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## **For the lifestyle and a love of creativity:**

### **Australian students' motivations for studying journalism**

#### **Abstract**

A number of studies have examined why students choose to study journalism at university, but overall this area is still relatively underexplored. Yet, understanding why students choose journalism, and what career expectations they hold, is important not only for educators, but also for wider society and public debates about the future of journalism and the value of tertiary journalism education. This paper examines the motivations of 1884 Australian journalism students enrolled across 10 universities. It finds that hopes for a varied lifestyle and opportunities to express their creativity are the most dominant motivations among students. Public service ideals are somewhat less important, while financial concerns and fame are least important. These motivations also find expression in students' preferred areas of specialisations: lifestyle rounds are far more popular than politics and business rounds, or science and development.

#### **Introduction**

With the global growth of tertiary education in journalism since the 1990s, scholarly attention to the ways in which future journalists are prepared for the industry has increased, both overseas and in Australia. The reason for such attention is the widely-held belief that journalism education matters: the argument is that the university environment is a first step of journalists' socialisation into the industry, although industry representatives, both in Australia and elsewhere, argue that universities do not prepare graduates adequately for the industry (see Christensen, 2012; Deuze, 2006; Turner, 2000; see also Obijiofor and Hanusch, 2011: 80-83). Such debates are notable because they keep resurfacing on an almost annual basis (for example: Christensen, 2012; Markson, 2014; Stewart, 2012).

Two key aspects may be responsible for the lack of progress in such discussions. First, there is a relative lack of empirical studies about what journalism students do at university, and what the impact of their chosen area of study may be. Second, industry estimates of the number of journalism graduates who secure jobs in newsrooms tend to focus on narrowly-defined conceptions of what journalism is and should do. Industry representatives typically complain there are only a few entry-level jobs in journalism, but such figures rarely take into consideration an increasingly diverse employment market for journalists (Cokley et al., 2011; Fuller, 2014). Some recent evidence also suggests that only four in five journalism students plan on becoming journalists, with even fewer wanting to work in hard news journalism (Hanusch, 2012a).

This article argues that investigating students' motivations for studying journalism in more depth can enhance debates about the value of tertiary journalism education. This is important in order

to gain a better understanding of students' choices of journalism as an area of study, and how such studies may impact their future work, if they do end up working as journalists. We examine student motivations based on the results of a large-scale survey of 1884 journalism students across 10 Australian universities, chosen to be representative of the wider tertiary journalism education sector.

## Overview

Australian journalists are today vastly more likely to hold a university degree than they were twenty years ago. Recent evidence suggests that 80 per cent of journalists have a tertiary degree, and 80 per cent of these graduates have studied journalism (Hanusch, 2013b). Yet why students embarked on their degree is still a relatively underexplored subject, even though one of the earliest studies on this topic dates back more than 40 years. Boyd-Barrett (1970) explored the motivations for why British journalism students wanted to enter the profession, and found that the most popular response was that journalism was offering non-routine, non-conventional work and had a sociable nature. Offering a public service was the motivation for only one per cent of Boyd-Barrett's sample. Some years later, a US study found that most students were looking for an opportunity for originality and initiative, while, at the same time, one-third of respondents saw contributing something of value to the community as very important (Becker et al., 1987).

The most notable global study of journalism students is Splichal and Sparks' (1994) survey of 1820 journalism students in 22 countries. It found two-thirds of respondents were motivated to study journalism because they like the idea of journalism as a profession, while a further four out of ten respondents said they chose journalism because they had a talent for writing. Travel was also an important motive, noted by just over one-quarter. On the other hand, only around one-fifth said their motivation was to have a chance to change society, a finding in line with the earlier studies by Boyd-Barrett (1970) and Becker *et al.* (1987). A more recent study points to a similar situation persisting in the UK. A survey of British journalism students found the motivation for most students was that they thought journalism suited their personality or was desirable, satisfying or interesting (Hanna and Sanders, 2007). A love of writing was also still important, albeit to a smaller degree, while even fewer – only 16 per cent – were motivated by public service ideals, such as wanting reform or to change society, campaign, or investigate.

