



TRUST IN **ETHICAL** JOURNALISM

The Key to Media Futures



Ethical
Journalism
Network

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Ethics in the News

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INTRODUCTION

Trust in Ethical Journalism The Key to Media Futures

Aidan White

If 2017 was the year the world finally woke up to the threat of disinformation and the way internet technologies are secretly and subtly used to undermine democracy, then 2018 is becoming the year when ethical journalism, a human instinct beyond encoding and algorithmic definition, finally gets the recognition it deserves.

This issue of *Ethics in the News* looks at how the communications revolution is continuing to pose more questions than answers over a public crisis of confidence, both in democracy and in sources of public information.

How do we build trust in journalism and news media? Must we sacrifice human rights and pluralism in return for free digital services? How do we stem the flow of hate-speech, propaganda and malicious lies without endangering free speech? How do we pay for the journalism that democracy needs to survive?

Around the world these debates rage, but in some countries and regions, the arguments are anything but theoretical. The rise of populism accompanied by a discreet use of technology to target voters or promote hate speech is tearing into the fabric of democracy everywhere. In countries wracked by economic and social crisis or in the aftermath of war, these threats are a major obstacle to peace and development.

In this issue we examine the technological, political and social realities of the information crisis: how algorithms and artificial intelligence are setting a new and potentially troubling agenda; how advertising platforms and the business of social

media are undermining public trust; how democracy and political elections are open to undue interference.

But it is not all bad news. From the Middle East and the Balkans there are inspiring stories of journalists and media working together, even across political divides, to develop new initiatives to challenge the hate-mongers. In Turkey a new spirit of media solidarity is in the air. In Africa there are new approaches to reporting terrorism and conflict and a fresh debate about the protection of authors' rights in the digital age.

Everywhere ethical issues abound – improving the role and portrayal of women in media; combating discrimination and intolerance; improving coverage of migration and human trafficking; and, importantly for all journalists and media, building a sustainable future for journalism without surrendering the cardinal principle of editorial freedom and independence.

The messages are mixed, but they point in one direction, towards a communications landscape that people can trust. It won't happen overnight, but such a vision will not be realised at all unless strategies for the future embrace public interest journalism, good governance in media, and a public information system rooted in ethics and transparency.



BACK TO BASICS

Internet crisis and a golden opportunity for journalism

Aidan White

Facebook appears to have finally had enough of journalism. The decision in January 2018 to downgrade its news profile and to strengthen its first-love – helping families and friends to stay in touch – means a retreat from its frontline role as the world’s leading publisher of news.

For publishers who staked their financial future on the Facebook model of publishing it could be very bad news, but for others who have been increasingly sceptical about the platform it may provide an opportunity for fresh-thinking about the future of news

On all sides Facebook and other big technology companies have come under fire¹: from rebellious employees and whistle blowing former executives; from governments increasingly worried about unscrupulous use of the platform to interfere in democratic elections; from restless advertisers fed up with being joined up with anti-social and

sometimes racist opinions; and increasing opposition from within its core community over privacy and abuse issues.

And into 2018, the blows kept coming with revelations in *The Observer* in London in March of a massive data breach in which the personal information from around 50 million Facebook users was taken without authorisation to build a system for profiling United States voters. A whistle-blower revealed² how a company linked to former Donald Trump adviser Steve Bannon, Cambridge Analytica, had gathered the data to target voters with personalised political advertisements during the US election in 2016.

For years now many commentators have been warning that Facebook’s use of technology is a key driver of today’s polarised, often chaotic information environment.

More than a year ago the Ethical Journalism Network joined other news leaders in a global protest over the Facebook deletion of the Napalm Girl photograph from the Norwegian daily *Aftenposten*.³



For years now many commentators have been warning that Facebook's use of technology is a key driver of today's polarised, often chaotic information environment.

This incident illustrated precisely why encoding and machine intelligence cannot guarantee informed, nuanced and ethical communications. Media leaders around the world argue that we need less robotic, automated editing and more informed, skilled and well-trained journalists and editors.

It is a message that Facebook appeared to accept with a decision last year to recruit more real live editors to monitor and delete abusive content. But maintaining and moderating a newsfeed means Facebook will have to hire thousands of editors and journalists to counter disinformation and that could hit profits in years to come.

That prospect as well as a growing realisation that publishing news is not easily compatible with the Facebook model of quick-fire sharing may be behind the decision to downgrade news media on the platform.

Certainly, it is a setback for Facebook's vision of creating a global public forum in which its 2 billion users would have easy access to all the information that's important in their lives.

Unfortunately, it is fresh evidence that social networks, and the business models around them, are not designed to promote or to give prominence to streams of reliable, trustworthy information like journalism. What counts in this world are clicks and attention-grabbing content to attract advertising, not the public purpose of information.

The shift has left news industry leaders scratching their heads over how to respond. Those who argue it's time for the industry to break with Facebook will have to find convincing alternatives, not least because many news leaders only signed up to the Facebook model because its advertising monopoly gave them little other choice and many publishers have grown addicted to the promise of clicks offered by a platform which now boasts two billion users, but the change of direction by the company will

cause them pain.

However, as Frederic Filloux, a French media commentator based in the US has noted⁴, this new reality also provides an opportunity to reinvest time and resources in the things that actually make for good journalism. "Once the acute pain is gone, the industry will realize that this is not such bad news after all," he writes. "It is time to regroup and refocus on the basics."

This message will resonate within media circles where our love affair with the mighty communications revolution has long-since cooled with the deeply negative effects of disinformation, malicious propaganda and online abuse and the destruction of sustainable models of journalism in recent years.

Anyone close to the news media business knows that newspapers and traditional news reporting increasingly rely on philanthropy, public funding or supportive foundations to maintain quality content and investigative journalism.

The traditional market models that kept general news media in profit and robust competition are obsolete and only niche markets – such as specialist information sectors like financial journalism – are making progress through the headwinds of market restructuring.

The fact that journalism no longer provides a living for people who work in the industry or invest in it has reinforced the corruption that has always overshadowed journalism in the developing world and has spawned a new generation of owners who buy up media as trophy possessions to promote their wider political and business interests.

Working conditions in newsrooms – online and offline – are equally poor. A generation of young people in the journalism schools around the world have few quality jobs to look forward to. Some will survive as freelancers, but many, if not most, are destined for advertising, corporate communications or public and political information jobs.

At the same time public trust in journalism is weakened as tech giants and advertising companies remain reluctant to promote reliable public information.

All of this points towards an opportunity for journalism but only if policymakers and citizens' groups recognise that there is an urgent need for public programmes to support a fresh agenda for change in journalism. For the Ethical Journalism Network the priorities in any back to basics strategy will be

- ▷ **Ethics:** Strengthening attachment inside journalism to core values – accuracy, independence, impartiality, humanity, transparency and accountability – and eliminating hate-speech, building respect for pluralism, holding power to account and challenging abuse of human rights;
- ▷ **Digital Knowledge:** Helping a new generation of journalists and editors to understand the digital age, to acquire the technical skills they need, and to put data journalism at the heart of editorial work at all levels;
- ▷ **Sustainability:** Building public support for new and creative ways of funding public interest journalism while preserving the editorial independence that ensures public trust in ethical media;
- ▷ **Engagement:** Ensuring journalism has a positive edge and is working with its audience to increase



understanding of journalism's role in the new information landscape while building respect for democracy and human rights;

- ▷ **Responsibility:** Media and journalism must be trustworthy, intolerant of conflicts of interest, transparent about its work and always ready to listen to the complaints and views of others.

These issues should be the centrepiece of any strategy for reviving the fortunes of journalism. Building public trust requires a new vision from policymakers that goes beyond political self-interest and public relations.

Whether it is countering the information wars being fought in conflict zones or creating a pluralist information space for elections, citizens need access to information they can trust, from people they can identify.

The question of sustainability is crucial. There is an explosion of new initiatives within journalism and a capacity for innovation that is giving fresh wind to the notion of a brighter future ahead. Already investigative

journalism is one area of reporting that is thriving on the back of non-traditional funding.

It may well be that journalism is no longer a money-spinner for hard-headed investors, but there are signs that a cleaner, more transparent world of news media will generate direct support from readers, listeners, viewers or followers.

New online initiatives and traditional players are successfully reinventing themselves on the web with support from donors, foundations, the audience and public sources. The future of journalism will not be determined by attachment to a single income flow, but will be based upon creative solutions to the funding crisis and may include a mix of civic, market and public resources.

Even in regions where democracy is under pressure, journalists are looking for innovative ways to secure the future of news. No-one predicts a smooth transition to the new information age, but equally no-one doubts that editorial optimism and a commitment to ethical values are the keys to success.

¹ <https://www.theguardian.com/news/2017/oct/31/coders-of-the-world-unite-can-silicon-valley-workers-curb-the-power-of-big-tech>

² https://www.theguardian.com/news/2018/mar/17/cambridge-analytica-facebook-influence-us-election?CMP=Share_AndroidApp_Tweet

³ <https://www.aftenposten.no/meninger/kommentar/i/G892Q/Dear-Mark-I-am-writing-this-to-inform-you-that-I-shall-not-comply-with-your-requirement-to-remove-this-picture>

⁴ <https://mondaynote.com/facebook-is-done-with-quality-journalism-deal-with-it-afc2475f1f84>

ONLINE DISINFORMATION

Europe dodges the money question

A European Union experts panel set up to look at the problem of fake news and disinformation last year has called upon political leaders to create an international coalition to fight fake news.

This was one of the actions in a series of proposals outlined in the 50-page report published on 12 March 2018¹ to combat fake news (a term now officially abandoned in favour of the more precise “disinformation”) including creating a new alliance of online platforms, media and journalists and civil society groups.

The report, commissioned by the European Union and produced by 39 media activists, journalists, media supporters, academics and internet specialists, also calls for a code of practice to be introduced across Europe, with national centres established to fight disinformation, promote media literacy and, importantly, to find resources to pay for more investigative journalism.

Those expecting a hard-line response to the problems created by Facebook and others will be disappointed that there is no demand for the tech companies to end the secrecy over the way they work, although the experts do suggest that social networks should commit “to ensure transparency by explaining how algorithms select news.”

Given that social media makes money by attracting the attention of users, often with sensationalist or false information, it’s unlikely that they will be happy to reveal the dark arts of robotic information processing anytime soon.

Although it’s widely accepted that the algorithm-driven business models of groups like Facebook and Google’s Youtube as well as politically-motivated government propaganda are widely accepted as responsible for disinformation, the report says the motives

for putting out false information must be determined before labelling something as ‘disinformation’.

However, the experts failed to examine the avalanches of disinformation that comes from governments and made no mention of how to deal with the problem of governments such as Russia or even EU member states who put out blatant propaganda and disinformation.

But perhaps most importantly the EU inquiry failed to follow the money trail that explains how social networks operate. An attempt to organise an inquiry into how the money flows and who makes how much money in the disinformation business did not get off the ground.

This would have been a deal-breaker for some of the experts around the table, but without fully understanding how falsehoods, propaganda and potentially abusive communications triggers profits for advertising companies like Google and Facebook it is impossible to understand the extent to which commercial interests are an obstacle in controlling the spread of disinformation.

Nevertheless, the report makes a number of positive recommendations including:

- ▷ setting up ‘European Centres’ to combat disinformation,
- ▷ improving media literacy,
- ▷ increasing funding for investigative journalism, and
- ▷ Providing VAT exemptions or other types of tax breaks in EU states to encourage more reliable streams of information.

The recommendations will feed into a larger European Union plan to be presented later in 2018.

¹ <https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/news/final-report-high-level-expert-group-fake-news-and-online-disinformation>



TRUST IN JOURNALISM

Thousands march as Slovakia reacts to media murder

Chris Elliott

The assassination of an investigative Slovakian journalist and his fiancée brought people onto the streets and the government of this small eastern European country to the brink of collapse.

Ján Kuciak and his fiancée, Martina Kušnírová, were discovered shot dead in the home they shared after worried relatives alerted police, saying it had been a week since they had heard from the couple, according to the *Guardian*.

Kuciak, 27, was understood to be investigating a high-level tax fraud involving businessmen, politicians and the mafia when they were murdered on 25 February. His investigations included those of some businessmen with alleged links to the ruling party.

Robert Fico, the Slovak Prime Minister for the last six years, resigned after weeks of public protests.

Slovakia is one of the so-called Visegrad countries – a group that also includes Hungary, Poland and the Czech Republic – all states led by some of Europe’s most prominent Eurosceptic politicians and who, like Hungary’s Viktor Orban, have targeted independent media.¹

Aidan White, outgoing Director of the EJNI, told journalists and policymakers at a conference of the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe in Kosovo on March 16th that the public demonstrations in Bratislava were clear evidence that people in Europe were ready to fight for journalism they can trust.

