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# **FUTURE OF JOURNALISM 2023**

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**Journalism in troubled times:  
Threats, opportunities and research**

# **ABSTRACTS**

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# What are data-informed news organisations made of? Sense-making and data imaginaries of Finnish news professionals

Laura Ahva<sup>1</sup>, [Margareta Salonen](#)<sup>2</sup>, Karoliina Talvitie-Lamberg<sup>2</sup>, Liisa Ovaska<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Tampere University, Tampere, Finland. <sup>2</sup>University of Jyväskylä, Jyväskylä, Finland

## Abstract

The collection and analysis of digital data has become easier and more effective in recent decades, and this broad shift of datafication is shaping journalism. The discussion of datafication has focused on the forms of data, automated, algorithm and metrics-driven journalism (Loosen, 2018). The vocabulary, tools and skills from the technological culture are thus increasingly becoming part of journalism culture. One sign of this development is the aim to create *data-informed newsrooms* (Cherubini & Nielsen, 2016). However, there is hardly any research that defines what a data-informed newsroom is, even if we know that audience data holds a particular place in journalistic organisations (Tandoc, 2014; Author, 2023). From these premises, the research takes a step further and aims to contribute to conceptualising what the (audience) data-informed news organisations are.

RQs:

-What kind of audience data are currently collected and used for managing news organisations in Finland?

-For what purposes are the audience data used in the news organisations' decision-making?

-What kinds of future-oriented imaginaries do the news professionals have about data-informed news organisations?

This research builds on the notion that everyday relations to data are lived through *data imaginaries* (Pink et al., 2018) and part of newsroom work (Svensson, 2021). We interpret these relations as forms of *sensemaking* (Weick et al., 2005), through which organising is achieved. We suggest that the integration of action and meaning (Glynn et al., 2020) is what creates a data-driven newsroom. The research brings together three projects based in Finland and adopts a mixed-methods approach combining quantitative and qualitative content analysis (Silverman, 2011). It draws from a set of survey data of 105 Finnish news professionals (five newspapers) and two sets of qualitative interviews with 18 Finnish news professionals (ten newspapers) dealing with data issues. The materials were gathered between December 2020 and November 2022.

# **Examining the Affective Responses and Engagements of Young Adult Nigerians from Low-Income Communities with Legacy Media News Reports**

Olutobi Akingbade

Centre for the Advancement of Non-Racialism and Democracy, Nelson Mandela University,  
Gqeberha, South Africa

## **Abstract**

This paper discusses the affective responses and engagements of a purposefully enlisted set of young adult Nigerians with online news from legacy media. Embedded in a qualitative research design, the paper draws on transcripts from semi-structured focus group sessions conducted with 23 young adults resident in the historically marginalized low-income communities of Amukoko and Ajegunle in Lagos State, Nigeria. Among other key motivations, this paper is motivated by assertions in literature that have emphasized that further research and development in the broad field of journalism should not be independent of theoretical and evidence-based insights into audience perceptions, understandings, and expectations. While the purposeful sampling of youths is motivated by relevant studies that suggest that they are more active in their participation and consumption of news and other information on the internet, young Nigerians were drawn from historically marginalized low-income communities because the individuals and households in these communities exemplify the digital divide and constraints in continuous internet access evidenced in literature.

This paper is an integral part of an ongoing study that examines internet and social media use, and online consumption of news, among young adults from low-income communities. The paper is grounded in conceptions of media consumption that emphasize the role of active audiences and posit that such audiences are not passive consumers of information about occurrences around them but actively engage in a variety of ways with such information. This paper is also grounded in theoretical understandings of the affective and emotional aspects of audience engagement with different forms and practices of journalism. Amongst other major themes, the paper brings to the fore the nexus between the young adults' affective responses and engagements with online news, their distrust of legacy media, and their sense of socio-economic marginalization and disappointment with political officeholders.

# Accommodating the challenges of local journalism: *L'Eco di Bergamo's* actions understood from a longitudinal perspective

Laura Amigo

Academy of journalism and media, University of Neuchatel, Neuchâtel, Switzerland

## Abstract

Despite increased trust and consumption of local news during the Covid-19 pandemic (Castriota et al., 2020), Italian local newspapers have been facing troubled times due to audiences' disaffection, digital transformation and the disruption of traditional business models (Cornia, 2022; Murru & Pasquali, 2020; Splendore, 2016). The need to rethink the relationship with audiences lies at the heart of this multifaceted crisis.

This research looks at how *L'Eco di Bergamo*, one of the oldest and most widely circulated local papers in Italy, takes up these challenges and seeks to revitalize the connection with its audiences. It also questions the newspaper's current approach in light of its past actions and history – an uncommon perspective in journalism studies, generally characterized by a tendency toward synchronic methodologies (Wahl-Jorgensen & Hanitzsch, 2020). This is done by combining several sets of data: an inventory of 490 actions *L'Eco* took since its foundation in 1880 to be closer to audiences; content analysis of 344 published articles allowing to identify the newspaper's principles and missions as communicated to its readership; and six interviews shedding light on how *L'Eco's* managing staff seek to strengthen the relationship with readers.

Results shows that while building proximity to audiences has remained a consistent focus of *L'Eco*, the forces shaping this process are changing. This is clear from the two contrasting views that emerged from staff discourse. One describes it as a continuation of past actions and principles, influenced by the Catholic Church's social doctrine. The other sees it as focused on newness and embracing more of a marketing approach than before, which questions notions such as news producers, local news scope and audiences. Discussions highlight that fostering a close relationship with audiences is a situated process and that a historical perspective helps disentangle what is new from what is another iteration of the past.

# **“Join the coalition”: Collective action spaces in pioneer journalism and the reimagining of journalistic epistemology**

Bissie Anderson

Robert Gordon University, Aberdeen, United Kingdom

## **Abstract**

The post-industrial era of converged media, broken monopoly of legacy journalism, and (inter-)active audiences has challenged journalism’s rituals of meaning-making and led to soul-searching in newsrooms, with calls to reimagine its epistemologies (Broersma, 2013; Callison & Young, 2019; Carlson, 2017; Ekström & Westlund, 2019; Steinke & Belair-Gagnon, 2020; Wahl-Jorgensen, 2019). Epistemic innovation has been most pronounced in what has come to be collectively known as “pioneer journalism” (Hepp & Loosen, 2021): communities of journalism practice who, through their knowledge-production activities, have a strong potential to “bring about media-related change” (Hepp, 2016, p. 927).

This paper examines how pioneer journalist communities reimagine journalism as an epistemic praxis through their metadiscourses, and traces how ideas about journalism as a form of knowledge are embodied in pioneer journalism production around the world. Taking a cross-national perspective, this multi-method study examines 1) pioneer journalist metadiscourses related to the epistemic role of journalism, found in 20 pioneer organisations’ manifestos and web pages and seven global industry events focused on journalism innovation; and 2) how metadiscourses translate into knowledge production practices, as explicated from semi-structured interviews with 30 pioneer journalism producers from four digital journalism startups based in Pakistan, Romania, Malaysia and the UK.

Findings suggest that pioneer journalists around the world “imagine” their knowledge production as more “relational” and “meaningful”, and through their metadiscourses and storytelling practices, create self-contained spaces of collective action, in which producers, audiences and the public play an equally important role in the negotiation of representations of reality. Furthermore, pioneer journalism producers go beyond their purely epistemic role and adopt a semi-political role, seeking to act upon their visions of “a better future” (Rappler). The public are invited to “join the coalition” (Bureau Local), and, together, as an imagined collective, to empower communities, make a difference, and spark social change.

# The forest as a battering ram in the climate change debate: How the forest issue is framed in journalistic visualizations around the Baltic Sea

Ester AL Appelgren, Kristina Riegert

Södertörn University, Huddinge, Sweden

## Abstract

Of the many sectors involved in the global push to mitigate climate change, the issue of sustainable forests have come to the fore. Especially in the forestry rich Baltic Sea region, there are increasing debates about forests as carbon sinks, biodiversity hotspots and energy resources under pressure from EU green legislation, energy scarcity and international conflict. The increasingly polarized media debate between users of the forest in relation to climate goals can be seen as a discursive struggle in terms of what is presented as problems and solutions. Despite the forest industry being of major importance in a country like Sweden, there are few journalists in mainstream media who regularly cover this complex issue (Hallberg-Sramek 2020). Globally, data journalistic initiatives on forest issues are often presented with the use of interactive maps (Milan & Gutiérrez 2018), and cartographics have been described as one of the longest-running forms of data activism (Kidd 2019). However, incorrectly designed maps, as well as charts can be misleading or difficult for the audience to understand and navigate (Cairo 2015). In this article, we analyze the role of visualization of statistics in digital journalism discourse around the forest issue in a sample from four countries of the Baltic Sea Region (Poland, Estonia, Finland and Sweden). We apply an integrative framing analysis (Dan 2018), coding for both verbal and visual frames to the content of a selection of national and local newspapers relating to the forest/climate issue. Furthermore, we are interested in the interpretation of statistics in the discourse around the forest. The analysis extends results from previous media research on forestry (cf. Park & Kleinschmit, 2016; Mack 2023) to how the design elements and visual cues in new digital and data-driven journalistic formats contribute to preferred problems and solutions in the coverage of sustainable forests.

# Revisiting News Automation's Narratives and Practices: A Case Study of the Use of AI-driven Tools in (Non-Western) Newsrooms

Rana Arafat, Glenda Cooper

City, University of London, London, United Kingdom

## Abstract

Machines and artificial intelligence increasingly assist or replace humans in journalistic work serving in the processes of gathering, filtering, composing and sharing news (Nechushtai & Lewis, 2019; Thurman et al., 2019). While scholars studying news automation have focused mainly on the big western media organizations with established innovation labs (e.g., Ford & Hutchinson, 2019; Jones & Jones, 2019), little attention was given to non-western media outlets in developing countries where the deployment of AI tools encounter many challenges such as limits over technology access, digital skills and training, and restrictions on free speech.

This paper employs in-depth interviews and digital ethnography to map out the news automation scene in non-western newsrooms, using the example of Egypt, as one of the major players in the Middle Eastern media markets and a pioneer of communication technologies in the Arab region. It will examine the use of algorithms and AI-driven tools on three levels: narrative, practice, and technological infrastructure. On the narrative level, the paper investigates how Egyptian actors (journalists, editors, and programmers) working for four selected newsrooms understand and define the role of news automation and AI in their media outlets. Looking at practice, it examines the news workers' use of AI-driven tools in different phases of news production processes. On the wider infrastructure level, the paper further investigates the wider technological and organizational factors that facilitate or hinder the adoption of automated news content in the selected newsrooms. Using digital ethnography, the paper takes a further look at the selected news outlets' websites to make observations about how AI tools are implemented in their news websites and social media pages.

The paper employs the diffusion of innovation theory that "analyzes how an innovation is adapted within a social system" (Rogers, 2003). Von Nordheim et al. (2018) identified three aspects of newsrooms innovation: technological, relational, and cultural innovation. This will allow us to identify all actors involved in the AI adoption processes and enable such actors to explain their perceptions of the internal and external sources of influence that shape their technological and relational innovation adoption in Egyptian newsrooms.

The paper draws upon in-depth interviews with 24 journalists, chief editors, and programmers working for the following two selected Egyptian legacy media: Youm Al Sabea (Youm7) and Al-Watan News, and two digital native newsrooms: Masrawy and Cairo 24, all published in Arabic language. We will also collect ethnographic observations about how different AI tools are actually implemented on the four websites and thematic analysis will be conducted using Nvivo Pro Software.

# Feeding off each other? Journalistic role negotiations between local and foreign reporters in Nairobi

Cecilia Arregui Olivera

Aarhus University, Aarhus, Denmark

## Abstract

Nairobi is a vibrant hub for international journalism in East Africa. The Kenyan capital hosts a mix of foreign and national reporters, stringers, freelancers, and fixers. This study focuses on the interplay and interactions between all these actors and how their relationships impact their professional role conceptions. Understanding roles as discursively constructed (Hanitzsch & Vos, 2017), I shed light on how these are renegotiated in the interactions (or lack thereof) between different actors that report on the same topics for different news media and audiences.

The paper is based on 35 interviews—with reporters, editors, media critics and foreign correspondents—and ethnographic data collected in Nairobi in 2021 as part of a larger research project centred on the coverage of electoral conflict and terrorism in Kenya by the legacy news media. These are two of the most salient and sensitive topics that journalists working in the country have covered in recent years and offer a few of the crucial instances in which all these actors interact. More specifically, as one participant remarked, how foreign correspondents cover electoral conflict and terrorism clearly affects “how the Kenyan media then covers the [same] story”.

On a delicate balancing act, Kenyan journalists seek to at once try to imitate the foreign press and fulfil similar roles while simultaneously attempting to offer counter-narratives to the generally stereotypical representations of Kenya abroad. Accordingly, journalists are often torn between championing traditional tenets consistent with the watchdog role or others like the advocate or missionary. In sum, while at first glance the interaction between international and local reporters in Nairobi is minimal, I pose that it is precisely the constant awareness of each other’s work that generates manifold tensions that, in turn, reflect on their own role perceptions and performances.



# **String Quartet on the Titanic: Are U.S. journalists covering their own demise or rowing to safety with democracy's own beat?**

Karin Assmann

University of Georgia, Athens, USA

## **Abstract**

In the weeks and months following the 2020 U.S. Presidential Election, the role of the news media in what appears to be an increasingly unstable democracy, became a contested topic among journalists, media critics, and scholars. One of Nieman Lab's predictions for the year 2021 was "the rise of the democracy beat," as a necessary consequence following ongoing attempts to overthrow the election results (Donohue, 2020). The same prediction appeared one year later, this time expecting the news industry to embrace more regulations, as well as institutionalized protections of both democracy itself and of the press (Brannon, 2021). Indeed, in the months leading up to the 2022 Midterm Elections, U.S. news outlets announced the creation of democracy beats and the hiring of democracy reporters (e.g., Brod, 2022; Henkel, 2022). The debate around the tension between the normative role of the press as defender of democracy on one hand (Christians et al., 2010), and as objective documentarian on the other (e.g., Schudson, 2001), became part of the metajournalistic discourse (Carlson, 2016) that absolved the U.S. news media from adhering to the myth of objectivity (Hounshell, 2022; Sullivan, 2021). This study examines the metajournalistic discourse in the United States around democracy beats. The analysis of the discourse around this explicit shift will contribute to our understanding of how journalistic ideals, norms and practices are being reshaped as news outlets respond to political crises. Additionally, to capture the nature of this new beat, the work of democracy reporters in newsrooms supported by the Center for Cooperative Media will be analyzed. Close to 400 newsrooms published news stories and editorials on Democracy Day in 2022 (Amditis, 2022; Collaborative Journalism, 2022), an event scheduled to take place again on September 15, 2023.

# **The struggle between advocacy journalism and traditional public interest journalism in the coverage of the Russia-Ukraine conflict.**

Monica A Attard

University of Technology Sydney, Sydney, Australia

## **Abstract**

The role of journalism in the coverage of conflict has been buffeted by phenomena that appears to be impacting other bespoke topics in the public sphere. The advent and broad journalistic acceptance of advocacy in journalism often appears to move traditional public interest journalism away from truth finding guided by professional standards of independence, accuracy and impartiality and towards a form of activism which platforms/ deplatforms according to dominant social media views and national imperatives. Narrowed debates are common in wartime: governments encourage groupthink and marginalise dissenting voices. The current Ukraine-Russia war is no different except that it is being fought in the age of social media where billions of words have shaped the journalistic discussion of the war's origins and possible outcome. This paper seeks to discern if advocacy journalism is present in the coverage of this war and if so, its impact. In the broadly agreed understanding of what an act of journalism is, there are requirements for balance, where evidence is gathered, assumptions are challenged, and an approximation of truth is arrived at. These acts of journalism demand that minds are kept open which is often reflected in the framing of journalism narratives, that all information remains open to assessment in reflection of impartiality and that finally, interpretations are based on the judgments a journalist brings to the information before them rather than any dominant narrative being promoted by political forces and social media pressure. Advocacy journalism, in promoting a political and social position, determines truth before any act of journalism is committed. Balance is less important and often undesirable because it is seen as platforming views not endorsed by the advocates. The task becomes not to report, not interview and not hold to account those whose views are inconsistent with the advocates. This paper explores these discrepancies.

# How audiences and journalistic actors negotiate innovation and change: Considering the role-expectation relationship

Sandra Banjac, Frank Harbers

University of Groningen, Groningen, Netherlands

## Abstract

This paper asks how the interaction between journalists and audiences shapes innovation. Fuelled by the ongoing crisis discourse about journalism's future, the idea that journalism needs to reinvent itself through innovation is widely embraced (Creech & Nadler, 2017; Bossio & Nelson, 2021). Among the changes journalists have confronted in response to pressures to innovate, is the need to reimagine their roles (Witschge & Nygren, 2009). While research into journalistic innovation has grown in the last decades (Bélair Gagnon & Steinke, 2021), it has tended to disregard the perspectives of audiences (Greber et al., 2023). Yet, their (dis)approval can affect the nature, pace and success of journalistic innovation and change. In this paper, we therefore analyse how journalists and audiences negotiate journalistic innovation through the way they envision and perform journalistic roles and expectations as a way of (de)legitimizing innovation and change.

To investigate the role-expectation interplay in relation to innovation, we draw on practice theory's emphasis on professional practice and the ongoing interaction between the 'sayings' i.e. discourse and the 'doings' i.e. journalistic performance (Witschge & Harbers, 2018), and role theory's (Biddle, 1979) central argument that expectations and roles shape one another. Through four focus groups with audiences and (reconstruction) interviews with 15 journalists in The Netherlands, we show how journalists and audiences through their performance of roles and expectations negotiate journalistic innovation by (de)legitimizing change and journalism's reimagination.

This approach allows us to also recognize the important role of audiences among the multiplicity of actors that shape what journalism innovation is and can be, thus further exposing the complex dynamics underlying journalistic change. Particularly in light of audiences' declining news consumption and deteriorating trust in news, we discuss how a disconnect between role performance and expectations may perpetuate these challenges (Coleman, 2012).

# **Disaster Journalism as Support for Rescue, Recovery and Social Resilience: The Readiness and Awareness of Turkish Journalists 6 February Earthquake in Turkey**

Emel Baştürk

Kocaeli University Faculty of Communication, Kocaeli, Turkey

## **Abstract**

In disasters, news flow is significant for emergency response, facilitating organise and contributing to social resilience. An earthquake is a natural disaster that causes sudden losses and has long-term effects on survivors. It imposes ethical responsibilities on the field reporters, such as reporting the devastation honestly and supporting the recovery of the victims. On 6 February 2023, earthquakes in Turkey caused great destruction in Turkey and Syria. In this tragic situation, the ethical dimension of disaster journalism, the correspondents' attitudes and discourse also sparked a debate. Some journalists were criticised for violating the privacy of victims, not showing due respect to their suffering, and manipulating reality in the field. Some were accused of trying to filter the victims' complaints about emergency actions. These showed the necessity of thinking about how the media should behave in disasters.

In this study, deeply-interviews will be conducted with six of the 6 February earthquake field reporters to reveal their readiness level for earthquake journalism and what they prioritise in the field. Questions will be asked such as whether they received training in earthquake reporting in their institutions, their perceptions about the expectations of their organisations, whether they had experience in an earthquake area before, how they felt when reporting, what their responsibilities might be during disasters and whether they feel any pressure in terms of freedom of expression. Thus, it will also be discussed to what extent the journalists' attitudes in the field are shaped by the policies of their institutions, the general political atmosphere in the country, and their awareness and experiences.

# Placefulness, Placelessness, and the Different Social Values of Local and Community Media

Thomas J Billard

Northwestern University, Chicago, USA

## Abstract

This paper argues that there is a duality in local and community media between “placefulness” and “placelessness.” “Placefulness” here means the specific quality of local media that locates stories within a social world based in geography. Local media tell stories about people with whom readers experience commonness because of their shared location and because of the social proximity they assume comes from that shared location. “Placelessness,” in contrast, refers to the quality of community media that universalizes human experience by locating stories in a social world based in collectively held, but fundamentally imagined identities. Community media tell stories about people with whom readers experience commonness because of shared social identity (over and above any geographic differences) and because of the sameness of experience they assume comes from that shared social identity. Confusingly, both placefulness and placelessness happen simultaneously; digital media have rendered placeful media also placeless, as they allow local stories to circulate through networks that span far beyond their intended, geographically delimited audiences. This dual character to local and community media has profound implications for journalism’s ability to serve as a forum for collective social orientation, helping communities come to shared understandings of collective problems and coordinating perspectives on appropriate resolution. Drawing on two years of ethnographic research in the US transgender rights movement, this paper explores how tensions between placefulness and placelessness affecting community understandings of transgender identity and the “threat” that transness poses to local communities. In doing so, it reflects on the normative functions of local and community media, offering insights into how they might navigate the complexities of the digital media environment in ways that protect marginalized members of their communities.

## **Going Global: Virtual Collaborations within Journalism Education**

Katherine Blair, Carolyn Jackson-Brown, Leigh Purves

Leeds Trinity University, Leeds, United Kingdom

### **Abstract**

The future of journalism education requires a global perspective that prepares students to work in an increasingly interconnected world. One way to achieve this goal is through global virtual collaborations, as described in the upcoming book "Going Global: Case Studies in Virtual Exchange for Journalism and Communication." This edited collection will be providing a guide for academics and instructors in the field of communications and journalism to develop and produce virtual collaborations with students in other countries.

At this conference we will offer examples of how virtual collaborations can work, as well as discuss the inclusivity of such projects, how technology has improved, and what students gain from the experience. Drawing on interviews with students, graduates, university instructors, and professionals, our paper will offer multiple viewpoints on how virtual collaborations can be developed and implemented successfully.

Universities have a unique opportunity to provide students with the chance to work collaboratively with peers from other cultures and backgrounds, providing a valuable learning experience that may not be available in other settings. Virtual collaborations offer an opportunity to work and learn from each other on an equal footing, which is especially valuable in the field of journalism where diverse perspectives and global awareness are essential.

This paper will discuss the importance of global virtual collaborations in journalism education and provide an overview of the case studies in our upcoming book "Going Global." It will explore the benefits of virtual collaborations for journalism students, including opportunities to build cross-cultural communication skills and gain experience working in a global environment. The paper will also examine the challenges of developing and implementing virtual collaborations and offer strategies for success. Overall, this paper will provide insights into how virtual collaborations can be used to prepare journalism students for a rapidly changing and increasingly globalized world

# **Rethinking Social Media Affordances and Online Reaction to News Coverage: A Case Study of the Death of Mahsa Amini and Iranian Protests**

Lindsey E Blumell, Sanam Mahoozi, [Rana Arafat](#)

City, University of London, London, United Kingdom

## **Abstract**

The Future of Journalism 2023 Conference

Theme: The role of social media in shaping audience responses to journalism and news consumption

## **Rethinking Social Media Affordances and Online Reaction to News Coverage: A Case Study of the Death of Mahsa Amini and Iranian Protests**

### Abstract

Understanding how audiences engage with news is a longstanding but ever evolving function of journalism (Coddington et al., 2021; Madianou, 2009). One important part of audience engagement is the role of social media in shaping public discourse on news events. Monitoring and participating in social media news discussions are increasingly routinized norms of news consumption (Coduto & Anderson, 2021; Oeldorf-Hirsch & Srinivasan, 2022) as an act of online community building (Schwaiger et al., 2022) and opinion expression (Yoo et al., 2017). This can have both positive and negative effects as social media reactions can foster public participation (Borg et al. 2021). On the other hand, experimental research shows comments can influence the audience's hostile media perceptions (Gearhart et al., 2021), and social bots heighten partisan narratives (Duan et al., 2022).

One important area of focus is the interplay between news media coverage and social media reactions in shaping recent protests—given the often marginalization of protesters and backlash by those in power (Harlow et al., 2020; Harlow & Kilgo, 2021; Ismail et al., 2019). Furthermore, the proliferation of new platforms like TikTok has shown the importance of the medium in shaping news message and audience reactions during protests (Literat et al., 2022).

This study focuses on the public discourse via comments on the news coverage of the tragic death of Mahsa Amini (Anglesey, 2022) and the subsequent Iranian protests across YouTube, TikTok, Facebook, and Twitter. The study first adopts content analysis of the audience's comments to identify and categorize the main communicated messages in response to the news coverage of Iranian protests. In a second step, the paper employs digital ethnography to examine how the affordances (Lievrouw, 2014) of each social media platform contribute to shaping the message in the audience's comments.

# **Crisis journalism as a pawn in the disinformation war? An automated content analysis of news media coverage on the Russian Invasion and its discussion in counterpublics**

Svenja Boberg, Johanna Klapproth, Thorsten Quandt

University of Muenster, Muenster, Germany

## **Abstract**

After two years of COVID-19 crisis, the Russian attack on Ukraine has been shaking the world since February 2022 and keeping the newsrooms in „crisis mode“. Even though journalism has established practices in handling unclear news situations (Nord & Strömbäck, 2006), this war presents a new quality due to quasi-live broadcasting of the attacks via social media and (des)information that is difficult to verify. So typical crisis reporting news values like sensationalism, personalization and negativity could fuel the spread of even more confusion. In this context, counterpublic social media channels serve as a breeding ground for misleading information, adapting their counter-hegemonic standpoint to the latest crisis. Even if these counterpublics feature their own alternative news outlets (Zehring & Domahidi, 2023), they only function in relation to the mainstream, which serves both distinction and credibility purposes. In this study we investigate which are the *predominant patterns of mainstream news media covering the Russian invasion* and how are these *patterns referenced in counterpublic Telegram channels*.

We rely on an analysis of 59,399 Facebook posts covering the Russian invasion by 71 German news media between February and August 2022. Combining structural topic modeling (k=20) with time series analysis, we identify different patterns of crisis coverage which are matched with messages that reference mainstream news media articles (N=7043) in 103 counterpublic Telegram channels. The media attention peaked with breaking news and reports of solidarity. While constantly decreasing, the coverage then turned to background articles and debates, focusing on domestic challenges. Counterpublic telegram channels mostly referenced emotional opinion pieces or clickbait content that was reframed to support the alternative agenda. Our study shows that while there is nuanced crisis coverage, oversimplified and emotionalized mainstream content is used by counterpublics to create a credible impression and to agitate against opposite views.



## Seasonal Journalism and Climate Change

Henrik Bodker

Aarhus University, Aarhus, Denmark

### Abstract

While journalism research has paid attention to various temporal aspects connected with the production, circulation and consumption of news, there has been little attention to aspects of seasonality. This paper develops the notion of seasonal journalism to call attention to broader aspects of cyclicity of journalism and, more specifically, to illuminate incremental changes in journalistic language linked to climate change. This is an overdue shift away from political and science journalism and towards areas of journalism, e.g. service and lifestyle content on gardening or cooking, that are largely repeated at certain times of the year; and which in addition often is related to everyday experiences of many readers.

Until now, most research on climate change journalism has focused on knowledge transfer as a mainly cognitive issue taking place within political and science journalism. This is linked to the notion of a 'knowledge deficit' and the argument that if complex scientific knowledge is translated appropriately, it will lead to significant changes (e.g. in behaviour and/or political engagement). While this is increasingly questioned, such an approach also overlooks what Callison (2014) calls a climate-change vernacular linked to everyday experiences.

Studying types of content here conceptualised as seasonal journalism over time offers insights into how experiences of the weather are expressed in relation to larger concerns as in a piece in the lifestyle section of the Danish national *Berlingske* addressing the meaning of seasonal fluctuations in the unusually warm winter of 2007 or a more recent article in *The Observer* headlined "Autumn has arrived in the UK — but the season is not like it used to be". In sum, this paper offers a new conceptual framework for studying journalism and climate change as well as offers some preliminary results from a longitudinal study of Danish online news from 1996 to the present.

# The Suburban News Desert: How the Media Punishes Marginalized Communities with Crime Coverage

Scott A Brinton, Mario A Murillo, Aashish Kumar

Hofstra University, Hempstead, USA

## Abstract

The rapid decline of news ecosystems across the United States has led to increased distrust of the media, a deterioration in civic dialogue and growing media misrepresentation of marginalized communities. With the continued loss of newspapers dating back to the mid-2000s, research into news deserts has focused primarily on communities that have lost their local papers, notably in rural and urban areas. Rarely, if ever, has news deserts research examined a suburban region flush with media outlets, and little to no attention has been paid to the Black and Brown communities within such an area.

This study aimed to determine whether one can live in a densely populated suburban community covered by a range of media outlets — from large-circulation daily newspapers to regional TV and radio stations and mom-and-pop community papers — and still find oneself living in a news desert, with one's daily information needs unmet. For the six Black and Brown communities included in this study, all located in Nassau County, N.Y., that is undoubtedly the case, despite the presence locally of more than 40 daily and weekly newspapers, four regional TV news stations and two regional radio news stations.

For this mixed-methods study, leaders from 21 community organizations based in the six neighborhoods were surveyed and interviewed, along with a dozen journalists from media outlets purporting to cover these areas. A news audit of 13 media outlets was then undertaken, examining and coding all 460 stories published or broadcast about the six communities from January to June 2022. Except for two small community weeklies, crime dominated the coverage, with issues such as immigration, healthcare and LGBTQ rights comprising a tiny fraction of stories produced, confirming the media misrepresentation that most CBO leaders argued had permeated the news for decades.

# News Sharing and Partisanship: Tracking News Outlet Repertoires on Twitter over Time

Axel Bruns<sup>1</sup>, Felix Münch<sup>2</sup>, Ehsan Dehghan<sup>1</sup>, Laura Vodden<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Digital Media Research Centre, Queensland University of Technology, Brisbane, Australia. <sup>2</sup>Leibniz-Institute for Media Research | Hans-Bredow-Institut, Hamburg, Germany

## Abstract

There are substantial concerns that democratic societies are becoming more polarised: recent surveys in Germany and Australia, for example, have found that self-reported and perceived polarisation are both on the rise (Roose, 2021; Cameron & McAllister, 2019). This paper complements such survey evidence by investigating the impact that such growing polarisation may have on everyday patterns of news engagement, and in particular, on news sharing via social media.

The additional effort required to craft a social media post that includes the URL of a news article, usually along with a brief comment on its contents, implies greater communicative engagement than the mere act of reading or watching a news item (Bruns, 2018). We further distinguish this active news sharing, where users initiate the process by creating a new post, from the less demanding practice of news on-sharing, where they merely repost (e.g. retweet) another user's post sharing an article link.

Using two large longitudinal datasets of all posts on Twitter that linked to any major German and Australian news sites, covering the period of 2016 to 2021, we identify all accounts that either shared such links in original, new tweets (news sharing), or retweeted existing tweets containing such links (news on-sharing). After removing low-activity and institutional accounts (e.g. those of the news outlets themselves), for user accounts in both groups we determine their news outlet repertoire: the range of outlets whose content they are willing to share.

Drawing on existing data on the relative positioning of outlets on the political spectrum in each country (e.g. Park et al., 2021), we investigate whether the repertoires of different partisan groups are becoming more ideologically distinct over time, and whether this is true both for active news sharing and more casual news on-sharing. Surprisingly, early results of this analysis show that heavy sharers of mainstream news content appear to have a less diverse news repertoire than those who frequently share highly partisan outlets: the latter often also share mainstream news, but along with critical rather than supportive commentary.

# Discouraging News Consumption: News Avoidance Cultivation as a Threat to Journalism

Matt Carlson

University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, USA

## Abstract

A key contribution of the ongoing audience turn in journalism studies has been increased attention to the phenomenon of “news avoidance” to understand the motivations, justifications, and strategies of avoiders. To push this literature further, the proposed paper seeks to expand the focus outward from micro-level actions to macro-level forces. The crux of the argument is that news avoidance is not only an aggregated bottom-up phenomenon, but also a top-down phenomenon driven by elite political and alternative media actors who actively discourage news consumption as a means of partisan gain.

This study proposes the concept of the “news avoidance cultivation” to describe purposive discursive efforts to discredit news reporting. It brings together the literatures on news avoidance and press criticism, utilizing the conceptual framework of metajournalistic discourse to situate public statements about news and journalism. While not assuming that all news avoidance can be linked to news avoidance cultivation, the concept helps reveal how political elites and alternative media actors situate journalists as active political actors rather than passive external actors to the political processes they cover. Such accusations connect to anti-elite populist discourse visible in many places in the world.

Empirically, this study focuses on how rightwing political and media actors strategize to cultivate news avoidance through persistent claims of a foundational elite and/or partisan media bias that corrupts news reporting, as well as other structural efforts to exclude reporters (e.g. prohibiting reporter access or circumventing news channels through digital media). Such discourse and actions urge the avoidance of the so-called “mainstream media” while supporting a rightwing news ecosystem that includes both legacy media formats and digital outlets. In keeping with the “Journalism in troubled times” theme, implications for journalism and democratic functioning will be examined.

# **Open-sourced reporting in a warzone: Mapping the relationship between citizen journalism, professional journalism, and open-source intelligence in Ukraine and beyond**

Keegan S Clements-Houser, Linda C Steiner

University of Maryland, College Park, College Park, USA

## **Abstract**

Citizen journalism and citizen witnessing have played essential roles in conflict journalism throughout history. However, the importance of the technologically empowered citizen observer within modern conflict zones has been brought into especially sharp relief by events such as the Arab Spring, the Syrian civil war, and more recently, the first and second Russian invasions of Ukraine. In particular, the usage of social media, metadata, geotagging, live video streaming, and other citizen-produced media to generate open-source intelligence (OSINT) used by private and state actors alike in these conflicts demonstrate a newly emerging dimension to conflict coverage. While explicitly linking OSINT to conflict journalism is a relatively nascent development in the literature, in this paper we argue that considering this connection is essential to understanding the future of conflict journalism. We do this in two ways. First, we examine exemplars of this new, technologically driven fusion of intelligence and journalism such as Bellingcat, a Netherlands-based hybrid citizen-professional investigative journalism project that describes itself as “an intelligence agency for the people.” Second, we examine the news contributions of citizens living in Ukraine, Syria, and other conflict zones, either produced and published independently or published in collaboration with established media groups such as Bellingcat. This examination takes the form of both content analyses and, when feasible, semi-structured interviews with individuals involved in the production of OSINT-driven conflict journalism. We then conclude by arguing that, despite the precipitous decline of empirical scholarship on citizen journalism over the past ten years, the topic remains highly salient in a world where smartphone-equipped citizens often stand at the forefront of documenting conflicts.

# **When content is king but the battle for the castle has been lost: The moral crisis in digital news distribution**

Sherine P Conyers

University of Leeds, Leeds, United Kingdom

## **Abstract**

Who is responsible for whether news lives or dies in the digital space? Writing great stories is no longer enough in digital production – if the work is invisible, so too are the important messages and values it may contain.

This paper will address an important problem facing legacy media amid increasing digital complexity and dwindling funds – how to distribute quality news.

Through newsroom ethnography and interviews from Australia, this research explores the intersections between media workers, metrics, and platforms and observes the accommodations made by legacy news institutions under digital pressure. I observed how complex feedback metrics were understood and interpreted by news workers in real time, and how these metric meanings shaped outputs.

Following on from the newsroom ethnographies of Anderson (2010; 2013), Christin, (2020) and Petre, (2015; 2021), while drawing upon the conceptual work of authors such as Latour (2005), Mumford (1934), Ong (1982), Waisbord (2013) and Coddington (2015), I argue that journalism's moral imperative – its authentic value – is in its ambition to improve community life and life quality, while metrics are firmly embedded in notions of economic and financial quantity. Thus, the bombardment of analytics in digital newsrooms results in two distinct forms of news production: authentic acts of journalistic discovery which are morally motivated; and manufactured acts of metric confirmation, where media workers produce content specifically to serve and service algorithmic recommenders, metric feedback systems and key performance benchmarks. The latter has a distinct purpose – to inflate metrics where a deeper investment in relevant journalism may not deliver the numbers that keep bosses at bay.

