

# **Citizen journalism under pressure: The case of Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines**

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**Citizen journalism Under Pressure: The Case of Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines**

**Abstract**

Citizen journalism was perceived to be a beacon of hope for democracy throughout countries in Southeast Asia. Nonetheless, recent developments indicate citizen journalism in the region is being challenged. This research exploits Pierre Bourdieu's field theory to understand contemporary Southeast Asian citizen journalism. The data was collected by way of semi-structured interviews conducted with thirty people participating in citizen journalism from Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines. The findings demonstrate prevalent economic, political, and cultural pressures in these countries, with political factors exerting the most pressure on the rise of citizen journalism. All three nations experience political pressure via regulations, with the Philippines being subjected to the most pressure due to extrajudicial killings and the intimidation of journalists. Owing to financial constraints, citizen journalism acts as a venue for mainstream media to obtain free content from citizen journalists. Citizen journalists in Indonesia earn significant incomes, although professional journalists covertly adopt their posts. Cultural pressure capital is exhibited when journalists apply ethical journalism to citizen journalists by means of training. Moreover, in the Philippines, citizen journalism is commonly positioned by government-supporting politicians to disinform. This study delivers an extensive and comparative overview, strengthening the case to update field theory.

**Keywords:** Citizen journalism, Indonesian journalism, Malaysian journalism, journalism in the Philippines, field of journalism, Southeast Asia journalism

**Introduction**

In recent years, the emergence of citizen journalism has been a significant development as regards the journalism landscape of Southeast Asia, with technological innovations allowing individuals to become active producers of news and information. Citizen journalism can be defined as "the collection, dissemination and analysis of news and information by the general public, using tools and by way of media platforms" (Atton, 2009). Likewise, citizen journalism could be regarded as a form of civic engagement by stimulating democratic dialogue (Nah & Chung, 2020) and could encourage citizens to actively participate in reporting news and voting on issues considered important by society (Mutsvairo & Rønning, 2020).

There have been numerous examples of citizen journalism playing a crucial role in breaking news stories and exposing issues that may have been ignored by the mainstream media (Mutsvairo & Salgado, 2022; Zeng et al., 2019a). Citizen journalism reports have successfully perpetuated the devastation of disaster events in Indonesia and supported its mitigation. Besides being an immediate source of disaster information, citizen journalism also impacts the socio-political factors within a country. In Malaysia, the Sarawak Report exposed a corruption scandal involving the former Malaysian Prime Minister, Najib Razak. Citizen reports published in the Sarawak Report helped to shape public opinion against rampant corruption throughout Malaysia (Rewcastle-Brown, 2021). Moreover, there is a growing trend of citizen journalism reporting human rights abuses and corruption via social media (Mutsvairo & Rønning, 2020; Slutskiy, 2021). Citizen journalists have exposed government abuses and played a central role in reporting socio-development in the Philippines (Macaraig & Hameleers, 2022).

The Philippines, Indonesia and Malaysia have adopted a democratic political system that guarantees freedom of speech; nevertheless, research reveals significant barriers to the freedom of the press and citizen journalism. It is worth noting that citizen journalists are not protected and are vulnerable to lawsuits and intimidation from the authorities. Simultaneously, the government can censor and block

websites or social media platforms deemed incompatible with their views (Tapsell, 2020). Additionally, there are also concerns pertaining to the conceivability, capacity, reliability, and acceptability citizen of citizen journalists (Mutsvairo & Salgado, 2022; Prawira, 2019).

There are prominent studies that have explained the opportunities and challenges in developing citizen journalism within Southeast Asian countries. However, that research explored the media landscape as a manifestation of macro factors, specifically the political and economic structures. Concerning the researcher's observations, few studies have investigated the occurrence of citizen journalism at the macro level, which focus on the role of the individual or micro-society in the context of Southeast Asia. This research was conducted in Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines to provide opportunities to undertake comparative studies, with the aim of gaining a better understanding of the current growth of citizen journalism in Southeast Asian countries. Hence, the following research question is asked: "How are economic, political, and cultural factors interrelated in the development of citizen journalism in Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines?"

