Challenges and possibilities of context-specific differences in international journalism training

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Introduction

A key aspect of the deep internationalization of communication studies is a critical reflection about journalism training as part of media development. This chapter is based on a literature review and the research results of my doctoral thesis, and it offers insights into how people coming from different contexts and on different hierarchical levels (being a so-called donor vs. a receiver, a trainer vs. a training participant) negotiate their differences. The aim is raising awareness in journalism research as well as journalism training practices of context-specific differences at times of global interconnections, their challenges, and possibilities for a more participatory approach. In the following, communication and journalism studies, as well as the practice of journalism training, are two threads that are interwoven in a mutual learning process.

As part of media development work (see also Fengler et al. in this book), journalistic training and education are offered worldwide and across national borders. Most of the funding is provided by countries such as the USA, Germany, Japan, the UK and other European countries (Cauhapé-Cazaux & Kalathil, 2015, p. 9; Myers & Juma, 2018, pp. 20–21). The "recipients" of these fundings (Cauhapé-Cazaux & Kalathil, 2015, p. 3) are often located in countries of the so-called "Global South" (p. 16), which are, for example, referred to as "non-democratic countries" (p. 5) or "developing countries" (p. 16), with a focus on Africa and Asia (p. 12). For journalistic education and training, governmental, or nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) either invite media professionals to their editorial offices or courses or travel to different countries to offer curricula or training for local media practitioners and students on-site. Against this background, this chapter assumes that it is essential to be prepared for the requirements of different work and life contexts in different media systems and regions. Regarding international training curricula and training offers, the lack of consideration of precisely these differences has already been discussed critically. In journalism studies, for example, the avoidance of these differences amounts to a "whiteness in journalism pedagogy," like a homogeneous White perspective

on news selection or journalistic values and inequalities, and the necessity to decolonize knowledge and journalism education (Alemán, 2014; Glasser, 1992; Moyo, 2022).

Here, the key question of how we can achieve a deep internationalization of journalistic training is answered by delving into three parts. First, a look at the past shows that the awareness of context-specific differences and forms of inequality was lacking but has always been demanded. Second, an examination of the present based on empirical studies and the analysis of discourses by academics and practitioners shows a slow realization when challenges persist, and potentials for a "deeply international" journalistic education. Third, a glimpse into the future can show us how challenges and possibilities of context-specific differences can be better addressed in terms of participation and deeper internationalization.

Where do we come from?

Answering the question of where we come from shows why and how international journalistic education has developed under Western normative influences. After the end of World War II, media development efforts primarily in the USA and the UK were aimed at restoring a functioning news system in the defeated countries. Journalists were seen as essential here. In 1946, for example, the USA invited journalists from Germany, Japan, and Austria to come and receive further training and "professionalization," according to Wrenn (2011, p. 85–92). Moreover, the motives for these training courses were primarily based on an anti-fascist, anti-communist, and anti-totalitarian ideology and were therefore normatively oriented (Wrenn, 2011, p. 89). The predetermined ideal of the press was that it should be independent of the government and be self-financing. However, its possible lack of freedom due to its subjugation to free-market logic was ignored (Wrenn, 2011, p. 93). After the end of the Cold War and the German reunification in 1989, optimism grew even more that the media and their development could lead to democratization worldwide (Higgins, 2014; Myers et al., 2017, p. 8; Schiffrin & Behrman, 2011, p. 340). With the "victory" of liberal democracy over communism, media development efforts became a global endeavor, "at least from the perspective of Western donors" (Miller, 2009, p. 12). The USA and Great Britain once again dominated these efforts with their ideas of a "Western" democracy and a correspondingly free press.[1] On a global level, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has had a funding program for the International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC) since 1980 (UNESCO, 2008, p. 12). It promoted an independent and pluralistic press and journalists through the Global Initiative for Excellence in Journalism Education program (UNESCO – International Programme for the Development of Communi-

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[1]   Here, it is unfortunately not possible to go any further into the media development work and journalistic education and training offered by Russia and China, which is certainly relevant for a discussion of asymmetries and dominance in this field, too. Either way, the studies on financial support for media development show that the main donors are the USA and European countries; see Cauhapé-Cazaux and Kalathil (2015), Myers and Gilberds (2024), and Myers and Juma (2018).

cation, 2014). Journalists were seen as key players in development, democracy, and good governance.

As early as the 1980s, Asian countries formulated the inappropriateness of "Western" news reporting and called for a corresponding "de-Westernization," and this was discussed, for example, at a symposium in Bangkok in 1985 among different media scholars and practitioners (Xu, 2009, p. 360). Another early critical examination of this dominance and the "Western" influence on media systems is the MacBride Report, which was commissioned by UNESCO. It emphasized the importance of national and independent media being independent from Western and foreign influences (International Commission for the Study of Communication Problems, 1980). "Western aid —described in the report as "a 'Marshall Plan' for the development of third world communications"—was inappropriate as it would tend to reproduce Western values and transnational corporate interests in third world societies" (Raboy, 2019, p. 16).