The case studies highlighted in this work reveal a deep structural problem that creates pressure for journalists to perform business functions ahead of journalistic ambitions, and shows how the interpretation of metric meanings obfuscate journalistic goals, ideals, values and outcomes.

# Six Uses of Generative AI in the Newsroom: Mapping Journalist's Perceptions of Perils and Possibilities of Generative AI-Tools

Hannes Cools

University of Amsterdam, Amsterdam, Netherlands

## **Abstract**

This study delves into journalists' perspectives on the perils and possibilities of using generative AI-tools like ChatGPT, Bard, and DALL-E in the newsroom. Through in-depth qualitative interviews with 20 journalists in Belgium, The Netherlands and Denmark, it was discovered that journalists have identified six key uses of generative AI, including content creation, data visualization, fact-checking, personalization, storytelling, and process automation. While journalists appreciate the advantages of these tools, such as improved efficiency and data handling capabilities, they also voice concerns about the potential for harm to journalism's accuracy and credibility, as well as ethical considerations like algorithm bias. The study further emphasizes the necessity of providing journalists with sufficient education and algorithmic literacy in using generative AI tools, as well as the significance of ongoing monitoring and assessment to guarantee their ethical usage in journalism.

Keywords: Computational Journalism; Digital Media; Generative AI; Newsroom Innovation.

# **The drama of journalism: the benefits and pitfalls of combining journalists and actors to produce live performance.**

Glenda Cooper<sup>1</sup>, Catherine Adams<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>City University of London, London, United Kingdom. <sup>2</sup>Nottingham Trent University, Nottingham, United Kingdom

## **Abstract**

As part of the emerging practice of 'live journalism' in several countries worldwide, the authors experimented with a new format of putting news on stage – a News Cabaret show, involving actors and theatrical and comic techniques.

The 'live journalism' field of study is flourishing at a time of political polarisation, social fragmentation and continuing mistrust in journalism (Fletcher 2020); it aims to reconnect audiences and rebuild trust around news organisations through interactive events in a public space, as part of the 'experience economy', (Pine and Gilmore, 2011).

This paper explores the effect on the (in-person) audience of some challenging themes and stories told through this format.

The show consisted of eight pieces based on previously unpublished pieces of journalism and included verbatim theatre techniques, stand-up comedy, sketches, monologues, songs, masks and improvisation. Discussions between cast, crew and audience took place during and after the show. We adopted a Reflective Practitioner Case Study (RCPs) approach (Peters, 2020), analysing surveys, recordings, observations and interviews.

Our research suggests that using theatrical devices to deliver content did not detract from quality journalism. Indeed, there were some unexpected positive outcomes from mixing journalists and actors, such as creative collaboration, teamwork and performance skills brought by actors. The audience reported that the event challenged them to think, and prompted some action, albeit limited.

We argue that such events could be useful to revitalise journalism practice, challenge social and political norms and re-engage hard-to-reach audiences. We also identified a new theoretical development. In place of the traditional 'actor to audience' dynamic, Brecht (1948) identified a triangle between actor, character and audience, with the actor working in and out of role. Our model adds a fourth part - the journalist, who can either speak directly to the audience, or through an actor or character, to potentially bring about change.



## **How young people experience news on TikTok. Understanding how news organizations can stand out on TikTok with valuable journalism and be meaningful to young audiences.**

Irene Costera Meijer, Kenza Lamot, Tim Groot Kormelink

Vrije Universiteit, Amsterdam, Netherlands

### **Abstract**

Title:

How young people experience news on TikTok. Understanding how news organizations can stand out on TikTok with valuable journalism and be meaningful to young audiences.

Abstract:

TikTok is one of the fastest-growing news sources for 18 to 24-year-olds: it reached around 40% of this age group in 2022, with 15% explicitly saying they used it for news (Newman et al., 2022). It is not surprising, then, that news media have migrated to TikTok to engage with younger audiences. Yet, research shows that news media struggle with reaching young people, because conventional news formats do not always correspond with how young people use and experience social media platforms (Klopfenstein Frei et al., 2022). Himm-Kadakas and Ferrer-Conill (2022) have argued that newsrooms would benefit from a platform-specific content approach: beyond merely (re)“packaging” the news and neglecting the content, they must learn to “speak the code of TikTok” to engage young audiences with their news. First aim of this paper is therefore to explore what that “code” implies: How do young people use and experience TikTok and what role does news play in this? Where most research is production-centered (Vázquez-Herrero et al., 2022) or takes a uses and gratifications approach (Bucknell Bossen & Kottasz, 2020), we take the experiences of young news users as point of departure (Costera Meijer & Groot Kormelink, 2021). Over the course of February and March 2023, we will conduct 90 in-depth interviews with adolescents (ages 16-24). The interviews comprise creative methods including WhatsApp diary (Kümpel, 2022), think-aloud protocols, ranking exercises, and the graphical reconstructing of their own “media day” (Örnebring & Hellekant Rowe, 2022). Ultimately, we hope this project will aid professional news organizations to better understand how they can stand out on TikTok with valuable journalism and be meaningful to young audiences.

# The costs and benefits of Twitter's impact on the institutional values and practices of news journalism

Chrysi Dagoula

University of Nottingham, Nottingham, United Kingdom

## Abstract

Ever since Twitter shifted from being a channel for banal chatter to carrying the news the platform has had a significant impact on news journalism. While this influence is widely accepted both by the scholarly community and news media actors, there is no agreement on the nature of its impact. A systematic and theoretically coherent review of the related academic literature carried out in this study reveals two dominant views in this regard: first, Twitter is seen as enabling news journalism, and second, Twitter is seen as distorting news journalism. Further subdivisions of these views acknowledge Twitter as benefiting news journalism by being an ambient news environment and a 'global village'; and recognise Twitter as devaluing news journalism by adding on journalists' professional pressures, by underpinning information disorder, and by coarsening of political and civil discourse.

To understand the nature and extent of Twitter's influence on news journalism, this study uses evolutionary theory conceived in terms of a process of punctuated equilibrium. Drawing from evolutionary biology and social policy, punctuated equilibrium is considered as the optimal to comprehend the changes Twitter brought, both at an institutional and at a behavioural level. Essentially, this study uses punctuated equilibrium to highlight an evolutionary pattern which when applied to news journalism reveals both the direct and indirect costs and benefits to the changing practices of news journalism.

Ultimately, to respond to the question whether Twitter disrupted the institution of news journalism to produce new practices and forms of news journalism, and therefore altered the core of news journalism practice, the study relies on an empirical account of punctuated equilibrium through: a) an evolutionary account (longitudinal research) of prolific news journalists' use of Twitter over the period 2009-2021 and b) a qualitative study (research interviews) with news journalists that offers their insights about their use of Twitter.

# The Philanthrocapitalism of Google News Initiative in Africa, Latin America, and the Middle East – Empirical Reflections

Mathias-Felipe de-Lima-Santos<sup>1</sup>, Lucia Mesquita<sup>2</sup>, Allen Munoriyarwa<sup>3</sup>, Adeola Abdulateef Elega<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>University of Amsterdam, Amsterdam, Netherlands. <sup>2</sup>Dublin City University, Dublin, Ireland.

<sup>3</sup>University of Johannesburg, Johannesburg, South Africa. <sup>4</sup>Nile University of Nigeria, Abuja, Nigeria

## Abstract

In the Global South, philanthropic foundations have a primary role in funding the news media sector, becoming its primary source. Recently, big tech companies have invested in a healthier relationship with news media. For example, Google launched the Google News Initiative (GNI) to provide support for the creation of quality journalism and technological innovations in newsroom operations. The GNI has expanded worldwide with over US\$300 million in funds. Through an analysis of the platform-dependent journalism industry, our study explores the GNI as a catalyst of journalism innovation in newsrooms, promoting new forms of philanthrocapitalism. We conducted twenty-six in-depth interviews with beneficiary news organizations in Africa, Latam, and the Middle East. The study seeks to: (i) critically discuss how the GNI Innovative Challenge program pushes technological innovation in journalism to create “sustainable” business models; (ii) ascertain the existence of pathways of sustainability in these programs, and (iii) discuss how these projects create a dependency syndrome. To this end, the article poses two specific research questions: (i) What characterizes the relationships between platforms and news media organizations? and (ii) In what ways are news media organizations increasingly dependent on the technology and finances of these platforms? Our findings suggest that GNI promotes an extension of philanthrocapitalism, where private wealth is used to advance the public good. GNI provides direct funding from Google to news organizations, bypassing intermediary institutions, and expects them to solve their financial sustainability problem by adopting emerging technological innovation quickly. However, the lack of knowledgeable IT personnel and high costs to hire these professionals have made organizations rely on third-party organizations to develop these projects, leading to a dependency syndrome and hampering the continuity of these projects. The study highlights the challenges news organizations face in these selected regions and the power and cultural dynamics embedded in deploying these projects that create a dependency on tech platforms.

## **Inside the propaganda training ground - how a new generation of Russian journalists is being educated for Moscow's information war.**

Kate dePury

Moscow Bureau Chief for European Broadcasting Union, Geneva, Switzerland

### **Abstract**

As Moscow's military forces stall in Ukraine, the only thing going well for the Kremlin is its propaganda machine. A patriotic narrative pushed by state TV and bolstered by censorship laws produces popular support for Putin's war. Reports of Russian casualties are kept out of the news and families of soldiers killed take to telegram calling for revenge against Kyiv rather than questioning the war.

Inside the propaganda machine there is little vocal opposition though privately, seasoned journalists voice doubts and some have resigned. Serving Moscow's imperial ambitions is the priority in Russia where a new generation of journalism students is being taught 'editorial standards' of God, Tsar and the Fatherland, pushing Putin's idea of a sacred war.

With profound historical resonance, this channels huge sacrifices ordinary Russians made in World War II and could be called upon to make again. Journalism courses are opening across Russia; it's a popular degree subject, a career path with prospects. Many graduates will work for state media, some in the local TV stations in Russian-occupied territories in east Ukraine.

I gained rare access inside a Moscow journalism school, attending lectures and speaking to students, to see how Russia's young journalists are being educated. From year one, lessons in orthodox Christianity and reworked Russian history teach the rhetoric for the part they will play in an 'information war.'

## **Intimate podcasting in Switzerland: evolving patterns of sourcing and expertise in journalism**

Cécile Détraz

Université de Neuchâtel, Académie du journalisme et des médias, Neuchâtel, Switzerland

### **Abstract**

Podcasts about personal accounts (intimate podcasts) are gaining popularity while podcasts in general is considered to have entered a golden age (Spinelli et Dan, 2019). However, the narrow focus on the number of their popularity over the last decade has overshadowed our understanding of how they have created new modes of expression and new ways of engaging conversation and creating meaning (Llinares et al., 2018 ; Spinelli et Dan, 2019).

While research has extensively examined the relationship between journalists and their institutional sources, “ordinary” or “citizen” sources – widely used in intimate podcasting – have received little attention.

In this research, I explore how journalists and ordinary sources interact and negotiate control over the story being told, at the different stages of the news production. Focused on podcasts making in French-speaking Switzerland, it reveals evolving techniques of sourcing as well as changing perceptions of journalistic roles.

This study is based on 18 semi-structured in-depth interviews (10 with journalists and 8 with sources) and the content analysis of 8 podcast episodes. In the preliminary results, podcasting appears to be a way for journalist to (1) mobilize “ordinary” sources that they are more reluctant to use in other formats and, (2) treat their sources’ discourse differently than in more traditional media offering “hard news”, for example by offering them more space and accepting their version of the story rather than by fact-checking or challenging every word they say.

Furthermore, the journalist-source relationship seems to be a negotiation between two different kinds of expertise: the sources are experts in the sense of their experiences (Flichy, 2010; Sennett, 2009) while journalists master the narrative codes. Journalists therefore place themselves more as facilitators of the story in front of their sources, who want the freedom to tell their story "in their own words".

## **Following the critical AI beat: European journalists covering AI errors and algorithmic profiling**

Philip Di Salvo

Universität St. Gallen, St. Gallen, Switzerland

### **Abstract**

Media and journalism play a fundamental part in channeling and shaping societal discussions around AI and algorithms and journalists are fundamental players in this field. This is particularly important when it comes to the coverage of the negative outcomes of AI-led technologies or algorithms profiling humans. While issues around AI biases and algorithmic profiling are increasingly becoming central in the journalistic coverage of these technologies in recent years (Ouchchy et al., 2020; Barassi et al., 2022), research about the backgrounds and rationales of the journalists covering these topics is still limited. This paper aims to fill this gap by focusing on journalists who covered issues related to AI innovation, ethics and algorithmic injustice. The paper is the result of 35 qualitative interviews with reporters based in Europe. It questions how journalists conceptualize issues of AI errors and algorithmic profiling while investigating their backgrounds, human stories and their views about the future of human-AI relationships and how they may affect human agency and the functioning of democracy. Overall, the paper contributes to the understanding of the role and responsibilities of journalism within debates about the social implications of AI. It does so by highlighting the perspectives of journalists themselves, and by analyzing which elements and nuances of these topics are on top of journalists' agendas and how they get to influence their coverage.

# Challenges facing the Podcast journalism in Vietnam

ANH DINH - HONG

University of the Arts London, London, United Kingdom

## Abstract

Podcast journalism in Vietnam has gained popularity in recent years as newsrooms seek new methods of content distribution, due to their belief in the audience's desire for audio content. Many news organizations have invested in podcast production with the aim of diversifying their journalistic content, reaching wider audiences, and connecting with them in a more personal way. The list of news organizations involved in podcast production is growing and includes Nhan Dan, VietnamPlus, Vnexpress, Zing, Voice of Vietnam (VOV), Dan Viet, Lao Dong, among others. Despite its growing popularity, this industry is still in its early stages of development and faces several challenges. This research, based on document analysis and in-depth interviews with 30 podcast journalists and experts conducted in 2022, investigates the challenges faced by news organizations and their podcast teams in Vietnam. Results show that there are four main challenges: (1) A lack of investment in content creation and production, and limitations in infrastructure and resources, limit the quality and diversity of available content. "Newsrooms still consider investments in podcast projects as experiments, so resources allocated to them are not enough to produce high-quality content that the public will notice. Podcasts produced by newsrooms are currently just derivatives of their main traditional products" (Ha Trang, 2022); (2) Limited monetization opportunities as newsrooms must convince traditional advertising partners of changing customer habits; (3) "In case the teams do not have a powerful CMS to build a podcast toolkit directly on their news websites, using audio platforms such as Spotify, SoundCloud, or Apple Podcasts is free or cheap but there is a risk of compromise or loss"; (4) Traditional radio stations may hesitate to enter the podcast market due to a fear of stepping outside their comfort zone (Kim Loan, 2022). This study contributes an important voice from the Global South that is considerably lacking in the current literature on this topic.

Keywords: Podcast journalism, Challenges in podcasting, Vietnam, Podcast production

# Defining responsible AI in journalism: Reporters' perceptions on automated decision-making and algorithmic bias

Tomas Dodds<sup>1</sup>, Astrid Vandendaele<sup>1</sup>, Mathias-Felipe de-Lima-Santos<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Leiden University, Leiden, Netherlands. <sup>2</sup>

## Abstract

The popularisation of artificial intelligence (AI) technologies inside newsrooms is presenting new ethical challenges for journalists (Mikalef et al., 2022). AI-based technologies are not only impacting organizational and professional values in journalism (Bastian et al., 2021; Diakopoulos, 2019), but they are also forcing a re-examination of both ethical and legal guidelines for artificial intelligence in mass communication (Calo, 2015; Gunkel, 2012; Guzman & Lewis, 2020).

As the debates on how these new normative frameworks for media should look rage on, recent initiatives, like the European Media Freedom Act, have called for news organizations to draft standards for the responsible use of AI in journalism.

In this article, we examine how the use of new AI-based technologies –such as recommender systems or automated insights– are impacting the professionalization of journalistic values and professional identities and how in turn, this phenomenon impacts reporters' perceptions of automated decision-making (van Drunen, 2021) and audiences' surveillance (Carlson, 2006, 2018). We consider these two concepts as a proxy to explain reporters' levels of support and understanding of responsible AI in journalism in their newsrooms.

This study draws from interviews with reporters, editors, and other media workers at the newsrooms of the Dutch newspaper de Volkskrant and the public broadcasting organization NPO. Conducting research in these two newsrooms allows us to understand how the introduction of AI-based technologies is reconfiguring conceptions of responsibility vis-à-vis the audience and the reconfiguration of professional identities in a multistakeholder system.

Our conclusions carry important implications as we discuss how journalists in these two Dutch newsrooms experience the introduction of AI-based technologies into their routines and the effects that these technologies have on reporters' perception of trustworthiness and privacy expectations toward AI technologies and the way it reconfigures its relationship with the audience. The results that we present in this article could inform both media professionals and policymakers seeking to establish a regulatory framework for artificial intelligence in media that not only takes into consideration legal and ethical dilemmas but also reporters' own ethical and professional values when defining how to promote responsible AI in newsrooms.



# Self-censorship in Journalism Education: the impacts of Bolsonaroism and social surveillance in Brazil

Ivana Ebel<sup>1</sup>, Janara Nicoletti<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Edinburgh Napier University, Edinburgh, United Kingdom. <sup>2</sup>objETHOS/Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina, Florianopolis, Brazil

## Abstract

Since his election in 2018, Jair Bolsonaro's populist right-wing government made numerous encroachments on democracy and human rights. Despite his defeat in the 2022 Brazilian general election, the ascension of the leftist former president Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva to power does not represent the end of far-right influence, as it still pressures different sectors of society. The rise of conservative ideology represented a slide towards authoritarianism and the erosion of civil liberties, threatening freedom of expression (Garcia, 2019; Hatzikidi, 2021). Bolsonaro was considered the main aggressor of journalists (RSF, 2021) promoting different types of attacks (Nicoletti et al., 2021) and delegitimisation of media, impacting journalism education (Mendes et al., 2020).

This research shows how the sharp rise of authoritarianism affected journalism education during Bolsonaro's regimen. An online survey with 260 journalism lecturers from different Brazilian universities identified elements of self-censorship by exploring the risks and violence faced by Brazilian journalism educators on a daily basis, the main aggressors, sources of censorship, its formats, and consequences. It also revealed that social media has been used as a surveillance mechanism, creating a Foulcauldian environment in which central debates (that are part of the basic journalism curricula) became impaired by fear of digital attacks and offline punishment.

Overall, the study captured how the deterioration of democracy under Bolsonaro affected educators and their students, mainly through social media surveillance and digital attacks. Results show that three out of every four participants practised self-censorship to avoid being attacked. In addition, largely due to polarisation, one out of three suffered violence or harassment from a fellow colleague within the department, and 43.79% said that they have already been threatened or intimidated by students because of the content of their lectures. 18.64% of them suffered some type of delegitimisation on social media. "I omit my opinions on social media because I fear I will be punished".

# Unequal from the start? The socialization of US teens into repertoires of news consumption

Stephanie Edgerly

Northwestern University, Evanston, USA

## Abstract

This study uses a repertoire approach to uncover the different ways that teenagers combine (or don't) multiple sources of news to create an overall news diet (Hasebrink & Domeyer, 2012; Peters & Schrøder, 2018). A consistent finding among repertoires studies is that some people consume little to no news across a wide array of media options (e.g., "news avoiders" or "news minimalists"), while others consume a lot of news across a wide array of media options (e.g., "news junkies" or "news omnivores") (Edgerly, 2015; Geers, 2020; Ksiazek et al., 2010; Picone & Vandenplas, 2022). These findings, especially within a U.S. context, exemplify a fragmented media system where increases in media choice result in polarized *amounts* of news consumption (Prior, 2007; Nechushtai, 2018).

At the same time, these habits are not a given, but learned from one's social environment. Socialization research points to the period of adolescence as a fertile time where individuals develop the set of values and habits they carry into adulthood (Niemi & Jennings, 1991). As such, this study takes a closer look at three primary 'agents of socialization': 1) news-based school curriculum, 2) parental news habits, and 3) peer news norms. The following research questions will be addressed:

**RQ1:** To what extent are youth repertoires of news consumption polarized?

**RQ2:** Which socialization factors (classroom, parents, peers) are related to youth consuming **(a)** a lot of news, and **(b)** very little news?

Data from this study comes from a nationally representative survey of teenagers (ages 13-17) in the U.S. (n=1500). The commercial survey company NORC will field the survey in February/ March of 2023. The results will be discussed in terms of growing the future news audience and the role played by news, education, and community organizations.

# **Affront, Affirm, Affect, Aggrieve: A typology of functions within counter-journalistic metadiscourses**

Scott A Eldridge II

Centre for Media and Journalism Studies, University of Groningen, Groningen, Netherlands

## **Abstract**

Consider this quote from a rightwing US news site, *PJ Media*:

“Not only do *they* not know *you*, *they* don’t know *anybody* who knows *you*.”

“They” do not know “you”. A near-perfect distillation of the societal fragmentation of our current epoch. In this case, it also reflects a fragmented journalistic field. “They” are the mainstream media, and the implication (in contrast) is that *PJ Media* does, in fact, know you. And they know people who know you, *affirming* that you belong to their public.

*Affirm* is one of four discursive functions, alongside *Affect*, *Affront*, and *Aggrieve*, that emerged from a computer-assisted textual analysis of ten years of metajournalistic discourses found within US and UK alternative digital news media. These are presented in this paper as a typology, reflecting how politically, culturally, and ideologically polarized digital media engage in discursive double work: First, they define themselves as counter-journalistic, elevating their position on the journalistic periphery in contrast to the journalistic core; Second, they address their audience as a counter-public under threat from ideological opponents, something that is apparent on the left and the right (Eldridge, 2022; Warner, 2002).

This expands our understanding metajournalistic discourses as public facing conversations about, within, and directed towards journalism (Carlson, 2016). It also addresses a gap in our understanding of metajournalistic discourses within peripheral journalistic media (Eldridge, 2021). Within democracies, this typology reflects how alternative media can contribute to a more-or-less pluralistic journalistic field and more-or-less pluralist democratic societies (Frischlich et al., 2023; Ihlebæk et al. 2022)

In its conclusions, however, this paper cautions that as contestations embedded within alternative metajournalistic discourses move from difference-making at the level of professional ideology towards difference-making at the level of identity and culture, they reframe journalistic differences as animosities between intrinsic enemies, thereby hampering possible democratic pluralistic opportunities.

# How has the relationship between community ties and interest in local news changed in the period 1995-2022?

Eiri Elvestad

University of South-Eastern Noorway, Horten, Norway

## **Abstract**

Although research on local journalism, new forms of digital local journalism and what it means to be local in a globalized and networked society, has increased the last decade, few recent studies have investigated the relationship between community ties and interest in local news. There are even fewer who have studied this over time. By using data from a survey conducted in Norway by TNS-Gallup/Kantar in 1995, 2005/6, 2012, 2017 and 2022, we will investigate this relation over time. These data also allow us to contribute to the field of research with a better understanding of how social characteristics such as gender, age, education and income interact with community ties and interest in local news over time.

Against this background, the purpose of this paper is to investigate the changing relationship between local community ties and interest in news on different levels (local, national and internal) over time. Among other things, and not surprisingly, we find a positive correlation between community ties and interest in local news. However, these linkages are not the same or of equal strength over time across social groups. In this paper we will discuss the implications of these findings' for local journalism, local democracy, and for local societies where people still live most of their lives.

## Relevance of automated journalism and estimations of future journalists

Victoria Ertelthaler, Cornelia Wallner

LMU, Munich, Germany

### Abstract

The increasing prevalence of automation processes in journalism, (Graefe 2016, Beckett 2019; Caswell; Dörr 2018, Thurman et al., 2019,) changes requirements regarding journalistic legitimacy, role, and professionalism (Boyles & Meisinger, 2020; Carlson, 2018), and journalistic routines. This especially applies for prospective journalists – they shape the future of journalism (Schmitz Weiss et al., 2020) and their perception reveals parts of the journalistic role discourse (Broersma & Singer, 2021). Artificial Intelligence (AI) in journalism is characterized as highly relevant and by a pragmatically supportive narrative (Köstler & Ossewaarde, 2022, Brennen et al., 2022, Sun et al., 2020, Cools et al., 2022). The support and extension by AI are evident (Moran & Shaikh, 2022), and technical knowledge is a strategy for future journalists to overcome career hurdles (Pereira, 2022). However, technology remains a source of pessimism (Williams et al., 2018), as some future journalists strive for traditional practices in journalism, apart from innovations (Broersma & Singer, 2021). Not yet investigated is the question of subjective relevance perception of new algorithmic applications as well as of changing routines, role models, and normative standards by prospective journalists. Therefore, this study aims to reveal (RQ1) how prospective journalists envision the future use of AI in journalism; (RQ2) how relevant they consider automated journalism for the future; and (RQ3) how they perceive themselves to be subjectively affected in terms of journalistic routines and role models.

We apply a quantitative survey among prospective journalists in institutionalized journalism training in Germany, theoretically placed in the context of socio-technical imaginaries (Jasanoff, 2015; Jasanoff, 2004). For explaining relevance ratings, we draw on The Influence of Presumed Influence (Gunther & Storey, 2003), Optimistic bias (Weinstein, 1980), and Confirmation bias (Ross et al., 1977). In Cardiff, we will present key findings for the first time.

# The worst time to be a journalist in Lebanon: Implications of a decreasing sense of security on journalists' role perceptions

Sally Farhat<sup>1</sup>, Linda Steiner<sup>1</sup>, Jad Melki<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>University of Maryland, College Park, USA. <sup>2</sup>Lebanese American University, Beirut, Lebanon

## Abstract

Over the six years of former President Michel Aoun's term, more than 800 violations of press and cultural freedoms were reported and Lebanon's ranking on the Press Freedom Index dramatic decreased, from 98th in 2016 to 130th out of 180 countries in 2022. The period saw threats to the mental and physical security of Lebanese journalists, i.e., the questioning and detaining of journalists, armed attacks with live bullets and assassinations. Lebanon's economic crisis led to chaos and, in turn, the deteriorating quality of the news, a mass exodus of journalists, weakened independence of media institutions, and a decrease in overall security.

While Lebanon's media system was long considered the freest in the Arab world, recent violations and the implications of the economic crisis for Lebanese journalists and media institutions raise significant concerns about the future of Lebanese news media. The limited research on the influence of intense political developments on journalists' role conception suggests that journalists' perception of their role tends to change during crises. Accordingly, we will examine the implications of the threats against journalists and the overall perception of security, on Lebanese journalists' role conception and perception of their jobs. Our primary focus is journalists' perceptions of their economic, emotional, and physical security.

We will recruit journalists using personal connections and interview them by zoom. We will compare Lebanese journalists working for Lebanese outlets to those working for non-Lebanese/"foreign"/"international," whether in Lebanon or outside (in the Gulf region and in Western countries). This will contribute to the limited literature on journalists' role conception during unrest and explain journalists' perception of their security. We will use expectancy violation theory and social identity theory.

## **The news conveyor belt. Intensities of automation and data micro-processes in Nordic newsrooms**

Raul Ferrer-Conill<sup>1</sup>, Carina Tenor<sup>2</sup>, Carl Chineme Okafor<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>University of Stavanger, Stavanger, Norway. <sup>2</sup>Karlstad University, Karlstad, Sweden

### **Abstract**

Computational journalism research has predominantly focused on machine-generated content (van Dalen, 2012) by looking at audience perceptions (Clerwall, 2014), ethical challenges (Dörr & Hollnbuchner, 2017), and the current fascination with AI (Broussard, et al., 2019). However, for most news organizations, the use of data and automation of newswork are embedded in daily journalism practices, far from fully automated content.

This study examines how journalists in Sweden and Norway interact with automation and data while creating news and how they perceive it is affecting their daily work. We understand the automation of news production as a continuum in which smaller processes are increasingly driven by data power and in which journalists intervene in various degrees. Theoretically, we draw from Anderson's (2013) outline of a sociology of computational and algorithmic journalism, Borden's (2007) conceptualization of journalism as practice, and Czarniawska's (2011) notion of cyberfactories. We argue for addressing the trend of automating news production as a way to rationalize the relationship between news organizations, newswriters, and technological innovation.

This qualitative study draws from a multi-sited ethnography and newsroom observations in six news organizations in Sweden and Norway, followed by a set of in-depth interviews with journalists from both Scandinavian countries.

Our preliminary results show that journalists increasingly rely on a multitude of data micro-processes that shape their daily tasks. The intensities of automation and data use differ considerably among newsrooms. While newswriters recognize automation as a simplification of their work, they perceive the evolution of the journalistic profession as akin to that of a factory worker. Their sense of professionalism decreases as the creation process is increasingly encapsulated in preformatted algorithmic tasks.

This paper contributes scholarship on computational journalism by studying how different intensities of automation may lead journalists to perceive their work and practice as another step in the news conveyor belt.

# Exploring Organisational Response to Dark Participation: Corporate Responsibility and Online Safety for Journalists.

Kelly Fincham

University of Galway, Galway, Ireland

## Abstract

The increased frequency of dark participation around journalism has resulted in a significant rise in hate speech, trolling and attacks against journalists online, particularly women, people of colour, members of the LGBTQ+ community, and individuals with disabilities. Current research indicates that journalists should “have a glass of wine”; take protective measures such as blocking, muting and reporting, or demonstrate other forms of individual resilience. This paper turns attention away from such reliance on individual resilience to explore the organisational response to dark participation in an effort to understand the protections available for journalists within news organisations. Focusing on corporate responsibility, this paper considers the institutional logics which may help shape the relationship between news organisations and their employee stakeholders. To do so this paper employs a qualitative content analysis of 13 international social media policies (SMPs) in Western media markets to explore the influence of institutional logics on corporate responsibility. Previous research has explored SMPs to determine how news organisations understand their journalists’ activity on social media but this paper instead considers how news organisations understand their journalists working conditions within these new occupational spaces. Safeguarding employees’ working conditions is considered a crucial part of a company’s corporate responsibility and this paper analyses prevailing procedures within news organisations to explore what is fast becoming a pressing issue of occupational safety as distinct from workplace safety. The paper considers the news organisations’ corporate responsibility towards their employees and explores the institutional logics that can influence whether or not news organisations consider their employees as merely means to a strategic end or as ends in themselves. The aim of this paper is to compare and critically analyse social media procedures to better understand what changes, if any, are needed within news organisations to address issues of online safety for journalists.



# Examining the Role of Journalism Educators in Solving the News Desert Crisis

Teri Finneman<sup>1</sup>, Meg Heckman<sup>2</sup>, Stephen Wolgast<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>University of Kansas, Lawrence, USA. <sup>2</sup>Northeastern University, Boston, USA

## Abstract

Finding solutions to the “systemic market failure” (Olsen et al., 2020, p. 673) of the journalism industry is increasingly urgent as news deserts expand. The most recent U.S. State of Local News report found 20 percent of the nation’s population either lives in a news desert or in an area at risk of becoming one (Abernathy, 2022). By one prediction, “one-third of American newspapers that existed roughly two decades ago will be out of business by 2025” (Sullivan, 2022, para. 4). The loss of local news is also having a “profound” impact (Nielsen 2015, 2) from the United Kingdom to Brazil to the Philippines to Australia (Mayhew 2019; da Silva and Pimenta 2020; Bautista 2020; Public Interest Journalism Initiative 2021). Cardiff University’s Centre for Community Journalism notes the news crisis “has in many ways been felt most acutely at the local level.”

This study seeks to better understand a newer phenomenon — the role that universities can play in addressing the news desert crisis. The U.S.-based Center for Community News estimates millions of Americans now receive local news from student journalists that is produced as part of their classwork or news labs at over 100 universities (Watts, 2023). Finneman, Heckman & Walck (2022) found student-run community newspapers are not only a potential solution for addressing news deserts but also for reimagining the conceptual and practical roles of student journalists. Similarly, Salahi and Smith (2021) explored the opportunities and challenges of what have been referred to as news-academic partnerships. Through semi-structured, in-depth interviews with three dozen journalism educators in Europe, Australia, and North America, this study will examine how journalism educators view their role in addressing the local news crisis and socializing the next generation of journalists to care about the long-term sustainability of local news.

# Understanding audience expectations of journalism in troubled times

Julie Firmstone<sup>1</sup>, John Steel<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>University of Leeds, Leeds, United Kingdom. <sup>2</sup>University of Derby, Derby, United Kingdom

## Abstract

Pervasive low levels of trust in journalism suggest that the news media and journalism are failing to meet audience expectations. Yet we know very little about what audiences expect from journalism, what audiences think about how journalism performs, and even less about the connection between expectations, evaluations of performance and trust. Finding ways to understand the audience-journalist relationship is increasingly important in the context of today's changing media ecology - fragmented audiences, the rise in mis and disinformation, metrics driven understandings of audiences, and a proliferation of new actors and outlets, all of which challenge the credibility and professional status of journalism. If we want to consider ways in which journalists and news organisations can act to repair the fundamental relationship between them and their audiences, there is a need to engage the public.

This paper takes a constructivist approach, deriving an understanding of trust by asking audiences how they expect news publications and journalists to perform and exploring the perceived discrepancies between expectation and performance (Coleman et al., 2012). We propose that as individuals and as groups, public understanding and expectations of standards in journalism will vary because "attitudes, opinions, and values are powerfully shaped by our past histories, our group memberships, and by our context-dependent experience of the given moment" (Bergman, 1998: 82). We analyse responses collected in a nationally representative survey of over 3000 members of the UK public to develop a nuanced understanding of variations in expectations and evaluations of performance that explores socio demographics, levels of use, and levels of political engagement. The study contributes to the 'audience turn' in journalism studies by focusing on understanding news from the perspective of audiences (Loosen and Schmidt, 2016, Costera Meijer, 2020).

## Trust in News Falls as Social Media Grows and Television Declines: Longitudinal Data from 46 Countries

Richard Fletcher<sup>1</sup>, Simge Andi<sup>2</sup>, Sumitra Badrinathan<sup>3</sup>, Kirsten Eddy<sup>1</sup>, Antonis Kalogeropoulos<sup>4</sup>, Camila Mont'Alverne<sup>1</sup>, Craig T Robertson<sup>1</sup>, Amy Ross Arguedas<sup>1</sup>, Anne Schulz<sup>5</sup>, Benjamin Toff<sup>1</sup>, Rasmus Kleis Nielsen<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>University of Oxford, Oxford, United Kingdom. <sup>2</sup>University of Exeter, Exeter, United Kingdom.

<sup>3</sup>American University, Washington DC, USA. <sup>4</sup>University of Liverpool, Liverpool, United Kingdom.

<sup>5</sup>University of Zurich, Zurich, Switzerland

### Abstract

Across the world, platforms that offer personalized content have become increasingly important parts of how people access news, as the importance of broadcast television, radio, and printed newspapers has stagnated or declined (Newman et al., 2022).

At the same time, trust in news has fallen in many countries (Hanitzsch et al., 2017), with obvious consequences for the extent to which people can be informed by the news media.

But are recent changes to trust and media use linked? Does the move from direct discovery to an increased reliance on distributed discovery itself influence levels of trust in news?

Many journalists, editors, and publishers certainly think so (Arguedas et al., 2022). In this paper, we use online survey data collected from 2015 to 2021 across 46 countries (N=485,000) to investigate whether they are right.

We find that they are.

By using random effects within-between (REWB) analysis find that (i) there has been a small overall decline in trust in news since 2015 in the countries covered (with very different patterns in different countries), and (ii) that—while there is some limited evidence of differences by media system—differences are much better explained by changes in news media use. Specifically, within-country declines in television news use over time—and parallel increases in social media news use—are significantly associated with declines in trust in news.

Thus, while many other factors—including interpersonal trust, trust in institutions, and political factors such as polarization and elite cues may also influence trust (Hanitzsch et al., 2017; Ladd, 2012; Strömbäck et al., 2020)—the rise of social media as a way of accessing news seems to have contributed to current declines.