### **Citizen journalism in Asia and Southeast Asia: An Overview**

Academics have studied citizen journalism over the past two decades, although a clear definition remains intangible. Citizen journalism often combine or confuse citizen journalism with other terms, such as civic journalism (Nah & Chung, 2020), public journalism and participatory journalism (Borger et al., 2019; Vos & Thomas, 2023). Citizen journalism could be described as ordinary, day-to-day individuals who work as journalists and participate in creating newsworthy content in relation to covering mainstream journalism (Luo & Harrison, 2019).

Previous research in Asia established that citizen journalism is the preferred news reporting source in countries that are exposed to less diverse media, such as Vietnam, Malaysia, and Indonesia (Zeng et al., 2019). The popularity of citizen journalism globally is a response to the lack of trust in the mainstream media. Given the extent of self-censorship among journalists and the influence of politics and business on news reporting, professional journalists in China are concerned about the future of freedom of the press (Darbo & Skjerdal, 2019). Conversely, citizen journalism is encountering challenges with respect to the quality of fact-checking and neutrality (Darbo and Skjerdal, 2019). Citizen journalism in China is frequently deemed to be untrustworthy because there is no verification system, which may result in potentially false information being disseminated (Zeng et al., 2019). Because of this, traditional journalists may well have a valid reason to be sceptical towards citizen journalism (Salaudeen, 2022).

Citizen journalism sites can also function as representative voices for marginalised and underrepresented communities (Nah & Yamamoto, 2019), utilising social media platforms to disseminate their work. This is evident, given that Indonesia and the Philippines ranked fourth and tenth respectively, as the countries with the highest number of social media users (Shewale, 2023). The Philippines and Malaysia ranked first and third, respectively in terms of daily average time spent on social media (Commission Factory, 2023).

Citizen journalism has gained significant traction in Asia. Empowered by the ubiquity of smartphones, social media platforms and online connectivity, citizens have assumed the role of news gatherers and distributors, challenging the concepts associated with traditional media (Salaudeen, 2022). Even though professional material subsists in conjunction with citizen journalism, the democratic effect that citizen journalism has on Malaysian society is investigated further via citizen journalism, which continues to influence public opinion and have an impact on Malaysian politics (Jalli, 2020).

Nonetheless, there is a contrast between citizen journalists and the negative associations of being keyboard warriors or cyberwarriors while sharing topics that are not political and focused as regards social and economic issues, as well as the societal impacts (Mahamed, 2022).

Examining citizen journalism across Southeast Asia in more detail, the citizen journalism landscape varies significantly, influenced by legal environments, technology use, citizen participation, and the subsequent impact. In Indonesia, the legal framework is ambiguous, with occasional harassment of journalists amidst widespread internet and smartphone use enabling active citizen participation via social media and independent media outlets (Balahmar, 2021; Lim, 2023). Conversely, although subject to legislation such as the Sedition Act, Malaysia profits from an open legal environment. This has encouraged citizen journalism, principally in political reporting and investigative journalism, driven by high internet penetration and smartphone use (Chinnasamy & Volkmer, 2023). The Philippines has freedom of speech; however, there are potential legal consequences for defamation, whilst journalists limited protection. Nonetheless, citizen journalism is thriving through substantial engagement on social media platforms, strengthening voices and influencing public discourse (Reporters Without Borders, 2020; Estella, 2021).

While citizen journalism across these countries has varying degrees of influence, it remains significant in shaping public opinion, challenging mainstream narratives, and raising awareness concerning social issues. Equally, in applying the democratic viewpoint, primary and secondary circles can be exploited to understand the position of citizen journalism. The primary circle encompasses citizen journalism's active engagement with democratic principles, for example transparency, accountability and citizen participation in determining public discourse. In contrast, the secondary circle reflects a more constrained environment where citizen journalism operates within restrictions imposed by legal constraints, government control and societal challenges, notwithstanding that continues to contribute to public discourse and awareness within those constraints (Curato & Fossati, 2020).