“This was a show of public anger over the killing of a courageous reporter,” he said. “It is also clear evidence



Images above CC BY-SA 3.0 Peťo Tkáč

that people want journalism they can trust and will vigorously defend it.”

In the murder investigation Slovakia has invited Europol, the EU agency that fights cross-border crime, to send experts to Slovakia² to help with forensics, while the FBI, Czech and Italian police are also assisting their Slovak counterparts.

The Guardian quoted Claude Moraes, a British Labour MEP who was co-chair of a European parliament delegation to Bratislava just after the killings, as saying it was essential that there should be a joint investigation with Slovak authorities and Europol into the double murder.

“All the indications are that it is an organised mafia-style killing and we think not enough is being done,” he told *The Guardian*. The Slovak authorities “have to open up the investigation...Outside experts needed to play a leading role in the investigation”, Moraes said, because of the “existential elements”, the murder of a journalist and pre-existing public concerns about corruption and conflicts of interest.

The MEPs want Europol to co-lead the joint team, rather than be relegated to a support role that does not allow its officers access to all files.

The deaths of the couple come just months after a powerful car bomb killed the anti-corruption campaigner and journalist Daphne Caruana Galizia. Three men have now been charged with her murder.

¹ <https://www.ft.com/content/50488256-60af-11e6-ae3f-77baadeb1c93>

² <https://www.theguardian.com/world/slovakia>

BUILDING TRUST: EJN PLAN OF ACTION IN VISEGRAD COUNTRIES

The countries of Hungary, Poland, the Czech Republic and Slovakia – the so-called Visegrad countries – are very different, but they all share a troubled political past and have media communities caught in the crossfire of populism, nationalism and intolerance.

In the face of increasing self-censorship and pressure on newsrooms the Ethical Journalism Network has developed a programme of support for ethical journalism in the region to counter media dependence on political influence and falling editorial standards.

According to the 2017 World Press Freedom Index all four countries show a decline with Hungary lowest in 71st place and Poland in 54th place and according to the Centre for European Pluralism and Media Freedom media are suffering from undue political influence with serious threats to press freedom and pluralism identified in Poland and Hungary.

In December 2017 Hungary, Poland and Czech Republic were referred to the European Court of Justice over their refusal to take refugees under the European Union’s mandatory quota system. These countries are EJN priorities for action to defend journalism and media independence.

The programme proposal of the Ethical Journalism Network aims to help national media counter this growing information crisis by helping journalists to

- a) confront hate-speech, misinformation, so-called fake news and undue political influence;
- b) promote good governance, transparency and editorial independence in the management and ownership of news media;
- c) build fresh links with civil society and the media audience to increase trust in journalism.

The EJN is working with key media support groups and international organisations and will be launching its programme in 2018. The target groups are journalists and media managers and the methodology proposed will promote fresh ways of working to improve the capacity of media to deal with current political and commercial challenges.

ROBOT WARS How artificial intelligence will define the future of news

James Ball

There are two paths ahead in the future of journalism, and both of them are shaped by artificial intelligence.

The first is a future in which newsrooms and their reporters are in robust health: thanks to the use of artificial intelligence, high-quality reporting has been enhanced. Not only do AI scripts manage the writing of simple day-to-day articles such as companies' quarterly earnings updates, they also monitor and track masses of data for outliers, flagging these to human reporters to investigate.

Outside of business journalism, comprehensive sports stats AIs keep key figures in the hands of sports journalists, letting them focus on the games and the stories around them. The automated future has worked.

The alternative is very different. In this world, AI reporters have replaced their human counterparts, and left accountability journalism hollowed out. Facing financial pressure, news organisations embraced AI to write much of their day-to-day reporting, first for their financial and sports sections, then bringing in more advanced scripts capable of reshaping wire copy to suit their outlet's political agenda. A few banner hires remain, but there is virtually no career path to replace them – and stories which can't be tackled by AI are generally missed.

These two scenarios represent two relatively extreme outcomes of how AI will reshape journalism, its ethics, and the way the world learns about itself – but these are

restricted just to reporting. But what they should really illuminate is that AI works like any other technology. It need not in itself lead to better and more ethical journalism, or worse – that will instead be determined by the human choices made in how it is developed and used in newsrooms across the world.

First, it should be noted that the more basic of these algorithms and AIs are already here: these decisions will face people who are newsroom leaders today, not fifty years in the future. Last year the *Financial Times* journalist Sarah O'Connor went toe-to-toe against an AI journalist named "Emma" to report a story on wage growth in the United Kingdom.¹

"Wage growth — the missing piece in the UK's job market recovery — remained sluggish," wrote one. "Total average earnings growth fell from 2.1 per cent to 1.8 per cent, although this partly reflected volatile bonuses."

The other opted for: "Broadly speaking, the UK economy continues to be on an upward trend and while it has yet to return to prerecession, goldilocks years it is undoubtedly in better shape."

The former was written by O'Connor; the latter by AI reporter Emma. While at greater length O'Connor's ability to put the information in broader political and social context shines through, AI is improving at a rapid pace, and for simple articles is already good enough to roughly match quality reporters.

The consequence of that lies with people running newsrooms: if it is simply used to replace reporters,



that doesn't only leave the current industry weaker, but means robots would replace an entry-level job where reporters learn the basics of their industry before chasing more complex investigations. It is easy to blame new technology for the negative consequences it appears to cause, but as we have learned time and again, in reality that lies where it is used.

Even deeper thought will be required from the companies and engineers developing such algorithms, and the people funding such research. There is a clear commercial market for algorithms which can quickly analyse, for example, stock prices and help financiers make bigger profits on their trades.

A more socially useful algorithm, though, might try to find the next Enron – automatically analysing thousands or millions of company filings and spotting outliers, which human journalists or financial investigators could dig into. Such a tool would never be perfect, but could have immense social value – but while billions in venture capital and City money goes into the former, who is funding the latter?

An algorithm is essentially a tool designed to spot patterns, sometimes 'learning' about associations as it operates, so that it can work more effectively on the next set of data it sees. When we talk about artificial intelligence as actually in operation today, we are almost always essentially just talking about complex algorithms – nothing resembling true intelligence, with its consequent ability to make ethical choices or flights of inspiration.

The result is that algorithms' actions are not just a consequence of the intents of their creators – whether to make money, make information more searchable, or decide who to lend to – but also prejudices contained within the minds of those making them, or the underlying data they are looking at.

In the US, a risk assessment algorithm known as COMPAS is used in many states to determine an offender's risk of committing further crimes, and is used as a tool in determining what sentence – including how much time in prison – that offender should get. And yet multiple journalistic investigations have found evidence of racial bias in its determinations for otherwise very similar criminals of different races – and as the algorithm is proprietary and therefore secret, no-one has decisive evidence as to why.

Similar patterns have been found in algorithms governing who gets loans, insurance and more: supposedly neutral, unchallengeable and infallible 'AI' systems embedding in decades or centuries of real world prejudices, because they can only run down the tracks that they have been given.

Another risk if AI replaces humans on 'routine' reporting comes from the loss of the hard-fought for diversity of voices. An LGBT writer may see something different and significant in a routine release of (for example) crime statistics than a straight one would. This is similarly true for a BME writer, or a woman, or a writer with a



disability. If AI is built only to focus on a single headline and narrative, there is a risk that it could simply automate a straight white male gaze onto the world, just as that is slowly beginning to become less of a default.

These situations should help us see that governing the legality and morality of AI and algorithms at once is at once immensely complex and very simple. On the complex side lies the challenge of handling algorithms which become so complex that even their creators often cannot explain how they work, when such tools are often in the hands of multinational companies with no one government able to assert jurisdiction over it. Working out the regulatory, legal and ethical codes for such diverse algorithms with such diverse purposes is – by this reasoning – an effort of staggering complexity.

On the flipside, it is the very neutrality of algorithms – and of AI as we know it today – that makes the task simple. At present, anything resembling real intelligence is far beyond the scope of modern AI, meaning such tools are simply the modern equivalent of a train or a factory machine – if either causes harm through intent or negligence, we blame its operator or owner.

What worked for trains can, for now, work for algorithms. Where we need to take greater leaps of imagination, if we want AI to lead to a better world, is looking at who is building algorithms, for what purpose, and look at how we fund the development of algorithms for social good rather than just private profit.

This is not a question AI can answer for us. Faced with this question, "Rose"² – one of the most advanced AI chatbots in the world today – could answer only "I wish I could explain it to you but I think it is just an instinct". This is one humanity will have to solve for ourselves.

¹<https://www.ft.com/content/92583120-0ae0-11e6-b0f1-61f222853ff3>

²<http://ec2-54-215-197-164.us-west-1.compute.amazonaws.com/speech.php>



TURKEY'S MEDIA REVIVAL

Even in hostile conditions ethics and solidarity can work

Ceren Sozeri

Over the past five years the pressure on Turkish journalism has continued to grow in the midst of national and regional crises that have stretched the credibility of Turkey as a working democracy to breaking point. Many journalists and dissidents have fled the country, fearing prosecution, and gone into exile.

But some journalists and media activists are not giving up. Even in the face of intimidation, victimisation and loss of jobs, a spirit of resistance is being displayed as journalists groups regroup and look for fresh solutions to the news crisis.

As of February 19, 2018, 156 journalists are in jail, around 200 media shut down, hundreds of press

cards and passports cancelled. The leftist and Kurdish news agencies and online news organisation are constantly banned by Information and Communication Technologies Authority. They try to survive through changing their URL.

The Afrin operation of the Turkish Army in Syria led to a new assault on journalism with writers, political opposition and social media critics of the war targeted by the government on the grounds of making “terror propaganda”.

According to the Ministry of the Interior, 786 people have been taken into custody for being against the Afrin Operation – or operation “Olive Branch” as the government terms it.

Media owners and the editors were called to a meeting and warned by the Prime Minister about how to cover

Two recent cases once more showed that the government will criminalise journalism to silence critical voices and use foreign journalists as hostage for international issues.

the operation within “national interests” and given 15 principles to be followed in reporting. The government has restricted coverage of critical statements or comments from Kurdish or political opposition as well as any mention of foreign media’s critical news about Turkey (*Ahval*, January 21, 2018). As the *Spectator* reporter Alice Beale noted, “the days of free reporting from northern Syria are over.” Even foreign journalists have been issued with a stiff set of instructions from Ankara on covering the Afrin operation.

In recent months, the government has come under heavy criticism for its crackdown on freedom of media and freedom of expression by European governments and international journalists associations. However, according to the President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, imprisoned journalists are “gardeners” of terrorism (*Deutsche Welle*, January 5, 2018). Six journalists including prominent columnists Ahmet Altan, Mehmet Altan and Nazlı Ilıcak were sentenced to life in prison over their alleged role in the failed coup attempt because of their television appearances and newspaper columns.

On the other hand, same time Turkish-German Deniz Yücel was released after a year in prison without any charges brought against him thanks to the efforts of the German Government even though Erdoğan labelled him as “German agent and terrorist”.

These two recent cases once more showed that the government will criminalise journalism to silence critical voices and use foreign journalists as hostage for international issues.

In these circumstances self-censorship is rampant and ethical journalism has been cowed with the focus of activism on efforts to free jailed journalists and support those facing prosecution.

Many journalists are jobless or working in precarious conditions. They face huge risks. Not surprisingly, the mood in the mainstream media is one of near hopelessness. Editors and reporters think that there is no chance to do real journalism in the country.

The scale of the problem is reflected in a series of interviews carried out with 14 journalists from mainstream, independent and international media and in the discussions around two media roundtables organised in İstanbul and in Ankara in February 2018.

The journalists in the survey spelled out a series of actions that they felt were needed to help keep an ethical flame alive in the world of Turkish journalism. In particular, they pointed to

- ▷ **Actions to combat censorship:** Censorship and self-censorship is widespread. Some journalists admitted that they deliberately avoid some issues to survive;
- ▷ **Improving solidarity:** Journalists, media and human rights activists are notoriously divided. Actions are

needed to create more co-operation.