In other national contexts, however, motivations appear to differ. In Scandinavia, public service ideals were ranked much more highly among students, although the variety and lively work of journalism was also the most commonly noted motivation (Hovden *et al.*, 2009). In Australia, a study of 130 Deakin University students found that a desire to influence society, to have power, to pursue the truth or to be a mediator between news-makers and the general public were among the most-regularly cited motivations (Alysen and Oakham, 1996). A smaller number cited the fact they enjoyed writing or wanted to improve their skills. Yet, a more recent study of 320 Australian undergraduate journalism students found that one-third chose journalism because they thought they were talented

and/or that they liked to write, while the possibility to change society was nominated by only 12 per cent (Hanusch, 2012a).

A comparative analysis across eight countries showed that a perceived talent for journalism, and a liking for writing and journalism, were the two most frequently mentioned motivations by journalism students, demonstrating some level of universal motives (Hanusch et al., 2015). However, studies such as those by Hanusch et al. (2015) and Hanusch (2012a) only allowed students to select one answer, making it difficult to compare across the different motivations. Further, answers like 'I like journalism as a profession' or 'I have a talent for journalism' are not very illuminating in terms of why students like journalism, or what they mean by talent.

To further delve into motivations, Hanusch's (2012a) study also asked students about their job expectations, which could be grouped into four categories: collegiality (the extent of support from colleagues and supervisors); public service (wanting to influence public affairs, help people and to have a valuable job that is essential for society); financial concerns (the level of pay and fringe benefits); and, career progression (the possibility to develop a specialisation and the chance to advance in one's career). The most important expectation was the public service notion, followed by the extent of collegiality and career progression opportunities, with financial concerns ranked last.

In a recent attempt to develop a theory-led and empirically-tested set of student motivations, Carpenter et al. (2014) – on the basis of responses to an online survey of 798 US undergraduate students majoring in journalism – proposed an eight-factor construct, which they called the Journalism Degree Motivations scale. It suggests that students' motivations can be classified along eight areas: social responsibility, reporting, social prestige, sports media, photography, writing, varied career, and numbers and science anxiety. Carpenter et al's study presents a considerable advancement in our theoretical thinking around student motivations. At the same time, one may question whether all of these items are motivations in the narrow sense of the term, or if some – such as sports media or photography – represent particular journalistic specialisations in which students are interested.

Such specialisations have also been explored by other scholars, with Splichal and Sparks (1994) finding that just over half of all students wanted to work in human interest or culture, arts and social science rounds. This compared to only one-fifth wanting to work in political journalism, and one out of ten looking to specialise in sports journalism. Hanna and Sanders (2007) came to similar conclusions, with feature or lifestyle areas preferred by 40 per cent of students, compared with 30 per cent who were interested in hard news journalism, and 20 per cent in sports journalism. Hanusch's (2012a) study of Australian students found 42 per cent interested in entertainment journalism, compared with 36 per cent in news journalism. The remainder did not plan to work in journalism. One limitation of that study, however, was that it only asked about broad categories of journalism, without segmenting these further in terms of particular rounds. This segmentation is deemed important to get a clearer understanding of the types of beats Australian students are interested in. Similar to the area of job motivations, there also appear to be gender-related differences in terms of preferred beats.



Hanusch (2012a) found that among men, 58 per cent wanted to work in news journalism, with the remainder interested in entertainment journalism. Among women, this was reversed, with 60 per cent interested in entertainment journalism.

Based on the literature reviewed here, it is clear that our knowledge around students' motivations for embarking on a journalism degree or major has advanced considerably over the years, yet the evidence is also somewhat limited in terms of the finer details. To generate such insight, we developed the following research questions:

RQ1: What are the motivations of Australian journalism students for studying a journalism degree or major?

RQ2: What areas of journalism do students want to specialise in?

RQ3: Are there any gender differences in relation to motivations and specialisations?

## **Methodology**

This study is based on the largest survey of Australian journalism students to date. Surveys were conducted with journalism students from 10 Australian universities, chosen to represent the 42 universities and colleges around Australia at which journalism is taught (Dunn, 2012): Edith Cowan University; La Trobe University; Monash University; Queensland University of Technology; University of Newcastle; University of South Australia; University of the Sunshine Coast; University of Technology Sydney; University of Sydney; and University of Tasmania. The selection ensured a representative mix of a number of environmental factors that may influence journalism education. These included geography (whether a university was in a regional or metropolitan area, but also to ensure the different states were represented); the size of journalism programs (ranging from small to large programs); the academic focus of each journalism program (ranging from mostly vocational to mostly theoretical); as well as universities' membership in a university network (to represent the Australian Technology Network, Group of Eight, Innovative Research Universities, and Regional Universities Network).