To examine this further, in Indonesia for instance, citizen journalism occupies a primary circle position within the democratic framework. Despite occasional legal uncertainties and risks, citizen journalism plays a vital role in progressing transparency and accountability. Similarly, in the Philippines, citizen journalism occupies a primary circle position, acting as a watchdog that scrutinises government performance and by promoting civic engagement. Evidently, social media platforms are essential in facilitating citizen participation and circumventing traditional media censorship, contributing to a dynamic media landscape (Ong & Tapsell, 2022).

However, in Malaysia, citizen journalism functions within a democratic secondary circle. Despite constitutional guarantees, legal constraints, such as the Communications and Multimedia Act and government control over media limit the impact of citizen journalism. While citizen journalists deliver alternative perspectives and challenge mainstream narratives, their effectiveness is hindered by regulatory barriers and the risk of censorship. Nevertheless, online platforms permit citizen journalists to circumvent traditional media censorship and report news, albeit within the confines of legal limitations (Freedom House, 2021; Kow & Khoo, 2023).

**Understanding Citizen journalism from a Journalistic Point of View**

Researchers particularly acknowledge that citizen journalism is not "journalism", but it is undeniable that it has influenced the mainstream news-media ecosystem (Miller, 2019). Citizen journalism also has a similar role to journalism in various contexts (Mutsvairo & Wasserman, 2016). Likewise, it is

widely used as a reference point in numerous parts of the world, including Asia (Jalli, 2020; Zeng et al., 2019) and is recognised in various forms and names (Roberts, 2019).

To understand journalism, Bourdieu offers field theory by identifying the power dynamics and the relationship between micro-level agents and macro-level society (Waltrop and Hartley, 2015, cited in Madeiros and Badr, 2022). It is believed that field theory could help understand alternative journalism, such as engaged journalism (Madeiros & Badr, 2022) or citizen journalism (Prawira, 2019) because they occupy a similar position in society.

Bourdieu mentioned that the field is an arena where agents compete to maintain or increase their position by using forces which he terms capital (Bourdieu, 2005). He mentioned that there are three fundamental capitals in the field of journalism, specifically economic, political and cultural capital. Bourdieu named economic capital the root of all other types of capital, such as money and commodity, whereas political capital is the power to influence political decisions. Bourdieu believes that political capital has the same position and is grounded in economic capital. Regardless, political capital can be more dominant than economic capital, for example, the application of libel rules and regulations governing official source-reporter relations (Benson, 2009). Political capital includes opinion, policy and political judgment (French, 2011), which can be categorised as endogenous and exogenous capital (Vos, 2019). Endogenous political capital can be identified as the opinions of agents or journalists', while exogenous force can be in the form of rules and regulations concerning journalism. For decades, journalism has maintained a close relationship with politics in many countries. Citizen journalism is exerting pressure on governments because it is also closely related to politics (Jalli, 2020; Mutsvairo, 2016). Furthermore, researchers ascertained that citizen journalism could change the political situation in South Korea when it supported the underdog in the presidential elections (Allan, 2006). It should also be stated that it has flourished when professionals were absent (Wall & El Zahed, 2015) and that it can influence political discourse and the political involvement of the public (Kaufhold et al., 2010). Academics believe that citizen journalism will strengthen democracy in journalism and allow citizen journalism to be undertaken on a regular basis (Allan & Peters, 2015; Bossio & Bebawi, 2016).

Cultural capital exists in an individual and the process of representation (Bourdieu, 1998, 2005). Bourdieu expresses a degree of scepticism as regards cultural capital. He contends that the field of journalism is heteronymous because it is powered by economic capital factors rather than its cultural capital (Bourdieu, 2005). He added that cultural capital appears in three forms; namely, embodied, objectified and institutionalised states. An example of cultural capital as quality journalism that deserves the Pulitzer Prize, cultural capital has become a benchmark in legitimising the position of citizen journalism in society.