## Networked journalism: the rise of European Journalism partnerships

Elvira García de Torres<sup>1</sup>, David Parra Valcarce<sup>2</sup>, Concha Edo Bolós<sup>2</sup>, Lyudmyla Yezers'ka<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Universidad CEU Cardenal Herrera/CEU Universities, Valencia, Spain. <sup>2</sup>Universidad Complutense de Madrid, Madrid, Spain. <sup>3</sup>Universidad de Piura, Piura, Peru

### Abstract

The Panama Papers case unveiled in 2016 more than eleven million files, but also shed light on collaboration, a disruptive trend in the media industry (Carson & Farhal 2018; Konieczna & Graves, 2020; Sambrook 2018; Author, 2016; Authors, 2017). Two years later, Danah Boyd stressed, at the ONA Awards, the importance of "coming up with new ways of taking the news industry into a non-competitive approach" (Bryant, 2018: p4).

Media collaboration has important antecedents in the creation of AP (1848), the World War I media coalition or the Pentagon papers in the 70s. But the systematic joint production of projects began in the 1960s with The Arizona Project (Konow-Lund 2022). In the past decade, the frequency and scope have accelerated, albeit unevenly. Cross-border investigative journalism has a long tradition in Europe and especially Latin America: collaboration addresses the weakness of small newsrooms and increases their visibility and protection (Alfter, 2019; Heft, 2021, Deméneck, 2016). "Cablegate" - the Wikileaks collaboration with The New York Times, The Guardian, Le Monde, El País and Der Spiegel - heralded an era of networked journalism in Europe (Hindman & Thomas, 2013; Becket, 2011). Collaboration has also produced outstanding results in solutions journalism and digital storytelling within the US (Porter & Shapiro, 2022), but research has not developed accordingly.

Our paper aims to deepen the knowledge of European collaborative practices. In order to do so 20 interviews were carried out with leading partners of seven journalism consortia "Cross-Border Local", "Stars4media NEWS", "Pix.T for News & Photojournalism", "The Circle", "European excellence exchange in journalism (E3J)", "European Focus" and "Media Innovation Europe" (RQ1. What are the opportunities and challenges for the European media sector?). Outputs outlined on the official websites (training, pitching, news reporting and innovation) were analyzed to identify their impact on the European journalism ecosystem (RQ2).

# **Social media, trust and news consumption: comparative analysis of France, United Kingdom and Spain**

Livia García-Faroldi, Laura Teruel-Rodríguez

University of Málaga, Málaga, Spain

## **Abstract**

Disinformation is one of the most urgent threats facing contemporary in Europe (Bechmann, 2020). This paper analyzes the audiences of three countries, France, the United Kingdom and Spain, with different media systems (Hallin and Mancini, 2003), using data from national representative samples obtained from the 2022 Digital News Report (Reuters Institute) in order to determine the relationship between the interest on media information and the risk of being affected by informative disorders.

We analyze the association between interest in news and the degree of concern about fake news; between interest in news and the use of social networks for informational purposes (Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, WhatsApp, Telegram, Facebook and TikTok); and between the use of these networks and the probability of finding false news.

Findings show several significant associations: those who are interested in the news are more concerned about its veracity, while it is more likely that those who are not interested in them do not use social networks for informational purposes and have not found false news. Finally, Spain stands out as the country where there is a stronger positive correlation between the use of the networks and the probability of finding false news and between interest in the news and the use of the networks, with the United Kingdom being at the opposite extreme.

These results are part of a broader reflection on how during the pandemic period citizens trusted more traditional media than social platforms to get information throughout Europe, but with national differences (Adam, S. et al., 2022).

# Teaching Investigative Journalism in a Transnational University in China

Diana Garrisi<sup>1</sup>, Jiahui Huang<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Cardiff University, Cardiff, United Kingdom. <sup>2</sup>Columbia University, New York, USA

## Abstract

This paper documents, through participatory observation, the first-hand experience of leading a course of investigative journalism in a transnational university in China, between 2018 and 2022. The course was delivered in an educational context that, ideally, aims to transcend national boundaries through combining notions of Western liberalism with Chinese values.

In the past five years, China has been a convergence point between the escalation of the trade war with the US; a pandemic-driven global health crisis, which incremented state control and intervention in the life of individual citizens worldwide; the Hong Kong protests, and the always tense relationship with Taiwan. In a setting that would require maximum media scrutiny, investigative journalism can hardly be practiced. *Reporters without Borders* denounced an intensification of government repression in China against journalism, specifying the methods and the policies implemented to restrict freedom of both expression and of access to information ('The Great Leap' 2021). Notwithstanding that the Western notion of investigative journalism challenges and contradicts the Chinese party-state ideology (Wang and Lee 2014), this study will explain what made its teaching possible as a form of creative intellectual inquiry; as a critical exploration of different human values (axiology); as a character-building experience; and as a set of transferable skills, including cognitive, social, and emotional.

Drawing on Jovchelovitch's (2007) principle of knowledge in context and on Freire's dialogical method, which he outlined in the *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970), this paper will discuss delivery, syllabus, and assessment of a Level 4 BA module of investigative journalism. It will show which forms investigative journalism training can take, beyond the classic paradigm, to promote diversity and inclusion, and to recognize the complexities of the environment from which learners derive their needs.

## What is journalism? Young adults' folk theories

. Diego Garusi<sup>1</sup>, Sergio Splendore<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>University of Vienna, Vienna, Austria. <sup>2</sup>Univeristy of Milan, Milan, Italy

### Abstract

Drawing from the concept of “folk theories”, this research explores how Italian young adults make sense of the information around them. Folk theories of journalism are “actually existing popular beliefs about what journalism is, what it does, and what it ought to do” (Nielsen, 2016, p. 840) that shape (dis)engagement with news media (Palmer, Toff & Nielsen, 2020).

The research consists of two steps. First, we interviewed a balanced sample of 40 Italian young adults (18-22 years old) to identify their folk theories. Then, we conducted a survey of a representative sample of the Italian population with an oversample of 800 young adults. In this study, we focus on this latter population to investigate the distribution of young adults' folk theories and their correlates.

Qualitative results highlight that young adults' folk theories are articulated on five layers: ontological (what journalism is), procedural (how journalism works), epistemological (what journalistic reality is), ethical (what good journalism is), and relational (how journalism should interact with the audience). Their discursive constructions differentiate journalism from journalists.

The quantitative analysis shows that young adults share mainly two fundamental epistemological positions: objectivism and empiricism (Hanitzsch, 2007). These epistemological stances are related to the belief that only journalists can convey relevant information.

However, the quantitative analysis also shows that interviewees are skeptical about journalists being able to be objective, echoing literature about journalistic authority and legitimization (Carlson, 2017); they also think that journalists are more interested in personal gain than anything else. Those folk theories are negatively associated with perceived political efficacy and trust in journalists.

Grasping how journalism and journalists are considered by younger generations is a stepping stone to understanding (the future of) journalistic epistemic authority (Abbott, 1988).

## How can regulation help news publishers earn public trust?

Hamish Gibson, Lexie Kirkconnell-Kawana

Impress, London, United Kingdom

### Abstract

Studies regularly show that confidence in journalism in the UK is far lower than it should be, for it to deliver on its public interest watchdog function. The Impress News Literacy Report, based on ESRC-funded research undertaken by the Universities of Leeds and Derby, shows that less than 50% of the public trust the news media and an even lower figure of 39% trust journalists. News literacy levels are low, with the public confused about how the news industry works, even though they believe passionately in the roles and functions of journalism, its contribution to society, and they want to become better informed about how it operates. Rebuilding the relationship between the news media, its practitioners and the public is key if journalism is to differentiate itself from the myriad of information and entertainment choices online and to act as a vehicle for meaningful democratic engagement.

Drawing from these findings, we want to explore the role that regulation can play in strengthening these relationships. We will consider how news literacy efforts can engage the public with news journalism processes, and how those working within a well-regulated ethical standards framework are well placed to deliver this. Sustaining quality journalism, and protecting the role it plays in society, requires strong community relationships built on trust, transparency, and accountability. Our research shows that effective regulation and higher news literacy can help realise this ambition, with positive effects on news media trust and confidence among all demographics.

Key questions:

- o What role does news literacy play in supporting public engagement with high quality journalism?
- o What is the relationship between journalism and democratic community engagement?
- o How can regulation contribute to rebuilding sustainable audience-journalist relationships?
- o How can publishers and journalists promote news literacy, and how can this benefit the sector as a whole?



## Navalny as an Interloper? Hybrid journalistic projects in contemporary autocratic Russia

Sofya Glazunova<sup>1</sup>, Aljosha Karim Schapals<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>University of Melbourne, Melbourne, Australia. <sup>2</sup>Queensland University of Technology, Brisbane, Australia

### Abstract

February 2023 has marked two years since the imprisonment of Russian opposition activist Alexey Navalny, known as a major contestant to the Russian establishment. He was regularly trying to be elected but also organised the largest mass anti-establishment and anti-corruption protests in Russia in the 2010s. Deprived of access and coverage in the Russian mainstream media, Navalny and his associates established their own media channels, including personal YouTube channels and online media outlets such as Navalny LIVE to avoid censorship and expose the corruption of high-ranking officials in Russia and their abuse of power.

However, at the same time, Navalny and his colleagues cannot be labelled as ‘journalists’ in a normative sense. They were not professional journalists (instead, mostly lawyers) and have not gone through the processes of journalistic socialisation, but rather “tried on” journalistic roles and investigative journalism practices to expose corrupt elites (Glazunova, 2022). Using the weight of journalistic evidence and investigative journalism methods in their viral YouTube documentaries, they tried to advocate for great political changes in Russia – especially in establishment circles – but at the same time gain political capital and recruit supporters for their political causes using populist rhetoric. In this sense, Navalny and his team could be called (explicit) interlopers (Eldridge, 2019) who are mimicking journalistic identities and force “a reconsideration of what journalists are and journalism is” (Holton & Belair-Gagnon, 2018). Hybrid journalistic projects such as Navalny’s, which also involve elements of advocacy (Glazunova 2022), helped inform Russian society about pressing political issues in their country and call people to action.

In this paper, we look at the case of Navalny and his investigative documentaries on YouTube in the late 2010s and early 2020s. We relate his practice to the journalistic concept of (explicit) interlopers and analyse how his unique and hybrid journalistic project has diversified a largely monopolised and authoritarian public sphere in Russia. With Russia’s war on Ukraine, the future of such media outlets has taken on a renewed sense of urgency. To date, Navalny is imprisoned, his movement is disintegrated, and independent and critical media outlets are shut down, recognised as ‘foreign agents’ or ‘undesirable organisations’. However, the case of Navalny’s media and journalistic practice can serve as a demonstrative and inspiring example of the bottom-up resistance to authoritarianism in Russia and across the world.

# Deepfake applications for journalism: A technology at the crossroads of rejection and acceptance

Alexander Godulla, Christian P. Hoffmann, Daniel Seibert, Hannah Lea Ötting

Leipzig University, Leipzig, Germany

## Abstract

Deepfakes are but one results of the latest advances in artificial intelligence (AI) and increasingly challenge the audiences' perception of whether an audio or video recording is real or fake (Mattke, 2018). Although today, deepfakes often lack quality to deceive the public, they have the potential to threaten journalism (Gutsche, 2019) and the democratic discourse (Citron & Chesney, 2018) – especially with the advancement of the technology.

While to date, research on deepfakes is driven by computer science and law (Authors, 2021), only few empirical studies in the social sciences have addressed the phenomenon focusing predominantly on the audiences' perceptive (e.g., Ternovski et al., 2022; Vaccari & Chadwick, 2020) and little is known about journalists' understanding of deepfakes as well as constructive deepfake applications in journalism (Authors, 2021). Therefore, this study explores *to what extent deepfakes threaten journalistic practice and how opportunities offered by deepfake applications can be utilized in journalism*.

Between October 2022 and February 2023 qualitative interviews with 20 journalists and experts were conducted. Sampling was based on an analysis of journalists working at established German media outlets covering deepfakes and the media outlets' editorial staff and technology experts whose thematic expertise includes an engagement with technological innovation.

Results show that the journalists and journalism experts frequently mention associated threats of deepfakes for journalism such as disinformation, more complex fact-checking processes, data protection issues (digital voices/faces), the media-recipient relationship and the deviation from journalistic norms (transparency, informing versus entertaining). Further, opportunities of deepfakes are discussed considering the creation, editing, internationalization, automation, and personalization of content (visualizations; error corrections; face anonymization; translation; easy language; automated reporting; storytelling). Based on these results, we can draw conclusions for future research and practice in journalism, especially with regard to the appropriate handling of deepfakes.

# Google as Journalist's Automated Research Assistant? The Impact of Algorithmically-Driven Search Results in Journalistic Information Gathering Routines

Nele Goutier<sup>1</sup>, Yael de Haan<sup>1</sup>, Sanne Kruikemeijer<sup>2</sup>, Sophie Lecheler<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Hogeschool Utrecht, Utrecht, Netherlands. <sup>2</sup>Wageningen University, Wageningen, Netherlands.

<sup>3</sup>Vienna University, Vienna, Austria

## Abstract

Search engines such as Google provide journalists with a vast amount of resources (Tylor, 2015). Scholars have raised concerns about the possible consequences for journalistic source selection and verification (Caplan and boyd, 2018). This study attempts to understand the extent to which the use of search engines affects the journalistic source selection.

We conducted an experimental mixed design, in which we directly observe the causal relationship between the use of search engines and journalistic information gathering (Epstein & Robertson, 2015). We recruited sixty journalists from seven different newsrooms (national and regional) in the Netherlands to participate in this lab-experiment. The participants were asked to examine the background of a specific expert for three minutes to evaluate if they would be a suitable source. While doing this, the journalists were exposed to one of the three conditions, determining the order of their search results.

Specifically, journalists are exposed to one of these conditions:

- (1) Google search results with mostly established media sources on the first two pages;
- (2) Google search results with mostly other sources than established media on the first two pages;
- (3) the original Google search results.

We chose to focus our manipulation on established media sources, as we know from previous research that journalists rely heavily on these sources (Lecheler & Kruikemeier, 2016).

The results show that journalists are steered by Google in the first two steps of their research: they stick to the first page of search results and click on whatever is offered to them there. The way the journalists evaluate the proposed expert was not influenced in this particular case. But the found lack of algorithmic knowledge and consciousness (de Haan et al., 2022) requires our attention, as the role of algorithms in information gathering processes will continue to increase.

# **An Additional Layer of Understanding? The Impact of Interactive Immersive Journalism on Information Processing**

Hannah Greber<sup>1</sup>, Dr. Sophie Lecheler<sup>1</sup>, Loes Aaldering<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>University of Vienna, Vienna, Austria. <sup>2</sup>Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, Amsterdam, Netherlands

## **Abstract**

Immersive Journalism (IJ) has been widely lauded for its ability to add a ‘deeper layer of understanding’ to the news. However, previous studies have shown that individuals have a harder time recalling information in the form of facts after an IJ experience (Barreda-Angeles et al., 2020), while the experience of VR is known to be remembered by users as if it happened to them in real life (i.e. episodic memory (Plancher et al., 2013)). In addition, interactive IJ has been associated with eliciting a fragmented, subjective understanding and, consequently, less accurate evaluation of the news while simultaneously – and paradoxically - being perceived by the audience as more accurate (Aitamurto, 2019).

To evaluate IJ's role in informing citizens in democracy (Strömbäck, 2005), we argue that we need to go beyond previous studies on factual recall of IJ and consider 1) the subjective first-person nature of the experience of IJ and, consequently, the form of information being recalled and 2) whether interactive IJ results in a highly fragmented understanding of the news. To do so, this study focuses on interactive IJ and the resulting sense of agency and presence. In a pre-registered experiment (n=150), the effect of three differently interactive IJ versions of ‘Hanan’s Story’, a production about the experience of a Syrian refugee, on main takeaways, factual recall, perceived knowledge increase, episodic memory, autobiographic memory, and credibility are evaluated.

Preliminary results indicate a detrimental impact of IJ on the democratic function of journalism to inform citizens. While there was no difference in factual recall between the different IJ productions, more interactive media resulted in a stronger perceived knowledge gain, leading to a gap between actual knowledge gain and perceived knowledge gain, also known as knowledge illusion.

# **Drone surveillance in contested airspace: Journalism, propaganda, and warfare**

Astrid Gynnild

University of Bergen, Bergen, Norway

## **Abstract**

This paper provides grounded theorizing on the democratic implications of drone surveillance in contested airspace on the European continent. More specifically, on clashes involving airborne journalism, policing, as well as drone warfare. While the European U-space system was put on hold due to the covid crisis, the Russian attack on Ukraine took the application of drone technologies to new and unexpected levels. Already during the covid pandemic, the implementation of drone no-fly-zones, orchestrated by the police, made protests and other forms of civic unrest increasingly difficult to cover. The ideas of Europe as an innovative hub for drone experimentation in a well-regulated lower airspace were postponed, while Ukraine became the new testbed for Iranian kamikaze-drones and other airborne cruelties. The unexpected Russian attacks prompted war reporters to find new solutions to drone coverage dilemmas in the warzones, in parallel with troll fabrics disseminating propaganda and fake news with the same tools. This conceptual study, based on news stories on drone warfare and its implications from February 2022 on, suggests and exemplifies how the unintended consequences of drone experimentation on the European continent might become just as important to investigate as doing investigative reporting with the drones.

## **The informed citizen in local communities: A user-centered study on how citizens use and value local journalism.**

Yael de Haan<sup>1</sup>, [Rijk van den Broek](#)<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>University of Groningen, Groningen, Netherlands. <sup>2</sup>University of Applied Sciences Utrecht, Utrecht, Netherlands

### **Abstract**

Much research on local media has focused on the business of local journalism, including new opportunities for local business models, the advent of new forms of local journalism such as hyperlocals (Van Kerkhoven & Bakker, 2014) and the possibilities of news organization to collaborate to maximize their resources (Jenkins & Graves, 2019). However, despite the concerns about the declines and something disappearance of local journalism, local news audiences have so far gained little academic attention (Costera Meijer, 2020). Yet, to revive local journalism in a disruptive market, a more fundamental question needs to be asked: how are people informed about what's happening in their community? What is news to them? And what role does local journalism play herein?

In this study, we take a user-centered approach to understand how people are informed about the place where they live. Hereby we position our study in the growing literature on the immediate and lived experience of news use (i.e. Boczkowski et al., 2021; Groot Kormelink & Costera Meijer, 2019). We take a bottom-up approach to have the audience define what local news or information is to them. We selected eight municipalities in the Netherlands, ranging in the population of the municipality and the number of local media offered. For each municipality, we conducted two focus groups with citizens actively involved in the place they live, for example, through voluntary work. Prior to the focus groups, we asked the participants to take pictures of information sources that were relevant to them.

Preliminary results of 16 focus groups with 100 participants show that people use a colored palette of information sources. While local journalistic outlets are found to be trustworthy, citizens value other information just as important, such as closed social media groups. While this increases the social cohesion among citizens, it questions the trustworthiness of the information.

## **The need for fact-checking in times of war: *Global fact-checking collaboration with regard to “forgotten” news & facts in the Global South using AI-based techniques: Theoretical outline and Case Study***

Hektor Haarkötter, Filiz Kalmuk, Ariane Burg

Hochschule Bonn-Rhein-Sieg, Sankt Augustin, Germany

### **Abstract**

Stories from the Global South are often not covered in the daily news: The region is considered a blind spot and often falls victim to so-called agenda cutting. This is also shown by a closer look at the correspondent networks worldwide. In the Global South one correspondent must cover up wide areas and frequently whole countries at the same time. Often, these very areas are crisis and war zones, which brings with it a special demand for the broadest possible reporting and reliable information. It also seems that especially topics related to war and crises are not covered with the right amount of factual background. And with that, facts are simultaneously suppressed in the reporting, which are, however, constitutive for the sovereign formation of political opinion. This ultimately increases the necessity of the work of fact-checkers.

This is where the fact-checking association of “Initiative Nachrichtenaufklärung (INA) e.V. and Project Censored“ comes to play: The aim is to pursue a practical approach against the background of intermedia agenda cutting with the goal of more sustainable reporting, using the international list of Top Ten Neglected News as accompanying research. In cooperation with the research project NEBULA, funded by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research, we also pursue a scientific approach to ensure greater news diversity. NEBULA aims to program a detection application based on continuously updated knowledge graphs with a special focus on vulnerable social groups and vulnerable geographical regions. The basis for the creation of these knowledge graphs is the communication and social science processing of fake news and misinformation as well as the development of disinformation categories and fake news types and the analysis of these different types according to media channels and user groups, especially topic-specific towards the covering of crises and war. We would like to present the outlines of our theoretical work, and as a case study, we would love to introduce to you the practical working methods of our projects.

## **'We just seek this traffic gold' - Journalistic challenges for Muslim Representations in the digital age.**

Nadia Haq

Cardiff University, Cardiff, United Kingdom

### **Abstract**

Drawing on qualitative interviews with British mainstream news journalists and the secondary analysis of testimonies from the editor-in-chiefs of Britain's leading newspapers, this paper argues that stories about Muslims that amplify the fear and anxieties of audiences are seen by newspapers as social media 'traffic gold'. My research shows that many journalists and editors believe that online audiences themselves hold prejudices against Muslims that they wish to see affirmed through media coverage, reinforcing societal polarisation and hatred towards Muslim communities. This makes Muslims an easy target for a journalism that seeks to thrill, rather than inform, the masses. Meanwhile, although online news stories about Muslims do receive many negative and often virulently Islamophobic comments from audience members, there is also evidence of growing pushbacks to these negative comments. This challenges ideas about what audiences really want when it comes to stories involving Muslims, and instead points to a burgeoning public resistance towards negative (and often harmful) representations of Muslims in the media.

Journalists' experiences reflect that they often find themselves in a position of having to compromise their integrity to produce content about Muslims that wins likes and shares. At the same time, there is a strong commitment to pull back on journalistic values to differentiate themselves as trustworthy news sources in response to the increasing disinformation found online. But can journalists resist and counteract this type of dysfunctional online news production when it comes to stories about Muslims? In analysing these tensions, the paper positions the debate about Muslim representation around our understandings of the potential future role for democratic journalism in an increasingly precarious market against a background of rising disinformation, populism and polarisation.



## **Arab Journalists and the Social Media Threat**

Zahera Harb, Rana Arafat

City, University of London, London, United Kingdom

### **Abstract**

Social Media platforms, mainly Facebook and Twitter, have been hailed as agents of change in facilitating the ousting of long-standing dictators and authoritarian regimes in several Arab countries following waves of uprisings in 2011 (see Harb, 2011; Khamis & Vaughn, 2011; Khamis & Vaughn, 2014; El-Nawawy & Khamis, 2013; Brym et al., 2014; Herrera, 2014). They were identified as agents of a new public sphere, an emerging space where democratic change can be communicated and facilitated (Harb 2011). This has long gone.

Twelve years on and social media platforms have become a space for various state and non-state actors, political opponents, or even audiences to intimidate journalists and activists. Many Arab journalists are being subject to targeted disinformation campaigns generating online hate speech, harassment and sexual abuse. Threats to their own and their families' safety made many of them choose to self-censorship their reporting. Arab female journalists have become the most vulnerable. The case of Al Jazeera principal presenter, Lebanese journalist, Ghada Oueiss, investigated by the International Centre for Journalists (ICFJ) as part of their Killer Stories project and presented in a recent "big data" case study publication (Posetti, Maynard, Kaisy, Harb and Shabbir, 2023), speaks of the brutal gender-based online violence campaigns, Oueiss has been subject to as a response to her journalism. Twitter was identified as the main disseminator of such campaigns.

This paper investigates social media's impact on the daily newswork of Arab journalists across Arab countries and the Diaspora. It explores how Arab journalists assess the role of social media post Arab uprisings, the type of intimidation they experience online including trolling, violence, and/or hate speech and who are the main actors in such campaigns. The paper draws upon 40 in depth interviews with Arab journalists inside and outside the Arab region.

## **Why do we want news? Analysing news' democratic desirability during Covid-19.**

Imke Henkel, Tim Markham

Birkbeck, University of London, London, United Kingdom

### **Abstract**

Over recent years, research into the essential democratic function of journalism has predominantly focused on how and to what extent people access and engage with news in high-choice media environments (e.g. Möller et al., 2020; Stier et al., 2021). Such studies tend to be built on the implicit assumption that exposure to and engagement with news is democratically desirable. However, research rarely explores the question whether news actually are desirable for democracies? This paper aims to help fill this gap by exploring the actual rather than the ideal function of news.

As a case study, we analyse news stories (N=776) on so-called "quality" websites during the Covid-19 pandemic. Covid-19 was chosen because it not only affords a well-defined and shared focus on a common experience, but also posed a tough test for democracy's ability to respond to a crisis that appeared to require strict and freedom-infringing measures (Greer et al., 2020; Karabulut et al., 2021), thus challenging news media's role in democracies. We focus on "quality" news because they are generally perceived to present a positive model for the democratic function of news (e.g., Cushion, 2022). We compare news in the UK and Germany to assess the impact of similar yet different media systems (Henkel et al., 2019).

For our analysis, we apply a constructed Grounded Theory approach (Charmaz, 2014) to allow for new perspectives of news' function in democracies. We identify a number of emerging themes, including constructing a shared community and an imagined public; evoking reassuring normality; constructing mock conversations; creating temporal and spatial drama; imagining a better future. Furthermore, we find notable differences between news functions in the UK and Germany. Following the Grounded Theory approach, this analysis is part of an ongoing project with planned further data collection, involving interviews with journalists and audience focus groups.

# **Silence, Complicity, or Confrontation: A Comparison of Mexican and U.S. Press Coverage of Mexican Journalist Killings**

Jennifer Henrichsen, Elizabeth Chambers

Washington State University, Pullman, USA

## **Abstract**

With a culture of organized crime, criminal impunity, and precarious press freedom fueling systemic violence against journalists, Mexico consistently ranks as one of the most dangerous countries for journalists in the world. The country has experienced 151 journalist killings in the past twenty years, with a record 19 killings in 2022 alone, according to UNESCO's Observatory of Killed Journalists. News coverage is a vehicle to publicize these deaths and pressure governing bodies into taking action, but past research suggests Mexican news coverage from both state-subsidized and independent organizations is limited and often blames common crime or personal disputes for the murders instead of journalists' work, in effect ignoring the issue of systemic violence against journalists. Research on this coverage is limited, however, largely consisting of case studies of deaths in the states of Veracruz and Sinaloa between 2012 and 2017. No research has considered how U.S. news organizations cover these deaths even while they enjoy greater safety and freedom to do so. The objective of this proposed study, then, is to compare how Mexican and U.S. news organizations cover Mexican journalist deaths using the framework of metajournalistic discourse in order to explore whether this coverage revictimizes journalists through discursive violence. Using qualitative text analysis, the study will examine coverage of the 19 journalists killed in Mexico in 2022 through 114 news articles, including three Spanish-language articles from Mexico-based news outlets and three English-language articles from U.S.-based news outlets for each death. Results will reveal whether national news outlets in Mexico and the U.S. covered the journalists' deaths at all and how they did so, including any attribution of responsibility or framing of the deaths in relation to systemic issues. These results have implications for public awareness, journalistic authority and independence, and international organizations' ability to pressure national governments into action.

# The present future: On the role of pioneer journalism in establishing communicative AI

Andreas Hepp<sup>1</sup>, Wiebke Loosen<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>University Bremen, Bremen, Germany. <sup>2</sup>Leibniz Institute for Media Research, Hamburg, Germany

## Abstract

At the latest with the discussion about ChatGPT, the automation of communication has moved into a broader societal focus. This also puts emphasis on the communicative aspect of AI, which is expressed in the concept of "communicative AI" (ComAI, Guzman/Lewis 2020; Hepp et al. 2023).

On the basis of a study of pioneer journalism in Germany, we want to ask what "futures" of journalism are constructed by such "technologies" (Waltrap et al. 2023). Our argumentation is based on an extensive qualitative study: A broad mapping of actors within pioneer journalism took place, based on which we selected individual cases that were examined in depth using media ethnography (among other things with over 60 interviews).

Using this data, we will present a three-step argument. First, we will situate the use of ComAI in the overall field of pioneer journalism. In doing so, we aim to show how ComAI is being established within a transformative actor constellation, driven by pioneer communities (as the Hacks/Hacker movement), young organizations (aka "start-ups") experimenting with technologies, and so called "innovation labs" in legacy organizations. In a second step, we will discuss what futures of journalism are constructed around ComAI detail. Finally, we argue that the primary transformation that comes with ComAI is not so much the "diffusion" of technologies, but the accompanying organizational shift towards an orientation to "products" and "prototyping".

Overall, we aim to show that the automation of communication is of significance in journalism in at least a twofold sense: First, it comes with hybrid human-machine figurations of doing journalism. Second, it enables new forms of observing society based on automatically processed data. Therefore, when we talk about "automation" in journalism, we are not simply talking about changes in journalistic routines, but about automation of communication with relevance to society as a whole.

# **A new model for journalism culture in the Caribbean: The Controlled Watchdog**

Aurora K Herrera

City, University of London, London, United Kingdom

## **Abstract**

To date, there has been no study of journalism culture in Trinidad and Tobago. Therefore, this work sought to define that culture. A nine month ethnographic study was conducted to observe the journalism culture within six newsrooms focusing on three newspapers and three television stations. In addition, ninety-three in depth semi-structured interviews were conducted with journalists who worked within those newsrooms to find out how they defined their own culture. Through these methods, journalism culture came to be understood as discursive field where numerous contradictory elements struggled, ebbed and flowed, such as a journalist's intention to uphold the public interest and their simultaneous acceptance of inducements and engagement in political clientelism to make ends meet. Research findings on the impact of media laws on local journalism culture showed that editors and investigative journalists felt the chill of media laws the most. Regular journalists were either ignorant of the laws or did not care about them, relying on their editors to vet their work. These regular journalists felt the economic chill of advertisers and other financial contributors more than the legal chill, causing them to self censor their work. Through this investigation into journalism culture in Trinidad and Tobago, a new professional milieu emerged: the controlled watchdog.

# Misinformation, inequality, and hostility: How health journalists conceive of their roles amid current challenges

Amanda Hinnant<sup>1</sup>, Rachel Young<sup>2</sup>, María Len-Ríos<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>University of Missouri, Columbia, MO, USA. <sup>2</sup>University of Iowa, Iowa City, IA, USA. <sup>3</sup>University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN, USA

## Abstract

Journalists are on the front lines of what has been called an infodemic of false information and conspiracy theories, many related to health. Journalists' beliefs about the roles they serve may shape how they deal with misinformation. Although much role conception research examines political journalists as a proxy for all journalism, we contend that examining the role identities of those covering health is valuable not only because of the primacy of health issues to policy (e.g. public health, climate regulation, healthcare), but also because of the centrality of health journalism to partisan issues (e.g., gender equality, social justice, pandemic). Not only does health journalists' context include growing misinformation threatening the veracity of their work and an environment of hostility toward journalists, but also one of systemic health inequalities where their coverage can have real consequences for marginalized communities. Lastly, distinct from other journalism subject matter, health coverage is dominated by women. Therefore, this study offers survey findings from 2023 to form new health journalist role conceptions and explore the relationships among these conceptions and how journalists say they manage current challenges.

To situate this research, several studies include interviews with health journalists about role conceptions (Forsyth et al., 2012; Hinnant et al., 2016; Klemm et al., 2019; Ren & Dan, 2022), and recent articles specifically examine how the reality of misinformation shapes role conceptions (Balod & Hameleers, 2021; Vu & Saldaña, 2021). Our survey items build upon that work and also incorporate role conception research from other beat-specific studies about environmental journalists (Tandoc & Takahashi, 2013) and financial journalists (Strauß, 2019). Lastly, we have accounted for survey and content analysis studies that update original research on roles (Belair-Gagnon et al., 2020; Hanitzsch, 2011; Holton et al., 2016; Mellado & Van Dalen, 2014; Raemy et al., 2019).

## **‘When I Stepped Up’: Journalists Working Outside of Organizations to Address Their Harassers**

Avery E Holton<sup>1</sup>, Valerie Belair-Gagnon<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>University of Utah, Salt Lake City, USA. <sup>2</sup>University of Minnesota-Twin Cities, Minneapolis, USA

### **Abstract**

Journalists have long implored their news organizations to establish safety mechanisms for journalists inside of and outside of newsrooms. Women facing chronic harassment from colleagues have advocated for policy changes, supportive human resources, and the abolishment of stigmas against those who report such harassment. Journalists covering traumatic events such as war, riots, murders, and other atrocities have advocated for improved mental health resources. And more recently, journalists have amplified the need for strong mental health and well-being resources to help soften professional challenges such as increasingly hostile social media spaces. Journalism scholars have aligned some of their research with this call, urging news organizations to improve preventative and palliative measures related to the acute, chronic, and escalatory forms of harassment journalists—and especially women journalists and journalists of color—point to as forces driving them from the profession. As this study shows, though, in the absence of organizational support, some journalists may be taking drastic measures into their own hands. Interviews with women journalists indicate some journalists may be employing their own support tactics while assisting and providing public exemplars for one another. These tactics may include countermeasures against social media harassment, calling out harassers through social media, publicly sharing messages from their harassers (which may include graphic or sexual content and images), building networks of support for and with other journalists and requesting autonomy from their organizations to respond publicly to harassment. These journalists indicate some level of empowerment when facing their harassers while also expressing concern for their personal safety, the safety of their loved ones, and their mental health and well-being. This study discusses these and other precarities that news organizations should consider as they begin to develop and enact policies of support against harassment for their journalists.

## **Navigating the complexities of the war in Ukraine. Risk and resilience of Ukrainian women journalists**

Oleksandra Hrybenko

Oslo Metropolitan, Oslo, Norway

### **Abstract**

The paper will focus on the risks and challenges Ukrainian women journalists face reporting on the war in Ukraine. In-depth qualitative interviews were conducted in 2023 with 9 Ukrainian women journalists, who have been extensively reporting on the war in Ukraine before and after the Russian full-scale invasion. The journalists are based in Ukraine and work in print, online, radio and TV formats for large and small national and foreign media.

This research identifies a wide spectrum of risks they face in the field ranging from physical to psychological, digital, and economic risks, as well as risks to their families. Gendered aspects of war reporting such as sexism and gendered risks are also addressed, as well as the advantages of reporting on the war as a woman. The findings show that the precarity of their employment conditions and lack of organizational support are among the factors contributing to these risks. Moreover, the targeting of Ukrainian journalists as a party to the conflict by the Russian state, makes it impossible for them to safely report from the occupied territories due to the risk of being taken hostage.

The resources they rely upon to sustain resilience and seek physical, psychological, and financial support are identified, among which, the support from colleagues, civil society, and the army, particularly in terms of physical safety.

The conflicts that arise from the coexistence of national and professional identities of Ukrainian women journalists are also discussed, namely, how they delineate their professional and national identities and negotiate professional values in the context of a national security threat. Findings reflect that these identities manifest sources of resilience and motivation for Ukrainian women journalists to continue reporting on the war despite the risks and burnout and for the sake of justice and public service.