The questionnaires were administered between April and August of 2014. Collaborators at each university visited lectures and tutorials of both undergraduate and postgraduate journalism students. Journalism students were defined as those who studied primarily journalism. This includes those enrolled in Bachelor of Journalism degrees, or studying for a major in journalism as part of another degree, such as Communication or Arts. To avoid students who were studying only one journalism subject as an elective of a different degree completing the survey, we explained to all students that they were to only complete the questionnaire if they were studying primarily journalism. We believe that a selection strategy based on declared majors or enrolments only would have underestimated the number of journalism students.

After a close examination of enrolments at each university's journalism program, taking into account undeclared majors, we estimated that the overall population of journalism students at the 10 universities in this study was 2967. A total of 1884 valid questionnaires were completed, resulting in an overall acceptable response rate of 63.5 per cent. It should be pointed out that very few students declined to complete the survey. Rather, the vast majority of non-responses were from students who did not attend class on the days when surveys were conducted. Individual institutions' response rates ranged from 50.7 per cent to 82.5 per cent.

An examination of the sample highlights a number of trends that have already been identified elsewhere. Firstly, the vast majority of Australian journalism students are women, who represented 68.9 per cent of our sample. This confirms previous evidence about the dominance of women in journalism programs (Alysen and Oakham, 1996; Densem, 2006; Grenby et al., 2009; Hanusch, 2013a; Splichal and Sparks, 1994). The average age of a journalism student is 21.42 years, with a median of 20 years. The vast majority (84.8 per cent) are enrolled in an undergraduate degree. Natural rates of attrition are reflected in the fact that 41.6 per cent of the sample were in their first year of study, compared with 29.9 per cent in their second year, and 28.6 per cent who were in their third, fourth, or fifth year (many of those in their fourth or fifth year were studying double degrees).

To examine RQ1, respondents were asked the following question: Please rate the following aspects in terms of the extent to which they motivated you to study your degree. Answer options included: 1=not important at all, 2=little important, 3=somewhat important, 4=very important, and 5=extremely important. Students were asked to rate each of 19 different motivations, derived from earlier studies (Carpenter et al., 2014; Splichal & Sparks, 1994; Hovden et al., 2009, Hanusch et al., 2015). To answer RQ2, we first asked students a filter question about the field they would like to work in when they finished their studies, offering the following options: Journalism, public relations/corporate communications, advertising, teaching and research, or other. This was followed by the question: If you want to work in journalism, how interested are you in specialising in the following areas of journalism? Students were provided with 12 items, with the following answer options: 1=not interested at all, 2=little interested, 3=somewhat interested, 4=very interested, 5=extremely interested.

## **Results and Discussion**

### **Motivations**

The results to our question about students' motivations show a general predilection for the creative and diverse nature of journalistic work, which is in line with past studies in Australia and elsewhere (Table 1).

*--- Insert Table 1 around here ---*

The three most strongly expressed motivations include the ability to be creative, the chance of meeting different people, and the varied and lively work. Each of these motivations was deemed very or extremely important by three out of four respondents. Potential fame is – at least according to students’ responses – the least important motivation for studying journalism. Only just over one in ten said the possibility of being famous was very or extremely important in their decision-making. Similarly, the amount of money one can earn in journalism was seen as important by just under one-quarter. Not unexpectedly, helping the government achieve goals for national development was one of the least important motivations, with only 16.5 per cent support. An interesting result is the relatively low desire for job autonomy – this was an important motivation for only one-third of students. Studies of working journalists have shown that autonomy is a very important predictor for job satisfaction (Beam, 2006).