Bourdieu asserted that economic capital dominates the field of journalism or what he labels market driven journalism (Bourdieu, 2005). Economic capital influences journalism in many ways, for example by way of advertising, ownership, or sponsorship. However, when the market drives journalism instead of politics, it is assumed that it generates higher-quality journalism (Marlière, 1998). By connecting a field's structural features to an actor's orientation and how they obtain social, cultural, as well as economic capital differently, field theory enables the conflicts that arise between established players and those who are on the periphery to be analysed (Madeiros and Badr, 2022). Bourdieu's field theory provides a rich theoretical foundation for interpreting the intricacies of modern journalism. Likewise, researchers can better understand power dynamics, inequality and ideological conflicts in the media industry by examining how these types of capital interact within the field of citizen journalism.



Research Methods

This research applies a structural-constructivism paradigm with a qualitative approach (Benson, 2006). Data were obtained by way of semi-structured interviews with thirty participants from Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines. Five citizen journalists and professional journalists from each country were interviewed. The interviews were conducted from February-August 2023. The open-ended questions are guided by Bourdieu’s field theory relating to politics, the economy and cultural capital. The study uses NVivo 12 with word frequency query to code the results of the transcribed interviews (Bazeley & Jackson, 2013).

Participants were chosen based on their ability to understand the phenomena studied (Jalli, 2020; Tapsell, 2020). This research comprises two categories: citizen journalists and professional journalists. Anyone who creates and distributes information content, whether as a primary career or a side gig, is considered a citizen journalist. A citizen journalist can be an academic, social media agent or an ordinary person who produces content on social media and other media platforms, whereas a professional journalist refers to a person who is employed as a journalist for a mainstream media outlet. We recruited participants based on criterion sampling, which was followed by snowball sampling (Lindlof & Taylor, 2019; Faulkner & Atkinson, 2024). The predetermined criteria are: (1) The participant is a practitioner in the field of citizen journalism and journalism; (2) The participant understands the field of politics in their respective countries; and (3) The participant has credibility in their respective fields.

Research Findings

To illustrate the research findings, this section presents a word cloud and a table featuring samples of the interviewees’ responses. Most interviewees chose to be anonymous; hence, their names are written as NR1 to NR30. Interviews were conducted using face-to-face interviews, Zoom meetings and WhatsApp calls with an average duration of around 50 minutes. Interview questions are based on the macro-societal and micro-societal factors connected with political capital, economic capital and cultural capital, as shown in Table 1. The table provides examples of the interviewees’ answers related to each category.

Theme	Category	Interviewee
Political Capital	Opinion	Citizen journalism is democratising journalism and people do not trust the mainstream media anymore (NR3).
	Policy	Well, we have a lot of Acts, Sedition, Printing, the Press Act, MCMC Act, etc, and that are also applied to citizen journalism. The Minister of Information in fact has got to address the laws in relation to both professional and citizen journalist. He cannot only talk about 5G, he cannot only talk about the phone, about the you know~. As far as protection goes it.... it is the same whether you are a professional journalist or a citizen journalist (NR11).
	Political Judgement	From my observation, there are many of us (citizen journalists) that are easily bought by people with interests (politicians). Therefore, many have not remained neutral (NR25).
Economic Capital	Money	Thus, payment is based on the target. So, if for example they reach the target within a month, they receive a basic fee. Well, there will also be a bonus for videos that went viral (NR5).
	Commodities	First, we have a target of a specific number of page views but citizen journalist's do not always post. So, occasionally we cover the story ourselves (NR10).
Cultural capital	Embodied	We went around Malaysia initially to train citizen journalists. I think from 2008 we were only carrying out one training. Currently, I am doing something like two training sessions a month across Malaysia. Every place you can think of in East Malaysia, the southern region, West Malaysia. Then from there, by 2010, we heard that a lot of, the whole you know programme was delivering momentum. Then I was going to a lot of Southeast Asia countries to do the training (NR15).
	Objectified	As editors and project initiators, we took a video from a contributor and edited it to make it more visually engaging for social media users. Then we attached the video to the article. I feel it has the potential to reach more than three million viewers (NR16).
	Institutionalised	PPWI (Indonesian Citizens Journalists Association) is trying to be recognised by the Press Council, but so far it has not been successful (NR1).