## Studying media criticism: an analytical model

Karoline Andrea Ihlebæk<sup>1</sup>, David K. Cheruiyot<sup>2</sup>, Tine U. Figenschou<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Oslo Metropolitan University, Oslo, Norway. <sup>2</sup>University of Groningen, Groningen, Netherlands

### Abstract

Journalism and criticism of journalism are both fundamental parts of well-functioning and informed democracies. Representing a powerful institution, it is widely acknowledged that journalism must be scrutinized and held accountable for its practices and priorities (Holt and von Krogh 2010; Krogh 2012; Stiernstedt 2014; Wyatt 2007). Historically, the normative approach to studying media criticism has widely acknowledged its implications to journalistic accountability, paradigm repair, professional autonomy and audience literacy (Carey 1974; Fengler 2003). Recent studies, however, show that media criticism today subjects journalism to a perpetual discursive struggle over its authority and societal relevance (Figenschou and Ihlebæk 2019; Carlson 2017; Cheruiyot 2022). Current forms of media criticism are omnipresent, politicized and weaponized by both democratic and non-democratic actors, often combining media criticism with cynicism (Wyatt 2007, Tsfati 2003), anti-press rhetoric (Roberts and Wahl-Jorgensen 2020), and digital hate, cancel culture, and threats (Cheruiyot 2018). This messy landscape calls for new analytical approaches to understand the boundaries, legitimacy and role of media criticism today. In this paper we discuss key dimensions of media criticism and propose a holistic analytical model that encompasses assessments of i) the socio-political/media context in which media criticism is raised (media system), ii) where it is played out (platform) iii) the discursive and normative dimensions of media criticism (content), and iv) the sender(s) and the receiver(s) position, authority, and impact (their social skills). In essence, our model to a greater degree incorporates both structure and agency to understand by whom, why and how media criticism is communicated and how it is countered in different socio-political and technological contexts.

# WhatsApp with the News: Non-Professional WhatsApp News Groups and Digital Pronewsmen in the Era of News Mobility

Jonathan Ilan

Bar-Ilan University, School of Communication, Ramat Gan, Israel

## Abstract

In a world where life has become more and more liquefied, on-the-move (Bauman, 2005), mobile devices have been playing an instrumental role. These are strongly embedded into contemporary social life and are giving rise to various forms of coordination and social networking (see Ling, 2004; Westlund, 2013; Ling and Campbell, 2011).

Mobile technology is nowadays part and parcel of the world of journalism, perhaps to the degree that it is hard to imagine news without digital mobile networks (Duffy and Westlund, 2022). In many ways, such technology impacted the platforms whereby news is being produced, distributed and consumed, but also the array of actors that are nowadays involved in its manufacturing, illustrating news as an ongoing information construction process in which professionals and other participants are joining hands (see e.g., Ilan, 2022; Cervi, Pérez Tornero & Tejedor, 2020; Belair-Gagnon and Holton, 2018; Ahva, 2017; Chadwick, 2011; Goggin, 2010).

This paper addresses such innovations in mobile news-making by focusing on non-professional WhatsApp news groups and the daily supply of materials delivered via these groups by their non-professional members – the “pronewsmen”. These materials are eventually received by traditional news organizations and often end up as news items. Based on a thematic analysis of materials in three leading Israeli non-professional WhatsApp news groups (“The people of Silence”, “Field Security” and “Reports from the Ground”), and on in-depth interviews with the groups’ founders and selected pronewsmen, this paper aims at illustrating these groups as a hybrid form between news ‘professionals’ and ‘amateur’ WhatsApp users, and their social implications, in an era that is very much characterized by the centrality of mobile media and communication infrastructures.

# Incorporating solutions journalism into local UK newsrooms: Toward a model of 'SOJO lite'?

Daniel Jackson, Antje Glück, An Nguyen

Bournemouth University, Bournemouth, United Kingdom

## Abstract

Solutions journalism (SOJO) is being increasingly practiced in newsrooms around the world (McIntyre and Gyldensted 2017), and there is now an established body of literature that evidences its positive impact on audience emotions (McIntyre 2020), engagement with the news (Meier 2018), public knowledge (Curry and Hammonds 2014) and psychological empowerment (Zhao, Jackson and Nguyen 2021).

Such research suggests that further newsroom integration of SOJO may have both commercial and public service benefits. Yet, we know much less about the conditions under which SOJO is integrated into newsroom practices, especially outside of the most well-resourced national newsrooms (Bro 2019). Nor do we know much about exactly what elements of SOJO are typically present in solutions stories.

In this project, we trained and then mentored 62 UK local journalists in solutions journalism practice, who were then tasked with producing regular solutions journalism stories over the course of one year. In this paper, we firstly content analyse the 170 stories that emerged from this project. Then in analysing and interpreting these findings, we draw on interviews with 18 local news journalists, 10 editors and 8 mentors.

Content analysis findings suggest an application of SOJO principles that falls short of most industry definitions. Interviews with journalists indicated that they saw the merits of SOJO and were keen to embed it in the newsroom. But there remain several structural impediments to such change, such as the crippling workloads and target-led culture that left little capacity for developing solutions-based stories. In advancing the literature, we outline models of SOJO that we characterise as 'SOJO lite' - that are watered-down by most definitions but are a pragmatic response to the prevailing conditions of local journalism. This offers a point of reflection for what normative and practical models of SOJO that industry and the academy wish to pursue.

# **To inform or entertain? Navigating the Tension between Integrity and Audience Engagement in Contemporary Journalism**

Carolyn Jackson-Brown

Leeds Trinity University, Leeds, United Kingdom

## **Abstract**

The modern media landscape presents a paradoxical challenge for journalists: how to maintain the integrity of their reporting while simultaneously catering to the ever-growing demand for sensational headlines and clickbait content. In an era where Netflix and Amazon produce fictionalized accounts of real-life events, it seems that journalism is being pushed to prioritize entertainment value over its core role of informing and educating the public.

Drawing on research co-created in the classroom with university undergraduates and postgraduates, this paper examines the tension between journalistic integrity and audience engagement. Through a combination of visual and lexical analysis, students have explored ways in which meanings are constructed and hidden ideologies revealed, from representations of war casualties in Ukraine to media casualties amongst recent UK Prime Ministers across a range of media outlets, with surprises from broadsheets to TikTok.

This paper argues that in order to maintain the integrity of journalism, it is important to resist the pressure to prioritize entertainment value over truthful reporting. Instead, we propose that journalists must relearn specific skills and values that have been lost or overlooked in the pursuit of audience engagement. These skills include a commitment to fact-checking and source verification, as well as an understanding of the social, political, and historical contexts that underpin their reporting.

Ultimately, this paper advocates for a renewed focus on journalistic ethics in contemporary newsrooms. By foregrounding the importance of truthful, accurate reporting, journalists can counteract the sensationalism and clickbait culture that threatens to erode public trust in the media. We believe that by equipping journalism students with the skills and values needed to produce high-quality reporting, we can help to ensure the future of journalism remains committed to its public service mandate.

## Local Journalists' Lived Experience of "The Media" Label

Joy M Jenkins, Nick Mathews, Pranaav Jadhav

University of Missouri, Columbia, USA

### Abstract

The New York Times, which serves a global audience, and The York Press, which serves the North and East Yorkshire regions in England, are different news organizations in innumerable ways. However, to many, the organizations are all part of "the media," the expansive and problematic term news consumers, practitioners and, too often, academics employ. Research has found higher levels of trust for local news organizations than national outlets (Newman et al., 2020), yet local outlets face the dual challenges of managing declining resources alongside cries of "fake news" and "lying media" (Jahng et al., 2021). This phenomenon draws smaller, local news organizations into the global crisis of credibility in news and information and threats to journalistic authority. We use in-depth interviews with journalists at local and regional news organizations in three countries — the United States, the U.K., and Germany — to explore how they describe critiques leveraged against them as "the media," their reactions to them, and their actions in response. Early findings suggest that local journalists face anger, hostility, and even threats at public, civic meetings. This disturbs, distresses, and demoralizes journalists. One tactic to address such claims is through conversation. The local journalists perceive their closeness with audiences as an advantage in fighting anti-media sentiments. Preliminary results also highlight instances in which audience members divide the small news organizations from "the media," separating them as "different" in criticisms. Journalists suggest that these comments are condescending, disrespectful, and insulting. Instead, they stress that they are part of the same industry as The New York Times. While local journalists value their distinctive editorial focus and audience relationships, they also desire to be seen as editorially robust as their larger counterparts.

## **Fighting or promoting? The role of journalists in the spread of disinformation**

Pedro Jerónimo, Luísa Torre, Aline Grupillo

University of Beira Interior, LabCom, Covilhã, Portugal

### **Abstract**

Journalists have historically built their authority and their praxis by defining their role as an essential institution that helps sustain democracy. Telling truthful stories, hearing from different sources and being objective are core principles. While journalists used to be central in the information ecosystem, mediating and organizing discourses and making sense of them (Chaparro, 2007), in social media, these premises are being disputed. Journalism loses its central role in selecting, hierarchizing and distributing information (Bentes, 2015).

In this new context, undemocratic tendencies such as disinformation emerge. False claims undermine the historical trust relationship between the media and their audiences, acting as a force for delegitimization, while journalists attempt to focus the discourse to the public perception of the media as credible disseminators of information (Carlson, 2020; Schapals & Bruns, 2022).

News production is, however, embedded in economic interests which are guided by digital metrics, and this sometimes reflects on editorial decisions, translating into sensationalism and clickbait. These contemporary trends are seen by the journalists themselves as practices that can contribute to the spread of disinformation (Farkas, 2023). But are they enemies in the fight against disinformation?

A survey applied to journalists in Portugal (n=485) as part of an ongoing project revealed that journalists see their peers as having a relevant weight on this matter: over 60% of them believe that the media have a role in spreading disinformation while almost 50% attribute this same responsibility to journalists themselves. Journalists also view sensationalism-heavy editorial lines and the unbridled search for an audience as contributing factors in the dissemination of disinformation.

On further analysis, it will be important to understand how journalists define and perceive disinformation and what factors contribute to them being disinformation disseminators. These are some questions to consider in the next phase of the study, in focus groups.

Keywords: journalists; disinformation; practices; media literacy; trust.

# The Impact of Fact-Checking. A distribution analysis of political fact-checking during the 2021 parliamentary election in Norway

Bente Kalsnes<sup>1</sup>, Steen Steensen<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Kristiania University College, Oslo, Norway. <sup>2</sup>Oslo Metropolitan University, Oslo, Norway

## Abstract

The spread of manipulated information, either done on purpose (disinformation), by mistake (misinformation) or to hurt someone (malinformation) has become a cause for serious concern around the globe (Wardle & Derakhshan, 2017). Fact-checking has been deemed one of many remedies that are needed to tackle this complex problem (European Commission, 2018). Studies suggest that political fact-checking can reduce false beliefs (Porter & Wood, 2021), have a positive influence on citizen's political beliefs (Walter et al., 2020), and improve citizens evaluations of political debates during elections (Wintersieck, 2017). However, most studies of the effectiveness of political fact-checking are based on experiments. Few studies have looked at how political fact-checks diffuse in digital media spaces and what characterises the political fact-checks that are shared and interacted with the most.

To address this gap, this paper presents a study of the digital diffusion of and engagement with political fact-checks during the Norwegian parliamentary election in 2021. The study does not only analyse distribution patterns from fact-checks embedded in editorial news media and social media engagement metrics, but also looks at correlations between different types of political-fact checks and their distribution. The study is guided by the following two research questions:

- How did political fact-checks during the Norwegian 2021 parliamentary election diffuse in digital media spaces?
- What characterises the fact-checks that were most distributed and created the most engagement?

Empirically, the study is based on analysis of the fact-checks produced by the Norwegian fact-checking organisation Faktisk during the election period and these fact-checks' distribution patterns on social media and in legacy media. Based on preliminary findings, we can state that electoral fact-checks are not widely distributed and engaged with by the general electoral audience, suggesting that the impact of political fact-checking during elections is minimal. Nevertheless, the fact-checks that achieve most diffusion on social media are typically spread by the political opponents.

# Journalists' Ideological Branding: Bridging Between Professional and Personal Branding on Twitter

Arnon S Kedem, Motti Neiger

Bar-Ilan University, Ramat-Gan, Israel

## Abstract

Journalists have a relatively new role as social media influencers. That fact compels journalism scholars to understand and evaluate how journalists perform their role on social media while leveraging and promoting their professional and personal brands (Mellado and Hermida, 2022).

Molyneux et al. (2018) suggest that journalists' tweets are essential to their brand construction. Such branding can be deconstructed into three levels: the individual (as private persons), the organizational (as part of a news organization), and the institutional (connected to the journalistic profession and its normative value). These dimensions of branding are evident in the digital era when journalists maneuver between identities on their social media accounts. The current study wishes to suggest a fourth level of branding: Ideological Branding, which bridges professional and personal branding on social media. Such branding combines journalists' biographies and ideological, political, social, economic, and religious standpoints. Thus, it bridges professional and personal journalists' roles and identities.

We integrated several research methods: in-depth interviews with ten eminent Israeli journalists active on Twitter were designed to explore how the journalists evaluate the ideological and political aspects of online activities. To complement the interviews, we used a mixed quantitative and qualitative content analysis of ten active Israeli journalists' Twitter profiles and tweets, two weeks before Israel's elections (Sep. 3-17, 2019). The coding schema was developed to identify ideological tweets (N=2758). The combined data show a strong positive correlation between journalists who include ideological content in their tweets and audience engagement manifestations. The interviewees also concurred that conservative Israeli journalists are more inclined to efficiently leverage ideological branding on Twitter to ignite online viral activity while simultaneously normalizing their narrative on mainstream media. The research conclusions illuminate how Journalists' Ideological Branding functions on social media as a new layer of journalistic branding and other branding levels.



# Crisis coverage in journalism and counterpublics: Analyzing the shift of climate change narratives in polarized news flows

Johanna Klapproth, Saïd Unger

University of Münster, Münster, Germany

## Abstract

Our planet is confronted with one of the most significant existential challenges: the destructive effects of climate change highlight the urgent need for global cooperation to develop appropriate political, social, and economical solutions. Climate activists are raising their voices worldwide to reinforce the demand for climate action. Despite scientific agreement concerning the increasing threat of climate change, the debate on climate protests and associated demands is politically polarized and emotionally charged (Cook, 2019). Counterpublic actors (Holt et al., 2019) seek to undermine the shared understanding of current and future global challenges through alternative narratives laced with disinformation and conspiracy theories (Uscinski et al., 2017). Therefore, journalistic coverage faces the challenge of framing a political and societal discourse grounded in evidence-based information to enable consensus-building within society. *Accordingly, it is a decisive question which political voices and narratives find their way into public discourses both in mainstream news media and alternative counterpublics.*

To analyze the discursive patterns along the thematization of shared narratives and integration of political positions, we compared the discussion of climate protests within German journalistic news outlets (N=33K), topic-related tweets (N=1.3M), and over 200 German counterpublic Telegram channels. We applied structural topic modeling to identify central topics and the development of the topic structure over time. To inspect the most prominent (political) actors and the contexts in which they are discussed, we conducted a Named Entity Recognition followed by a co-occurrence analysis and combined with a subsequent sentiment analysis. Preliminary results show that discourses about climate protest differ between journalistic mainstream news media and alternative counterpublics. While event-related topics are covered in a similar way, the framing of overarching narratives varies widely. Within counterpublics, the discourse is highly emotionalized and shifted by integrating extreme political opinions and populist narratives.

# Materializing (the boundaries of) creativity: Journalism and and the communicative patterns of creative teamwork

Minna Koivula<sup>1</sup>, Salla-Maaria Laaksonen<sup>2</sup>, Jukka Huhtamäki<sup>3</sup>, Kaisa Laitinen<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>University of Jyväskylä, Jyväskylä, Finland. <sup>2</sup>University of Helsinki, Helsinki, Finland. <sup>3</sup>Tampere University, Tampere, Finland

## Abstract

Creativity has remained an elusive subject in journalism studies: While it gets touted as a solution to journalism's economic troubles in media management research (e.g., Küng, 2017; Porcu, 2020), creativity has suffered from conceptual unclarity due to its abstract nature and resulting contradictory discourses in past studies (Malmelin, 2015). To approach the inherent creativity of journalism (Deuze, 2019) in a more tangible manner, we studied the Slack conversations of a partially distributed journalistic team in a Nordic regional newspaper and asked, what gets materialized in team discussions in relation to creative work. Theoretically, we adopt the lens of communicative constitution of organizations (CCO) which posits that organizations are emergent configurations that are formed and shaped in communication (Putnam et al. 2009). That is, organizations do not cause or contain communication, but rather exist as communication (Ashcraft et al., 2009). Rather than viewing creativity as an abstract trait of people or objects, we approach it as a phenomenon materializing in communication (Martine & Cooren 2016), which is a salient approach to explore creativity as it emerges in newsrooms.

We explored a dataset of over 76,000 Slack messages with a combination of computational text mining, network analysis, and qualitative inquiry to identify, first, communication episodes in the data, and, second, different entities related to creative work that are materialized across the communication episodes. Our analysis indicates that the most typical elements and entities that materialize in team discussion are not related to the creative process as such, but rather to different elements that constitute the boundaries of creativity in everyday journalistic work. We contribute to journalism research by examining the constant flow of creativity over time (the data spans over two years) with naturally occurring research data, and to the practice of journalism by providing an account of tangible, creativity-related practices.

# Teaching Cross-Border Collaboration in Journalism Education by replicating collaboration in the Panama Papers

Maria Konow-Lund

OsloMet University, Oslo, Norway

## Abstract

This paper looks at how universities and journalism schools have taught the cross-border collaboration which is now common in the international field of investigative journalism. Foundational examples such as the Panama and Paradise Papers brought together journalists from over 100 organizations and 80 countries with a huge range of cultural backgrounds and professional experiences and interests. While the data in the Panama Papers was supplied by an anonymous source, the work was managed and organized by the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists, a network for members and expert investigative reporters. Some professionals at the network have more recently contributed to the teaching of cross-border collaboration to master's students at the University of Gothenburg, the University of Leipzig and the Centre de Formation des Journalistes in Paris and Lyon. These students chose a subject to investigate and shared both sources and journalistic content amongst themselves during the work while seeking to publish individually in their respective national outlets.

The aim of this study is to use this educational experience as a case study of both the benefits and the challenges of teaching cross-border collaboration, including the use of digital technology, a joint wiki and the negotiation of cultural and linguistic differences. This study's methodology draws on field observation, field interviews, document analyses and follow-up semi-structured interviews of teachers, coordinators, group leaders, students, and the collaborative media organisations themselves. Through its findings, this study hopes to better inform journalism education in the future.

# African Journalists' Use of Social Media and Editorial Policies Informing News Reporting

Ammina Kothari<sup>1</sup>, Sally Ann Cruikshank,<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>University of Rhode Island, Kingston, USA. <sup>2</sup>Middle Tennessee State University, Murfreesboro, USA

## Abstract

The use of social media platforms is shaping and redefining news production and consumption practices. There are a variety of ways in which African journalists use social media (Bosch, 2014), such as producing interactive broadcast stories (Mabweazara and Mare, 2021) and identifying "elusive sources," such as political dissidents who are hard to reach offline (Namasinga Selnes and Orgeret, 2020). In some African newsrooms, social media platforms have been integrated into the workflow to reduce operational costs and increase audience engagement (Masele and Joseph, 2023), while others use WhatsApp and Twitter to generate story ideas and conduct meetings (Ndlovu and Sibanda, 2022). The increasing use of social media for sourcing and news distribution has also resulted in a number of African newsrooms using analytics to make editorial decisions and assess journalist performance (Moyo, Mare and Matsilele, 2020). The combination of editorial reliance on analytics for news decisions, algorithmic manipulation of social media platforms, and expansion of technology to produce deep fakes have significant implications for journalists and public trust in the media, particularly in countries with limited press freedom. In this study, we investigate how African journalists use social media tools and whether any social media policies guide their reporting and story distribution. Data were collected through Qualtrics using both purposive and snowball sampling recruitment methods. African journalists (n=141) completed all the questions in the survey. Our preliminary analysis found a significant variance in the use of social media by media roles and size and understanding of algorithms influencing social media content. The social media use policies also vary by media type, reflecting the scope of journalism and reporting resources available for reporters. Our findings provide several important implications for understanding how African newsrooms adapt to technological advances and change sourcing patterns.

# The Infrastructuring of News: Negotiating infrastructural capture and autonomy in news organisations

Lisa Merete Kristensen, Jannie M Hartley

Roskilde University, Roskilde, Denmark

## Abstract

It is no understatement that the past 15 years have seen an intensified datafication of the news industry. Most significantly, the distribution of news has experienced a radical change as the communicative system and the infrastructural conditions of distribution have moved from being operated by media companies themselves, as was the case with the printing press, or by states, such as with much of telecom and postal infrastructures (Flensburg, 2020). Today, much of the material infrastructure is owned by large technology companies, resulting in what van Dijck and her colleagues (2018) have termed 'Platform Societies'.

The reliance on externally developed technologies has triggered public and scholarly concern regarding the platforms' potential threat to ideals of journalistic autonomy and economic independence. Despite the ongoing debate, the material infrastructure of the news remains understudied. We argue that it is important to examine the material basis of journalism as it allows us to understand how new logics are entering processes of media production and distribution through the technologies implemented in the tech stack (Simon, 2022, p. 1833). Seeing the infrastructural relationship as 'spaces of negotiation' (Poell et al., 2022), the article asks: How is the autonomy and interdependencies vis a vis external technology providers negotiated in the process of implementing and developing tech systems as infrastructure for the production and distribution of news?

This research rests on a combination of interviews, fieldwork and desk research. The first analytical part presents a mapping of the backend systems of several media organisations. The second part is based on in-depth interviews with 19 European and US-based publishers and intermediaries and ethnographic observations in the development departments of two large Danish news organisations. Through this, we argue that infrastructure capture is negotiated and manifested through three overall logics, namely logics of datafication, standardisation and classification.

# Journalists, critics and music-lovers: A study of the use of emotions in Norwegian music criticism

Ingebjørg Sofie Larsen

Norwegian Academy of Music, Oslo, Norway

## Abstract

In a time where emotions play such a major part in both politics and public debates, there has been little scholarly research on how emotions are incorporated in the discourses of the press. Even in cultural journalism research, emotions have not been a major focus, although emotions can play a crucial role in conveying experiences of the arts: Scholars have argued that a *journalistic* logic has superseded the more *aesthetic* logic of cultural journalism as a result of the ongoing professionalism of the daily press – a professionalism that is in part value-based, tied to the journalistic value of objectivity.

In this paper, I argue that music critics' use of emotions may give much-needed insight into whether and how discourses of emotion can function within – and in dialogue with – the journalistic logic of the daily press. I trace how music critics have approached emotions throughout the period when the Norwegian daily press became professionalized, and ask: *To what extent and in which ways have emotions been present in Norwegian music criticism throughout the period of professionalism? How do critics negotiate emotions with other characteristics of the journalistic and aesthetic logics of cultural journalism?*

To address these questions, I offer a study of a dataset of 163 music reviews by 60 different critics from four Norwegian dailies (*Dagbladet*, *Aftenposten*, *Bergens Tidende*, *Arbeiderbladet/Dagsavisen*). The reviews were sampled from three points of professionalization in the Norwegian press: 1981, 2001 and 2022. The main findings reveal that critics paid more attention to emotions in 2022 compared to 1981 and 2001 – a development that includes discussing emotions in the musical work/performance, emotions in the critics' own responses, and further, balancing emotions with arguments, newsworthiness, and musical/societal context. This, I propose, may add new perspectives to the place and potential of emotions in the mass media.

## **The Boundaries Within the Field: A Qualitative Approach to Constructive Journalism**

Birte Leonhardt, Diego Garusi

University of Vienna, Vienna, Austria

### **Abstract**

Constructive journalism is a future-oriented type of journalism, focusing on the question “what now?” in addition to the traditional journalistic w-questions (Gyldensted, 2015, p. 175-181), by providing constructive solutions to socially relevant issues (Gyldensted, 2015; McIntyre, 2015). It criticizes Anglo-American journalism’s tendency to focus on negative news (Gyldensted, 2015) and its emphasis on detached reporting (Mast et al., 2019). However, despite its contrasting approach to traditional journalism, constructive journalism lacks a unified conceptualization, definition, and insights into how constructive journalists define their journalistic role and ultimately distinguish themselves from other types of journalism (Bro, 2018). Previous research has examined constructive journalism particularly in the context of practices roles (Haagerup, 2017; Hermans & Gyldensted, 2019), which is why this study focuses on the exploration of narrated, cognitive and normative roles (Hanitzsch & Vos, 2017). Furthermore, this study opens up the debate of applying boundary work (Gieryn, 1983) within the field and examining boundary struggles between different types of journalism, thus offering a new and innovative approach to boundary work theory. This research examines:

- To what extent do constructive journalists demarcate themselves from other types of journalism?
- What are the key boundary markers used to distinguish constructive journalism from other types of journalism?

The study carries out in-depth interviews with a diverse sample of self-identified Austrian constructive journalists. It provides a bottom-up definition contributing to a typology (Kuckartz, 2014) and conceptualization of constructive journalism, ultimately proposing an innovative framework allowing a distinction between different types of journalism. Finally, by applying boundary work to constructive journalism, a specific type of journalism, this study adds valuable insights from within the journalistic field and enhances the applicability of boundary work theory in general.

# **‘Money is the root of all evil.’ How the business of journalism shapes trust in news**

Seth C. Lewis<sup>1</sup>, Jacob L. Nelson<sup>2</sup>, Brent Cowley<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>University of Oregon, Eugene, USA. <sup>2</sup>University of Utah, Salt Lake City, USA

## **Abstract**

In journalism studies, the “audience turn” (Swart et al. 2022) in recent years has shifted attention in important ways to the lived experiences of news consumers (Costera Meijer 2019). As journalism studies scholars explore and emphasize the everyday encounters that people have with media technologies generally and with journalism specifically (Boczkowski et al. 2021), they have worked to develop a more holistic portrayal of how audience perceptions and behaviors take shape (e.g., Nelson and Lewis 2022; Nelson and Edgerly 2021). These studies have revealed, among other things, that people’s interactions with news are not just the result of their opinions about distinct news organizations, but also of the assumptions they hold about journalism more broadly (Wilner et al. 2021; Palmer et al. 2020).

This study adds to the growing body of literature by exploring the question: How do people’s assumptions about how news is paid for affect their trust in and approach to news? Our data draw from interviews conducted in 2022 with 34 news consumers who were constructively sampled to represent a diverse cross-section of U.S. adults. Guided by the folk theories concept, a generative approach to discovering the stories that people tell themselves about news (Toff and Nielsen 2018), we find that news consumers see journalism as increasingly compromised by journalists’ perceived pursuit of profit and financial success in a competitive media environment. They feel that journalists are primarily motivated to profit off their attention, leading them to view most news with a great deal of skepticism. By situating audience perceptions of capitalism and its relationship to journalism at the center, this study brings a new dimension to ongoing discussions about trust, objectivity, and bias in reporting.



## Mapping violence and targeted journalistic identities in Belgium

Manon Libert<sup>1</sup>, Florence Le Cam<sup>2</sup>, Bart Vanhaelewyn<sup>3</sup>, Sarah Van Leuven<sup>3</sup>, Karin Raeymaeckers<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>University of Mons (UMONS), Mons, Belgium. <sup>2</sup>Université libre de Bruxelles, Bruxelles, Belgium.

<sup>3</sup>Ghent University, Ghent, Belgium

### Abstract

Violence against journalists has taken many forms: murders, physical assaults, verbal abuse, etc. It was more likely to come from countries in extreme risk situations such as Mexico, Rwanda, Brazil or Israel (Frère, 2015; Brambila, 2017; Rios & Bronosky, 2019). In recent years, violence seems to be spreading all over the world. Gender-based violence, cyber-harassment and physical attacks on journalists during their work are illustrative of this major challenge for both the profession and press freedom (Löfgren Nilsson & Örnebring, 2016; Høiby, 2016; Corcione, 2018; Waisbord, 2020).

Even in Belgium, a country ranked 23rd in the Press Freedom Index (RSF, 2022), the professional and academic worlds are taking a closer look at violence (Malcorps, Libert & Le Cam, 2022; De Vuyst & Raeymaeckers, 2019). In early 2023, we distributed a questionnaire to almost all the members (5069) of the two national journalists' associations. The response rate is 28% (n=1396). Three perspectives can thus be explored: 1) to map the diversity of online and offline violence encountered by Belgian journalists, their frequency and nature; 2) to identify the number of journalists affected, their gender, age, professional status, topics of coverage; 3) to measure the consequences of this violence on journalists and identify whether they find ways to cope with it.

Analysis has just started but the first findings show that 57% of the Belgian journalists experienced at least one type of violence throughout their career. 4 out of 10 respondents have been the target of verbal violence, 3 out of 10 have been intimidated, 5% have been physically assaulted. Almost 2 out of 10 women report sexual transgressive behavior. More detailed analyses will be conducted to better understand the problematic of the violence against journalists, its targeted character and the consequences on careers and the profession such as the silencing of journalists.

## Conceptualising Augmented Journalism

Carl-Gustav Linden<sup>1</sup>, Mariëlle Wijermars<sup>2</sup>, Andreas Opdahl<sup>1</sup>, David Caswell<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>University of Bergen, Bergen, Norway. <sup>2</sup>University of Helsinki, Helsinki, Finland. <sup>3</sup>BBC News, London, United Kingdom

### Abstract

Already decades ago, Information and communication technologies (ICT) - including Artificial Intelligence (AI) and other computation techniques - entered into news industries and journalism. Early on automation in newsrooms was framed as an existential threat to the journalism profession (Lindén, 2018). However, in the wake of generative AI and systems such as the conversational bot ChatGPT, there is an increased urgency to consider conceptually stronger and more precise theories in journalism studies than the overarching umbrella term AI. Acknowledging the already crowded space of new concepts (Loosen et al., 2022), we propose revisiting a more than 60 year old idea (Engelbart, 1962) that has resurfaced in journalism studies in recent years, namely Augmented Journalism (Scherer, 2010; Marconi & Siegman, 2017; Lindén, 2018; Lindén, 2020).

We define Augmented Journalism as "the use of AI and other computation techniques to support the application of editorial judgement in the production and distribution of news". By "news production and distribution" we mean newsgathering, news monitoring, news selection, news analysis, news verification, creation of news artefacts (articles, videos, etc) and curation of news within the news organisation's domain. By 'editorial judgement' we mean the assessment and assurance by individual humans (usually, but not necessarily, journalists and editors) of the compliance of information with 'journalistic values' (e.g. truthfulness, relevance, impact, timeliness, accessibility, etc).

We want to push back against the AI-centrism - human vs machine - which has permeated discussions and inspire new directions for thinking about tech in journalism, but also for developing tech for journalism. This intervention is particularly urgent as the rapid and accelerating progress in computational and Synthetic Media technologies that are applicable to news and information production give rise to pressing questions about the roles of humans and 'machines'. These concerns are touching directly on the societal role of journalism and the public values connected to the performance of this role. By turning the debate on its head and recentering focus on human capacities and sensibilities to be protected or 'augmented', we want to offer a 'leap of the imagination' (Reese, 2022).

# Gatekeeper, Gate-watcher or Gate-escaper? Perceptions of online 'Gatekeeping' by Chinese TV Journalists

Yuxin Liu

Shanghai University of Political Science and Law, Shanghai, China

## Abstract

Existing research has widely accounted for negotiations of gatekeeping in final publication (output) stages on social media but neglects to explain the transformation of gatekeeping involved in accessing information (input) and selection criteria (throughput) within the Chinese social-political context. Using dual thematic and cognitive linguistic analysis, this paper investigates transformations of journalistic gatekeeping related to 'input', 'throughput' and 'output' processes. This paper offers a culture-specific perception of gatekeeping in Chinese society by investigating how journalists perceive their gatekeeping roles on Weibo and WeChat J-accounts. Meanwhile, to identify the influence of various factors established on the interpretation of gatekeeping, we will answer three main research questions: (1) How do Chinese TV journalists negotiate the role of gatekeeper on Weibo and WeChat?; (2) What are the journalists' new conceptual roles during journalistic gatekeeping on Weibo and WeChat? ; (3) How do TV journalists perceive social and cultural pressures that affect the transformation of journalistic gatekeeping on Weibo and WeChat? The interviews of Chinese TV journalists reveal that while the 'gatekeeping' function is not challenged in terms of information delivery ('output'), the 'throughput' and 'input' stages are altered by a range of factors: online moderation and censorship, technological algorithms, and social media interests. This challenges the classic understanding of 'gatekeeping' by showing that this understanding is altered when studying online 'gatekeeping'. We study the interviewed journalists' discourse about 'gatekeeping', following the approaches related to cognitive and critical analysis of discourse. This analysis leads us to thoroughly discuss the self-identification of interviewed journalists as 'gatekeepers', 'gate-watchers' and 'gate-escapers'. We argue that 'gatekeeping' has been transgressed by technological improvements, socio-cultural contexts, and cognitive evaluations by journalists. This paper advances gatekeeping theory in terms of the information 'input' and 'throughput' stages and contributes to empirical analysis of various aspects of 'gatekeeping practices' in China.

# Competition or Complementation? Exploring relational boundary strategies of traditional and peripheral actors

Kim Löhmann<sup>1</sup>, Phoebe Maares<sup>1</sup>, Daniel Nölleke<sup>2</sup>, Folker Hanusch<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>University of Vienna, Vienna, Austria. <sup>2</sup>German Sport University Cologne, Cologne, Germany

## Abstract

The past decades have seen a surge in new social actors - often referred to as peripheral actors – who engage in work that closely resembles traditional journalism, thus forcing us to reconsider what constitutes a journalist and journalistic work. While scholarship has identified a variety of different peripheral actors (Belair-Gagnon & Holton, 2018), boundary markers (Singer, 2015; Karlsson et al., 2023) and even dimensions of peripherality (Hanusch & Löhmann, 2022), we still have an incomplete understanding of the strategies peripheral and traditional actors use in relation to each other to claim and protect membership of the journalistic field (Gieryn, 1999). This study therefore explores in-depth such claims of belonging among peripheral actors, as well as strategies of demarcation by traditional actors.

We address these issues with an innovative approach combining in-depth interviews with an open card-sorting technique (Lobinger & Brantner, 2020). The study draws on interviews with more than 40 actors across the wide spectrum of traditional to peripheral media in Austria. We asked respondents to map images of (non-)traditional journalistic formats in relation to each other within a coordinate system with horizontal poles going from legitimate to not legitimate and vertical poles from autonomous to not autonomous, in order to explore their abstract understanding of what and who is considered journalistic. These maps served as the foundation to further investigate where respondents positioned themselves in relation to others, and what strategies they employ to interact with each other. Preliminary results indicate a nuanced understanding of who and what can be considered journalistic, underscoring the necessity for a more comprehensive and non-dichotomous perspective on boundary work. By focusing on the relational discourse, the study contributes to a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of journalistic boundary contestation, boundary protection, and boundary spanning.

## The “Polyamorous” Newsworker: Journalists’ relationship(s) to their audience from a repertoire perspective

Wiebke Loosen, Julius Reimer, Sprengelmeyer Louise

Leibniz Institute for Media Research | Hans Bredow Institute, Hamburg, Germany

### Abstract

Today, journalists are confronted with the paradoxical task of addressing “the” public, while at the same time serving ever more specific target groups and dealing with different users on diverse (social) media channels with differing degrees of activity, expectations, etc.

To shed light on how journalists handle this “multiplication” of their audience, we interviewed 52 journalists from various areas of the field in Germany about their audience-relationship(s). As a first result we develop a *typology* of eleven different *relationship-forms* that journalists can maintain: from “distantly informing citizens” to “cultivating fans” to “coping with troublemakers.” Each form builds on: a) a particular “*audience construction*” — i.e., subgroups of or roles ascribed to audiences (e.g., customer, community, knowledge carrier) — that journalists relate to through b) specific *relationship practices* which are guided by c) certain *frames of relevance*.

We find that emerging relationship-forms expand journalists’ traditional audience-relation with respect to the three components: regarding a), the focus on a general public is complemented by relating to specific *social groups* and even *individual users*; as for b), the enactment of established roles and mere imagination of the audience are complemented by actually *observing* or even *interacting* with users; and concerning c), the traditionally role-based framing is complemented by *emotions*.

