

NEGOTIATING JOURNALISM

Core Values and Cultural Diversities

Elsebeth Frey, Mofizur Rhaman and Hamida El Bour (Eds.)

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Foreword

How do we get to grips with the diverse dynamics and roles played by journalism around the world? This is the question this anthology seeks to probe. It does this by taking general debates about journalism and investigating their shape in three countries – Tunisia, Bangladesh and Norway. What the collection shows is how different societies, seen in part through the eyes of journalism students, engage with the issues of the universal and the particular.

For UNESCO, with 195 Member States, this dialectic between universal principles and national diversities is intrinsically part of the dynamic of the Organisation. As the UN agency that deals with media issues, the relationship between the general and the particular is notably relevant to our work concerning journalism.

The starting point for UNESCO, as indeed should be the case more broadly, is the universal human right of freedom of expression. We note that this right encompasses each individual's entitlement to impart, as well as to seek and receive, information. From this, we infer that it therefore inherently entails two dimensions: press freedom and freedom of access to information. As set out in our study *World Trends in Freedom of Expression and Media Development*, UNESCO has elaborated on press freedom further by specifying the importance of (legal) freedom, (economic) pluralism, and (self-regulatory) independence for the media.

In this perspective, journalism is a specialized and voluntary exercise of free expression. What makes journalism specific is the universal aspiration to meet certain professional standards and its operation via an ethic of public interest.

In a time when more and more journalism takes to digital channels, and in a time with an abundance of information, social media and interpersonal news, the importance of keeping focus on the uniqueness of journalism should go without saying, even given different cultural inflections of the practice. This is one reason why UNESCO is developing indicators for assessing the digital environment within which journalism takes place. Accordingly, the indicators cover four fields hugely relevant to journalism: Rights, Openness, Accessibility and Multi-stakeholder participation (ROAM).

To conclude: at the present time, journalism is under intensified threat. Some threats originate in economics, many others in politics and social life. This is why

FOREWORD

attention to the questions discussed in this anthology is valuable. If we are going to preserve journalism as a universal beacon, and indeed strengthen it going forward, the more knowledge we have about diversities in practice, the better our strategies can be.

Guy Berger
Director
Division of Freedom of Expression and Media Development
UNESCO

Preface

When working with our first-year students on a journalistic online project about press freedom around the world, we observed that the Norwegian students and their sources in other countries – mostly journalists – seem to share the same core values, although conditions on the ground made their daily work and routines different. So, working in Oslo on our training website led to discussions about journalism's values and ideals and the degree to which they are transnational.

From debating journalism's core values grew a transnational project that was named *Shared Horizons*. It is a development and research project between the three largest and oldest journalism educations in Norway, Bangladesh and Tunisia.

The main reason for this collaboration is that Bangladesh, Norway and Tunisia are three very different countries, with distinctly dissimilar histories, political cultures and traditions.

While Norway is a relatively secular society, with a separation of religion and state but still based on Christianity, both Tunisia and Bangladesh are Islamic majority countries. In all three countries, religion intertwines with media and society in a local as well as global context.

Regarding conditions of press freedom, Reporters sans frontières (Reporters without Borders) rank Norway at number 1, Tunisia at 97 and Bangladesh at 146 in a table of 180 countries (Reporters sans frontières 2017). In addition to this, Freedom House describes Norway and Tunisia as free, whereas Bangladesh is considered to be partly free (Freedom House 2017).

Can journalists and journalism students in these contrasting contexts still share the same journalistic values? Do journalism peers across nations think alike or differently, and what are the similarities and differences?

As diversity can be a source of enrichment, comparison may be a fruitful way of helping to clarify ideals and values, of understanding the role of journalism and not taking for granted achievements in the field. Moreover, *if* Tunisia, Bangladesh and Norway share the same notions about journalistic core values, the case for transnational core values in journalism would, we argue, be strengthened.

Since the initiative was Norwegian and the Department of Journalism and Media Studies at Oslo and Akershus University College of Applied Sciences (HiOA) had collaborated before with the Department of Mass Communication and Journalism at the University of Dhaka in Bangladesh (DU), it was a natural choice for both parts to work with one another. At the time, Tunisia was in the early stages of its transition

period after the uprising against a repressive dictatorship. Media outlets were popping up, and journalists, suddenly free from censorship of the regime of Ben Ali, almost had to reinvent journalism. It seemed as if all Tunisians were engaged in debates about politics, religion, human rights, journalism and media. So, working with two peers from the journalism education at the Institut de Presse et des Sciences de l'Information (IPSI) at the University of Manouba was interesting for both us and them.

From the start, the *Shared Horizons* project included journalism students. We met students when we visited each other, and we used our joint experiences when teaching in our institutions. Some students were directly included in our work, while others got scholarships in order to do their very first research. As a matter of fact, some of these research efforts form part of this anthology. For instance, Margrethe Håland Solheim, as a journalism student with a scholarship from *Shared Horizons*, undertook a small-scale study interviewing Colombian journalists about journalistic values and press freedom. Her results dovetail nicely with the research in the *Shared Horizons* project. In this book, her chapter adds another country and a new perspective.

Shared Horizons is more than a research collaboration between scholars and journalism teachers. Its intensions were first to build a network of journalism educators in Bangladesh, Tunisia and Norway and act as a forum for debates and exchanges of opinions and experiences in teaching journalism.

In 2013, we conducted a survey sampling our bachelor students in journalism, and 439 of them answered. The next two years we also did qualitative interviews, because we wanted to delve deeper into concepts and views as well as to examine if journalism students and working journalists have diverse understandings of journalism's core values. In 2016, we started planning an anthology, and since then, *Shared Horizons* has been primarily about making this book, *Negotiating Journalism. Core Values and Cultural Diversities*. Some of the chapters build on *Shared Horizons'* quantitative and qualitative research, more of which you can read in Appendices I and II. Others rely on document analysis, content analysis of newspapers and visual rhetoric analysis, to mention a few research methods.

We are grateful to all former students who contributed to the project and to the Norwegian colleagues who took part in *Shared Horizons* for a shorter period: Audgunn Oltedal, Anne Hege Simonsen and Anders Graver Knudsen. We are also thankful for the funding granted to *Shared Horizons* by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. As editors, we are grateful to Oslo and Akershus University College of Applied Sciences (HiOA) for their economic support in publishing the anthology. Furthermore, we would like to thank Ingela Wadbring and Johannes Bjerling at Nordicom for their support and enthusiasm.

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I. Points of Departure

Chapter 1

Introduction

Negotiating Core Values Transnationally

Elsebeth Frey

Every day worldwide, journalists gather and publish information. They make their news stories according to ideals and values as well as routines and methods of their profession. Also, students are educated and trained to become journalists in accordance with journalism's epistemology. Journalists and journalism students around the world interpret journalistic core values and implement them in journalistic work. They do so in the historical, social and geographical contexts of their society. Still, they have the same occupation, publishing news so that the public may 'seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers' (United Nations 1948, article 19).

Telling the truth and giving information to the public are core values in journalism. Immediacy is another. Traditionally, news media and press freedom enhance people's ability to make up their minds about what is going on and then to form their own opinions about essential issues. According to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, people have the right to freedom of expression and freedom of opinion (ibid). Freedom of speech and press freedom are corner stones of the foundation of journalism. Even so, the meaning of press freedom and informing the public is 'far more elastic than textbook knowledge usually implies and therefore has to be renegotiated in the context in which they are implemented' (Veltmer 2012:233).

In a globalized world, new technologies, media commercialization, convergence and conglomeration constantly make marks on journalism. Social media and media companies such as Google, Facebook and YouTube make it easier for anyone to be a content provider and publisher. Furthermore, they also make the world seem closer.

In times of significant changes, one answer is to go to the core of the profession. It may be a strategic move in order to (re)legitimize journalism, or it may as well be as simple as seeing core values in a different light. Values can – and should – be renegotiated, as they do not have 'a fixed meaning that could claim validity outside time and space' (ibid).

Today, social media challenge the way in which journalists gather and verify information, and the answer from Brandtzaeg et al. (2015) is that verification has become even *more* important.

In regards to interpreting journalistic values through space, the notion of autonomy stands out as an enduring core value (see for instance Splichal & Sparks 1994; Weaver 1998; Deuze 2005). However, is it possible to make and publish autonomous journalism throughout the world? Examining levels of democratic performance, perceived security, violence and inequality in 62 countries, Hughes et al. found that journalists in insecure democracies feel influences about their work most intensely (2017:652). It seems natural to assume that journalists living in unsettled societies are more careful to monitor politicians and other people with power.

Nevertheless, Muchtar et al. state that three out of four journalists in countries such as Egypt, Sudan, Sierra Leone and Turkey say it is very or extremely important to scrutinize political leaders (2017:568), thus emphasizing the value of being a watchdog. Indeed, they stress that journalists' roles in the political domain are particularly vulnerable to cross-cultural variation (ibid). That may be because 'the press always takes on the form and coloration of the social and political structures within which it operates. Especially, it reflects the system of social control whereby the relation of individuals and institutions are adjusted' (Siebert et al. [1956] 1969:1f).

In 1956, Fred S. Siebert, Theodore Peterson and Wilburn Schramm launched four theories of the media. They wrote about the Authoritarian system, the Libertarian theory, the Social responsibility system and the Soviet Communist theory of the press (Siebert et al. [1956] 1969).

Nearly half a century later, Daniel Hallin and Paolo Mancini examined North America and Western Europe, stating that these regions 'tend to dominate models globally' (2004:6). The Liberal or the Anglo-American Model of neutrality and objectivity, as well as the dominance of market mechanisms, is based on American and partly British journalism.

In northern Europe, the Democratic Corporatist Model prevails, and it also makes its mark on France. France, however, also displays characteristics of the Polarized Pluralist Model, which was Hallin and Mancini's third model. This type of journalism, which integrates media and party politics and incorporates a strong role for the state, is mainly found in Mediterranean Europe. As for the Democratic Corporatist Model, it is characterized by an active but legally limited state.

In 2012, Katrin Voltmer looked into how far media systems can travel. To use Hallin and Mancini's three media system models on the rest of the world, she claims, would be overstretching them and would disguise 'the broad variations of constellations that can be found empirically outside the Western world' (Voltmer 2012:244). Voltmer and other contributors to *Comparing Media Systems Beyond the Western World*, edited by Hallin and Mancini, argued that globalization is an important force on media systems and 'produces a variety of forms of hybridization, rather than homogenization' (Hallin & Mancini 2012:286). Thus, media norms from the Liberal

Model are reinterpreted in the local context, where their meanings are transformed (ibid:285).

The aim of this book is to compare journalism's core values transnationally. Our intention is not to suggest new models of media systems. Nevertheless, the theories of media systems mentioned are interesting to the countries we examine. Due to the heritage from colonial times, the British media system influences Bangladesh, whereas the French media system influences Tunisia. As for Norway, its media system is very similar to the one described as the Democratic Corporatist Model.

This book presents results and discussions on journalistic core values in Bangladesh, Norway and Tunisia. In Part II, the contributors problematize the perception and interpretation of core values, such as objectivity, press freedom and the role of being a watchdog. In Part III, empirical studies show how core values are renegotiated under different conditions in divergent countries. When we examine whether journalistic core values are transnational or not, we follow in a long line of researchers who have asked questions about differences and similarities in the journalism field, its culture and its participants.

Decades before Hallin and Mancini's models of different media systems, the Liberal or Anglo-American model of journalism spread across the world through the early establishment of American journalism education (de Burgh 2005:4) as well as by the fact that English grew to be the common language for most of the academic world. Also, the Marshall Plan helped to spread the Anglo-American model, as did the American aid programme to developing countries from the 1960s onwards (Curran & Park 2000:5).

Most of the comparative studies of journalism, whether they have a focus on values, cultures, journalists or media models, relate to this model. In 1998, Weaver concluded, after a study involving 21 countries and territories, that there were many differences among journalists, and 'cultural norms and political values do appear to have some influence on journalists' views of their roles and ethics' (Weaver 1998:478). By 2012, Weaver and Willnat (2012:545) found that 'a culture of global journalism has not yet emerged' and 'journalistic norms and values vary widely across nationals' (549). Splichal and Sparks' results, gleaned from studying journalism students in 22 countries, showed striking similarities and indicated that differences were not related to countries (1994:179ff).

However, the concept of being critical was less important for students in developing countries (ibid:149ff), and objectivity and accuracy were also negatively correlated in some countries while positively in others (ibid:149). Years later, Hanitzsch et al. found that 'traditional western ideals of detachment and being a watchdog of the government flourish among the standards accepted by journalists around the world' (2011:280). That, however, does not mean these values are fully enacted in practice, Muchtar et al. claim (2017:564). Nor does it mean, as this anthology will show, that they are looked upon in the same way in different parts of the world – or, for that matter, under the influence of the same religious faith. For instance, Bangladesh is one of three out of

12 Muslim countries where journalists seem to be motivated to monitor business and politics, which are qualities of the watchdog role (ibid:569f).

Blumler states that, although Western factors are abound in the Worlds of Journalism Study, the examination of contextual differences means that ‘an overly “Western-centered focus”’ was avoided (Blumler 2017:683). For, even though the Anglo-American model of journalism ‘seems to stand out as the only universal model’ (Mancini 2005:78), academic as well as global winds blew in another direction, making it obvious that the model ‘cannot be grafted on to any other systems’ (Schudson 2005:104).

Thus, Curran and Park (2000) aimed to broaden the understanding of media theory and the experiences ‘outside the Anglo-American orbit’ (2000:11). In addition, they write that global theory underplays the importance of nations, which they believe are influential in shaping media systems (ibid:12ff).

Also De Burgh emphasizes that how journalists act depends on culture. Furthermore, globalization ‘has meant a sharing of techniques, and formats and professional attitudes but also, paradoxically, globalisation has brought about an intensified awareness of the power of culture such that we cannot afford to ignore it’ (2005:17).

For example, examining journalistic culture in Muslim-majority countries, Muchtar et al. saw that journalists support national development and advocate for social change, ‘particularly [...] journalists in Bangladesh and Indonesia, Oman and Qatar, as well as Sierra Leone and Sudan’ (2017:564). However, as a study from Ramaprasad and Rahman (2006) shows, it is not necessarily contradictory to believe in critical reporting and, at the same time, to endorse national-building values.

Normative and empirical

As Hallin and Mancini state, comparative studies are valuable but risky (2004:5). One of the many reasons for this is that using surveys and interviews to examine journalism’s values and norms generates results on how journalists *think*, not on what they *do*. So, there could be a gap between expressed values and work in practice and a need to follow up with research on journalistic content. Furthermore, journalism, as well as studies of it, tends to be normative.

For journalism, normativity is its legitimization (McQuail in Josephi 2005:576). Maybe due to the hegemony of the Anglo-American model, it is often argued that detached, critical journalism may lead to better democratic practices. Others have stated that a socially responsible press may lead to social harmony or that advocacy journalism can bring about change.

Schudson (2003:198), for example, states ‘the press by itself is not democracy and does not create democracy’ – unless the state tolerates criticism of its power and permits some degree of self-government for the press (ibid:197). Merrill points to the ‘cacophony of muttering worldwide about press freedom’ (2009:10), ironically refer-

ring to claims of this freedom, even when the obstacles are numerous. Press freedom is a normative value journalists want to claim exists, but the concept has multiple meanings, depending on where it is uttered (ibid).

We admit that this anthology has its fair share of normativity. Actually, for the six journalism teachers in *Shared Horizons*, normative and critical theory is an integral part of the teaching practices. As teachers, we also work alongside empirical approaches, covering journalistic methodology, skills and training. The students want to learn the best ways to work as journalists, and with our main aim being to teach them to be good reporters, normative values and norms are necessarily included. Furthermore, in journalism education, it is important that students reflect on what journalism is and even what it *should* be (Hallin & Mancini 2004:13).

Negotiating journalism: An outline of the book

Acknowledging that cultural, political and social structures shape the development of the media (Hallin & Mancini 2004:297), Chapter 2 describes the legacies, histories and media landscapes of Bangladesh, Norway and Tunisia. As we believe structures, laws and societal characteristics within national boundaries are important also in a globalized world, this chapter aims to give some necessary background about the three countries. Together, Chapters 1 and 2 form Part I: the study's points of departure.

Then follows Part II, with four chapters that offer comparative perspectives on journalism's core values. The methodology of these chapters is described primarily in the two appendices that close the book.

Chapter 3 examines the notion of objectivity, presenting theoretical approaches to the concept as well as results for how journalism students and journalists in the three countries understand it. The debate on objectivity is an ongoing discussion. In fact, discussions about whether or not it is possible to be objective came up in every meeting in the *Shared Horizons'* network. In this chapter, Elsebeth Frey shows that the way we understand objectivity in journalism is related to how we understand facts and notions about what is true.

Chapter 4 looks into how future and current journalists think journalists relate to political power. This opens up for a discussion on neutrality versus a critical position, whereupon the contrasting positions of the respondents in the different countries become apparent. The Norwegian students find a neutral position untenable, while for students in Tunisia and Bangladesh, neutrality means not being biased towards anyone, powerful or powerless. Also, Hamida El Bour examines perceptions of the watchdog role in this chapter.

In Chapter 5, Solveig Steien considers the relationship between press freedom and corruption. A minority of the students' opinion is that there is *no* press freedom in their country, although Tunisian and Bangladeshi students cite many limitations. The students were asked if they as journalists would be in danger when working on

a story about corruption, or if their sources could be in danger, and Steien finds that the majority of students from the two developing countries reflect on consequences of this kind. Surprisingly, many of the Norwegian students express fear for their sources' and their own safety, which does not seem to correspond with the relatively calm situation in Norwegian society.

Chapter 6 offers insight into thoughts and beliefs of Colombian journalists, and the notions of Colombian journalists are also compared to those of their peers in Bangladesh, Norway and Tunisia. Journalistic core values give meaning to the work of the journalists, according to Margrethe Håland Solheim, but some core values are appreciated more in Colombia and Norway than in Bangladesh and Tunisia – and vice versa.

With Part III, the anthology changes path and scrutinizes themes and case studies from the three countries. Addressing the state of freedom of expression and press freedom, as seen through a focus on religion, Chapter 7 is first in line. Methodologically, Amina Khatun, Janina Islam Abir, Mofizur Rhaman and Md. Golam Rahman use content analysis and semi-structured interviews to unveil the complex relations between religion, press freedom and freedom of speech during a hyped and critical time in Bangladesh.

The next case concerns the post-revolution challenges in Tunisia, as Souha Yacoub analyses in Chapter 8. Yacoub examines political, economic and legal limitations of press freedom in the only Arab country that has succeeded in building a democracy after the so-called Arab Spring. Still, as this chapter shows, freedom of the press is at stake, despite establishment of a more liberal media landscape and other advances that have been made.

Religion is an issue in Chapters 9 and 10 as well as in Chapter 7. In Chapter 9, Eva Beate Strømsted questions whether religious confrontations and diversities in a multicultural society such as Norway have an impact on the work of cartoonists. The majority of the interviewed cartoonists maintain that their contemporary caricatures are stylistically similar to the ones made before the Muhammad Cartoons Controversy and the terror against Charlie Hebdo. However, the nuanced worldview has forced them to strive for more precision, since the caricature has become more controversial. One of the interview subjects laments that the caricature is 'dying – not just in Norway, but also internationally'.

In Chapter 10, Most. Ummay Habiba, Priyanka Kundu, Md. Golam Rahman and Mofizur Rhaman examine the state of freedom of expression in Bangladesh in view of the five bloggers who were killed between February 2013 and August 2015. A variety of methods are employed to look more closely at the role played by religious fundamentalists in the country's social-political and cultural dynamics, as well as at how the murders were covered in the local media.

Chapter 11 lays bare an attempt to take control of the Tunisian public media. Taoufik Yacoub puts on historical and political science glasses to look at the battle for press freedom in Tunisia. Yacoub describes the tensions leading up to the general

strike by journalists on 17 October 2012. This strike, it is argued, led to the long-awaited implementation of two media laws as well as to the creation of HAICA, an audio-visual regulatory body.

The last five chapters provide examples of the state of journalism during transitional periods, when the role of journalism is vital, although debated. Also, when it comes to the comparative chapters, journalism, as a system of norms and values, is discussed. Jointly, the chapters offer insights into why journalism and its core values are crucial in communicating important, contemporary events as well as representing a means of debating pivotal themes in societies, nationally as well as globally.

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Chapter 2

Media Landscape in Bangladesh, Norway and Tunisia

Hamida El Bour, Elsebeth Frey and Md. Golam Rahman

For decades, researchers have compared journalism across nations, as this anthology does. In our opinion, media and journalism may have an impact on social structures and politics. But there is no doubt that, in turn, politics, political institutions and their laws, as well as the economic, cultural and social structures of a country, shape the development of the media (Hallin & Mancini 2004:297).

As a backdrop to the anthology, this chapter outlines the cultural and historical context as well as the media landscape in the countries of Bangladesh, Norway and Tunisia. Historically, media systems have been ‘rooted in the institutions of the national state, in part because of their close relationship to the political world’ (ibid:13). While it is not possible to identify all causes and effects in a short text, such as this chapter, patterns and a basic understanding of the three countries can be imparted.

A table outlining the major characteristics is presented below (Table 1).

Table 1. Some characteristics of Bangladesh, Norway and Tunisia

	Bangladesh	Norway	Tunisia
Country facts			
Country size (sq km) ¹	148,460	323,802	163,610
Population (millions of inhabitants) ²	164,8	5,3	11,5
Population density (no inhabitants/sq km)	1,110	16	70
GDP per capita 2016 (current US\$) ³	1,359	70,812	3,689
Media facts			
Share of Internet users (per cent) ⁴	41	100	51
Number of newspapers ⁵	2,320	227	44
Number of online news sites ⁶	1,781	268	180
Number of radio channels (local/national) ⁷	72	300	45
Number of television channels (local/national) ⁸	43	98	13
Public service	Yes	Yes	Yes
Number of organized journalists ⁹	17,300	8,400	1,400

Comment: Concerning radio stations, not all stations in the table are on the air, but the table shows the total of radio licenses.

Bangladesh

Surrounded by India on most of its three sides, with a small common border with Myanmar, Bangladesh is one of the most densely populated countries in the world. Being a low-lying riverine land, Bangladesh is traversed by the many branches and tributaries of the Ganges and Brahmaputra rivers.

In 1947, India was politically divided into two countries, India and Pakistan. Pakistan was composed of two wings, one eastern and one western, with a distance of about 1500 km between them. The eastern wing, with a Muslim majority and a multicultural background, was known as East Pakistan.

Despite winning a majority of seats in the Pakistani election of 1947, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman – leader of the political party the Awami League – was not allowed into power. Concerning the political-historical background, Barman, Rahman and Siddiqui write:

For nearly a quarter century, East Pakistan faced discrimination on several fronts, creating the conditions in which the astute and charismatic Sheikh Mujibur Rahman scored his decisive electoral victory. The struggle for independence of Bangladesh thus began (Barman, Rahman & Siddiqui 2002:13).

On 26 March 1971, the day after a brutal crackdown, Bangladesh declared itself independent. During the liberation war that followed, an estimated three million Bangladeshis were killed, and 10 million people had to take refuge in India.

The ‘father of the nation’, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, was assassinated by military officers in a coup on 15 August 1975, and the following 15 years were troubled, with a series of military coups and near-coups.

However, in 1990, after many years of political turmoil and conflict, civilian discontent forced the military to step down from power, and the journey towards democracy began. Since the early 1990s, there have been two main competitors for political power: the Bangladesh National Party and the Awami League.

During 2012 and 2013, there was, once again, widespread political unrest that led to huge property damage, economic losses and the death of hundreds of people in the country.

The 10th general election took place in January 2014 and was won by Sheikh Hasina of the Awami League, though the election was boycotted by the other major political party, the Bangladesh National Party.

The Constitution

Through article 39, the Constitution of Bangladesh guarantees freedom of thought and conscience and the right of every citizen to freedom of speech and expression. Thus, freedom of the press is guaranteed by law, although, in practice, it is a freedom with limits: the freedom of the press is subject to any reasonable restrictions imposed by law in the interests of the security of the state, friendly relations with foreign states,

public order, decency or morality or, in relation to contempt of court, defamation or incitement to an offence (Constitution of Bangladesh 2011).

Media history

Rangpur Bartaboho, the first Bangladeshi newspaper, started in the late 1840s and was published in Rangpur, East Bengal; the first English weekly, Dhaka News, appeared roughly a decade later, in 1856.

Because of political activism and national resurgence, there was a significant growth of the print medium during the first half of the twentieth century. In 1921, Jyoti, the first daily newspaper, was published in Chittagong, East Bengal. Examples of other newspapers that appeared during these years are Paigam, Zindegi and the Daily Azad.

In the early 1950s, the Bangla-speaking population – led by ‘The Language Movement’ – began to more persistently claim that Bangla should be recognized as a state language, and several students and political activists were killed during protests at the campus of Dhaka University on 21 February 1952.

Bangla language newspapers, such as the Azad and the Dainik Sangbad, marked the killings with evocative articles, ignoring the threats and risks posed by the Pakistani occupation forces. Every newspaper of then East Pakistan carried the same editorial, condemning the killings and criticizing the Pakistani government for its brutal murder of innocents (Yusuf 2015).

Before 1971, roughly 30 dailies and 109 weeklies and three bi-weeklies were published in the territory of Bangladesh. During the Liberation War, the Pakistan army burnt down three leading newspapers from Dhaka – Dainik Ittefaq, The People and Sangbad.

Yusuf states that a research book by Hasina Ahmed recounts that, ‘with the help of freedom fighters, journalists brought out the latest information about the war and made public unity against Pakistani militants. At the time, almost 65 newspapers were published’ (ibid.).

After the liberation, the new government took over the management of some of the newspapers, and in June 1975, the government banned the publication of all newspapers, except for four dailies: Dainik Ittefaq, Dainik Bangla, Bangladesh Observer and Bangladesh Times (Rahman & Ahmed 2015).

After the assassination of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the ‘father of the nation’, many newspapers that had been banned started to reappear. However, between 1982 and 1989, the newspapers were kept under strict control, and around 50 newspapers and periodicals were closed down for having published materials critical of the government. During these years, there were instructions on what should or should not be published.

A huge number of newspapers and periodicals representing different opinions and policies were published during the 1990s, and all the major ones were from the capital Dhaka.

Bangladesh Television (BTV) and Bangladesh Betar (Radio Bangladesh) operate under government ownership and control. Although BTV provides the audience with public service information, it is also known to serve the purposes of the incumbent government and therefore refrains from telecasting news and views that criticize the party in power.

Media regulations

Bangladesh struggles for stable press freedom and sustainable democracy, and freedom of expression is indirectly restrained through a couple of restrictive laws. Some of them are: The Penal Code 1860, The Code of Criminal Procedure 1898, the Official Secrets Act 1923, Printing Presses and Publications Act 1973, Press Council Act 1974, Law of Defamation, The Newspapers (Annulment of Declaration) Ordinance 1975, ICT Act 2006 (amended in 2013), Advertisement Distribution Policy 1976 & 1987, and Oath of Secrecy.

In the past, the Special Powers Act was frequently used to ban newspapers and to detain journalists in the country; the act allowed detention of up to 90 days without trial. Journalists could be arrested for stories that were critical of government officials or policies, or they could be charged with contempt of court. To eliminate the provisions that curbed the freedom of the press in the country, some amendments were brought out in the 'Printing Press and Publications Act'.

The government has made legislative changes, such as with the Right to Information Act, 2009, which contains provisions for ensuring the free flow of information and people's right to information. If any citizen wants to know about the activities, planning and services of any government and non-government organization, office, department, division and ministry, then he/she can get the requested information within a defined time on payment of a nominal fee that covers the reproduction. Through this law, not only can the citizens get information, but there is also the opportunity to establish accountability and transparency in the administration.

Another dimension of the press situation in Bangladesh is marked by Islamist attacks on journalists. Twelve journalists have been murdered in connection with their work since 1992, according to the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ 2013). Since 2013, there has been an increase in attacks on a number of secularist and so-called atheist writers, bloggers and publishers in Bangladesh. Foreigners and religious minorities, such as Hindus, Buddhists, Christians and Shias, have also been targeted. Attacks of this kind have killed more than 20 people since 2013, and they are believed to be the work of Islamic extremists in Bangladesh (BBC 2016).

Another example of restrictions is the arrest of an editor and the closing down of two television stations. The editors of 15 newspapers demanded the unconditional release of Amar Desh's acting editor, Mahmudur Rahman. The statement also called for the removal of the ban on three media outlets. The minister of information, Hasanul Haq Inu, stated that Mahmudur Rahman was arrested on allegations of lying, hack-

ing and instigating religious fanaticism. Furthermore, he said that the two television stations had broadcasted misleading information and news (Dhaka Tribune 2013).

To amend the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Act, legislation covering online crimes – including defamation and blasphemy – was adopted in 2013. Concerning the new legislation, Article 57 is much criticized, since it enables abuse and harassment of journalists and people using social media.

Moreover, the right of law enforcement agencies to arrest and indefinitely detain a suspect without bail was upheld, and the law gives officials unlimited powers during the investigatory period. Besides, ‘penalties for online offences are set at between 7 and 14 years in prison, regardless of whether the crime is related to defamation or national security’ (Freedom House 2017).