Table 1. Interviewees’ Responses to the field of Citizen Journalism

[illegible]

Picture 2 reveals the keywords that were derived from the transcribed interviews related to the issue of economic capital. These keywords include money, advertising, news and pageviews. Respondents were concerned with the financial reasons behind partnerships between mainstream media and citizen journalism. The goal of citizen journalism is to supplement news media's revenue-generating efforts by producing news stories. Furthermore, several citizen journalists are optimistic that citizen journalism can operate independently and will not require cooperation from mainstream media. Nevertheless, crowdfunded citizen journalism remains unpopular in these three countries and continues to be dependent on partnerships and paid content.



The research findings pertaining to the cultural capital associated with citizen journalism in Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines are summarised in Picture 3. When discussing cultural capital, specific terms are employed more frequently than others: quality, continuity, training and journalist. The interviewees regard citizen journalism as being related to or within the field of journalism. According to the sources in the research, citizen journalism must cooperate with mainstream media to adhere to their norms.



Picture 3. Word Cloud of the Cultural Capital associated with citizen journalism in Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines

Research Discussion

Political Capital in Citizen Journalism

This sub-section discusses the research findings as regards the political capital theme. This research determines that citizen journalism is related to the political activity of the governments and citizen journalists. The keywords that are mentioned the most in relation to political capital are regulation, government and law. The finding obtained by this research confirms that citizen journalism is a recent phenomenon in all three countries; consequently, there are differences in how it is understood. All three countries adhere to a democratic system of government that recognises freedom of speech and the freedom of the press. However, all three countries possess regulations that prevent freedom of speech. NR3 claimed that the government can target opposition using the ITE law, the Criminal Code in Indonesia. However, in Malaysia, the Penal Code, Sedition Act, Peaceful Assembly Act and Communications and Multimedia Act are used against citizen journalists. In the Philippines, authorities use cybercrime laws to silence people who condemn the government. These findings strengthen previous research concerning pressure on the press in Southeast Asia. It is also important to note that because citizen journalism networks are likewise under the influence of the powerful, fulfilling the public's information needs is a challenge for citizen journalism, which was once predicted to take the place of the mainstream media as a source of information.

*“Well, we have a lot of acts, Sedition, Printing, Presses Act, MCMC Act, etc, and it is also applied to citizen journalism. In fact, the Minister of Information has got to address the laws in relation to both professional and citizen journalists” (NR11, 2023).*

According to NR22, the ABS-CBN news network, which was the foremost mainstream media outlet in the Philippines prior to its closure by the Duterte government, collaborated the most with citizen journalists. The closure of ABS-CBN not only has had an adverse impact on journalism but also has affected citizen journalism. This is because this media had the largest citizen journalism network in the country. In 2020, ABS-CBN failed to secure a franchise renewal from the House of Representatives on account of its business practices. The interviewees believe that the closure of the largest media network in the Philippines was because of criticism of President Duterte in his war on drugs. Journalism together with citizen journalism in the Philippines is in danger.

*“Libel is also one weapon used even to Duterte and Marcos, yes. All of the journalists have been sued by powerful politicians. It’s used as a scare tactic to deter journalist from writing critical stories about politicians and other influential figures” (NR29, 2023).*



According to NR21, journalists in the Philippines continue to be in danger and murdered. At the same time, the government uses internet trolls to promote its agenda. Moreover, according to NR21, this situation has also given rise to political influencers on social media who support the government. According to NR22, these influencers use Facebook to convey their agenda.

Of note, is that in just two years, 444 cases were investigated in Malaysia based on the Communications and Multimedia Act (Malaysia Kini, 2023). The threat of legal prosecution also occurs in Indonesia. Indonesia has laws and regulations, such as the Electronic Transactions (ITE) Law which can incarcerate citizen journalists for up to seven years. According to NR03, the most common legal cases are defamation cases.