- ▷ **Tips on reporting restricted subjects (human rights journalism, child abuse, gender, migration):** Reliable reporting is difficult when many journalists are excluded from government press meetings, and are not getting insider information. Their only sources are lawyers and NGOs.
- ▷ **Online and offline security:** Independent journalists, particularly Kurdish ones are at risk. They don’t have press cards and never get accreditation. They can be easily targeted by police or army forces. How do they survive and how do all learn the basics in use of digital security tools?
- ▷ **More investigative journalism:** There are calls for creating and building local investigative journalists networks;
- ▷ **Alternative media:** More needs to be done to strengthen alternative media voices but it still needs a collaborative effort to remain on the agenda on social media to attract public opinion. Division and political or historical baggage are still preventing solidarity among journalists.
- ▷ **New ways of telling stories:** Social media are prominent news sources for readers and audience. How can they be mobilised for quality and ethical story-telling?
- ▷ **Standards and respect for the audience:** Many news stories don’t meet the basics of journalism. Stories are defective, hate speech is common, and more effort is needed to build a culture of standards.

These findings provide a challenging opportunity to confront the crisis overwhelming the entire media landscape and are evidence that all is not lost. Independent journalists and media support groups are still open to collaboration and are willing to work together to build new and creative alliances to keep journalism alive.

A set of priorities for this new movement were further identified at meetings in İstanbul and Ankara in February 2018 organised by the EJN, the Journalists Union of Turkey and with the support of the Turkish Press Council and independent media support groups such as P24, Teyit.Org and the Progressive Journalists Association.

After two days of discussions the meetings developed a draft action plan to provide support for ethical journalism and good governance in media to counter the current hostile climate and to combat self-censorship.

There was general agreement that the crisis in Turkey requires support for media and journalism on a number of different, but related fronts. These include:



- ▶ **Training and raising awareness** within the journalism community on basic principles:
 - The core values of ethical journalism: accuracy, independence, impartiality, humanity and transparency;
 - The essential of good governance for ethical ownership and management of media;
 - The importance of self-regulation at all levels, including the level of the individual, the media enterprise, and across different platforms of distribution
- ▶ **Development of further skills training and editorial tools** to assist journalists in combating unethical journalism, hate-speech, and undue bias in reporting while developing good practice in journalistic methods, including use of images and pictures, protection of sources, reporting migration and other rights issues;
- ▶ **Understanding the nature of change in the communications** and journalism sector and facing the ethical challenges of using technology – data journalism, Internet tools for investigative journalism.
- ▶ **Improving skills and capacity in the use of technology** and web-based tools in journalistic work;
- ▶ **Actions to strengthen self-regulation** as a mechanism to improve transparency and accountability and quality of journalism at all levels;
- ▶ **Research activity to analyse** the current media environment including the impact of self-censorship and the scope of unethical practice across the spectrum of journalism;
- ▶ **Building bridges between journalism and civil society** and political centres of power to create a national dialogue about the importance of ethical communications and a new movement for media and information literacy (MIL)
- ▶ **Strengthening specific areas of journalism** – such as investigative journalism, video production, online portals and new forms of information and introducing awards and prizes that reflect and recognise best practice;
- ▶ **Creating an informal structure for dialogue and ethical and independent journalism** on which all stakeholders – teachers of journalism; media practitioners and managers; media support groups; unions, existing networks and relevant civil society groups can play a role.

All of this is welcome, but it cannot disguise the reality that the political atmosphere is toxic and polarised. Journalism has become more emotional than ever.

Building a new approach will require patience and collaboration and a commitment to practical actions, but there is a welcome recognition inside journalism that the media crisis is not just one that stems from political pressure, it also flows from a lack of attachment to the basics of journalism – a failure to verify information; sensationalism and emotional reportage; a rush to publish and media competition that leads to slipshod journalism and propaganda.

It is this media weakness that is inspiring activists, media support groups and independent journalists to a new movement in support of ethical reporting and to strengthen traditional journalism.

A LOST VOICE FOR JOURNALISM: MEDIA SALE SPARKS FEARS FOR PLURALISM IN TURKEY

The fragility of independent journalism in Turkey was further shaken on 21 March 2018 with the news that Dogan Media Company, one of country's leading media groups, had been sold to Demiroren Holding, a pro-government industrial conglomerate.

The sale sent shock waves through the country's beleaguered media community where dozens of journalists are in jail or facing trial.

The move is likely to further limit the independence of Turkish journalism and will strengthen the influence of the President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and his government across the news media.

Demiroren Holding is a conglomerate with interests primarily in energy, construction, tourism and media but its media assets were boosted in 2012 when it snapped up two leading titles – *Milliyet* and *Vatan* – which Dogan was forced to sell in the wake of a \$4.5million fine for unpaid taxes, a decision that was widely seen as an attempt by the Turkish government to punish it for its criticism of Erdogan who was prime minister at the time.

The latest sale includes Dogan Media's newspapers *Hurriyet* and *Posta*, and two of Turkey's main entertainment and news channels, *Kanal D* and *CNN Turk*.

According to the *New York Times*¹ the sale takes place after more government accusations that the Dogan Group was biased against it and the AKP governing party. The paper highlighted publicity given to a 2014 leaked phone conversation between Erdogan Demiroren, the owner of Demiroren

Holding, and Mr. Erdogan, Mr. Demiroren was heard apologizing for an article in the newspaper *Milliyet*.

"Did I upset you, boss?" Mr. Demiroren was heard to say, as Mr. Erdogan rebuked him for an article on the leaked minutes of a secret meeting between Turkish intelligence officers and leaders of the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK). Mr. Demiroren was heard weeping, promising Mr. Erdogan that he would find the source of the leaked minutes.

Journalists' leaders and media commentators fear that this huge takeover puts the country's mass media industry under the direct political influence of President Erdogan and adds to concerns over the fate of dozens of journalists and activists who are in jail or facing trial.

The news will further reinforce efforts by international press organisations and media support groups like the Ethical Journalism Network, to work closely with journalists and media supporters to launch solidarity programmes in support of editorial independence.

"The news from Turkey makes the struggle for editorial freedom in the country that much harder," said Aidan White, Director of the EJNI who with EJNI Treasurer Ashok Gupta visited Istanbul and Ankara in February 2018 to discuss new support programmes with local partners, "but journalists and groups striving to bring about democracy and respect for human rights will not be giving up on the fight for ethics, good governance and self-regulation in all media."

¹ <https://mobile.nytimes.com/2018/03/21/world/europe/turkey-media-erdogan-dogan.html?referer=https://t.co/QAENncfqc&=1#click=https://t.co/QAENncfqc>





AFRICAN JOURNALISM AND THE ETHICS OF AUTHORS' RIGHTS

Korieh Duodu argues that it is time to refashion the protection of journalistic endeavours through the law of copyright, and for Africa to pave the way by tearing up the 19th century rulebook in favour of a system that gives real protection – and value – to journalism in the digital age. Doing so will strengthen the profession, at a crucial time when its role in increasing accountability and tackling corruption across the African continent cannot be over-emphasised.

It is, of course, impossible to generalise about the experience of African journalists. A writer in Ethiopia¹ or Gambia² may have more pressing concerns than whether someone is copying their articles. Africa's patchwork of states neighbour those that engage in human rights abuses against journalists next to others enjoying diverse and free media³. A common denominator, nevertheless, is the challenge journalists face in seeking to monetise their work, in the digital age of rampant abuse of copyright.

One key issue that has not been sufficiently analysed is the almost complete breakdown in literary copyright recognition, protection and enforcement across the African continent. Quite apart from the blatant and unethical copying of one journalist's work by another, a more sinister force is at play.

In Ghana, for instance, articles published in mainstream newspapers (particularly those that publish online) are systematically harvested by free news 'portals'. Generally, the newspaper publisher receives no license fee for this. Even if syndication fees are paid, they are not shared with the journalist. Such portals may even suggest it is a 'favour' for a journalist to see their articles there, with the increased readership and exposure.

This devaluing of journalism is compounded by two additional problems: a lack of sufficiently robust training in intellectual property laws and ethics for those coming into the profession, and – as importantly – the near impossible task of enforcing copyright laws. The legal systems in Africa often do not lend themselves to commercial enterprises looking for swift and effective court action.

Cases generally take too long to be heard, may be open to influence by bribery, and may result in the winner being out of pocket. Remedies such as court ordered damages and injunctions may also be completely ineffectual, since a rogue web publisher can simply close down any local company and continue to run their website offshore.

Secondly, while the copyright laws across Africa do not appear to be the problem, they are archaic and designed for the near-bygone era of print publishing (as is copyright law worldwide). Africa's copyright protection regime is based on the 19th Century colonial legal systems inherited from the English and French, as modernised by the Berne Convention (of 1886) and incorporated into many African countries laws under the 1994 World Trade Organisation's (WTO's) Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPs).

In *Access to Knowledge in Africa: The Role of Copyright*⁴, an impressively detailed survey of the copyright laws of eight African countries, namely Egypt, Ghana, Kenya, Morocco, Mozambique, Senegal, South Africa and Uganda, the authors conclude that all of these countries (and most in Africa) do indeed adhere to the important aspects of the Berne Convention.

But the authors also recognise that “*In most study countries, case law with respect to copyright in general and access to learning materials in particular, is sparse. Copyright litigation is uncommon.*” This is indeed spot on. What use is a legal regime for copyright protection, if it fails to provide effective protection for those most in need of it?

A key consequence of the problem with lack of copyright enforcement is that journalists do not get paid for their work. This has a knock-on effect on their integrity. A journalist will not attend a press conference unless they are paid privately (or, to put it colloquially, bribed⁵) by the ‘beneficiary’ of the press coverage. This leads to a skewed market where those journalists wishing to act with integrity will struggle to make ends meet. Worse, for the societies these journalists serve, there is a dearth of truly independent journalism, since he who pays the piper, calls the tune.

Ghana is a perfect example. Having been celebrated as a thriving multi-party democracy where a free press is

CASH AND POLITICS AT THE HEART OF CORRUPTION IN AFRICAN JOURNALISM

Chris Elliott

A consistent theme of a two-day conferences of West African journalists in February and March 2018 was the problem of corruption and journalism.

As one Ghanaian put it at the conference in Abuja, organised by the Federation of African Journalists, the Nigerian Union of Journalists and the EJN: “You can’t put fish next to a cat and not expect the cat to steal it.” However, as colleagues repeatedly pointed out, one of the key problems exacerbating the issue was the widespread failure of employers to pay their staff.

“How do you ask a journalist who has not been paid for two months to self-regulate?” asked another delegate.

This was one of the key questions at the second of two conferences held to discuss the role of journalism and democracy in a digital age.

Zahui Claude Dassé, from Cote d’Ivoire, warned that “corruption is not just financial but moral too”. As an example he said large swathes of the European and American press supported the case for the Iraq war on the basis of inaccurate reports that Iraq had weapons of mass destruction, without verification.

One of the other debates discussed the problems of African authors retaining their copyright in a digital age. Dawodu Olawale, Managing Editor of *Paparazzi Magazine*, Nigeria, said that there was a problem in the region that was not being addressed.

At the close of the conference delegates adopted a programme of action, which targeted dealing with the problem of corruption, strengthening investigative journalism and developing an online tool for journalists to raise awareness on the ethics and importance of authors’ rights and how they can defend their interests across the new information landscape.

apparently the norm, two important deficiencies to the country's progress have been recognised. The country has experienced a rapidly worsening record for corruption⁶, while at the same time critical journalism is deteriorating both in its quality and in its value as a way of making a living.

How we begin to address the problems

Naturally, better paid and better trained journalists are more likely to resist the temptations of bribery and other unethical behaviour. But to have better paid journalists, the business model of media publishing needs an overhaul. There are too many anecdotes of failed pan-African publications, set up with substantial investment and producing glossy issues for a year or two, before financial mismanagement led to a swift decline. It is essential to get the finances of publishing right, in an age where revenues are increasingly based on page views of advertisements, rather than paid-for print circulation.

Of course, journalists can also do more to help themselves. Journalists should insist on more robust representation by their journalistic unions and associations as well as by royalty collecting societies, to ensure that traditional ways of licensing and sharing the profits from original journalistic content are recognised and protected.

But the above measures have been tried before, without particular success. The critical additional step that needs to be taken is for publishers and journalists to take advantage of developments in digital publishing to wrestle back control of their content, through effective digital rights enforcement. If this is done in addition to improved co-ordination amongst journalists and publishers to protect their rights, a major shift in the value of journalistic content could be achieved.

Africa boasts one of the most creative and innovative tech environments worldwide, and it is time for the media to consider digital remedies to this problem, in the same way as the music industry had to⁷, and as Google does with Youtube⁸. The issues are wide-ranging and complex, and require further research.

Nevertheless, the end result ought to be that technology similar to that which Youtube uses to detect breach of copyright, is deployed to detect and flag websites that infringe literary copyright. In the same way as digital certificates allow for browsers to detect 'trusted' and secure content online, a website that copies content without proper acknowledgement or licensing should – like a website likely to send you a virus – be flagged as lacking copyright integrity. With some co-operation and co-ordination, infringing websites could be blocked by browsers through a regulated system of blacklisting.