Overall, various dependencies and influencing factors on journalistic ideas and practices in the so-called recipient countries were and are still discussed. Regarding the perception of editorial independence, according to Schiffrin (2017, p. 13), surveys of private foundations, intermediary organizations, and recipient organizations showed that grant recipients align themselves with the priorities of the donors. The author further noted that donors also exert influence through their demands to refrain from certain reports (such as not mentioning other NGOs) or to report on certain topics in a partially predetermined manner and another form of influence is journalists' engagement in reporting on selected "development projects" (pp. 18–19). Organizations in countries that primarily receive funding and are considered to be countries of the "Global South" are more dependent (Keßler, 2022). "In poor countries, media outlets may be more likely to accept requests from donors that they would decline if they could afford to say no" (Schiffrin, 2017, p. 21). In addition, funding from international organizations, such as the UN, can influence editorial decisions and lead to less critical reports about them or their member states (Scott et al., 2017, p. 173). The ideological understanding of what journalism is or should be is discussed as "Western" or Anglo-American and as normative (Josephi, 2005, pp. 575–576; see also Radue et al. on "prefix journalisms" in this book). For Asia, for example, the term "development journalism" was used to describe its own ideas of journalism that were distinct from the "West" (Kalyango et al., 2017; Xu, 2009).[2] Historically, its roots and approaches are seen in the 1960s in Asia, such as in the Philippines and India, and especially at the beginning as a differentiation from "Western news agencies" (Xu, 2009, pp. 358–361). Here, journalists engage in goal-oriented communication in the context of specific development projects (Grossenbacher, 1988, pp. 65–66; Kalyango et al., 2017).[3] Another key aspect of this understanding of the role of development journalism is the promotion of tolerance and cultural diversity (Kalyango et al., 2017, p. 584).

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[2] It should be noted here that there is no one form of "development journalism," even if it is described as a special form of journalism for "developing countries" and in the service of their national development and independence; see Grossenbacher (1988, pp. 59–62) and Xu (2009).

[3] The motives of "development journalism," such as positive social change, are not necessarily only to be found among journalists from "developing countries" or in the service of "development efforts." A similar form is, for example, the "public journalism" of the 1990s in the USA; see Shafer (1998). Other common features of "development journalism" described by Musa und Domatob (2007) are

This historical development described here clarifies what possibilities and challenges can be associated with journalistic education and training, especially those offered and developed by external actors. In particular, global structural inequalities and context-specific differences between countries and regions need to be reflected upon. After looking back at the past, the question of where journalistic education and training stand today needs to be explored.

Where do we stand?

The dominance of "Western" ideas of development and journalism, which has been criticized by academics and practitioners alike (Banda, 2013; Lugo-Ocando, 2020; Manyozo, 2012, pp. 200–207; Miller, 2009; Murphy & Scotton, 1987; Phiri & Fourie, 2011), has long been addressed in media development work and research through participatory approaches. Furthermore, for some time, they have been described as partially overcome[4] (Communication Initiative et al., 2007, p. 44; Drefs & Thomass, 2019; Tufte & Mefalopolus, 2009). With these participatory approaches, an "external expert stance" of stakeholders, mostly from donor countries, should be avoided (World Bank, 1996, p. 3). Here, participation is not only associated with equality and self-determination but also with the effectiveness and sustainability of "development efforts," as well as with their success, relevance, and quality (World Bank, 1996, p. ix). Overall, the objectives and standards of further journalistic education and training are described in various ways, such as "good practice" (Banda, 2013, p. 9; UNESCO, 2013, p. 5), "professionalization," or "capacity-building" (Scott, 2014, p. 80). "Professionalization" is also one of five indicators for measuring the sustainability of media in respective countries developed by the Washington/USA-based NGO International Research & Exchanges Board (IREX, 2016). Despite these approaches and standards, the following subchapter will show that dominance and the resulting challenges have not yet been overcome.

In addition to the various objectives and motives, the content of journalistic training is diverse (in line with different understandings of media development work, categorized and discussed by Manyozo, 2012; Scott, 2014). Depending on the understanding of what media development is and what it is for, and how media is used for this purpose, there are journalistic courses on topics such as reporting on health or economic issues (Schiffrin & Behrman, 2011), elections (Myers et al., 2017, p. 19), the development of business models for the self-financing of media organizations (Myers et al., 2017, p. 21; Scott, 2014, pp.

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discussed as so-called universal ethics, such as the claim to truth and objectivity and social responsibility (pp. 318–319).