Press ethics

The Press Council of Bangladesh, in operation since 1974, developed a set of codes of conduct in 1993. In 2002, they were amended specifically for the newspapers, news agencies and journalists of Bangladesh (Press Council of Bangladesh 2017). The journalist community did not approve these codes, and journalists do not comply with them. Instead, every media organization abides by its own set of internal codes. Many outlets do not have written codes but rely on traditional experience, house policies and fair practice, which makes them complacent.

Norway

Norway is a monarchy and a democracy situated way up in the north of Europe. For most of the time since 1935, the social democratic Labour party has governed the country.

From the Middle Ages onwards, Norway has been in a union with Denmark. The autocratic king ruled from Copenhagen, and the capital was the political, economic and cultural centre of Denmark-Norway.

After the British raid on Copenhagen in 1807, as part of the Napoleonic Wars, Denmark-Norway joined Napoleon’s side. Already in July 1812, the Tsar of Russia had promised Norway to Sweden (Høyer 1995:142), and after the war, Denmark had to cede Norway to Sweden.

However, the Norwegians defied the decision, and elections for a Constitutional Assembly were held in February 1814. Some months later, on 17 May, the Constitution was approved. Despite this, in October of the same year, Norway was forced into a union with Sweden – this union lasted until 1905.

Industrialization started in the last decades before the union with Sweden was dissolved and then jumped ahead (Furre 1972:13f). In the late 1960s, drilling for oil in the North Sea took place, and since the 1970s, Norway has been an oil and a gas nation.

A radical Constitution

Article 100 of the 1814 Constitution said there should be freedom of printing, later changed to freedom of expression. Anyone has the right to speak frankly and gain access to documents of the state and the communities, as well as a right to follow court sessions and debate in democratically elected bodies. The authorities are responsible for creating ‘conditions that facilitate open and enlightened public discourse’ (Stortinget 2012).

Accordingly, the main goals of the media, in political terms, are to secure freedom of expression, public and legal security and a living democracy (Kulturdepartementet 2010). Furthermore, there is a goal to have diversity of media – in a geographical sense and in terms of ideological value and journalistic content (ibid).

In 1814, the Norwegian Constitution was radical, giving the right to vote to around 40 per cent of the male population over the age of 25. Since 1898, all adult men have had the right to vote, and in 1913, women got the right to vote (Aftenposten 2013).

Media history

In 1814, Norway had only seven newspapers; just over a century later, there were 231 newspapers (Høyer 1995), many of them local. The newspapers have played a significant role in building a Norwegian culture and in the journey towards independence.

Much later, starting slowly in the 1960s and accelerating in the 1980s, the newspapers broke their ties to the political parties, and Norwegian journalism became more professionalized. In media researcher Sigurd Høst’s opinion, Norway’s particular tradition of local newspapers is due to its topography, characterized by fjords and mountains and by the fact that it is a small country with many small communes that possess great and important municipal responsibilities (Høst 2003:93ff). State support for the media is also important (Høst 2003).

In the beginning of the 1990s, the Norwegians read the largest number of newspapers in the world (Høst 2003). Today, eight out of 10 Norwegians over the age of 12 read news every day from Norwegian media outlets – online¹⁰, on paper or on their phones (Mediebedriftene 2016).

Local and national competition in the newspaper market is seen as a stronghold for democracy, as is the public service channel Norwegian Broadcasting Company (NRK) and its competition with the commercial public service broadcasting TV2, as well as other commercial channels. Before 1981, NRK had a monopoly, and the channel is still funded by licence. Two propositions are up for debate in Stortinget about finding alternative ways of funding NRK and TV2 (Kulturdepartementet 2016a, 2016b).

Due to convergence, more and more Norwegians are streaming on portable units instead of watching linear television. In addition to this, newspapers are encroaching on traditional TV – videos are important to the online newspapers, and the newspaper Verdens Gang has its own TV channel.

Still, NRK's three channels have more than 40 per cent of television viewers. On radio, NRK's channels dominate the market (NRK 2016), even though there are several private, national and regional radio stations and 238 local radio stations (Medienorge 2016).

Regulating the media

Although heavily debated, direct financial media support for newspapers was introduced in 1969, and in 2016, 151 newspapers received a production subsidy (Medietilsynet 2016a).

In 2016, Stortinget decided that not only newspapers but also all news media on paper, computers, mobile units, radio and TV should be exempt from VAT¹¹. Due to global competition – technological developments that have altered media use and reduced income and the downsizing of editorial staff – there are concerns today about the plurality of the media as well as journalism's continued influence on the public debate (Kulturdepartementet 2017). Hence, on 7 March 2017, a committee presented suggestions on changes to media support. Direct support will continue but with major alterations (ibid:3.1.4).

The law 'Act relating to transparency of media ownership' enables openness on who the media owners are (Medietilsynet 2016b). Different laws refer to the editor's rights and responsibilities, particularly a law from 2009 about editorial freedom. This law says that the owner cannot instruct or overrule the editor in editorial matters (Kulturdepartementet 2008). The editors themselves have made a declaration on the 'Rights and Duties of the Editor' where it is stated that the...

... editor is expected to share the fundamental views and aims of his/her publication. But within this framework the editor is entitled to a free and independent leadership of the editorial department and editorial work and full freedom to shape the opinions of the paper even if they in single matters are not shared by the publisher or the board (Norsk Redaktørforening 2004).

A committee has looked into the regulations on media responsibility, how regulation could be platform neutral and if the different laws could be unified in one media regulation law. While the majority did not favour a new law (Kulturdepartementet 2011), the opposition at Stortinget and the media organizations are still asking for an exposition on editorial responsibility, which includes the question of user-generated content (Johansen 2016).

In 1933, the author Arnulf Øverland was acquitted of blasphemy after having written an essay describing Christianity as the 'tenth plague'¹². Since then, Article 142 of the Penal Code, the blasphemy article, has been a sleeping article.

The debate, however, was revived in 1993, when the Norwegian publisher of Salman Rushdie's *Satanic Verses*¹³ was shot in his garden, and it flared up again with the Mohammed cartoons in 2005–2006¹⁴. Many Norwegians think, like Francis Sejersted, that freedom of speech must be used for protection and that one has a kind of

obligation to test its limits (Sejersted 1999). Daily speech does not need freedom of expression; we are in need of the right to freedom of expression for exceptional and even horrible and offending speech.

On 5 May 2015, Stortinget voted to revoke the blasphemy article. In the debate, the Minister of Justice said that, although the blasphemy article should be repealed, it is still forbidden to make hateful and discriminating expressions (Stortinget 2015).

Further, while two Norwegian laws give the news media the right to keep their sources anonymous, the court can order the editorial staff to disclose the name of a source. However, Norwegian editors and journalists do not state their sources, even if the court requires them to do so.¹⁵ Still, the Union of Norwegian Journalists, Norsk Journalistlag (NJ), works to enforce and broaden the protection of sources, with a right to keep silent towards any authorities about anonymous sources, and a ban on any investigation (NJ 2015).

Press ethics

Independence and critical journalism are important concepts for Norwegian journalism, as they are closely linked to journalists' understanding of the role of the press in society. The first section of the Code of Ethics connects journalism to freedom of expression and press freedom. Here, free and independent news media are seen as 'among the most important institutions in a democratic society' (Norsk Presseforbund 2015). In some ways, the Code of Ethics goes further than legal laws. That is the case, for instance, when it comes to the protection of sources.¹⁶

The Code of Ethics is part of a self-regulating system organized by the Norwegian Press Association (NP), to which all media organizations belong. The Norwegian Press Association also organizes the Press Complaints Commission, which deals with complaints about the media's content and conduct. The Press Complaints Commission has seven members – four from the press and three from the public. If it finds that a media outlet has published a story that is not in compliance with the Code of Ethics, the media outlet has to publish the Commission's critical statement for the public to see.

Tunisia

Tunisia is a small north-African country that is known to be the only full democracy in the Arab World (Bernas 2016), and its form of government is regarded as a unitary semi-presidential representative democracy (Gaddes 2014). Tunisia is a melting pot, where 'several elements mix to give birth to an original union which looks like all its components but doesn't totally identify with any of them' (Boulares 2012:15).

Tunisia was first granted a Constitution under the Ottoman¹⁷ reformists in 1861, even though it was not applied according to the spirit of the promulgators (Boulares 2012:470). Twenty years later, Tunisia was under French occupation (1881–1956).

The independence in March 1956 brought a new political system, established by Habib Bourguiba¹⁸ and based on one political party (ibid). The Bourguiba-era lasted until 7 November 1987, when his Prime Minister Ben Ali¹⁹ took power.

The lack of freedom, combined with ‘the economic development model failure led to the first uprisings in 2008’ (Ben Hamouda 2016:101) and to the revolution of December 2010/January 2011.

The new Constitution

The new Constitution was approved on 27 January 2014. It stresses, in Article 31, the freedom of speech, of the press, and of opinion, and says that there is no censorship on these rights (Constitution of Tunisia 2014).

In order to avoid the return of a dictatorship, the Constitution prescribes a mixture of parliamentary and presidential rule. The Parliament, with 217 members, has the legislative power, and the majority party chooses the Prime Minister – in the Constitution called ‘the President of the government’.

However, the Parliament has the mission to control the government, and the executive power is shared between the President of the government and the President of the republic (Gaddes 2014). Moreover, the constitution created five independent constitutional instances, among them the instance regulating the broadcast media.

Media history

In 1860, the first Tunisian newspaper, *Erraied Ettounsi* (the Tunisian Leader) was founded. It became, decades later, the Official Gazette of the Republic of Tunisia (Chelbi 1986:15).

Many of the newspapers that appeared at the end of the nineteenth century were French speaking and stood by the settlers, while some of them were Arabic-speaking newspapers. Among the latter group, the most important newspapers were created by Tunisian nationalists in order to fight against the occupation (Boulares 2012:522).

After 14 January 2011, more than one hundred political parties were created, many related to figures who were not allowed to have any kind of political activity during the regime of Ben Ali. This diverse political scene, however, had to cope with an old media scene inherited from the propaganda system – especially public media had to make a quick change from serving the government and the party in power to serving the public and its right to information. Consequently, Tunisian media coverage of the election to the Constituent National Assembly was, for the first time, quite neutral and not clearly biased.

Then, during the parliamentary and presidential elections of 2014, the media coverage contributed largely to polarize the attention between two political parties, the Islamist party *Ennahdha* and its opponent at that time, *Nidaa Tounes* (HAICA 2014).

After the 14 January 2011 revolution, many media outlets were founded, but the crisis among the printed press did hurt them badly, and more than 170 newspapers

have now closed (Businessnews 2016). The media in Tunisia is mainly privately owned, but some TV channels, radio stations, newspapers and news agencies are owned by the state. All of them are free to deal with any kind of issue.

Regulating the media

In 1975, under President Bourguiba, all laws linked to the media were gathered in one text, the Press Code, with restrictions to press freedom: ‘The most significant of these were protecting internal and external state security, preserving public order and misdemeanours such as defamation and slander committed against persons and against heads of state and foreign diplomats’ (INRIC 2012:12). This policy of tightly controlling the media was reinforced under Ben Ali’s regime (LTDH 2003:7).

Two months after the uprising, the INRIC was created to ‘present its suggestions in regard to reforming the media and communication sector, all the while taking into consideration the international standards’ (Decree N10/2011).

On 2 November 2011, two main laws were issued in order to regulate the media: The Decree law 115 and the Decree law 116. In its first article, Decree law 115 guarantees press freedom and freedom of expression, according to international conventions on civic and political rights. Moreover, article 11 pledges the protection of sources, unless the motive of the breach is linked to state security and national defense (Decree law 115).

The same spirit is found in Decree law 116, which relates to broadcast freedom. In Article 3 of this law, it is stated that the freedom of broadcast communication is guaranteed and that each citizen has the right to information and broadcast communication (Decree law 116).

Article 69 of Decree law 115 declares that, in cases of defamation and hate speech against a category of people of a certain race, religion or origin, the public prosecution is empowered to sue the author (Decree law 115). The Decree laws 115 and 116 will be changed, and the debate between the NGOs and the government is about finding the appropriate mechanisms to reinforce the independence of the media.

In 2016, a new law on access to information was issued, guaranteeing everyone the right to access information (JORT 2016:26).

Still, restrictive post-revolution laws are at play, but they are now being removed (read more in Chapter 8).

Press ethics

Since 1983, the journalists have traditionally had their code of ethics printed on the backs of their membership cards for the journalists’ union, SNJT (Zran 2009:93). Called the Code of Honor, the code prescribes the rights and duties of the journalists. Among these principles are the responsibilities of ‘seeking the truth’ and ‘defense of press freedom’ (ibid:94).

However, on 22 April 2017 – after a three-year-long process – the Press Council was officially launched. Its intention is to promote quality journalism and protect press freedom (TAP 2017). This is the first time ever that the print media in Tunisia have tried some kind of self-regulation in order to respect professional standards and ethics (El Bour 2016:338).

Conclusion

Despite the fact that Bangladesh, Norway and Tunisia have very different historical and political backgrounds, freedom of speech and press freedom are now guaranteed by the Constitution of all three countries.

However, for Bangladesh and Tunisia – both countries with comparatively newly settled democratic systems – the difficulties and challenges are numerous. As for Norway, stability and democratic observance are words that describe the situation for press freedom, although that is not to be taken for granted in a rapidly changing media environment and a global world.

For all three countries, changes in the media domain will remain an ongoing process for many reasons – especially because of technological evolution and social and political developments.

Notes

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- Available at <http://www.cfi.fr/actualites/panorama-des-medias-en-ligne-en-tunisie> [Accessed 20 July 2017].
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 10. The first Norwegian online newspaper was established in 1995, and Norway is one of the most digitally sophisticated markets in Europe (Ottosen & Krumsvik 2012).
 11. As opposed to ordinary VAT, which is 25 per cent.
 12. Arnulf Øverland was a Norwegian poet (1889-1968) known for writing against violence, oppression and the German occupation of Norway 1940-1945. His essay about Christianity as the tenth plague refers to the plagues in the Bible.
 13. Ayatollah Khomeini issued a fatwa on 14 February 1989 against the author Salman Rushdie and the publishers of *The Satanic Verses* (Austenå 2011:26, 33).
 14. The Danish newspaper Jyllands-Posten published 12 drawings, among them drawings of the prophet Muhammed, on 30 September 2005.
 15. An example of this is the fact that no editor or journalist has been sentenced to jail since 1952, when an editor spent two weeks in prison because he refused to name his source (Lindahl 2009).
 16. The Code of Ethics states that the source must be identified for the public, unless this conflicts with source protection or consideration for a third party (Norsk Presseforbund 2015).
 17. 'The Ottomans' refers to the Ottoman Empire (1299-1922), founded at the end of the thirteenth century by Osman I in Anatolia, Turkey (Shaw & Yapp 2016).
 18. Habib Bourguiba was the first President of the Republic of Tunisia, 1956–1987. The second Constitution was approved in 1959 (Chouikha & Gobe 2015).
 19. Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, second President of Tunisia (1987-2011). The revolution of 17 December 2010 – 14 January 2011 ended Ben Ali's regime, and he fled the country on 14 January 2011.

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II. Shared Horizons: Comparing Bangladesh, Norway and Tunisia

Chapter 3

Objectivity – An Ideal or a Misunderstanding?

Elsebeth Frey

Objectivity is often seen as an emblem of Western journalism, but in the developed countries the notion of objectivity has declined. Still, journalists from other parts of the world point to it as an export of Western, especially American, journalism.

At the same time, American journalism teachers impress on their students the futility of objectivity, and Alex Jones writes that ‘we may be living through what could be considered objectivity’s last stand’ (Jones 2009). As Durham states (1998:118) ‘journalistic objectivity has always been a slippery notion’.

Research shows that objectivity worldwide ‘is present and locally generated and negotiated in several ways’ (Krøvel et al. 2012:24). The concept of objectivity has many layers, and one could say that the perception of it is tainted with misunderstandings. As Muñoz-Torres (2012) emphasizes, its philosophical origin is rooted in how we see the world, our understanding of what knowledge is and our perception of the truth. Others write about a practical (Jones 2009) or functional (Rhaman 2017) truth as the one journalists are aiming to discern.

This study explores objectivity as seen by journalists and journalism students transnationally, although very much rooted in their culture and politics, specifically in Norway, Tunisia and Bangladesh. Are there differences and/or similarities, and if so, what are they? Furthermore, armed with theoretical approaches from Streckfuss (1990) and Muñoz-Torres (2012), among others, the aim of this chapter is to clarify different positions, as well as views among our interviewees.

The notion of objectivity in journalism

Richard Streckfuss (1990) looked at historical documents in order to trace when and why objectivity was introduced to journalism in the USA. In the 1890s, working journalists and media commentators used the words *unbiased* and *uncolored*, but *objectivity* was not introduced before 1928.

The mood of the late 1920s was far from the reigning thoughts of the American Revolution, when people thought that humans were rational and moral beings and the truth would win out. Circumstances were different in the 1920s – the First World War had ended, the free market was tainted with propaganda and communist scare led to a rise in patriotism.

Under these conditions, Walter Lippmann and others were concerned about the role of the press and how it affected the democratic system and the citizen as a voter. Streckfuss writes (1990:974): ‘Objectivity was founded not on a naive idea that humans could be objective, but on a realization that they could NOT.’ Hence, journalists ought to be trained in methods that drew upon a strict methodology of scientific naturalism. Lippmann called this ‘new objective journalism’, and he believed it would lead to journalism turning into a real profession (ibid:981f).

However, Streckfuss found that when the word objectivity had made its way into journalist text books, it had shrunk to ‘a practical posture of day-to-day production’ (ibid:982). That meant separating facts from opinion and impartial and balanced reporting; however, also the notions of impartiality and balance are debated (Wallace 2013, Kovach & Rosenstiel 2014).

The ideal of objectivity still seems ‘to dominate many newsrooms across the globe’ (Hanitzsch 2007:367), although to several journalists and academics it seems ‘old-fashioned and outdated’ (Jones 2009:82). Juan Ramón Muñoz-Torres (2012) points to the never-ending debate on objectivity. He finds the discussion mired in errors due to the blurred notions of the concept. Objectivity as the idea of value-free facticity in journalism, where journalists put their opinions aside, rely on facts and report in a neutral way, is the *epistemological* meaning of the word.

However, alongside the epistemological understanding there is also, Muñoz-Torres argues, the *ethical* side. On this side, Muñoz-Torres conceives ‘everything with regard to what is called “balance”, “fairness” or “non-distortion”’ (ibid:570), in other words, the journalists’ moral integrity.

In order to tidy up the confusion about the concept, Muñoz-Torres seeks its philosophical origin in the theory of scientific objectivity from ‘empiricist philosophy and its heir, positivism’ (ibid:571). In his opinion, the notion of objectivity is based upon the mistaken premises of positivism, where facts are seen as value-free. The fact-value dichotomy is false, he argues, since there can be no knowledge without a subject, the knower, acknowledging the object known (ibid:575).

Furthermore, if the knower is a *tabula rasa*¹, he or she would not know what to look for, and how to recognize a fact when finding it. To Muñoz-Torres the apparent opposite of positivism is relativism. Under relativism there is no truth, hence your truth is as valid as mine. In fact, Muñoz-Torres claims that relativism and objectivism are ‘two sides of the same coin, because both of them are part of the positivistic conceptual framework’ (ibid:577).

Kovach and Rosenstiel (2014:9, 49) state that journalism’s first obligation is to the truth. So, what is truth?

Absolute truth is not the same as practical truth (ibid:50ff). Furthermore, 'objective validity is a matter of what is, in fact, *true*, not of what we take to be true' (Fultner 2003:xv). Truth claims, what we presume to be true, even when well justified could 'turn out to be false' (Habermas 2003:38). Jones quotes Jeff Jarvis in a speech where he said that journalists' job is not to deliver the truth, but to help the public decide what is true (Jones 2009:83). Jones writes in favour of journalistic effort to 'discern a practical truth, not an abstract, perfect truth' (ibid:88). Rhaman agrees and says that the truth journalists seek is a functional one (Rhaman 2017:82).

In Gaye Tuchman's opinion objectivity is a strategic ritual for newsmen. Facts, Tuchman writes, are 'highly dependent upon social processes' (1972:668). When looking at the feminist approach, it is relevant to notice that Tuchman, as well as Harding and Durham, dislikes how the media exclude women (1978). Sandra Harding (1995) remarks that objectivity is attributed to masculine, European, bourgeois values.

Harding, as well as Meenakshi G. Durham (1998), argue for 'strong objectivity' and standpoint theories. Both suggest giving voice to people from marginal groups – the starting point of any news story should be the point of view of the voiceless.

Michael Ryan (2001), however, expresses the opposite when he point out that to approach a story from a particular standpoint does not lead to balance. He defends objective journalism, but acknowledges that it could benefit from including aspects from its critics' standpoints – epistemology, existential journalism and public journalism. Journalists, says Ryan, must admit that absolute objectivity is seldom achieved and acknowledge their biases.

The empirical findings that follow come from the *Shared Horizons* research project. Consequently, the methodology is discussed in the Appendices that close the book.

Empirical findings: Is objectivity possible?

One of the Norwegian interviewees explains what objectivity in news journalism is, in his opinion:

We have yet to see that anyone can be neutral. Journalists carry with them a set of values, knowledge and other things in their work, which makes neutrality barely achievable. But objectivity can be achieved for instance in a case always being seen from both sides, so that what is perceived as completely natural from one party is also seen from other people involved. So, objectivity is a form of allowing all parties involved to be heard, so that you can show what A, B and C believe. I would say that objectivity is showcasing a story from as many sides as possible. If not, it is bias and then it is not objective (Interviewee 39).

Using the vocabulary of Muñoz-Torres (2012), the interviewee refers to both the epistemological and the ethical side of objectivity. Firstly, the interviewee does not

believe anyone can be neutral, nor that value-free facts exist. Thus, this interviewee does not believe in epistemological objectivity.

However, the interviewee then sets out to explain how it nevertheless is possible to achieve objectivity in journalism. The side of objectivity now discussed is the ethical side of the concept, and whereas the interviewee believes that objectivity, in this sense, is possible, the concept has to a large extent been reduced to a matter of balance and impartiality.

The above quote is an example of how most Norwegian journalists and editors as well as journalism students conceive the concept of objectivity. In the survey, 58 per cent of the journalism students in Oslo state that they ‘never’ or ‘rarely’ find it possible to achieve objectivity in news journalism.

As for the Tunisian students, only 8 per cent answer the same. In our survey we defined objectivity as the belief that a journalist may cover a story independently from his/her personal thoughts, background, beliefs and knowledge. In other words, our definition is an epistemological one.

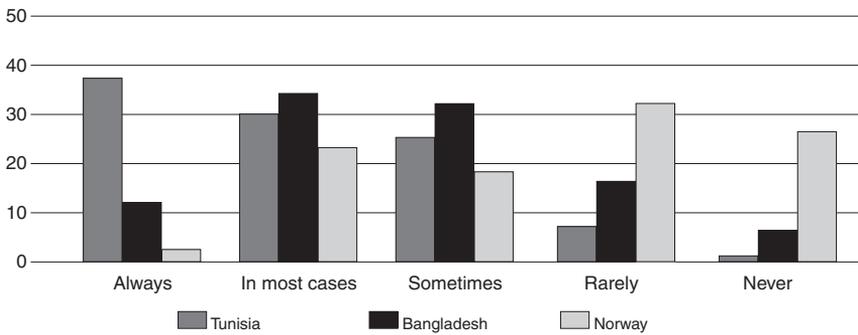


Figure 1. Perceptions of whether objectivity is possible (per cent)

Comments: The question was posed ‘To what extent do you find it possible to achieve objectivity in news journalism?’ The numbers of respondents were 100 (Tunisia), 202 (Bangladesh) and 133 (Norway).

As seen in Figure 1, whereas the Tunisian students seem to think that it is possible to report objectively, the Norwegians do not. The Bangladeshi students, for their part, are divided, leaning slightly more in favour of objectivity being possible.

Our control question linked objectivity directly to each respondent – and how the students answered is shown in Figure 2.

For the Bangladeshi and the Norwegian students, there is coherence in how they answer the two questions, as the interviews confirm as well. In addition, Norwegian respondents show coherence over time, as students from Oslo assessed the possibility of objectivity negatively also in Splichal and Sparks’ study from 1994.

The Tunisian students, on the other hand, seem to express more doubt about objectivity in Figure 2 than in Figure 1. When interviewing the Tunisians, and including journalists and journalist teachers alongside students, the answers are even more diverse.

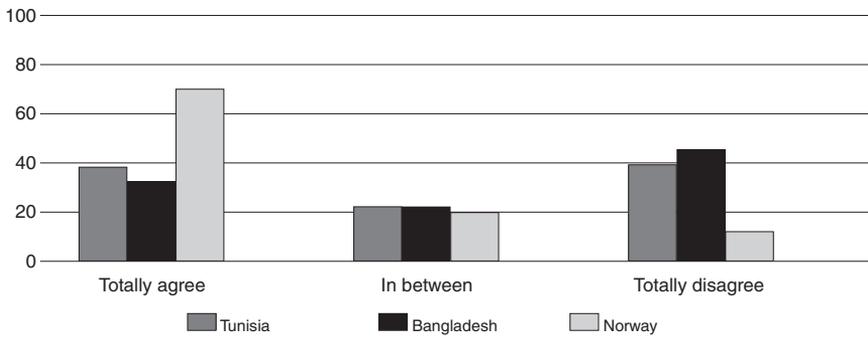


Figure 2. Perceived influence of respondents' own values (per cent)

Comments: The question was posed 'Do you believe that your personal values influence the way you write an article, take a photograph or chose your sources?' The numbers of respondents were 99 (Tunisia), 194 (Bangladesh) and 132 (Norway).

Most of them believe it is possible to achieve objectivity, but some oppose that stance and state that it is not possible or very hard to obtain objectivity, because 'it is just an abstract value' (Interviewee 25). Still, most of the Tunisians answer in accordance with this statement: 'objectivity is the heart of the journalism profession' (Interviewee 37).

Also at the roundtable conference (see Appendices), the two Tunisians give different opinions. One talks about objectivity as the keystone of journalism (Interviewee B) whereas another argues that it is not possible to achieve objectivity (Interviewee C). Moreover, in Tunis and in Dhaka, there are interviewees arguing that journalists in developing countries should *not* be neutral – they should take the advocacy position and work in the best interests of people, support progress and better conditions. Krøvel et al. found that ten out of 60 interviewees were inclined to take this position; all ten were from developing countries (Krøvel et al. 2012:22).

One of my interviewees says: 'I cannot be neutral. As a Tunisian journalist, I am engaged in a struggle to defend legitimate rights and universal values' (Interviewee 34). This is a statement that could be classed as advocacy or subjective or opinionated reporting, and might be more honest and true (Wallace 2013:64). In addition, it is one of many quotes in this chapter showing that 'the gulf between norm and practice is as gaping as ever' (Joseph 2005:577).

The Bangladeshi interviewees offer multiple views. One says 'in a hundred [per cent of the] cases it is possible to achieve objectivity' (Interviewee 16), but others state 'in many cases it is not possible to achieve objectivity in journalism' (Interviewee 8). This latter statement goes hand in hand with the Norwegian view: a majority of the interviewees and the participants at the roundtable claim that objectivity is impossible to reach as 'there is not any pure form of objectivity' (Interviewee 40).

This view points towards philosophical theory. Furthermore, it confirms that Norwegians are situated in the post-modernist, Western world, where the metaphor

on mirroring the world started to lose its meaning when Tuchman wrote 'News is a window of the world. Through its frame' (1978:1).

Hard to achieve

Then, it maybe gets confusing, as the Norwegians state that they are struggling to achieve some sort of objectivity in journalism. As one interviewee puts it 'that is what you endeavour to do' (Interviewee 40).

Regarding more practical day-to-day-journalism, the majority agrees that a journalist should try to be impartial and fair, seek several sources and give them equal space in the news story. A Norwegian, who thinks that personal values hinder objectivity, seeks a solution through being conscious of the process: 'For as long as you are aware of your own situation and position, I think it is not that hard to show all the different angles, and that your own angle does not necessarily appear' (Interviewee F).

This statement aligns with Kovach and Rosenstiel who write that the job is to 'become more conscious of the biases at play in the given story' (2014:128). Struggling with objectivity can take many forms – from picking the right words to deciding the angle of the news story. As one interviewee admits: 'Even if it is not intended, those values of mine do influence my work. In theory, they should not but they do. I choose my sources; I choose the angle I want to pursue' (Interviewee C).

Indeed, there is power in choosing an angle and picking sources. A story with only one source is not regarded as good journalism, balancing two sides is a minimum, and several interviewees state that a journalist should try to show an event or a case 'from as many sides as possible' (Interviewee 43). This subject's statement is on the same lines as the 2006 proclamation from the former BBC World Service director Peter Horrocks, who considered adopting "radical impartiality" – the need to hear the widest range of views' (Wallace 2013:69), as opposed to balancing Right and Left (ibid:64).

When journalists let random voices go up against each other, Durham states, balance and fairness expose the intellectual weaknesses of relativism (1998:125). One interviewee uses the example of a TV debate on climate changes, where a sceptic who represents only a tiny part of scientific opinion gets equal exposure as highly recognized researchers. This 'does not make a truthful portray of reality. So the balance ideal can actually be something that journalists often unconsciously abuse' (Interviewee 46).

Jones states: 'He-said/she-said reporting, which just pits one voice against another, has become the discredited face of objectivity. But this is *not* authentic objectivity' (Jones 2009:83). Jones calls this illusion of fairness, 'phony objectivity' (ibid:84).

