhelming majority of people who took part in this research said that the best option for a formal journalism education in Ukraine is a bachelor's degree in a non-journalism discipline and master's degree in journalism (focus groups 6, 7, 9).

Focus groups on non-formal education
Many of those journalists who entered the profession without a degree in journalism generally believe that one can study all practical things in non-formal courses or trainings, for example, at trainings offered by Internews Ukraine, CEDEM, the Institute of Mass Information, the Academy of Ukrainian Press, the NGO Detector Media, and other Ukrainian NGOs (focus groups 1, 2, 3, 4, 5):

> "The employer requires not a diploma but practical knowledge, general high level of erudition. For example, I came to work, showed that I could record, edit, write, and they took me. And only then they asked where I learned it. I told the truth that I learned it not at the university but at various courses and trainings (focus group 2, journalist from western Ukraine).

> "A non-formal journalism education can improve and enrich knowledge and skills in some days or a week without spending four (bachelor program) or two (master program) years at university and being taught a lot of useless courses. I became a journalist without a formal education and do believe that one can become a journalist even without a diploma in journalism" (focus group, 4, journalist from eastern Ukraine).

> "A non-formal journalism education helped me broaden my professional outlook, because with the help of new acquaintances with colleagues from other regions of Ukraine and from abroad, national and foreign media-experts, I received new professional contacts. It helped me a lot when I entered the profession. Time to time I attend such courses, because I realize that journalism demands lifelong learning" (focus group 5, journalist from northern Ukraine).

However, there were respondents in this category who admitted that they lacked general theoretical knowledge about journalism. Thus, they said if they had the time, they would like to study at a one-year master's program in journalism, as long as it was a high-quality program (focus groups 2, 4, 5).

Many respondents also said that a formal or non-formal journalism education, unfortunately, does not guarantee freedom within the profession in Ukraine. For example, many journalists claimed that they were shocked when they started working as journalists because the professional reality they entered neglected those ethical and moral principles they were taught at universities, or during non-formal journalism trainings or courses, respectively (focus groups 1, 3, 4, 7, 9, 10). Principles defined by the Code of Professional Ethics of Ukrainian Journalists (2002) – for example, to tell the truth, to be balanced, to check the sources of information, to avoid censorship, self-censorship, and so on – are often not adhered to in Ukraine:

> "At the journalistic ethics course, our lecturers taught us to match the BBC standards. When I came to work, I realized never mind BBC! You have to either adhere to the unwritten editorial code 'a good journalist has to earn money' or look for another place of work" (focus group 2, journalist from central Ukraine).

> "When they asked me to rewrite the article and delete critical remarks toward the owner of our channel, I realized how awful the things in our profession are. The ones who pay us can dictate us what to do. Shame on me, but I did it, because I had to earn money for my 3-year-old baby" (focus group 5, journalist from eastern Ukraine).

This issue of media freedom in Ukraine is a result of media ownership in the country. Media owners or so-called media barons in Ukraine are oligarchs. They own large media holdings, which were established in the mid-1990s. At that time, the owners of financial and industrial groups (now referred to as oligarchs) accumulated their original assets. Since Ukraine's independence, these oligarchs have grown stronger and they now influence many processes in the country. They use the media in Ukraine as a political tool (especially during elections). As a rule, the majority of large media owners also own enterprises in different industries (refining, chemical, heavy machinery, construction, etc.) and, therefore, these businessmen are often loyal to the authorities in order to protect their own interests. The situation also affects the editorial policy of different media organizations (Dutsyk, 2010), and very often results in violations of professional journalistic standards (Zubchenko, 2018). This indicates that also non-formal education does not in all aspects meet the reality of the Ukrainian media market.

In-depth interviews

The results of the in-depth interviews conducted with lecturers from journalism departments in Ukraine, with well-known Ukrainian media experts and representatives of Ukrainian NGOs, and with media that organize different types of non-formal journalism training programs confirm that misunderstanding and ineffectiveness dominate the training of journalists.

For instance, the media market blames lecturers for bad training of future professionals. The editors very often state that the graduates of most universities do not have basic practical skills, do not understand the specifics of work in newsrooms, are not familiar with market trends (for example, they do not know anything about data journalism, how to promote a media product, etc.), and do not use journalistic terminology (in-depth interviews 1, 5, 6, 8, 9).

The educators in turn blame the media market representatives for their unwillingness to cooperate with the departments of journalism. Instead, according to the educators, the recent practice has been to establish journalism schools or training projects for specific media (for example, media schools of *Inter* or *1+1* television channels).

> "Such practices are profitable for the media market. However, this does not improve the situation with the formal journalism education" (in-depth interview 2, woman, Petro Mohyla Black Sea University).