To better comprehend students’ motivations, we aimed to identify whether there was any underlying dimension of job motivations (see also Carpenter et al., 2014). Therefore, we conducted a principal components analysis (PCA), which allows researchers to ‘reduce the dimensionality of a data set consisting of a large number of interrelated variables, while retaining as much as possible of the variation present in the data set’ (Jolliffe, 2002: 1). Following a preliminary PCA, two items (‘the autonomy one has’; ‘the prestige of journalism as a profession’) were excluded from further analysis because they did not load clearly on any of the identified dimensions. The main PCA was therefore conducted with the remaining 17 items orthogonal rotation (Varimax). The resulting sampling adequacy was an overall meritorious KMO=0.838 with Bartlett’s test of sphericity  $\chi^2=10181.152$ ,  $df=136$ ,  $p<0.001$  sufficiently large for conducting PCA. Four components had eigenvalues over Kaiser’s criterion of 1, and combined accounted for 59.06 per cent of variance. The dimensions can be categorised as follows.

1. **Public service:** Included in this dimension are the motivations of: ‘to work for freedom and democracy’, ‘to fight injustice’, ‘the chance to influence public opinion’, ‘to hold people in power accountable’, ‘to help in nation-building’, ‘the chance to help people in their everyday life’, and ‘to help the government achieve its goals for national development’. Students who score high on this dimension are therefore those who chose a journalism degree or major because they were motivated by journalism’s public service role. They want to help everyday people and make a difference in public life.
2. **Varied career:** This dimension is made up of four items: ‘the dynamic lifestyle’, ‘the chance to meet different people’, ‘the varied and lively work’, and ‘the opportunity to travel’. Students who score high on this dimension are motivated by the changing nature of journalistic work, with its numerous opportunities to meet different people, to travel, and a general sense of dynamic work.
3. **Financial concerns and fame:** Three items make up this dimension: ‘the amount of money one can earn’, ‘to get a secure job’ and ‘the possibility of being famous’. Respondents on this

dimension are primarily motivated by financial concerns and making sure they have a secure job. Fame is also a motivator here.

4. **Creativity:** The final dimension consists of three items: ‘the pleasure of writing’, ‘to be able to be creative’, and ‘my talent for journalism’. It speaks to journalism as creative work, as noted by Fulton (2011; Fulton and McIntyre, 2013), and respondents who score high on this dimension derive pleasure from writing and feel they have a talent for journalism.

The first three of these dimensions are very similar to those identified by Hanusch’s (2012a) study of Australian students, while the fourth is different. A reason for this is that the items used to construct the creativity dimension were not asked in that earlier study. The dimension does, however, align with Hanusch’s (2012a) finding that students were motivated by a talent for writing. The dimensions also overlap to some extent with those identified by Carpenter et al. (2014). Our ‘public interest’ motivation is similar to their term ‘social responsibility’; ‘financial concerns and fame’ is in part related to their ‘social prestige’; ‘creativity’ somewhat overlaps with ‘writing’ and both Carpenter et al. and we identify a ‘varied career’ dimension.

Once the dimensions were identified, we were able to better compare these underlying structures. An evaluation of the dimension means showed that differences between the scores were highly significant,  $F(2.85, 4972.47) = 935.535, p < 0.001$ . All differences between any given pair of means were also significant at  $p < 0.001$ . As Table 2 shows, the most popular motivation for embarking on a journalism degree or major in Australia was to have a varied career.

*--- Insert Table 2 around here ---*

The second-most popular motivation relates to the creative nature of journalistic work, followed by the public service motivation. Financial concerns and fame motivations such as earning money, having a secure job or becoming famous are the least important criteria when students decide on a journalism degree. While the results are difficult to compare due to methodological differences and increasing fragmentation of the media environment and therefore wider variety of job opportunities, our findings are reasonably consistent with earlier evidence on Australian undergraduate journalism students (Hanusch, 2012a). Students are overwhelmingly attracted to journalism by the opportunity to live a dynamic lifestyle, travel, meet different types of people and to express their creativity and practise their love of writing. These motivations also point to some possible misconceptions among students about journalistic work. Similar to findings in other studies (see Alysén and Oakham, 1996; Grenby et al., 2009), students may still have misconceptions about their future work as journalists, expecting a life full of creative opportunities and travel, when quite often journalism is more reactive and process-driven.