*"I have been a journalist for over 40 years, and I am a registered member of PWI. However, I do not work for any mainstream media outlets, and YouTube is where my products are released. That's the issue, but there was another situation when the cops called."*  
(NR03,2023)

This research determines two types of political capital in citizen journalism, specifically endogenous and exogenous political capital. There are various political reasons motivate people to engage in citizen journalism. Several interviewees mentioned that citizen journalism is a movement to democratise journalism, whereas others alleged that citizen journalism is a partisan movement. NR23 mentioned that there are popular government supporters in the Philippines who are also known as citizen journalists. However, NR5 asserted that citizen journalists in Indonesia are wary of reporting political content because they are concerned about their personal safety.

Exogenous political capital pressure originates from parties who seek to maintain the status quo as influencers of public opinion, for example the government, politicians, and journalists. The governments of all three countries have acknowledged the technological developments that support the development of robust information exchange, although they have not accepted that citizen journalists are a part of journalism. According to NR1, the Indonesian Citizen Journalists Association (PPWI) has been established for a while, but it has never been recognised by the Indonesian Press Council as a journalism organisation.

It should be mentioned that some interviewees maintain that citizen journalism is part of journalism, while others believe that it falls outside the field of journalism. However, all the interviewees admitted that citizen journalism is a field that has been in existence for several years. Therefore, the rules that apply in this field remain contested. As Bourdieu stated, the rules of the game are one of the conditions for the formation of the field. According to Bourdieu (1986), this field comprises rules of the game that distinguish it from other fields. From this perspective, citizen journalism differs from conventional journalism which adheres to a code of ethics. The exclusion of citizen journalism from the field of journalism undoubtedly has an impact on their legal protection. Given that citizen journalists are not covered by media law, they can be prosecuted by way of general law. In conclusion, political capital is the most influential capital in the field of citizen journalism in Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines.

### Economic capital in Citizen Journalism

This sub-section discusses the research findings in relation to economic capital. The findings proved the word frequency regarding economic capital is as follows: money, advertising, news and pageviews,

which are related to the category shown in Table 1. This research learned that the model adopted by mainstream media is also applicable to citizen journalism. Citizen journalism is defined as a collaboration of common people and professional journalist that is disseminated in mainstream media outlets. However, this collaboration is problematic because it gives one party the opportunity to exploit the other. Primarily, this collaboration positions mainstream media journalists as the main beneficiaries as they receive content for free from citizen journalists. NR8 claimed that they are not allowed to pay for citizen journalism's work because of journalism ethics. NR8 considers citizen journalists to be a source of information and therefore they should not be paid. Conversely, NR9 said that they give citizen journalists gifts, such as mobile phones, motorcycle helmets and jackets to motivate them to submit their work.

Journalism and citizen journalism competitions are comparable in that they both aim to be fast and exclusive. However, In citizen journalism, the interviewee is focused on continuity. NR10, the manager of citizen journalism's online news media collaboration in Indonesia, maintains that on occasion, he must write for the channel he manages on behalf of citizen journalists to ensure continuity.

As citizen journalists are not professionals, they will contribute whenever they feel like it; hence, they lack continuity. NR10 asserted that continuity is an crucial factor in achieving the pageviews target as a commodity that can be sold to advertisers.

*"We have a target of a specific number of page views but citizen journalist's do not always post. So, occasionally we cover the story ourselves"* (NR10, 2023).

NR5, manager of Indonesian Snack Video news, purported that he only recruits skilled citizen journalists because he wants to guarantee the quality and quantity of citizen journalism's content. His strategy resulted in the Snack citizen journalists he recruited being professional journalists. The demands for quality Snack Video content also compel registered Snack citizen journalists to follow rules that are more inflexible than the applicable Indonesian journalistic code of ethics.