4   However, recent studies show that these asymmetrical relationships still exist. For example, the study on the unequal negotiation processes of the 2030 Development Agenda within the UN, see Denk (2023), and for the study on the one-sided dominance of development cooperation between actors from Germany on the one hand and Peru and Bolivia on the other, see Nguyen (2016). Also, the many voices of thinkers from the "Global South" on the Western dominance of journalistic education and their calls for African perspectives illustrate this, for example Banda (2009), Ezumah (2019), Kasoma (1996), Nyamnjoh (2010), Phiri & Fourie (2011), Rodny-Gumede (2018), and Ugangu (2019).

85–86), science journalism (Lugo-Ocando, 2020, pp. 128–130), how to use new or digital technologies (Myers et al., 2017, p. 46; Scott, 2014, p. 98), and methods of investigative journalism (Lublinski et al., 2016).

Journalistic skills and quality are measured, among other things, by whether journalism schools or university programs exist in the respective countries (Center for International Media Assistance [CIMA], 2007, pp. 7, 9; Nelson & Susman-Peña, 2012, p. 23; UNESCO, 2013, pp. 6, 22). In the Model Curricula for Journalism Education, the UNESCO member states declare: "We do believe, however, that study in university disciplines should continue to be seen as basic to professional training in journalism" (UNESCO, 2007, p. 7). This orientation can be seen in terms of institutionalization and formalization (Schmidt & Martens-Edwards, 2015, p. 15) and follows a trend from the USA and Great Britain begun in the 1970s and 80s (Martens-Edwards, 2023, pp. 68–71; Murphy & Scotton, 1987, pp. 17–18). However, the preference for either university or practical training was not uniform between the UK and the USA, or even in European countries, which is clearly shown in the international comparison of journalistic education and training sponsored by UNESCO (Gaunt, 1992). This also applies to the question of who leads such courses: either practitioners or academics. Either way, when we talk about preferences, the question of who designs them is relevant. To answer this question, we use the example of the UNESCO training curricula to illustrate why and how they are discussed as a normative Western dominance. Overall, UNESCO's journalistic standards emphasize practical skills, reflections on the role of journalists and their function in society, and the importance of including other disciplines from arts and sciences (UNESCO, 2007, pp. 7–8). In 2007, UNESCO developed indicators for the quality of journalism education (Berger & Matras, 2007), based on European countries and the USA. They were then adapted to the African continent to define excellence centers of journalism here.[5] Besides the UNESCO curricula, standards for journalism education were also defined at the World Journalism Education Congress (WJEC) (MacKinnon, 2007). The WJEC is an alliance of academic associations worldwide that deal with journalism and mass communication and work together with UNESCO – International Programme for the Development of Communication (2020, p. 1). Their standards for journalistic education require, among other things, that educators are a mix of academics and practitioners (principle 3), that they must be proficient in a variety of computer-based technologies (9), that they are required to collaborate internationally (11), and, finally, that they have an interest in context-specific differences (10) (MacKinnon, 2007).

In 2020, the WJEC and UNESCO reaffirmed the importance of journalism education and training for the 2030 Development Agenda with the Paris Declaration on Freedom of Journalism Education at the World Journalism Education Congress: "We believe that journalism education has a fundamental role to play towards more inclusive societies and the United Nations' 2030 development agenda" (UNESCO – International Programme for the Development of Communication, 2020, p. 8). UNESCO has a publication series on journalism education and offers various curricula and training courses (Banda, 2013;

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5   The authors noted here that "by no means should UNESCO ignore the institutions that are not in the potential Centres of Excellence list, but rather see its work with the latter as a way of leveraging impact on such Centres of Reference (and others)"; see Berger und Matras (2007, p. 28).

UNESCO, 2007).[6] The universally conceived model curricula are still discussed critically as in the past by several participants at two meetings, particularly regarding local differences and "Western dominance" (UNESCO, 2013). On the one hand, the curricula homogenize context-specific differences with their specific and different journalistic practices and enable the continuation and expansion of postcolonial privileges of former colonizers (Harris et al., 2023, pp. 155–156), as the above examples of factors influencing journalistic training have shown. On the other hand, they link journalistic standards with the promotion of democracy and has a corresponding focus (Harris et al., 2023, p. 159). However, "In this vein, some scholars have legitimately and rightly questioned whether the UNESCO model curriculum design can be 'universal'" (UNESCO, 2013, p. 9). In addition, literature, and material references that are relevant for contexts such as Asia, for example, are indicated as missing (UNESCO, 2013, pp. 28–29).[7] Furthermore, the curriculum content does not always correspond to local realities, as discussed for Africa (UNESCO, 2013).[8] Here, references to the history of African journalism must inform journalism education, contrary to the dominant neoliberal model (UNESCO, 2013, pp. 53–57). Above all, the connection between ideas of development and economic standards subjects journalistic education and training to neoliberal constraints. Even in the "developed" countries themselves,[9] journalism education and training curricula are based on "journalism experiences grounded in western nations" (Aujla-Sidhu, 2022, p. 1638). This is shown, for example, by an analysis of the reading lists and module descriptions of journalism courses accredited in the UK, which neglect non-White perspectives and marginalize knowledge of the so-called Global South (Aujla-Sidhu, 2022). This shows that what is practiced locally is also transferred to international journalistic training and education and vice versa.[10] In addition, these dominances lead to an equally dominant teaching method "that is centered on the idea of teachers (as subjects) 'depositing' knowledge into students (as objects), which they have to mechanically memorize" (Harris et al., 2023,

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6   The first UNESCO model curricula were published in 2007, and a second version was published in 2013.