Secondary, though still important, are considerations of wanting to provide a public service, which includes an opportunity to help everyday people, and to make a difference in public life. On the other hand, financial concerns and fame considerations are typically the least important motivations for students to embark on a degree in journalism. More broadly, these results are also in line with the findings by Boyd-Barrett (1970) and Becker et al., (1987), as well as findings from other Western countries more recently (Hanusch et al., 2015). This points to strong similarities in student motivations in countries such as Australia, the UK and the US.

Interesting differences emerge when we compare male and female students. While there are no gender differences for financial concerns and fame and creativity, men and women differ significantly when it comes to the other two dimensions. Women ( $M=3.90$ ,  $SD=.734$ ) are more likely to be motivated by a varied career than men ( $M=3.71$ ,  $SD=.777$ ),  $t(1738)=4.856$ ,  $p<.001$ , and they are also more likely to be motivated by public service ideals (Women:  $M=3.31$ ,  $SD=.846$ ; Men:  $M=3.09$ ,  $SD=.891$ ),  $t(1738)=5.027$ ,  $p<.001$ . The latter finding is similar to that found in an earlier study (Hanusch, 2012a). Despite these gender-related differences, however, the overall ranking of the motivational dimensions does not actually differ between men and women.

### Specialisations

To examine in which areas students want to work, we first asked them whether they wanted to work in journalism, given evidence that not every journalism student plans to become a journalist (Hanna and Sanders, 2007; Hanusch, 2013a; Hanusch et al., 2015). Only just under two-thirds of our respondents (63.6 per cent) said they wanted to work in journalism. This compares to a figure of 80 per cent found in an earlier, though much smaller study of just 320 Australian journalism students (Hanusch, 2012a). Just over one in ten (13.4 per cent) chose public relations, 5.6 per cent advertising, 2.6 per cent teaching and research, and 14.8 per cent the category 'Other'. The latter category included areas such as law, business, film and television production, politics and creative writing, among others. The most popular news media platform in which students wanted to work was television (21.8 per cent). Magazines were a close second (19.1 per cent), followed by newspapers (10 per cent). In fourth place was radio (7.5 per cent), while online-only news or magazine sites were attractive to 7.3 per cent of students. The least popular journalistic media was news agencies or wire services, at 2.1 per cent. These findings show that students still tend to be interested in mainstream media rather than the increasingly diverse sets of news media that have emerged in the online environment. To further explore the rounds students were interested in, we asked only those 1190 students who said they wanted to work in journalism to answer a question about their preferred specialisation (Table 3).

**--- Insert Table 3 around here ---**

By far the two most popular areas in which students want to work are travel and culture. This is perhaps not altogether surprising given the earlier finding that students are motivated by a varied career with opportunities to travel and meet different people. We should point out that the term ‘culture’, in retrospect, may be somewhat difficult to interpret, and different students may have meant different things. Culture could include reporting on things like pop culture, although this would also be covered in entertainment, the fourth-most popular news round. But it could also be interpreted as reporting on other cultures – which would also make sense in relation to the popularity of travel as an area of specialisation, as well as foreign news. In any case, it appears that the softer news rounds like travel, entertainment and lifestyle (and arguably culture) rank very highly in terms of the areas where students want to work. In a similar way, so does overseas reporting, as evidenced by the presence of foreign news, as well as arguably culture. By far the least popular news round is economy and business, with science not far behind. Similarly, less than one-third of students are very or extremely interested in specialising in politics. An interesting case is the relatively low level of interest in sports. A closer look, however, reveals that this is due to the fact that male students are in a minority in the sample. Amongst male students only, sports is actually the third-most popular round, while among women, it is the second-least popular specialisation. A statistically significant difference exists, with men ( $M=3.44$ ,  $SD=1.634$ ) extremely more likely to want to work in sports journalism than women ( $M=2.23$ ,  $SD=1.298$ ). There are also other differences in terms of men and women’s news round preferences, which are discussed further below.