In terms of their audience-relation, however, journalists appear “polyamorous:” they do not only maintain one relationship-form but all combine a selection of them. Through a cluster analysis, we identify four typical *relationship-repertoires*. Notably, repertoires focused on emerging, emotionally framed relationship-forms always also contain ones based on established journalistic roles. We show how the four repertoires correlate with, for instance, the media journalists work for (from established organizations to startups; from print to podcasts) and the topics they cover (from politics to pop-music), and discuss implications for journalists’ work and public communication in general.

## **Breaching BBC impartiality rules: Journalism identity, institutional networks and social media**

María Luengo, Teresa Gil-López

Carlos III University, Madrid, Spain

### **Abstract**

In May 2020, Emily Maitlis, then-presenter of BBC's *Newsnight*, made waves during her opening monologue by criticising Dominic Cummings for his controversial trip to Durham amid lockdown restrictions while serving as chief adviser to Prime Minister Boris Johnson. Her on-air remarks featured prominently on social media outlets, triggering a public outcry and widespread calls for Mr Cummings to resign. According to the BBC, Maitlis had compromised the broadcaster by giving the impression of taking sides and voicing an opinion on a controversial matter' (*BBC*, 3 September 2020). Maitlis's reproach is far from an isolated incident at the BBC, which in recent times has rebuked several news presenters for violating its impartiality rules. If BBC journalists are compelled to follow regulative-impartiality rules, why are some journalists defying them? Are they on-off or individual cases, or do they respond to constitutive patterns of the profession?

The focus of this study will be twofold: first, the analytical distinction between regulative and constitutive news rules (Ryfe, 2006) and, second, social network theory on actors' opportunities and constraints. In this way, the study links notions of meaning and discourse to network structure. Drawing on network analysis of BBC News journalists' Twitter accounts and qualitative content analysis of their Twitter feeds before and after the implementation of a set of BBC's impartiality guidelines in October 2021, this paper provides new insight into the relationship between BBC journalists' discourses on impartiality and the positions and roles they hold within the institutional news network.

Our findings indicated that roles are of interest in determining the way in which journalists make use of one or other discursive approach to impartiality in relation to the BBC, while network centrality matters when it comes to setting up starting points about who can (or cannot) frame the public debate about impartiality.

# **An obituary for an Iranian actress, naked cyclists for the environment, and tragic 9-11 commemorative photos: An analysis of news values in global news publishers' most engaging Instagram posts**

Julian Maitra<sup>1</sup>, Patric Raemy<sup>1</sup>, Lydia Cheng<sup>2</sup>, Matthew Chew<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>University of Fribourg, Fribourg, Switzerland. <sup>2</sup>University of Sydney, Sydney, Australia. <sup>3</sup>Nanyang Technological University, Singapore, Singapore

## **Abstract**

Instagram, the world's second most popular social media platform, has become a critical space for news: Global news organizations heavily contribute journalistic content to it, which audiences embrace and interact with (e.g., Newman et al., 2022). Despite its growing importance for journalism, news on Instagram has received less attention from journalism researchers. Through a content analysis of the top-performing news posts from August 2021-July 2022, we attempt to make sense of Instagram's emerging, platform-centric news values. We use digital trace data from 662 global news publishers' Instagram accounts from Crowdtangle. During the analysis period, the sampled Instagram accounts published >1.79M Instagram posts that received >12B interactions (likes + comments) and >34B video views. We extract the 1,000 posts with the most interactions from this large-scale sample.

Inspired by Harcup and O'Neill's (2001; 2017) journalistic news values as a sensitizing concept, the analysis characterizes Instagram's most engaging news.

An obituary for an Iranian actress, naked cyclists for the environment, and tragic photos of a 9-11 commemoration – Instagram's top news are a diverse mix of audience-oriented, visual stories, even if some fully-text-based ones are also present. In a preliminary analysis of the top 100 posts, we found good and bad news to be evenly distributed; most posts are attractive, touching, and surprising in both ways of the valence. Only a few posts focus on the power elite; most exhibit a civic and audience orientation, often containing user-generated content such as eye-witness captures. Surprisingly, breaking news is relatively scarce among the top posts – news publishers on Instagram tend to focus on contextual and background stories. While many traditional news values continue to play a role, the platform encourages the emergence of less time-sensitive, intriguing, and audio-visually attractive stories.

# Of TikTokers, Team Media, Finance Gurus, and the Party Press: Exploring membership claims of non-traditional journalistic actors

Phoebe Maares<sup>1</sup>, Kim Löhmann<sup>1</sup>, Daniel Nölleke<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>University of Vienna, Vienna, Austria. <sup>2</sup>German Sport University Cologne, Cologne, Germany

## Abstract

Digital transformations have contributed substantially to the emergence of non-traditional actors in journalism, who, often in niche areas, add to the plurality of topics and perspectives through journalistic or quasi-journalistic content. One popular way of understanding their impact on the journalistic field is by viewing them through the concepts of boundary work and field theory (Eldridge, 2018; Maares & Hanusch, 2022), which considers the transformative power of non-journalistic resources and ideologies that actors bring to the field. These can challenge long-held ideas of what journalism should be about and provide for the public. Transformative intentions occur explicitly or unconsciously, depending on how non-traditional actors discursively claim membership, for instance by publicly describing themselves as journalists or as providing something that legacy media fail to offer (Hanusch & Löhmann, 2022).

Scholarship has engaged with such membership claims but often focuses on deviant actors who cover political topics (Carlson, 2020; Eldridge, 2018; Vos et al., 2012). This study argues that we need to expand our focus to diverse journalistic beats, in order to better understand whether and with which intentions different types of actors might transform the field. In particular, we examine how diverse peripheral actors who produce information on political, business, lifestyle, and sports topics discursively claim membership in the journalistic field.

We employ a textual analysis of the strapline, About pages, and imprints of 166 Austrian peripheral websites and social media pages, offering a broad spectrum of niche and general topics. Preliminary findings indicate claims of membership differ across the beats, with political formats voicing the most agonistic claims. This demonstrates that transformational intentions are not limited to antagonistic or agonistic claims but also includes nuances of indifference. The study therefore adds to our understanding of peripheral actors and their objectives to transform journalism.



## **In the line of Fire! Conflict Reportage; Kenya's War on Terror Narratives**

Loise Macharia, Marguerite Barry

University College Dublin, Dublin, Ireland

### **Abstract**

Constructive Journalism (Cojo) as a practice is steadily being adopted into newsrooms in the global north and Europe. The breadth of scholarly research on Cojo is also steadily growing as experiments with different approaches taking root in other contexts (Lough & McIntyre, 2021). Cojo adheres to traditional journalistic norms and practices with a new dimension in reporting, which shifts from covering social problems to exposing actionable solutions to these problems (Aitamurto & Varma, 2018). Cojo enthusiasts hold that if journalists practice responsible journalism, citizens could be seen as active participants, thus, co-creating solutions to societal problems. However, journalists need to be safe to practice responsible journalism (Høiby & Ottosen, 2019). Journalists seeking to change society tend to unearth issues that are difficult to imagine and oftentimes shocking. In the coverage of political violence for instance; journalists may want to uncover how incidences of violence occurred, and how the various actors behave or reacted to incidences. The ripple effect of routine coverage potentially places the journalist's work and at times, life at risk. Cojo scholarship seems silent on the safety of journalists in carrying out Cojo practice stories, a gap that this study aims to probe further. Using in-depth interviews with journalists (n=18) from Kenya who report on conflict and terrorism in the leading media houses, the study finds that potential for constructive journalism exists but resources pertaining to the safety and security of journalists are essential to its success. There appears to be a tiered component to journalism practice and safety in conflict reportage: Physical safety, journalists tend to receive threats, while others hide away as they go about their work: media houses may try to support journalists but this conflicts with organisations' interests forcing journalists to seek help elsewhere to stay safe. In terms of mental well-being; journalists have access to counselling, but daily work routines tend to interfere with access to those resources. The study findings speak to the practicalities of constructive journalism practice and the human cost of responsible journalism, with the aim of justifying resource allocation for infrastructural networks that allow for the safety of journalists.

## Impact of media ownership concentration on local news content

Ville J. E. Manninen, Lauri Haapanen

University of Jyväskylä, Jyväskylä, Finland

### Abstract

Finland is a country of newspapers and Finns are committed newspaper readers. Despite the high visibility and circulation of a few national newspapers, the backbone of the press is regional and local; there are no so-called news deserts and around 200 titles are published.

The ownership of Finnish media has become increasingly concentrated. However, the impact of this concentration on journalism and thus on the realization of democracy has been severely understudied in Finland. Even international research has mostly focused on news deserts, while less attention has been given to situations where journalism does not completely disappear but where its content deteriorates vis-a-vis the citizens' democratic needs.

In our analysis, we examine 69 local newspapers (one issue per newspaper; 2,127 articles). We identify the papers' owner and ascertain the number of personnel and circulation area. For articles, we code for their length, localness, and authorship. We then use a detailed content analysis to evaluate whether each article meets the *Critical Information Needs* of the local public. This coding schema is based on an updated and localized version of the eight criteria proposed by Friedland and others (2012). These needs are fundamental to citizens' participation in society, with a broad access to information on health, education, economic advancement, public safety, and environmental quality (ibid. 4).

The results of our analysis provide unique qualitative and quantitative information on the impact of media ownership on the journalistic content of local newspapers. We will also discuss the next phase of our research project, where we analyze the impact diachronically: we will compile a data set that contains issues of selected newspaper titles before and after the change of ownership.

# Audience Logics in Global Data-driven Journalism: Searching for Substantive Engagement

Jason A. Martin<sup>1</sup>, Lindita Camaj<sup>2</sup>, Gerry Lanosga<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>DePaul University, Chicago, USA. <sup>2</sup>University of Houston, Houston, USA. <sup>3</sup>Indiana University, Bloomington, USA

## Abstract

This study explores how data journalists incorporate audience engagement in their work, and whether these practices reinforce institutionalized journalism values or prioritise interactivity and audience needs in more substantive ways. Using a theoretical framework of audience logics, we investigate three different sub-logics that drive the audience turn in digital journalism: market orientation, reflecting commercial forces; normative, which prioritises social or public responsibility over market considerations; and network media, which considers the technical affordances of digital technologies that have been integrated into digital journalism as determinants of audience involvement in the news process.

Using in-depth interviews with data journalists from 34 countries, we investigate how data journalists perform audience engagement and their motivations. Within the audience logic framework, our results are sorted into a participatory typology of data journalism clustered around practices of crowdsourcing, interactivity, social media engagement, and data transparency. Analysis reveals a complicated tangle of three sub-logics. We find data journalists' audience engagement work mostly motivated by instrumental aspects of commercial and normative sub-logics and explained by digital technology affordances. Less often, data journalists embrace networked logic as they strive for more substantive engagement and audience input. Resource constraints of time, personnel, expertise, and technology are frequently cited as obstacles to more authentic and frequent forms of engagement.

Findings reveal the complicated ways in which data journalists constantly negotiate their own conceptualizations of audience and the meaning of substantive engagement in their work on discrete projects but also collectively as a field. Overall, analysis suggests that when thinking about audience engagement in the news-making process, data journalists are primarily motivated by their internal occupational aspirations in building legitimacy and credibility and to some extent provide a public service by making public data available for other to reuse.

## Volunteer Journalism: An Underexplored Sub-field of Journalism

Nick Mathews<sup>1</sup>, Lene Heiselberg<sup>2</sup>, Danford Zirugo<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>University of Missouri, Columbia, USA. <sup>2</sup>University of Southern Denmark, Odense, Denmark.

<sup>3</sup>University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, USA

### Abstract

When a rural United States county lost its weekly newspaper during Covid-19, a group of community members joined to launch a replacement. While the organizers had the spirit to serve their community, they lacked journalistic experience and, more problematic, funding to maintain their mission. The organization turned to a vital component in vibrant communities — volunteerism. The organization rests exclusively on the unpaid labor of 15 volunteers to gather, produce and distribute the news to South Dakota residents. The concept of “volunteer journalism” is not novel — and is perhaps historic — yet it remains vastly underexplored in journalism studies. This project offers a multi-nation examination of volunteer journalism and calls for a renewed focus on the sub-field as existential threats continue to compound journalism. The simplest question is: Is volunteer journalism a possible solution to the problems that face journalism? The straightforward inquiry raises more complex considerations, including boundary-related questions such as “Are volunteer journalists actually journalists?” This article will utilize online video research interviews with approximately 20 volunteer journalists from multiple organizations across three continents (North America, Europe, Africa). The interviews represent the first stage of a larger project, informing an important audience-focused investigation of the news products. In Denmark, the HornePosten has printed quarterly since 1973 and terms the publication “sogneblad,” which translates into magazine for the community. Similarly, for a half-century, the Prairie Dog Press has printed in a rural U.S. Midwestern town with “community volunteer newspaper” incorporated in the masthead. This study will explore the motivations of volunteer journalists, investigating such desires as affiliation, altruism, career development and egoistic. This article will then provide an analytical framework for future studies, defining volunteer journalism (versus citizen journalism, etc.), articulating its components (including the significance of organizational identity, versus residents participating on community message boards) and pinpointing potential critiques.

## **“It’s not rocket science”: Re-asserting the value of local ‘new presence’ for small-town news outlets in a digital era**

Alison McAdam, Kristy Hess

Deakin University, Geelong, Australia

### **Abstract**

For local news outlets serving small towns and regions, being physically ‘present in place’ is considered necessary to their legitimacy, authority and credibility in the localities they serve. This has been challenged in a digital era, where cost-cutting measures such as centralisation and dispersion have left many traditional news outlets with no photographers, fewer journalists, parts of the business being outsourced interstate or offshore, and the closure of local news office buildings. We argue there is a need not to ‘rethink’ or ‘reconceptualise’ the importance of presence but reassert its significance to local news outlets and their audiences in a digital world. We suggest ‘news presence’ is a combination of visibility and sensibility that generates a news outlet’s standing and legitimacy in a locale. Firstly, local *visibility* in a geographic region is gained through journalistic, infrastructure or community-level investment, which can be complemented (but not replaced by) visibility in digital spaces. Secondly, local *sensibility* is a news outlet’s accumulated local knowledge and a tacit understanding of a place, its people, social connections, history and cultural identity. Combined, they enable a news outlet to have this ‘presence’ felt. We draw on data from the largest research project undertaken into Australia’s local news sector, which found successful small-town news producers still place a high value on being visible in, and having a sensibility about, their local region. They are also categorising elements that contribute to the perception of being local and those that do not, ensuing the ‘frontstage’ operations such as journalism, advertising sales and inquiries are conducted locally, while saving money by outsourcing ‘backstage’ operations such as some graphic design, printing and payroll/accounting.

## **Knowledge can wait? The epistemic conversion of new beat reporters**

Tal Mishaly, Zvi Reich

Ben Gurion university of the Negev, Beer Sheva, Israel

### **Abstract**

This is a first study on the ways in which new Israeli beat reporters establish their expertise during their first two years. It reveals that journalists' basic approach to knowledge is already reshaped for years to come during their first 100 days on the job. In this turbulent period, reporters shift from experiencing stress and panic to an operative and competent state of mind, with their basic approach to knowledge transformed on three interconnected levels: from seeing prior knowledge as a necessity to realizing they can do without it; from self-knowledge to a "distributed" model where knowledge often resides in the hands of their sources; and from prioritizing learning the beat subject matter to prioritizing journalistic knowhow. These findings expose the mechanisms and the surprisingly early stage in which some of the most prominent epistemic bottlenecks described in the literature (Donsbach 2004; Lippman 1922; Patterson 2013, Stephens 2014) take shape.

Findings are based on the experience of 21 reporters from Israeli national news outlets using WhatsApp Micro-diaries, filled every two weeks, and periodic in-depth interviews every six months. Ongoing results (followed 8 reporters for more than one year, 9 who are close to finishing or have already finished their two-year term, and 4 others who dropped out after 4-6 months), indicate that the epistemic conversion of the first 100 days is both formative and enduring.

The low prioritization of subject-matter knowledge is bad news for an occupation based on "on-the-job" training and shortening careers, filling the lines of journalism with slow-paced learners that may leave the beat before having a chance to become domain specialists. Findings also indicate that reporting without knowledge is not a journalistic "bug", but rather one of its main features, at least throughout the early years of most news reporters.

Keywords:

News reporting, News beats, Socialization, Knowledge, Epistemology, Mental models.

## **“This is What the News Should Sound Like”: The Discursive Construct of News Podcast as an Innovative Genre by Practitioners on Metajournalistic Podcasts.**

Maxwell Modell

Cardiff University, Cardiff, United Kingdom

### **Abstract**

The whole news podcasts phenomena is still relatively new and under researched. The genre broke out following the success of *The Daily*, the *New York Times* daily news podcast launched in 2017 as a direct response to the rise of Donald Trump and his challenge to the popular legitimacy of journalism. *The Daily* makes the striking claim “this is what the news should sound like”, implying there is a quality deficit in traditional news journalism that *The Daily* overcomes. While this phrase is commonly cited in scholarship to represent how news podcasts challenge journalistic norms, beyond *The Daily* no study has explored how news podcasters understand and define their own practice. Using Matt Carlson’s (2016) theory of metajournalistic discourse, this paper explores the discursive construction of news podcasts as an innovative journalistic genre in meta podcasts (podcasts about podcasting) with a specific focus on how practitioners articulate the normative role of journalism. This is achieved through a thematic analysis of 19 meta podcast episodes that feature news podcasters from the UK or US. The study finds practitioners tend to construct news podcasts as a disruptive genre that challenges the values that underpin journalism: characterised by humanised, emotional storytelling; slower news practices; covering a story from the beginning, rather than just the immediate headline; journalists saying what they know and admitting what they do not; a news agenda that diverts from hard news staples to cover underreported issues; and, in the UK context, a continued commitment to impartiality. The significance of these findings is twofold. Firstly, it reveals how practitioners understand their journalistic ideals. Secondly, given what people say is often a poor predictor of what they do, these conclusions can direct a new research agenda to assess how these ideals are (or are not) accomplished in practice.

## **Where is local science news? The over-dependence on international science sources in Qatari media and its implications**

Anto Mohsin<sup>1</sup>, An Nguyen<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Northwestern University in Qatar, Doha, Qatar. <sup>2</sup>Bournemouth University, Poole, United Kingdom

### **Abstract**

Developing countries rely heavily on developed ones for not only scientific expertise but also science news output: a large proportion of science news consumed in the former has been found to be translated or, at best, synthesised from sources based in the latter (Nguyen and Tran 2020). Although this bears many consequences for local and global development, it has been rarely studied at any depth.

Drawing on a recent study on the current state of science journalism in Qatar, a country that has invested rigorously in science research, this paper will provide comprehensive insights into the current state of the above problem, its potential causes and implications for science journalism in the Global South. A content analysis of 485 Arabic and English-language news stories about scientific discoveries in Qatar shows that they do not often make it to the news page (except, to some extent, medical discoveries). Wherever they do, the vast majority (94% of stories) are about foreign science achievements, being mostly copied or translated verbatim from media sources based in developed countries (76%), with very little localisation (85%). In-depth interviews with 15 local science journalists and editors as well as a Delphi panel with six scientists explains this content pattern. In general, there is no science news culture in Qatar, with both reporters and editors not seeing science as a newsworthy category and investing very little money and time in producing original science journalism or training their people to do so. Some even see science communication as the job of the government rather than of the media. Our participating scientists confirm this, noting a clear lack of two-way communication between scientists and journalists in Qatar. In that context, foreign science news can provide a quick fix. The short- and long-term implications of this dependency for the development of Qatar, and the Global South, will be discussed.



# Diversity for what? An analysis of normative democratic assumptions in the domain of personalized news recommender systems

Jannie Møller Hartley, Elisabetta Petrucci

Roskilde University, Roskilde, Denmark

## Abstract

This paper presents a framework for linking notions of diversity to democratically sustainable recommender systems for news. Scholars have pointed out that news diversity is not an end in itself, but rather a means for the perpetuation of democracy (Helberger, 2015; Joris et al., 2020). Helberger (2019) has argued that the conceptualization and role of diversity in news recommender systems changes in relation to the democratic theory endorsed, both in the analysis and critique of such systems and in their design. To better understand whether and how these different conceptualizations of diversity are operationalized, we analyzed the current literature on diversity and news recommender systems from the field of computer and social sciences, using framing analysis (Entman, 1993). Firstly, we found that the conceptualization of diversity in news recommender systems is implicitly designed and evaluated according to the participatory democracy model, which emphasizes political participation and active citizenship. Secondly, we found that literature from both fields have a techno-centric framing of personalization, which results in viewing challenges to personalization as mainly technological problems with technological solutions and narrow, operational, measurable definitions of diversity. We argue that the current operationalizations of diversity focusing on issues bias, source diversity and content diversity overlooks other dimensions of personalization, which are important when designing democratically sustainable personalization systems. These missing perspectives, we would argue, also explain, why many personalization projects fail in news journalism (Møller Hartley et. al forthcoming 2023, Schjøtt Hansen and Møller Hartley 2021). Finally, the article introduces an Earth Democracy perspective (Shiva, 2006) to argue for more holistic design and evaluation criteria linked to three dimensions of democratic sustainability; namely 1) democratic collectiveness, 2) algorithmic reflectiveness and 3) ecological resource dependence.

## Exploring the Infrastructure of Journalism Work in the Global South

Ruth Moon, Will Mari

Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, USA

### Abstract

Infrastructural breakdown presents a major challenge to private life and public engagement across the Global South.[1] Poor infrastructure — in the form of impassable or missing roads, downed power lines, gaps in wireless accessibility, and insufficient access to transportation equipment, among other things — is a marker of ineffective governance.[2] Crucially, it also limits the capacity of journalists and other civic agents to gather information and encourage public engagement.

This problem is particularly pernicious in the age of dis- and misinformation, where information provision is essential to public safety.[3] It is also exacerbated by the increasing effects of climate change, which most dramatically impact the already-precarious nations of the Global South, with especially pronounced effects on island nations like those in the Caribbean.[4] Considering the increasing importance and brittleness of infrastructure in these places, we need more research that examines the ways journalists in precarious contexts use existing environmental tools and adapt to infrastructural breakdown. This study extends the research agenda by examining the effects of infrastructure breakdown and misalignment on journalism practice in Martinique and Dominica, two Caribbean islands chosen for their geographic and social proximity and their different global alignments (Martinique as a French territory and Dominica as an independent republic).[5]

Using ethnographic data from participant observation and interviews, we examine the existing structures that enable and restrict the information-gathering phase of news work, with a focus on the ways that political alignments might influence infrastructure.[6] Information-gathering is, of course, a crucial first step in the news-creation process. Since information that is never collected cannot become a news item, this is one point at which journalists make key decisions, informed by infrastructure, about what their audiences will later see. Our study can inform future work on infrastructure and journalistic adaptation around the globe.[7]

# Reconsidering mediated distant suffering in a context of news avoidance: A social media users' perspective

Gabriela Müggenburg, María Luengo

Universidad Carlos III de Madrid, Madrid, Spain

## Abstract

Based on theories of mediated distant suffering (Boltanski, 1999; Chouliaraki, 2006, Moeller, 1999), audience research has overall categorised publics' responses to representation of human pain as 'compassion,' 'ignorance' or 'denial' (Höijer, 2004; Scott, 2015; Sue, 2010). Researchers have also developed alternative concepts such as media witnessing and remembering (Kyriakidou, 2015; 2014). In our view, these notions help to drill down into processes of media users' responses to distant suffering and to link these reception processes to broader cultural performances of trauma (Alexander, 2012); performances that in turn lead to effectively actions of solidarity and civil repair with 'the distant other.'

This study draws on analysis of how social media habits shape user's responses (Huiberts, 2020; Scott, 2015) to show ways in which users engage (and civilly commit to act) with different kind of distant suffering news in a context of news avoidance (Ong, 2015; Vandevordt, 2018).

Through a mixed qualitative methodology of in-depth semi-structured interviews and diary interviews with Instagram users, this study explores and compares audiences' testimonies and memories of the 1985 and 2017 earthquakes in Mexico, both on the 19th of September with 32 years of difference. The sample is composed of (1) Mexicans who were living in their country during both or one of these events, (2) Mexicans who were living abroad during both or one of these events, and (3) foreigners who remember witnessing the 2017 event via Instagram.

This methodological design reflects typologies within the media witnessing and remembering framework, looking at social media user's interpretations and performances regarding potential solidarity actions within a process of cultural trauma that goes beyond social media instant reactions.

# **Aiming to See Through The Fog of War: The Role of the New Surveillance Technologies in War Reporting**

Markus Mykkänen, Turo I Uskali, Antero Holmila, Pasi S Ikonen

University of Jyväskylä, Jyväskylä, Finland

## **Abstract**

The paper presents the preliminary results of an ongoing study that focuses on the work of Finnish war correspondents, photographers, and their fixers in the Russia–Ukraine war from 2014 to 2024.

One can argue that war journalism is the most challenging kind of journalism. War censorship, propaganda, disinformation, and restricted access to combat zones have in history effectively prohibited any kind of qualitative war reporting. This is called the fog of war -phenomenon. (Knightley 2004; Kotisova 2019)

Still, despite these challenges, several hundreds of reporters, photographers, and their fixers have been working hard to cover the Russian attack on Ukraine. Every day they work in physically and psychologically hazardous environments to fulfill the information needs of their audiences. According to the Committee to Protect Journalists at least 15 journalists had been killed in Ukraine after Russia's invasion in February 2022.

The main argument for this paper is that the current war between Russia and Ukraine has been the testbed for many new surveillance technologies, especially satellites, camera drones and CCTV cameras. This paper systematically gathers and critically analyzes both journalistic and interview data to understand the usefulness of new surveillance tools and methods in the work of war correspondents. It also recognizes the impact of open-source investigation as a new genre of conflict reporting. (Ristovka 2020) In addition, the ethics of war reporting, and the ethics of research on war reporting are emphasized in the paper.

## **What happens when the news is shut off? Non-journalistic information flows in Canadian rural communities**

Tyler W. S. Nagel, Geoffrey Hobbis, Marcel Broersma

University of Groningen, Groningen, Netherlands

### **Abstract**

This paper studies the provision of news in isolated rural communities in Alberta, Canada, where local journalism recedes. Grounded in an information ecology approach, we analyze how newspapers are only one news provider in these ecologies, and how the news function is now also furnished by non-journalistic institutions, including social media and community newsletters. We argue that in such cases, local news does not resemble professional journalism, but nevertheless is a valuable information source for residents.

We collected survey data and did interviews with a variety of actors, ranging from journalists to librarians and residents, in four communities. These were selected because they are remote and separated from other settlements and media markets by significant distances. The isolated nature of these communities makes them particularly appropriate laboratories to examine media effects: there is little “contamination” from competing media titles. However, the position of journalism in the communities’ information ecologies differ. While the first community has a vibrant, independent newspaper that is still printed on-site by the newspaper owner, the second has not had a printed newspaper in several decades. The third community had their only newspaper close in 2018 and is now replaced by an innovative social enterprise that is trying to fill the “news gap.” The fourth had their newspaper close in 2021 and is now without a newspaper or any sort of professional journalism.

We analyze how journalistic and non-journalistic actors contribute to the different information flows in these communities, showing how when local newspapers recede, their role in information ecologies is substituted by non-journalistic actors: news is shared in-person, on social media, and in non-journalistic publications. Such news is created without regard to traditional journalistic values, ethics, or sourcing. Despite these shortcomings, such non-journalistic outlets were viewed as essential by their audiences.

## **‘An Ally to Women Journalists.’ How Media Interlopers Help Journalists Navigate Dark Participation**

Jacob L Nelson<sup>1</sup>, Valérie Bélair-Gagnon<sup>2</sup>, Avery Holton<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>University of Utah, Salt Lake City, USA. <sup>2</sup>University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, USA

### **Abstract**

Journalists worldwide depend on social media platforms to find sources (Zhang & Li, 2020), distribute reporting (Peterson-Salahuddin & Diakopoulos, 2020), engage with audiences (Belair-Gagnon et al., 2018), and advocate for better labor conditions (Cohen & de Peuter, 2020). However, social media platforms also present significant risks and challenges, namely in the form of online harassment, trolling, and abuse (Miller, 2021), some of which can follow them offline (Lewis, Zamith, & Coddington, 2020). Recent research that has explored how journalism navigates these risks and challenges has consistently concluded that newsroom managers fail to offer meaningful protections and support to journalists enduring online harassment, which causes confusion surrounding what journalists should share online and also contributes to journalists’ increasingly diminished sense of well-being within the profession (Holton, Bélair-Gagnon, Bossio, & Molyneux, 2021; Miller & Nelson, 2022; Nelson, 2023). This study asks: How are journalism’s peripheral actors complementing the work being done (or, perhaps more accurately, *not* being done) by newsroom managers when it comes to offering support for journalists enduring the negative aspects of social media?

We draw on interview data collected from employees at the Coalition Against Online Violence, “a collection of global organizations working to find better solutions for women journalists facing online abuse, harassment and other forms of digital attack” (About the Coalition Against Online Violence, n.d.). To interpret our findings, we fuse two theoretical frameworks—the media interlopers concept, which describes the role of non-traditional journalism actors working on the periphery of the profession (Eldridge, 2018; Holton & Bélair-Gagnon, 2018) with “dark participation,” which refers to the “deeply sinister” aspects of audience engagement (Quandt, 2018). We conclude by exploring the implications of a news media environment where these peripheral actors feel compelled to act for journalists, their managers, and the public.

# Political Crisis Reporting in a Hybrid Media Environment: How Citizen Journalists and Legacy Media Report on Cameroon's Anglophone's Crisis

Edwin Tamfuh Nfor

University of Jyväskylä, Jyväskylä, Finland

## Abstract

Traditional media and citizen journalists in Cameroon have since October 2016 reported on what has become known as the Anglophone crisis. The crisis began as peaceful demands for better working conditions by professional groups in the English-speaking regions, but gradually became an insurgency. Observers have noted the waning monopoly of mainstream media, as (former) audiences are now actively involved in reporting on the crisis. In this study, we would answer the following questions: 1. How have traditional media and citizens collaborated or competed to gather, treat and disseminate information on the crisis? 2. What perception do they have of each other's reporting? 3. How do traditional media and citizen journalists enforce gatekeeping?

The theoretical basis is Andrew Chadwick's (2013) hybrid media system which highlights a change in media production patterns with untrained individuals using "newer" media to create and disseminate content. He highlights "interactions among older and newer media logics: technologies, genres, norms..."

The study is expected to bring new findings from Africa, a continent with increasing Internet penetration and several areas of political crises. Previous studies on the theory have focused on western countries whose realities are not always applicable in sub-Saharan Africa. This research will simultaneously examine two key actors in the hybrid media environment namely journalists and audiences. It therefore advances earlier studies that have concentrated either on mainstream media or citizen journalists.

Through purposive sampling, fifty reporters are being selected for in depth interviews. Data will be analyzed inductively through thematic analysis. After ten interviews, initial results reveal collaboration between citizen reporters and mainstream news outlets notwithstanding skepticism from some legacy media workers who consider citizen reporters as activists. This ongoing study is part of research for a PhD in the Jyväskylä University, Finland.

**Keywords:** Political crisis reporting, Cameroon Anglophone crisis, citizen journalists, hybrid media system

## Washington Post's Delivery of News on TikTok

Damilola Oduolowu, Vy Luong, LaRissa Lawrie

Missouri School of Journalism, University of Missouri, Columbia, USA

### Abstract

As more people acquire their news from TikTok, news organizations are motivated to use the platform to reach younger audiences (Matsa, 2022). In order to reach users, scholars have found that news organizations are attempting to adapt to the language and presentation style of TikTok (Vázquez-Herrero et al., 2022). This is described as “TikTok Logic” which includes presenting news in “skits”, and dances, using TikTok trends, and using humor (Vázquez-Herrero et al., 2022). While much research has been conducted on identifying how news organizations are using TikTok, it is unclear how audiences are receiving this stylistic change in reporting norms, sourcing, and role of expertise. Audiences’ social media comments reflect highly motivated, engaged users, as well as their individual involvement and concerns about the content (Khan, 2017). The Washington Post, in particular, has been praised as a leader in using TikTok Logic to deliver the news (Newman, 2022). Utilizing grounded theory, we conducted a content analysis of the comments on 100 videos from the Washington Post over a three-month time period to understand the impact of “TikTok Logic” on audience responses to journalism and news consumption. The Washington Post was selected because of their use of “TikTok logic”, as well as consistency among frequent uploads, and the amount of engagement on their videos. Our preliminary findings indicate that audiences are aware and respond to the “TikTok Logic” employed by the Washington Post – audiences express positive and negative feedback to the presentation style while they less frequently discuss the content of the news. The findings of this study will give us a better understanding of the current state of participatory journalism and reciprocity journalism (Lewis et al., 2014.), and how TikTok would create challenges or opportunities for the future of journalism.



# What makes reporting worthwhile? Conceptualizing how journalists create meaning in work

Gunhild R. Olsen

Kristiania University College, Oslo, Norway

## Abstract

Ongoing structural changes, such as declining advertising revenue and fragmenting audiences, have led to major alterations within contemporary journalism (Jaakkola et al., 2015). Journalists labor in increasingly precarious conditions (Deuze & Witschge, 2018; Örnebring et al., 2018) and experience major changes in professional values and working practices – where both journalistic autonomy and professional identity are challenged (Jaakkola et al., 2015). Despite this development, surveys show that most journalists are still satisfied and passionate about their work (Pew Research Center, 2022).

This paper aims at building a conceptual framework to better understand how journalists create meaning in work. Meaningful work can be described as work-related activities that are pleasant, enjoyable, and personally enriching, as well as contributing to something beyond pure self-interest (Bailey et al., 2017, p. 417). Connecting the concept of work meaningfulness to journalistic studies of role conceptions, ideologies, job satisfaction, working conditions, and emotional labor, the research question is: *How can meaningfulness be applied as a concept to understand the draw of journalism?* The proposed framework features the inward and outward dimensions of three central aspects which appear to be particularly important in making journalistic work meaningful: autonomy, recognition, and a sense of belonging. The inward dimensions of these aspects (workplace autonomy, good working conditions, and identification with the media organization) seem to be subordinate to the outward dimensions (establishing independent meaning systems, worker solidarity, and identification with professional values). This can explain why journalists, despite the recent development, still see reporting as a source of meaning.

Providing a deeper understanding of what journalists want from work, the framework can be applied to better understand the personal impact various structural changes have on reporters, and why some news organizations seem to handle the changes better than others.

## **From shoe-leather journalism to sedentary journalism: An analysis of recent newsroom trends and practices**

Troels G. Østergaard, Friederike N. Felbo

Danish School of Media and Journalism, Aarhus, Denmark

### **Abstract**

Digital technology has in recent years led to a rise in sedentary journalism, which means that reporters are increasingly stuck at the desk rather than conducting interviews face to face or otherwise collecting data in the physical reality outside of the newsroom. Most likely, the COVID-19 pandemic has further pushed this development. One recent study showed that journalists make up the most sedentary group of professionals in Denmark with 95.1 % of respondents answering that they spend 75 % or more of their working hours behind the desk. Such working conditions are somewhat at odds with one of journalism's fundamental claims for authority, which Professor Jay Rosen has dubbed awayness: "I'm there, you're not, let me tell you about it". (Rosen, 2013) Our study investigates the potential challenges arising from sedentary journalism from two vantage points. First, we conduct a content analysis of stories from the four leading legacy media in Denmark (Berlingske, Jyllands-Posten, Information, and Politiken) assigning each story to either the category of sedentary journalism or the category of awayness journalism. The aim is to explore the differences between the two categories of content by analyzing, among other things, methods of sourcing, levels of independent research, and topical framing. Second, we will conduct a series of qualitative interviews with both reporters and editors from the included legacy media, i.e., the primary gatekeepers. The aim is to gain insight into the editorial, ethical, and economical considerations, which precede decisions on whether to produce stories from the desk or whether to include one or several elements of awayness. At the Future of Journalism Conference, we wish to present the theoretical framework and the methodology of the study as well as our preliminary findings. The study is funded by the Danish School of Media and Journalism.