7   Asia is a large context but is addressed as such here; see Sundeep R. Muppidi on "Developing an 'Asian' framework for UNESCO's model curricula" in UNESCO (2013, pp. 28–30). In some cases, a South Asian experience is described and experts and researchers from India, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Philippines, Laos, and Indonesia are mentioned.

8   The paper refers to Africa as the bigger context, mostly referring to sub-Saharan African countries. In contrast to the West, Africa is described here as a single entity. "Training programs from the West are often out of tune with the realities on the ground in Africa." See Ibrahim Seaga Shaw on "UNESCO model curricula in Africa: Call for a more bottom-up approach" in UNESCO (2013, p. 53)

9   The UN declarations on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the World Development Report for example distinguish between "developed" and "developing countries" (United Nations General Assembly, 2015, p. 3; United Nations Development Programme, 2001). The so-called developed countries are located primarily in the Northern hemisphere and primarily refer to the USA and European countries.

10   See also the literature review and the study of two journalism training courses in the USA by Alemán (2014). It shows that a so-called objectivity in journalism is equated with Whiteness or the perspective of White trainers and journalists, Alemán (2014, p. 75).

p. 157).[11]Additionally, journalism programs and model curricula are limited by poor theoretical foundations, as well as legal, technical, and economic constraints. They can also be limited because of ideological restrictions, which make a genuine "deep" internationalization of journalism training and the trainees' subsequent professional practice difficult to implement.

In this respect, various studies based on interviews have shown the difficulties of "Western" journalistic training in transferring their content and ideas to foreign local contexts. In Indonesia, for example, journalists could not adopt the practices presented by invited external trainers. The implementation of the content was made difficult by their different journalistic values, normative foundations, practical conditions, and contexts (Muchtar & Hanitzsch, 2013). However, trainers also encounter difficulties when they try to train journalists from other contexts. These are based, for example, on their lack of knowledge of local circumstances, practices, and a possible rejection of their training content by local journalists (Becker et al., 2002; Ognianova, 1995). Other challenges emerge from sponsoring government organizations or NGOs that follow their specific ideas of journalism and try to transfer them to other contexts (Noske-Turner, 2017, pp. 8–9; Schiffrin, 2010, p. 406; Thomaß, 2012, p. 397). Thus, the addressed or receiving countries are subject to various external influences. These can even devalue local journalism ideas and practices (Nyamnjoh, 2010). Furthermore, the dominance of colonial languages at universities and training institutions, as well as of their learning materials and university models, makes it difficult for journalistic education and training to be practiced independently and locally (Murphy & Scotton, 1987). In his analysis of various curricula for education and training in Bangladesh, Ullah (2022) also concluded that there existed the dominance of one-sided guidelines from sponsors. The Chair of Mass Communication and Journalism at Rajshahi University, Al Mamun, explained:

> Everything comes from the top; from DW Akademie, we have no evidence for what we will do. The DW Akademie people come and ask to launch something that many faculty members do not support, except junior-level faculty members, to show their enthusiasm to participate in those project activities. [Interview 15.03.2021]. (Ullah, 2022, p. 154)

It becomes clear here that recognizing power inequalities and country-specific agendas along with local differences in journalistic practices and perceptions are crucial for the efficiency and legitimacy of journalistic training—both for training in host countries and for external training offered in recipient countries. With regard to internationalization and thus the recognition of context-specific differences and the need for participation in creating and providing journalistic training programs, there are various possibilities:

> In participatory approaches to development there are no universal models to be followed or adopted. All societies are different and require different methods for real and endogenous social change to occur. . . . (Phiri & Fourie, 2011, p. 92)

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11   In his critical examination of pedagogy of the oppressed, Freire (2021) also described this as "banking concept of education" (pp. 28–29).