Similar to the motivations discussed earlier, we were interested in finding any underlying dimensions or classifications of preferred news rounds. We again conducted a preliminary principal components analysis with orthogonal rotation (Varimax). Following this, we excluded two items from further analysis. One item (‘crime and law’) did not load clearly on any dimensions, while the other (‘sports’) was the only item loading on a fourth dimension. Due to the lack of reliability for one-item dimensions, we decided to exclude this item. The main PCA was conducted with 10 items, resulting in a three-dimensional structure. Sampling adequacy was an overall middling  $KMO=0.758$  with Bartlett’s test of sphericity  $\chi^2=3783.922$ ,  $df=45$ ,  $p<0.001$  sufficiently large for conducting PCA. Three components had eigenvalues over Kaiser’s criterion of 1, and combined accounted for 66.71 per cent of variance. The three dimensions are:

1. **Lifestyle & Culture:** This dimension consists of four items: ‘lifestyle’, ‘culture’, ‘travel’, and ‘entertainment’. Students who score high on this dimension are thus interested in working in these softer types of news, which have experienced considerable growth in recent decades (Hanusch, 2012b).
2. **Science & Development:** Three items make up the second dimension, which includes ‘environment’, ‘science’ and ‘development issues’. Students attracted to these specialisations

take an interest in some of the most pressing global issues around the environment and human development.

3. **Politics & Business:** The third dimension represents the traditional hard news beats of 'politics', 'foreign news' and 'economy and business'. Students in this dimension are likely interested in political processes, wanting to report on the powerful in society.

Again, we were interested in the extent to which students supported each of these dimensions. An evaluation of the dimension means showed that differences between the scores were highly significant,  $F(1.71, 403.98) = 406.17, p < 0.001$ . All differences between any given pair of means were also significant at  $p < 0.001$ . As Table 4 demonstrates, by far the strongest interest is in the Lifestyle & Culture dimension.

*--- Insert Table 4 around here ---*

Least popular overall is Science & Development, although Politics & Business is not far in front. An analysis of gender differences points to some considerable variation. Women ( $M=3.96, SD=.832$ ) are far more likely than men ( $M=3.19, SD=.968$ ) to be interested in working in Lifestyle & Culture rounds,  $t(654.49)=13.094, p < .001$ . They are also much more likely to want to work in Science and Development (Women:  $M=2.72, SD=.951$ ; Men:  $M=2.58, SD=.967$ ),  $t(1086)=2.391, p < .05$ . While the difference in relation to Politics & Business was just outside significance ( $p=.056$ ), the trend was for male students to be more interested in working in this area than female students. In fact, when comparing the dimension means on gender terms, the mean difference for men between Politics & Business and Lifestyle & Culture was far smaller (.333) than for women (1.223). Similarly, the mean difference between Politics & Business and Science & Development was also bigger for men (.279) than for women (.018). Overall, these findings are broadly in line with previous studies overseas as well as within Australia, which all found a predilection in Western countries for the softer types of journalism, especially among female students (Splichal and Sparks, 1994; Hanna and Sanders, 2007; Hanusch, 2012a).

Further analysis shows that some motivations are very strongly correlated with some of the specialisations in which students are interested. The motivation of wanting to have a varied career, for example, is strongly correlated with wanting to specialise in Lifestyle & Culture ( $r_s=.398, p < .001$ ). This means the more a student is motivated by the varied and dynamic work of journalism, the more likely they are to be interested in working in lifestyle beats – a finding in line with past evidence (Hanusch, 2012a). There is also a significant correlation between wanting a varied career and specialising in Science & Development ( $r_s=.107, p < .001$ ), but the strength of this association is relatively small. The strongest motivation to be correlated with specialising in Science & Development is to provide a Public Service ( $r_s=.421, p < .001$ ). This motivation is also very strongly

correlated with the specialisation of Politics & Business ( $r_s=.452, p<.001$ ). A negative correlation exists between Politics & Business and the motivation of financial concerns and fame ( $r_s=-.121, p<.001$ ). This means that those who want to work in Politics & Business are strongly motivated by providing a public service, but the more students are motivated by financial concerns and becoming famous, the less likely they are to want to work in this round. Financial concerns and fame are instead positively correlated with specialising in Lifestyle & Culture ( $r_s=.258, p<.001$ ). As might be expected, the motivation of Creativity is also positively correlated with Lifestyle & Culture ( $r_s=.209, p<.001$ ) but also with Science & Development, albeit to a smaller degree ( $r_s=.104, p<.001$ ).

## Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to explore both the professional motivations of journalism students and their expectations from their degrees. The results show that the creative aspects of journalism overwhelmingly motivate students, who are attracted also to the idea of a varied lifestyle, while the idea of providing a public service is a somewhat secondary motivation. Even though some students may choose journalism because they want to be famous, this, as well as financial concerns, is actually the least frequent motivation. The creativity and lifestyle notions are also evident in the most popular rounds, with lifestyle areas of journalism by far the most popular among students. Politics and business news, as well as science and development, are far less popular news rounds. Gender differences in motivations shed further light on these results. Women are slightly more motivated by public service ideals and a varied career, though the ranking of motivations is the same for men and women. In terms of specialisations, however, lifestyle and culture rounds are far more attractive to women, who are also more interested in working in the areas of science and development issues. On the other hand, sports, while overall the third-least popular round (out of 12), is actually the third-most popular round among men. In the area of politics and business, there was a trend for men to be more interested in these rounds, but it lay just outside statistical significance. It does appear that men and women's motivations do run along the gender divisions of news rounds found amongst working journalists, where women are most prominent among lifestyle beats, while sports and politics are typically the domain of men (Cann & Mohr, 2001; Gallagher, 2010). This is an interesting finding to be followed up by further research into gender aspects in the media, in particular in relation to perceived gender bias in newsrooms (North, 2009). Overall, these findings provide some much-needed empirical evidence about why students actually choose journalism. They provide a nuanced picture that shows that students' perceptions of what they want to do in journalism – and perhaps even what journalism is – do not necessarily align with the industry's perception of these issues.

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**Table 1: Students' motivations for studying their degree**

	<b>N</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>% very/extremely important</b>
To be able to be creative	1858	4.02	.977	74.6
The chance to meet different people	1863	4.01	.967	75.4
The varied and lively work	1857	3.96	.894	75.1
The pleasure of writing	1861	3.91	1.073	68.6
The dynamic lifestyle	1862	3.84	1.020	66.8
The chance to help people in their everyday life	1856	3.77	1.019	63.1
The opportunity to travel	1859	3.52	1.197	53.4
To work for freedom and democracy	1858	3.43	1.164	50.2
The chance to influence public opinion	1862	3.41	1.107	49.8
To fight injustice	1858	3.41	1.146	48.4
To hold people in power accountable	1854	3.28	1.202	45.1
To get a secure job	1856	3.27	1.209	45.4
My talent for journalism	1856	3.16	1.074	38.6
The amount of autonomy one has	1840	3.10	1.039	34.5
To help in nation-building	1850	2.88	1.134	29.7
The prestige of journalism as a profession	1855	2.84	1.144	28.1
The amount of the money one can earn	1844	2.71	1.078	22.6
To help the government achieve its goals for national development	1858	2.46	1.096	16.5
The possibility of being famous	1858	2.08	1.102	11.2

**Table 2: Dimensions of student motivations**

	<b>N</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Cronach's alpha</b>
Varied career	1745	3.84	0.752	0.722
Creativity	1745	3.70	0.793	0.632
Public service	1745	3.24	0.866	0.87
Career progression	1745	2.69	0.845	0.61

**Table 3: Students' preferred specialisations**

	<b>N</b>	<b>Missing</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>	<b>Very/extremely interested</b>
Travel	1135	55	3.98	1.138	70.7
Culture	1138	52	3.96	1.06	71.6
Foreign news	1133	57	3.51	1.206	52.7
Entertainment	1137	53	3.49	1.318	54
Lifestyle	1133	57	3.37	1.26	50.4
Crime and law	1132	58	3.13	1.184	39.4
Environment	1134	56	2.88	1.174	31.5
Development issues	1125	65	2.81	1.17	27
Politics	1136	54	2.79	1.333	32
Sports	1129	61	2.64	1.533	31.4
Science	1123	67	2.37	1.164	18
Economy and business	1127	63	2.07	1.03	9.6

**Table 4: Dimensions of specialisations**

	<b>N</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Reliability (<math>\alpha</math>)</b>
Lifestyle & Culture	1091	3.70	0.956	0.808
Politics & Business	1091	2.78	0.958	0.700
Science & Development	1091	2.68	0.958	0.762