Standpoint epistemology's answer to 'the view from nowhere' (Durham 1998:128) is to begin all reporting from the perspective of the underprivileged. Then, knowledge will become 'less partial and relativistic than the kind of knowledge that is presented by the journalist/insider as value free' (ibid:132). Ryan, however, argues that 'balancing is not achieved by a journalist who approaches a story from a particular standpoint'

(Ryan 2001:15). Rather, in order to make objectivity stronger, journalism needs to include multiple experiences based on an understanding that social identities are complex and heterogeneous (ibid:17f).

As there is a norm regarding impartiality with sources, there is also a norm that requires journalists to find the best-suited and trustworthy sources. As Lippmann argued, ‘sources forming public opinion must be accurate’ (Streckfuss 1990:978).

Several Norwegian interviewees emphasize that sources may have an interest in presenting information with a twist to suit their own needs – they may have an agenda or they could flat out lie. As journalists write ‘the first draft of history’ (The Big Apple 2009), it is important to be aware that the story could flip as new sources appear and more information is gathered. So, in journalism education, the students are told that journalists need to dig further, checking and verifying to get accurate facts.

Facts and verification

Both the survey and the interviews show that verifying and fact checking is a common value in the three participating countries. As one Tunisian student puts it, ‘to provide credible information is not an option, but a moral obligation and a job requirement’ (Interviewee 23). Another expresses that journalism is not ‘only collecting and transferring information, it is above all verification and checking of facts’ (Interviewee 32).

Still, there are differences in the way they perceive the notion of facts and how to use them. Connected to a belief in pure objectivity is a faith in letting the facts speak for themselves. Although Thomas Hanitzsch (2007:377f) correctly emphasizes that believing in facts versus analysis is not the same as believing in objectivity, there could still be a connection. In the survey we connected facts and context and asked: ‘What do you think is most important when making a news report/news article?’

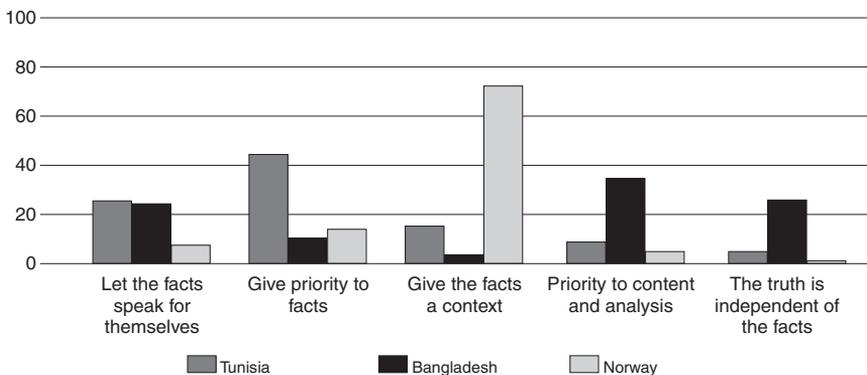


Figure 3. Perceptions of how journalists should deal with facts (per cent)

Comments: The question was posed ‘What do you think is most important when making a news report/news article?’ The numbers of respondents were 99 (Tunisia), 202 (Bangladesh) and 133 (Norway).

Figure 3 shows that 44 per cent of the Tunisian students state that facts should be given priority and 26 per cent of them believe in brute facts ('Let the facts speak for themselves') – and, as we have seen, the Tunisians have a strong belief in objectivity. In contrast, three quarters of the Norwegian respondents think that facts need to be contextualized; the Norwegian students, thus, do not find facts to be natural, pure or something that can be taken-for-granted (Tuchman 1978:210f). Again, we find that the Bangladeshi students are divided. About a quarter of them agree with the Tunisians that facts can speak for themselves, but 35 per cent accentuate the value of content and analysis.

In addition, Figure 3 shows that almost one third of the Bangladeshi students believe the truth to be independent of the facts. This standpoint may be connected to the bias I find in most of the answers from the Bangladeshi students answering the survey, implying that the Bangladeshi society is polarized.

Indeed, the dichotomy between the two political parties, Awami League and the Bangladesh Nationalist Party, is in evidence in the answers to the questions of how to perceive reality and what truth is. One of the Bangladeshi students says, 'News lost its objectivity and accuracy because of the imbalance in the presentation of all parties' (Interviewee 2).

This reveals something about how the Bangladeshi students perceive journalism. Although the percentages vary, there is a large group of students on the side of factual knowledge and objectivity as well as a group that to a great extent does not require neutrality and has no faith in absolute truth. The group that believes in factual knowledge and objectivity connect fact checking to the notion of truth, as do the Tunisian and the Norwegian students. In accordance with Kovach and Rosenstiel (2014:9), who defined the essence of journalism as the discipline of verification, verifying and checking is what journalists do, most of the students say.

Truth in journalism

Verifiable facts are essential in news journalism, and they are connected to the concept of truth. The students believe that journalism has an obligation to be true and correct. Muñoz-Torres writes that the key question is whether objectivity could replace the concept of truth – his own answer is that it could not (2012:575).

The results from the survey, the interviews and the roundtable discussion show that our research subjects believe something to be true, while other information is twisted, untrue, biased and not accurate. In other words, they are not relativists – not even the Norwegians – defined as thinking there is not *one* truth and *any* truth is valid.

Muñoz-Torres, again, claims that the fact-truth dichotomy is false, since 'factual knowledge cannot be dissociated from subjective perception and, consequently, from man's capacity to judge' (2012:573). Leaning on naturalistic science, one can find empirical facts by counting or measuring, and therefore it is possible to tell if a person

is tall or not. Still, I would claim, in order to be recognized as tall in Norway, one has to be taller than in Bangladesh. Therefore, being tall has to do with how we view the components, which constitute a fact.

On the other hand, Muñoz-Torres says, being nice is a quality ‘as real as being tall, although [it] is not verifiable and consequently does not produce maximum certainty’ (2012:579). Without interpretations of values in a societal context, it will be impossible to distinguish nice from nasty. Acknowledging truth in domains other than the physical world implies evaluations, which consist of moral values. Could the Norwegian novelist Karl Ove Knausgård be right when he states: ‘The moral is the we in the I, thus a quality of the social, and it is above the truth’ (Knausgård 2011:790; own translation)?

Adding religion into the discussion, the difficulties of verifiable knowledge increase for some of us. For others, religious belief is superior to anything that may be measured and/or proved the scientific way. For them, it is untrue that ‘truth may always “outrun” justified belief’ (Fultner 2003:xviii).

Furthermore, personal and bodily experiences are difficult to measure, but that does not imply they are unreal or false. Knowledge needs both reason and experience (Muñoz-Torres 2012:578). One can measure how much money someone has, even test which bodily marks poverty and wealth carve out. Yet, with these pieces of evidence, one has not reached a complete understanding of being poor or rich.

As well as admitting the existence of multiple perspectives on the world as such, journalists are trained to acknowledge that true and false information exists. Jones (2009) refers to the abstract, perfect truth as the opposite of practical truth, which is the kind that journalistic objectivity wants to discern. Furthermore, he states that if ‘the evidence is inconclusive, then that *is* – by scientific standards – the truth’ (ibid:88).

Analysing explanations and comments

As the interviews open up for reflection, we wanted the interviewees to comment on the results from the survey about objectivity. We also asked for their opinions about the differences between the three countries’ journalism students.

Firstly, 17 out of 18 Tunisians interviewees do not agree with the Tunisian answers from the survey. These 17 interview subjects say that it is *not possible* to be objective in the Tunisian media landscape. They express that the media is biased, that it broadcasts insults and misinformation. They refer to the coverage of the 2014 elections, when the media took sides and acted in a partial way. Several of them also point to the media owners, and their ties to political parties: ‘They defy their enemies and promote their allies’ (Interviewee 30). Others emphasize that the journalists themselves are not impartial. One says the journalists in Tunisia are subjective, not even trying to be objective (Interviewee 36).

One interviewee thinks that the journalism students want to believe in objectivity, since that is what people wish for (Interviewee 37). This statement resonates with

Hallin's and Mancini's point on the normative character of journalism – that 'due to its rooting in professional education, where it is more important to reflect on what journalism *should be* than to analyse in detail what and why it is' (2004:13). Indeed, the statement of the interviewee is also rooted in the Tunisian context. After living under dictatorship, people were tired of biased and untrue information as well as censorship. They expressed clearly that journalism should be neutral, made by journalists who were not 'whores of Ben Ali'² or 'journalists of shame' (Frey 2016:181).

The interviewees give some interesting explanations for the students' answers in the survey, such as this quite harsh one: 'The Tunisian students are lying! Well, perhaps they answer like this because they have not yet worked as journalists and discovered how difficult it is to achieve objectivity' (Interviewee 33). Some interviewees connect the survey's answers to the Tunisian post-revolutionary context:

The Tunisians answered like this because of our immaturity in this domain. We must not forget that we have started to live with democracy and freedom for just four years. In my opinion, it is very hard to achieve objectivity. Over time, we will know that objectivity is not always obvious (Interviewee 30).

Yet, one journalist goes further in her explanation, saying 'Tunisians and people of under-developed countries, or conservative people in general, are submitted to their religions, their traditions and their culture. They believe they contain the absolute truth' (Interviewee 31). In her opinion, this explains 'the positivism of their answers'.

Some of the Bangladeshi interviewees talk about their nation as a third world country. Several think their students' survey answers are due to private media – also mentioned on occasion by Tunisian interviewees – and that they have to 'stay with powerful political parties and media owners' (Interviewee 1). In Norway, as well, there are private owned media, but for the Norwegians ownership does not seem to play a part in the question of objectivity. It did some decades ago, before journalism was professionalized and the newspapers broke their ties to the political parties (see chapter 2).

All interviewees emphasize that economic, social and cultural differences, as well as the level of press freedom and freedom of expression in the three countries, are probably the reasons for looking differently at the concept of objectivity. One Bangladeshi answers that there are many aspects connected to the question of objectivity, for instance, pressure against journalists, the right to information, the level of freedom of speech and respect for human rights (Interviewee 9).

However, many interviewees from Tunisia, and especially interviewees from Bangladesh, are surprised by the Norwegian answers on objectivity. One Tunisian thinks that, in demanding their media to be more honest and credible, the Norwegians are 'looking for perfection' (Interviewee 38). A Bangladeshi even asks if the Norwegian students learn proper journalism, adding 'I am very disappointed about what the Norwegian students say' (Interviewee 10).

The Norwegian view surprises them, since they find the level of freedom high in Norway, a developed country with good social structures and a thriving economy.

One of the more fascinating attempts to explain the Norwegian disbelief in objectivity is this: ‘The Norwegian people may be more individualistic and do not like talking with other people to share information. As a result, it is difficult for journalists to get information’ (Interviewee 5).

This statement clashes with the Norwegian interviewees’ view on themselves and their society, representatively stated by this quote: ‘At least, we Norwegians like to think we are very egalitarian. Most likely there are not many countries where you can interview a minister in sneakers. But that is very positive’ (Interviewee 40).

Most of the Norwegians do state that they do not sufficiently know the other countries and, as a result, are reticent about giving explanations. Nevertheless, one interviewee conjectures that if you live in a country that does not have a high degree of democracy, journalists might want to take a role in the process ahead and act ‘in spite of the way things are’ (Interviewee 41) – and so you believe in objectivity *because* you want it to be true.

Another interviewed subject talks about ‘excitement for the ideal, which is understandable’ (Interviewee 46). In his opinion, the situation in Norway when it comes to objectivity is the following:

Journalists have just begun a type of self-conscious, self-critical reflection on this, in many ways stimulated by journalistic education, where you philosophize and reflect more on the traditional objectivity concept. But maybe we have not reached the point where we are embracing a newer understanding of objectivity, like an attitude, an approach to understand the reality based on factuality – and use of a good method and source criticism and so on.

Conclusion

This chapter has plunged into the concept of objectivity as journalists and journalism students in Bangladesh, Tunisia and Norway see it. Through quantitative and qualitative methods, I have looked into which positions the respondents and interviewees adopt towards objectivity as a core value and in the practical journalistic aspect of their daily work. The main question was which differences and/or similarities exist.

Not surprisingly, my research confirms that the notion of objectivity is as debated, disputed and defended as ever. One thing is for sure, the concept still arouses heat concerning what journalism is and should be, which – in my view – is a fruitful and important discussion.

The Tunisian students answering the survey position themselves on the positivist side: a journalist simply holds up a mirror to reflect the world and let the facts speak for themselves. Interviews with Tunisian journalists, though, show more nuanced views on objectivity; it is an ideal for some but not so much for others, and they seem to agree that, in practical journalism, it is not as vibrant.

The Norwegian students and journalists lean more to the side of believing in accurate and checked facts, situated truth and acknowledging that ‘subjectivity and inter-subjectivity are part of the honesty that is included in objectivity’ (Interviewee 46). In Norway, objectivity is a highly debated value even though it makes its mark on daily journalistic routines.

In Bangladesh, finally, the concept is part of a distinct, ongoing struggle about what truth is and how the world is seen. Some of the Bangladeshi respondents agree with the Tunisian respondents and some of them share the views reported by Norwegian journalism students. As one says, ‘objectivity is a core value of journalism, but it cannot be attained all the time’ (Interviewee D). Still, according to the majority of the interviewees in all three countries, the journalistic methods connected to objectivity are the guidelines in ‘practical posture of day-to-day production’ (Streckfuss 1990:982).

Students and journalists struggle with conducting themselves according to the abstract and complicated philosophical meaning of objectivity – either it clashes with journalism as practiced in the media or the principle itself is hard to grasp and embrace. As Muñoz-Torres writes the concept ‘has so many aspects and approaches, that it seems almost impossible to encompass all of them’ (2012:567).

A transnational debate on objectivity, as displayed in this chapter, is packed with various definitions of the concept and significant variations in how journalistic culture locally is ‘conceptualized and operationalized’ (Hanitzsch 2007:368). Furthermore, it seems that no matter their opinion on the concept, our respondents and interviewees strive to bend and redefine objectivity to make it fit as a guiding path through their journalistic working methods and their ethical approach to their profession.

Notes

1. Tabula rasa means ‘blank slate’.
2. The dictator Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, Ben Ali for short, was the President driven out of office and out of Tunisia by the revolution of 2011.

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Chapter 4

Media and Power

A Comparative Analysis of the Situation in Bangladesh, Norway and Tunisia

Hamida El Bour

How does the media relate to political power? It is an important issue both in well-established democratic countries and countries on the path towards democracy. It is also the key question of this chapter, which compares how current and future journalists consider how the media relate to power in three countries – Bangladesh, Norway and Tunisia.

From their daily practices and contact with those in power, working journalists provide an inside view about the relationship between power and the media. As for the students, their perception is rooted in the journalism education they receive. Since Tunisia is considered to be in the midst of a process of democratization, I have chosen to focus especially on this country.

The theories which inform this work are mainly the comparative research efforts of Thomas Hanitzch (2007, 2010), Larbi Chouikha (2014, 2015), and Rahman (2015). The empirical data consists of the survey and the interviews conducted within the framework of the *Shared Horizons* in 2013 and 2014.

Theoretical points of departure, methodology and material

Media is the space where many political, intellectual and cultural ideas are presented, and it is therefore important that the media reflect the intellectual diversity and the political pluralism of democracies (El Bour 2013a). Schudson stresses that ‘there are various types of journalism and various democracies’ (Schudson 2005:2). This qualification is relevant here, as I am comparing three countries that are at different levels of the democratic process.

I use the concept of the power of the media as defined by Remy Rieffel; media power, thus, is ‘the ability to impose a mode of authority, domination or obedience on others’ (Rieffel 2005:17). For Rieffel, the power of the media is not a statement but a process as the information disseminated by the media is likely to modify our knowledge but

also our preferences, thus producing ‘cognitive and persuasive effects’ (ibid:21). In this perspective the ‘cultural context’, as Hanitzch puts it (Hanitzch 2007:368), is relevant.

The power of the media is perceived as granting it a ‘watchdog’ role. Bennett and Serrin write that ‘the watchdog role of journalism may involve simply documenting the activities of government, business, and other public institutions in ways that expose little-publicized or hidden activities to public scrutiny’ (Bennett & Serrin 2005:169)

I compare perceptions of media power in three countries, Bangladesh, Norway and Tunisia, by analysing the results of a quantitative survey conducted among journalism students in 2013. The main aim of the survey was to explore the core values of the journalism students in the above three countries, and 439 students answered the survey (which implies a response rate of 68 per cent).

In the analyses, I also use the in-depth interviews with journalism students and journalists that were conducted in 2014. The goal of the qualitative interviews was to get deeper thoughts and perceptions about the issues that were raised in the quantitative survey. (For further information about the methodology, see appendices.)

The research group conducted 18 interviews with Bangladeshi students, teachers and journalists, 20 interviews with Tunisian students, teachers and journalists and nine interviews with Norwegian students, teachers and journalists.

Two main themes from the survey and the qualitative interviews are used in this chapter, namely the answers about the functions of the media and the answers about the way the media relates to power.

What is the role of the media?

A comparison between the three professional contexts reveals a common commitment to the audience. A Bangladeshi journalist considers that the main function of the news media, and even the duty of the journalistic profession, is to help people by giving them the right information and ‘leading them to the correct direction’ (Interviewee 13). In the same way, Norwegian journalists speak of a mandate for journalism to strengthen democracy by ‘inviting an engaged and public conversation about important fields that are part of deciding where society is going’ (Interviewee 46). This perception is linked to what some Tunisian journalists call a mission to ‘increase public awareness’ (Interviewee 37).

When I compare the journalists’ perceptions with the results from the survey, I find many similarities, also the students think that the main role of journalism is to inform the public about what is happening in society.

Among the Bangladeshis 86 per cent think so, the corresponding share for the Norwegians is 87 per cent, whereas 71 per cent of the Tunisians stresses this idea.

However, also the watchdog role is stressed, and in order to gain more insights about their perceptions of the watchdog role, we asked the students to make a scale of how important, in their opinion, this role is.

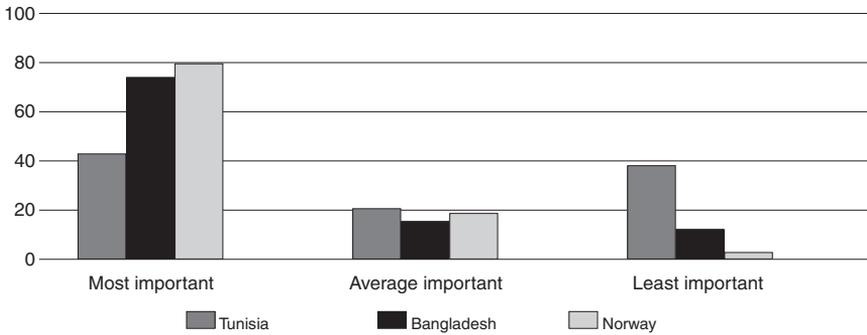


Figure 1. Perceived importance of the watchdog role (per cent)

Comments: The question was posed 'What is the most important role journalism plays in society? Please indicate in a scale of 1 to 6 your opinion.' The number of respondents were 99 (Tunisia), 192 (Bangladesh) and 126 (Norway).

As shown in Figure 1, there are some differences between the Tunisian students and the others. In Bangladesh and Norway, the role of the watchdog is seen as the most important by 74 per cent of the Bangladeshi students and by 80 per cent of the Norwegians.

For the Tunisians, however, respondents are divided between giving the watchdog role a great importance and ranking it as the least important. The differences among the respondents' views in the survey, even when from the same country, reflect the diversity of opinions concerning the watchdog ideal.

For the Norwegian students the watchdog role is a goal and, sometimes, an idealistic hope of a specific kind of practicing journalism. One of the interviewees, for example, looks upon investigate journalism as 'the most rewarding to work with', but, unfortunately, 'there is a declining focus on digging journalism' (Interviewee 40). In the interviewee's view, the reason why investigative journalism is being neglected is the tendency of 'looking for sensational click-journalism'. While this may be the case, the same interviewee still thinks that journalism in Norway is 'very much based on the idea of the media being a fourth power in the state and being a watchdog'.

For the Bangladeshi students, the watchdog role of the media is linked to the ability of journalists to criticize the government. One speaks of the government fearing this kind of journalism – 'the power of writing' and 'the power of criticizing' (Interviewee 1).

As for the Tunisian students, it seems that their answers are linked to their perceptions of the nation's media after the revolution. One of them says 'in our country, what we often see is that the media either create obstacles and polemics, or they hide the failures of the power' (Interviewee 23).

The working journalists from the three countries think that the watchdog notion is integral to a major mission the media should fulfill in society. A Tunisian journalist focuses on its duty to 'combat corruption and fraud' (Interviewee 34), while another characterizes this as a 'critical eye' towards society, politics and 'all sources of infor-

mation’ (Interviewee 37). For the Bangladeshi journalists, especially the print media have the ability to take on the role of watchdog. One interviewee speaks of the ‘fear of print media criticism’ (Interviewee 14).

The fourth estate

The answers from the Tunisian students to the question of how journalism should relate to power, show that more than two-thirds of them answered ‘neutral’. This conflicts with their reflections about the watchdog role of the media, as 42 per cent of them regard the watchdog role as the most important of the media.

To a degree, their attitude reflects the problems of the media in post-revolutionary Tunisia. After years of the propaganda information system, the need for balanced information is overwhelming.

Mark Deuze has stated that ‘journalists all over the world voice concerns regarding their freedom to work as they please’ (Deuze 2005:456), and, in Deuze’s words, reporters ‘feel that their work can only thrive and flourish in a society that protects its media from censorship’ (ibid:448). Chouikha emphasises that media production is linked to the economic, social and cultural context (Chouikha 2014:95).

Indeed, freedom and autonomy were the essential objectives that the journalists in Tunisia were seeking to achieve after the revolution – especially an end to the censorship system. For the Tunisian Journalists’ Syndicate, the status of the media can either be a key pillar of the democratic process or ‘a major obstacle to this path and a cause of its failure’ (Syndicat National des Journalistes Tunisiens 2015:5).

How journalists should relate to those in power was one focus of the survey in *Shared Horizons*. The students were asked to choose from a range of suggestions, and their answers are shown in figure 2.

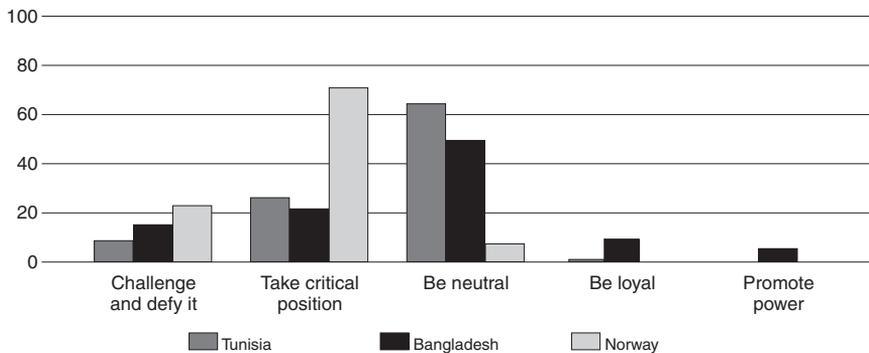


Figure 2. Perceptions of how journalism should relate to power (per cent)

Comments: The question was posed ‘How do you think journalism should relate to power?’ Only one alternative could be marked. The number of respondents were 99 (Tunisia), 202 (Bangladesh) and 123 (Norway).

A majority of the Tunisian students, 64 per cent, think that journalism should be neutral towards power, and this view is shared by 49 per cent of the Bangladeshi students.

However, for the Norwegian students the corresponding share is only 7 per cent. In contrast, 71 per cent of the Norwegian students think that journalists should take a critical position towards power.

The differences in perceptions are most likely strongly connected to the political situation, as well as the status of press freedom, in the examined countries. In Norway, challenging power is considered one of the main characteristics of journalism.

Notably, among the Tunisian students only 8 per cent state that journalism should challenge and defy power. This answer does not match with what they answered about the watchdog role of the media, a role that 42 per cent of the Tunisian students considered to be the most important of the media.

Almost half of the Bangladeshi students say journalism should be neutral to power. During the year of the survey, 2013, the political situation in Bangladesh was very turbulent, a fact that may explain the attitude of the Bangladeshi students.

Moreover, referring especially to Asia, Hanitzsch writes that in some cultures 'an adversarial understanding of journalism may conflict with a preference for consensus and harmony' (Hanitzsch 2007:373). To Hanitzsch, the position of being loyal to power is very close to a propagandist role (ibid:374).

A challenging political context

In Tunisia, the new atmosphere of freedom of the press raised new perceptions about the relationship with political power, especially for the journalism students who will have the opportunity to work in a context free from the censorship system of the Ben Ali's era.

The power of the media is linked to its ability to prove that its agenda is independent of political power. This means that the independence of the media is measured by the distance it observes towards all political parties, including those in power, and the media must not 'advocate for any political party' (Charfi 2010:6). Media coverage of the 2011 election is an example: 'Monitoring reports showed that the Tunisian media cut with the practice of propaganda for the regime and tried to achieve the equity principle in covering the election of the constitutional national assembly' (El Bour 2013b:148).

Through the qualitative interviews, the Tunisian students tried to describe the current position of the media towards political power. Whereas 64 per cent of the Tunisian survey respondents thought that the media should be neutral in relation to political power, the interviews show that this stance is not perceived to be the norm in the Tunisian media.

According to one interview subject, 'Tunisian media can take two positions, either they defy power, or they promote it' (Interviewee 30). The same interviewee recalls

how before the Tunisian revolution ‘all media were loyal to the dictator, [whereas] after the Islamic party Ennahdha came to power, all Tunisian media became opponents’. He then continues: ‘After Beji Caid Essebsi¹ came to power, Tunisian media have obviously returned to their old habits: they are promoting the current authorities’.

Another interviewee says, ‘in Tunisia there is no example of neutral media towards power’ (Interviewee 24). However, in his opinion ‘even in developed countries like the United States there are no neutral media. Every media is created to do a specific role’.

One interviewee sums up the Tunisian situation: ‘Tunisian media, they either defy power and create obstacles, or they promote it by hiding corruption and errors. We are calling for a neutral journalism’ (Interviewee 23).

A critical stance – as conceived in Tunisia, Bangladesh and Norway

Despite the plea for neutrality, the interviewees stress that the mission of the media is to be critical towards those in power. ‘I can define the critical position as an objective position. So, to take a critical position, journalists must meet several criteria such as objectivity and neutrality’ (Interviewee 30).

Another interviewee contrasts the period before the revolution – where ‘all media obeyed the instructions of a one-party dictatorship’ – to the one after the revolution, concluding that ‘there is no neutral media in Tunisia’ (Interviewee 27). In this interviewee’s opinion, ‘subjectivity has increased and the influences are becoming numerous’. Moreover, trying to explain the high numbers in the survey advocating neutrality, he claims that ‘Tunisian students are tired of subjectivity and the conflict of interests. They dream about neutral media’.

This view is very close to how working journalists explain these answers. One journalist says, ‘our media aren’t neutral, that’s why Tunisian citizens are claiming their right to neutral journalism. That is why 64 per cent of the Tunisian students answered that way’ (Interviewee 37). When observing daily practice in the field of journalism, it is important to qualify the extent that one can speak of the Tunisian media as being ‘a fourth estate’. In describing the relationship between the media and the political sphere and the degree to which Tunisian media can challenge power, Chouikha considers that it is difficult to transform the media (Chouikha 2015:103).

However, through the interviews, the Tunisian journalists gave their views on what it means to be critical towards power. One says: ‘It means to criticize when necessary, to speak of achievements when it is required and to keep quiet when needed’ (Interviewee 38).

Another interviewee goes further, saying, ‘we should never believe power, we should never believe any source of information. We must always verify the accuracy of facts’ (Interviewee 34). He then gives examples about government actions and how journalists must point out the errors, especially concerning strategic issues like ter-

rorism and fighting natural disasters. ‘We must no longer try to justify failures. We, therefore, have to criticize and to call into question the government’s performance.’

However, there is also a plea for a more balanced position, which could mean ‘to criticize when the government makes a mistake, but also to speak of government achievements when necessary’ (Interviewee 37). A journalist must maintain a critical eye towards society, power and all sources of information, the interviewee added.

For Bangladeshi students and journalists, ‘neutrality’ has other meanings. A Bangladeshi interviewee says that ‘neutral to power means do not challenge power’ (Interviewee 2). Describing specifically the situation of his country, another interviewee says that ‘if the Bangladeshi media did not support the government the government could not accept it’ (Interviewee 3).

Bangladeshi working journalists think that journalists must be neutral towards power. In the interviewees’ minds, neutral means not being supportive of those who are in power, or backing the opposition parties. That is why they speak about the role of the journalists as criticising without rallying behind any political party. Another says that ‘being neutral towards power must be the most common thing’ (Interviewee 15). He adds: ‘We are journalists, our main work is to be neutral’, linking this position to the political situation of the country.

Through the qualitative interviews they also speak of attempts at controlling the media. One gives the example of a broadcasting regulation the government is preparing: ‘We are saying that the government is influencing freedom of speech or trying to hinder the voice of mass media’ (Interviewee 15). Another interviewee voices the same concerns: ‘Again, now, the government is trying to control the media with the broadcast policy’ (Interviewee 4). The Bangladeshi researcher Rahman comes to the same conclusion about the print media – the so-called ‘press advice’ provided by the government’s Press Information Department (PID), or any kind of public authority, is an attempt to guide media coverage, especially in the newspapers. It provides instructions on what should and should not be published, and even on the forms of the final content and how it must be presented to the readership (Rahman 2012).