In order to counter unequal power relations and therefore also the one-sided control and dominance of media development work, representatives of participatory approaches demand that the needs of the recipients and their own relevance are decisive (Manyozo, 2012, pp. 152–195; Nelson, 2019; Thomaß, 2012, p. 403). In addition to the benefits of greater effectiveness and sustainability, participation is also a fundamental human right (Tufte & Mefalopolus, 2009, p. 18). For journalistic training courses, this type of participation would mean that the participating journalists use their knowledge to determine and expand the content and design of the training courses. For trainers and external curriculum designers, it would mean that "their role is to act as a catalyst in the empowerment of others who are different from themselves, without controlling the process and while maintaining a genuine respect for local knowledge" (Scott, 2014, p. 73). Thus, practical knowledge and the experiences of the journalists and their socialization play a major role here (Glasser, 1992, p. 135). A so-called professionalism with universal and homogenizing assumptions tends to ignore their diversity.

> What ends up in our lectures and texts are not the vividly cultural and historical accounts of journalism that would honor the role of experience in the production of knowledge. What we proffer instead is either a sanitized and scientized version of the practice of journalism. . . . (Glasser, 1992, p. 138)

All these aspects of participation, such as the orientation toward local and practical knowledge, a relationship of trust at eye level (Ashman, 2001), and the inclusion of various interest groups (Drefs & Thomass, 2019), are also reflected in the UN's declaration of its 9th roundtable of communication for development:

> Communication for Development is about people, who are the drivers of their own development. . . . Communication for Development is a two-way process—it is about people coming together to identify problems, agree on visions for desirable futures, create solutions and empower the poorest. Participatory Communication for Development does not only apply to work with communities. It is an approach of equal importance to all stakeholders. Communication for Development is about the co-creation and sharing of knowledge. Communication for Development respects Indigenous knowledge and culture; local context is key. (Food and Agriculture Organization [FAO] et al., 2005, p. 8)

In addition to power inequalities and corresponding asymmetries in journalistic education and training, the different journalistic concepts and practices (also described as "journalism cultures"; see Hanitzsch et al., 2019) also play a decisive role in the question of context-specific and suitable offers. In sub-Saharan Africa, for example, Skjerdal (2012) has identified numerous normative journalism models, such as ujamaa journalism, Indigenous journalism, and azmari- and dagu-based journalism, to name a few. Moreover, the role of journalists in "crisis and transition countries," for instance, varies considerably. Accordingly, there is not only conflict-sensitive journalism. In their interviews with 100 journalists from Egypt, Kenya, Serbia, and South Africa, Lohner et al. (2019) found that the understanding of roles differs depending on the context and is sometimes mixed, such as that of objective, investigative, or mediating journalism. They concluded

that journalistic values and practices need to be contextualized. According to Voltmer and Wasserman (2014), the understanding of key terms and concepts in the journalistic field can vary, as cultural traditions, historical experiences, and political values influence them. For example, the meaning of "freedom of the press" can therefore be understood differently (Voltmer & Wasserman, 2014). Language can also be a hybrid of local languages and "national languages" established by colonial countries and thus contradict a uniform journalistic form of language and use of terms (this is also referred to as the creolization of language; see Nyamnjoh, 2010, p. 18). The journalism and communication scientist Bebawi (2023), for example, described the unique aspects of an "Arab culture of journalism" and its role in journalistic training. Accordingly, Arabic is an emotional language that significantly influences reporting (p. 196). Stylistic devices here are exaggeration, overemphasis, and repetition. Furthermore, hypotheses are not tested as much as articles are researched and written according to an anticipated point of view (Bebawi, 2023, p. 197). Working on these stylistic devices and perspectives in further training courses takes time and can also be difficult for individual journalists to implement after returning to their newsrooms. Overall, it is important to design training courses in such a way that journalists learn "how 'to do' journalism within their own environments" (Bebawi & Onilov, 2023, p. 1). As an Australian trainer, Downey (2000) had similar experiences in Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam. The local journalists could hardly apply the training content because the editors of their media organizations and their superiors in the ministries were not convinced. Other challenges were that Downey did not speak the local languages and that the participating journalists came from different media sectors. She had given the training herself with the help of local translators. She also emphasized the need for sufficient preparation time for training sessions in order to understand local conditions. Even though Downey (2000, pp. 110–111) described external trainers and especially short training (of 1 to 2 weeks) as a problem, she also saw advantages in their ability to share their experience and knowledge. The British trainers Gaber and Goldsmith (2023), who have worked in sub-Saharan Africa for over 20 years, have agreed with this view. Their conclusion was that the presence of international trainers can encourage local journalists to change (p. 188). Also, Duran, who himself is from France and has given media training mainly in Turkey, came to the following conclusion: "Journalistic training abroad is not impossible, nor is it completely useless" (2005, n. p.) Nevertheless, he emphasized that it is important to reflect on various differences. These include language, different ways of thinking and various ideologies, and the cultural and educational background of the participants. Furthermore, the relationship between the country of origin of the trainers and the country of origin of the course participants also plays a role (like between the USA and Iraq, when a US-American trainer is invited there), for example, when the countries are in a current conflict (Duran, 2005). In addition, there are "cultural differences" that can "complicate" the work of trainers, such as "gender differences (men and women sitting separately, for example), differences around levels of informality, acknowledging hierarchies" (Gaber & Goldsmith, 2023, p. 177).