## **Opinion and explainer or reported stories from the ground – How are Indian prime-time TV anchor-journalists using YouTube to do alternative independent journalism**

Sambit Pal

International School of Broadcasting and Journalism, MIT Art, Design and Technology University,  
Pune, India

### **Abstract**

The hostile takeover of the media houses by the richest industrialists, subtle and overt intimidation of the journalists by the ruling establishment, right-wing Hindutva brigade's ideological dominance in the news ecosystem, harassment by the financial regulatory bodies and many more factors are allegedly shrinking the freedom of the press in India. These developments in the Indian media have forced many top anchor-journalists to quit the mainstream media and use YouTube as an alternative platform to cater to their audience base. Most recently Magsaysay award-winning TV journalist Ravish Kumar has quit one of the oldest private TV news channels, NDTV which top industrialist Gautam Adani has taken over. Earlier, senior editor Punya Prasun Bajpai had to quit ABP News (formerly Star News) after he aired a story that exposed the lies of the Indian PM Narendra Modi's government machinery. Both of them are on YouTube now. The list is long. This paper, through purposive sampling, is going to pick up five journalists who earlier hosted prime-time shows on Indian mainstream TV news channels and are now running their independent YouTube channels or distributing news content through the platform. Using qualitative content analysis of the latest videos on their channels, the study aims to find out the kind of alternative journalism these journalists are practising on YouTube. Are they reporting the same issues as the mainstream TV news media? Are these reports simple analyses sugar-coated with opinions and explanations or stories from the ground? Are these journalists giving a voice to the voiceless or using the digital platform to air their opinions? The results will highlight the trends of alternative journalism by the former mainstream journalists and if they are setting parallel agenda or echoing the corporate-driven media with just a different perspective.

# Troubled times for journalists: The impact of job insecurity, workload and external pressure on professionals' mental health

Dolors Palau Sampio, Maria Iranzo-Cabrera

University of Valencia, Valencia, Spain

## Abstract

Over the years, the journalistic profession has been suffering the effects of successive crisis – including the financial, the business model and the pandemic–, that have seriously affected not only the employment rates but also the job conditions. As a result of the mentioned crisis, journalism in countries such as Spain has been settled in the precariousness, a concept defined in terms of lack of reasonable economic remuneration, long-term employment stability and employability, career and skill progression, employment security and integration into social security system (Keller & Seifert, 2013; Standing, 2011; Norbäck & Styhre, 2021).

According to the 2022 Informe de la Profesión Periodística, 70% of the journalists surveyed feel that mental health is a problem for the Spanish professionals (APM, 2022). By using a qualitative methodology, this paper offers an in-depth approach to the journalists working conditions in Spain and how external pressure (commercial, political) affect not only their emotional well-being but also their mental health. By means of in-depth semi-structured interviews with twenty Spanish journalists, both representative in terms of age and gender conditions, this research aims to answer the following questions:

1. Which are the main aspects relating job precariousness, workload and external pressure that affect journalists' well-being?
2. How are labor conditions experienced by young and senior professional? There is a gender gap in the concerns?
3. How are journalists dealing with mental health problems?

Preliminary results show that most journalists suffer from symptoms related to the spectrum of mental health problems, from stress to fatigue or anxiety. However, they also unveil gender and generation gaps. Women are more likely than men to suffer these troubles and while early career journalists experience the impact on the lack of employment stability, older ones suffer from the pressures and work overload.

## **Raising relevance, lowering barriers: Journalists' solutions for news avoidance**

Dr. Ruth Palmer<sup>1</sup>, Professor Stephanie Edgerly<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>IE University, Madrid, Spain. <sup>2</sup>Northwestern University, Chicago, USA

### **Abstract**

What journalists believe about the growing phenomenon of news avoidance will affect the way they address it. Recent industry reports find 72% of newsroom leaders are worried about news avoidance (Newman, 2023), but we still know little about how journalists imagine solutions to it.

In this paper we address that question by analyzing how journalists in the United States (N=1,543) responded to two survey questions about news avoidance: first, whether they believe it is possible to convert consistent news avoiders into more regular news consumers (a closed-ended question) and, if they replied in the affirmative, a follow-up open-ended question about how they believe that could happen.

Overall, 67.1% of respondents said news avoiders could be converted. A logistic regression shows that younger journalists, those with higher levels of education, those in non-editing/reporting positions, and those who personally know a news avoider are more likely to believe this. Notably, there were no differences based on the type of news organization where journalists worked.

Next, we deep dive into journalists' imagined solutions to news avoidance. Initial findings from qualitative textual analysis suggest two interlocking patterns. First, respondents recognize that, on balance, news avoiders see news as poor value for the amount of time, emotional energy, and intellectual and practical effort required (a finding resonant with what studies of news avoiders have found, see Edgerly 2022; Palmer & Toff, 2020). Most recommended solutions fall into one of two categories: either to increase the value (or perceived value) of news by making news more relevant, or to lower costs by reducing various barriers to consuming it. Second, responses suggest a spectrum of actors who would be responsible for taking action, ranging from news organizations themselves, to more collaborative efforts with outside organizations, to governmental or abstract actors.

# Global Television News in the Age of Nationalism and Populism: A Survey of Recent Changes in International and Transnational Broadcasting

Chris Paterson, Jasmin Surm

University of Leeds, Leeds, United Kingdom

## Abstract

Since Cushion and Lewis published their work *The Rise of 24-Hour News Television: Global Perspectives* in 2010, we have seen the rise of highly ideological international broadcasting and a more overt public diplomacy mission for transnational broadcasting. While Al Jazeera and TeleSur traded on the theme of being against Western imperialism and serving as the voice of the Global South, other widely disrupted services with direct sponsorship by their host governments refined their formulae for the distribution of state propaganda branded as serious journalism without a Western taint.

As popular authoritarian leaders have come to dominate political life in several countries with influential and well-established international news broadcasters (such as China, Russia, and Turkey), many services have become emboldened to distribute propaganda in ways they would have avoided when initially establishing their international credibility; a period when many of them employed journalists who had come from Western broadcasters and news agencies. The last half-decade has seen a more overt and widespread politicisation of transnational broadcasting. The commercial success of Fox News in the US, even as it entered into a synergistic alliance with the Trump presidency, seemed to demonstrate that broadcasting in service of populist politicians is a winning strategy.

This trend has left broadcast regulators in many countries having to determine if the balance of journalism and state propaganda has shifted too far toward the latter and, in several cases, implement bans, for instance, in the UK when the media regulator Ofcom revoked the broadcasting licence of RT in March 2022.

## Hate speech against journalists on social media in Spain

Simón Peña-Fernández, Ainara Larrondo-Ureta, Ángela Alonso-Jurnet

University of the Basque Country, Leioa, Spain

### Abstract

Hate speech is strongly related with the spread of disinformation (Ben-David & Matamoros, 2016; Poole, Haifa & Quincey, 2020) and has become one of the biggest challenges for democratic societies.

Attacks on and threats to journalists and the media constrain freedom of expression and dissemination of certain information, and generate fear and self-censorship, undermining the media's role in democratic societies (Clark & Grech, 2017).

Recent reports by the Council of Europe (2017), UNESCO (2020) and RSF (2021) highlight that 60-70% of women journalists have suffered online harassment. These percentages are much higher than those of men. In the same vein, Gardiner's study (2018) concluded after having studied 70 million comments on the website of The Guardian that female and BAME (Black, Asian and minority ethnic) journalists were subject to more abuse than their male, white counterparts. The double condition of being a woman and belonging to a minority group can mean aggravating the hate speech to which it is exposed. Hence, hate speech against journalists needs to be understood also within the context of gender discrimination and violence against women (Stahel and Schoen, 2019).

In this context, this paper presents the results of the comparative analysis of hate speech against journalists in Spain through social networks. To this end, the messages published during a year in the personal accounts of 420 Spanish journalists on Twitter, men and women, have been analyzed. The messages they have published have been studied in terms of engagement and sentiment.

Preliminary results show less engagement with the content published by women, compared to a somewhat higher percentage of responses with negative content, which confirms the results of previous studies.

# Paywalling journalism: Newsroom Ethnography in a Finnish Tabloid

Pauliina Penttilä

Tampere University, Tampere, Finland

## Abstract

Newspaper paywalls have been studied as revenue streams complementing the declining advertising and print revenues (Myllylahti 2017). Paywalled content and the audience adaptation to paywalls have been subjects of interest (Sjøvaag 2016). As paywalls have become more common, questions have been raised about their impact on democracy. In the commonly used freemium model, for example, so-called “premium” content is chargeable, and the rest of the news is free. Does the paywall divide citizens to those who can pay and those who can't? Is journalism able to provide quality news for everyone (Benson 2019)?

Contents of chargeable journalism depend on information about readers and their behaviour. A dominant source for this information is audience metrics, which shape news organizations' ideas about the audience. How paywalling with the help of audience metrics affects journalistic practices, hasn't yet been thoroughly studied.

This paper presents early results of an ethnographic study conducted in the Finnish newspaper *Ilta-lehti* during Spring 2023. *Ilta-lehti* is a Nordic tabloid, which started publishing chargeable content in March 2021. Two years later, the paper is making ambitious expansion plans for the role of chargeable content. Due to this, the tabloid aims to develop audience metrics' capacities in leading the way toward a larger and more engaged subscriber base.

The ethnographic observation aims to understand (1) how "paywalled journalism" is being developed, (2) what is the role of audience metrics in catalyzing the development project, (3) what sort of cultural negotiations take place in the newsroom, and (4) does the experiment change journalism produced at *Ilta-lehti* or journalists' understanding of it?

In the era of digital journalism, professional ethos of tabloid journalists has strongly leaned on making free journalism for large audience. The study intends to comprehend how paywalling and segregated audiences change the ideals and professionalism of tabloid journalists.



# **A Critical Examination of the Media Coverage Surrounding the Fight for Jewish Ethiopian Immigration 2015-2020**

Uri Perednik

Bar-Ilan University, Ramat Gan, Israel

## **Abstract**

The way in which minorities are covered in the media can affect their perception by the general public; this coverage may reinforce stereotypes and prejudices against the group, or alternatively provide a voice and the possibility to consolidate their identity (Hall, 1997). The media coverage of the Ethiopian population, a discernible minority in Israel, is an interesting case study in this context. Over the last decade, this population has received greater media exposure in their struggle to achieve equal rights in Israeli society, with one of their main issues being the campaign to immigrate the remaining Jewish Ethiopian population (Talmi-Cohn, 2020). In 2016, the Israeli government announced that it did not intend to implement the immigration as promised, leading to a political and public contestation (Protocol 149, Interior and Environmental Protection Committee).

Based on a thematic analysis of selected texts from traditional and online Israeli news outlets, my research demonstrates clear trends in the ways the Israeli media describes Ethiopian immigration, enriching the existing research on the topic, such as the work of Mengistu & Avraham (2015). The analysis found that when Israeli media outlets used the government as their main source, they were more hostile toward the Ethiopian population. While articles with a larger variety of sources, gave a stronger voice to Ethiopian Jews. Additionally, the use of the collective name "Falashmura" to describe Ethiopian immigrants enhanced the narrative of "otherness" and a threat to the national identity. Using thematic analysis, I show how the increase in political representation for the Ethiopian community within the government, led to a larger understanding and sympathy for the cause of immigration from Ethiopia within the Israeli media.

# **Boundary-work in the Nordic media model: A comparative analysis of institutional responses to alternative media in Norway, Sweden and Denmark**

Leif Hemming Pedersen, Karoline Andrea Ihlebæk, Tine Ustad Figenschou, Eva Mayerhöffer

<sup>1</sup>Roskilde University, Roskilde, Denmark. <sup>2</sup>OsloMet, Oslo, Norway

## **Abstract**

The paper analyses responses from the journalistic field in Norway, Sweden and Denmark to the rise and competition of alternative media. While the three countries share many similar traits politically, socially and culturally, they differ in terms of the presence and impact of alternative media, creating ample opportunity to comparatively explore similarities and differences when it comes to boundary-work and professional-alternative contentions. Combining a strategic action field approach (SAF) (Fligstein & McAdam, 2011) with a media system perspective, we position the journalistic field in the three countries as a “meso-level social order where actors interact with knowledge of one another under a set of common understandings about the purpose of the field, the relationships in the field (including who has power and why) and the field’s rules” (p.3). The essence of this framework is to enhance understandings of how journalism results from continuous positioning between social actors, including those that protect the field and those that challenge it. Although the power dynamics of social fields are most apparent with severe disruptions or critical incidents, the struggle for positioning also occurs during stable periods. Methodologically, our study builds on semi-structured interviews with key ‘backplayers’ in the Nordic media system (i.e. governance units such as professional associations, press councils, funding authorities, unions), as well as news editors in leading news organizations. In the paper we discuss how these actors evaluate the rise of alternative media and their impact in the respective countries, and the material (money, access, knowledge) and symbolic resources (legitimacy, authority, influence) that are at play. The study shows how alternative media as a phenomenon contribute to a re-definition and stabilization of the established journalistic field, but also reveals that these processes play out in a particular way in each of the three countries.

# The normalization of changing news use: A longitudinal study of what drives changing news repertoires among young adults

Chris Peters<sup>1</sup>, Josephine Lehaff<sup>2</sup>, Julie Vulpius<sup>1</sup>, Kim Schrøder<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Roskilde University, Roskilde, Denmark. <sup>2</sup>University of Groningen, Groningen, Netherlands

## Abstract

Studies of everyday life frequently note shifts whereby the novel, strange, and disruptive become taken-for-granted, familiar, and mundane through processes of normalization (Highmore, 2002; Silverstone, 2005). The same process seems to occur for ‘news repertoires’ (Hassebrink & Hepp, 2017; Peters & Schrøder, 2018), but it is unclear how people negotiate this in a digital media landscape beset by rapid change (Moe & Ytre-Arne, 2022; Swart et al., 2022). Given these challenges, this article investigates how and why news repertoires become meaningful over time. Developing an innovative, longitudinal, comparative research design over a two-year period, it compares the transformations of news repertoires of 24 Danish participants, aged 18-24, meeting this same group in 2019 and 2021. In both meetings, the study conducted an iterative encounter lasting two hours, consisting of a Q-sort exercise, think-aloud protocols, and semi-structured interviews. Participants ranked and reflected on 36 ways to encounter news, incorporating a broad concourse of informational alternatives (Peters et al., 2021; Vulpius et al., 2022). On the second occasion, in 2021, they completed the same sorting exercise and were then presented with the version they completed two-years earlier—countering methodological challenges associated with empirical recall. They then reflected on what, exactly, changed over this timeframe. The paper finds that changes in news preferences are normalized over time even when alterations in sensemaking practices are significant. Despite such processes of incorporation, what at first appear to be unconscious changes by participants are often revealed to be driven by issues around routine (new rhythms in everyday life), proximity (geographic and social distance), relevance (life circumstances and technological developments), and feeling (affective engagement). This study’s findings have significant civic implications in terms of changing assessments and sentiments of worthwhile patterns of use, and how life factors and mediated affordances shape perceived informational practices.

# To procure or not procure: improving the conditions for journalistic AI adoption from external technology providers

Stanislaw Piasecki, Natali Helberger

University of Amsterdam, Amsterdam, Netherlands

## Abstract

Media organisations that decide to integrate AI systems are faced with difficult questions and choices. Which tools are available? Which to build in-house? Which to procure from external tech companies? How to prepare the organisation, in-house processes and teams? So far, very little research has explored the process of procuring AI systems in the media, the contractual conditions and strategic considerations that are involved, or how those conditions can impact the feasibility and sustainability of AI adoption. This article responds to the following questions: how to decide whether procuring AI technologies from external companies is in agreement with a media organisation's professional values, mission and objectives? How to counter the often privileged negotiation position of companies providing AI tools to newsrooms? In this context, what should media organisations take into consideration before, during and after the negotiation process? To respond to those questions, in addition to a doctrinal and theoretical study, terms and conditions written by providers of AI technologies are analysed. Surveys and semi-structured interviews with members of media organisations that are likely to (or have already) procured journalistic AI are also conducted to gain a more in-depth understanding of the practical issues involved. Grounded in empirical research, the article will conclude with concrete suggestions for procurement guidelines that are relevant along all steps of the procurement process: problem definition, planning, solicitation, critical evaluation of technology solutions and contract execution. While they would be useful for everyone, those guidelines could be particularly beneficial for smaller and local media actors as they have less experience in implementing AI systems within their processes. The main purpose of this paper is to discuss the considerations involved in the procurement of journalistic AI by newsrooms and how procurement guidelines, currently developed by the Council of Europe, could support them in this endeavour.

## **Altering news use to deal with a toxic news environment**

Ike Picone, Ruben Vandenplas, Pauljan Truyens, Sarah Vis

imec-SMIT-VUB, Brussels, Belgium

### **Abstract**

Hate speech, disinformation, information overload... our networked news environment becomes increasingly 'polluted' by intrusive, unsettling, polarising, and non-factual information, which we would label 'toxic' information. In this paper, we seek to explore how news users respond to this 'toxic' environment by altering their news use practices through the lens of news repertoires (Edgerly, 2015). Following Vandenplas (2022), we propose to combine quantitative data to map news repertoires and qualitative data to take us on a tour of their inner logics.

First, we will use the Belgian data from the Digital News Report to identify archetypical news repertoires and identify significant changes in their composition over four years (2020-2023) – through a Latent Class Analysis that considers both the frequency and kind/brand of news consulted. In previous research using DNR data (Picone & Vandenplas, 2021) we have identified limited, occasional, and panoramic news repertoires in Belgium. Initial analyses of the data from 2020 to 2022 do indicate that the limited repertoire turned into an almost mono-focal, television-centred repertoire and the panoramic repertoire became less varied. We now further hypothesize that next to social status (Picone & Vandenplas, 2021), perceived exposure to and concerns about disinformation are indicators of someone featuring a specific news repertoire.

Second, we will analyse 20 in-depth interviews with news users between 18 and 24 years old purposefully selected across the repertoires identified in the 2023 DNR data for Belgium. We know from previous qualitative research (Vandenplas et al., 2021) that citizens reconfigured their news repertoires to cope with the overtly negative stream of Covid-19 related information. We now investigate how and why news users make certain alterations to their news repertoire to deal with toxic news.

# The audiences' expectations toward transparency of data journalism

Colin Porlezza<sup>1</sup>, Marília Gehrke<sup>2</sup>, Ester Appelgren<sup>3</sup>, Jack Rosenberry<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Università della Svizzera Italiana, Lugano, Switzerland. <sup>2</sup>University of Southern Denmark, Odense, Denmark. <sup>3</sup>Södertörn University, Stockholm, Sweden. <sup>4</sup>St. John Fisher University, Rochester, USA

## Abstract

In the past two decades, digital journalism scholarship has shifted from a celebratory to a critical appraisal of transparency (Karlsson, 2022). Transparency was once considered a normative fundamental that would allow journalism to recover trust and credibility, but the effects were observed to be limited within general audiences (Karlsson & Clerwall, 2018).

Nonetheless, different from the digital journalism body of knowledge, data journalism's theoretical foundations were inherited from Precision Journalism (Meyer, 2002) and Computer-Assisted Reporting, oriented by the unit of method (Lippmann, 1920), verification, and replicability, intending to push journalism toward science. Such procedures still guide data journalists (Author & Colleagues, 2018; Author, 2020), despite the challenges of verifying data sources (D'Ignazio & Klein, 2020; Lawson et al., 2021; Tong, 2022). Even though openness was investigated in data journalism stories (Zamith, 2019), scholarship on the audience has been barely explored.

We investigate whether data journalism audiences' expectations toward transparency meet what has been offered by news organizations in four countries, such as (the existence) of a *byline*, *profile and expertise*, *documents and databases as sources*, *methodology*, *open source code*, *financial sustainability*, and *manual of style and ethical procedures* (Author, 2021). We argue that data journalism companies and audiences are subscribed to a singular communication contract where they are aware of how to report information and interpret it (Charaudeau, 2002). Furthermore, this paper contributes to the theoretical discussion in journalism studies by exploring the values associated with transparency as seen by the audience members in relation to previous research on norms and ethics (Turilli & Floridi, 2009).

We ask:

RQ1: What do audiences expect to achieve when reading data journalism stories?

RQ2: Which transparency features emerge in the audiences' discourse?

RQ3: What are the public perceptions of transparency within journalism articles and information disclosure about news outlets?

To answer those questions, we will examine the readership expectations in Brazil, Italy, Sweden, and the United States. We will conduct in-depth interviews with 15 adults per country (N=60) using snowball sampling, having as a criterion being a regular reader of data journalism publications. Having an educational background in communication will count as an exclusion criterion.

# **Journalism in Crisis: Lessons of Challenge, Strategy and Leadership in Local News Sustainability in Ukraine during the War with Russia**

Marisa Porto

University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, USA

## **Abstract**

The business model for local news is challenging around the globe. Digital transformation, media abundance, audience fragmentation and the power shift from media producers to content consumers are several of a myriad of business challenges facing local news outlets today. The pandemic added another layer of challenge, causing a decline in advertising revenue that forced local news outlets to reconsider their revenue strategies. These same challenges have faced news leaders in Ukraine, but they have faced an additional layer of unique business challenges since February 24, 2022. Interviews were conducted with news leaders from print, television, radio and digital platforms during the war to determine what business and leadership challenges they have faced since the invasion and what strategies they used to address those challenges. The interviews included leaders from Ukrainian news outlets that decided to relocate their teams and their businesses because their communities were in active combat zones. Interviews also were conducted with organizations that provided aid during the crisis to determine existing market conditions and future leadership challenges facing the industry and its leaders. We evaluate the challenges, strategies and lessons learned from those interviews with local news leaders on the front lines.

## **Deepfakes in Journalism. Risks and Opportunities, Prevention and Intervention.**

Patric Raemy, Manuel Puppis

University of Fribourg, Fribourg, Switzerland

### **Abstract**

Deepfakes as a phenomenon exemplifies both the evolution of disinformation and technological progress. Disinformation evolved from mostly written articles and comments towards synthetic video and/or audio content that is difficult to distinguish from unaltered media content. First, this increases the risk of false or harmful information affecting not only public opinion but also trust in and credibility of journalism (Godulla et al., 2021). Second, journalists themselves run risk of being affected by slander using Deepfakes (e.g., Ayyub, 2018). Third, artificial intelligence as the major technology behind Deepfakes also offers some opportunities for journalism such as the potential to increase personalization, visualization and immersion of news (Wahl-Jorgensen & Carlson, 2021). Despite the increasing relevance and scholarly interest, there are only few empirical studies exploring Deepfakes in journalism so far. Little is known about how journalists discuss the impact of Deepfakes on journalistic work and how they negotiate potential risks and opportunities. Using qualitative interviews with representatives of Switzerland's major news media organizations, the proposed contribution explores the perception of Deepfakes, strategies to deal with risks and opportunities, and how prevention and intervention mechanisms have been implemented in news organizations to detect Deepfakes. A qualitative content analysis (Mayring, 2022) of the interview data reveal that only a few news organizations provide dedicated resources to deal with Deepfakes. Deepfakes are mostly seen as a special case of the disinformation problem, forcing journalists to become even more careful when selecting and publishing content, and increasing the need to promote media and information literacy among their audience. The interviewees highlight the lasting importance of holding on to journalistic standards and norms of fact checking in light of the emergence of new technologies. Results further indicate how journalists' professional identity can be challenged, adapted and reinforced by new technological phenomenon such as Deepfakes. Finally, the interviews show an awareness of the need to discuss what journalism should (or should not) be and how it might evolve alongside technology. In sum, the study shows that while Deepfakes create new technological challenges for fact-checking, it also reinforces the importance of journalism as an institution providing professionally selected and verified information to its audience.



## **Covering deprivation in India: theoretical and practical challenges**

Nalini Rajan

Asian College of Journalism, Chennai, India

### **Abstract**

What is the meaning of 'deprivation'? Admittedly, the word has multiple meanings, and is, in a sense, a cluster concept. There are two different kinds of clusters associated with the word 'deprivation'. One could be deprived of love affection, friendship, family, pride, or self-respect. Alternatively, one could be deprived of food, education, healthcare, housing, provision of drinking water and sanitation. This paper focuses on the second cluster pertaining to economic deprivation, although it seeks on occasion to touch upon sentiments like self-respect, which have changed over time in India, especially when it refers to traditionally oppressed groups like Dalits or women. It also looks at the way journalists cover -- or don't cover -- deprivation.

Indeed, driven by competitive pressures and commercial considerations, the Indian media rarely covers stories of deprivation. And when it does, facts, causes and effects often give way to sensationalism, largely because of a lack of understanding of the complex and contentious issues involved.

Why should journalists know about these complex and contentious issues? There are a number of reasons. First, these issues can have life-and-death significance to a large number of people, especially the poor. Whether a particular person has access to state support systems would depend on whether the person is identified as poor or not. Second, an understanding of the reality of the depth of poverty in India (particularly in the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic) would provide the much needed backdrop to a journalist's story. It would allow the journalist to place the issue within a larger context and impart a degree of sensitivity to the stories he or she is asked to write. Finally, the journalist who functions as truth-teller and watchdog will be obliged to represent the interests of those who experience some form of deprivation.

## **‘The New Normal’: Russian media and the state-sanctioned homophobia**

Aleksandra Raspopina

London Metropolitan University, London, United Kingdom

### **Abstract**

The first of the so-called ‘anti-gay’ laws was passed in Russia in June 2013, imposing fines on those who ‘provide information about the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community to minors or hold gay pride rallies’ (Associated Press 2013). In 2022, the law was expanded to adults as well, banning all media and online resources, advertising, film, TV and theatre from portraying LGBTQ+ topics, people, or fictional characters in a positive light (Associated Press 2022).

This paper explores the coverage of LGBTQ+ topics in 10 mainstream Russian media outlets before, during, and after each of the two ‘anti-gay’ laws was adopted. The paper takes a mixed methods approach, first looking quantitatively at the amount of coverage on LGBTQ+ topics in the selected media outlets, and then zooms in qualitatively to examine the nature and tone of this coverage. Though this paper is a work in progress, preliminary findings show that both the amount and tone of coverage changed dramatically when each law entered the public discourse as a law proposal – there was significantly more coverage, and the tone of media publications grew increasingly hostile. Additionally, the paper finds that in 2022 and 2023 the tone of media coverage of LGBTQ+ issues became violent, which is analysed with reference to the war in Ukraine and the increasing climate of fear and anti-Western sentiment inside Russia (Merz 2022).

## Digital Courts and Journalism: Implications for Open Justice.

Sally Reardon, Bernhard Gross, Tom Smith, Marcus Keppel-Palmer

University of the West of England, Bristol, Bristol, United Kingdom

### Abstract

During the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020, courts in England and Wales moved online virtually overnight. Whilst this period was short and much of this online delivery reverted to traditional 'in person' courts, there appears to be a willingness by the UK Parliament and HMCTS to more quickly expand online court hearings which are livestreamed. However, the implications for the principle of Open Justice and journalism are concerns expressed in a recent UK parliament Justice Select Committee report which stated: 'The legal and constitutional status of open justice is immaterial if journalists face...hurdles. Those barriers have the potential to create a chilling effect for journalists and the public by discouraging them from exercising their right to attend hearings.'" (House of Commons Justice Committee 2022).

Our recent research on online courts (Smith et al, 2022) explored the perspectives of experienced court reporters during the first Covid-19 lockdown. This showed that even professional journalists faced difficulties in understanding, accessing and reporting on digital criminal courts. One of the key findings was that digital courts worked sufficiently well only if a journalist was already a 'regular' at a court, and had established relationships not negated by the online context. However, for those outside of the 'club' – such as members of the public, journalists trying to access an unfamiliar court, new court reporters, and journalism students, accessing online court spaces became much more problematic.

In order to address this issue, this paper will discuss the outcomes of a new pilot project to examine the practical operation of a fully remote court currently running in England, where journalism students and members of the public test the protocols and procedures for accessing and observing the livestreamed digital court in real time with real cases, in order to assess their ability to be open justice 'watchdogs'.

## **Filling the gap? When non-journalists produce and fact-check**

Aline Grupillo Reis

University of Beira Interior, Covilhã, Portugal

### **Abstract**

Every day, important facts come to public for the active participation of non-journalists in the production and transmission of journalistic content through a certain App Culture. Using the app “Onde Tem Tiroteio” (OTT) as case study, this work aims to discuss the role of the public as the main agent to produce reliable information in territories where journalists cannot cover or do not report.

The app, used by five million people, was developed in Brazil to share information about conflicted territories where journalists are unable to provide a proper journalistic coverage due to violence and the presence of paramilitary groups. In these areas, there is a collaborative activity of a journalistic nature carried out by citizens for citizens. They verify the information and builds something that resembles news stories. They are the ones who validate the relevance of the information, which is later appropriated by the traditional media. These seek to obscure the authorship of the content, making this not a collaboration relationship, but a dependency relationship.

Among the citizens who use the app, the confidence is formed by strong bonds, built by the feeling of responsibility and the desire to share reliable information, collaboratively verified, aiming at the common good. Between journalists and OTT, however, trust takes on an ambiguous form: journalists tend to trust the content provided by the app, because OTT is where journalists are not, but they try not to assume who creates the content as a co-creator.

This study is part of a PhD thesis, guided by the assumptions of virtual ethnography, we investigated the dynamics of posts during six consecutive months in 2020. We analyze 2,607 alerts that resulted in 46,395 reactions from users and 3,834 comments. The study was complemented with 13 in-depth interviews with journalists from different Brazilian media outlets.

Keywords: Violence; OTT; Fact-check; trust; Journalism

# **“Role conflicts and coping strategies in communication practice in times of blurring boundaries between journalism, public relations and advertising”**

Gisela Reiter<sup>1</sup>, Uta Russmann<sup>2</sup>, Sabine Einwiller<sup>3</sup>, Jens Seiffert-Brockmann<sup>4</sup>, Lina Stürmer<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>FHWien der WKW, University of Applied Sciences for Management & Communication, Vienna, Austria. <sup>2</sup>Department of Media, Society and Communication Universität Innsbruck, Innsbruck, Austria. <sup>3</sup>Department of Communication, University of Vienna, Vienna, Austria. <sup>4</sup>Department of Business Communication Vienna University of Economics and Business, Vienna, Austria

## **Abstract**

The boundaries between public communication professions become more and more blurry. Fierce market competition emerged from new business forms like news aggregators, and the widespread notion that information is free, created severe economic stress and a rise of ethical conflicts especially for journalists (Alexander, 2015; Hanitsch & Vos, 2018). The paper builds upon role theory to systematically outline different types of ethical conflicts and the resulting coping strategies. Depending on the situation, several types of role conflicts such as inter-role conflicts, person-role conflicts and intra-role conflicts can be differentiated (Mohr & Puck, 2007; Padney & Kumar, 1997). Role conflicts for journalists or public relations practitioners have been studied with various foci (Koch et al., 2021; Steinmann et al., 1993; Viererbl & Koch, 2019) but the paper will provide a comparison of different working fields closely linked to one another. Our two research questions are therefore:

RQ1: How do journalists, journalist/content producers and former journalists perceive their roles in times of blurring boundaries between journalism and other communication professions?

RQ2: What ethical conflicts and coping strategies arise for them due to the blurring boundaries?

To tackle the problem, we gathered a broad sample of 27 practitioners, consisting of 9 Journalists, 9 former journalists who now work as content producers and 9 other communication professionals, mainly working in PR and marketing. The semi-structured expert interviews (Galletta, 2013) were conducted between December 2021 and May 2022 and analyzed with MAXQDA software. The paper reports on how practitioners perceive ethical conflicts in their daily practice and systematizes them, using a typology of conflict. These conflict types are then matched with corresponding coping strategies. Further, the paper discusses how far a level of systemic conflict needs to be considered in applying role theory to the study of ethical conflicts in communication practice.

## Repairing deviant journalistic practice: The Dupont de Ligonès case

Pauline M Renaud

City, University of London, London, United Kingdom

### **Abstract**

The present iteration of the information disorder has created several challenges for news organisations, not least exacerbated pressure to verify, in a timely fashion, a deluge of rumours, false stories, and conspiracy theories, all of which have found new impetus through social media. The imperative, for many journalists, is to maintain their legitimacy as ‘truth mediators’ (Michailidou & Trenz, 2021) in the current context.

However, when journalists themselves contribute to spreading misinformation or disinformation, adhering to that imperative can prove complex. Prior research (Bennett, Gressett & Haltom, 1985) has shown that the media may attempt to ‘repair’ problematic news stories that fail to conform to expectations of fairness, accuracy, and quality by reaffirming the boundaries of what is acceptable journalistic practice.

This manuscript examines the case of news outlets in France unknowingly disseminating false information about the alleged arrest of Xavier Dupont de Ligonès, a man suspected of murdering his family in 2011. Analysing news articles about the aftermath of the false scoop, findings suggest that the French media repaired this news story through three main narrative strategies: minimisation, demarcation, and admonition.

By either minimising the issue with this story, distancing themselves from it or blaming a certain type of reporting or media for it, news organisations normalised it as an unfortunate case of deviant practice in an otherwise sound journalistic paradigm. The limited amount of self-reflection demonstrates that the question of accountability in French journalism is yet to form an intrinsic part of the field’s professional identity.

# **Criminalizing independent journalism: the media war during Russia's invasion of Ukraine**

James Rodgers

City, University of London, London, United Kingdom

## **Abstract**

The media war that has accompanied Russia's invasion of Ukraine has shown how important a part of 21st century conflict journalism remains, and also demonstrated the power authoritarian regimes possess to restrict reporting—even in the age of smartphones and social media.

In a move that echoed the draconian censorship laws of earlier ages, the Russian government declared its media war just days into the war. New legislation meant journalists risked gaol if they refused to follow dutifully the official line that the war was 'a special military operation', and not a war at all. Yet this effective ban on independent journalism may be seen as a kind of compliment: a testament to the power that reporters have to challenge the Kremlin's justification for making war.

By discussing examples of international news content produced since the start of the war, and drawing also on interviews with international journalists who decided to leave Russia in 2022, this paper will offer an assessment of the media war so far: the approaches of the Russian and Ukrainian presidents, and the challenges for journalism.

It will argue that while the Kremlin's biggest success has been placing 20th century controls on 21st century media, the west's response—restricting state-backed Russian media outlets such as Sputnik and RT—is ultimately counter-productive. For one day this war will end, and the US, UK, EU and others will have to forge a new relationship with Russia. It is unlikely to be one of friendship—but even one accepting distance, division, and discord can better be managed by the kind of dialogue of which journalism can be the starting point.

## **Avoiding the flag. Exploring Snapchat's gatekeeping dynamics in the newsroom.**

Heidi Rosok-Dahl, Ragnhild Kristine Olsen

Oslo Metropolitan University, Oslo, Norway

### **Abstract**

News media's relationship with social media platforms is complex and characterized by dependencies and conflicts. Building presence on social media platforms comes with benefits such as generating visibility and engagement particularly among hard-to-reach younger audiences. On the other hand, the platforms serve as gatekeepers to the public and set standards that news media must abide by if they want to be part of the networks that platforms enable.

In recent years, Snapchat has become an increasingly important social media platform to reach young audiences, and many legacy news organizations have embraced Snapchat as a more playful distribution channel for news content. There has so far been limited research on how newsrooms navigate Snapchat standards, such as the platform's "flagging" practice which, based on algorithmic filtering, reduces spreading of content. The present study addresses this gap by investigating how journalists publishing on Snapchat adapt their stories to meet Snapchat's rules and regulations. Building on a three-month ethnographic study at Norway's public broadcaster NRK, the study explores how the editorial group of "NRK UNG" (youth) choose, develop, publish, and evaluate their stories published on Snapchat to reach the younger generation. Moreover, the study asks what stories are flagged, and why, and what impact such flagging has on newsroom practices.