In Norway, this kind of struggle does not exist and, for Norwegian journalists, the concept of neutrality is not seen as a suitable attitude towards those in power. One of the Norwegians observes that possibly the Bangladeshis and Tunisians ‘regard neutrality as a giant leap compared to what they have experienced to be possible before’ (Interviewee 46). He adds that, ‘due to their historical situation they will have a different understanding of neutrality than we have.’

Indeed, the Norwegian answers clearly express the view that the main mission of the media is to challenge power. One thinks that journalists are ‘quite good at challenging power in Norway’ (Interviewee 40). Even though this interviewee classifies journalists as frequently on the left side of politics, he claims the media generally has a critical attitude.

In the students’ answers from the interviews, being critical is defined as asking follow-up questions, doing fact checking and not blindly relying on what is said by

sources. A student explains that a critical stance means asking critical questions and checking, but it is not being ‘always so critical that you don’t believe anything anyone says’ (Interviewee 44).

Another student states that to take a critical position does not mean ‘to be negative, awful and cranky towards everyone you meet, but to be critical and think that every source has a somewhat cautious agenda’ (Interviewee 47). Along the same lines is this statement: ‘It is important that we as journalists are both challenging and critical towards politicians and political cases. But we also have to be loyal towards them – if you cross the line they will stop speaking to you’ (Interviewee 45).

Controlling all kinds of power

Power comes in many different ways – to name a few, there is political power, economic power and military power – and, clearly, journalists must relate to other power holders than politicians. Therefore, in the survey we asked the students if the controlling function of the media is meant only towards those with political power.

The question was as follows: ‘Journalism is often said to have a controlling function towards power. In your opinion, is it a question regarding political power or all types of power?’ How the students answered is shown in figure 3.

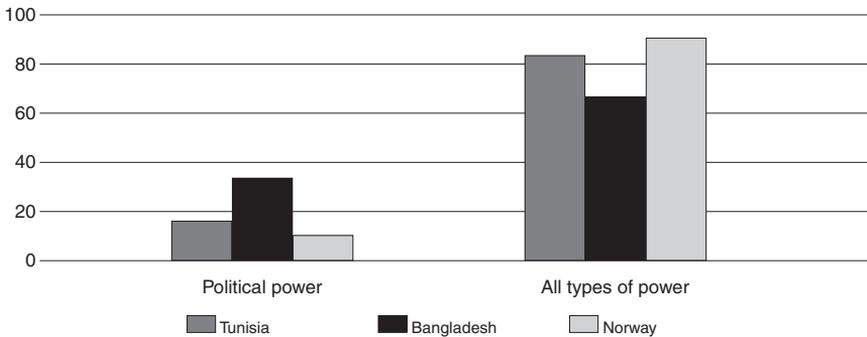


Figure 3. Towards what power(s) should journalism be critical? (per cent)

Comments: The question was posed ‘Journalism is often said to have a controlling function towards power. In your opinion, is it a question regarding political power or all types of power?’ The number of respondents were 97 (Tunisia), 186 (Bangladesh) and 115 (Norway).

Figure 3 shows that the majority of the students in the three countries think that journalists should practice their control mission towards all kinds of power. This is linked to the perception of the media as being a watchdog and a fourth estate, which in turn means that the journalists’ beliefs are strongly influenced by the values common in journalism education. If it is obvious in Norway that the media play this role, for

Bangladesh and Tunisia the emerging position of the media as a pillar for democracy still needs development.

After the revolution in Tunisia, the media were obliged to change and behave as they are supposed to in a democratic process (El Bour 2013c:165). In Bangladesh, Rahman considers that ‘amidst political instability and insecurity, professional journalism has to develop with a commitment to exposing corruptions, irregularities, inequality and injustice prevailing in the society’ (Rahman 2015:21).

Conclusion

My key question concerned how the media relates to political power in three different cultural and political contexts – Bangladesh, Norway and Tunisia. Through the answers of journalism students, I find that the perceptions about the media’s mission and behaviour towards those in power differs from one country to another.

Even though the majority of the students from the three countries insist on the watchdog role as being the most important function of the media, only the Norwegians say that journalists must be critical towards power. The Tunisian students, by contrast, think that journalists must be neutral, this opinion is also held by the Bangladeshi students.

Despite these differences between the three countries, the journalists’ and the future journalists’ perception of the power of the media leads them to take a critical position towards political power and all kinds of power. But maintaining a critical distance from political power is an everyday challenge. In Bangladesh and Tunisia, many of these challenges can be found within newsrooms.

In Tunisia, the implementation of rules of self-regulation, the lack of financial resources for print media, and ensuring that the revision of laws in the constitution adopted in January 2014 respects press freedom, are all significant challenges. As for Norway, the challenges are of another kind, and maybe the most important, in the minds of the Norwegian journalists, is how to preserve this critical attitude in the new environment of the media, especially in the light of the growth of the PR industry.

The main common value that the journalists in all three countries have to defend is surely press freedom which needs the support of international networks of journalists. And it is always an issue concerning the relation to power and who regulates the process of producing political news in the context of the media’s mission in a democratic process.

Note

1. Beji Caid Essebsi is the current President of Tunisia (2014 – 2019). Beji Caid Essebsi founded the Nida Tounes party in 2012, and won the Presidential election in 2014.

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Chapter 5

The Relationship between Press Freedom and Corruption

The Perception of Journalism Students

Solveig Steien

‘Without journalists working all over the world, we hardly would be able to expose corruption’, one employee at Transparency International (TI) says, addressing one of the biggest threats to welfare and prosperity within nations and societies – corruption. But the relationship between corruption and a free and independent press is complex, and the safety of journalists reporting on corruption is an issue for concern and deeper reflections.

In February 2012, two television journalists, Sagar Sarwar and his wife Meherun Runi, were murdered in Dhaka, Bangladesh, while they were investigating corruption within their own governmental institutions (BBC News 2012). The murderers have never been prosecuted, and journalists who have tried to dig into the situation have been threatened, harassed and lost their jobs.

The same year, 2012, the Tunisian blogger Olfa Riahi went to court because she reported that Tunisia’s foreign minister, Rafik Abdessalem, had spent public money for private purposes (the ‘Sheraton gate’). Abdessalem’s father in law, Ennahda’s party leader Rachid Ghannouchi, urged flogging of the blogger (*Al Arabiya News* 2012). According to Reporters sans Frontières (RSF), four years after initiating ‘The Arab Spring’, Tunisia’s journalists experienced threats (RSF 2017).

In Norway in 2005, three journalists in *Aftenposten* revealed that the head of the Romerike Waterworks, owned by the nearby municipalities, was guilty of corruption. He was later sentenced to almost eight years imprisonment and the journalists were awarded the SKUP prize¹.

William Horsley reports that between 2006 and 2009 a total of 244 journalists in 36 countries were killed, yet only eight convictions related to those deaths were recorded (Horsley 2014:149). Hence, impunity is the rule not the exception. Looking at the last twelve years, more than 1,100 journalists, including media staff, have been killed in the line of duty worldwide, according to the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ)². The International Federation of Journalists reports that the killed journalists were covering conflicts, investigating crime, and exposing corruption in politics, and

Steien, Solveig (2017). The Relationship between Press Freedom and Corruption. The Perception of Journalism Students p. 65-76 in Elsebeth Frey, Mofizur Rhaman and Hamida El Bour (eds.) *Negotiating Journalism. Core Values and Cultural Diversities*. Göteborg: Nordicom.

were often murdered by contracted assassins. ‘A press freedom violation can be an assassin’s bullet, aimed to kill an investigative journalist’ or ‘it can be a knock on the door’ (the IFJ website). Journalists and civic organizations, especially those who reveal corruption and crime, are the main target of violence, Norris writes (2010:117, 315).

Comparing a high rank on the corruption scale (TI’s Annual Reports) with the level of press freedom (RSF’s Annual Reports) demonstrates the relationship between these issues.

In this chapter, two research questions are at the fore: 1: Do the students have the same perceptions, ideals and values about press freedom? 2: Do the students make any connection between press freedom and corruption? (For methodology and material, see appendices.)

Press freedom and corruption – what do we know?

One dictionary definition on press freedom states that it is ‘the right to publish newspapers, magazines and other printed matter without governmental restriction and subject only to the laws of libel, obscenity, sedition, etc’ (Dictionary.com Unabridged 2016). This dictionary’s definition does not take into account broadcast and digital media, which beside the printed press, are the main subjects of the annual Freedom House reports covering 199 countries and territories (2016).

Published since 1980, these reports have on an annual basis evaluated the legal environment for the media, political pressures that influence reporting, and economic factors that affect access to news and information.

According to Brunetti and Weder (2003), restrictions of press freedom come in many disguises. In many countries, the press is regulated through an array of laws, many of which claim to protect national security, personal privacy or even the truth.

The global coalition against corruption, Transparency International, defines corruption as ‘the abuse of entrusted power for private gain. It can be classified as grand, petty and political, depending on the amounts of money lost and the sector where it occurs’ (TI 2016).

Mancini debates the relationship between media and corruption and lists certain variables and contextual conditions that can affect such a relationship: the ‘socio-economic structure, political and religious culture’ (Podumljak 2014). He also mentions that corruption in a European context more often occurs in Catholic countries than Protestant ones (ibid).

However, as demonstrated above, corruption also occurs in a wealthy, Protestant country like Norway. In 2012, Transparency International Norway (TIN) made the first national study of the country’s system of integrity. This was one of 23 Transparency International studies in Europe at the time and resulted in individual profiles on corruption for the countries involved. The report on Norway, noting the small extent of corruption in its institutions, legal systems and business sector, had the subtitle: ‘not

quite perfect' (TIN 2012:33, 3). One of the findings was that although the Norwegian media did not have special programmes with explicit objectives to inform the population about corruption and its impact on society, 'there is a good reason to assert that the media succeeded well in informing the population about this' (ibid:265).

Out of 154 countries scrutinized by Transparency International in 2015, Bangladesh was ranked 139, Tunisia 76 and Norway 5 (TI 2016). Reporters sans Frontières' index on press freedom 2015 demonstrated a similar placement in the ranking system: out of a total of 180 countries, Bangladesh was number 144, Tunisia number 96 and Norway number 3 (RSF 2017). The three countries can be understood as one far out on the negative side regarding press freedom and corruption (Bangladesh), one approximately in the middle (Tunisia), and one near the very top of the indexes (Norway).

High levels of press freedom are often associated with low levels of corruption, a so-called negative connection, although the causality is debated (Bolsius 2012:20). Chowdhury, for example, refers to an analysis done by Brunetti and Weder (2003) who found that democracy did not have any effect on corruption (Chowdhury 2004:1). Nevertheless, Chowdhury discusses a protracted link between press freedom and reduced corruption: 'The presence of press freedom brings public corruption cases to the voters while voters in a democracy in turn punish corrupt politicians by ousting them from public offices. Hence, elected politicians act to the voters by reducing corruption', Chowdhury asserts (2004:93f).

Freille et al. believe that the relationship between press freedom and corruption 'simply picks up wealth effects and the institutional environment more generally' (2007:839), and that rich countries can afford a free press and are likely to be liberal across a wide range of activities not just media activities' (ibid). The Norwegian position may be an example of that.

In 2010, Pippa Norris edited an extensive report – *Public Sentinel: News Media & Governance Reform* – on behalf of The World Bank. Among the contributors, several dealt with the link between democracy, press freedom and corruption. 'The most plausible systematic evidence is derived from cross-national comparisons testing whether press freedom and levels of media access function as external control mechanisms on corruption', Norris and Odugbemi wrote (Norris 2010:380).

Cross-national comparisons were also made by Brunetti and Weder, who studied whether the relationship between press freedom and corruption was driven by outliers or by the difference between developed and less developed countries. In their study the empirical evidence 'shows a strong association between the level of press freedom and the level of corruption across countries' (ibid:1820).

Not everyone, however, agrees about such a causal relationship. Graber writes: 'The importance of a free press has been so axiomatic that its presumed benefits have seldom been questioned, at least not publicly' (1986:257). Graber concludes that the effects of the free press on corruption should not be overstated and press freedom might even increase corruption (Graber in Bolsius 2012:20). Also Färdigh et al (2011) question the link between press freedom and the media's ability to curb corruption:

'the knowledge as to how effective media and a free press actually are in combatting corruption is still limited, albeit growing' (ibid:4).

Moreover, corruption may affect media and journalism more directly, as 'the media themselves might be corrupted and might therefore decide not to publish about corruption' (Bolsius 2012:20). Freille et al. (2007) refer to the Global Corruption Report 2003 which confirms such an observation:

Corruption also exists within the structure of media organisations and in the way journalists carryout their reporting tasks. Many engage in a host of corrupt practises, ranging from 'check book journalism' to news tailored to suit advertising or commercial needs (ibid:839).

While corruption most likely has negative connotations and consequences, some economists point out that it may not always be damaging. For instance, Jakob Svensson (2005) has surveyed the literature on the economic effects of corruption and requests more research on this field, using China's fast growing economy as an example: 'Would China have grown even faster if corruption was lower?', Svensson asks (ibid:40). China was in 2015 number 83 on the Transparency International's Corruption Perception List (TI 2015), and its place on Reporters sans Frontières' Press freedom index was 160 (RFS 2015).

Blattman writes about how economists have generally been unable to link levels of corruption with growth rates in different countries of the world. There is, according to him, very little evidence that corruption leads to slower economic growth:

Why might this be so? Most of us fail to imagine that corruption can also grease the wheels of prosperity. Yet in places where bureaucracies and organizations are inefficient (meaning entrepreneurs and big firms struggle to transport or export or comply with regulation), corruption could improve efficiency and growth. Bribes can act like a piece rate or price discrimination, and give faster or better service to the firms with highest opportunity cost of waiting (Blattman 2012).

Neither Blattman nor Svensson delve specifically into the media's role, and Freille et al (2007) state that there are very different ways in which the media is controlled across countries, which may also lead to very different outcomes for corruption:

Restrictive legislation, threats, physical harassment, verbal abuse, financial extortion, censorship, media concentration, intimidation, violent assaults, high entry costs and access restrictions to the media market are some of the most common restrictions to press freedom (Freille et al: 2007:839).

Freedom House (2016) reports that press freedom declined to its lowest point in 2015, as political, criminal and terrorist forces co-opted or silenced the media in their broader struggle for power. Bangladesh was among the nine countries suffering the largest decline, mostly because of the killing of four secular bloggers in 2014 and 2015. In 2016, one more blogger was assassinated. Another factor is government

sanctioned economic pressure on certain media outlets and attempts to censor social media (ibid).

The students' perceptions of press freedom and its limitations

Press freedom is basically defined as the right to gather, publish and distribute information and ideas without government restriction, and this right encompasses freedom from prior restraints and freedom from censorship.

Figure 1 shows the distribution of the students' answers to one of the 25 questions in the survey: 'Do you have press freedom in your country?'

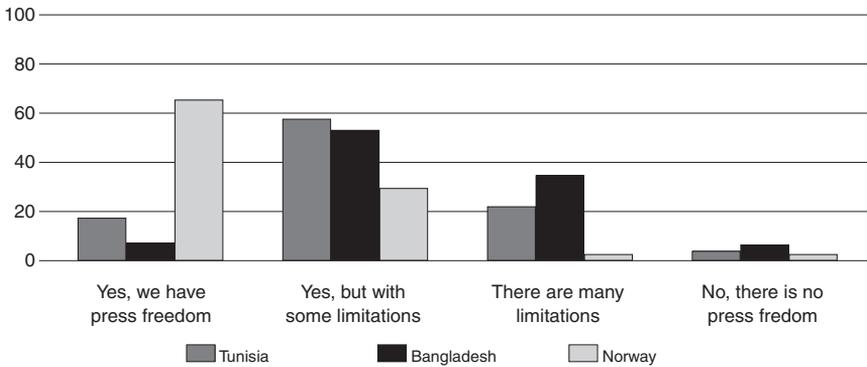


Figure 1. The students' perceptions of the existence of press freedom (per cent)

Comments: The number of respondents were 99 (Tunisia), 202 (Bangladesh) and 133 (Norway).

A common perception among the students in the three countries is that very few of them think that there is *no* press freedom in their country. However, while the majority of the Norwegian students express that there is press freedom in their country, the majority of the Tunisian and Bangladeshi respondents say there is press freedom with some or many limitations.

Following this basic question about press freedom, the survey asked an open-ended question: 'What kind of limitations to press freedom exists in your country?' Here, the answers showed profound differences between the three countries, especially with regard to what kinds of limitations that are mentioned.

Bangladeshi students cited a wide range of limitations: 'there is restriction for religious characteristics' (Respondent 9), 'media house policy' (Respondent 6), 'false news' (Respondent 27), 'sometimes our press cannot express what they want' (Respondent 46). However, most of the limitations in the Bangladeshi students' opinions are connected to political power or the government itself: 187 of 202 Bangladeshi respondents (93 per cent) think that the main obstacle to freedom of the press is politicians on

different levels. Moreover, 22 of them single out corruption as a hindrance to press freedom. 'Media owners are propagandists here because they have political power' (Respondent 94). Another respondent puts it this way: 'Our media is often controlled by owners who mainly are political leaders: They do not allow the media to publish real facts' (Respondent 90). Nepotism or oligarchy may also be a hindrance for the development of a free press and make the watchdog ideal remote (Coronel 2010). One student says:

In my country, most of the media are hostage to politicians and businessmen. They act like gatekeepers and regulate what is to be published or not. Sometimes, a few media publish pure propaganda, which creates problems on the path to press freedom (Respondent 108).

In Tunisia the same tendency is in evidence – 43 of the Tunisian respondents to the open-ended question describe political decision-makers and their power over the media as a big obstacle to press freedom: 'Authorities try to control the journalist's work and decisions in order to serve their [the politicians'] own interests' (Respondent 212). This is an observation Freille et al (2007) confirm when describing corruption both in media structures and in the way journalists act in their own reporting (2007:839).

Some of the students also look for more media regulations and codes of ethics: 'The problem in Tunisia is that we now have to control the media, mainly TV and the radio stations, given the amounts of mistakes committed by journalists' (Respondent 207).

The Tunisian media professor, Larbi Chouika states: 'Threats to freedom of expression can also come from journalists themselves if they lack professionalism and ethics' (Belhassine 2015). Corruption within the media organizations themselves is mentioned by some of the respondents – one from Bangladesh says: 'In our country the press is seriously corrupted because most of the media are owned by political leaders. They always try to enforce power into the publications' (Respondent 178).

In Tunisia, the students' views, as reflected in their answers, are quite diverse, and sometimes even conflicting. One respondent says that 'there are no limitations' on press freedom (Respondent 267) and that 'freedom of speech does exist'. However, another states: 'Press freedom is absent in Tunisia, and the word freedom has a lot of meanings, as such the press in Tunisia is biased in service of the ruling regime' (Respondent 251).

The survey was conducted barely three years after the revolution and in a post-revolutionary era. In 2010 Tunisia was ranked 164 on Reporters sans Frontières' press freedom index, which demonstrates its progress on press freedom after the revolution, as the country reached 76 in 2015. However, a majority of the respondents claimed that there still is a strong presence of politics within the media, and that the authorities and politicians try to use the media to serve their own interests.

In general, the students in Norway consider that there is a very high degree of press freedom. Journalists meet few restrictions in their work, the media landscape is diverse, and there are very few threats to journalists from political or other sources. However,

according to the respondents, some limitations exist and these are connected to ownership, professional sources, legal regulations and ‘The Ethical Code of Practice for the Norwegian Press.’ Several respondents also point out that recent cutbacks and staff reductions, due to a downfall in the media economy, are leading to fewer permanent jobs and uncertainty among journalists – and hence a turn to more entertainment, and less enlightenment, in order to appease and please the public.

Some also consider a strong concentration in ownership, the domination of a few big media companies, a more indirect limitation, even if editorial independence from owners has a very strong tradition in the Norwegian press. The balance between the journalist and professional sources like communication advisors and PR-companies is also seen as a problem. The Ethical Code also put limitations on what and how a journalist can report and publish. This is not seen as problematic, since the vast majority of the students agree with the need for ethical regulations.

Investigating corruption and the fear of risking lives

In the first of the two questions on corruption, the students were asked: ‘You are digging into corruption, and you also interview different persons about this. If you publish your story, could your sources risk danger for their own safety?’ How the students answered to this question is shown in figure 2.

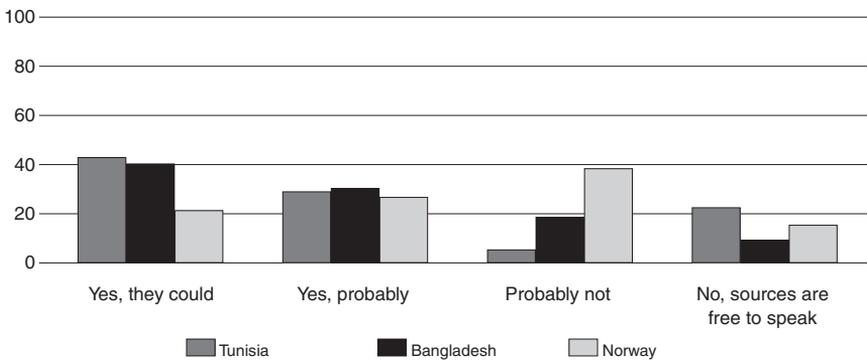


Figure 2. Perceptions of whether sources could be at risk (per cent)

Comments: The number of respondents were 99 (Tunisia), 201 (Bangladesh) and 112 (Norway).

As shown in figure 2, a clear majority of the students in both Tunisia and Bangladesh believe that sources providing journalists with information on corruption may be in danger (merging ‘Yes, they could’ with ‘Yes, probably’). And whereas the situation is believed to be better in Norway, almost half of the Norwegian students, 46 per cent, believe that sources in corruption stories may be at risk.

However, the question of safety is relevant also with regard to the journalists themselves, and the second question on corruption was: 'You are on the same story about corruption. Could you as a journalist risk danger for your own safety?' How this question was answered is shown in figure 3.

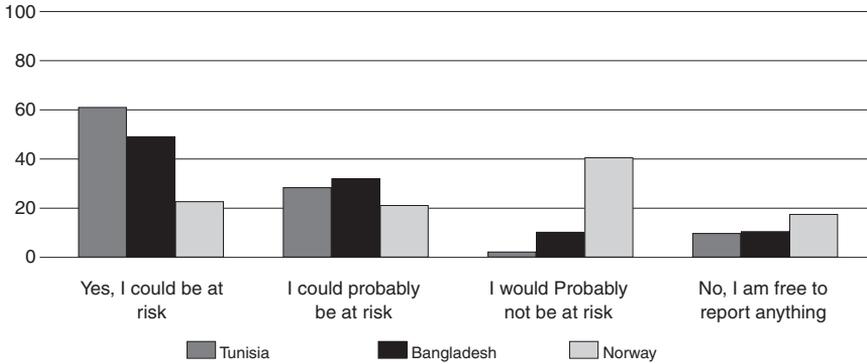


Figure 3. Perceptions of whether respondent could be at risk (per cent)

Comments: The number of respondents were 100 (Tunisia), 201 (Bangladesh) and 121 (Norway).

Fear of the range of their work is a challenge to some of the journalism students. They are not provided with necessary protection from abuse or physical threats, and this limits their work, out of fear of retaliations or attacks. For instance, one Bangladeshi respondent refers to 'torturing journalists' (Respondent 89), another to 'killing of journalists exists in my country' (Respondent 141). Some say that harassments and political threats are common.

The context in Bangladesh and Tunisia, where journalists are threatened and can find themselves victims of many kinds of aggression, provides the foundation for answers of this kind. In Tunisia for instance, the Tunis Centre for Press Freedom (CTLJ) releases monthly reports on violence against journalists.

The trap in which journalists find themselves, between government forces and the extremist groups it is vowing to fight, can only have a negative effect on press freedom. [...] And the atmosphere of legislative threat and impunity in attacks on journalists by security forces and other actors appears to already be having a chilling effect at some news outlets (CTLJ 2015).

Even in Norway the safety of journalists reporting on corruption seems to be an issue for debate. The survey's respondents demonstrate that the risk of danger is closely distributed among the three countries. 47 per cent of the Norwegian students fear to put their sources in a potentially risky position. For themselves as journalists, the corresponding figure is 43 per cent. This could be interpreted as a surprisingly high score considering the Norwegian standards and the relatively stability in working conditions for journalists. The fact that almost half of the Norwegian students are

afraid that sources may be at risk does not correspond with the relatively calm situation in Norwegian society, nor with their comments in the open-ended question about press freedom.

Censorships and other threats to journalism

Despite the political and historical differences between the three countries, the students in Tunisia, Bangladesh and Norway agree on what they regard as the most serious threat to journalism: a lack of press freedom.

However, also censorship and self-censorship are regarded as threats for the practicing of journalism in all the three countries, and the psychological aspect of self-censorship must not be underestimated.

In countries where journalists have been killed, a certain level of self-censorship may be seen as natural. One of the Bangladeshi students says: 'Journalists cannot express the correct news because these sometimes go against the government' (Respondent 201). Hanitzsch et al point out that journalists that face legal uncertainty, weak jurisdiction and a more hostile climate towards press freedom will 'focus more on the potential consequences of their decisions' (2010:288). There are some examples of this tendency from the survey's open-ended question. One student from Tunisia says: 'The government is trying to end press freedom and get us back to the pre-revolution period' (Respondent 271).

Sensitive issues, and issues that are deemed to tamper with the sovereignty of the nation, restrict the freedom that citizens, and hence journalists, have. There are some articles of the Penal Code in the Tunisian Constitution of 2014 that can still get journalists convicted for 'undermining public order' (Belhassine 2015).

Instead of acting as watchdogs in the society, a metaphor describing the media's role in society for the last 200 years (Coronel 2010), some of the respondents express that the opposite takes place: 'The government always plays the role of watching and controlling the press' (Respondent 7).

The consequences of writing and publishing journalism which can offend or reveal criminal acts like corruption may lead to the holding back of information and important news from the public. Self-censorship, or 'auto-censorship' as one Tunisian respondent (Respondent 262) calls it seems to be seen as a threat to journalism across the three countries, even if there are differences in the ways of practicing journalism.

A partial press freedom places challenges on the way journalism is conducted, whether in a new-born democracy like Tunisia or in Bangladesh. Editors-in-chief are seen as a problem, imposing limitations and control over the editorial line. On the other hand, some Tunisian respondents think that the media is somewhat out of control, in part because the journalists do not know how to handle their relative freedom.

In Bangladesh, the students consider political ownership and censorship, together with corruption, as the main obstacles to press freedom. But many also perceive of

a nuance when the government acts in a heavy-handed fashion, because they think this is done with the nation's interest in mind: 'Sometimes our government creates some limitation for some information. But our government is obliged to protect people's welfare' (Respondent 84). While tax revenues are almost 35 per cent of GDP in OECD-countries, in Bangladesh they are only around 9 per cent and decreasing (Zaman 2017:1). Zaman writes about how developing countries like Bangladesh are particularly vulnerable to tax evasion because of the implications for social welfare, but also because of its impact on corruption – taxpayers cannot be certain whether their taxes are being used to finance public goods and services (ibid:6). The country's tax payments may end up in the pocket of some bureaucrats, a process described by Freille et al as 'bureaucratic corruption' (2007:848).

For 66 per cent of the Tunisian students in the survey, corruption is one of the largest threats to journalists and their sources. The combination of black money and politics in the Tunisian media scene has been singled out by many researchers as one of the challenges for the freedom of the press (Chouikha 2015:104). Tax revenues in Tunisia are about 21 per cent of GDP (The World Bank 2016). In Norway tax revenues decreased from 29 per cent of GDP in 2006 to 23 per cent in 2014. This may, among other circumstances, indicate an increase of the black market and the shadow economy, and hence, maybe often more space for corruption.

Conclusion

The perception of the importance of press freedom seems to be common, and a vast majority of our respondents means that lack of press freedom is an obstacle to revealing corruption. Moreover, the students seem to share the perception that corruption may paralyze their own performances as journalists, in addition to putting their sources in danger. A common view, it seems, is that corruption hinders incentives to actively investigate corruption and other wrongdoings – one can sense a slightly resigned or ironic attitude among many of the Bangladeshi and some of the Tunisian respondents: 'There is no absolute freedom. Freedom only exists in the jungle' (Respondent 207).

None of the students seem to share the approach to corruption which some economists have – that it may have a positive impact on development in some third world countries (Blattman 2012, Svensson 2005). In contrast to this, the students in Bangladesh regard corruption as a big problem and a limitation to their safety.

Brunetti and Weder write (2003:1805): 'The more involved a corrupt arrangement, the more fame an investigative journalist can earn by uncovering it.' This may be a fact for the Norwegian journalist students. But the journalists who have the possibility to reveal wrongdoings and crimes like corruption, seem trapped in a vicious circle – instead of, through their work, giving their government incentives to improve policies for the further development of the country, they feel captured in the limitations of their role as journalists because of threats and violations.

Censorship from the authorities and media owners, but also from within themselves, through self-censorship, is a common experience shared by the students, although in different contexts. Bangladesh is a country of multitudinous dangers for journalists. Even if Norwegian journalists and journalism students do not have to fear for their lives through the conduct of their profession domestically, they share a sense of fear for themselves and their sources with their co-students in Tunisia and Bangladesh. Because of the different experiences and preconditions for this fear, it is not possible to conclude that it derives from common suppositions between the survey's three participating countries. But sharing of knowledge about what happens globally also indicates sharing a perception of fear about being a journalist, an occupation William Horsley describes as 'the most dangerous profession' (Horsley 2014:147).