At the same time, publishers should work with digital advertising centres such as Google AdSense⁹ to develop an advertising regime that provides an equitable split of advertising revenues not just to websites that pull in large numbers of viewers, but those who have contributed content to those websites. Again, digital certificates could detect copying and require payment for authorised use. Companies that fail to co-operate should have their advertising revenues stripped.

In other words, there is a need for a thoroughly modern approach to a thoroughly modern problem. While copyright laws and the courts will still be relevant to certain situations, this should only be in exceptional circumstances.

Until the modern approach is thrashed out, here are some practical recommendations for journalists who regularly face problems with copyright infringement:

- 1 Each work should be marked with a separate copyright notice, warning against unauthorised use and identifying the author as the copyright holder and the date of first publication.
- 2 Where there is a persistent culprit and multiple journalists and publishers are having their rights infringed, a class action should be considered. This would ensure greater judicial scrutiny. A highly publicised damages award could operate as a significant deterrent.
- 3 In countries where persistent problems are experienced, journalists and publishers should come together with collecting societies, lawyers and academics to discuss the operation of the law and its limitations, and how to use innovation to effect change.
- 4 Where a work is likely to be syndicated widely, the journalist should try to negotiate a higher fee with the publisher for first use, taking into account any further royalties the publisher will earn from syndication and the fact that the journalist will earn nothing more from the piece.
- 5 Journalists should use the power of their pens to address this issue, naming and shaming the obvious culprits alongside taking legal action.

Accountability through a strong free press is essential to development in Africa, and the world over. Without a firm and innovative approach to copyright protection, we risk viewing apparently thriving African democracies through the blinkered lens of a 'free press', while a media 'free-for-all' takes place under the surface, with quality journalistic content paying the price.

Korieh Duodu is a lawyer qualified in England and Ghana. He is the principal of Equality Law.

¹ <https://www.ifex.org/ethiopia/2018/02/15/eskinder-nega-woubshet-taye/>

² <http://thepoint.gm/africa/gambia/article/ecowas-court-directs-gambia-repeal-media-laws>

³ <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2017/ghana>

⁴ http://www.wipo.int/wipo_magazine/en/2011/01/article_0009.html

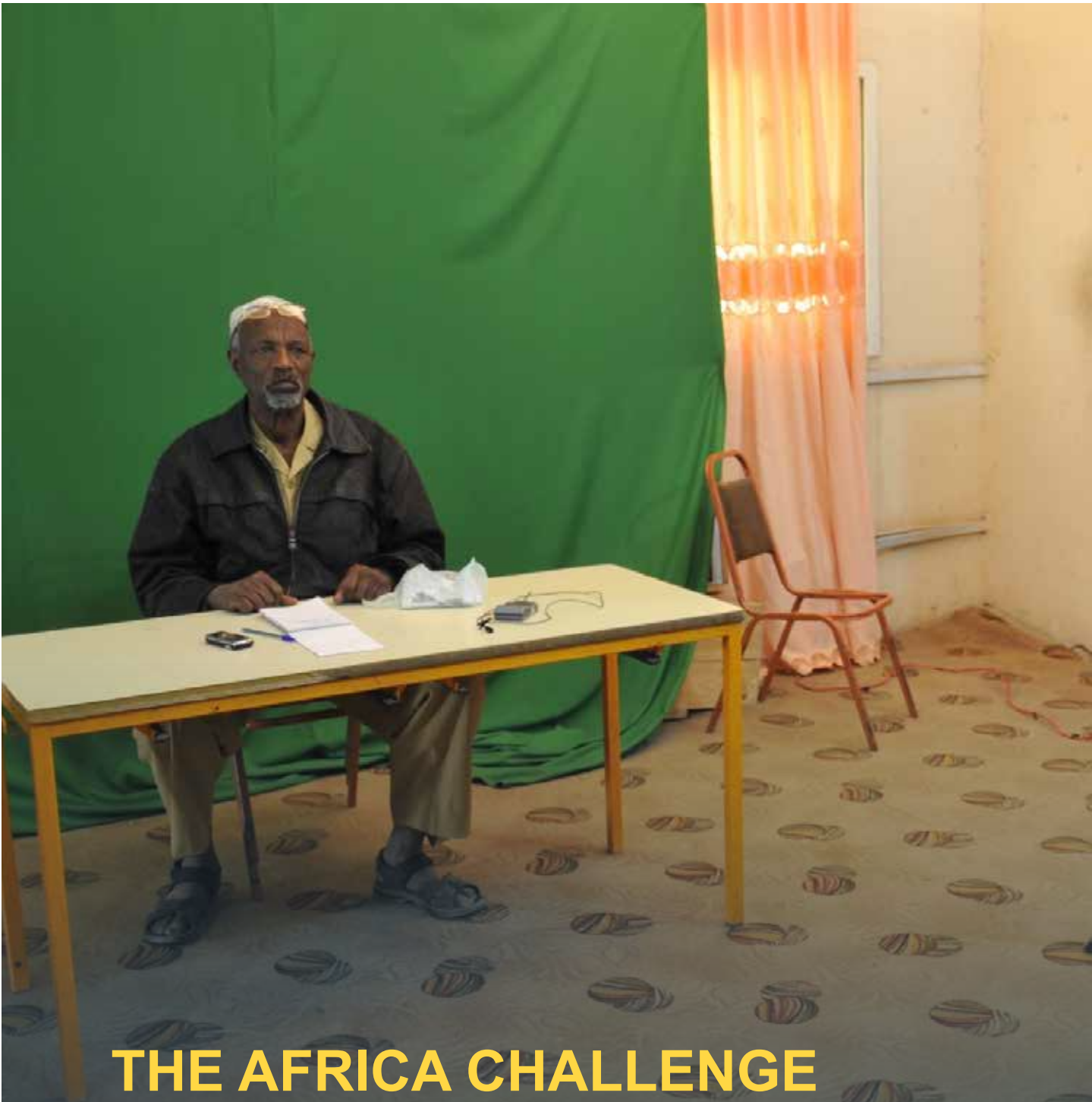
⁵ https://www.huffingtonpost.ca/adam-bemma/bribing-the-media_b_4604173.html

⁶ <http://citifmonline.com/2018/02/22/ghana-drops-to-81-in-2017-corruption-perception-index/>

⁷ <https://cacm.acm.org/magazines/2017/2/212432-copyright-enforcement-in-the-digital-age/fulltext>

⁸ <http://www.adweek.com/digital/youtube-make-money-off-your-videos/>

⁹ https://www.google.com/adsense/start/#/?modal_active=none



THE AFRICA CHALLENGE

Media networks aiming to combat corruption and build trust

Gabriel Baglo



African journalists and media are targeting political corruption as a significant obstacle to democracy and economic growth across the continent.

The move is an attempt by journalists to make sure politicians across the continent keep to their commitments to combat corruption following the decision by the Assembly of the African Union to declare 2018 as “the African Anti-Corruption Year.”

The conclusions of two regional meetings organised by the Ethical Journalism Network and the Federation of African Journalists and led by media leaders from western and central African countries have also pledged to support action plans to encourage the expansion and development of investigative journalism and ethical media management.

The challenge of building trust in global media which has been recently exposed in western Europe and north America over the actions of social networks is also felt in Africa, but it causes much less worry than the undue influence on journalism of government and politicians and self-inflicted media problems of poor governance and a lack of transparency.

In a continent where conflicts of interest, corruption in political and business affairs and poor levels of transparency in the ownership and management of media create a continuing and profound crisis for democracy and development, the most pressing demand is for more informed, investigative journalism that will hold those in power to account.

This was one of the key conclusions of the meetings in Cameroon and Nigeria in 2018 which brought together over 80 journalists, editors, industry regulators and educators, all of them committed to ethical journalism as the key element needed to create the African information sphere that will help democracy to survive and thrive.

Building structures for editorial independence and media freedom must become a top priority for policymakers and professionals alike.

Representatives from Cameroon, Chad, DR Congo and Congo Brazzaville, met in Douala from 26-27 February hosted by the Cameroon Journalists Trade Union, while delegates from Bénin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Gambia, Liberia, Mali, Nigeria, Senegal, and Togo met in Abuja from 1-2 March hosted by the Nigerian Journalists Union.

Both meetings agreed that hate speech, fake news and abusive exploitation of information technology are endangering pluralism, democracy and the defence of human rights.

But greater commitment to investigative journalism and sound financial reporting and an urgent need for media to face up to some home truths about its own way of working were also among the demands for change.

Change will not come unless there are more actions to improve the capacity of newsrooms to have the time and resources to carry out adequate research and the editorial freedom to scrutinise centres of state and corporate power.

Both meetings acknowledged a deepening crisis for journalism in Africa and made strong calls on media owners and managers to engage in dialogue to up their game with better governance and more transparency in order to improve the financial prospects of the profession and the news industry.

In particular, the meetings called for media owners to open themselves up to a thorough review of how they work and to set higher standards in the management and operations of media companies.

The participants, including some senior media representatives, agreed to circulate the EJN Ethical Media Audit¹, which helps managers and owners to bring the ownership and executive branch of media into the ethical orbit occupied by and expected of journalists and editors in the newsroom.

Speaking to the meeting in Nigeria Alh. Muhktar Gidado, Deputy President, of the Nigeria Union of Journalists said: "We must practice our profession according to its ethical standards to meet the expectations of our audience and because the survival of any democracy depends on a credible and unrelenting media."

The focus on improving media systems also saw a commitment to creating better forms of self-regulation, including promoting the role of independent ombudsmen and readers' editors to inspire further discussion in the region on the value of transparent and accountable media ownership and management.

Considering that court cases in Nigeria and other countries can take 20-30 years, the meetings called for

more effective arbitration and complaints procedures to be adopted by press councils as soon as possible.

And there should be change inside media house as well, with enterprise-based accountability mechanisms, to provide timely, fair and independent responses to complaints and to decrease the number of times they are taken to court.

But it is the need to strengthen investigative journalism and newsroom performance which is seen as the most important priority.

Political corruption is a significant obstacle everywhere, not only to democracy and economic growth in Africa, but to the expansion and development of journalism across the continent. Therefore, building structures for editorial independence and media freedom must become a top priority for policymakers and professionals alike.

That is easier said than done. In Cameroon, for instance, there is crisis of perceived and real bias between Cameroon's public and private media, as well as along regional lines, and media owners and managers need to build more trust with their audience by improving levels of governance and transparency.

The Ethical Journalism Network can respond to these concerns in a number of ways, by, for instance:

- ▷ Promoting more training and education on the basics of journalism, good governance and self-regulation and providing examples of best-practice for ethical management and transparency in media;
- ▷ Supporting African-based skills training to make all journalists better equipped to carry out data journalism and to be more effective in the use of technological tools in their work;
- ▷ Raising-awareness of the values of ethical journalism to society as a whole and working with African journalists to build more effective bridges between media and journalism and their audience.

Much of this work is being done already in the field of hate-speech and key areas of journalistic work such as election reporting, covering migration, violent extremism and political reporting, but at a time when information wars between centres of power are intensifying, reporters, editors and media owners need to work more closely together to ensure that they all contribute to making the mission of journalism more viable and effective.

That's why the conclusions of the African meetings also make the creation of more African ethical journalism networks and greater solidarity between all sides of the media industry a critical imperative for future work.

¹ <https://ethicaljournalismnetwork.org/media-standards-model-auditing-transparency-good-governance-ethics-journalism>



UNDERSTANDING HATE SPEECH:

Jordan's new definition threatens press freedom

Aida Al -Kaisy

Journalists in Jordan fear that government plans to revise the country's Cybercrimes law are simply a means to crack down on the media.

The revisions, proposed by Jordan's Legislation and Opinion Bureau to the 2015 Cybercrimes law, attempt to define hate speech. The amendments recommend the criminalisation of online hate speech, based on a very sweeping meaning of the term, which could lead to harsh penalties and extortionate fines.

One cartoonist accused of "hate crimes" has already been shot dead on the steps of the court room where he was due to stand trial. Nahed Hattar, was assassinated in September 2016, by a member of the public outside the courtroom in which he was standing trial for the crime of 'inciting sectarian strife and racism' for a cartoon he had shared portraying dead jihadist Abu Saleh giving orders to God.

Despite issuing an apology for causing any insult and a full explanation of the cartoon as a critique of terrorism rather than Islam, the Jordanian government went ahead with the prosecution.

While a date for Parliamentary debate of the amendments to the Cybercrimes law is still to be confirmed, many journalists in Jordan are alarmed by the hate speech amendment and the harm they believe it will bring. And it may have regional consequences.