*"Snack Video has high pay. With the money he received from Snack Video as a citizen journalist, a friend in Palembang was able to purchase a house. Many like that"* (NR07,2023)

The Chinese application, Snack Video, pays a fee of USD 50-1000 per month for contributions from citizen journalists. With a platform that pays for citizen journalist's work, content provide by citizen journalists can be planned more or continuous. The amount paid by Snack Video Indonesia exceeds the average wage of professional Indonesian journalists.

Cultural Capital of Citizen Journalism

This sub-section examines the research findings using the cultural capital theme. The most frequent words regarding the cultural capital theme are quality, continuity, training, journalists. Most interviewees are concerned about the quality of information conveyed by citizen journalists. NR1 said that the programme that accommodated citizen journalists could not continue as the collaborations with citizen journalists are inconsistent, the quality of their work is questionable and they fail to produce work regularly, unlike professional journalists. According to NR20, being a citizen journalist is not a full-time profession, therefore he will write reports whenever he feels like it.

*"Citizen journalism is a means to connect people you know who are not full-time, non-professional journalists with opportunities to be on the ground, involved in journalism, and have access to alternative media"* (NR20, 2023)

Professional journalists provide training for citizen journalists to improve their quality and consistency, notwithstanding this activity takes considerable time, effort and money. NR15 revealed that since 2008, the Citizen Journalism of Malaysia (CJMY) has travelled around the country to provide training for citizen journalists. In Indonesia, NR10 also claimed that citizen journalism training is on the agenda of the media company where he works. Additionally, NR25 commented that more training was carried out for university students in the Philippines.

Professional journalists believe that citizen journalist is still producing news of a low quality. Accuracy, ethics, and completeness of information are some of the areas that are emphasized in citizen journalism training. NR16 stated that his passion of writing news articles is the reason he was interested in attending citizen journalism course.

"I got info from a friend who was also, he was actually a journalist at MalaysiaKini, and then and I got to the, to the training and I was in, I came to know then I start to write, writing aaa articles and then I came to know that they also have the, the job, job opening and then I got involved."(NR16, 2023)

This type of training puts pressure on citizen journalism to follow journalism ethics. These trainings introduce ethical journalism so that *citizen journalism* is defined as merely a collaborator in news production in mainstream media.

In the meantime, the progress made by citizen journalism has increased public awareness about its role and it now occupies a prominent position in public discourse. Equally, political citizen journalists who support the government are increasingly popular and have subscribers on YouTube.

*"For example, if you look at Bannat's YouTube channel, he has countless political opinions and I think he's more well-known than most journalists. Additionally, journalists wouldn't post that type of political agenda because, naturally, journalists are expected to speak with objectivity"* (NR22, 2023).

Nevertheless, the credibility of citizen journalists still has not received recognition from the Press Council, professional journalists, the government or from law enforcement. Furthermore, citizen journalism in all three countries has not yet been established, although citizen journalism groups have introduced training for citizen journalists to obtain certification as professional journalists. NR1 stated that citizen journalism would not be recognized by the Press Council because, according to him, citizen journalism cannot be institutionalized. To date, the rules of citizen journalism have not been legalised; therefore, citizen journalism remains unestablished.

To further demonstrate the complexities connected with the political, economic and cultural capital conditions in these countries, Table 2 highlighted the capital conditions pertaining to citizen journalism in each of the three countries. All three countries adhere to democratic government, but all three implement authoritarian government systems on different levels. The government system influences the journalism system and citizen journalism. The political system in the Philippines, as the exogenous political capital, exhibits the highest level of repression. The government and other parties put pressure on the citizen journalists in the form of legislation and extra-judicial killings.

The legal aspects in Indonesia and Malaysia are similar. All three countries have laws and regulations that prevent freedom of speech, whether directed at ordinary people, journalists or citizen journalists.

The political motivation of citizen journalists demonstrates endogenous political capital. While in the Philippines, the social media platforms that citizen journalists also use are employed by government supporters.

Table 2 also gives a comparison of economic capital in Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines. This study determined that collaboration between citizen journalists and mainstream media is the most common business model. This collaborative relationship is profitable because they obtain content from citizen journalists for free. Conversely, citizen journalism in Indonesia has taken a step further in terms of economic capital and citizen journalists are quite well paid through their contributions to Snack videos. Nonetheless, the citizen journalists who contribute to Snack Video are professional journalists.