Drawing on gatekeeping theory, the present study shows how Snapchat's flagging prevents certain news stories from spreading. Thus, human news judgement based on well-established news values are challenged by algorithms which filter out content based on opaque and sometimes questionable standards. The flagging is seen to influence news practices and make journalists more cautious about what stories to publish and how to present them, effectively positioning Snapchat as an extra gatekeeping-layer in the news production.



## How marginalised and underserved audiences across the Global North and South perceive symbolic representation in newsrooms and news coverage

Amy A Ross Arugedas, Sayan Banerjee, Camila Mont'Alverne, Benjamin Toff, Richard Fletcher, Rasmus Kleis Nielsen

University of Oxford, Oxford, United Kingdom

### Abstract

Catalysed by various social movements around the globe, many newsrooms have, in recent years, begun reckoning with how their internal practices may contribute to a lack of diversity both internally and in the news coverage they produce. However, research on how members of underrepresented groups think about news coverage about people like them is limited, especially outside of the United States. In this study, we take a comparative and intersectional approach to understand how specific marginalised and/or underserved audiences in various national contexts perceive representation in news in relation to their own identities. We draw on 40 targeted focus groups across four countries in the Global North and South with individuals from specific identities or backgrounds based on: race (Brazil and the United States), place (United States and United Kingdom), class (United Kingdom), and caste and religion (India). Our preliminary findings identify five core themes that members of communities underrepresented in news offered as criticisms about journalistic practices in their countries: negativity, unfair treatment, invisibility, stereotyping, and divisiveness. Despite considerable commonalities across groups with many perceiving journalists as out-of-touch and unable to understand their lived experiences, the substance of these perceived deficiencies and their salience often varied by group, country, and sometimes also cut across other lines of identity (e.g., age and gender). Participants also held somewhat differing—and at times contradictory—expectations and ideas about how these shortcomings should be addressed. We discuss the implications of these findings for newsrooms interested in reaching and cultivating trust with the audience segments.

## **Journalism as technology-inspired engagement of the information elites? Exploring the futures knowledge of entrepreneurial pioneer journalists.**

Soc.Sc. Juho Ruotsalainen

Finland Futures Research Centre, University of Turku, Helsinki, Finland

### **Abstract**

The journalism industry is increasingly turning to foresight to make sense of its possible futures (Manninen et al., 2022). The shift is, in particular, driven by the uncertainties brought about by journalism's transition to the digital, networked media. Foresight methods, such as expert panels regarding future trends, are employed in the industry to bolster strategic decision making, but also to creatively imagine new futures for journalism (Newman, 2021). By considering alternative futures in their strategies and everyday practices, journalists and news organisations can proactively prepare to the changing media landscape and seek success from new initiatives.

A prominently futures-oriented group are pioneer journalists, who develop new journalistic norms, practices, and imaginaries of journalism's futures (Hepp & Loosen, 2021). To make better sense of foresight in the journalistic field, the paper examines the futures knowledge of pioneer journalists. Futures knowledge does not comprise only empirical conjectures, but involves the collective hopes, expectations, visions, and other such socially shared imaginations of journalism's futures (Creech & Nadler, 2018). Rather than anticipating the possible futures of journalism, therefore, the paper focuses on how journalism's futures are being socially constructed and performed in the present (Groves, 2017).

Operationalising pioneer analysis as a study of journalistic entrepreneurs, the paper explores how entrepreneurial journalists imagine journalism's futures in semi-structured interviews, what kind of journalistic language they pioneer in their daily news, and how they pursue to re-shape journalistic norms. Assuming a relational perspective, the paper shows that both the conceptions and journalistic practices of entrepreneurial pioneer journalists are influenced by the core futures imaginaries of the technological field, peer-to-peer and the Californian ideology (Benkler, 2006; Barbrook & Cameron, 1996). This is problematic for journalism as public service, as the imaginaries of networked media are biased towards serving information elites (Kreiss et al., 2011; Robinson & Wang, 2018).

## **Life in Exile: Risks and Challenges for Refugee Journalists**

Sanem Şahin

University of Lincoln, Lincoln, United Kingdom

### **Abstract**

Journalists are forced to leave their countries when they face violence, oppression and persecution and can no longer work independently and safely. In the host country, some continue with their journalism, reporting from afar abuse of power back home, while others struggle as a lack of contacts, work opportunities, and language skills make it hard for them to remain in the profession they built over the years. Some journalists continue to be targets of physical and online violence in their new location and fear reprisal. They also face other difficulties, such as economic hardship, struggles to integrate into new cultures and places, psychological concerns, and language problems.

Serving the public and protecting its interests are at the centre of journalism's professional ideals. Yet, displacement and resettlement dislocate journalists from their position in society and disrupt their contact and communication networks with audiences, sources and institutions. Professional identity, a resource of identification for journalists, can also be affected.

The paper explores how refugee journalists perceive their professional roles and identities. It is interested in how they see the violence, risks, and challenges they experience before and during their displacement and resettlement process. Using data from semi-structured interviews with journalists who had to escape to the UK for safety from different countries, it studies the effects of a combination of violence and the multiple hardships on their professional and personal lives and how journalists, who continue practising journalism, adapt and perform their roles in their new settings.

## Happy Journalism Unions in Troubled Times: Communicating Newswriters' Job and Life Satisfaction

Errol Salamon

University of Huddersfield, Huddersfield, United Kingdom

### Abstract

More than 7,500 newswriters steadily unionized in the United States between April 2015 and June 2022 at over 200 internet-only and legacy for-profit and nonprofit media companies within a context of business model change and technological disruption across the industry. They include newswriters at Gawker (now Gizmodo Media), VICE Media, HuffPost, *Guardian US*, *The Los Angeles Times*, and *The New Yorker*. This paper analyzes all 22 collective bargaining agreements (CBAs) of one union, the Writers Guild of America, East, which were ratified between March 2016 and June 2022, to better understand employee digital job and life satisfaction. It brings together critical political economy of media, sociology of work, and labor research, conceptualizing newswriter unions' role in job and life satisfaction. This paper argues that a CBA is a communicative means through which newswriter unions articulate employee resistance to labor relations and working conditions. It is also a legal means for articulating solutions to these grievances that could provide the basis for employee job and life satisfaction and happiness. Conducting a content analysis, this paper develops a relational model of digital-era newswriters' CBAs based on three overarching categories and 21 subcategories. It finds that the CBAs incorporate similar language in three categories—workplace rights, newswriters' benefits, and limits on management rights—illuminating the relative weight of various solutions to newswriters' digital-era grievances. The CBAs also communicatively constitute the conditions for newswriters' happiness and subjective well-being. These findings support a focus on not only precarious employment and exploitation (Cohen and de Peuter, 2020), but also happiness, emphasizing CBA language vis-à-vis an "overall appreciation of one's life-as-a-whole" (Veenhoven, 1984: 7) and workers' quality of life. Researchers and practitioners could ultimately better understand the language that is needed to communicatively constitute and foster happiness in newsrooms, supporting digital job and life satisfaction among newswriters.

# Post-publication Gatekeeping Factors and Practices in News Work—Interplay Between (Audience) Data, Platforms and Regulations

Margareta Salonen, Veera Ehrlén, Minna Koivula, Karoliina Talvitie-Lamberg

University of Jyväskylä, Jyväskylä, Finland

## Abstract

The growing use of audience data in newsrooms has impacted the power dynamics between news organisations, platforms, and audiences. This has led to a situation where journalists hold less gatekeeping power, i.e., a growing number of players have gained influence over news distribution, circulation, and the business itself (Author, 2022; Seuri & Ikäheimo, 2022). Also, gatekeeping literature has turned to look at the factors and practices that shape gatekeeping in the post-publication environment, i.e., after news has entered circulation (Hermida, 2020; Salonen et al., 2022). For example, Hermida (2020) has called for more research on the factors that shape news post-publication and to see how digital metrics are connected to editorial decision-making. Furthermore, previous studies have called for research that investigates media regulation and self-regulation in the era of datafication (Porlezza & Eberwein, 2022; Seuri et al. 2022).

This study examines datafied news work from the perspective of post-publication gatekeeping. Our aim is to broadly understand how (audience) data is part of editorial decision-making in news media from news workers' perceptions. More specifically, we contribute to the literature by discussing what role regulations play in the datafied news environment. The study was conducted by interviewing nine news workers from three Finnish news organisations between May and August 2022. The data was analysed utilising iterative content analysis (Tracy, 2018).

Our analysis revealed that the use of (audience) data increasingly shaped news workers' journalistic decision-making processes, and that news workers were ambivalent toward data (use). When interviewed about journalism ethics, news workers only connected it with legislative issues, such as GDPR. Further, we could see that legislation and media self-regulation hold (post-publication) gatekeeping power over news production and distribution. This study reflects how journalism (research) is shifting from an audience-centric view to a data-driven one, i.e., is experiencing *a data turn*.

# **Press-state relationship in the time of the COVID-19 pandemic: An ethnography study of three Indonesian news organisations**

Endah Saptorini

Bournemouth University, Bournemouth, United Kingdom

## **Abstract**

As classic theories of press-state relations have established (e.g., Bennett, 1990; Hallin, 1989), even in media systems characterised by a free press and highly adversarial press-political relations, the news agenda is frequently shaped by elite sources and indexed to elite opinion. Moreover, power relations between an independent press and the state are always finely balanced, especially in hybrid democratic countries such as Indonesia. With press freedom in Indonesia (ranked 117 of 180 in the World Press Freedom Index 2022) still a work in progress, in this paper we bring attention to how the COVID-19 pandemic and the imposed social distancing measures tilted the balance in press-political relations. To do so, we draw on an ethnography of 245 hours of offline and online observations, 35 in-depth interviews, participants' diaries, and internal documents conducted over 15 months in three news organisations, namely SCTV, Liputan6.com, and BBC Indonesia.

Our study found that the pandemic changed relationships between journalists and the government and posed a considerable challenge to press freedom. First, due to the social distancing practice, there is a high dependence on official sources; the press has become more reliant on authority. Second, the consequences of virtual communication, which was supposed to simplify communication, resulted in more official voices, limiting journalists' ability to question and challenge the government. Third, the pandemic worsens existing barriers to press freedom, as evidenced by increased self-censorship among journalists confronted with controversial issues. Our study contributes to press-state relations by demonstrating the importance of proximity and that diminishing physical presence in press-state relations threatens journalist autonomy and endangers press freedom.

Keywords: press-state relations, COVID-19 pandemic, press freedom, ethnography, Indonesia

# PERSONALIZED, PEACE/WAR JOURNALISM ON TWITTER: THE RUSSO-UKRAINIAN WAR THROUGH THE LENS OF POLITICAL JOURNALISTS

Nina Fabiola Schumacher, Christian Nuernbergk, Kristin Shi-Kupfer

Trier University, Trier, Germany

## Abstract

Social media plays a significant role in war/conflict communication (Stieglitz et al., 2015; Fahmy & Hussain, 2021). During the 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine, Twitter emerged as a central communication hub where European politicians, journalists, and other stakeholders discuss conflict developments. Our study investigates how German political journalists in general compared to journalists specifically covering Russia/Ukraine participate in the ongoing war discourse on Twitter. Maurer et al. (2022) recently found that foreign and domestic political actors dominate the war coverage in Germany. Furthermore, politicians from both areas receive quite different evaluations. Our analysis builds upon two key concepts: (1), a peace/war framing approach; (2), personalization. To examine the conflict reporting patterns on Twitter, we study peace/war indicators and adopt Lee and Maslogs' (2005) classification system which is based on Galtung's (1986) seminal peace journalism work. Scholarship suggests that conflict reporting tends to be escalatory and results in "rather superficial reporting instead of covering the complexities of the process" (Fahmy & Hussain, 2021). We combine this framing perspective with the personalization approach in political news developed by van Aelst et al. (2012). For this, we study evaluative characteristics like leadership and credibility. We assume that the Putin/Selensky coverage, which is likely to appear also within the journalists' tweets, can be best analyzed with this approach. So far, this novel combination has not been applied in studying conflict reporting on social media. In short, we examine how the Twitter communication of both groups of journalists (1) adheres to peace/war journalism, (2) refers to leading domestic and foreign political actors and evaluates them (3). Furthermore, we investigate the network visibility of actors (4). To answer these RQs, we tracked the journalists' tweets for six months (Sep.22–Feb.23) and analyzed them by combining quantitative content analysis with network analysis.

## The Fight for Press Freedom: International Advocacy Campaigns and Journalists in the Global South

Martin Scott<sup>1</sup>, Mel Bunce<sup>2</sup>, Mary Myers<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>University of East Anglia, Norwich, United Kingdom. <sup>2</sup>City, University of London, London, United Kingdom

### Abstract

In 2022, a record number of countries were classified as “very bad” for press freedom due to rising autocracy, polarisation and attacks on journalists (RSF 2022).

This paper aims to re-centre the views and opinions of journalists in the Global South on how the international community can best respond to these attacks. It does this through a case study of the Media Freedom Coalition (MFC), a major international campaign launched in 2019 by the United Kingdom and Canada, which has grown to more than 50 member countries that jointly lobby for media freedom.

The paper presents the results of semi-structured interviews with 33 journalists - 15 in the Sudan and 18 in the Philippines - two ‘most different’ case study countries where the MFC is active. These journalists were asked about their views and experiences of the MFC. The interviews reveal that journalists in both countries were highly sceptical of the MFC’s ability to make a difference ‘on the ground’. Interestingly, however, they were still supportive of the campaign, describing it as a ‘morale booster’. Moreover, they did not object to the MFC’s failures to consult local journalists— a common issue in media development interventions (Noske-Turner 2017). This was because the journalists saw the MFC as primarily functioning as a symbolic, performative campaign on the international stage.

Drawing on Baudrillard (1983) and others, we suggest that - from the journalists’ perspective - the MFC functions as a simulacrum, or ‘simulation’ of support for media freedom. Simulating support for media freedom is not a benign act. In the paper, we explore how this approach can have unintended consequences by promoting division amongst journalists and making international campaigns less accountable. The study has direct implications for how international assistance should be re-configured to enable a truly inclusive and global movement to promote press freedom.



# Understanding the Efficacy of Online Bystander Intervention when Journalists are the Targets

Dr. Kathleen Searles<sup>1</sup>, Dr. Rebekah Tromble<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, USA. <sup>2</sup>George Washington University, Washington, DC, USA

## Abstract

Research on hate-based harassment often focuses on the role of bystanders, with the aim to increase awareness and the likelihood of intervention. As the domain for abuse has shifted from in-person to digital spaces, scholars and advocates have transferred previous learnings from this research to online interactions. However, the assumption underlying this shift is that bystander interventions are efficacious online. Moreover, this work assumes that targets consent to intervention. This project tests these assumptions in the context of journalism by seeking to (1) understand the needs and preferences of journalists who have been targeted by online abuse, so as to (2) validate the efficacy of online bystander intervention in the context of consent, so that (3) subsequent tests can discern best practices for online intervention. Rooted in community-based models of evaluation and consent-based frameworks, this project uses mixed methods including interviews, surveys, and experiments. Interviews with journalists are first deployed to understand their experience. An online survey of journalists who have experienced online abuse will be conducted via snowball sampling to lend depth and breadth to the interview data. And finally, a series of survey experiments will be fielded to test the effectiveness of various bystander interventions using vignettes that vary intervention and scenario characteristics. Initial results suggest that characteristics of digital spaces intersect with professional considerations to change the effectiveness of common bystander interventions, with consequences for vulnerable journalists. Ultimately, this research contributes to our understanding of the efficacy of online bystander intervention by putting those experiencing harm at the center of the work. Practically, this work has the potential to shift the way the audiences engage with journalists who experience online violence.

## Friends like these: The normative relocation of conflict journalism

Robert Sharp<sup>1</sup>, Richard Stupart<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>University of Sussex, Sussex, United Kingdom. <sup>2</sup>University of Liverpool, Liverpool, United Kingdom

### Abstract

This paper draws on previous work in the fields of conflict studies and journalism studies, as well as empirical work by the authors on the normative language of conflict journalism to argue that this subfield of journalism appears to have increasingly 'moved house' from the normative universe of institutional journalism to that of professional humanitarianism. We describe three shifts that are taking (or have taken) place whose effects may include a transformation of ideas around 'what conflict journalism is for' and how it understands its presence in armed conflict.

First, we observe that humanitarian news subsidies (Gandy, 1982), an increase in work being done for both journalism and humanitarian organisations (Wright, 2016b) and untenable precarity in conflict reporting (Stupart, 2021) is increasingly driving journalists into careers that rely on the finances of the humanitarian and (I)NGO sector over that of news publications. Second, we argue that the presently-existing safety infrastructure in major armed conflicts incentivizes a reliance by journalists on humanitarian actors for safe passage (Duffield, 2010) and fosters opportunities for developing a common habitus and imaginary between humanitarian actors and journalists covering conflict (Wright, 2016a) Finally, we observe that the language in which the profession justifies itself in moments of loss appears to rely far more on the language of humanitarian cosmopolitanism than that of institutional journalism.

Taken together, we argue that these dynamics point to conflict journalism having increasingly 'moved into' a new professional home in the discursive world of humanitarianism, but that this process has been in motion over a longer history than might be assumed and may be uneven across different forms of conflict reporting. The possibility that elements of conflict journalism are finding a professional home amongst humanitarians provokes a range of empirical and theoretical questions.

## **Infrastructure (re)capture beyond the platforms. How journalism is losing institutional power through the digital distribution chains**

Helle Sjøvaag<sup>1</sup>, Ragnhild Kr. Olsen<sup>2</sup>, Raul Ferrer-Conill<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>University of Stavanger, Stavanger, Norway. <sup>2</sup>Oslo Metropolitan University, Oslo, Norway

### **Abstract**

After decades of owning the means of news distribution, most news organizations have partly outsourced this process to social media platforms and third-party technology infrastructures and services. We argue that moving away from the symbol of the printing press and broadcasting towers exemplifies the erosion of the physical manifestation of journalism's institutional power by partly relinquishing its distribution control.

In this study, we investigate this erosion of power by analyzing how cloud services and content delivery networks (CDNs) feature in news corporations' distribution strategies. Studying news organizations' digital infrastructure is important because the multitude of digital distribution services (such as CDNs and repository servers) play a decisive role in the quality of the journalistic service delivery to the public. This quality is now essentially beyond news publishers' control. Digitalization of journalism has thus removed news publishers from sources of legitimacy and power, as they have transitioned away from legacy modes of distribution. Instead of being control the entire chain of production and distribution, news organizations have become dependent on technical "solutions" that they often do not control and do not understand.

To understand this development, we mobilize legitimacy theory, path dependency theory, and the notion of technological autonomy. Our methodological approach relies on 20 expert participatory interviews with CEOs and CTOs of news organizations in Scandinavia, as well as CDN engineers. Preliminary results show that these technologies are not only central to news distribution; they also impact the flexibility, autonomy, and dependence of news distribution strategies, reducing journalism's institutional power.

This study contributes to journalism studies by focusing on the role of digital infrastructures beyond social media platforms for the provision of journalism to the public, highlighting how sources of legitimacy such as distribution become sources of institutional dependency as journalism grows more reliant on digital backbones.

## News characteristics, newsworthiness and sharing news during a violent authoritarian movement

Marcos P. Da Silva<sup>1</sup>, Rachel R. Mourão<sup>2</sup>, Tim P. Vos<sup>2</sup>, Marialina Antolini<sup>2</sup>, Leilane Menezes<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Federal University of Mato Grosso do Sul, Campo Grande, Brazil. <sup>2</sup>Michigan State University, East Lansing, USA

### Abstract

We seek to understand why people share news, particularly during a crisis fueled by violent authoritarian movements. To that end, this study investigates how news sharing might be related to news characteristics and trust in democratic institutions. We focus on four perceived characteristics of news (appearance, confirmability, source credibility, and newsworthiness) in shaping intentions to share. Building on Da Silva's (2022) work, we characterize appearance as the presentation, style, and format of news, confirmability as whether news can be checked for correctness, and source credibility based on the trustworthiness of the news item's origins. Newsworthiness, per Shoemaker (2006), refers to the perceived social significance and deviance of events and actions.

Our survey (n=1225) was fielded in Brazil a week after the 2023 attempted coup by Bolsonaro supporters. Accounting for the overall context, we first investigate how demographics and political antecedents influence how people attribute importance to each characteristic of news when sharing information. Second, we examine how repertoires of news media consumption relate to the importance given to each characteristic when sharing news. Finally, we assess the relationship between characteristics that guide news sharing and trust in political actors and democratic institutions.

Results suggest that conservatism (including conservative media consumption and trust in conservative institutions) is inversely correlated with the confirmability characteristic while positively correlated with the news appearance and newsworthiness and, to a lesser extent, source credibility. Conversely, consumers of legacy media and those who trust scientific institutions place a higher value on confirmability when sharing news. Our findings reveal that the appearance characteristic of news has, under certain conditions, a leading role over confirmability and source credibility characteristics, furthering our understanding of how news is distributed across informational ecosystems during authoritarian movements.

# Escape Me If You Can: How AI Reshapes News Organisations' Dependency on Platform Companies

Felix M Simon

Oxford Internet Institute, University of Oxford, Oxford, United Kingdom

## **Abstract**

Platform companies play a crucial role in the creation, dissemination, and business of news. They also are also central actors in artificial intelligence (AI) which has led some to argue that the increasing use of AI in journalism may heighten the news industry's dependence on platform companies. This article evaluates this argument. Drawing on 121 interviews with news workers at publishers in the US, UK, and Germany, 31 expert interviews, and secondary material it finds that AI reshapes the dependency of publishers on platform companies by exacerbating existing dependencies in distribution and creating new dependencies in production. News organisations rely on platforms for AI for various reasons, such as high development costs, lack of resources, and varying visions over their mission. The findings show that while increasing dependence on platforms is acknowledged, there is disagreement over its extent and impact on the autonomy of the news. The results are discussed in relation to institutional theory, media autonomy, and their implications for the public arena.

## **A global index on journalists' safety**

Vera Slavtcheva-Petkova<sup>1</sup>, Thomas Hanitzsch<sup>2</sup>, Basyouni Hamada<sup>3</sup>, Jyotika Ramaprasad<sup>4</sup>, Kenneth Andresen<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup>University of Liverpool, Liverpool, United Kingdom. <sup>2</sup>LMU Munich, Munich, Germany. <sup>3</sup>Qatar University, Doha, Qatar. <sup>4</sup>University of Miami, Florida, Coral Gables, USA. <sup>5</sup>University of Agder, Agder, Norway

### **Abstract**

This paper presents a novel global index on journalists' safety, comprising four key dimensions: physical, psychological, digital and financial safety (Slavtcheva-Petkova et al., 2023). Journalists' safety is an issue of growing concern around the world, affecting their ability to perform their roles with autonomy and serve their societies without fear of repercussions. Since safety is not limited to killings and immediate physical danger in conflict zones, our index accounts for a range of emerging threats that journalists face in their day-to-day work, including digital and financial ones. While a few NGOs compile indices on press freedom and the most dangerous countries for journalists (e.g., RSF, CPJ), there are no academic attempts to compare the safety of journalists around the world on a multidimensional, theoretically-grounded basis. This is precisely what our index is designed to do. It is built upon recent conceptual work on journalists' safety defined as "the extent to which journalists can perform their work-related tasks without facing threats to their physical, psychological, digital, and financial integrity and well-being" (Slavtcheva-Petkova et al., 2023). It incorporates primary data collected as part of the third, ongoing wave of the Worlds of Journalism Study in about 120 countries in addition to secondary data from extant sources, such as statistics on murdered journalists, external measures of freedom of expression, and the state of democracy. The WJS survey includes questions on journalists' subjective sense of safety, the range of threats experienced by them during the past five years, the impact of safety threats on their professional views, roles and individual wellbeing, the way journalists cope with safety threats, the relevance of social support systems, journalists' perceptions of impunity as well as a range of questions pertaining to issues of precarity. The paper presents first results of a pilot study testing the proposed measurement strategy on selected countries for which data are already available in WJS3.

## Reporting on trans issues in an intensely transphobic Russia

Wendy S Sloane

London Metropolitan University, London, United Kingdom

### Abstract

Under the guise of “protecting” the younger generation, Russia last November introduced a new law that cracks down on free speech by and for the LGBTQIA+ community. This time, however, the law went one step further, making it a crime to educate children about gender transition. That means that reporting on the needs of the trans community is made even more difficult, and more and more Russians who identify as trans are going back into hiding to protect their livelihoods - and their lives.

Transgender Europe (TGEU) suggests that trans Russians form one of the “most vulnerable communities” in the country, and that their plight has worsened thanks to the invasion of Ukraine. Trans people today find it almost impossible to get access to healthcare, and many either live in poverty and/or are homeless. Now, not only will teaching about trans identities in schools be illegal but portraying trans characters in films and TV will also be punishable by fines under yet another new law that the Russian Duma approved in principle in December. “In times of increasing resistance against trans rights and rising authoritarianism in our region, another anti-LGB and anti-trans law adds to the list of countries that have been aggressively removing rights from LGB and trans people in the past years,” said Anwar Ogrm, TEU’s acting co-director.

This article will combine interviews with members of Russia’s trans community, many of whom have fled abroad, along with reporters who are either still in the country or have left, to see whether reporting on issues that affect the community can continue – and how. It will also explore what could happen to the community if free, uncensored reporting on trans issues in Russia is censored, or stopped completely.

## Should journalists learn to code?

Clare Spencer

BBC, Cardiff, United Kingdom

### **Abstract**

The last decade has seen a series of huge leaks of financial documents revealing the secrets of hundreds and world leaders, politicians and celebrities.

This has created an opportunity for journalists: to expose wrong doing and hold leaders to account.

But it has also created a challenge: finding stories in that data can take a lot of time and requires different skills to that of a traditional journalist.

So how does a news organisation adapt to this change?

Clare Spencer from BBC News Labs will share her insights from a small-scale experiment attempting to pass on the data analysis skills, specifically using the computer programming language Python, from software engineers to journalists.



## In the eye of the beholder: Researching journalistic roles in creative ways

Louise Sprengelmeyer

Leibniz Institute for Media Research | Hans Bredow Institute (HBI), Hamburg, Germany

### Abstract

Research on journalistic roles - theoretically and empirically - represents a particularly relevant research strand in journalism studies. At the heart of such studies are *items* designed to operationalize journalistic roles. Certain items - some developed decades ago - are passed on from one study to the next, with only occasional revision. Popularized role constructions of '*the journalist*' and '*me as a journalist*' are thus repeatedly taken up and kept in discourse (author, forthcoming) - in and beyond the scientific field.

In light of this tradition of knowledge and history of (recurring) ideas, this study acknowledges that creative attempts are necessary to reflect and also challenge common constructions. Until recently, scholars rarely made any use of *Arts-based research* (Hölsgens/Wildt/Witschge, 2020) to in-depth explore journalistic roles as a systematic literature review shows (author, forthcoming).

Against this background, an empirical study is underway that is qualitative and experimental in design. Five interview sessions have already been conducted; participants verbalized their interpretations of predefined items from the popular *Worlds of Journalism Study*. Next, more open approaches rooted in the performative and the artistic will follow: to think aloud and draw a journalist *in action*, write a portrait of *the journalist*, or - in a collaborative manner in a group discussion setting - think about a screenplay to outline different *journalists'* roles.

This study takes into account that, nowadays, trained journalists and new *peripheral actors* (Maares/Hanusch, 2022) experiment with *acts* of journalism in and beyond *established* newsrooms (Deuze/Witschge, 2020). In Germany, there is a special organizational setting that bundles diverse journalistic actors as if seen under a magnifying glass: the cooperative "content network *funk*" (funk, 2023); serving as case for this study. First preliminary results show a broad spectrum of role constructions - with a focus on practices of *supporting* something, someone, or oneself.

## Casual Democracies. Informed citizenship and democratic participation in places left behind by journalism

Steen Steensen

Oslo Metropolitan University, Oslo, Norway

### Abstract

This paper summarises the findings of a research project on the functioning of local public spheres and local democracy in places left behind by journalism. Recent decades have seen a steep decline in local journalism across Europe, North-America, and elsewhere (e.g. Hayes, 2021; Nielsen, 2015). Local news media have been forced to shut down due to loss of readership and lack of sustainable revenue models, creating so-called “news deserts” – communities with no journalistic outlet reporting on local affairs – and “ghost newspapers” – outlets so deprived of resources that they no longer can engage in proper reporting (Abernathy, 2020). Scholars argue that the collapse in local news outlets represents “the greatest challenge facing journalism today” (Wahl-Jorgensen, 2019, p. 163) and a major threat to the well-being of local democracies (Miller, 2018).

The research project includes two case studies of local communities left behind by journalism – one urban community in Denmark and one rural town in the UK. The research is guided by the research question: *How are informed citizenship and democratic participation facilitated and negotiated in communities left by journalism?*

Methodologically, the case studies are based on analytic autoethnography (Anderson, 2006); semi-structured interviews; netnography of local social media groups (Kozinets, 2020); and content analysis of local media outlets. The paper, which is going to be a concluding chapter in a monograph, summarises the findings and discusses what they mean for how local democracy in places left behind by journalism functions.

Ultimately, the paper argues that such places risk becoming *casual democracies*, in which who and what gets to dominate the local public sphere to a large degree become left to chance, trustworthy information can be difficult to find, and where the combination of platform infrastructure and individual agency can create new, unstable hierarchies of power with unclear democratic anchoring.

# Assessing the role of news media in the spread and impact of disinformation

Jaume Suau, Elena Yeste

Ramon LLull University, Barcelona, Spain

## Abstract

In an age of growing political polarization and populist communication styles (Rachman, 2022; Mudde, 2019) examples such as Cambridge Analytica or the recent Team Jorge scandal show how the spread of disinformation is used to exacerbate such political trends to shape election results. However, despite the vast and growing literature on disinformation its real impact in society remains unclear (Jungherr and Schroeder, 2021). Moreover, although most research focuses on its spread through social media, there are warning signs that point towards the amplifying effect of news media and journalists (Phillips, 2018). Following Zanettou et al. (2019a), we suggest studying misleading content from a holistic approach, to see how disinformation narratives spread in multiple formats (images, textual claims, videos, etc.) and through diverse platforms and news media.

We present data from a survey conducted in Spain (N=1003) in March 2022. We teamed up with one of the leading Spanish fact-checkers, Newtral, to have daily information about spotted disinformation content the three weeks before the survey was launched. Research team analysed the material detected to identify content that was related or that belonged to similar narratives. The goal was to identify the key disinformation narratives that were spreading before the survey, rather than just isolated content, to test through survey research the reach and impact of disinformation narratives, as well as spreading patterns. Results point towards the fact that disinformation narratives were spread around 20-30% respondents, being news media and journalists the main actors in spreading them. Also, those that received the narrative before were more likely to believe it, indicating a potential high impact of disinformation narratives.

## **What feels like news? Young people's perceptions of news(-ness) on Instagram.**

Joëlle Swart, Marcel Broersma

University of Groningen, Groningen, Netherlands

### **Abstract**

What do young people consider “news”? Growing dependence on social media makes it increasingly difficult to answer this deceptively simple question. Now news is dislocated from dedicated outlets of news organizations, it has become hard to distinguish from other cultural forms such as entertainment, advertising or misinformation. So-called ‘news’ feeds on social platforms offer a blend of content that only partly matches classic conceptualizations of news. Especially on visual social media where many different forms, topics and tones circulate, users’ affective and intuitive assessments may diverge from traditional definitions of news.

This paper advances current conceptual debates around news(-ness), by going beyond what is culturally accepted and cognitively recognized as news. We argue for the importance of capturing the affective and tacit understandings young people have of news, by analyzing what feels like news to them on Instagram. Such judgments matter because how audiences decide what is news and what is not, and how they value different kinds of information, affects assessments of trustworthiness and reliability. Drawing upon a three-wave study (2020-2022) including in-depth interviews and walk-throughs of social media feeds with Dutch smartphone users aged 16-25 ( $N = 215$ ), we explore users’ tacit understandings of what constitutes news on Instagram.

We find that while young people are strongly aware of societal norms around what news is or should be, these cognitive understandings do not necessarily align with what they experience as news(-like) within their everyday practices. Although some users do employ traditional journalistic conceptualizations of news, others negotiate or challenge such definitions through processes of compartmentalization, homogenization or reconceptualization, to mitigate tensions between what they cognitively recognize versus what they affectively perceive as news. Consequently, we argue that more inclusive epistemological approaches are needed to comprehend young people’s shifting experiences of news(-ness) and conceptualize news from an audience perspective.

## **“Not wasting heat on the crows” – rationalizing news production in Swedish legacy news institutions**

Carina Tenor, Joanne Kuai

Karlstad University, Karlstad, Sweden

### **Abstract**

Audience analytics and other digital metrics have rapidly permeated journalism practice across the world (Carlson, 2018). ). The use of AI and algorithmic technologies in metrics also raises questions about increasing platform dependency and decreasing journalistic autonomy (Dodds et al., 2023; Örnebring & Karlsson, 2022; Simon, 2022). Since quantitative performance targets potentially clash with journalists’ feelings of self-determination and ideals of journalistic quality (Bunce, 2017; Cohen, 2019; Sjørgård Olsen, 2018; Tandoc, 2019), management also needs to ‘engineer consent’ for editorial metrics (Christin & Petre, 2020; Petre, 2018).

This study analyses how managers interpret external pressure and other justifications for using metrics to manage, monitor and evaluate journalists’ production. Drawing from new institutional theory and the concept of meta-journalistic discourse, we view the self-expressions of rationales and navigated ideals as linked to claims and negotiations of journalism as a societal institution (Ryfe, 2006; Vos, 2019). This study also adopts a critical perspective on metrification and metrics’ inherent power (Beer, 2016; Espeland & Sauder, 2007; Mau, 2019), for example in determining the epistemic value of news (Ekström et al., 2021).

The empirical material for this study is a set of interviews with 20 senior key managers (holding strategic and central positions of editorial analytics, or analytics-driven editorial development) across the Swedish legacy news industry (large commercial newspaper companies and public service broadcasters). Similar to other Nordic countries, Swedish journalists have traditionally experienced strong autonomy, something that seems to be a-changing. (Ahva et al., 2017; Waldenström et al., 2019).

The results show that Swedish managers justify management and rationalised production using metaphors of not wasting resources or making journalists work in vain and that numbers provide proof, “a receipt” if managers and journalists disagree.

This study contributes to research on the managerialization and bureaucratization of news organisations.

# **Ethics of war correspondence, peace journalism and training interventions**

Georgios Terzis

Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Brussels, Belgium

## **Abstract**

The purpose of this paper is to attempt an ethical analysis of war correspondence, peace journalism, and training interventions. We discuss them through the lenses of utilitarian, contractualist, cosmopolitan, deontological, discourse and care ethics theories.

Our discussion of the ethics of War correspondence and Peace journalism is based on the analysis of interviews of journalists reporting the Greek and Turkish conflict 20 years after our original research on the topic published here [1] We look at the changes that occurred due to the introduction of social media and the new media economics and strains that those pose in their work through an ethics prism. We also discuss the difference of the rapprochement between the two countries that occurred after the earthquakes in both countries in 1999 and the role of the media coverage and the coverage of the recent earthquake in Turkey.

Our discussion on the ethics of trainings of journalists reporting conflict include the conclusions reached from the analysis of 15 elite interviews with managers of the leading NGO DT Global who is realising trainings for journalists through the EU4IndependentMedia Emergency Support for Ukraine as part of the media support programme for the Eastern Neighbourhood countries, Ukrainian journalists who participated in those trainings, the trainers employed to implement those and EU officials from EC DG NEAR who are responsible for the funding of those.