As in many other countries of the Middle East, Jordan has an increasingly complex and draconian legislative environment governing the media, which has seen numerous journalists wrongly accused and even imprisoned.

Reem Al-Masri, the internet governance and digital rights editor for Jordanian website *Tiber* told the Committee to Protect Journalists, "The state charged Hattar with

blasphemy for sharing a cartoon, thus playing a role in positioning him as a criminal and creating an environment where calls inciting to his murder were tolerated. If the state had been serious about reducing damages caused by hate speech, it should have gone after the speech that eventually led to his crime, rather than after the solution that got them popular support. None of those who directly called for Hattar's murder were prosecuted."

Jordan is not alone in the region for its use of Cybercrimes laws in order to stifle freedom of the press under the guise of cracking down on hate speech and protecting citizens. Similar laws in countries such as the UAE, Lebanon and the Occupied Palestinian Territories are being put to effect. A lack of agreement over what constitutes hate speech across the region, even globally, is seeing more governments turn to counter-terrorism legislation as a means of suppressing the media and activists worldwide.

The difficulties in defining and identifying hate speech in the media have been recognised by the Ethical Journalism Network. The EJM five-point test has been developed in order to provide journalists, policymakers and legislators with a tool kit that will enable them to make more informed decisions about how to recognise and approach hate speech.

The EJM has developed a programme of work aimed at supporting journalists working in the Middle East and North Africa through the creation and facilitation of the *Arab Media Hub Against Hate Speech*. A number of events over the last three years have brought together media practitioners, CSOs and academics to discuss best practice to address hate speech in the region. A series of meetings and seminars held in Lebanon, Egypt and Jordan have explored possibilities to challenge hate speech across the Arab media.

GLOSSARIES OF HATE

Word power to counter intolerance in journalism

Aidan White

The Ethical Journalism Network has launched a programme aimed at countering hate-speech by helping journalists and media supporters to draft glossaries of words and phrases that cause unnecessary offence and even lead to incitement.

Two initiatives are underway, one in support of media on the divided island of Cyprus, and the other in the Middle East where journalists and media academics have agreed a programme to counter hate-speech following the successful publication of a glossary for Egyptian journalists.

Since 2011 Egypt's political upheaval has coincided with hate speech in media becoming increasingly used to pursue cultural, sectarian and political agendas, as well as to discriminate against activists and those wanting to participate in political debate and civil society.

In the absence of agreement on what should be defined as hate speech and how media should approach the problem, the EJNI and the Egypt Media Development Programme partnered with the American University in Cairo's Department for Journalism and Mass Communication to create a glossary of hate speech in Egyptian media as a starting point for the development of clear guidelines and standards.

The glossary, which was launched at the American University in Cairo and at the Arab Reporters for Investigative Journalism conference in Jordan in December 2017, begins by providing background on how Egyptian law and the country's constitution define hate speech, as well as relevant universal human rights principles. The guide provides examples of where media have fallen short of their ethical responsibilities when dealing with dangerous language and images.

But it also illustrates good practice and provides guidance to help journalists and media identify hate speech and report on it in an ethical context using the EJNI's five-point test for hate speech.

The five-point test is translated into 30 languages and gives journalists and editors a step-by-step formula for evaluating speech to see whether it is potentially incitement to hatred or violence.

Rd. Nail Handy, Associate Professor and Chair of the AUC's Journalism and Mass Communication department, who presented the glossary to the Arab-US Association for Communication Educators' 22nd Annual Conference in Cairo in October outlined how the glossary and the five-point test work well together as part of an editorial strategy to address the problem of intolerance in media reporting.

The second initiative is part of a ground-breaking programme of co-operation between media organisations and press councils in Cyprus in an attempt to help break an information impasse that has been in place since Turkish military action in the north led to the division of the country in 1974.

Leaders of journalists' unions and the two media councils, responsible for self-regulation of media on both sides of the divide, met in the demilitarised buffer zone that separates the country's Greek and Turkish-speaking communities on October 9 for a series of meetings with Harlem Desir, the recently-appointed Representative on Freedom of the Media of the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE).

Desir, whose office leads the only intergovernmental media watchdog in the world covering 57 countries, announced the glossary as one of two new initiatives in support of Cypriot journalists.



The guide provides examples of where media have fallen short of their ethical responsibilities when dealing with dangerous language and images.

Firstly, a pioneering media exchange project, which for the first time will see selected young journalists from neighbouring communities working in the newsrooms of media outlets on the other side of the political divide.

“This project will widen the professional networks of young journalists,” he said, “and it will increase understanding in both communities about the lives of their neighbours.”

At the same time, the country’s two press councils and unions of journalists gave their unanimous backing to a proposal for the creation of a joint glossary of insensitive words and potentially inflammatory speech to counter stereotypes and hate speech in media reporting.

The glossary, which is being prepared for launch in the spring of 2018, will be produced in Greek, Turkish and English. The Ethical Journalism Network has been providing advice and guidance on the content of the glossary.

Similar initiatives for glossaries are being considered for Kenya, Turkey and Ukraine. These publications serve two useful functions: first, to promote internal editorial discussions on the routine and often casual use of language and terms that can be an obstacle to better understanding and, secondly, to eliminate language that can provoke an angry and sometimes violent response from people who are the targets of hate.



ITALIAN CASE STUDY

Fear and insecurity dominate as media make infotainment out of the election

Francesca Marchese

They are not racist. But they are disappointed and – more important – they are frightened. Italians voted in national elections in March 2018 and delivered a shock result with dramatic increases in the number of votes for political populists such as the Five Star Movement (Movimento Cinque Stelle) and far-right party the League (La Lega).

Media commentators were examining the role played by journalism and social networks in an election that, like the British referendum on Brexit, delivered a fresh setback for the European Union.

The elections winners are vocal critics of the European Union and the success of their populist and anti-establishment message has turned politics up-side-down.

A very uncertain time for the country is now ahead. And the uncertainty extends to the influence of media in a country where the non-traditional voices of social media and online information exercise more influence than ever.

What was the role of old and new media in meeting the challenge of political change? The electoral campaign did not, as previously, operate in the wide open space of invigorating public debates and demonstrations in the elegant squares and piazze of the country's towns and cities.

Instead, traditional media found different ways to tell the election story and the non-traditional, but increasingly influential, impact of internet media was more evident than ever. So, what has happened?

Impact of TV: A focus on “fear” and “immigration”

There were no grand televised debates on this occasion: TV did not show any head-to-head encounter between the candidates. There was no grilling of party leaders by hard-talking journalists. Lots of people did not sit in front of the telly watching programmes and listening to ideas on how to change the country for the better.

Instead, they watched 403 news stories about two inter-related items of news:

First, a racially-motivated shooting in Macerata, in the Marche region (it was an attempted massacre in which an Italian gunman, a neo-Nazi and former Lega candidate, injured 6 Nigerians) and, secondly, the brutal killing of a white Italian girl a couple of days earlier (her dismembered body was found in two suitcases: three Nigerian migrants are arrested and another one is currently under investigation).

The “Carta di Roma” association, which promotes and seeks to implement the Journalist’s Code of Conduct on immigration, said the two stories were reported twice on television news programmes over a month according to researchers at the independent Osservatorio di Pavia.

It was not the only case study. During 2017, according to the media report *Notizie da paura* by Carta di Roma, television news programme in prime time, broadcast an extra 26 percent news about immigration than in 2016.

The report found that

- ▷ Coverage focused on the actions of NGOs, sea rescues, legal issues and crime stories.
- ▷ Media reporting deals with migration in such a way that it risks being presented as a permanent emergency, rather than a social reality that needs to be addressed in a coherent and rational manner.
- ▷ Discrimination is found in reporting of related issues dealing with religion, violence, financial and health problems. And migrants, themselves, are usually given little voice, and are present in only 0,5 percent of media stories.

The report found that in this pre-electoral year news reporting with a sensationalist tone increased and the political agenda has had a strong impact in the way news stories are connected.

The result of all of this according to the authors has been “a cocktail of insecurity and fear.” It hardly surprising to find that the sense of threat towards migrants and refugees has increased in Italy: from 33 percent in 2015 to 43 percent in 2017, according Demos&Pi, a research organisation based in Vicenza.

And it is not just news reporting that is criticized. Infotainment provided by some popular Italian talk shows and political programmes are also under fire.

One, “*Dalla Vostra Parte*” (broadcast

by Mediaset, Rete 4) sparked particular outrage and has been accused of open racism. One of its reporters was fired because, it is alleged, he paid a migrant to impersonate a Roma crook and an extremist Muslim on two separate occasions. Nevertheless, the programme is so popular it has spawned two different satirical versions.

Newspapers: the word “fear” in the news

According to Audipress data (28th February 2018)¹, 32 percent of Italians read a newspaper every day. Those who read the papers during the last two months of the electoral campaign, were exposed to the repetition of the word “*paura*” (“fear”) 334 times².

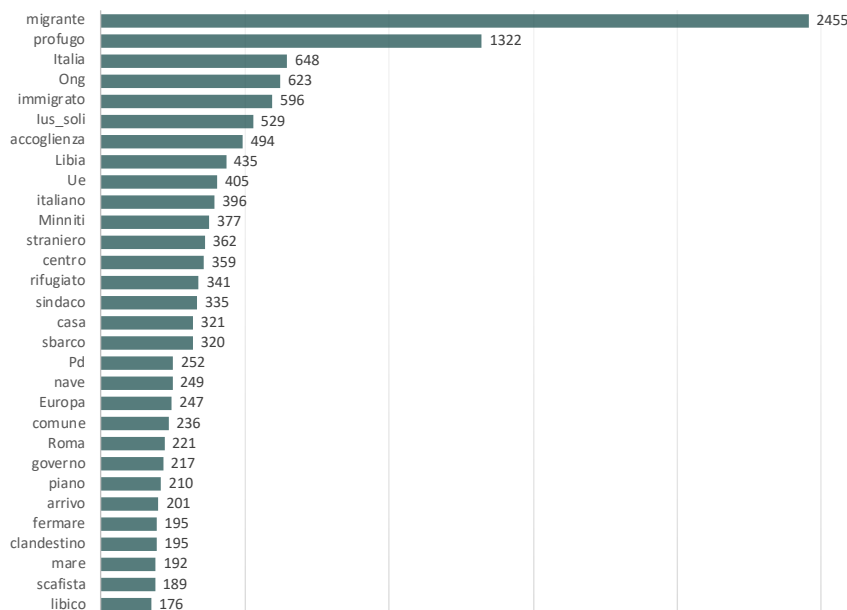
During the final month of the election campaign the most common words in headlines linked to the Macerata story were “*Salvini*” (the name of the candidate of the Northern League), “*immigration*”, “*immigrant*”, “*hate*”, “*racism*” and “*stranger*”. In the election Matteo Salvini gained 18 percent of votes, surpassing even Silvio Berlusconi.

Carta di Roma says: “In the press, the facts of Macerata story are closely connected with politics: from the beginning of February they enter into the agenda of the election campaign and dominate it. Words such as rage, hate, fear and fault appear several times, associated with increasing sensationalism.”

Looking back over 2017, the report says the word “migrant” appeared 2,455 times in headlines³ on the front pages of daily newspapers.

National press such as *Liberio*, *Il Tempo* and *La Verità* have been criticised over sensationalist and intemperate headlines. In 2015 *Liberio*, for instance, published a headline “Islamic Bastard”: the paper faced legal action but its editor Maurizio Belpietro was cleared from any accusation because, according to the judge, no crime was intended.

More recently, the same newspaper was criticized for its headline “*In order to knock down Renzi, it is necessary to shoot him*”⁴ and *Il Tempo* published the headline “*Here is the migrant’s malaria*”⁵.





In the last few months some newspapers have let themselves go with headlines that are deliberately racist or insulting towards women or immigrants.

But it's not just the traditional media where problems arise. According to Filippo Trevisan, who is Assistant Professor at the American University School of Communication, this election confirmed a trend established after the election five years ago that Italian voters are ever-more keen on alternative online information sources⁶. Voters searching the internet for information about the Five Star Movement were more likely to look specifically for the party's official website and online streaming channel rather than tune into the traditional media.

Trevisan says that recent studies illustrating low levels of trust in media organisations⁷ have made Italy and some other European countries vulnerable to the spread of misinformation. He highlights a BuzzFeed report at the end of 2017⁸, which exposed popular Italian websites and Facebook pages that posed as news organisations but that were, in fact, trafficking misinformation and content with anti-immigration bias.

It's of little surprise, then, when this type of content increased as populist leaders put immigration at the heart of the 2018 election campaign.