Another problem is the lack of communication on the question of how the departments of journalism at different universities should teach their students:

> "Joint projects or scientific conferences take place very occasionally, but they are not enough to pull scholars together to solve a common problem and start the process of reforming education programs on their part" (in-depth interview 4, man, the Ukrainian Catholic University).

What also complicates Ukrainian formal journalism education is the lack of transparency regarding changes made to the curricula of different journalism departments:

> "Ministerial checks are bureaucratic, held in the same way over the years, where the content is not so important as the form of its presentation" (in-depth interview 7, man, V.N. Karazin Kharkiv State University)

The results of the in-depth interviews with lecturers from Petro Mohyla Black Sea University and Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv showed that that educators mostly blame everybody but themselves, that education programs at their departments are not adapted to current market conditions. Still, lecturers themselves do not want to improve the situation:

> "There are a lot of lecturers in Ukraine who do not improve their syllabuses or adopt new disciplines into educational process. In 2017 we questioned educators from 11 departments in Ukraine and found out that few of them knew about the changes in education programs initiated by UNESCO still in 2005 and discussed at the World Journalism Education Congress held every three years (2007, 2010, 2013, 2016)" (in-depth interview, 3, man, the Rinat Akhmetov Foundation Development of Ukraine).

Representatives of non-formal journalism education programs said that the demand for their courses and trainings grows every year. In their opinion, this provides evidence of a deep crisis in formal journalism education (in-depth interview,

3, man, the Rinat Akhmetov Foundation Development of Ukraine).

> "To find the way out of this situation, educators have to revise courses and programs for teaching students, and to refuse outdated subjects. At the level of the Ministry of Education, they need to reduce the number of universities and institutes training future specialists. To do this, it is worth creating effective methodology for filtering universities so that their education complies with the media market needs" (in-depth interview 5, woman, the newspaper Day).

Simultaneously, representatives of the media market need to help lecturers by outlining their expectations of graduates, and by developing their requirements for future journalists, "actually, to continue what was started by the project Passport of the Profession (2011-2014)" (in-depth interview 4, man, the Ukrainian Catholic University).

Most importantly, the process should include not only Kyiv and some big cities, but other Ukrainian cities from distant regions, too:

> "Most of the problems in the field of journalism education start from oblasts, since decisions on the opening of the departments of journalism, quantity of the government order and other are made at the local level through corruption schemes and nepotism. There should be definitely an external independent commission to revise these departments and help them improve" (in-depth interview, 6, woman, Hromadske.TV).

Very often, a university diploma is the reason that an employer will not even invite a candidate to an interview. For example, one of the interviewees noted that their media company does not recruit graduates from some Ukrainian journalism departments because of their perceived low level of training (in-depth interview 9, woman, the television channel Inter).

Conclusion

Ongoing conversations with Ukrainian journalists, lecturers, and representatives of the Ukrainian media industry and NGOs in Ukraine led to the conclusion that the current Ukrainian university system at most journalism departments inadequately prepares future professionals.

The qualitative content analysis of focus groups and in-depth interviews identified many gaps that exist in formal journalism education in Ukraine.

Graduates from Ukrainian journalism departments mostly noted that certain teachers, interesting subjects, a wide range of acquaintances with interesting people (both classmates and guest lecturers), and opportunities for self-development (opportunities for free schedule, practice in media, opportunities for attending different courses, exchange programs, non-formal journalism education, etc.) were among the advantages of their formal studies.

On the other hand, Ukrainian graduates mostly noted the following disadvantages in their education: the programs and study materials were obsolete, there was too

much focus on the study of theory, there was a lack of technical equipment and educators did not have the requisite skills needed to teach their courses. Nearly half of the respondents said they lack the practice they believe they should have. Specifically, they said that they do not have the skills needed to work with photo and video editors, to work with sources , and to do data and investigative journalism.

The focus groups and in-depth interviews also showed that Ukrainian journalism education is not well integrated into the international educational framework and does not adhere to many journalism principles adopted, for instance, by WJEC.
As a result, the philological orientation of formal education at journalism departments and the absence of communication with international educators do not allow students to achieve the professional competences and qualifications needed in the profession.
Moreover, most of the respondents in this research were convinced that it is not necessary to have a journalism degree to become a journalist, largely because there are now many NGOs in Ukraine that provide journalists with high quality training. Thus, these research participants said that they prefer non-formal journalism preparation, and to them non-formal journalism education offers a promising alternative to formal journalism education in Ukraine.

In addition, representatives of the Ukrainian media market remain unsatisfied with the formal journalism education of graduates. And educators, in turn, blame the media market, saying that media representatives do not communicate with them and tell them what they need future journalists to know.
Formal journalism education in Ukraine has not yet rid itself of a philological style of education. Occasionally journalism programs revise their curricula and make an effort to adapt to the new demands of the media market. But, at the moment, non-formal journalism education is still better suited to address the challenges, needs, and tendencies of the media market in Ukraine.

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