Norwegian media scientist Skjerdal (2009) described his approach to address differences in journalistic values and practices. He co-developed the curriculum for a master's program at Addis Ababa University in Ethiopia, which was launched in 2004 and financed by the Norwegian government as part of its media development work through

the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD) (p. 24). Skjerdal (2009) described what he saw as an interplay between "universal" and locally specific journalistic values. For him, one example was the communitarian orientation of "public or civic journalism" in the USA in the 1990s. Similar orientations can be found in Ethiopia, even if this cannot simply be transferred to this context. According to this, the author noted, it is a matter of not simply adopting the communitarian orientation, "but of recovering it in a culture where it is already deeply rooted in history and communities" (p. 30). Overall, it is striking how context-specific differences are ignored, especially in the field of journalistic education and training, but still play a major role in areas such as intercultural pedagogy (Auernheimer, 2002; Prengel, 2019), intercultural and transcultural communication (Thomas et al., 2005), and media reception research (Stehling, 2015):

> It is curious that questions of cultural dependence are legitimate topics for research when applied to the consumption of media programs and the like but largely a non sequitur when applied to the consumption of media education. (Glasser, 1992, p. 135)

Another context, another journalism? The example of Afghanistan (Kefa Hamidi)

Another example of addressing different journalistic norms and practices is the proposal for a dual training program for journalists in Afghanistan developed in 2016 and 2017 (Hamidi & Brüchner, 2020; Kutsch & Hamidi, 2020).

This case study focused on the design and implementation of a dual training program for journalists in Afghanistan as well as the integration of mediation skills as a critical component of journalistic practice. The duality of the training program refers to combining theoretical education with simulated practical experience. The program was tailored to the specific needs and cultural context of Afghanistan, particularly its multiethnic and Islamic identity. Through a thorough needs assessment, including interviews with various stakeholders, such as Afghan university journalism faculty, media representatives, and university policymakers, a dual training program for professional journalism was designed. The findings of this analysis were used to develop the program, which aimed to combine theory with simulated practical experience. In addition, emphasis was placed on teaching mediation skills, which are recognized as integral to journalistic practice in Afghanistan. The case study not only shed light on the genesis of the program but also highlighted the challenges and progress made in working with Afghan universities and the Ministry of Education.

A dual training program for professional journalism, which has long been practiced in various European and non-European countries, did not exist in Afghanistan. The proposed program aimed to combine theory and simulated practice. It was based on recent international research and a needs assessment.

Religion and tradition shape the self-image of journalists in Afghanistan and other Islamic societies. Hence, the connection between journalistic values and the teachings of Islam should be taken into account in training programs. Accordingly, the develop-

ment of the program followed a participatory approach. From summer 2016 to May 2017, a team from the University of Leipzig conducted a needs and feasibility analysis in the form of guided interviews. The central topics were educational goals, areas, and contents, as well as university teaching. We also asked about the structural framework of Afghan universities and colleges (such as admission restrictions for students, the academic profile of teaching staff, and physical and technical investments).

Mediation skills emerged as a new key journalistic skill in Afghanistan. On the one hand, the interviewees showed similar attitudes toward journalism training compared to international models, such as an orientation toward professional competence, specialization, presentation, and cross-media competence, organizational competence, and social orientation. In addition, the participants in the study expressed that a further component of journalism training should be added, which can be described as "mediation skills." This involves promoting the common good and national development through journalistic work. It includes techniques such as creating a "forum," seeking "consensus," and acting as a "teacher." The interviewees stated that this type of reporting can contribute to the positive development of the country. They emphasized the importance of mediation in a variety of conflict situations and as a contribution to national development and social harmony, which can be described under the concept of "constructive national identity." The concept of constructive national identity emphasizes the collective sense of belonging and shared values within a nation, leading to unity, social cohesion, and progress (Smith, 1991). Unlike traditional understandings of national identity, which are often based solely on historical or cultural factors, constructive national identity emphasizes the active construction and promotion of positive narratives about the nation (Anderson, 1983). This approach encourages citizens to participate in shaping and defining their national identities, thereby promoting inclusiveness and a sense of ownership among different social groups (Brubaker, 1996). By promoting a constructive national identity, societies aim to build resilience and adaptability in the face of challenges while fostering a shared vision for the future (Smith, 1991).

So far, however, these mediation skills have not been taught in academic journalism training in Afghanistan. The needs assessment showed that mediation skills should be systematically integrated into journalism training. This can help promote a constructive national identity. It also develops cultural sensitivity in a multicultural and multiethnic society, as well as conflict management skills. This is particularly important in a country characterized by long-standing conflicts and social challenges.