Trevisan also says that popular news websites controlled by the PR agency in charge of Five Star's election campaign⁹ have posted content espousing Kremlin propaganda. The problem is, he argues, not simply that misinformation is readily available online, but also that a large proportion of Italians find this content credible.¹⁰

However, Italian journalist Matteo Grandi, an internet specialist, says fake news did not play a decisive role in the election. "In my opinion it can't be proven that the election was influenced by fake news", he says, "Fake news is usually made for business reasons rather than for ideology". He asks, provocatively: "What influences the results most? A fake news shared by some digital illiterates, or daily news television programmes all lined up to a party?"

For their part Italian reporters are fighting back. Both the Italian Ordine, the professional association of journalists, and the journalists' trade union Federazione Nazionale Stampa Italiana are calling on reporters to be more responsible.

Speaking about shocking headlines, the president of the Italian Ordine of Journalists which monitors journalist

ETHICS ARE COMPULSORY IN ITALY

Italian journalists under the country's professional rules for media are forced to attend training courses on ethical behavior. Every 3 years they have to collect 60 credits including 20 about professional ethics. The rules of the job are listed in a document called "The text of journalist's duties"¹² which has 13 themes and sets out editorial rules covering different topics such as stories about minors, migrants and refugees, prisoners, finance, surveys and sport.

ethics Carlo Verna told the Ethical Journalism Network: "These need to be penalized. The Ordine has highlighted several cases. In the months to come, we are expecting more actions to be taken".

In the last six years, a new law, the Severino law, has forced all Italian professional associations, including the Ordine of Journalists, to modify how they deal with rules and penalties. Now, norms are written by a National Board and disciplinary issues are handled by Discipline Boards, both local and national. "Judges" of complaints are not elected among colleagues anymore, but are nominated by each local tribunal from a list of candidates chosen by the regional Board.

This law is controversial among journalists and the Ordine has asked several times for it to be reformed, but so far without success.

Raffaele Lorusso, who is the secretary of the Federation of Italian journalists FNSI (Federazione Nazionale Stampa Italiana) admits that sensationalism plays a role in media coverage. "Provocations and "shouted" titles are part of the game", he says. "What is absolutely unacceptable is imbalance, tones which are discrimination or defamation. A journalist has the obligation to always respect truth of facts and the dignity of people. For this reason titles or articles inciting hate, racism and sexual discrimination cannot be tolerated".

Lorusso recognizes the crisis. He says: "In the last few months some newspapers have let themselves go with headlines that are deliberately racist or insulting towards women or immigrants."

The FNSI supports a number of initiatives to combat

hate speech and the spread of fake news, including promoting the Assisi Manifesto, written by the friars of the Sacred Convent of San Francesco, which supports responsible information, and the Venice Manifesto which deals with the correct gendered language".

In addition, two Italian national newspapers, *La Stampa* and *La Repubblica*, are involved in a ground-breaking activity, "The Trust Project" which offers more transparent standards to readers and supports the "immune system of democracy".

La Stampa, in particular, has an ethics code and an effective policy on moderating online comments which has been recently updated.¹³

Nevertheless, more needs to be done to strengthen Italian journalism, particularly regarding working conditions. Some freelance reporters, for instance, get paid just 35 euro for an online article in the national press and just 5 euro on local titles. Standards are important for democracy and freedom, but so are social conditions. Journalists believe the industry needs to needs to rethink its business model.

It's just one of the issues that has come into focus as a result of the election. The need to strengthen journalism, to make people more aware of their own responsibility, to understand how the new culture of communication works and, above all, to reinforce the role of independent public interest broadcasting are all pressing issues. But without a completely new policy approach to dealing with the threat of misinformation and propaganda it's not just journalism that is under threat, democracy itself is at risk.

¹ <http://www.primaonline.it/2018/02/28/267661/i-nuovi-dati-audipress-sulla-lettura-dei-giornali-il-32-degli-italiani-sfoggia-un-quotidiano-al-giorno-settimanali-27-mensili-24/>

² <https://www.cartadiroma.org/news/elezioni-a-parole/>

³ <http://cartadiroma.waypress.eu/cgi/ImageCgi.cgi?f=20180223/LV15046.TIF&t=pdfocr>

⁴ <http://www.fnsi.it/titolo-di-libero-contro-renzi-fnsi-e-istigazione-alla-violenza-e-allodio-non-diritto-di-critica>

⁵ <https://www.ilpost.it/2017/09/06/le-prime-pagine-di-oggi-1729/il-tempo-193/>

⁶ <https://theconversation.com/in-italy-fake-news-helps-populists-and-far-right-triumph-92271>

⁷ https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/sites/default/files/Digital%20News%20Report%202017%20web_0.pdf?utm_source=digitalnewsreport.org&utm_medium=referral

⁸ https://www.buzzfeed.com/albertonardelli/one-of-the-biggest-alternative-media-networks-in-italy-is?utm_term=.kl8YodW2J#.fk1ZNVJIK

⁹ <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/02/28/world/europe/italy-election-davide-casaleggio-five-star.html>

¹⁰ <http://www.lastampa.it/2018/02/05/italia/politica/le-fake-news-rischiano-di-condizionare-il-voto-tre-italiani-su-dieci-ci-credono-8CRt10HpIVq6drx5kiButI/pagina.html>

¹² <http://www.odg.it/content/testo-unico-dei-doveri-del-giornalista-0>

¹³ http://www.lastampa.it/_stc/policy/



THE ART OF LEAKING

French lessons for media
and democracy

Jean-Paul Marthoz



On May 29, under the brightly-lid chandeliers of the Versailles Palace, President Emmanuel Macron did not blink when, standing alongside Russian President Putin, he called RT and Sputnik News “propaganda tools”. He had an axe to grind. During the 2017 election campaign his electoral team had regularly accused the two Russian state media of relaying canards and disinformation on their candidate.

Macron’s message was blunt: “I have always had an exemplary relation with foreign journalists, at least when they are journalists. When press people broadcast libellous untruths they are no longer journalists, but organs of influence”.

The worst had come on May 5, on the last day of the official campaign, a few hours before the “period of restraint” which prohibits the media and politicians from further comments on the electoral race. A torrent of documents, dubbed MacronLeaks, overwhelmed the Internet. Or tried to. They were the product of the hacking of email boxes of six of the candidate’s close advisers, and contained only trivial exchanges on the logistics of the campaign. But they also included sloppily fabricated stories which purported to show that *La République en Marche*’s whizz kid was soft on terrorism or held a secret account in a fiscal paradise.

The first to exploit these hacked documents were pro-Trump activists in the United States. A few minutes after the documents were posted on the 4chan forum, a well-known sanctuary of far-right extremists and conspiracy theorists, Trump supporter Jack Posobiec sent the link to his 100,000 Twitter followers.



The last thing the authorities want is an exposé of failings, incompetence or turf wars inside the “state security apparatus” which might have damning political consequences.

“Constrained by their legal obligations the French mainstream media were impeded from reacting to these so-called ‘revelations’, wrote Sébastien Seibt on France 24 website on May 8¹, “while Marine Le Pen’s supporters had an open space on social networks to disseminate the so-called Macron Leaks”.

French mainstream media, however, were not impressed. Most articles started with a warning which effectively demolished the credibility of the leaks. “Qualified as MacronLeaks they reveal that the reproaches directed at Macron are fake news”, Jean-Marc Manach wrote in Slate.²

In fact, the MacronLeaks coverage shows that a press which is forewarned is a press forearmed. The suspicion had been lurking for months that the liberal candidate would be targeted by fake news. He seemed to be the dream person that far right nationalists and left-wing populists love to hate. A self-avowed globalist, a multiculturalist, a defender of migration, a strong partisan of more European Union integration, he hit on all the nerves of self-proclaimed patriots and was seen as a natural target for fake news sites and extremist blogs.

The attacks on the Democratic Party and Hillary Clinton were widely covered in France, and everyone in the newsrooms expected something to happen. The second run made it more probable and well-documented links between Marine Le Pen’s Front national party and Russian interests increased the expectations of dirty tricks.

When the inevitable happened, French media faced a challenge to cover it. *Le Monde* published a note to readers stating that it had seen the hacked emails and decided not to publish before the run-off. “Because the sheer volume of the hacked documents makes it impossible to analyze and fact check them with such a deadline,” said the paper, “and, above all, because these files have been published 48 hours before election day, with the obvious aim of damaging the integrity of the vote, at the time the candidates and their supporters are legally banned to respond to possible accusations”.

Misusing the fake news scare?

The fallout from MacronLeaks came in January 2018 when the newly-elected President announced plans for a law against fake news. “Macron’s measure would grant judges emergency powers to remove or block content deemed to be “fake” during sensitive election periods,” the *Washington Post’s* James McAuley wrote on January 10, 2018.³ “It would also require greater transparency for sponsored content and permit France’s media watchdog, the Conseil Supérieur de l’Audiovisuel, to combat ‘any attempt at destabilization’ by foreign-financed media organisations.”

Press freedom groups were concerned that such measures, however well-intentioned, might infringe on freedom of expression. “A government cannot define what

truth is,” said Pierre Haski⁴, a renowned *L’Obs* columnist and the president of Reporters without Borders.

The questions piled up. Why adopt a new law when the old 1881 press law already bans “false news”? What kind of responsibility would be expected from social platforms? Some distinguished media warned against an overreaction to a phenomenon which should rather be confronted with fact-checking or media literacy.

In an opinion piece in the liberal left weekly *L’Obs*, the famous and at times polemical essayist Emmanuel Todd was even blunter: “French people underestimate the power of disinformation from the state. If there is a producer of fake news it is the state! As the ruling classes no longer understand the reality that they have created, the voters’ behaviours, Trump, the Brexit... they want to ban. Not content with having the monopoly of legitimate violence the State would like to have a monopoly on fake news.”

His resonating message was that democracies sometimes are less threatened by the attacks they suffer than by the way they react, or overreact, to them.

Leaks in the public interest

French authorities have not been sparing in their efforts to put a stop to journalism that covers areas they consider off-limits. They have put pressure⁵ on enterprising investigative journalists and their potential sources using the law against them, invoking the violation of state secrets or the risk posed to agents of the state.

The “war on terror” has brought another dimension to this constant tension between “les services” (intelligence and security agencies) and investigative journalists. It is true, of course, that reporting on terrorism also means reporting on counter-terrorism, and on the way the police, the intelligence services and the judiciary perform their duties. And the last thing the authorities want is an exposé of failings, incompetence or turf wars inside the “state security apparatus” that might have damning political consequences.

While media can be loud and hyperbolic in their coverage of jihadists, many are much more cautious when they investigate counter-terrorism. Some fear that

exposing the mistakes and incompetence of security forces might be seen by the public as unpatriotic. Or they tread carefully for fear of being blacklisted and losing access precious sources inside the security services.

Such concerns were confirmed by a sensational news story on January 4, 2018. A reporter for the left-wing online site *Mediapart* alleged that the Paris anti terrorist police bungled the surveillance of a jihadist accused of murdering a Catholic priest in July 2016 in the church of Saint-Etienne du Rouvray, close to Rouen.

The jihadist’s exchanges on the crypted messaging app Telegram, wrote *Mediapart*, had been closely monitored by a cybercop. In mid-June the jihadist mentioned attacking churches with a knife and called his followers to attend his courses in a mosque in Saint-Etienne du Rouvray. The cybercop sent a note to his hierarchy. But for various reasons there was no follow-up. Even worse, after the crime was committed said *Mediapart*⁶, the police asked the cybercop to change the date of his warning in order to cover up their blunder.

The police authorities denied part of the story, in particular the fact that the jihadist represented an immediate and direct danger, but the Paris prosecutor decided to investigate the case. “Who knew? Could the attack have been prevented?”, asked Rouen’s bishop, Mgr Lebrun.

There are different kinds of leaks. The Macron Leaks belong to the world of manipulation and distortion of the democratic process. Others, like the Swissleaks or the Panama Papers, are meant to hold public authorities to account.

They are part of the system of checks and balances which are at the heart of the democratic system. But too often secrecy is being used not to protect legitimate national security interests but to hide gaffes or even illegal actions from the eyes of the public.

Such leaks protect a democratic society against abuses of power and can be useful to help the authorities to identify weaknesses in their fight against terrorism and take corrective measures. The truth is that unjustified cover-ups on crucial questions of public accountability can be much more damaging for democracy than a torrent of easily identifiable disinformation and fake news.