Notes

1. SKUP is a foundation dedicated to promoting investigative journalism in Norway. It was founded in 1992 and awards prizes to investigative journalism/journalists every year.
2. The International Federation of Journalists monitors press freedom violations and campaigns for greater safety among media workers. It was established in 1926.

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Chapter 6

Journalistic Values and Challenges in Colombia, Bangladesh, Tunisia and Norway

Margrethe Håland Solheim

It was when the head of the police department said he could not guarantee my safety that I understood I had to leave. I had to go somewhere else because in Colombia I was going to get killed for what I had written (Interviewee 57).

Today this journalist is back in Colombia, always followed by two bodyguards. In Norway, a female journalist states the following: 'I can work freely. I can write whatever I want' (Interviewee 23). These two journalists do indeed live in very different societies. Still, they have the same profession. One can but wonder if they base their work on the same set of values and have the same thoughts that give meaning to their journalism?

There is a 'widely shared understanding of key theories and methods' (Deuze 2005:442) in journalism that is recognized worldwide, although some researchers do find more differences than similarities among reporters around the globe. Core values in journalism are connected to the role of journalism in society as well as to the way journalists carry out their work. For instance, Deuze finds that journalists worldwide share a sense of being ethical (ibid).

In this chapter, I look into some of the values that are important to journalists in Colombia, Bangladesh, Tunisia and Norway. The last three are the countries in the *Shared Horizons* project, but I have chosen to also include Colombia, which is considered one of the most dangerous countries for journalists in South America. This is a part of the world where journalists find freedom of the press challenged every day, and by including Colombia I hope to broaden the perspective.

My aim is to examine the mindset of journalists in four very different countries in order to find their core values. Furthermore, I examine the challenges they face. Consequently, my research questions are: What values are important to journalists in the four countries? What challenges do they experience? To what degree do they experience limitations in their ability to work according to their core values?

The examined countries

Why these four countries? Colombia and Bangladesh are considered by the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) two of the most deadly countries for journalists. Tunisia is considered challenging while Norway is deemed safe (CPJ 2015). These four countries on four different continents will hopefully give us an understanding of the values of journalists around the world. First, I start with some background information about Colombia (Bangladesh, Tunisia and Norway are all described in chapter 2).

Colombia is number eight on CPJ's list of the world's most deadly countries (ibid), and this makes it the most dangerous country for journalists in the Spanish-speaking world. 'While security in Colombia has improved in recent years, impunity is entrenched and threats and violence against journalists continue', CPJ states (ibid). Cases like that of Flor Alba Núñez Vargas, a Colombian journalist who was killed in front of her radio station in Huila on 10 September 2015, show that Colombia still is a dangerous country for journalists. President Juan Manuel Santos and the rebel group, The Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), have been negotiating a peace treaty for years. On 24 November 2016 a revised peace treaty was signed after the first one was rejected by the Colombian people (BBC News 2016).

Even though they were negotiating the peace treaty in 2015, that year is described by the Federation for a Free Press (FLIP) in Colombia as a very violent year for journalists (FLIP 2016). 232 Colombian journalists were attacked in some way in 2015, and five were killed (ibid).

Bangladesh is number 14 on the CPJ's list of the deadliest countries for journalists. In 2015 there were five confirmed killings of journalists in the country. One example is freelancer and blogger Niloy Neel, who was killed on 7 August when at least four assailants entered his home in Dhaka and hacked him to death with sharp weapons. Neel had just defended minority rights and criticized Islamic extremists when the murder took place (Daily Star 2015; see chapter 10).

In Tunisia only one journalist has been killed since CPJ started compiling their reports in 1992. Even though Tunisia is not as dangerous as Colombia and Bangladesh, CPJ describe the situation in the country as 'challenging'. 'Hard-earned press freedom in Tunisia is under threat as journalists are squeezed between violent extremists and security services sensitive to criticism in the wake of deadly terror attacks', the organisation concludes (CPJ 2015). New legislation and security forces that legally harass and assault journalists are among the factors that make the work of journalists in Tunisia a challenge.

CPJ has not made a specific report on Norway, where no journalists have been killed due to their work since 1992, when CPJ started making their lists. At the same time, research done by Trond Idås and Kjetil Stormark shows that some Norwegian journalists experience threats and violence (Jensen 2013). A survey answered by 3,697 journalists and 218 editors shows that every third journalist has felt threatened in the last five years, while 100 have experienced violence.

Reporters sans Frontières (RSF) has a Press Freedom Index (RSF 2016), where the countries on the top are the ones with the best conditions for press freedom. Norway is number three on the index, beaten only by Finland and the Netherlands. Tunisia is number 96 on this list, Colombia 134 and Bangladesh 144.

Methodology

The qualitative interviews with journalists in Colombia, Bangladesh, Tunisia and Norway give extensive insights into their ways of thinking. The interviews in Bangladesh, Tunisia and Norway are part of the *Shared Horizons* project (see appendices), while I have done the interviews from Colombia as a separate project.¹

There is a total of 36 interviews with journalists – ten from Bangladesh, eight from Tunisia, eight from Norway and ten from Colombia. 15 of the interviewees are female and 21 male. All interviews were done face to face. The advantage of using qualitative interviews is that the researcher can test her own theories and hypotheses through the interviews (Østbye 2007:98).

The interview guides from the *Shared Horizons* project and the project in Colombia are slightly different. The interviews in Colombia probed the interviewees' journalistic values and asked to what extent they were able to actually work according to these values. Whereas also the interviews made in Bangladesh, Tunisia and Norway focused on core values, there were only a few questions about the interviewees' journalistic work.

For security reasons, and because we wanted them to speak freely without thinking about possible consequences, the interviewees are anonymous. The Bangladeshi interviewees are numbered 9 to 18, the Tunisians 31 to 38 and the Norwegians 39 to 47. The Colombians were given the numbers 48 to 56.

As part of the *Shared Horizons* research a survey was sent to journalism students in the three countries (see appendices). The students were asked two open-ended questions: 'What kind of limitations on press freedom exists in your country?' and 'Describe how you find the situation for freedom of expression in your country'. 406 students responded (which implies a response rate of 68 per cent), and I will use some of the answers in this chapter.

I have systematized the Colombian interviewees' answers and the answers from the open-ended questions in the survey so they can be compared and analysed.

Theoretical approach to journalistic values

According to Mark Deuze, journalistic values have been built up over time, especially through education (Deuze 2005:444). In this chapter, I will examine some of the values that are important to journalists in the four countries.

Through the World of Journalism project, Hanitzsch and international researchers (2016) investigated journalistic culture in 66 countries, including Colombia, Bangladesh and Norway. The findings indicate that detachment, non-involvement, providing political information to the public and monitoring the government are considered essential all over the world. Previously, Hanitzsch had found that journalists in developing countries were more in favour of advocacy journalism, promoting religion, ideas and views than their Western peers (Hanitzsch 2011:287).

Robie writes that journalists in Pacific countries, unlike journalists in the Western world, have a need to contribute to the democratization of the region (Robie 2013:105). On the other hand, a survey done in Bangladesh in 2006 (Ramaprada & Rahman 2006:1) indicates that Bangladeshi journalists consider libertarian functions more important than development functions, but that there is a gap between perceived importance and actual practice. Furthermore, journalists from non-Western countries tend to be more interventionist, with more flexible ethical views than Western journalists (Hanitzsch 2016).

Deuze (2005) discovered that many journalistic values are appreciated in different parts of the world. These include public service, objectivity, autonomy, immediacy and a feeling of ethics (ibid:447). Deuze is critical to the objectivity ideal, and writes that Western research often deems it to be unachievable. (Compare with chapter 3, where it was found that Norwegian students consider objectivity a hard ideal to live up to, while journalism students in Tunisia and Bangladesh think that one, as a journalist, has to be objective.)

In a survey of journalism students in 22 countries, Splichal and Sparks (1994:179) found a striking similarity in the wish to be independent and autonomous. However, several researchers claim that societies around the world are so different that it seems impossible to compare journalistic values (Hanitzsch 2011:368). It is hard to picture the same values (and especially the same working conditions), in counties engulfed in war and conflict as opposed to peaceful Western countries. The theory is based on the fact that journalists transnationally do possess some similar values, but that it might be hard to actually make a comparison.

Barry James, a Paris-based reporter and editor, states in a report by UNESCO that a safe environment for journalists is essential to a democracy (James 2007). 'The deaths, tragic as they are, are only the tip of the iceberg because they create a climate of fear and self-censorship that makes investigative journalism difficult, if not impossible', he writes (ibid:8). James also maintains that it is the responsibility of the government in every country to protect journalists and optimize their working conditions. 'Every journalist killed or neutralized by terror is an observer less of the human condition. Every attack distorts reality by creating a climate of fear and self-censorship' (ibid:7).

Core values

Interviewees in all four countries talk about autonomy as one of their most important journalistic values – that their work is not to be influenced by anyone but themselves (Deuze 2005). One of the interviewees in Colombia wants journalists to be free so they can reflect, investigate and search, without any control or censorship: ‘The ideal journalism is journalism only controlled by the journalist’ (Interviewee 52). In Bangladesh, one interviewee worries that journalists will not be able to work freely in the future. He is afraid that they will need to engage in self-censorship, concluding ‘that will be the end of journalism’ (Interviewee 13).

Even though interviewees from all four countries want to work independently, they do emphasize different values as well. Norwegian journalists, for example, stress especially that journalism needs to be accurate and they strive towards a journalism that is as balanced as possible. ‘I think journalists have a great social responsibility when it comes to providing the public with the right information’, a journalist from Norway says (Interviewee 42). Another Norwegian journalist regards scrutinizing those in power as an important task:

To challenge power is the main task, and it is also a social mission. When the citizens are reading newspapers, listening to radio, reading online newspapers, watching television, they have an expectation that those in power are being examined, and then you display what you have found, the citizens nod and think that it is a good thing (Interviewee 39).

In common with the Norwegian interviewees, the Colombian journalists relish being a watchdog in society. ‘I want to examine those in power, to uncover power abuse’, one states (Interviewee 51). Another asserts: ‘Journalists should be critical, uncover what those in power try to hide’ (Interviewee 48).

While journalists in Bangladesh also want to act as watchdogs, the most important role for them seems to be to inform the public. ‘I think informing those who do not know is the most important contribution of journalism’ (Interviewee 17). In Tunisia the interviewees do not refer to the desire to be a watchdog at all. Instead, all interviewees talk about informing and reporting on the correct facts as the most important task. As one of the Tunisian interviewees state: ‘The most important function is to inform the general public’ (Interviewee 33).

Deuze mentions autonomy, a sense of public service and the watchdog function as important journalistic values (Deuze 2005:446). Another value that Deuze stresses, the feeling of immediacy, is also important for the interviewees. While this may be the case, journalists from all four countries agree that it is more important to publish something that is accurate than to publish it quickly. ‘I try to verify the information until the last moment, even during broadcasting the news programme. If I simply fail to verify it, I will not diffuse it’ (Interviewee 33). ‘I would rather report on something

true than report on something fast', as one of the Colombian interviewees puts it (Interviewee 50). A Bangladeshi interviewee agrees:

I think there is no way to avoid cross checking in advance of deadlines. The work of reporting has to be divided in such a way that cross checking can be finished in time. Uncertain information should be avoided. It is not journalism to disseminate information without cross checking (Interviewee 15).

To journalists in all four countries, it is important to report the truth and to know that the facts they publish are correct. One Tunisian interviewee says he wants to be neutral and objective but not critical: 'Being neutral in reporting means to give pure information, without personal interpretations or criticisms' (Interviewee 33). Norwegian journalists, on the other hand, state that they strive to be as neutral as possible, but this is an impossible value to live up to. In a similar vein, Colombian interviewees state that they would like to be neutral, although 'one cannot be completely neutral' (Interviewee 50).

When talking about their journalistic values – about how they want journalism to be – most interviewees always have a 'but'. I will now look into some of the reasons for this realism.

Detachment and non-involvement

Even though the interviewees from all four countries want to work freely, it is evidently not the reality for all of them. Hanitzsch found that journalists in most countries around the world find it a challenge to monitor the government (Hanitzsch 2016).

In Colombia, *Semana* is one of the biggest newspapers. It is well known for its investigative journalism, and it is the only newspaper in the country with its own group of investigative reporters. At the same time, these reporters cannot write whatever they want. Interviewee 55 explains the situation in Colombia like this: All the big media outlets are a hundred per cent owned by powerful people who can dictate what the editors publish. The media owners often have links to politics – *Semana*, for example, is owned by the Santos family, the family of President Juan Manuel Santos. Hence, it will not be possible for the journalists in the newspaper to write anything critical about the president.

In addition, the editors are often given guidelines by the owners on what to publish. This is direct censorship, and something that easily drives the journalists to self-censorship. 'The journalists self-censor, they know what they can write and what cannot be mentioned, and that is why journalism in Colombia is not free' (Interviewee 49). One Colombian interviewee says that if he had a corruption case on a politician, he could not publish it. That is why he cannot do his work as well as he wants to (Interviewee 51).

Research on the Colombian newspaper *El Tiempo*, in 2009, found that the uneasy situation in the country made it dangerous to do critical journalism (Díaz 2009:138).

Journalism balances between publishing and holding back information, the report concluded (ibid). At the same time, *El Tiempo* and other big newspapers play an essential role in forming the population's perception of politics and important values in society. To put it in other words – those who control the media also control reality and the people.

Another interviewee wants to be critical towards the government and protect people from the abuse of power, but realizes this is just a dream. 'Censorship is so common that, in Colombia, it is impossible to be a watchdog' (Interviewee 56). I find the same tendency in Bangladesh.

A kind of indirect censorship has emerged as the biggest threat to the practice of journalism in the country in recent years. In many cases, if the content of the media goes against the power-holders, those media are closed down (Interviewee 17).

Rahman finds that during the three last decades many examples of investigative journalism have been seen in the Bangladeshi newspapers (Rahman 2014:5). Most investigative reports, Rahman states, seem to be the result of the individual efforts of reporters (ibid:9). As noted above, journalists in Bangladesh often value independence, but there is a gap between its perceived importance and actual practice (Ramapada & Rahman 2006:1)

Sadly, the same kind of observations that we find in Bangladesh and Colombia are also in evidence among the Tunisian journalists: 'Journalism is threatened by political interference and power. Power is always looking for alternative ways to control journalism' (Interviewee 35). At the same time, the professionalization of the profession might improve Tunisian journalism. As a matter of fact, in 2013 the Tunisian journalism education institution, IPSI, became the first in the Arab world to introduce investigative journalism to master students.

The Norwegian journalists do not feel censored. 'Norwegian journalism and freedom of press is not under pressure', one Norwegian journalist states (Interviewee 39). In Norway investigative journalism is highly valued as a core function of journalism, and in the Ethical Code of Practice for the Press it is actually stated that journalists should 'uncover and disclose matters, which ought to be subjected to criticism' (Norsk Presseforbund 2015:1.4). However, concerns have been raised as budgets have been cut, and according to Warmedal (Warmedal & Hjeltnes 2012) this has decreased the focus on investigative journalism.

Threats and violence – everywhere but in Norway

In April 2016 the Bangladeshi journalist, Xulhaz Mannan, was stabbed to death at his home. According to the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ 2015) the murder was due to his work as a senior editor at the gay rights magazine, *Roopbaan*.

Threats against journalists are common in Bangladesh. 'We have to be careful what questions we ask, so we self-censor. If you ask the wrong question you could easily be

threatened' (Interviewee 13). The picture for Colombia is very much the same: 'If you write stories that different groups do not like, it is easy for them to threaten you. By doing so they can control our society, they do it by spreading fear' (Interviewee 57).

In Tunisia, journalists are to some extent under threat as they are squeezed between violent extremists and a security service sensitive to criticism. 'While Islamist militants threaten the media, the government introduces restrictive legislation and security forces legally harass and even assault journalists', CPJ observes (2015). One journalist sees threats as preventing journalists from fulfilling their role: 'A journalist who wants to expose corruption will be interrupted with bribes or violent threats' (Interviewee 31).

In Norway, in contrast, none of the interviewees report receiving direct threats. Here the risk is less direct and, obviously, of a smaller magnitude. As one of the interviewees put it: 'One rarely risks one's life and health in Norway by publishing a critical story, but one could, for instance, lose access to sources' (Interviewee 43).

In a society where journalists expect threats, they may protect themselves through self-censorship. According to my findings, journalists who have not been directly exposed to violence or threats still tend to self-censor in societies where violence or threats are common. This is what Barry James warned about – that threats and violence create a climate of fear and self-censorship that makes investigative journalism difficult, if not impossible (James 2007).

Another aspect that might affect journalists is corruption, as alluded to by interviewees in both Colombia and Bangladesh: 'There are not only corrupt powers that want to censor the media and control the editors, there are also journalists who are corrupted, who get paid to report on different stories', a Colombian journalist says (Interviewee 48). The Bangladeshi respondents in the survey observe the same feature and one of them states: 'In our country the press is corrupted seriously' (Respondent 178). Such 'internal' corruption is not mentioned in either Tunisia or Norway, but a challenge that is emphasized by a number of Tunisian students is the lack of access to information. 'The main limitation of the freedom of the press is the difficulty in accessing information' (Respondent 243).

Deuze is clear on the fact that for a journalist to feel successful there has to be freedom of the press and journalists have to feel protected against censorship (Deuze 2005:449). So, in Colombia, Bangladesh and Tunisia, is there a press freedom to talk of?

Freedom of the press

As seen above, Bangladeshi, Colombian and Tunisian journalists' report that they engage in self-censorship and some of them also feel censored by people in power. In 2011, a committee appointed by the Minister of Culture examined the responsibility of the press in Norway. In their report freedom of the press was defined as the right to publish without being affected by outside interests (Medieansvarsutvalget 2011:17).

Thus, while freedom of speech applies to anyone, freedom of the press protects the media from owners and governments.

In Colombia, one interviewee agrees with this definition. Because owners and the government manipulate journalism in Colombia, he concludes that Colombia does not have press freedom (Interviewee 51). Another Colombian emphasizes that it is important for journalists to work freely – that journalists should be autonomous. For her, freedom of the press means having a lot of different media outlets. ‘There are good journalists, and there is a lot of good journalistic work being done,’ she says. ‘It is also, to a certain extent, possible to work freely, even though the freedom has its limitations’ (Interviewee 50).

In our survey, journalism students in Bangladesh, Tunisia and Norway responded to an open-ended question that asked them to list the limitations on press freedom in their country. ‘Political pressure, lack of journalist skills, pressure from the capitalist society,’ one Bangladeshi student answered (Respondent 1). Another Bangladeshi describes press freedom as a fantasy unrelated to reality (Respondent 7). As exemplified in the following quote, some of the students also point at the differences between theory and practice: ‘In my country we have press freedom, but we have some limitations on the press such as corruption, media policy, government oppression’ (Respondent 15).

How can there be freedom of the press if corruption and government oppression affect journalists’ work? According to Hanitzsch, one of the challenges with comparing journalistic values in different nations is contrasting interpretations of terminology (Hanitzsch 2011:287). Also, as we have seen, informing and reporting correct facts are particularly important values for journalists in Bangladesh and Tunisia. This might explain why some journalists in these countries believe they have press freedom and can work freely although they face some challenges.

Some of the Tunisian students say things have changed following the revolution of 2011, and that conditions have improved over the past few years. However, that the situation is still problematic becomes apparent in the following quote: ‘Press freedom is allowed until it is going against the government or the media owners’ (Respondent 140). Another interviewee is more optimistic and points to the fact that new voices are being heard after the revolution: ‘Freedom of the press in Tunisia has been strengthened significantly after the revolution. The proof of that is that minorities live with us and share their ideas on various occasions without being assaulted or intercepted’ (Interviewee 38).

In Norway, students seem to agree on the fact that press freedom exists. At the same time, Norwegian students do see some challenges. The pressure for consensus in Norwegian society is seen as one such challenge:

Not everyone has the opportunity to express their opinions. I think that we, to a high degree, censor opinions at the extreme ends of both sides of the debate, for example when it comes to debates on immigration (Respondent 306).

The media are sometimes being criticized for being too elite-oriented. The day after the 2016 US election when Donald Trump won, Reidun Kjelling Nybø, the assistant

general secretary of The Association of Norwegian Editors, invited media outlets to look at their coverage of both Brexit and the US election, as both results came as a complete surprise to them (Johannessen et al. 2016). She asks to what degree the Norwegian media have distanced themselves from regular citizens.

Moreover, in Norway there seems to be another problem, which is also mentioned in the other countries – economic challenges posed by new media structures.

Economic pressure

A Bangladeshi journalist describes the following situation:

I would say the corporate effect is a big threat not only for Bangladeshi journalism but also for the whole world's journalism. Once upon a time the corporate organizations had some social responsibilities. But now they are buying and commercializing even the content of news like a giant (Interviewee 7).

This situation seems relevant in all four countries. Media outlets striving to give their owners the profit they want struggle economically. The economic recession following the financial crisis has made cuts necessary in media organizations all over the world, and this affects journalistic activity (Medieansvarsutvalget 2011:17). Syvertsen et al. identify 'potential disruptions related to digitalization, globalization and fragmentation', and point out how these changes, among other implications, cause challenges to media structures (Syvertsen et al. 2016:19).

In Colombia, Tunisia and Bangladesh salaries are low, and the following two Tunisian interviewees highlight the conditions that journalists work under: 'Tunisian journalists are specifically threatened by the bad material situation and a very low standard of living' (Interviewee 33). The other says, 'Tunisian journalists suffer from being under-paid, under-equipped and under-staffed' (Interviewee 34).

In Norway big budget cuts are taking place in most media outlets, which means fewer and fewer journalists are required to produce the same amount of content. A Norwegian journalist working for one of the country's biggest newspapers remarks: 'I would say that there is a declining focus on investigative journalism or that fewer resources are put into this' (Interviewee 40).

Over the last 10 years all the largest media outlets in Norway have made swingeing budget cuts. In particular the transformation from traditional printed media to digital media has led to hefty losses in income (Warmedal & Hjeltnes 2012:41). 'Not enough people are permanently employed so few journalists have the chance to be truly good. I think that is rather restrictive for journalism', one of the Norwegian interviewees says (Interviewee 40).

Helje Solberg, news editor at the Norwegian daily paper *Verdens Gang*, believes that convergence and digital developments will strengthen journalism, and she states, 'Because of the Internet we now have access to thousands of valuable sources' (Solberg

2012:255). Digital developments are seen as the future also among the interviewees from the developing countries. ‘We use social media for freedom of expression,’ one Bangladeshi journalism student says (Respondent 36). In Colombia, some journalists have established critical online newspapers. *Verdad Abierta*, which means ‘open reality’, is one of them. An aim of *Verdad Abierta* is to be an alternative to the traditional media outlets:

This is free journalism; we can write whatever we want. There are clearly challenges with this as well, but I think we can make something more interesting, more investigative. I think we can be better journalists without all the limitations our society creates for us now (Interviewee 51).

In Bangladesh bloggers get threats, and in Tunisia bloggers and social media contributed to the Arab Spring. At the same time, journalism students in these two countries fear that bloggers might ruin balanced and professional journalism. One respondent worries that politicians and people in power may restrict press freedom because of uneducated bloggers who push ethical limits. ‘Lack of journalistic skills are a threat to the freedom of the press’ (Respondent 1).

Watchdog or advocacy? How to relate to power

In Colombia there is a tradition of respecting people in powerful positions. ‘It is not a part of Colombian culture to hold the people with power accountable for their mistakes’ (Interviewee 54). The interviewee saying this also claims that this makes his work as a watchdog difficult. He is drawn between wanting to be a watchdog and recognising that his readers might be upset if he is too critical of powerful people. ‘This makes the task of protecting the weak in society hard’, he adds. Another Colombian interviewee says that the work of a journalist in a developing country is different to that of their counterpart in an industrialized country: ‘The development that European countries have experienced through the last two hundred years, we have not experienced. We are experiencing this now. We are doing well, but it takes time to change a society’ (Interviewee 56).

In his view the British magazine *The Economist* is the ideal newspaper. This is because it is critical and presents every case from all angles. ‘For Colombian journalism to be like journalism in the western world, the society has to be like Western societies’, he says.

That social reality affects how different journalistic values are being prioritized and conceived has been pointed out in previous research. Robie, for example, claims that journalists in developing countries often have a challenge reconciling the views of passive groups in society with those of people seeking change (Robie 2013:1). And, as seen above, Hanitzsch maintains that journalists in developing countries, to a larger degree than Western journalists, have a tendency to promote ideas. Journalists

in developing countries are more inclined to use advocacy in order to develop their societies (Hanitzsch 2016).

Colombian, Tunisian and Bangladeshi interviewees highlight this tendency. 'In my opinion', one Tunisian says, 'journalists of underdeveloped countries must not be neutral. They must commit themselves to defend their legal rights' (Interviewee 34). Another affirms: 'Journalism is a double-edged sword. You can both build a healthy society or you can disturb public order' (Interviewee 36). A Bangladeshi interviewee admits that he would not report on a case if it might cause harm:

If I write anything as a journalist that violates the religion and there may be indiscipline in society, considering the consequence of the news, I will choose respect for religion because I will not want to create an unstable situation in the society through my freedom of speech (Interviewee 5).

I find that journalists set different goals for their work according to their society. Limits of the freedom of expression are not the same everywhere – they are marked by the cultural and social context (Carlsson 2016:11). Also, instability in Colombian, Bangladeshi or Tunisian society would probably lead to bigger problems, such as loss of human life, than it would in Norway. Consequently, to a Norwegian journalist it is natural to state, 'As a journalist, you should be a watchdog, not a helper' (Interviewee 39).

Conclusion

Journalistic values are the values that give meaning to journalistic work (Deuze 2005:444). For journalists in Colombia, Bangladesh, Tunisia and Norway, autonomy and reporting the truth are important values, whereas the watchdog role is an important value especially for interviewees in Colombia and Norway. In Bangladesh and Tunisia, on the other hand, journalists find that objectivity and the function of informing the public are their core values.

In Colombia and Bangladesh, corruption, threats and powerful people or groups affect journalistic work. Most of our interviewees in these two countries state that they cannot work as they wish – they are censored or they self-censor. Also our Tunisian interviewees are aware of self-censorship, and independent journalism is under pressure, both from the government and powerful owners of media outlets.

In contrast, in Norway the journalists did not identify concrete threats affecting their ability to work freely, although, for sure, also Norwegian journalists face some challenges. Moreover, in the developing countries, to a larger extent than in Norway, journalists have a tendency to promote ideas and thoughts that can move society forwards.

To conclude, I would say that journalists in the four countries have some common core values, and some that are different. We see that there are challenges in all countries, and that the journalists' values and their ability to work according to them are

affected by different factors. Freedom of the press has to be fought for, and it seems the more challenges there are in a society, the harder it is for journalists to work in accordance with their values.

Note

1. I would like to thank the *Shared Horizons* researcher for the material they have provided me with.

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III. Single-Country Case Studies

Press Freedom Dynamics in Bangladesh

Amina Khatun, Janina Islam Abir,
Mofizur Rhaman & Md. Golam Rahman

This chapter explores the state of freedom of expression and press freedom in Bangladesh and how religion, in particular, influences these issues. More specifically, through content analyses of some selected newspapers and in-depth interviews with journalists, experts and civil society representatives, this chapter reveals the barriers to press freedom and how the politics of religion is related to press freedom and freedom of expression in the country.

Past political situations, especially military rule and the struggle for democracy, have created an unstable situation for the press in Bangladesh. Moreover, religious extremism, intolerance and politics of religion jeopardize the socio-political situation of the country time and again. The period from February to March 2013 was particularly decisive as the people at this time became sharply divided on the issue of International War Crimes Tribunal¹ and its first verdict in the case of Abdul Quader Mollah². Millions of people gathered at Shahbug Square³ for more than two months and stayed there day and night, chanting slogans in favour of justice for war heroes and ensuring capital punishment for war criminals. People from all walks of lives, mainstream media as well as social media, became part of the movement. There was, of course, a section of people and media who played a more subtle role and spoke out against this movement, and the media soon became a battlefield where the war was fought by different stakeholders – proponents as well as opponents of the International War Crimes Tribunal.

The role of some media has been controversial – some were banned for news fabrication, and later a number of free thinkers and bloggers were killed. In this context the Bangladeshi Information Minister declared that ‘... any media will face legal action if they publish materials, which slander Prophet (SM) or criticize any religion in obscene language, quoting blogs or social networking sites like Facebook’ (Daily Star 2013a). On the other hand, ‘Eight Islamist parties ... threatened to call for a boycott of a section of a media for publishing and broadcasting pro-atheist and provocative news’ (Daily Star 2013b). Therefore, it is important to unveil the complex relations of

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religion, freedom of expression and press freedom and show how these issues were presented in the newspapers during that critical, politically-hyped time in the country.

The context

Bangladesh emerged as a secular country, a fact recognized by its very first constitution formulated in 1972. However, in 1977, the 5th amendment of the constitution – ‘Absolute trust and faith in Almighty Allah (God)’ – was added (Bangladesh Constitution [1972] 1977). Adherence to this clause has contributed to politics of religion, which has grown into a vital phenomenon in the country. Some religious-based political parties emerged and the politics of religion has subsequently raised many puzzling questions in Bangladesh and is seen as a drawback for the country.

Though the majority of the population in Bangladesh are Muslim, the country does not practice Islamic law and there are also people from other religions, like Hinduism, Buddhism and Christianity, as well as people from other tribal religions.