Those results of all the interviews are also be placed in the general theoretical framework of the social determinants of journalism such as political and economic pressures, technological and organisational constraints, source tactics and professional culture during times of conflict, as well as journalism ethics.

# What comes after the algorithm? An investigation of journalists' aims and practices when editing stories produced with automation

Sina Thäsler-Kordonouri

Ludwig-Maximilian-University, Munich, Germany

## Abstract

News companies increasingly automate the production of news text to boost productivity (Diakopoulos, 2019). This practice, called automated journalism, uses “algorithmic processes [to] convert data into narrative news texts” (Carlson, 2015, 417). The human-computer interaction that takes place when journalists work with automated journalism challenges traditional conceptions of human agency in news production. Journalists often perceive the technology as having rather limited capabilities when it comes to writing news articles (Diakopoulos, 2020). It is unsurprising then that they sometimes manually edit automated stories before publication to compensate for their perceived narrative and editorial shortcomings, thus creating so-called *post-edited* variants—a news production process that has yet to be examined empirically.

This study aims to advance research on post-edited automated journalism by investigating how UK journalists say they edit automatically-generated stories prior to publication and evaluating whether and how they actually do so. To do this, we compare the content of fully-automated news stories and their post-edited offspring based on journalists' claims about the process of post-editing. This approach allows us to evaluate whether journalists' intentions are realised and whether post-editing involves editorial steps that go beyond their claims (see Mellado & van Dalen, 2014).

We inductively developed a code book using data from semi-structured interviews with journalists and a preliminary qualitative content analysis of both story types. The journalists reported that post-editing includes *simplifying the presentation of numbers*, *localising the narrative*, and *adding explanations or solutions*. The qualitative content analysis showed that further steps include *sensationalising the headline*, *adding data visualisations*, and *changing the byline* of an article.

We tested these findings in a comparative quantitative content analysis of automated news stories and their post-edited offspring published in the UK between 2021 and 2022 (n = 286). The full results will be ready to present at the Future of Journalism conference.

# There is No Such Thing as Convergence: Divergence as an Explanatory Framework for Digital Journalism

Ryan J. Thomas

Washington State University, Pullman, USA

## Abstract

Though there is not unanimity on precisely when “convergence” became part of the journalistic vernacular, we can roughly trace it to the latter years of the twentieth century and early years of the twenty-first. The quarter-century anniversary of convergence – early or belated, depending on who you ask – provides an opportunity to look back and assess the claims made about it and the impact it has had.

Convergence is commonly referenced as a central concept – perhaps even the defining concept – describing journalism in this era. It is taken as given both empirically (“convergence has happened”) and normatively (“it is good that convergence happened”). The easy take-up of convergence by scholars and practitioners alike warrants close interrogation. This paper argues that convergence is a poor descriptor for this period of journalism. Rather, the period is best characterized by divergence.

To support this argument, I highlight cases that illustrate the flawed assumptions surrounding convergence. These include the displacement and devaluing of journalistic labor through the incorporation of user-generated content, the rise of “one-man-bandism” making journalists more solitary workers through multi-skilling, the dashing of hopes about interactivity due to the prominence of “dark participation,” and the rise of fragmented media forms like Medium and podcasting. I use these cases to argue that, overall, both the production and consumption of journalism are best described as having experienced divergence. I conclude the paper with reflections about the implications for journalism studies when its members indulge in what James Carey once described as “nostalgia for the future.”



## **When information subsidies go live. Conceptualizing the strategic role of personal storytelling in the media**

Kjersti Thorbjørnsrud

Institute of Social Research, Oslo, Norway

### **Abstract**

The personal story, with its capacity to engage the audience and go viral, is in high demand in the current media ecology. This article argues that the strategic role of such personal storytelling is insufficiently understood within journalism and communication studies. Claiming the need to study backstage relations and liaisons between interest groups, professional communication workers and journalists, it conceptualize how personal stories, with a high moral appeal and claim to authenticity, have become a powerful form of information subsidy, both in pro-active media strategies and in direct strategies to influence decision makers. By combining insights from distinct fields within sociology (the study of social movements and storytelling), journalism (the truth claims and formats of personal stories) and political communication (exemplar theory, legislative subsidies), the article extends the original theory of information subsidies by Oscar Gandy to include living persons with the right captivating experience and the ability to perform in the media. Building on extensive qualitative data from ethnographic field work and 150 in depth interviews with journalists, representatives from non-profit, professional and corporate interests groups, as well as politicians and their communication staff, it demonstrates how the access to, preparation and presentation of media friendly lay individuals with a story to tell is a vital capital for organizational actors. Personal stories are used to align special interests with the common good and a morally worthy cause, creating public support and impact political decisions. The voice of the lay citizens is associated with progressive movements and social justice. In our times, when the distinction between fake and credible, authentic and staged appear increasingly muddy and disputed, it is all the more important to study the embedded ties that sometimes lay behind such voices, affecting who wins and who loses in the struggle for public attention and sympathy.

## **“Last update 1 hour ago”: A large-scale study of incremental updates in Flemish online news**

Yoram Timmerman, Antoon Bronselaer, Sarah Van Leuven

Ghent University, Ghent, Belgium

### **Abstract**

This paper draws attention to an understudied but crucial component of online news production, i.e. the practice of “incremental news updates” (Usher, 2018). The original news piece is replaced by the updated piece containing modifications ranging from minor corrections to further interpretation of news events, often without notifying the reader. Incremental news updates have mainly been studied in the context of breaking news (f.e. Ekström et al., 2021; Usher, 2018). Therefore, a first contribution of this paper is theoretical by studying corrections and updates in routine news coverage, to better understand to what extent this practice has permeated newsrooms and what kind of corrections/updates are typically done. The second contribution is methodological. Without denying the important contribution of previous research (f.e. Forde et al., 2022; Karlsson & Strömbäck, 2010; Saltzis, 2012; Widholm, 2016), researchers have been struggling with freezing the news flow and capturing different article versions. Inspired by the work of Kautsky and Widholm (2008), we apply regular interval content capturing to conduct a large-scale study on the usage of online news updates. Using in-house developed software, 291,666 articles and 197,979 associated updates written by six leading Flemish news outlets are collected. It is examined how commonly updates are applied and how they are conducted. Furthermore, a subset of 11,389 articles is manually analyzed to examine the reason(s) for applying updates. Finally, update patterns for different news outlets and topics are compared using Kruskal-Wallis tests. Results indicate that updates are commonly applied across all news outlets and topics. 35% of the articles are updated at least once and an updated article is updated 1.94 times on average. Approximately 4.2% of textual changes are made to correct objective or subjective errors, typically without any communication towards the reader. Therefore, we argue that transparency regarding news updates should be enhanced.

## **Audience evaluations of data-driven local news articles made with various levels of automation, and none: A large-scale survey experiment**

Neil Thurman, Florian Stalph, Sina Thaesler-Kordonouri

Department of Media and Communication, LMU Munich, Munich, Germany

### **Abstract**

Automation technologies are increasingly deployed to varying degrees in the production of news articles. However, thus far, our knowledge about differences in audience perceptions of human-authored and automated news texts is limited. Although at least 18 studies have been carried out, their findings are inconsistent and often limited by methodological shortcomings. For example, the experimental stimuli used in some of those studies has made the isolation of authorship (automated or human) as an independent variable difficult. Our study attempts to overcome some of the previous studies' shortcomings to better evaluate audiences' relative evaluations of news texts produced with varying degrees of automation (and none). A large-scale 3 (article source: human-written, automated, hybrid) × 14 (story topics) between-subjects online survey experiment was conducted using a sample (N=4,200) representative of UK online news consumers by age and gender. The sample of respondents was drawn from various local regions and divided into 42 treatment groups. Each treatment group was exposed to a data-driven news article that had been produced either: (1) traditionally by a human journalist, (2) using template-based automation, or (3) in a hybrid manner, where a human journalist had further developed the automated article. Respondents were only shown articles relevant to where they lived. To minimise confounding variables, the articles in each of the 14 story sets were based on the same data source(s), featured the same story angle, and were about the same locality. Respondents' perceptions were measured using news perception criteria developed in a qualitative pre-study based on group interviews with UK news consumers (N=31). The questionnaire was pre-tested and piloted after its initial development but before its full-scale field administration. The survey was fielded in autumn 2022 by YouGov to their online panel. Results will be ready in time for presentation at the Future of Journalism Conference.

## **”For three months, I tried to watch the news, but then I realised that I was going crazy.” Emotions and affective practices shaping trust in Covid-19 news reception**

Salla Tuomola<sup>1</sup>, Jaana Hujanen<sup>1</sup>, Katja Lehtisaari<sup>2</sup>, Juho Ruotsalainen<sup>3</sup>, Mikko Grönlund<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>University of Helsinki, Helsinki, Finland. <sup>2</sup>Tampere University, Tampere, Finland. <sup>3</sup>University of Turku, Turku, Finland

### **Abstract**

At the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020, the demand for real-time information and news was even more urgent than usual during crises since the extent and severity of the health effects of the virus were unknown. Consuming news during the pandemic has thus been unavoidable, compelling, and even overwhelming. To produce new insights into the practices of using and making sense of information and news related to health crises, this paper explores the reception of the Covid-19 news coverage in Finland. Scholars have recognised the pivotal role of emotions in crisis communication and news reporting. The paper focuses on audiences’ emotions and affective practices in news reception.

Reuters Institute’s Digital News Report (2022) shows that Finland still holds the highest level of overall trust in news media (69%). It has been suggested that the increasingly polarised debates over topics such as Covid-19 restrictions may have impacted positively on the majority’s trust in experts, institutions, and the news media (Reunanen, 2022). A recent audience survey conducted in the Oulu region in Finland with 506 respondents examined the ways in which citizens provided and evaluated crisis information during the Covid-19 pandemic (Grönlund et al., 2022). The study shows that while trusting journalistic media, people also had critical views on Covid-19 news. This paper delves deeper into these questions by examining media users’ emotions and affective practices evoked by Covid-19 pandemic coverage in Finland. Our data consists of 14 qualitative semi-structured interviews conducted between May and August 2022.

Our results indicate that the Covid-19 news coverage was so penetrating, overwhelming, and distressing that it started to affect people’s trust and relationship with media and communication itself. However, those interviewees who described a relatively high level of trust before the outbreak expressed even stronger confidence in mainstream news media during the pandemic.

## **(Re)constructing Science – (Pseudo-)Science narratives in journalism and counterpublics**

Saïd Unger, Svenja Boberg, Dr. Thorsten Quandt

University of Münster, Münster, Germany

### **Abstract**

Pseudoscience and anti-academic narratives are not a new phenomenon. The extent of public reception and the spread of science based disinformation has however increased massively due to political trends and the circumvention of journalistic verification processes (Neuberger et al., 2023). While science journalists are supposed to subscribe to the same basic epistemological principles as their sources – researchers with rigorous scientific principles – users participating in counterpublics (Holt et al., 2019) hold very different views towards scientists and science: Populist arguments liken scientists to malicious elites, others reference scientists of questionable repute or construct their own pseudo-scientific epistemologies as an amalgamation of esoteric beliefs, outdated scientific theories or disinformation (Hansson, 2017; Mede & Schäfer, 2020). To compare the positioning of journalists and counterpublics towards scientific knowledge we therefore ask, *how are scientists and references to science contextualized by journalists and counterpublics?* Therefore, we collected newspaper articles from leading German newspapers referencing science or scientists (N=3,239), as well as tweets on the same subjects (N=3.9M). In addition we gathered messages (N=22,219) from 122 telegram channels and groups associated with the German *Querdenken* movement, which was formed against COVID-restrictions. We applied structural topic modeling to all texts to extract central themes over time as well as a sentiment analysis to measure their affective dimensions. Preliminary results underline a notable divide between mainstream journalism and counterpublic actors: While journalists mostly reference science and scientists for expert opinions, counterpublic actors either dismiss science and scientists, attack them or propose unscientific alternatives. However, there are overlaps when it comes to headline driven boulevard journalism: Here, the reporting drifts into science-skepticism, characterizing academic work as residing in an ivory tower, detached from “real-world problems”. This is indicative of a rising competition between traditional journalism and new, alternative platforms.

## The social skills of alternative media

Tine Ustad Figenschou, Karoline Andrea Ihlebæk

Oslo Metropolitan University (OSLOMET), Oslo, Norway

### Abstract

Although a growing scholarly literature have studied ongoing power dynamics and boundary struggles in journalism, the challengers' position is rarely studied in detail. We argue that more effort must be given to what these actors represent in contemporary journalism, what they aim to achieve and why. Particularly the voice of antagonistic alternative media actors has been notably absent in the existing body of literature (but see Holt 2019; Eldridge 2018; Noppari, Hiltunen and Ahva 2018; for exceptions). This paper is based on in-depth interviews with editors and senior editorial staff representing 12 different alternative media projects in Norway (n=15), including anti-systemic media, far-right alternative media, religious alternative media, alternative health media, left-leaning alternative media. It analyses the editors' motivations and editorial aims; their positioning vis-à-vis the mainstream media and political establishment, and their social skills (ability to mobilize support, cooperation, and alliances). Combining theories of strategic action fields (Fligstein 2001; Fligstein and McAdam 2012) and (online) counterpublics (Downey and Fenton 2003; Fraser 1990), it illuminates how alternative media editors' aiming to be a corrective to 'the mainstream media' strive to convince their competitors and audience of their 'alternativeness' (Holt et al. 2019). It finds great variety in how alternative media position themselves vis-à-vis the journalistic institution (funding, organisations, ethical and normative framework), a position we find to be guided by the degree of anti-systemness rather than ideological leaning. It further illuminates how interviewees across positions mobilize around key values and collective frames such as i) honesty (open about their partisan position in contrast to false 'claims of neutrality'); ii) proximity (represent the interests of 'the people' in contrast to the elite-orientated mainstream press); iii) inclusion (invite voices that are excluded from the established media); iv) freedom (defending free speech in contrast to political correctness); and v), independence (from funding authorities, regulators and the journalistic institution).

# **Global issue, global coverage? International relations framing in national reporting on climate change.**

Merle van Berkum

City, University of London, London, United Kingdom

## **Abstract**

### Rationale and theoretical approach

Climate change is the defining crisis of our time; however, its complex nature makes it difficult to grasp and the individual perception relies heavily on media coverage. And while there have been several studies that investigate climate change reporting within the research field of science, risk and environmental communication, this paper enhances the debate by taking a comparative approach and by including questions of historic responsibility and international relations.

Climate change is a global issue, but journalism often prioritises national perspectives (Broadbent et al. 2016). This study aims to take into consideration the global scale of climate change and the global approach initiated by the UN. In a frame analysis of news articles from different countries allocated to the Global North and the Global South, it should be investigated how international dynamics are reported in national media when it comes to climate change. The paper draws on sociological approaches to journalism studies as well as postcolonial studies. This also includes a debate about epistemic justice and global news flows.

### Research design and empirical application

First, a comparative, quantitative frame analysis serves to identify dominant discourses. Second, qualitative semi-structured interviews with journalists are conducted to enhance the results from the frame analysis. The main methodological challenge in comparative journalism studies is – at the most basic level – comparability. This will be addressed in more detail in the presentation of this paper.

The study analyses online articles from eight countries. The selected countries are Ghana, Kenya, Namibia, Nigeria, and South Africa from the African continent, and Germany, the UK and the US allocated to the Global North. This study is unique in that it does not only look at climate change coverage across countries and regions but also investigates climate change reporting with regards to international cooperation and relations.

# The algorithms behind the headlines revisited – How ChatGPT re-redefines the core skills of human journalists

Arjen Van Dalen

University of Southern Denmark, Odense, Denmark

## Abstract

In November 2022 journalists once again re-examined the future of their profession and their core skills when ChatGPT was released to the general public. ChatGPT is a chatbot based on advanced Natural Language Processing. Due to its ability to process and create human-like texts, ChatGPT has been described as a game changer, leading to an “era of potential transformation of journalism and media content” (Pavlik, 2023, p. 1).

Given this large leap in the technological capabilities of automatic text generation, this paper revisits key research questions asked in the 2012 article *The algorithm behind the headlines*: What do these developments tell us about how journalism should be defined? and Which are the core skills that define journalistic labor?

Theoretically, the paper builds on a sociology of occupations- and boundary work- perspective to understand how journalists (re)define and (re)affirm their professional roles and skills to protect their professional standing in the face of external challenges such as the technological developments represented by ChatGPT. Previous research has shown that rather than rejecting earlier forms of machine-written news, journalists have mainly accommodated these developments by (1) acknowledging them as competition; (2) seeing them as complementary; or (3) integrating them. This in turn affected how journalists saw their core skills.

A qualitative analysis of journalistic reactions to ChatGPT in journalistic blog posts and newspaper articles shows that journalists see ChatGPT as a larger threat to their profession than previous forms of automated news. Concerns about fake news and lack of accountability lead them to reject the development and request government regulation. Journalists foresee a need for upskilling. Rather than focusing on journalists as a professional *collective* which follows routines, professional discourse around ChatGPT emphasizes journalists as *individuals* who should pose personal integrity, an own tone of voice and human intuition.



# News literacy revised for teenagers. Towards a news knowledge scale for youngsters

Kristin Van Damme<sup>1</sup>, Edward De Vooght<sup>2</sup>, Jan Boesman<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>imec-mict-UGent, Ghent, Belgium. <sup>2</sup>Artevelde University of Applied Sciences, Ghent, Belgium

## Abstract

Boosted by a disinformation discourse, critically engaging with news and news literacy are currently high on the agenda. News literacy initiatives predominantly focus on teenagers, as they are believed to be decreasingly interested in news and in developing passive news use practices (Swart, 2022; Tamboer et al., 2022).

News literacy programs therefore strive to develop critical media audiences by raising awareness and providing information on disinformation and journalism. Such programs are often evaluated by measuring the knowledge audiences have related to news. Tully et al. (2021) herefor developed a news literacy scale across five domains: context, creation, content, circulation, and consumption (i.e., the 5Cs from Tully & Vraga, 2022).

Previous research among young audiences, however, indicated low scores, with only one in five 12-26-year olds passing the 5Cs-test (Van Damme et al., 2022). These results suggest that either news literacy is low or that the current scale is not fine-grained enough to distinguish lower-level literacy. It is possible that the items are too difficult for young audiences, while they might not be as ignorant as the results indicate.

As such, this multimethod study was designed to investigate new measures of news literacy that are more adapted to younger audiences. First, a survey with over 1500 respondents (age 12-26), measured the 5Cs scale and seven easier items. Comparing the results of both scales might shed light on meaningful variation in lower literacy scores. Second, an experiment was conducted with 100 pupils in secondary schools using an educational package on news literacy (Mediawijs, 2022). To assess this impact, open-ended questions gauge active critical thinking skills towards news media, going beyond typical multiple-choice questions.

Apart from the results of both studies, their value for news literacy measures will be discussed, and suggestions will be made for a measure more suited for young respondents.

## **“Follow our updates and don’t miss a thing!”: A large-scale content analysis of one year of liveblogging in Flemish newsrooms**

Sarah D.G. Van Leuven, Yoram Timmerman, Antoon Bronselaer

Ghent University, Ghent, Belgium

### **Abstract**

Since the London 2005 bombings, liveblogs have quickly acquired a central position on news websites to report about major ongoing events (e.g. breaking news, elections). Liveblogs present a wide array of updates in reverse chronological order such as statements by sources, direct embedding of social media posts, video footage, or written summaries or interpretation by journalists (Matheson & Wahl-Jorgensen, 2020; Thorsen & Jackson, 2018). In contrast to regular news articles who present a clear narrative and structure, liveblogs are fragmented and chaotic. Different liveblog updates may contradict one another, which raises important questions about how truth-telling practices are rearticulated in the liveblog format. Yet, despite the popularity of the liveblog and its establishment as a journalistic genre, little attention has been paid to its epistemology (Matheson & Wahl-Jorgensen, 2020). Inspired by previous work on liveblogs as well as broader scholarly work about breaking news and news updates, we are especially interested into how journalists integrate ‘epistemic caution’ (Ekström et al., 2021; Rom, & Reich, 2020; Wilczek & Blangetti, 2018) as well as transparency about errors and corrections (Karlsson et al., 2017; Thurman & Walters, 2013) in liveblog updates. This paper aims to study (1) how epistemic caution is articulated in liveblogs (f.e. “10 reported dead” instead of “10 dead”); (2) to what extent updates contain contradicting information and (3) to what extent and how errors in earlier updates are communicated and corrected in subsequent updates. Therefore, we applied regular interval content capturing (Kautsky and Widholm, 2008) using in-house developed software to study updating practices in around 1500 unique liveblogs published by six leading Flemish news outlets between March, 7th 2020 and March 31st, 2021. All data will be manually coded during April-May 2023 and the full paper with findings will be presented during the conference.

# Translating Data: Strategies for News Audience Engagement Across Social Media Platforms

Astrid Vandendaele, Tomás Dodds

Leiden University, Leiden, Netherlands

## Abstract

Data journalism has created new possibilities for storytelling and news reporting. After filtering and analyzing a dataset, in collaboration with graphic designers and sub-editors, journalists convert findings and patterns into precise figures and images. Furthermore, data visualization has become an attention-grabbing tool that aids computer-assisted reporting and data journalism in telling fact-based stories. Yet, reporters increasingly depend on digital, third-party platforms – and their affordances – for news distribution, audience traffic, and engagement. This presents a challenge, as reporters now need to produce the same information for distribution through different platforms and formats.

This paper aims to understand the strategies journalists use to translate the presentation of data-based stories, so they fit third-party platforms' assets. We examine both the production and 'translation' process and investigate the (perceived) effectiveness of the various techniques to distribute data-informed news content through social networking sites.

For this study, we conducted 20 semi-structured interviews with editors and journalists in newsrooms in the Netherlands and Flanders. Our sample includes editors, reporters, social media managers, and professionals working on producing and distributing news articles across multiple platforms.

We notice how, throughout the production of data visualizations, the reader remains top of mind for all journalists involved, driving forward the graphics' design, formats, and strategies concerning their publication. This solidifies the existing 'alliances' between receiver and producer in the news production process. However, the reader's desires and needs are shaped by and catered to through the various features of social media platforms aimed to enhance audience reach and engagement.

Our results have important implications for understanding data, its visualization, and journalists' strategies for audience engagement online. They also point to the growing importance of graphic design in the newsroom and the continuing platformization of today's news media, fostering new 'alliances' between reporters, graphic designers, social media platforms and the audience.

# Can tech solve it? Analyzing Indian alternative journalists' efforts to counter misinformation

Darsana Vijay

University of Toronto, Toronto, Canada

## Abstract

Misinformation in India is engineered to spread hate against minority communities. Indian alternative journalists resist by fact-checking viral content and uncovering the actors behind it: political parties' IT cells, their decentralized networks, transnational majoritarian groups, and complicit social media platforms. Responding to the paucity of research on how journalists address misinformation, this paper examines how Indian alternative journalists counter misinformation and their efficacy. Using a case-study of *The Wire's* (now redacted) exposes on the ruling party's sophisticated misinformation apparatus and the ensuing controversy, I interrogate the privileged position assigned to tech-reporting, forensic analysis, data journalism and other positivist methods in 'solving' misinformation and simultaneously, journalism's credibility crisis. I adopt an STS approach to controversy as an opportunity to question normalized journalistic practices, institutional arrangements and assumptions about truth. Additionally, I engage with literature on journalism and change, field repair as well as misinformation studies.

I argue that alternative journalists frame misinformation as an information problem and not a political one. Such a framing focuses on authenticity of information and offers the journalistic practice of verification and technological forensic analysis of information as cornerstones of its solution. *The Wire* erects boundaries between their proper practice of verification and good journalism and the practices of bad 'politically-motivated' actors who circulate vitriol and misinformation. Instead of reckoning with the complicity of established journalistic practices and digital technologies in precipitating this crisis, they exalt conventional tenets of journalism and technology as solutions, curtailing any re-imagining of journalistic practice.

Instead, I explore the plausibility of an approach wherein alternative journalists embrace a political commitment to social justice and commit to iterative intervention (Markham, 2021) in the face of majoritarian misinformation. This entails consistently challenging the status quo, organizing around a fair, alternative vision for the information landscape and building cross-cutting solidarities to work towards it.

# Renegotiating the press-police relationship in four liberal democracies

Tim P Vos<sup>1</sup>, Carolyne Lunga<sup>2</sup>, Prosper Senyo<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Michigan State University, East Lansing, USA. <sup>2</sup>City University, London, United Kingdom

## Abstract

Journalists in liberal democracies have long embraced a normative ideal of critical distance from the powerful (Hanitzsch et al., 2019), while also having long been accused of having a cozy relationship with police (Gans, 2003; Shpayer-Makov, 2009). The inconsistency between these ideals and practices has increasingly become obvious. The ubiquity of cameras on phones has led to routine exposure of police behavior that, previously, was only rarely reported by the legacy press (Lawrence, 2023). Added to this, populist tendencies in several democracies have led to wedges between governments – including the police – and journalists (Waisbord, 2019). Legacy journalists have increasingly faced calls to change the way they cover police (Walker, 2022). It is unclear, though, how journalists are collectively rethinking their institutional practices or setting new normative guiderails. Since journalistic norms are subject to “discursive (re)creation, (re)interpretation, appropriation, and contestation” (Hanitzsch & Vos, 2018, p. 146), we seek possible evidence of a normative reckoning in journalistic discourse about the press-police relationship.

Thus, this study examines the ways in which journalists in different liberal democracies have collectively reevaluated their normative understandings of journalist-police relations. We focus on the places journalists have talked to each about their journalism, i.e., metajournalism (Carlson, 2016), in the US, UK, Ghana, and Nigeria (varied by Global North and South). We have identified online sites of metajournalism in the four countries and are currently archiving postings about the press-police relationship from 2010 to 2023 (a period that captures cellphone and populist developments).

We argue that differences in so-called power-distance within liberal democracies (Hanitzsch et al., 2019) – represented by the four countries here – could plausibly lead to different normative discourses. Thus, we seek to understand how the various discourses rationalize past journalism-police relationships, legitimize new outlooks or practices regarding the relationships, and converge or diverge on these points.

## **“We should do more than publish and pray”: Fact Checkers on getting truth to the people**

Emily K. Vraga<sup>1</sup>, Leticia Bode<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, USA. <sup>2</sup>Georgetown University, Washington, DC, USA

### **Abstract**

Most of our experiences in the 21st century (and for much of recorded history) are mediated (Lippmann, 1922). Despite the rise of social media, and even sometimes because of it (Nielsen & Ganter, 2022), journalism remains a major way that people learn about the world. A relatively new journalistic movement is the growth of fact checking journalism, designed to debunk, correct, or set the record straight (Amazeen, 2017; Graves, 2016). As part of the misinformation ecosystem, their contributions are multilayered: they are sources of information in their own right but also produce the journalism – that is, fact checks of misinformation – that many individuals rely on when they correct others.

To find out more about how fact checkers think about their role in this ecosystem, we interviewed professional fact checkers from eight different organizations across five continents, identified through the International Fact Checking Network,[1] in June and July of 2022. We iteratively sorted the content of the transcripts into themes using a grounded theory approach. These interviews suggest that the majority of fact checkers emphasize their role as suppliers of high quality information, focused on answering questions of public concern, making their content more accessible, and reaching audiences who can share this content on their behalf. However, they largely eschew direct corrections of misinformation themselves, concerned about toxicity and the ineffectiveness of these corrections. We reflect on the role that fact checking journalists can and should play in correcting misinformation online.

[1] Two were interviewed in person, five over videoconference, and one was interviewed by email according to their preference and availability. Interviews were open-ended and lasted between 28 and 58 minutes.

## **Vernacular journalism: Local news and everyday life**

Karin Wahl-Jorgensen<sup>1</sup>, Julia Boelle<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Cardiff University, Cardiff, United Kingdom. <sup>2</sup>Independent Researcher, Hamburg, Germany

### **Abstract**

This paper is based on in-depth interviews with 57 local journalism entrepreneurs in the UK. It develops the idea that an emergent sector of small-scale local news organizations prioritizes a form of “vernacular journalism.” Driven by a democratic impulse, vernacular journalism reflects the preoccupations, experiences and histories of ordinary people and their communities, providing a vehicle for representation and voice which is often missing from more established news organizations. Vernacular journalism seeks to (1) make a difference in the local community, (2) represent the nature of the community, and (3) provide a “first draft” of the community’s history from the perspective of its inhabitants. The ability to provide such vernacular journalism is premised on knowledge of the local community, cultivated through long-standing presence. A vernacular journalism which reflects the world from the bottom up represents a unique selling point for local journalism, against the top-down orientation of larger regional and national outlets.

## The Think-tank Turn of Chinese Newspapers in the Digital Era

Haiyan Wang<sup>1</sup>, Liangen Yin<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>University of Macau, Taipa, Macao. <sup>2</sup>Shenzhen University, Shenzhen, China

### Abstract

This study analyzes what we call the “think-tank turn” of Chinese newspapers, a popular path of digital transformation that many media organizations have been undertaking in response to the multi-faceted crisis of the media in the past decade. Based on a case study of Paper N, a commercial newspaper in southeast China that has been praised for having organized one of the most successful media-based think-tanks in the country, this study explores how the media legitimizes their think-tank roles and activities. It argues that by turning the newsroom into a policy research hub and the journalists into policy analysts and consultants, Chinese newspapers further subordinate themselves to the institutions of political power, becoming not only their loyal propagandists but also fully-fledged dependents. Implications of the think-tank turn to media transformation in the digital era are discussed.



## Toward more equitable local news: the role of meta-organizations

Andrea D Wenzel

Temple University, Philadelphia, USA

### **Abstract**

In recent years, many journalism organizations around the globe have faced reckonings over how their coverage has harmed historically marginalized groups, particularly Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) communities (Callison and Young, 2019; Torres et al., 2020). While newsrooms have responded with a variety of diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging (DEIB) projects (Wenzel, 2021), the question often remains how these can be transformed into sustainable accountability infrastructure—systems, structures, or programs that facilitate a process of holding stakeholders with more power (e.g. news organizations, editors, CEOs) responsible for listening to and addressing the needs and concerns of those with less (e.g. BIPOC journalists and community members). This paper examines attempts to establish accountability infrastructure within one U.S. city by exploring case studies of four journalism organizations in Philadelphia (two long-established majority white newsrooms, and two community-centered start-ups where at least half the staff identify as BIPOC). Drawing on communication infrastructure theory (Ball-Rokeach et al., 2001; Kim and Ball-Rokeach, 2006) and interviews, focus groups, and participant observation conducted over five years, this paper focuses on how internal newsroom accountability efforts (source tracking, pre-publication Slack channels, performance reviews, etc.) are intertwined with external accountability infrastructure efforts undertaken by a range of increasingly influential outside meta-organizations (Ferucci, 2022; Konieczna, 2022; Lowrey et al., 2022; Robinson, 2023). I explore how philanthropic foundations, journalism support organizations, and DEIB consultants influence efforts to push the city’s news and information built environment toward greater equity and antiracism. I look at attempts to create external accountability bodies, and how national efforts by meta-organizations may both support and compete with local initiatives.

## **What role can Theatre Reportage play in the mediation of unbiased reporting?**

Carrie Westwater

Cardiff | University, Cardiff, United Kingdom

### **Abstract**

With this abstract, I propose a provocation.

Can Theatre Reportage: a mix between theatre praxis, non-theatre and journalism, successfully report on “conflict including war, repression and political violence?” Can this method of mediation perform as non-biased, unaffiliated media texts that represent authentic lived experiences?

I argue, yes.

With a presentation on the history of political theatre and its use in circumventing censorship and indeed closures during times of political strife across the globe, this paper will focus on two case studies: Teatro Di Nascosto and the work of Valera Simonchuk from Ukraine. Each are producing work as ‘theatre reportage’ to report on war, repression and political violence as witnessed in the regions of Ukraine, Palestine, Kurdistan and Iraq. The work is co-produced with actors and journalist's living in these regions over months of ethnographic observations and verbatim storytelling. In presenting news in this way the theatrics are stripped away as non-theatre, raw and documentary.

In February 2023, I documented this work as presented to the European Parliament in Brussels to fifty four MEP's ....to a standing ovation.

Why?

Because the verbatim narratives of life under oppression, repression and war were communicated in a manner that was uncensored, non-biased, believable and were received as ultimately “re-humanising”.

# Journalism students' views on AI innovation and responsibility: Findings from a Design Thinking project in Germany

Bartosz Wilczek, Maximilian Eder, Roxana Portugal, Neil Thurman, Mario Haim

LMU Munich, Munich, Germany

## Abstract

Artificial Intelligence (AI) and rule-based automation technologies offer opportunities for local journalism to cope better with its economic challenges (Jenkins & Nielsen, 2020). At the same time, such digital technologies should be responsible (Bastian et al., 2021), i.e., not only increase economic efficiency but also contribute to the democratic role of local news media in society by adhering to journalistic quality standards.

However, research regarding journalists' perceptions of how AI in local news media should incorporate such quality standards remains scarce. Therefore, based on the Stanford Design Thinking approach (Micheli et al., 2019), an online survey followed by four in-person mixed-methods workshops with 15 students from the German School of Journalism was conducted. The aim of the Design Thinking project was to investigate their attitudes regarding responsible AI in local journalism and to develop a prototype of a responsible AI application. The analytical framework draws on literature regarding the contemporary challenges journalists face and their perspectives regarding quality standards.

The students considered time constraints regarding editing and assembling video content as a core problem in local journalism, with content overload and lack of time for fact-checking identified as core reasons for this problem. Accordingly, AI was perceived to have particular potential to assist with editing and assembling video content. Relevance and accuracy were described as core quality standards that need to be implemented in a corresponding AI application. Based on the problem and standard identification, a low-fidelity prototype for a responsible AI application for editing and assembling video content was ideated and tested. The prototype's functionality included automated video and audio retrieval, sentiment analysis, and fact-checking.

This study contributes to previous research by revealing entry-level journalists' attitudes regarding responsible AI in local journalism and by introducing the mixed-methods Design Thinking approach as a valid method in journalism research.

# Digital Media Ecosystems: An analysis of Generation Z news consumption, its impact on evolving concepts and applications in journalism

Bethany Wood

University of Derby, Derby, United Kingdom

## Abstract

The world pandemic led to a change in the way social media was used by audiences, with young people spending more hours on the platform due to lockdown (Arens, 2020; Goodyear, 2020). Reports by Ofcom have demonstrated that the internet is the second most popular platform for accessing news after television in the UK (Jigsaw Research, 2022) with social media and the internet ranked as the most popular platform to access news for those aged between 16-24 (Statista, 2022). These statistics are unsurprising considering that at the time of writing, 98 percent of Generation Z (Gen Z) owned a smartphone (O'Dea, 2022) and the subsequent ease and accessibility of social media.

Technology is constantly developing and with this, its importance is becoming more prevalent with each generation: the Baby Boomers (1946-1964) consider it something useful whereas millennials (1981-1997) believe it a necessity for day to day living (Bucuta, 2015). Gen Z, otherwise known as the digital native, have grown up with this technology at their fingertips and social media is a norm. It helps form their identity, their affiliations and opens gateways for them to engage with news in a new way. It is a common misconception that Gen Z do not consume news, they are simply doing so in a different way to their predecessors (Wood and Ebel, 2021).

Using a sample of 800 18-20 year olds whilst utilising Generational theory, Actor Network Theory and the Social Shaping of Technology, this research provides a critical analyse regarding how Gen Z's news consumption and engagement habits are developing along with technology to sculpture the future format of news and its distribution. From that perspective, allied with the empirical approach, it is possible to provide research orientated advice for the industry and even help to redefine traditional concepts of journalism.