The study was groundbreaking, perhaps unique, in following the system over the years to understand its status quo, strengths, and weaknesses over the long term. Over a period of 22 years, the system has evolved rapidly and has faced many challenges. The study identified these challenges and shortcomings and suggested ways to improve the education system. Following the completion of the study, negotiations between the University of Leipzig and the Afghan Ministry of Higher Education made significant progress. It was agreed that the proposals developed in the study would be phased into the system, with the agreement to be signed and implemented over a five-year period. This was due to take place in 2021, but toward the end of that year, Afghanistan's state structures collapsed and power passed to the Taliban. The new regime reversed all the

developments of the previous two decades and brought about a complete overhaul of the system.

Despite the setback in Afghanistan, there is now hope that the lessons learned and the proposals put forward can be applied to other countries going through a similar process. Many countries face similar challenges and could benefit from the lessons learned.

A different context, a different journalism? The examples of Bhutan and Nepal (Beate Illg)

There is no doubt about the "Western" influence on journalism in Asia—not only but also due to media training and support by so-called "highly developed" countries. This is clearly shown in qualitative interviews conducted in Nepal and Bhutan with journalists about their self-perceptions within the democratic process in their country[a] (see Illg, 2018, 2019). Though both countries changed in completely different ways, they both became democratic structures in 2008. Nepal became a Federal Democratic Republic after a 10-year guerrilla war initiated by the Maoists (1996–2006). The Kingdom of Bhutan became a constitutional monarchy due to the King's voluntary decision.

Journalists in both countries are highly intrinsically motivated—they strive to give "a voice to the voiceless," want to help to improve peoples' lives, and see media as the fourth estate. Advocacy journalism is the label that characterizes this—according to a "Western" perspective.

This motivation is especially remarkable because journalists in both countries are not well paid; in fact, sometimes they even work for a month without receiving salary. Most Nepali journalists need a second job to secure survival. Investigative journalists in Nepal often face threats and intimidations. In a small society of about 760,000 inhabitants like Bhutan, this is less common, but journalists often feel social pressure that leads to self-censorship. In addition, the Bhutanese Gross National Happiness sometimes causes reports about crime or other negative topics to be skipped.

Although it is obvious that the interviewed journalists refer to objectivity as a common standard of journalism, they often claim that it is needed "to find their own way" in Bhutan as well as in Nepal. Both countries are quite young democracies, and other democracies within their neighborhood are not considered a blueprint because they do not seem to work very well. The role of the media as a watchdog is probably even more important in young democracies with problems such as corruption (especially Nepal) or social control (particularly Bhutan). As a consequence, it is perhaps more necessary that journalists focus on the position of the citizens, the disadvantaged, and those who cannot stand up for their rights and interests. Maybe fairness is more relevant than objectivity and neutrality—as Kunda Dixit (personal communication, February, 2024), an internationally well-known Nepali editor, journalist, and lecturer, mentioned in an interview. Asked about his perspective on what is needed for a deep internalization of journalism education, Dixit mentioned that teaching journalism on a national level is obsolete because all relevant topics like economics, climate, and migration are internationally linked. He argued vehemently for highly specialized journalists, like scien-

tists, who have to be able to speak to authorities: "We really need this global minded specialized journalist." In his view, "journalists need to know what the problem is—of their community, their country, the world; this becomes more and more important." This theme-centered perspective is his key aspect because "**why** to do journalism, **why** it is important—it becomes critical." Implicitly, the interviewee referred to the concept of advocacy journalism without little regard for that kind of classification.

Media literacy was mentioned in this context as well, and the problem that it is often the most modern technology has the highest credibility. But techniques can be learned by training on the job—it is not necessary to go to university for that. Dixit stated that there is probably still a lack of equipment in several countries, such as Nepal, where support can be useful—"but content is much more important." Working as a lecturer for several international institutions like New York University (at the Abu Dhabi campus), he argued for field trips and cross-cultural experiences because this would open young peoples' eyes, widen their horizon, and create empathy. In his view, field trips are extremely important "because students of journalism really need exposure to the outside world and to see it for themselves." This enables them to "write with empathy about some other place."

As previously mentioned, Dixit considered a global perspective to be more important than ever before. As a consequence, "a credible global media is needed." Therefore, student and faculty exchanges are required as well as joint media training to "make them work together and learn from each other." This could be a good start for "deep internationalization."

Where do we want to go?