¹ <http://www.france24.com/fr/20170508-jack-posobiec-pizzagate-soi-disant-macronleaks-macron-etats-unis>

² <http://www.slate.fr/story/145221/le-macronleaks-est-une-fakenews>

³ https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/europe/france-weighs-a-law-to-rein-in-fake-news-raising-fears-for-freedom-of-speech/2018/01/10/78256962-f558-11e7-9af7-a50bc3300042_story.html?utm_term=.cf39a893abdd

⁴ <https://www.nouvelobs.com/medias/20180104.OBS0140/une-loi-contre-les-fake-news-le-projet-de-macron-risque-t-il-de-museler-la-presse.html>

⁵ <https://cpj.org/blog/2011/09/spying-on-media-exposes-french-governments-dark-si.php>

⁶ <https://www.mediapart.fr/journal/france/040118/comment-les-renseignements-ont-etouffe-leur-rate-apres-l-attentat-de-saint-etienne-du-rouvray?onglet=full>



ETHICAL STORIES

Global media guidelines on migration and people trafficking

Aidan White

The human trafficking story, one of the most challenging and ethically testing assignments for media, affects millions of people. Some of them are among the most vulnerable people in the world – groups of people, including children, who are bought and sold and who live and work in slave labour conditions.

Telling their story requires journalism of humanity. Media need to show the utmost sensitivity, not least because slipshod language and careless, sensationalist reporting can incite hatred and sometimes violence.

It is not just the stereotypes that do damage. Ignorance and misunderstanding often deflect policymakers and governments from giving attention to the root causes of social dislocation. Focusing on trafficked migrants, who are the victims of a multi-million illegal market in human suffering, may make them scapegoats and prevent much-needed public debate on how to find rational solutions to social crisis.

For that reason the EJN has been working with international partners who have commissioned and published a detailed set of guidelines and policies that are designed to help editors and reporters to shape their

stories in ways that avoid the dangers lurking in an aggressive and competitive media landscape.

The International Centre for Migration Policy Development based in Vienna which has successfully concluded a recent project with the European Union, asked the EJM to help them frame a set of guidelines to help media and journalism play a positive role in helping policymakers and communities worldwide understand why trafficking must be eradicated.

That is a long-term ambition, but in the short term media can ensure that political leaders and the public at large get to read, hear and see the full story. Telling the story in an informed and temperate voice is an essential first step in generating the political will needed to overcome the fundamental causes of human trafficking.

The full guidelines can be found on the ICMPD website¹ and they provide advice and suggestions that can help journalists and editors to think twice about how they report on trafficking; to consider the legal and human rights issues involved; the treatment of the victims, their privacy and welfare; and how to tell the story with humanity and style while helping audiences to understand better what must be done.

The guide spells out how credible journalism requires reporters and editors to know and understand what they are talking about. The words and terminology we use to discuss human trafficking often have clear legal definitions. Journalists should use them carefully and with precision.

Few journalists, for instance, know the precise and detailed differences between human trafficking (the criminal exploitation and control of people shipped from country to country in different forms of slavery and bondage) and people smuggling (the business of helping people make irregular journeys avoiding official procedures that govern movement from one country to another).

These guidelines also cover tips on interviewing, protection of children and the use of pictures and images, and there are also investigative story tips. The trafficking story is on almost everyone's doorstep. Media might examine how local low-grade services (car-washes, nail bars, construction work and farm labouring) have business models built upon cheap labour.

Are the workers involved potentially trafficked persons? Journalists can follow the money and look for slavery-tainted raw materials. They can show their audience how we all might be connected to human trafficking. It will get people's attention.

One key problem in covering trafficking issues is the state of relations between media and groups working to combat trafficking, forced labour, and child abuse. The guidelines recommend that journalists should build good and reliable contacts with advocacy groups who are wary of press sensationalism and are often reluctant to publicise the shocking facts about trafficking or forced labour (for example, by giving journalists access to victim interviews).

When better connections are made, it also helps to solve the problem caused by a lack of reliable research and data available to journalists, material



The guide spells out how credible journalism requires reporters and editors to know and understand what they are talking about.

that is critical to shaping a story. Media can help to build trust by improving the capacity for editorial work in this area, giving reporters more time for research; organising internal newsroom briefings on human trafficking issues; and working closely with public authorities and international agencies, particularly in providing information on numbers of victims of trafficking;

Media can also launch focused campaigns on trafficking. These can also reinforce public trust in journalism. Some good examples of where the media's engagement with this issue has delivered powerful journalism include the Freedom Project from CNN² and Aljazeera's Slavery: A 21st Century Evil³ campaign.

Even in the worst of cases, there can be positive stories to tell. Too often, it's easy for the public to think of people who are victims of trafficking or in forced labour as powerless individuals who are permanently damaged. That isn't always true. Journalism that highlights human resilience and tells the story of how people can rebuild their lives out of the tragedy of modern slavery and forced labour tells a different story.

MORE INFORMATION

Find codes and standards for journalists at <http://accountablejournalism.org>

Two reports on media reporting of migration issues:

1. <http://ethicaljournalismnetwork.org/resources/publications/moving-stories>
2. <http://ethicaljournalismnetwork.org/resources/publications/media-mediterranean-migration>

Some key political initiatives and resources from international agencies which journalists and media should be aware of:

- ▷ Rabat Process: the Euro African Dialogue on Migration and Development⁴
- ▷ Khartoum Process: the European Union Horn of Africa Migration Route Initiative⁵
- ▷ Africa Continental Dialogue within the Migration and Mobility Dialogue (MMD)⁶
- ▷ Budapest Process: a consultative process among 50 countries for orderly migration⁷
- ▷ Prague Process: targeted migration dialogue among countries of the European Union, Schengen Area, Eastern Partnership, Western Balkans, Central Asia, Russia and Turkey⁸
- ▷ Mediterranean Transit Migration Dialogue: A consultative dialogue among officials dealing with migration and related issues.⁹
- ▷ Global Compact for Migration: a United Nations initiative for a holistic approach to migration.¹⁰
- ▷ Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons: The United Nations strategy for dealing with human trafficking¹¹
- ▷ International Labour Organisation: Key UN organisation on forced labour and child labour¹²
- ▷ Inter-Agency Coordination Group against Trafficking in Persons: The UN agencies working together to combat trafficking¹³
- ▷ Alliance against Trafficking in Persons: Broad international forum set up by the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe¹⁴
- ▷ Alliance 8.7: International alliance to combat child labour¹⁵
- ▷ Migration Newsdesk: Established for journalists by International Organisation for Migration¹⁶
- ▷ Migration Stories: Briefings from the United Nations High Commissioner for¹⁷
- ▷ Anti-trafficking projects: Summary of actions from the International Centre for Migration Policy Development which conducts robust and policy-orientated research in this area, particularly on human trafficking.¹⁸

Media Links:

- ▷ www.freetheslaves.net/about-slavery/faqs-glossary *One of many international NGOs with excellent advice for journalists.*
- ▷ gijn.org/human-trafficking-resources-best-practices-in-reporting *Excellent resource with examples of good practice and advice for journalists and media organisations from the Global Investigative Journalists Network.*

¹ https://www.icmpd.org/fileadmin/user_upload/Media_and_THB_Guidelines_EN_WEB.pdf

² <http://edition.cnn.com/interactive/2018/specials/freedom-project/>

³ <https://www.aljazeera.com/programmes/slavery21stcenturyevil/>

⁴ <https://www.rabat-process.org/en/>

⁵ <https://www.khartoumprocess.net/>

⁶ <https://www.khartoumprocess.net/about/africa-eu-dialogue-on-migration-and-mobility-mmd>

⁷ <https://www.icmpd.org/our-work/migration-dialogues/budapest-process/>

⁸ <https://www.pragueprocess.eu/en/>

⁹ <https://www.icmpd.org/our-work/migration-dialogues/mtm/>

¹⁰ <https://refugeemigrants.un.org/migration-compact>

¹¹ <https://www.un.org/pga/72/event-latest/global-plan-of-action-to-combat-trafficking-in-persons/>

¹² <http://www.ilo.org/global/topics/forced-labour/lang--en/index.htm>

¹³ <http://icat.network/>

¹⁴ <https://www.osce.org/secretariat/107221>

¹⁵ <http://www.alliance87.org/>

¹⁶ <https://www.iom.int/press-room/newsdesk>

¹⁷ <http://www.unhcr.org/uk/news-and-stories.html>

¹⁸ <https://www.icmpd.org/our-work/capacity-building/thb-and-related-forms-of-exploitation/ongoing-projects/>



ONLINE ODYSSEY IN THE BALKANS

Change is coming, but credibility and support are urgently needed

Besa Luci

For many years public trust in media across the Western Balkans has been in steady decline. When journalism is seen as a stepping stone to politics and when public media serve as the mouthpiece of governments across the region — the profession of journalism is reaching a moment of profound crisis.

And it is not just the journalism of traditional media where the threat lies. More recently, online media and social networks appear to have particularly lost the trust of the public at large. According to the 2016 Eurobarometer¹ on media use in the European Union, which also measures media use for Albania, Serbia, Montenegro and Macedonia (although not for Kosovo or

Bosnia and Herzegovina), trust in media institutions on the Internet and social networks has seen a decline from 2015 to 2016, a change from 2014-15² when it increased.

While there is a growing reliance on the internet as a source of information, this has not necessarily been accompanied by an increase in choices for better, improved professional standards or ethical practices.

On the contrary, an explosion in the number of “online portals” has been intrinsically linked to the unscrupulous political and economic environments within which they emerge and operate.

The so-called three-way “unholy alliance”³ of vested interests between media, politics and businesses that has largely been the model used to describe the ‘traditional



media' environment, is just as evident in the way online portals in the region function.

The reality is that in a region where an independent advertising industry is almost nonexistent, and where self-sustainable economic models prove elusive, even media interested in pursuing editorial independence and high newsroom standards are having to rely on some kind of support from power elites, such as advertising from government or businesses with close political affiliations.

As a result, editorial policies and the news agenda end up being driven in two predominant directions by the key centres of power:

- ▷ First, is the pressure of finance, commerce and markets which leads to a marginalization of social, political and critical public issues and instead a news media focus on the trivial and popular. This results in what we have been increasingly witnessing — patterns of short, fast, scandal-oriented, personality-based news, and the misleading information wrapped by sensationalism.
- ▷ Secondly, media are driven to serve the interests of the political elite through deliberate politically-driven attacks and defamation. This is most prevalent in Serbia, where investigative journalists and small independent media are constantly targeted by pro-government tabloids and political opposition are regularly the focus of personalized and vindictive media attacks.

In Kosovo, meanwhile, there has in particular been an increase in the number of online portals that emerge

during election campaigns, disguised as “news portals,” which use social media to disseminate inaccurate and deliberately false information for the purposes of political smear campaigns.

Such media behavior damages the already fragile framework of professional standards and ethics, to the extent that fact-based, verified, contextualized information becomes the exception rather than the rule for everyday journalism. In this vein, tabloidization and politicization have emerged as the norm, rather than the exception.

It is a politically and financially toxic environment, made worse by the many violent or intimidating forms of political pressure and intimidation of journalists. The major questions for everyone in the media business are how to make independent journalism truly flourish and prevail, and how to rebuild and reinvigorate public confidence and trust in the media?

What's for sure is that there are no swift, magic wand solutions. While there is no shortage of civil society attention in this area (often supported by well-meaning donors and the international community), the overall climate has left many journalists doubtful as to whether substantial change within the media can truly happen without being led by equally significant change in the political environment.

At the moment, the possibilities in that direction are limited, but there are reasons for optimism. Even in the midst of the media crisis, it is important to recognize that sound, independent and professional media outlets do

exist — even online. Although these are generally small in number, resources and outreach, they are pushing for, and insisting upon, ethically and socially grounded journalism.

Regrettably, such media tend to receive less attention or acknowledgment. But, it is important that they continue to be vocal and demand changes within the sector. They can be drivers for change, and need more support.

Other drivers for change are self-regulatory bodies. Despite financial struggles and resistance from within the media sector itself, they have nevertheless been accepted to varying degrees across the region; the only exception is in Albania, where a highly-polarized media sector has contributed to a lack of genuine interest in establishing such a body. However, even that may be changing with a new debate on the relaunching of the country's ethical code for journalists.

Some changes elsewhere are evident, and are often being pushed by the more credible media outlets. For example, in 2015 — 10 years after its establishment — the Kosovo Press Council amended its statute in order to respond to a lack of transparency in media ownership and management. Now all members are required to publish an impressum (a legal statement of ownership) on their websites. In Macedonia, where the Council of Media Ethics was only established in 2014, it immediately included the impressum requirement for anyone aspiring to become a member.