However, as religious-based political parties use propaganda media in order to influence the people in the name of religion, restrictions on the press are almost invited. Conversely, the authorities may use this as an opportunity to suppress the press for entirely self-interested reasons. Thus, press freedom and freedom of expression are directly or indirectly threatened by the widespread practice of the politics of religion.

To assess the press freedom situation, we ask: 1. What is the general trend of newspaper coverage of the issues relating to freedom of expression and press freedom and politics of religion? 2. What are the thoughts of journalists and civil society representatives about the prevailing situation of press freedom, freedom of expression and politics of religion in the country? 3. What are the barriers to freedom of expression and press freedom? 4. How is freedom of expression and press freedom reconciled with the politics of religion in the country?

Theoretical background

Freedom of expression is integral to self-fulfilment, as the expression of thoughts and feelings is part of being human (Ash 2011). Moreover, freedom of expression is essential in order to understand diversity and the differing perspectives of society. All the relevant facts and arguments on any given issue need to be brought up so that the most rational explanations can win. Cory states:

It is difficult to imagine a guaranteed right more important to a democratic society than freedom of expression. Indeed a democracy cannot exist without that freedom to express new ideas and to put forward opinions about the functioning of public institutions. The concept of free and uninhibited speech permeates all truly

democratic societies and institutions. The vital importance of the concept cannot be over-emphasized. (Cory 1989, as quoted in Duhaime's Law Dictionary).

Sean MacBride (1980) states, 'The principle of freedom of expression is one that admits of no exceptions and that is applicable to the people all over the world by virtue of their human dignity.' (MacBride1980:10). The idea of press freedom is connected to that of freedom of speech and human rights. Article 19 of Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) says 'Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers' (UN 1948:5).

Freedom of the press is necessary for assuring individual rights to disseminate thoughts through any media. Albert Venn Dicey (1885) affirms that, 'The freedom of press means the right of a person to publish what he pleases in books or newspapers' (Dicey as quoted in Alam 1992:8). India addressed press freedom as an important part of freedom of speech and expression in its constitution. Section 1 of Article 19 of the Indian Constitution ([1949] 2015) states, 'All citizens shall have the right to freedom of speech and expression,' and this right fundamentally includes the freedom of the press.

On the other hand, according to the Article 39 of the Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh ([1972] 2011):

1. Freedom of thought and conscience is guaranteed.
2. Subject to any reasonable restrictions imposed by law in the interests of the security of the states, public order, decency or morality, or in relations to contempt of court, defamation or incitements to an offence. (a) The right of every citizen to freedom of speech and expression and (b) Freedom of the press are guaranteed.

Scanlon (1972) argues that government can only limit freedom of expression in cases of enormous disorder. However, the constitution of Bangladesh guarantees freedom of expression to its citizens subject to some reasonable restrictions. And, in many situations, these restrictions end up protecting religious values and thoughts.

Methodology

This chapter is based on the content related to press freedom, freedom of expression and politics of religion in six mainstream newspapers in Bangladesh. Data was gathered through a content analysis based on 14 variables⁴, and in order to get comparative and representative data, newspapers from diverse political and ideological backgrounds were analyzed. Of the six analysed papers, two are English daily newspapers and four are Bangla language dailies.

The Prothom Alo is the most circulated, liberal progressive Bangla daily newspaper of Bangladesh. The Daily Ittefaq is one of the oldest newspapers in the country and has played a significant role in different historical periods. The Daily Janakhantho is also a prominent daily newspaper of Bangladesh. This newspaper leans towards the ruling

Awami League government and the values of liberalism. The Daily Star, meanwhile, has the highest circulation of any English newspaper in Bangladesh. These newspapers are all considered to be driven by progressive-capitalistic and liberal values.

The English-language daily, The New Age, by contrast, is ideologically progressive and left leaning, and with a lower circulation. The Daily Naya Diganta is owned and run by the people who were actively against the Liberation War of Bangladesh in 1971 – namely the political party, Jamat-i-Islami Bangladesh. This party is blamed for spreading political religiosity and religious politics in the country.

The examined period stretches from 1 February 2013 to 31 March 2013, a period during which Bangladesh was facing a political dilemma and crisis with respect to the values of Bengali nationalism and the culture and spirit of the liberation war. In response to the verdict of life imprisonment delivered on war criminal Abdul Quader Mollah, the Shahbug movement erupted, led by bloggers and social media activists demanding his capital punishment. Subsequently, some bloggers were killed and some media banned. In this context, an analysis of print press coverage of that period may indicate how the print media deals with issues of press freedom and freedom of expression.

In order to substantiate the results, findings from a total of 20 interviews with journalists, members of civil society and academic experts complement the content analysis. Thirteen journalists, four academics and three representatives of civil society in Bangladesh were interviewed to gauge their perceptions on press freedom and freedom of expression. The interviews were semi-structured and concentrated on the existing press freedom situation in Bangladesh, obstacles to freedom of expression and the recent press situation.

The general coverage

A total of 546 items relating to the issues of press freedom, freedom of expression and politics of religion were published in the selected six daily newspapers during the two month study period. On average nine items were published in the selected newspaper every single day, indicating the gravity of the situation in that politically-hyped study period, as well as the seriousness of the media in addressing freedom of expression in general.

Among the examined titles, the individual newspaper that published most articles was The Daily Ittefaq (a popular and widely read Bangla newspaper). Here, a total of 105 items related to press freedom, freedom of expression and the politics of religion were published.

However, nearly as many, 104, were published in The Daily Naya Diganta, a conservative, right-leaning daily owned and run by Mir Kashem Ali, who was later convicted of war crimes.

Following these, both The Daily Star (the most circulated English daily) and The Daily Prothom Alo published 91 items, and 90 items were found in The Daily Jana-

Table 1. Coverage of press freedom, freedom of expression and the politics of religion

Newspapers	Number of items
The Ittefaq	105
The Naya Diganta	104
The Daily Star	91
The Prothom Alo	91
The Janakantho	90
The New Age	65
Total	546

Comments: Items refers to journalistic genre i.e. news, editorial, op-ed, feature, post editorial etc.

kantha (a newspaper considered to uphold liberal values). Least items were found in another of the liberal English language newspapers, The New Age, with a total of 65 items during the period under study.

The fact that a conservative daily such as The Daily Naya Diganta published so many items on issues related to press freedom, freedom of expression and the politics of religion may seem intriguing. However, qualitative reading reveals that most of its items covered the issues from a negative angle.

Factors affecting press freedom and freedom of expression

Factors affecting press freedom were categorized by in-depth reading of the published items in the selected dailies. An attempt was made to connect the items to different barriers to freedom of expression and they were later categorized according to sub-variables under investigation, such as government/ruling political parties, opposition parties, religious parties, media owners, self-censorship, law enforcement agencies, threats by miscreants etc. The following table shows the barriers to press freedom and freedom of expression in Bangladesh as presented in the six newspapers.

The dominant barrier: Islamist political parties

Table 2 shows that the by far largest share, 66 per cent of the items, refers to religious parties as barriers to freedom of expression and press freedom in Bangladesh. Activists of different Islamist parties declared an offensive against journalists, evident in a story in the *Daily Star* from 23 February 2013: ‘In a countrywide reign of terror, Jamaate-e-Islami ...attacked law enforcers and journalists, burned the national flag and vandalized Shaheed Minars to counter the mass demand for capital punishment to 1971 war criminals’ (Daily Star 2013c).

Religious parties try to motivate people by the name of religion: Islam. A news story with the headline ‘Islamists threaten non-stop strike’, in the New Age, reads

Table 2. Barriers to freedom of expression and press freedom as reflected in the newspapers

Barriers to press freedom	Per cent
Religious parties	66
Opposition parties	9
Threats by miscreants	7
Others	6
Media and owners of media institutions	5
Government/ruling political parties	5
Journalists' self-censorship	1
Laws and policies	1
Police and other law enforcement agencies	0
Total	100

Comments: The number of coded items is 546.

‘Thousands of Islamists went on demonstrations across the country ...demanding punishment of atheist bloggers of Shabugh for derogatory remarks about Islam and its Prophet Muhammad (SM)’ (New Age 2013). It seems that the targeting of journalists and bloggers by Islamist parties means that their freedom of expression is restricted.

Journalists and media owners

A united media has had glorious roles in different developments in Bangladesh’s history. However, the situation has changed recently as the journalist community has become divided and influenced by the political ideology of the owners of certain media, a development that is sometimes reflected in the journalists’ writings and reports. Even in the case of developing professionalism in the field, ensuring good wages and job security, the journalist community is not united. This weakens the voice of journalists in upholding and protecting freedom of expression and press freedom in the country. The whole journalist community should be a proponent of press freedom, but six stories in Table 2 cite journalists themselves and their self-censorship as barriers to press freedom.

Media owners also affect the practice of press freedom and freedom of expression. It is often reported that the owners or their representatives advise the newsroom not to publish certain types of news stories. If any news runs against the business interest of the media house and its policy, then that news never sees the light of day. And, in the same vein, in cases where the media owners belong to a political party, that particular media outlet often refrains from publishing news hostile to its owners’ political ideology.

This is reflected in five per cent of the items which hold that owners of media institutions are barriers to press freedom. One interviewee claims that media owners do not support press freedom and improving the quality of journalism. He says,

‘We asked the private TV channels to provide funding for the training of upcoming journalists to be equipped with state-of-the-art technology and techniques for writing freely. However, they are not interested in increasing quality or bringing any change to the existing situation’ (Interviewee 1).

Government and ruling political parties

In many developing nations, governments and ruling political parties are seen as one of the biggest obstacles to a free press. This also applies to Bangladesh, although only five per cent of the items single out Bangladesh’s government and ruling political party as a press freedom barrier.

During the undemocratic regime, the government used to send press advices in order to control the press. The situation has changed over the years but the government is still reported to sometimes take sides against media freedom. As an example, consider the following headline: ‘Media cautioned: Information Minister warns some newspapers against religious instigation.’ The accompanying story states, ‘The government yesterday asked all the print and electronic media to refrain from running any motivated story that may exploit people’s religious sentiments’ (Daily Star 2013d). The request obliges journalists not to write about any issue that relates to religion out of fear of a possible instigation case against the reporter. This ministerial warning was reinforced by an SMS, urging ‘the people to remain alert to circulation of fictitious publications dishonouring the Prophet (SM) as well as bids to make derogatory remarks about the (war crimes) tribunal’. It was titled: ‘Stay alert over defaming Islam’ and sent to all mobiles.

Conversely, journalists and media are also accused of abusing press freedom. The right-leaning daily *The Amar Desh* published a news story about a march against the death penalty for convicted war criminal Abdul Quader Mollah, which was led by the Imam of The Holy Macca. But the story was later found to be false, indicating that some media may invite government intervention against the press due to their irresponsible, unethical journalism.

The editor/owner of *Amar Desh*, which tends to support the opposition party, criticized other media outlets for their stance against his newspaper for its falsity and news fabrication. This was reflected in the headline ‘Mahmudur Slams Media’. The story explains, ‘*Amar Desh* acting editor Mahmudur Rahman launched a scathing attack on the media and journalist leaders yesterday for criticizing his stance on the Shahbugh movement. He also accused journalists of turning into activists over the Shahbugh demonstration’ (Daily Star 2013e). He charged most of the media, including top newsmen and editors, with having no shame. In a story with the headline ‘Three Newspapers Abusing Press Freedom – says Information Minister’, Information Minister Hasanul Huq Inu was reported as accusing national daily newspapers, *Amar Desh*, *Naya Diganta* and *Sangram*, of spreading propaganda against the young people’s Shahbugh movement (Daily Star 2013f).

Thus, sometimes a section of the oppositional press creates hurdles to press freedom. It is notable that the second largest share of the items, nine per cent, is about opposition parties acting as a barrier to press freedom in the country.

Corporate pressure

The economy of newspapers is, in general, highly dependent on advertisement from the public sector and private companies. Therefore the press usually has a flexible attitude towards negative news about its advertisers, fearing that otherwise they may lose advertisements.

One interviewee, who has an important position in a leading television channel, indicates that there is no direct pressure from government on the press nowadays. However, another interviewee remarks, 'There are pressures from big corporate organizations and we are obliged to them for keeping the constant flow of advertisement' (Interviewee 2).

Moreover, journalists and members of civil society highlight the self-interest of journalists which makes them self-censor. Though they did not explain the nature of this self-interest, the implied meaning could be indulging in bias towards some parties and favouring them because of partisan behaviour or mutual interest.

Life threats and killings

Journalists in Bangladesh also face life threats from time to time, and several journalists have been killed since the independence in 1971. Besides that, journalists face other threats such as physical torture, phone threats and abduction.

According to the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ 2012), 12 journalists were murdered in Bangladesh between 1992 and March 2012. Most of their killers escaped prosecution. Three quarters of those who died were covering crime and/or corruption stories at the time (CDAC 2012). Another report says only three of the 27 cases filed in connection with the murder of journalists in the past 15 years have so far been completed – with conviction in one case and acquittal in the other two.

Journalists offer a variety of opinions about the killing of other journalists. Most journalists regard these killings as equal to the murder of any other citizen. Few of them assert that the journalists were killed because of their journalism. Rather, they were killed for other personal reasons or due to business rivalry. An editor of a newspaper says, 'A few of the journalists were killed for professional reasons. Mostly, journalists involved with other side-businesses, along with journalism, were killed due to conflicting business interests' (Interviewee 3).

This does not decrease the gravity of the killings but it may well relate to the overall law and order situation in the country. Moreover, murder trials have not taken place due to flaws in the legal system. Civil society representatives realize that Bangladesh's

legal structure is incapable of ensuring the security of its citizens. An academic of media law and ethics says:

The matter of insecurity is applicable for all. In a developing country like Bangladesh, there is no need to say anything specifically for journalists. I am not sure whether I will be able to reach my house safely. Working journalists are facing all kinds of risks. Who will give security to them? How can we talk about safety of journalists only? (Interviewee 5).

However, an editor of a newspaper demands special security for journalists in order to ensure the safety of their profession. He states:

Journalists face serious life threats in Bangladesh. Shamsur Rahman, Manik Saha, Humayun Kabir Balu and recently Sagor-Runi, a journalist couple, were killed. Our legal system is highly politicized. Therefore our press becomes victim of this situation. So I think the government should take proper steps and ensure the security of the journalists (Interviewee 6).

Several other interviewees claim that the historical/political background demeans press freedom in Bangladesh. But the present situation is far better than under the military regime during the 1980s. One says:

I've been involved with journalism since the 80s. During the military government I was working on the news desk of a newspaper. We used to get phone calls at night asking for news modification, and to discard some news. Nowadays those problems are not heard, and press freedom is much better than at any other time (Interviewee 9).

Positive or negative? Differences in *how* press freedom and freedom of expression is being covered

Our analysis revealed that 546 items were published in the selected daily newspapers during the study period. However, they did not all relate to the issues in the same way. The connection of the items was investigated from two perspectives – those that were positively related to press freedom and freedom of expression and those negatively related to press freedom and freedom of expression.

Figure 1 shows that the largest share, 41 per cent, was negatively related to freedom of expression. These stories highlight the negative aspects of freedom of expression. A story titled, 'Blogger Rajib was targeted for his blog' indirectly blames his freedom of expression for putting his life in danger. The story explains how 'Online Jamaat-Shibir activists had branded the slain blogger Ahmed Rajib Haider as an atheist who they said should have been resisted' (Daily Star 2013g). Thus, freedom of expression as a basic human value has been undermined. It suggests that if somebody does write freely it is normal for them to be victimised or killed.

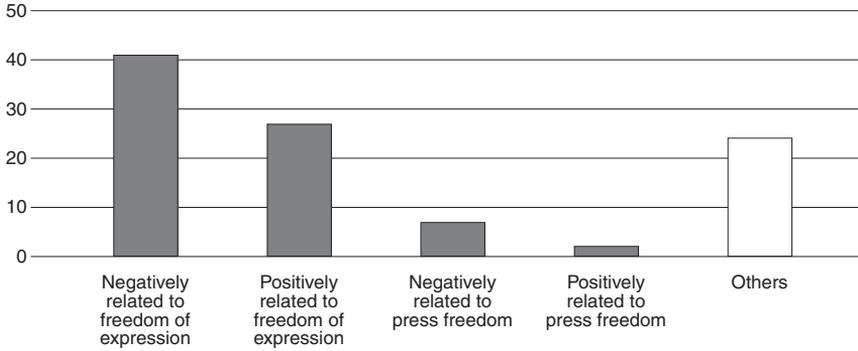


Figure 1. Positive and negative attitudes towards press freedom and freedom of expression (per cent)

Comments: The number of coded items is 546.

The second largest share, 27 per cent of the items, was positively related to freedom of expression. An example is a story with the headline, ‘OUTRAGED: People take to the streets to air anger over the verdict – demand death penalty for Quader Mollah’ (Daily Star 2013h).

Thus, all in all it is evident that both positive and negative attitudes towards freedom of expression occurred in the newspapers during the study period. While the articles focusing on negative aspects were more common, 147 of the articles related to freedom of expression in a positive way.

By contrast, only two per cent of the items were positively related to press freedom, while seven per cent were negatively related to press freedom. Regarding this issue, it seems that newspapers are giving more space to items that highlight and uphold the significance of press freedom. However, as they are few in numbers compared to items about freedom of expression, questions about the media’s seriousness with regard to their freedom can be raised.

Yet, journalists’ view of the press situation in Bangladesh is that they currently enjoy more freedom than in earlier times. One interviewee recalls:

I have been working as a journalist for 21 years. Now I am a decision-maker of a television channel. We have faced different political situations. We can evaluate the time in comparison with military government, last BNP-led government and the caretaker government of January 2007. Currently I do not get any calls to cancel news from the authority concerned (Interviewee 8).

25 per cent of the examined items have been coded as ‘others’, and most of them relate to the politics of religion. In these items, negative aspects are strongly prevalent – a perspective reflected in the headline, ‘Fanatic Now Targets Journos’. The piece says: ‘Jamat-e-Islami and Islamic Chhatra Shibir men attacked and injured at least 15 jour-

nalists ... launched attack on electronic and print media personnel ... police were seen as inactive during the attack' (Daily Star 2013i).

Journalists and civil society members draw attention to the recent incident when two TV channels were taken off air for contributing to huge anarchy by live coverage of Hefajot-e-Islam's demonstration on 5 May 2013.

Journalists and civil society representatives did not consider the banning of these channels, and the subsequent government action regarding these media institutions, as harmful for press freedom considering the circumstances of the study period:

Recently Bangladesh has watched an unforgettable situation about politics, secularism and the verdict of war criminals. It was an acid test for the press of Bangladesh. But unfortunately they failed to observe neutrality. Some press were used as the propaganda tool of a party. It creates ethnic violence all over the country. When the press goes beyond their ethical stand, government has to put an action on that (Interviewee 10).

Some stories were related to the ethics of journalism too. If journalism is not practiced ethically there is a possibility for intervention. One interviewee emphasizes the responsibility and professionalism of journalists in ensuring press freedom. According to the interviewee, 'journalists are losing their credibility and professionalism due to a small number of dishonest journalists' (Interviewee 11).

Another interviewee holds press owners responsible for unethical journalism:

Have you ever seen any fresh medical student doing a surgical operation? But, first or second year journalism students are recruited for professional work. This entry without completing educational training may affect the quality of journalism as well as access to information and the exercise of press freedom (Interviewee 1).

Social media

How the stories about press freedom, freedom of expression and the politics of religion relate to different media enables a media-centric understanding of the press freedom situation in Bangladesh.

Figure 2 shows that the largest share, 66 per cent of the items, relates to social media. This is not very surprising since social media has emerged as an important alternative platform for the expression of people's opinions, as well as getting others' views on different issues. Consequently, what happens on social media becomes the focus of coverage in the newspapers too. Though the Internet use began in Bangladesh earlier than in many other developing countries, the growth rate has greatly accelerated after the introduction of social media in the country.

According to Telecommunication Regulatory Commission of Bangladesh (BTRC 2017), the total number of Internet subscribers reached 67.2 million in 2017. Among

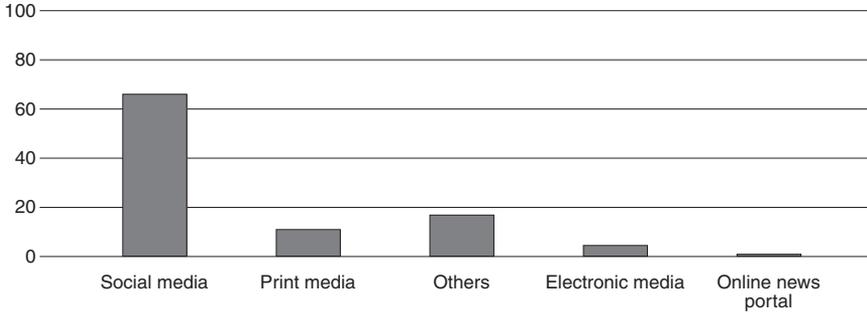


Figure 2. Media connection of the stories (per cent)

Comments: The number of coded items is 546.

the users, 80 per cent are on social networking sites, especially Facebook (Daily Star 2015). These figures show that the Bangladeshi people are active in the virtual world and that social media is acting as a catalyst of socio-political movements.

Consequently, the content analysis finds that of all 546 items related to freedom of the press, freedom of expression and the politics of religion, the Daily Star published 91 items and 57 per cent of these were related to social media. The Daily Prothom Alo also supplied 91 items, 71 per cent of which were related to social media. The Daily Janakantha weighed in with 90 items, and 53 per cent were related to social media. The Daily New Age was responsible for 65 items and of that batch 68 per cent were related to social media. The Daily Ittefaq topped the poll with 105 items. Of those 105, 74 per cent were related to social media, The Daily Naya Diganta was just behind with 104 items, of which 59 per cent of the items were related to social media.

Considering the context of the study period it is not surprising that social media are monitored by the mainstream newspapers and received wide coverage. Being a democratic and easily accessible site, free thinkers, Islamists, and extremists all use social media to reflect on their values, spread and disseminate their ideas and opinion about different issues. Hence, the mainstream newspapers also wrote stories, published op-ed, letters and columns about what happened in the social media world and how they would affect law and order situation, stability in the country, religious harmony and so on.

In recent years, negative aspects of social media have also become all the more obvious, not least by the dissemination of extremist thoughts via social networking sites. Creating anarchy by sharing hoaxes or deceptive information is alarming and, most dangerously, social media is being used to lay the groundwork for anti-social activities (Abir 2016).

However, social media has also power to organize people around multiple issues. It was observed that the Shahbug movement was largely influenced by social media activists, demonstrating the increasing dependence of people on social media (Curtis 2015). As social media provide an opportunity to express opinions, as well as a space

to create disturbance, its relevance with respect to press freedom and freedom of expression is a factor in all newspapers' coverage.

Voice in the story

The 'voice in the story' refers to opinions, statements and comments that were quoted in the stories. Thus 'voice' reveals who says what on what issues, among the many stakeholders in the field. Analysis of 'voice' is important as it helps to identify the proponents and opponents of press freedom.

Table 3. Voices in the story

	Per cent
Islamic political voice	54
Government and ruling political party voice	14
Journalist voice	9
Political right voice	8
Other voice	6
Civil society voice	4
Foreign voice	3
Legal experts and think-tanks voice	1
Political left voice	1
Total	100

Comments: The number of coded items is 546.

Table 3 shows that a majority, 54 per cent, of the articles quote Islamic political voices in the stories. This is evidence of the presence of religious parties as active actors on the issues under investigation, and it also shows their concern about press freedom and the freedom of expression situation in the country. However, as it has been observed that Islamists are *opposed* to free expression, their voice does not help to enhance press freedom. Rather it provokes more intervention and hurdles on the road to press freedom.

Government and ruling political voices are quoted in 14 per cent of the articles. Depending on the context, these voices appear as either proponents or opponents of press freedom and freedom of expression. The situation was complex due to the division among the media where some follow the rules of the game and some do not. Playing the role of referee, the voice of the government and ruling political parties becomes coercive to some extent as they serve the greater cause of the national interest and maintaining peace in society.

On the other hand, nine per cent of the items quote the voice of the political right. Their voices are found attacking the government as well as other media, as media out-

lets favouring the right-wing were criticized for their unethical journalistic role. There were only three items which quoted the political left voice, a surprisingly low figure.

In comparison, the voices of journalists were quoted in nine per cent of the items, and members of civil society occurred in four per cent of the items.

Conclusion

The content analysis of the newspapers shows that the issues of press freedom, freedom of expression and politics of religion received extensive coverage during the study period.

However, this coverage cannot be generalized as it is the portrayal of a complex time when the issue of press freedom became very divisive among the political parties and their followers. Both working journalists and civil society members who were interviewed think that the present press freedom situation in Bangladesh is far better than in the past and nowadays they do not get any press advices from the authorities. However, they engage in self-censorship when it comes to religious issues, as they fear legal suits for religious instigation. Yet, while there are many barriers to press freedom in the country, religious political parties are the most vociferous opponents of press freedom and freedom of expression.

As the study period was defined by an ideological conflict between liberal-secular and Islamist forces, the practice and perception of press freedom and freedom of expression was largely shaped by the politics of religion.

Notes

1. The International War Crimes Tribunal (Bangladesh) is a domestic war crimes tribunal set up in 2009 to investigate and prosecute the suspects for the genocide committed by the Pakistan Army and their local collaborators during the Liberation War of Bangladesh in 1971. Twenty-four people have so far been convicted of war crimes by this tribunal and so far six of them have been hanged.
2. Convicted and hanged for war crimes committed in 1971 during the Liberation War of Bangladesh.
3. A place in Dhaka where a massive demonstration took place in 2013 demanding capital punishment for those convicted of war crimes.
4. The variables under study were: size of the story; source of news; newspaper own stuff; source; news agency; treatment; page location; treatment; headline; section of the newspaper; genre; reporting items; genre; opinion item; story relevance; gender relevance of the story; media relevance of the story; voice in the story; and factors affecting freedom of expression & press freedom etc.

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Chapter 8

Press Freedom in Tunisia

The Post-Revolution Challenges

Souha Yacoub

As a developing country, Tunisia was living under a dictatorship until 14 January 2011, a date that marked a political and social turning point. Denouncing corruption, a lack of freedoms and the absence of control over the country's resources, people took to the streets and put an end to the 23-year-long rule of the president Ben Ali. As Tunisians were long denied both freedom of expression and freedom of the press, the core questions this chapter tries to answer revolve around the new press freedom status in Tunisia – what has changed since the revolution? What are the main dangers threatening press freedom? And what reforms were enacted in the media to counter those threats?

Press freedom limitations of three different kinds are being discussed: economic limitations, legal limitations, and political limitations. This classification is based on indicators for media independence, the quality of the legislative framework, and journalists' safety.

Background

Closely linked to democracy, freedom of expression and freedom of the press form an indivisible whole. Most of the established democracies tend to benefit from functioning public spheres; spaces for equal, inclusive, rational, and free deliberation. For Habermas, the press is the public sphere's most prominent institution (Calhoun 1992). According to him, deliberation finds its material space in media where engaging in public and critical debate becomes possible. For over 23 years Tunisians could not do this.

Suppressing personal freedoms, Ben Ali's regime had a complete grip over the traditional media and, in more recent years, the Internet. During those years of dictatorship several NGOs, such as Reporters sans Frontières (RSF), Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, repeatedly condemned the multiple human rights violations committed by the Tunisian regime. According to the RSF's Press Freedom Index,

Tunisia's rank kept dropping from 2002 onwards, until in 2010 it reached its lowest ever position: 164th place. The NGO also rated Tunisia an 'Enemy of the Internet' for over five consecutive years (RSF 2010). Many observers were convinced that what lay behind these restrictions was the belief of the regime in the importance of a free media for democracy.

By 2011, the uprising had put an end to Ben Ali's harassment of journalists and finally stopped the massive and systematic Internet filtering. The revolution thus enabled the emergence of a real pluralism of opinion in the media. Those factors helped the country's ranking in RSF's worldwide index to jump by almost 30 places. But due to several reasons, and underscoring the danger of a return to the past, it has been stagnating ever since. It is important then to identify the challenges facing press freedom in Tunisia after the establishment of this new political, economic and social order.

To identify the Tunisian press freedom challenges and categorize them, RSF's indicators were used. It mainly examined pluralism, media independence, the media environment and self-censorship, the legislative framework, transparency, and the quality of the infrastructure that supports the production of news and information.

Methodology

Based on a qualitative methodology, the paper combines a descriptive approach and semi-structured interviews with major actors in media-related fields. The interviewees were selected, not only because of their current positions in governmental and non-governmental media entities, but also because of their status as journalists under the previous regime and their record as strong press freedom proponents. The interview guides were set according to each individual's specialization and essentially aimed to reveal that person's own retrospective evaluation and, most importantly, their future perspectives concerning press freedom.

The document analysed are mainly the current and the recently abandoned laws governing media – the 1975 Press Code, Decree-law 115 and Decree-law 116. The publications of several NGOs (Reporters sans Frontières, Article 19, the Tunis Centre for Press Freedom as well as UNESCO) were utilised and national reports, media releases and press articles were also studied.

The article is based on four semi-structured interviews that I conducted in November 2015. The first two interviews were with Abdelkrim Hizaoui, media regulation professor and former Director of the African Centre for Training of Journalists and Communicators (CAPJC) and Nouri Lajmi, media professor and head of the Independent High Authority for Audiovisual Communication (HAICA). The third interviewee was the current head of the National Tunisian Journalists' Union (SNJT), Neji Bghouri, and the last one was Kamel Laabidi, human rights advocate and former head of the National Authority to Reform Information and Communication (INRIC).