After critically reflecting on the past and current issues of journalistic education and training, as well as differences in journalistic roles and practices, questions arise as to what we can learn from this and where the field needs to develop further. Altogether, these questions have various practical and scientific implications. As the literature review and empirical studies presented above have shown, it is essential to be prepared for the requirements of different work and life contexts in different media systems and regions. Overall, the universality (often a frequent synonym for objectivity) of knowledge needs to be questioned, as it is a legitimization of dominance relations (Aujla-Sidhu, 2022, p. 1642). It would be important for journalistic training and education actors to be sensitized to different life and work contexts, as well as to practices of inequality, while reflecting their own teaching content and ideas. In this way, journalistic training can then be designed in a dialogical and participatory way. Teachers become learners, and learners become teachers (Freire, 2022, p. 80). Methodological approaches, for example, can be where the addressed participants name and develop their own topics, which can be supplemented by the instructors through a dialogical exchange (Freire, 2022, p. 120). Furthermore, the references of knowledge and its embedding in historical and current

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a   In Nepal, Illg conducted 24 qualitative interviews with journalists in 2013 and 17 interviews in 2017; in Bhutan, she conducted 17 interviews with journalists in 2017.

geopolitical conditions are reflected upon. Overall, the most important prerequisite is a critical and reflective attitude on the part of course providers and trainers. These reflections can be described as an integral part of pedagogical professionalism (Heinemann & Sarabi, 2020, p. 310). In this context, it helps to abandon the concept of "development" and its implicit constructions (Ziai, 2014, p. 426). Another tool is cooperation with actors from civil, teaching, and media organizations from countries of the so-called Global South, where there are also thinkers and publications that deal with the decolonization of journalistic education and training that goes beyond internationalization and de-Westernization (Moyo, 2022, pp. 1570–1571). Accordingly, the de-Westernization approaches have ignored asymmetrical power relations and the associated production of knowledge between the Global North and South. The internationalization approaches, on the other hand, have been motivated by the market economy and served more to spread Western models (Moyo, 2022). For this reason, it is important to explicitly decolonize journalism studies and training:

> While there have been calls to make journalism education more international in its outlook, the terminology decolonizing is specifically used to denote the undoing of colonial legacies in creating ethnically and racially divided societies. (Aujla-Sidhu, 2022)

This includes the inclusion of postcolonial theories and discourses on inequality and racism, which also reflect current structures: "No person can escape . . . geographical, and racial hierarchies set by this power structure of global coloniality" (Moyo, 2022, p. 1569). In addition, current structures of media development work, including journalism training and education, should be seen in the context of their historical development. Furthermore, different journalistic orientations, such as the "constructivist models of journalism, advocate or campaign journalism" should be included in the curricula (Aujla-Sidhu, 2022, p. 1647). Other options include regular workshops for organization and teaching-learning staff to expand bibliographies and case studies, inviting guest speakers who respond to the diversity of course participants, and representing alternative or community news organizations (Aujla-Sidhu, 2022, p. 1649). "At the most basic level, the locus of enunciation is about the fact that journalism practice and academic training are culturally and socially shaped" (Moyo, 2022, p. 1569). Thus, so-called informal or practical knowledge plays a major role (Glasser, 1992, p. 138). Intercultural communication and education training can also sensitize educators and media development actors to contextual differences and corresponding challenges (as suggested by Armbruster, 2014; Ognianova, 1995). Previous stays of trainers abroad alone are not enough here (Brinkmann & van Weerdenburg, 2014, pp. 95–134). Also, for journalistic training and education donors, participatory measures are crucial to overcome inequalities and recognize the diversity of journalistic practices and needs. Despite structural and institutional limitations, there are various ways to do this (Keßler, 2022; Waisbord, 2008). However, to not remain just lip service, participatory approaches and journalistic education need to be reviewed and evaluated accordingly, especially by the recipients themselves (Carpentier, 2011, p. 52; Chambers, 2017, pp. 134–135; Noske-Turner, 2017; Tufte & Mefalopulus, 2009, p. 6). With regard to a participatory design and reflection of

training courses (Drefs & Thomass, 2019), we can also learn from the findings of development cooperation in general (Chambers, 2002, 2017). Furthermore, local actors and their knowledge must guide decisions, and trustful cooperation on an equal footing must be established accordingly (Keßler, 2022). Finally, scientific results can be transferred even more into training materials and approaches.

For journalism research, it is advisable to investigate practices of inequality further and their effects on journalistic training, going beyond the numerous existing interview studies (Keßler, 2024). In particular, ethnographic approaches (Breidenstein et al., 2015; Knoblauch, 2005; Lilienthal, 2017) and inductive data analyses (Corbin & Strauss, 2015), which work without fixed categories and theories, can examine actual and everyday conditions of journalism training and interactions between different actors even more closely and avoid one's own (possibly "Western") assumptions. Moreover, for international and comparative journalist research, it is "vital that researchers hold to the consensus that they must continue to increase the number of non-Western case studies and incorporate a greater number of scholarly perspectives from the Global South" (Martens-Edwards, 2023, p. 436). Finally, educational research findings and approaches are also particularly insightful and applicable to the teaching and learning setting of journalism training courses (Akbaba et al., 2022; Malik, 2022; Mecheril & Plößer, 2009; Mills & Morton, 2013; Tervooren et al., 2014).

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