Theme	Country		
	Indonesia	Malaysia	Philippines
Politic	Citizen journalism is limited because of the Penal Code and the ITE Law.	The Malaysian government restricts citizen journalism by way of various legislation, including the Sedition Act, Printing Act, Press Act and the MCMC.	Citizen journalism is restricted by legislation and citizen journalists face the possibility of extrajudicial execution. The government of the Philippines banned a media company that supported citizen journalism. Conversely, citizen journalists who back the government are beginning to emerge.
Economy	Social media firm Snack Video began to monetise citizen journalism. Snack Video pays citizen journalists for their work.	Citizen journalism is cooperating with mainstream media, but citizen journalists are not paid.	Although they provide content for mainstream media, citizen journalists are not compensated.
Cultural	Owing to inconsistencies and issues about quality concerning citizen journalists' work, professional journalists are writing stories for citizen journalism channel.	Citizen journalists are trained by professional journalists to adhere to journalistic ethics and practices.	Misinformation posted by promising citizen journalists is evident on YouTube.

Table. 2. Comparison of Capital in Indonesia, Malaysia and Citizen Journalism in the Philippines

The cultural capital associated with citizen journalism in all three countries reveals similarities. The sources in this research all refer to ethical mainstream journalism. Attempts are ongoing to normalise citizen journalism using journalism standards by way of conducting journalism training for citizen journalists. Similarly, the practice of training citizen journalists will result in them being accepted by **professional** journalists. Granting that they share the same field to some extent, citizen journalism could possibly embrace a different position to traditional journalism, though this has only been partially successful. For example, in Indonesia, instead of providing training to citizen journalists and encouraging them, some professional journalists decided to disguise themselves as citizen journalists. In recent years, various citizen journalists have gained key positions as public influencers in Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines. Furthermore, this phenomenon also has adverse impacts because citizen journalists are also a source of misinformation. For instance, in the Philippines, citizen journalism is actively used as a platform to support the government. Likewise, not unlike journalism, citizen journalism is heteronomous due to the predominance of external influences.

## Conclusion

Citizen journalism has developed into an alternative source of public information in Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines. However, this study ascertained that citizen journalism is under pressure politically, economically and culturally to make it a heteronomous field. Political factors were noted to place the most pressure on the development of citizen journalism in all three countries. Similarly, citizen journalism received interest from the public and challenged the mainstream media paradigm. Alternatively, it is evident that citizen journalism as an influencer of public opinion, is under pressure from parties who want to maintain the *status quo*, such as the government, politicians and professional journalists. Also, citizen journalists are being legally prosecuted given that they are not protected by media law. Despite the existence of democratic government systems in each country, the number of people being prosecuted and imprisoned is increasing, with citizen journalists also being targeted. Furthermore, this study has strengthened the critique of Bourdieu's field theory. In the context of citizen journalism, there is a gap in the relationship between economic capital and political capital, despite the fact that both occupy the same position in relation to cultural capital.

Traditional media sources have taken notice of the growth of citizen journalism and have included citizen journalism in their media products, although citizen journalism is not compensated for this partnership. The Snack Video Indonesia social media programme provides significant rewards for citizen journalists; yet professional journalists pose as citizen journalists in Snack videos. Also, the focus on cultural capital relates to skills, citizen journalism products and recognition. Furthermore, journalists train citizen journalists and apply ethical journalism to meet the standard mainstream media product.

This research has presented an overview of capital relationships in contemporary citizen journalism in the context of democratic countries, e.g., Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines. All three countries have different citizen journalism settings, yet they also have similarities, which provide an overview of the state of citizen journalism in the ASEAN. Similarly, this research is limited to qualitative data from thirty sources obtained by means of purposive sampling. Hence, a more significant amount of data is required to obtain a more detailed understanding of citizen journalism in the ASEAN.

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