Legal framework

As a guarantee to freedoms in general, laws in the journalistic field, in particular, are essential to press freedom and its fulfilment. The press code that was adopted in 1975, and repealed in 2011, protected the ruling regime against journalists. The code mandated heavy fines and prison sentences for press offences such as attempting to jeopardize State security and public order or causing offence to the head of the state, foreign diplomatic officers, and public figures. As it included many sentences involving loss of liberty and lacked any guarantees for the protection of journalists and their sources, the Press Code of 1975 was considered itself by law specialists to be a repressive piece of legislation, quite apart from its implementation by the dictatorial regime (Chouikha 2015).

After the revolution, reviewing the entire legal framework became a necessity. Talks at the time between government officials and a number of journalists and human rights advocates led to the establishment, in February 2011, of a national authority to reform information and communication – the Instance Nationale pour la Réforme de l'Information et de la Communication (INRIC). The body was granted the power to submit legal proposals about media and communication reform. The INRIC's consultative role, in combination with other joint efforts, led to the drafting of two new laws: The Decree-law 115 (on the Press, Printing and Publishing), and the Decree-law 116 (on the Freedom of Audio-visual Communication and the Creation of a Supreme Independent Body of Audio-visual Communication). Both laws were adopted in November 2011 but implemented only after protracted government dithering and the Tunisian journalists' general strike in October 2012 (see chapter 11).

Whereas the adoption of the decree-law 115 was an important step forward – as it is pluralist, liberal and democratic – some technical errors were made due to the short time frame for preparing the draft.

Most of these shortcomings relate to the regulation of defamation, electronic media, and public advertising. The Decree-law 115 applies to all print media actors and includes electronic media as well. But only two articles of the decree specifically mention electronic media – among the general definition of journalistic work (article 2), 'digitalised work' is included whereas the term electronic media is not mentioned. The seventh article of the decree also states that a person is considered to be a journalist if he or she works for an electronic media outlet. Aside from those two articles, the text does not take into consideration the specificities of electronic media work that operates in a different way than traditional media.

Legal shortcomings

The lack of specified regulations has generated an uncertain state of blurring and numerous professional and ethical abuses in the midst of a significant expansion of the

sector following the post-revolution. The abuses are intended to be overcome through the creation of a Press Council, mentioned in the new press code, and adopted by Parliament (Bghouri 2015). The creation of this independent self-regulation body was set in motion in 2012 and officially launched in 20 April 2017 (SNJT 2017a).

Under the previous regime, defamation was a legislative tool which helped accuse and imprison political dissidents and independent journalists. Within the new legislation defamation is no longer punished by imprisonment, but despite this, journalists, as well as regular citizens, are still facing prison charges in cases of defamation or slander since those provisions are still present in the Penal Code, which is yet to be reviewed (Penal Code 2005, articles 246-248).

Monitoring the aggressions and law suits faced by journalists in Tunisia, the Tunis Centre for Press Freedom CTLP¹ compiled monthly reports from November 2012 until June 2015 (CTLP 2016). Analysis of those 30 reports shows that almost three-quarters of the law suits monitored by the centre concerned journalists accused of defamation and sued in court according to the Penal Code instead of the specific law, decree-law 115. Not making the court refer exclusively to the specific media law in cases of press-related offences is a shortcoming of the law-decree that threatens press freedom. Intimidating journalists with heavy legal actions, and selective use of the law to serve narrow political interests, are old regime practices that might revive if the decree-law is not revised.

Among the numerous ways the previous regime kept control over print media, was the 1975 Press Code articles relating to a 'legal deposit'. This article legally obliged all media owners and publishers to submit every issue of their publication before making it available to the public. This measure was aimed originally at preserving the collective memory and securing the archiving of all national publications. However, having access to the publications before their general release helped censure any unwanted content by denying the publisher the distribution authorization normally granted after the deposit. The same article, obliging media owners to submit their publication prior to publishing, appears in the decree-law 115/2011. Even if, until now, the successive governments that have led Tunisia have not used this power, the very existence of such legal possibility represents a step backwards in the eyes of many observers (Tekiano 2012). For any publication to be subject to prior authorization is against freedom of opinion, expression and thought, although legal deposit is nevertheless important and should be kept as a declarative formality.

In view of these shortcomings, reviewing decree-law 115 became a necessity. The SNJT, with the help of civil society organisations, have been working for over a year on a draft law to replace it, and launched national consultation sessions in different cities. When the consultation is complete, the draft will be submitted to the Assembly of People's Representatives. This phase is important since adopting the law can take over a year, not to mention delays over its effective implementation such as shown by decree-laws 115 and 116 (Bghouri 2015).

Broadcasting regulation

The audio-visual media in Tunisia were an important propaganda tool for the previous regime. Ben Ali did not only use public service media to convey his ideas but controlled the private sector as well. TV and radio broadcasting licences were granted solely to his family members or those who pledged allegiance to his regime.

Broadcasting regulation has been an imperative step forward in guaranteeing expression and the creation of freedom, diversity and plurality in what the media produces, as well as securing access to the means to audio-visual production. The guarantees of broadcasting freedoms in decree-law 116 relate to the nature, definition and composition of an Independent Broadcasting Authority (HAICA), the competence and powers granted to this institution, and its functioning and financial basis. The law decree itself is considered generally acceptable and attains international standards in the nomination of the board members. Members reflect a balanced representation of media scene protagonists and, more importantly, they have political and financial independence (The Civil Coalition for the Defence of Freedom of Expression 2015).

The regulatory body has the power to establish the standards, grant the licences and monitor the programmes but for most protagonists, ‘The real shortcoming lands elsewhere: the HAICA lacks working tools since the Tunisian legal landscape is still in need of a general law on audio-visual media services that relates to the content and broadcasting’ (Hizaoui 2015).

With 50 radio channels and more than ten television stations, including those broadcasting without a licence, the broadcast media landscape has become very competitive at the expense of ethical principles. Interested in high ratings and attracting advertisers, some media owners neglect ethical rules. Often when sanctions are imposed by the HAICA and court appeals fail, anti-regulation campaigns take place – the regulation body is questioned, its sanction is censored in live TV broadcasts and, moreover, its members are verbally abused. One interviewee states:

Regulation is not only about imposing sanctions. The real change must come from journalists and media owners themselves. Thanks to effective consciousness-raising campaigns, they will gain awareness of the dangers of such actions on media content quality and press freedom in general. For journalists to respect ethics is essential, and the day will come when those who won't stick to it will discredit themselves and risk being abandoned by the public (Lajmi 2015).

In order to secure regulation continuity, the newly adopted constitution of January 2014 included an article that relates to the creation of a constitutional Broadcast Communication Commission (ACC) – the first for the country. According to article 127 of the Constitution, ‘The Commission shall oversee the modulation and development of the audio-visual communication sector and seek to guarantee freedoms of expression and the existence of pluralistic and fair media’ (The Constitution 2014).

Aside from this constitutional measure, several stakeholders, including HAICA members, legal experts and representatives of media professionals, have been working on the drafting of a new law to replace decree-law 116/2011. The HAICA and the prime minister's office have produced two different drafts that have yet to be presented to Parliament (La Presse News 2016). Both promise that all the shortcomings have been ironed out and the new law will support a more pluralist media environment, in harmony with the text of the Constitution that guarantees press freedom.

When politics control media

Through the Ministry of Information and the External Communication Agency ATCE, Ben Ali had during his 23 years in power institutionalised media control. The overthrow of the regime brought a flow of freedoms across the Tunisian media and permitted journalists to gain press freedom. Despite these changes, some of the regime's old practices kept going in disguised forms.

The Tunisian media public service, two television stations, nine radio channels and the national news agency, TAP, have always been a governmental service ruled by the government, and most of the time by the President himself. During Ben Ali's rule, the appointment of the directors, chief editors and even some journalists needed presidential approval, and in order to put an end to such undemocratic practices, new legislation introduced measures to ensure an independent, functioning public service media. According to decree-law 116/2011, the Independent High Authority for Audio-visual Communication (HAICA) has a consultative role in the appointment of audio-visual public service media chief executives. For each nomination the executive, which used to have the absolute power to choose names, now needs to get the HAICA's approval.

The two decrees-laws, 115 and 116, were passed by the government before it lost power in the 2011 elections, and when the new, post-election government took over, the legislation remained to be implemented². This legal void in the media field was intentionally maintained, as it permitted the prime minister to make a series of appointments at the top levels of public service media: involving the national radio agency, the national television network, and the chairman of the board of directors for the state-run media institution, Dar Assabah. The Islamist party, Ennahdha, which was now running the country, was also accused of taking advantage of the uncertain legal situation to secretly insert its members and supporters into public media newsrooms and administrations. At first, the INRIC pleaded for the implementation of the two decree-laws, but faced with the unwillingness of the government to consider its recommendations, it stopped all its activities, 'refusing to serve as a front for the government wrongdoings' (INRIC 2012).

With 84 aggressions against journalists reported by the end of the 2012, the Troika-led government³ is considered the worst of all the post revolution periods for press freedom.

Cases of journalists verbally and physically abused reached its highest level between 2012 and 2013 and the country lost several places in the 2013 RSF ranking (RSF 2013).

The three parties leading the country were accused of controlling public media and leading defamatory campaigns against the media to diminish the role of the media and discredit journalists. This tense climate created by the political power harmed journalists who worked in fear of verbal and physical aggression from citizens (Bghouri 2015).

One of the most visible examples of this atmosphere was a sit-in which took place in front of a local public television channel, Wataniya Television. For over 50 days, protestors called for the 'disinfection' of the media, and the results were heinous allegations and threats against journalists, not to mention physical and verbal altercations (Directinfo 2012).

The political turmoil behind the press freedom regression lasted for over two years and partially ended when the Islamic party Ennahdha stepped down in 2013. With the new technocratic government, fears for public media, as well as the pressure-level on journalists and physical aggression against them, progressively decreased. However, intervention in the private media sphere has reached a more dangerous level. The correlation between media and power goes beyond any editorial policies. With no respect for impartial and neutral content, private media owners choose to support one political side rather than the other in order to serve their own interests. Or in the worst-case scenarios, they themselves are members of a political party and use their media organization to convey its ideas (Laabidi 2015).

Nessma TV, a channel launched in 2007, is the perfect example of the correlation between media and power indicated by the number of sanctions imposed on it by the HAICA, mainly for political advertising (HuffPost Tunisie 2014). Its founder Nabil Karoui, originally a businessman in the advertising sector, used the channel's programmes to consolidate Nidaa Tounes as a party and support the serving president, Beji Caid Essebsi, during the 2014 presidential campaign. He officially joined the ruling party, Nidaa Tounes, after its election victory on January 2016.

The Nessma TV case is considered by media observers as an important issue but not the worst. In the words of one commentator: 'A state of blurring has taken over media ownership and needs to be cleared' (Laabidi 2015). Legislation actually obliges every media owner who has obtained a licence to create a website in which detailed information about the company's capital and owners is listed. However, none of the television and radio stations receiving a licence has made this crucial information public (HAICA 2014). Furthermore, investigative work has revealed that this opacity has allowed suspicious media funding and secret cross-media ownership concentration to go on (Mtibaa 2016).

Economic power as a threat to press freedom

Threats to press freedom in Tunisia do not come only from political power, as a lot of journalists suffer from an unstable social and economic situation, also structural

issues within the profession itself are worrisome. For example, from June 2015 until May 2016, there were 300 cases of journalists and media workers not receiving their salary (Mosaique fm 2016a). In the same period, another 65 cases of abusive dismissal were discovered by the SNJT (ibid). This relatively new phenomenon became commonly known as ‘arbitrary dismissal’.

‘Starving journalists into submission’ read a banner raised by 22 journalists working for the Attounissia newspaper who went on strike on May 2016⁴ (Mosaique fm 2016b). Another owner – the owner of the Aldhamir newspaper – also practiced arbitrary dismissal⁵ (Kapitalis 2016). To help overcome the crisis the Tunisian Federation of Newspaper Directors (FTDJ) is calling for the creation of a press council. Whereas the main role of this self-regulation body will be to promote respect for journalistic ethics, media owners want the same independent body to govern the whole field of journalism.

The print media sector is facing an important crisis but journalists working in both audio-visual and electronic media are also facing a precarious situation. During the last two years, journalists working for two major private television stations, Hannibal TV and Elhiwar Ettounsi, as well as the third-ranked radio station Shems fm (Directinfo 2017), went on multiple strikes for social and economic demands. A case of arbitrary dismissal was also witnessed at the radio station Kelma fm (Directinfo 2016). After an investigation revealing the undercover funding of the channel by the president of a political party, the regulatory body HAICA authorized the National Broadcasting Authority, ONT, to stop providing transmission services (HAICA 2016).

The example of Kelma fm confirms the complexity of the issue. It simultaneously involves misrepresentation by journalists of themselves and their rights, and exploitation and abuse by media owners. The latter are mostly businessmen who lack any journalistic background and are taking advantage of an unclear economic and legal framework in the media to pursue their own agendas. The interviewee Lajmi states:

A private media outlet is an economic institution which aims to make profits, journalists are contract workers who should defend their interests and stand for their rights as employees. The journalists who accept to work without regular contracts and social assurances are ultimately subject to exploitation and misleading (Lajmi 2015).

This precarious situation for journalists has been a growing issue and represents, to observers, one of the many obstacles to the fulfilment of press freedom in Tunisia. One remarks: ‘Media lobbying is a prominent danger; a lot of efforts have been made and others are still yet to come, but facing the complex combination of media with financial and political power won’t be easy’ (Laabidi 2015).

Access to information for a free press

Until recently, the only existing legislation relating to access to information in Tunisia was the decree-law 2011-41, enacted in March 2011 by interim President Foued Me-

bazaâ, and the decree-law 2011-54 of June 2011, which amended and supplemented it. Back in 2011, the enacting of this decree-law represented a big step towards the achievement of government transparency. However, its essential deficiencies, such as a limited definition of information, procedures requiring improvement, and a need for bodies to provide important information, have subsequently been highlighted by civil society on both the national and international stage (Article 19, 2011).

As the new constitution promulgated in January 2014 guaranteed access to information (in its second chapter ‘rights and freedoms’), a new law had to follow. The government, led by Habib Essid from February 2015 to August 2016, proposed a draft to Parliament but, after almost a year of discussions and amendments, the same government withdrew the draft law without explanation. Local and international civil society organisations, such as the local bureau of RSF, Article 19 and Al Bawsla⁶, led a campaign against the controversial law review entitled ‘freedom of press and information hanging by a thread’ (RSF 2015). The law was finally adopted in March 2016 – law 2016-22, dated 24 March 2016 – but free information is still under threat. While efforts to establish the Access to Information Commission responsible for the enforcement of the Access to Information law are on the verge of completion, executive power is putting this right at risk once again (SNJT 2017b).

As an example, the head of the new coalition government, in office since August 2016, Youssef Chahed, issued a circular that obliges civil servants to refrain from

... making statements or interventions, or disclosing official information or documents in the press or by any other means, related to their functions or to the public structures they work for without the preliminary and explicit authorization of their hierarchy or the managers of structures employing them (Circular 2017).

Once again, civil society mobilized and called for the immediate withdrawal of the circular. Set under pressure, the government is likely to review the circular (Hakae-konline 2017). As Bghouri states,

The vigilance of civil society, its free actions and campaigns is the first guarantee to press freedom, the negotiations over law drafts its adoption and implementations as well as the executive decisions became close to a democratic tradition and this makes me hopeful about the future of press freedom in Tunisia (Bghouri 2015).

Conclusion

To identify specific press freedom limitations in Tunisia, this study took a closer look at certain important factors. The factors discussed were the economic, legal, and political situation in Tunisia.

To some extent, the different factors intermingle. Some of the laws – shortcomings aside – could have helped to clear the situation if they had been implemented, but the political will was missing. Thus, to distinguish between legal and political shortcomings

is quite hard; suffice it to say that theory is one thing, practice another. In addition to this, the economic threats are not restricted to the exploitative treatment of journalists but also include the problem of businessmen controlling the media in order to exert leverage on the political scene. ‘Follow the money’, is an old advice. Media is business and therefore closely entangled with the political sphere – in Tunisia as in the rest of the world.

Nevertheless, compared to the blackout imposed by the dictatorship regime, Tunisia has made important strides forward. But the mere acceptance of democratic rules does not guarantee a positive evolution, and a vigilant eye needs to be kept in order not to risk the progresses that have been made. This is a role undertaken by civil society in the form of NGOs, associations and various professional bodies, because as long as democracy is not firmly established, freedom of the press is still in the balance.

Notes

1. The CTLP Tunis Centre for Press Freedom is a non-governmental organization established in 2011 by a group of individual journalists which aims to observe the violations of press freedom, participate in the legislative reform of the media sector as well as strengthen young journalists' ethical abilities.
2. The Islamic party, Ennahdha, won the first democratic elections in Tunisia that took place on 23 October 2011.
3. The Troika government was composed of the three victorious parties in the 2011 elections: Ennahdha, the Congress for the Republic (CPR) and the Democratic Forum for Labour and Liberties (FDTL).
4. The newspaper owner did not pay the employees for four months, then simply closed the paper without any advance notice.
5. Eighteen journalists were dismissed from the newspaper Aldhamir.
6. Al Bawsla is a non-profit NGO established under Tunisian law whose objectives are to offer Tunisian citizens updates on the elected representatives and build relationships with elected representatives and decision-makers in order to work towards the establishment of good governance practices and political ethics.

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Chapter 9

When Caricature Meets Resistance

Eva Beate Strømsted

Self-censorship? Yes. There wasn't much of it before, but today it [the satire] is drenched in self-censorship. I feel it affects almost everything I draw now. Earlier I just made a drawing with my opinion, and it got published. But now I think: 'Okay, if I make it this way, it will not get published.' Eventually I make a drawing that will be accepted (Cartoonist 3).

According to Freedberg (1991), humans have always worshiped and feared images, giving pictures powerful and magical influence, ruining and censoring them. With regards to the art of cartoons, its aesthetics have been seen as a strong political weapon. It is especially within the last decade's dramatic developments that the thoughts of the Norwegian cartoonist in the above quote must be located.

In Paris 7 January 2015, two Islamists, Saïd and Chérif Kouachi, connected to Al-Qaida's branch in Yemen, forced their way into the office of the French satirical magazine Charlie Hebdo. Armed with assault rifles and other weapons, they killed 12 people and injured 11 others, all because of Charlie Hebdo's drawings of Muhammad (Samuelsen 2015).

However, the magazine has always published cartoons insulting whomever, often in a completely disrespectful manner, and the assassinations at Charlie Hebdo must be seen as an extension of the cartoon controversy that started ten years earlier.

In 2005, Flemming Rose, the culture editor of the Danish newspaper, *Jyllands-Posten*, wanted to contribute to the debate about criticism of Islam and self-censorship among European artists. Hence, on 30 September 2005, 12 cartoons of the Prophet were published under the title 'Muhammad's face' and the drawings were later republished as facsimiles in several Norwegian and international publications. Muslim groups in Denmark complained and the issue eventually led, the following year, to emergency meetings, trade boycotts, violent demonstrations, death threats, terror, the burning of flags and destruction of embassies all over the world in 2006 (CNN 2006). Furthermore, the publication incited a murder attempt against the Danish artist Kurt Westergaard.

Strømsted, Eva Beate (2017). When Caricature Meets Resistance p. 121-135 in Elsebeth Frey, Mofizur Rhaman and Hamida El Bour (eds.) *Negotiating Journalism. Core Values and Cultural Diversities*. Göteborg: Nordicom.

A Somali man, with ties to Al-Qaida, tried to murder the then 75-year-old cartoonist with an axe and a knife (Batty 2010).

By looking into the working situation of seven editorial cartoonists in Norway, this study will establish a greater understanding of how the last decade's uproar has affected cartoonists' freedom of speech. Has the editorial cartoonists' freedom of expression been curtailed? Do cartoonists indulge in self-censorship? To what extent do they consider ethical dilemmas in their images? Have their choices with regard to visual expression changed?

The history of the caricature – the conflict is spreading

If we look back in time, we can see that satire has never been gentle. The task has always been to ridicule and taunt. Christians in Norway have been particularly tested by many controversial blasphemous drawings against their clergy, which have made people furious.

During the interwar-period – when we had totalitarian movements in Europe such as Nazism, Fascism and Communism – satire transformed into a strong and provocative propaganda tool and a watchdog in the society. Kjus and Kaare (2006:20) suggest that cartoons may turn into propaganda because they outline the cultural identity and attitudes that exist in a society in a humorous way, sometimes too aggressively. A good example is the well-known Norwegian cartoonist, Ragnvald Blix, and his anti-Nazi drawings during the 20th century. When the Germans occupied Norway in 1940, he fled to Sweden so that his sharp critique could survive. Over the border he continued to draw under the pseudonym Stig Höök. However, the Nazis also used the power of the image to foster contempt against the Jews (Hansen 1986:xiii). In anti-Semitic propaganda, for instance, Jews have been likened to the Devil (Vogt 1978:16).

Due to a globalized world, Western cartoonists are now challenging the multicultural society and another religion – Islam. However, Islam and Judaism have a strong tradition of aniconism, as it is prohibited in most Islamic traditions to visually depict Muhammad. In the Exodus one can read:

You shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make for yourself an image in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. You shall not bow down to them or worship them (Moses 20:3-5).

In Islam the belief is most strongly held by the Sunnis, who form the great majority of the world's Muslims, whereas the image ban is debatable among the Shias (Steien 2007:11). Nevertheless, what made the editorial act in 2005 so provocative is the fact that the 12 cartoons were used as propaganda by a group of Danish imams. The imams travelled around the Middle East showing the cartoons and, in addition to this, presented non-published controversial pictures, among them a photograph from a French pig festival (ibid:3).

Since 2005 satire has been confronted even more forcefully. Known to poke fun at all kinds of authorities, Charlie Hebdo has received several threats. In 2013, for instance, the magazine published a special edition with 64 pages dedicated to Muhammad's life, provoking very strong reactions. In 2015 the reactions reached their peak resulting in 12 deaths. One month later gunmen tried to hit the Swedish artist, Lars Vilks, with an estimated 200 gunshots for caricaturing prophet Muhammad. The terror attack happened during a blasphemy debate at a café in Copenhagen (Johnston 2015). The freedom of expression was again attacked in May of the same year, this time in Texas in the USA. Also here, shots were fired during an event featuring controversial cartoons of the Prophet Muhammad. The shooting suspect, identified as Elton Simpson, linked himself to ISIS just before the attack (Shoichet 2015).

Art and a journalistic genre

Annibale Carracci established the term 'caricatura' during the 16th century. The Italian painter was particularly known for his humorous and exaggerated caricatures that contrasted with contemporary idealism. To caricature therefore means to exaggerate what is characteristic (Lien 2015:9ff).

Seen as art, the expression also encompasses another field, journalism (Becker 2008:123), and according to Frey and Gjerstad (2006), it is a visual comment. Text has a criticizing power, but Borgersen and Ellingsen emphasize that it is easier to remember an image (2004:138). Drawers have also a greater editorial freedom and have been considered the press' freest pen. An explanation to this may be that the visual language has multiple interpretations (Frey & Gjerstad 2006).

Yet, both cartoonists and journalists need to follow several constraints that set out limitations and develop genres – the Code of Ethics of the Norwegian Press, the Penal Code, as well as the declaration of the rights and duties of the editor. Journalists' bosses – the editors – have a particular role in guarding press freedom within the framework of this declaration. The declaration, which establishes and defends editorial independence from interference by the owners, is jointly signed by the Association of Norwegian Editors, Norsk Redaktørforening (NR) and the owners, Mediebedriftene.

There is little research around the visual aspect of satire. The caricature has mainly been considered an important piece of source material for journalists and historians. One of the reasons is probably because caricature has been viewed as innocent fun (Lien 2015:30ff). However, the last decade's bloody outcomes contradict this view, and have resulted in an increased interest in the art form itself.

Ingebretsen (2008) studied caricature's visual communication through cognitive metaphor theory, by examining satires. Comparing the visual communication with the written language, she used the pictorial and plastic layers to describe the meaning of metaphors. The first layer emphasizes what items the recipient sees on the surface of the image. The second layer, the plastic, examines the underlying meaning through

shapes, colours and textures (ibid:65). Here, the distinction between pictorial and plastic layers will be applied in an analysis of two cartoons made by one of the interviewees.

Fabricius and Roksvold (2010:86) clarify that a metaphor is a figure of speech which makes an implicit connection between two things that are unrelated but share common characteristics. Cognitive metaphor theory has gradually been applied to a variety of fields – poetry, linguistics and music, as well as sign language for the deaf.

Regulations

Norway has several constraints that render the concept of free opinion and press freedom less than absolute. The Norwegian Penal Code (2015) justifies a limitation with regard to several actions that may be considered offensive or infringing.

Firstly, the Penal Code prohibits the insulting of another state's flag, coat of arms, or representation in Norway (1995 § 95). Secondly, it is forbidden to make hateful and discriminatory statements, especially about other peoples' religion, skin colour and sex. This also includes the use of symbols (2013 § 135a). The so-called racism article, § 135a, is especially controversial since it involves a restriction on freedom of expression. Moreover, it is prohibited to defame (1939 § 246), harm others' reputation or name (1980 § 247), violate their privacy or public announcements (1973 § 390) or behave in an offensive or frightening manner (2003 § 390a).

Internationally, legislation against blasphemy has continued to restrict freedom of expression and press freedom over the past six years. As of 2011, 47 per cent of countries issued such laws (UNESCO 2014:31). However, the assassination at Charlie Hebdo prompted Norwegian politicians to act immediately. Consequently, with the aim to strengthen freedom of expression as soon as possible the supreme legislature of Norway, Stortinget, annulled the blasphemy article on 5 May 2015 (Verdens Gang 2015).

Methodology

The following is based on research conducted in Norway. Seven cartoonists representing national, local, and regional newspapers in Norway were asked the same pre-defined questions during face-to-face qualitative interviews. This method makes it possible to compare and generalize (Østbye et al. 2013:105). The interviews covered the editorial cartoonists' freedom of expression, press freedom, visual changes within their body of work, self-censorship, fear of violence and terror, satire's thematic development, taboos, stereotypes and the profession's prospects.

Moreover, it was important to interview Kjersti Løken Stavrum, at the time Secretary General of the Norwegian Press Association, Norsk Presseforbund (NP). The organisation is responsible for monitoring the ethical work of the Norwegian press. While Stavrum is presented in the research by name, the cartoonists' answers are

anonymous due to security reasons. The interviews will be presented in a thematic order and the interviewees are numbered 1 to 7 (the Norwegian cartoonists have been given number 1 to 5, and the international cartoonists have been numbered 6 to 7). The two international cartoonists, originally from societies ruled by dictatorships, were also asked: How free were you as an editorial cartoonist in your homeland comparing to Norway? Have you received any reactions or threats in Norway? By examining the themes above, this research looks deeper into the nature of freedom of expression in Norway and its development since 2005.

In order to examine the visual development, two drawings made by the same cartoonist will be compared: one before (2005) and one after (2009) the cartoon controversy. The aim will be to look at the narratives and metaphors, visual choices in terms of visual rhetoric, colours, symbols and patterns. Trends and changes will be studied through a comparative discourse and a qualitative content analysis – methods that allow the underlying meanings to be identified (Østbye et al.:211).

Nonetheless, the case study has some disadvantages. As only two drawings are examined, the result may not be scientifically durable. Additionally, it is difficult to make an entirely objective comparison and the answer may also be accidental or contingent on different factors.

What do the Norwegian cartoonists think?

All of the Norwegian cartoonists say that the cartoon controversy in 2005/2006 has made the profession more difficult. One of them says: ‘It is an indisputable fact that freedom of expression has been restricted since 2006. Caricature has become more controversial and difficult’ (Cartoonist 4). Interviewee 3 feels scared that his freedom of expression has been violated: ‘Ten years ago I was 99 per cent free and I could draw whatever I wanted. Today I do not feel free anymore and I think that it is scary and totally freaking’ (Cartoonist 3). The five editorial cartoonists point out that the human right to free expression does not exist in reality – just on paper. Four interviewees outline political correctness as the primary reason for the restriction. One cartoonist thinks that the reason is ‘fear of violence’ (Cartoonist 4).

Whereas four out of five do not feel threatened by extremists, one says he has to be careful when he walks alone in the city: ‘Today I have to be cautious where I go. One should not be afraid, but it is going to become worse in a few years. It is the damn political correctness that curtails freedom of expression’ (Cartoonist 3). These findings can be parallelized to another profession, namely journalists. In 2012, 20 per cent of the Norwegian journalists claimed they had been exposed to threats over the previous five years, and two per cent had experienced physical violence (Idås 2013:39f). In 2015, a report by the Work Research Institute (AFI) showed that incidents of hate speech and threats have increased. More precisely, it reports that one out of five people working in the Norwegian media feels suppressed today (Gjestad 2015).

One of the main questions in the semi-structured interviews was: 'Have you ever self-censored yourself?' Four out of five give affirmative answers – they have. Interviewee 2 explains that freedom of expression has mostly been restricted due to self-censorship, as the legislation has substantially been equal and untouched, sometimes even strengthened: 'Personally, I apply self-censorship every day within every theme, because I may be tempted to exceed the boundaries' (Cartoonist 2).