While these are positive steps in the right direction, the self-regulatory nature of these press councils, which rely on the willingness of their members to implement and enforce guidelines, often means that established principles are not respected by all.

In Kosovo, two of the 28 members — both online media — to this day refuse to publish their ownership status in spite of the Press Council ruling. Moreover, the practices of unsigned articles across the regional online media sector have largely remained un-tackled.

But nonetheless, there is some positive momentum to build upon. While each body is dealing with its specific circumstances, what many of them have in common is that they have seen a rise of membership, and specifically from online media. In Kosovo, of the current 28 members, 20 are online media, 13 of which have joined since 2015; whereas in Bosnia and Herzegovina since 2016, 25 online portals have joined its council. Meanwhile, in both these countries, as well as in Macedonia, the number of complaints filed for unethical reporting in online media has made up more than half of the annual complaints in the past few years.

As this trend continues, it is likely that some press councils will before long comprise only online media, and codes of ethics need to be constantly updated to dynamically respond to the changing nature of complaints. Some steps to be taken include:

- ▷ Clarifying where the complaint by a person or decision by the press council is published in relation to the original disputed story;

- ▷ If articles are corrected following publication, then acknowledging that such edits have been made;
- ▷ If a story has been published through social networks then ensuring that the decision or correction is added to the post;
- ▷ Changing the URL of a story that has been reported inaccurately and subsequently fixed.

Adapting media regulation to the realities of online and internet journalism is one of the major challenges of change for Balkan media regulators. But press councils should be more engaged in the online world themselves.

They need to be more vocal and have more profile in the public information space, showing the public what discussions are taking place among media practitioners, what ethical dilemmas are most prevalent, how such complaints are addressed, and what decisions are made.

If trust is to be built, the public needs to be better informed about the role played by engaged, ethical media outlets. There needs to be more focus on the work of media practitioners that are not only engaged in their daily jobs as journalists, but who are working actively towards improving the media environment and upholding higher standards.

If such actions do not come from within the media sector itself, then there is a risk that governments, in a climate of declining public trust and in the name of “addressing the media problem,” will intervene with excessive legislation, which could be used to curb media freedoms.

But media organisations can also take another, simple step to help repair public confidence.

Credible outlets should make a clearer distinction between their work and that of the seemingly infinite number of online portals. In fact, the concept of online portals itself needs to be challenged as there is currently a tendency to tar all media with the same discredited brush.

Online journalism is not just about “portals” but is increasingly the important and growing voice on the internet for newspapers, agencies, magazines, news sources. Media must do more to recognise and promote the power of the internet and online journalism and to use it effectively and confidently. Public confidence in the online capacity for ethical and trustworthy news and information is crucial to the future of journalism and provides an answer to the crisis of 21st century information overload.

In order for the public to filter through different formats of content, they have to be shown that online journalism is not restricted to narrow mainstream commercialism, or tendencies towards clickbait and political vilification.

Ultimately, the greatest responsibility will fall on those credible media that might even be suffering from least financial viability, or professional security. And that is why they urgently need more political and public support. No change is too little, or unimportant but change is necessary and the sooner the better.

¹ <https://ec.europa.eu/comfrontoffice/publicopinion/index.cfm/ResultDoc/download/DocumentKy/79405>

² <https://idui.us.es/xmlui/bitstream/handle/11441/69414/373-1048-1-PB.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>

³ <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0019/001908/190810e.pdf>

THE TERRORISM STORY

Media learn the hard way from their own mistakes

Jean-Paul Marthoz





Terrorist attacks have unfortunately become a regular news item. After dealing with a succession of incidents many newsrooms appear better prepared to confront one of the most challenging stories of the time. Some have drawn lessons from their previous failings and adopted stricter guidelines.

However there is a form of inevitability in the way many media cover terrorism: images that often are picked up on social platforms are rushed into publication and rebroadcast incessantly; stand-up live reporting close to the scene excites and dramatizes the coverage; witnesses are solicited and experts, either from academia or from more partisan advocacy groups, are called in to “interpret” the event often in the middle of confusion and mayhem.

“By playing this endless loop of the same images of terrified people running away from the scene of an attack, we are essentially playing into the hands of terrorists”, reminded Indira Lakshmanan, chair of journalism ethics for Poynter, in an interview with NPR on June 4, 2017.¹

This media overdose extends to the coverage of reactions to the attack. “When you dramatize excessively the collective emotion you encourage criminal actions,” writes Michel Fize, author of *Les larmes de Charlie...et Cie* (The tears of Charlie...and Company), in *Le Monde* on August 25, 2017. “With all these reactive demonstrations of prayers and marches, we show the assailants less that we have solidarity and are more bound together, than affected by the acts of horror”.

The media struggle to cope with the avalanche of tweets, messages and pictures. Obviously social media may be used as news sources as well as immediate fact checkers and help correct false information. They can even express solidarity and bring some reason and humanity. But they also intensify the pressures to “publish first and be damned”, raising the risks of bad judgment in selecting what to disseminate and what to stop.

They may also pollute the news with inflammatory comments, incitements to hatred, panicky messages or angry criticism of choices made by the newsroom. In the wake of the Westminster Bridge attack on March 22, 2017, an account identified by Twitter as a Russian bot used the



Despite a flurry of discussions for many years on the use of pictures and videos media continue to appear divided on what to do. Crude photos of victims were published in the wake of attacks in Barcelona. Red lines, according to the public and the authorities, were crossed.

photo of a hijab-wearing woman to fan islamophobia.

“Muslim woman pays no mind to the terror attack, casually walks by a dying man while checking her phone”, said the post with the hashtag #BanIslam.

Journalists must learn to stay on course. “I regret to say that social networks do not determine and will never determine what we must do”, said Fernando Mas, deputy director of Madrid’s *El Independiente* after the August 17, Barcelona truck attack on the Ramblas.²

When Media Get it Wrong

Speculation remains a constant threat. During the Barcelona attacks too many media went wrong, says Spanish journalist Esther Miguel Trula, leading her to conclude that the Mossos de Esquadra, the Catalan security forces, and the police, via their twitter accounts, were “nearly the only places where reliable information was provided.”³

A number of media – RTVE, TV3, EL Nacional de Catalunya, *El Español*, *El Independiente*, *El Confidencial* and *The Independent* – she writes, claimed for instance that one or two suspects of the attack were holed up in

a restaurant, some even mentioned they were holding hostages. The Mossos officially crushed the rumors.

On 22 March 2017 in its reporting of the Westminster terror attack Channel 4 News wrongly identified the perpetrator while relying on one usually reliable source. Just one. The man named by the TV channel was in fact in prison. The incident reveals again that time pressures can lead to skipping even carefully drafted internal rules. “The Channel 4 incident acts as a timely reminder of the need to take care, check your fact, and only rely on a single source in the most exceptional of circumstances”, writes Jennifer Agate on 21 November 2017 in *HoldTheFrontPage*.⁴

Once bitten, twice shy, many media have learnt to be cautious. They clearly indicate what “they know” and what “they don’t know”. They issue warnings on what is “unconfirmed” or “not witnessed by us” and dutifully cite their sources. But the first obligation – to be right rather than first – is not always respected.

Correcting mistakes quickly and visibly is especially crucial. Channel 4 News did so promptly but at the time of the Quebec Mosque attack on Friday, January 29, 2017 Fox News kept a wrong fact, that the suspect was “of Moroccan

origin”, on its website after the Canadian police has put the record straight. The tweet appeared early on Monday afternoon. The US channel corrected the misreported information with a tweet and an update to the story on Monday evening but did not delete the previous tweet immediately. Meanwhile, the incriminated message had been retweeted more than 900 times, and liked about 1,600 times. It also had about 7,200 replies, many of them pointing out the inaccuracy and calling for a correction.⁵

A subsequent tweet posted Monday evening noting the second person in custody had been cleared was retweeted only 72 times and had 162 likes. Although Refet Kaplan, the managing director for FoxNews.com, issued an apology in a Tuesday evening email, Kate Purchase, Canadian PM Justin Trudeau’s director of communications, issued a statement condemning the US channel.

“These tweets by Fox News dishonour the memory of the six victims and their families by spreading misinformation, playing identity politics, and perpetuating fear and division within our communities”, she said.⁶

Despite a flurry of discussions for many years on the use of pictures and videos media continue to appear divided on what to do. Crude photos of victims were published in the wake of attacks in Barcelona. Red lines, according to the public and the authorities, were crossed.

In the wake of an attack the public and in particular those people who have been affected more directly (victims, parents of victims, witnesses, etc.) tend to be shocked by media decisions which even though they might appear insensitive are in fact legitimate and justifiable. Publishing pictures of the attacker might be decrypted as “glorifying terrorists” but such qualification largely depends on the kind of photograph that is being used and on the contextualization that is being provided.

It would be easy to rely on journalistic dogmas and automatic decisions. But this is not how journalism works. Time pressures and psychological factors intervene. Doubts are inevitable. In an interesting article the deputy editor of *El Independiente* confessed his perplexity after the Barcelona attacks and the way the newsroom hesitated on the use of graphic pictures of victims. “We decided to add two very crude sequences. We considered that we should not hide the consequences of terror. I had doubts. I had so much doubt that I continue having doubts. The reflection went on. We withdrew the pictures. I don’t know whether it is was the right decision”, he wrote.⁷

Beyond Reporting of Terror Attacks

A number of more general ethical reflections have accompanied terrorism reporting. Firstly, the need to keep a sense of proportion: “Terrorism deaths are the single most heavily covered type of deaths per capita in the first pages of the *New York Times* compared to every other way that a human can die,” says Indira Lakshmanan on NPR. “This fuels the perception that we are living in some sort of a terrorist state out of proportion from the reality that it is.”

Second, there is an awareness that Islamic terrorism is given much more attention to other forms of terrorism. “We ignore the terrorist threat from right-wing extremism at our peril,” Norwegian researcher Sindre Bangstad wrote in a March 7, 2017 in an opinion piece for *OpenDemocracy*.⁸

Finally, the discussion has shifted from event-led and breaking news reporting to investigative and analytical forms of journalism: trying to understand the origins of radicalization and decoding the political impact of terrorism. Up to the point of reflecting on the role of the media in feeding hate? What has been the role of “radio poubelles” (trash radio), asked Quebec journalists after the January 2017 Mosque attack by a white supremacist.⁹

A number of rowdy private radio stations have been accused of fanning a climate of stigmatisation of the Muslim community and of drumming up support for populist movements. “Intimidation, dubious jokes, demeaning words, the striking force and deprecatory content of Quebec radios have reached unimaginable heights,” writes Dominique Payette in the Montreal daily *La Presse*.¹⁰

A final question points to a crucial issue: to what extent does dramatized media coverage create a call for illiberal measures? Publicity is the oxygen of terrorism, as Margaret Thatcher put it in reference to the IRA, the Irish Republican terrorists in the 1980s, but media hype and overreaction may also provide the oxygen for knee-jerk and excessive counter-terrorism measures. In her case, Thatcher introduced a clumsy strategy of half-censorship – forcing broadcasters like the BBC to substitute actual voices of terror group representatives with the voices of actors. It lasted only briefly. Such actions can be double-edged, they risk doing the terrorists’ work by undermining the values of openness, liberty and rule of law which are the extremists’ targets.

¹ <https://www.npr.org/2017/06/04/531485427/looking-at-how-news-organizations-report-on-terrorist-attacks>

² <https://www.elindependiente.com/opinion/2017/08/19/con-perdon-tengo-dudas/>

³ <https://magnet.xataka.com/en-diez-minutos/medios-y-usuarios-de-redes-deberiamos-estar-avergonzados-del-tratamiento-del-atentado-de-barcelona>

⁴ <https://www.holdthefrontpage.co.uk/2017/news/law-column-reporting-terrorist-attacks-lessons-from-c4-news-ofcom-breach/>

⁵ <https://www.thestar.com/news/canada/2017/01/31/pmo-slams-fox-news-for-inaccurate-tweet-about-quebec-shooting-suspect.html>

⁶ <https://www.thestar.com/news/canada/2017/01/31/pmo-slams-fox-news-for-inaccurate-tweet-about-quebec-shooting-suspect.html>

⁷ <https://www.elindependiente.com/opinion/2017/08/19/con-perdon-tengo-dudas/>

⁸ <https://www.opendemocracy.net/sindre-bangstad/lessons-from-norway-s-terror-attack-that-world-failed-to-heed>

⁹ <http://ici.radio-canada.ca/nouvelle/1014180/role-medias-attentat-quebec>

¹⁰ http://plus.lapresse.ca/screens/08b7f968-1fe7-4d49-bd91-467413527b96__7C__8-Du492iVWEX.html

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