One of the interviewees mentions that editors have become more politically correct: 'A drawing that may be offensive may not be published in the newspaper. But a drawing that is politically correct – it may be published. It is scary that people has the power to tell us how to think' (Cartoonist 3). This development, says another, has made him draw more intellectual puzzles, allowing him to get away with the message without provoking the editors (Cartoonist 5). However, several editorial cartoonists say that their editors give them freedom to decide the visual appearance of the caricature. The themes, on the other hand, are directed by editorial choices and the commentators' texts. Yet, in some newspapers, a caricature may be published without a text as an independent visual comment. As the work of an artist, the cartoon may then be seen as emblematic of cartoonists' individual freedom and responsibility to challenge social conventions (Becker 2008:123).

Norwegian cartoonists traditionally visualized people and situations in their own country with political actors mainly in the centre (Berntsen 1999:73). Today, several interviewees say that satire has a major focus towards *religion*. 'At the start of my career it was not a very interesting topic, but it did not take long before it gained more importance' (Cartoonist 1). The same drawer adds that before globalization, editorial drawings focused more on internal politics, the USA and the Soviet Union. Interviewee 2 agrees about this change: 'The focus *has* increased, and I do therefore draw more religious drawings today than ever before' (Cartoonist 2). Another adds that it is relevant in light of the frequent provocation of religion: 'Because we are constantly being confronted with it – Muslims have their own culture and they do not want to integrate with the Norwegian society' (Cartoonist 4).

Four out of the five Norwegian cartoonists state that they have no problem sketching Islam-related drawings, but all of them agree that this topic requires extreme precision. One says: 'You must know how these drawings will be perceived. It is almost impossible to imagine that an image can have so much power', and then adds:

Today I spend less time on the actual execution of the drawing and more time on updating myself. I do not have time to read novels anymore, but choose to rather read the history of religion and the history of culture. The level of difficulty has increased (Cartoonist 2.).

Then what about stereotypes? Previously, journalists and editorial cartoonists used stereotypes to produce cultural viewpoints. As stated by Steien, these were characterized by the old colonial heritage due to geographical distances (2007:21f). All five interviewees state that what worked before, does not work today. The same goes for taboos.

The Norwegian cartoonists mention that there are still taboos about drawings that challenge political correctness, ethnicity, cultural background, women and vulnerable groups. It is constantly mentioned that the Norwegian cartoonists are careful about the way they draw Jewish caricatures and Holocaust-elements. They are concerned about addressing these topics as the persecution of Jews as a social and religious group has a century-long history.

Also, a drawing of Muhammad is a huge taboo today. Nevertheless, for the Norwegian cartoonists it has never been an ambition to draw the Prophet. They do not want to offend, insult or hurt someone intentionally: 'I have no desire to vilify other people's religious feelings and I have never done it' (Cartoonist 2).

The risk and fear of being misunderstood is higher than ever before, and four out of the five state that they often think about the details that can be misinterpreted in a drawing. In all of the five Norwegian interviewees' opinion, today's multicultural society makes their work situation more challenging. One recalls when Theo van Gogh¹ was murdered: 'During that moment, I understood that I "talk" to people who may not agree with me and my worldview' (Cartoonist 1). After the murder in 2004, interviewee 1 started to draw common experiences and feelings so that people with other backgrounds could understand the work. Another interviewee is not concerned about being misunderstood. He believes that people must have the freedom to interpret his work just as they wish, asserting that this leeway will make him less responsible (Cartoonist 5).

Additionally, several cartoonists express concern about the Internet and its possibility to spread drawings across the whole world, setting their cartoons out of context. In recent years, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and other channels have exploded the borders. The former Prime Minister of Norway, Jens Stoltenberg, once said: 'Every word said is spreading to all corners of the world with the speed of the light' (Kokkvold 2006:14). But this also applies to the image, making the interviewees concerned. One of them states: 'When you have an audience that includes the whole world, the possibility of misunderstanding and provocation is much bigger' (Cartoonist 1).

In Norway – are we free now?

The following is based on answers from two interviewees with international backgrounds, numbered 6 and 7. Do they feel freer in Norway? The interviewees explain that they are far more independent in Norway than they were in their own home countries. The Norwegian readers have never reacted strongly or threateningly on their drawings. One interviewee (Cartoonist 7) believes that the explanation lies in his choice of themes – human rights and war. These topics do not harm others, he says.

However, they also cannot draw quite as freely as they did when they first arrived in Norway, as freedom of expression and press freedom have decreased during the last years. One of them says: 'We thought that Europe was different and safer, but the problem has arisen everywhere in the world' (Cartoonist 7). They believe the reason

is partly due to extremism and self-censorship. Both outline several topics one has to be careful with in Norway: women, Jews, and holy people as the Prophet and Jesus. In other words, the same topics as those their Norwegian colleagues mention. According to UNESCO, the world has seen ‘an increase of intolerance for opinions or factual reporting deemed by some to offend religion or morality’ (2014:31), thus raising challenges for journalists’ and editorial cartoonists’ press freedom and safety.

Cartoonist 6 is upset when explaining that freedom of expression became more restricted directly after the terror attack on Charlie Hebdo in 2015. Now he strictly regulates his drawings through self-censorship, especially concerning the topic of *religion*:

I have made many drawings, which have criticized Islam before, as Islam has many aspects that I disagree about. I published these drawings on my website. But after the Charlie Hebdo terror, I have made such drawings private. If anyone wants to see them, one must have access to the password (Cartoonist 6).

The above interviewee claims that his new stance is not due to fear, but to carefulness. As with their Norwegian colleagues, both interviewees now refrain from drawing Muhammad. Interviewees 6 and 7 have also become more conscious of how they execute a drawing: ‘Before I used a lot of text and speech bubbles. Today I have started to make more simple drawings that are easier to understand’ (Cartoonist 7).

The visual development

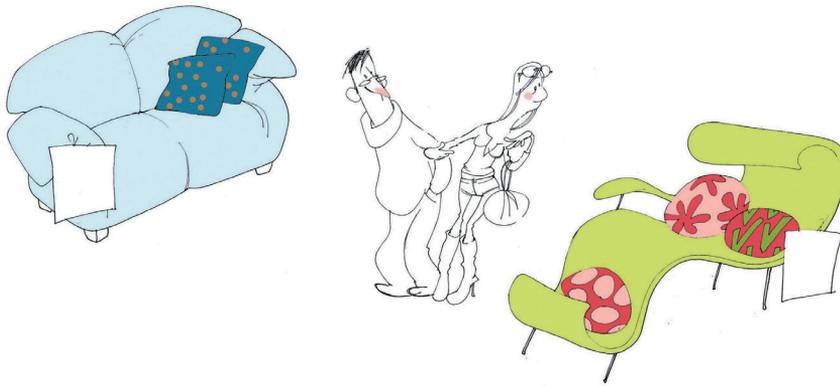
The majority of the editorial cartoonists state that their contemporary cartoons are stylistically similar to the ones made before the cartoon controversy. But has the uproar affected other visual choices? In this part, two drawings made before and after the controversy in 2005/2006, will be analysed.

The drawing of the couple from 2005 (picture 1), as well as the child scene from 2009 (picture 2), are both figurative. Both have motives made of shapes or other concrete items. The line is single and dominant and the colours have similar nuances. If we analyse drawing 1 through the pictorial layer, we can see a young lady with a slightly older conservative man. They wander past a stout blue sofa and a modern green and red chair. However, through the plastic layer we understand that the elements conceal several codes, representing the general election in Norway, which took place in September 2005. Conclusively, the caricature does not evoke feelings (pathos) through a narrative story, but is more based on the rhetorical appeal form – *logos* built on facts, logic and reasons. Ergo, one must know the society and facts about this election to understand the cartoon. *Logos* and *pathos* are two of the three rhetorical appeal forms, where rhetoric means the art of oratory (Fabricius & Roksvold 2010:11). It is also important in the visual utterance.

For instance, the colours, patterns and the two characters represent political ideologies. In the Norwegian context, blue is the colour of conservative parties, red

means socialism, whereas green represents liberalism and environmental politics. Thus, through the plastic content, the old blue couch is a symbol of the conservative-liberal politics of the Conservative Party (H) and the Progress Party (FrP). The modern green chair, on the other hand, symbolizes innovation and the social democracy of the red-green alliance in Norway – one of the pillows has a pattern that symbolizes the Norwegian Socialist Left Party (SV), one of the three parties in that alliance. The two other parties are the Labour Party (Ap) and the Centre Party (Sp).

The fact that the woman is leaning forwards indicates that the red-green coalition has a leading position in the election. Furthermore, there are two price tags. They indicate that people cannot be sure they will get what they are voting for. Ingebretsen points out that interpretations happen through cognitive linguistics, aimed at sensing specific acknowledgment (ibid:51). It is a form of parallelism within the rhetorical tool 'simile', which means comparison (2008:100f).



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Picture 1. Caricature published in 2005

Four years later, i.e. three years after the cartoon controversy, the same cartoonist drew another caricature. The drawing (picture 2) was published with a comment about climate change and evokes a human drama. In contrast with drawing 1, this caricature contains emotional metaphors that tell a story (pathos).

However, the logical patterns (logos) are also a part of this caricature, but only if seen with the political text. Through the scene, the cartoonist tries to illustrate the world's leaders who struggle to successfully negotiate about climate change, blaming each other, rather than acting efficiently to bring about changes for a better environment.

Meanwhile, we see a child, who represents future generations. What will happen in the future? Since this is one of the major questions in the inflamed debate, the child is in the foreground of the drawing. The colours are essential, as they represent the plastic metaphors. Black characterizes the forces of darkness, the underworld, sorrow, misfortune and death, whereas white expresses innocence, purity and helplessness. Orange, finally, is the colour of fire, and indicates peoples' striving to achieve pleasure



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Picture 2. Caricature published in 2009

(Bruce-Mitford 2009:281ff). Moreover, fire evokes the flames of hell that our planet is literally on fire – the temperature increases and this causes severe destructive changes.

Comparing the two cartoons shows that a slight visual change may have emerged. Whereas both contain clear lines, many metaphors, elements and symbols, the choices and the way they are composed seem to have changed. To clarify, the first drawing conceals many hidden codes that require knowledge and political interest within Norwegian society. The second drawing, on the contrary, may be easier to understand in a multicultural society. It incorporates fewer codes and puzzles, and since it is based on mutual human experiences it relies less on a specific cultural understanding.

The development may be explained by several factors. One of the major components is most likely the cartoon controversy of 2005/2006, as many editorial cartoonists suddenly realized how much power they operated with.

A delicate act of balancing: stereotypes within a multicultural society

The concepts of freedom of expression and press freedom are essential pillars in the European democratic tradition. Their premise is: contradict and criticize what you want within the developed framework of the society. But where does the actual limit between infringement and freedom of expression reside? How much freedom does actually exist? A cartoonist is in the middle of this dilemma:

Once I received a letter from an exhibitor. It was something like: ‘You are not going to exhibit drawings that may offend those who are offended by that kind [of drawing]’. But this is impossible! I do not know what people perceive as offensive – it may

be everything. What should I draw then? Kitties?! There will certainly be someone who does not like that either. It has become completely hopeless (Cartoonist 1).

A report from UNESCO (2014:14) asserts that 'press freedom and safety are recognized as being an integral part of the wider landscape of freedom of expression and media development'. But the cartoon controversy and Charlie Hebdo attack demonstrated that it costs to convey opinions, express oneself and test the limits. It is understandable that a caricature – with its symbols, metaphors, codes and exaggeration – can be comprehended as a manipulation of people's beliefs, attitudes and actions. The caricature's power is well engrained in its technique, conveying a sense of urgency, contrast and dynamism (Becker 2008:123). Eisner (1996:27) also believes drawings can become sincerely overwhelming, as artists usually have more time to form the message. However, a cartoonist does not have much time to complete his work. People within the profession of satire do not operate as artists, but rather as journalists who have to abide by deadlines.

What is politically correct is a vital question within the freedom of speech debate and its restrictions. In Norway, the term, 'political correctness' is perhaps more relevant in debates within immigration and integration policies, but it has also, as a result of globalization, loomed large within the profession of cartoonist.

In 2007, there were about 6 per cent non-Western immigrants in Norway (Steien 2007:7). In 2016 the number had doubled to 12 per cent, according to Statistics Norway (Statistisk sentralbyrå 2016). Undoubtedly, this is a challenge for a cartoonist, as every satire relies on stereotypes, prejudices and generalizations. Hansen says that the aim of stereotypes is to play with familiar concepts (1986:xi). However, many stereotypes are not usable anymore – cartoonists are afraid of being offensive against other cultures whose inhabitants now live in Norway. Interviewee 4 exemplifies that several stereotypes from the 50s do not work today:

You could say that the Norwegian cartoonists' perception of an African during the 50s would be considered offensive today. It probably was during that time as well, but it was not relevant because it was so far away (Cartoonist 4).

Contemporary satire using old stereotypes may be perceived as propaganda or a form of racism in a globalized world (Eisner 1996:17). Nevertheless, the old stereotypes and taboos are learned by heart, sometimes challenging cartoonists during short deadlines:

It was ten minutes to deadline and I was extremely tired. To finish the little Somali girl, I drew a hijab, and filled the girl all black in Photoshop. On the following day I thought: 'Jesus!' The girl was not only black and with a hijab, but she had also a too big mouth. I was a fool ... Suddenly she looked like one from the dumbest cartoons from the 30s (Cartoonist 1).

Becker asserts that there are many things one can learn from the cartoon controversy. One of them, she claims, is that 'there are very different image cultures, where we find visual representations integrated into traditions and systems of belief in ways that carry different meaning' (2008:117). The aim of cartoons is to embody cultural

identities and attitudes that exists in a humoristic way (Kjus & Kaare 2006:20), and this humour may sometimes come across as too aggressive. For many Western people it can be difficult to understand that the Danish cartoons' satirical line might have been offensive. However, drawing them was risky, as many people in Muslim countries viewed them as Western propaganda.

Art that follows editorial ethical rules

Caricature discursively moves between art and journalism – ‘as a form of self-expression by an individual artist, while simultaneously framed within the institutional norms of editorial opinion in the press’ (Becker 2008:123). Yet, Frey and Gjerstad (2006) report that the visual comment tends to have more freedom than the written one because satire embodies a personal statement that can be interpreted differently. Also Cohn points out that while language must follow a grammatically correct structure, there are no rules dictating how an image must be structured (2012:5f).

Indeed, seen as separate drawings, cartoons could be interpreted as a form of individual critique of power structures and social conventions. Everyone has the right to express themselves through pictures, text, drawings and words. The minefield, however, occurs when satire is published in the newspaper, as one must take responsibility for a publication. Quickly, it obtains a journalistic form and is expected by society to embrace the newspaper's editorial position, ethics and norms. If the ethics within a drawing are not followed, the satire can be reported to the Norwegian Press Complaints Commission (PFU), a complaint commission of the Norwegian Press Association (NP). In that case, the caricature will be evaluated according to the journalists' Code of Ethics. If the commission upholds the complaint, the media organization which published the drawing, is required to publicly issue PFU's verdict. Of course, many media organizations perceive such judgements to be harmful to their organization's reputation. In cases such as these, the guidelines' point 4.3 will be particularly relevant: ‘Show respect for human individuality, privacy, race and belief’ (Norsk Presseforbund 2015).

One interviewee says complains to the Press Complaints Commission never involve cartoonists ‘because it represents humour and it is so difficult to frame it judicially. Legislation and free art do not mix together’ (Cartoonist 2). However, in 2006, when Finn Graff caricatured Israel's Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, complaints were raised to the Commission. In the drawing, Olmert was depicted as smiling, shirtless and with a machine gun in his hand. The drawing clearly referred to a scene in the movie *Schindler's List*, comparing the Israel-Palestinian conflict to the Jewish situation during the Holocaust.

Interestingly enough, the Commission's decision was not in favour to the complainant – Israel's ambassador in Norway. Instead the committee emphasized that satire's art form must have wide limits: ‘Satire, as part of freedom of expression, must be able to hurt and offend’, former Secretary General Stavrum underlined (Norsk Presseforbund 2006).

However, today's great willingness to misunderstand may open up a new discussion on whether we should limit the editorial cartoonist's freedom of expression through laws or not. Stavrum does not underestimate the gravity of punishing the media outlet that publishes an offending caricature, nor does she endorse a major constraint within the genre. She thinks that if major constraints on humour become acceptable in Norway, it may turn into censorship of peoples' subjective tastes (2015).

Another option may be to erase the whole § 135a (2013) from The Norwegian Penal Code. Then no speech would be legally considered discriminatory or offensive because the legislation would be perceived as fairer. The article is already under debate in Norway as it restricts freedom of expression, and few people have actually been convicted of violating the law.²

Conclusion

Although freedom of expression and press freedom constitutes one of Norway's core values, they are not absolute; the Norwegian press has acknowledged that journalists have the power to make individuals suffer through public exposure and also that editorial cartoonists may inflict harm.

The working situation of the seven editorial cartoonists' in Norway demonstrates a tangible change over the last decade. The transformation is as much a result of developments globally as it is of transformation in European societies, and can be seen as a consequence of the most recent terror attacks and controversies initiated by drawings. Undoubtedly, it was easier for the Norwegian cartoonists to express themselves before the Internet and, in a homogeneous society, before immigration from non-Western countries started in the 1970s. Forty years later, extremism and fear of being misunderstood in a globalized world, have built high walls. Among other things, national and international cartoonists in Norway do not discount that terror could also happen in our country. As a result, they have started to limit their freedom of expression by self-censorship.

Furthermore, the reporting depicted in this study, illustrates that press freedom is also in danger. Because of globalization and multiculturalism, the focus on religion as a topic is now increasing considerably. Consequently it is challenging the old stereotypes and taboos that earlier made fun of other nations. Some editors feel negatively influenced by political correctness and, in some circumstances, censor drawings that do not conform to society's political views. Editorial cartoonists also report they are strongly affected by political correctness, which has limited their visual choices. Nevertheless, public censorship is not a common practice, and most of the cartoonists in Norway are still deciding the visual appearance freely without interference by their publishing supervisors.

On the other hand, cartoonists have become more afraid of being offensive. The controversy and multiple terror attacks initiated by drawings have made them realize

that caricature has reached a new level of power. Therefore, they often censor themselves by strongly mulling over ethical dilemmas. Nevertheless, the press' freest pen has still a wide range of visual possibilities and it almost never happens that the PFU upholds the complaints against caricatures. The complaint commission maintains that satire's humour must have a wide acceptance in Norway in order to secure the safety of public expression.

While the majority of the seven editorial cartoonists state that their contemporary caricatures are stylistically similar to the ones they made before the cartoon controversy in 2005/2006, a nuanced worldview has forced them to strive for more precision when choosing visual elements. According to the interviewees, the situation is challenging as it is marked by a high level of misconception. Many have therefore become more aware, cautious and thoughtful, and do not draw without knowing the codes and references that require special knowledge.

Note

1. Theodore van Gogh was a Dutch film director who was murdered after having criticised the treatment of women in Islam.
2. Since 1997, only three cases concerning racism have ended up in the Supreme Court, and only two people have been sentenced.

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Freedom of Expression in Bangladesh in the Context of Bloggers' Killings

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The right to freedom of expression is recognized by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and an apparent value in most democratic countries. Freedom of expression is also a key to *achieving* democracy. Mass media and other media – be they social, traditional, mainstream or new – are considered the main ways to practice this freedom. Nowadays social media and the Internet blogging platforms are popular all over the world. Anybody can connect anywhere and instantly access information as frequently as they desire.

Although freedom of expression is recognized by the Constitution of Bangladesh (Government of Bangladesh 1972), its actual presence has never been firmly established, and the country has been ruled by military regimes several times (Riaz 2012). It was only after 1991 that Bangladesh started electing its government.

In recent years, however, the country has witnessed several killing incidents, including the murder of five bloggers/publishers for expressing and sharing their standpoints about religious dogmas. From the very beginning of the Shahbag Movement in 2013, the killing of bloggers has been a big concern for Bangladesh.

On 15 February 2013, a blogger named Rajib Haider was killed by a militant group that reflects Islam and religious views. Then, Bangladeshi-born, American citizen Avijit Roy, and the bloggers Washikur Rahman, Ananta Bijoy Das and Niladri Chatterjee, were killed in 2015. They were accused of writing blogs against Islam, religious sentiments and dogmatism.

The aim of this chapter is to discuss the picture of freedom of expression in the context of bloggers' killings in Bangladesh. Consequently, we ask: First, how was the killing of bloggers framed in Bangladeshi newspapers, and how does the coverage relate to freedom of expression? Secondly, what is the situation of freedom of expression for the bloggers, and do legal, social and religious factors in Bangladesh exert any influence?

The context of the killings

The killing of five bloggers between 2013 and 2015 was regarded by critics and activists alike to be highly connected to the Shahbag Movement. In 2013, the Blogger and Online Activists Network organized the Shahbag Movement in order to demand proper trials of war criminals from the Liberation War of Bangladesh. More than one million people gathered on the afternoon of Friday 5 February 2013 at Shahbag Square and shouted for the proper judgment of the 1971 war criminals (BBC 2013a)¹. This spontaneous mobilization of people realized latent feelings over the verdicts of the War Crimes Tribunal. The International Crimes (Tribunals) Act (Act No. XIX 1973) was enacted by the Parliament of Bangladesh to provide for the detention, prosecution and punishment of persons responsible for committing genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes and other crimes under international law.

The Shahbag Movement was initially non-political, but slowly became a big political issue and the movement began to oppose the religious-based political parties and their alliances (Riaz 2012). The judgment of the International War Crimes Tribunal (IWCT) did not fulfill the expectations of the people, especially the younger generation, and they came out on the street on 5 February 2013, demanding the execution of Quader Mollah. The IWCT gave a verdict of life imprisonment to Abdul Quader Mollah, a leader of Jamaat-i-Islam of Bangladesh (JIB)². The establishment of the IWCT was an electoral commitment of the Bangladesh Awami League (BAL)³.

After a few weeks of Shahbag demonstrations, a counter-movement organization was formed by an Islamist fundamentalist group called Hefajot-i-Islam⁴. Hefazot-i-Islam was morally tied up with JIB.

In early May 2013, Hefazot led large demonstrations, and whereas some of them were peaceful, others resulted in the deaths of police officers. Hefazot demanded the death penalty – on the grounds that they were atheists – for 84 bloggers. They also submitted a list of those bloggers to the Prime Minister of Bangladesh for punishment. They threatened to kill the 84 bloggers to protect Islam, and the killing spree began with the murder of blogger Ahmed Rajib Haider on 15 February 2013.

A banned Islamist militant group, Ansarullah Bangla Team⁵, took responsibility for this murder. Rajib Haidar was one of the organizers of the movement and, in his writings, had demanded a ban on religious politics in Bangladesh. Haidar used to write for somewhereinblog.net, amarblog.com and nagorikblog.com (Hammadi 2015). After Rajib Haidar, the next victim was Avijit Roy, a Bangladeshi-American online activist and writer for a weblog-forum called Mukto-Mona. He had written ten books on science, beliefs and homosexuality, and coordinated international protests against government censorship and imprisonment of bloggers. Roy was hacked to death on 26 February 2015 by machete-wielding assailants at a month-long book fair, Ekushey Boimela⁶, and the Islamic militant organization, Ansarullah Bangla Team, claimed – as did other groups – responsibility for the murder (BBC 2016).

One month after Avijit Roy's death, on 30 March 2015, blogger Washiqur Rahman, a progressive free-thinker, was killed in Dhaka in a similar attack. Rahman had blogged under the pen-name, Kucchit Hasher Channa (Ugly Duckling). On Facebook, Rahman had authored several posts opposing the irrationality of religious belief and he belonged to a group called Atheist Bangladesh. He was active on different blogging sites including Dhormockery, a satirical website critical of all religions and blocked in Bangladesh. He was a member of Logical Forum, an online discussion platform, and he used to write on somewhereinblog.com (BBC 2015a).

The BBC website states that Ananta Das was the third blogger killed in 2015 (BBC 2015b). Blogger Ananta Bijoy Das was hacked to death on 12 May 2015 by four men wielding machetes. He was a banker and used to write blogs for the website Mukto-Mona, mainly on science.

On 7 August 2015, Niladri Chattopadhyay Niloy, known by the pen name, Niloy Neel, was killed. Ansarullah Bangla Team again claimed responsibility for the murder. Niladri Chattopadhyay Niloy was a rationalist council who had completed his Master's degree in Philosophy only two years earlier, in 2013. He was associated with the Shahbag Movement and attended the public protest demanding justice for the murdered bloggers Ananta Bijoy Das and Avijit Roy (Daily Star 2015a). The reason for their murders, as reflected in the media, was criticism of religion. The Dhaka Tribune reported the email from the group Ansar Al Islam after Niloy Neel's death as saying:

We al-Qaida in the Indian Subcontinent, claim responsibility for this operation as vengeance for the honor of the messenger of almighty Allah. We declare war against the enemies of Allah and his Messenger. Enemies of Allah and his Messenger ... we are coming for you ... If your 'Freedom of Speech' maintains no limits, then widen your chests for 'Freedom of our Machetes' (Dhaka Tribune 2015).

Regarding the nurturing of freedom of expression in the context of bloggers killings, Khan explained that,

In recent times Bangladesh has experienced a shocking wave of killing progressive writers and bloggers one after another by the extreme Islamists.... Due to that bloggers and writers are withdrawing themselves from different blogs and go on hiding for fear of life (Khan 2016:14).

Further, government also arrested some bloggers in the name of maintaining laws and order in the country.

Theoretical aspects

Discourse theory covers a different set of insights, assumptions and concepts derived from varied disciplines. Ferdinand de Saussure, Ludwig Wittgenstein and Michel Foucault were the pioneers of this line of thought (Rorty 1992). Most approaches to

discourse theory articulate that language and language use do not merely reflect and stand for social and perceptual realities but help to assemble those realities. The theory says that language or discourse can form human thoughts and assumptions. Discourse analysis states that language is merely a type of communication. Discourse analysis theory is related to social and media content inquiry and analysis (Karlberg 2005). According to Phillips and Hardy, discourse analysis does not simply comprise a set of techniques for understanding structure and the qualitative investigations of texts, but also involves a set of assumptions concerning the constructive effects of language (Phillips & Hardy 2002). Discourse theory is therefore contextual to the examination of legal documents in this chapter.

Framing is a theory to define problems which are related to mass media. It determines what a causal agent is doing with what costs and benefits, measures common cultural values, examines causes and identifies the forces that create problems. Frames highlight some bits of information about an item that is the subject of a communication, thereby elevating their salience.

Here, the word 'salience' needs to be defined. It means making a piece of information more noticeable, meaningful, or memorable to audiences. Whatever its specific use, the concept of framing consistently offers a way to describe the power of a communicating text. Analysis of frames clarifies an accurate way of influencing human consciousness which is exercised by the transfer of information from one location to that consciousness (Entman 1993). Framing analysis is presented here as a constructive approach to examine news discourse with the primary focus on conceptualizing news texts into empirically operational dimensions – syntactical, script, thematic, and rhetorical structures – so that evidence of the news texts may be gathered. This is considered a step towards analyzing the news discourse process as a whole (D'Angelo 2002). In this context, framing theory is used to analyze news articles on the killing of bloggers in Bangladesh.

Freedom of expression is a universally recognized notion of human rights. This value refers to the right to disclose one's opinion or thought in public without being controlled or censored. According to Article 19 of Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 'Freedom of expression is the right of every individual to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers' (UDHR 1948). It signifies that freedom of expression is applicable worldwide, and that human beings shall have the right to freedom of speech or expression and that nothing can create barriers to this.

But we cannot practice this concept in our regular lives when restrictions and liabilities make people afraid of harassment and force people not to express everything. In the 2016 World Press Freedom Index, Bangladesh has the rank of 144 (it stood at 146 in 2015).

Research methodology

Following the requirement of the study, we have translated the Bengali headlines, documents and laws, as well as the Bengali quotes from the interviewees, into English. Three methods were used for data collection in this study: content analysis of newspapers, legal document analysis and in-depth interviewing of selected professionals. Content analysis was done to find out the nature of newspaper coverage – especially the interconnection between freedom of expression and religion on the issues of bloggers' killings – in order to arrive at objective, systematic and quantitative description of the communication content.

A purposive sampling method was followed, monitoring seven mainstream newspapers published in Bangladesh on the killing of the bloggers. The newspapers were: the Prothom Alo, the Janakantha, the Daily Star, the New Age, the Ittefaq, the Naya-Diganta and the Manabjamin. Each newspaper was observed for seven days after the deaths of Ahmed Razib Haiders and Avijit Roy.

As Razib Haider was murdered on 15 February 2013, we scrutinized the content of newspapers from 16 February to 22 February 2013; and to examine the coverage of Avijit Roy's killing, we looked into the newspaper content from 27 February to 5 March 2015, as he was murdered on 26 February 2015.

The framing analysis also used newspaper coverage. In addition, the situation was reviewed in the light of an analysis of available legal documents. This was done to investigate the ICT Act and its effect on freedom of expression in the blogosphere. The interviews were conducted with a semi-structured interview guide. The central question asked was what the interviewees were thinking about and how they evaluated the social, legal and religious situation regarding the killing of bloggers? This was an attempt to construct an overview of the present situation concerning freedom of expression with the help of the interviewees' opinions. In total, nine interviewees, selected purposively, were interviewed to discern the situation. Four of the interviewees were bloggers, three were legal experts, one was an academic and one worked as a journalist.

Document analysis helped the study to find the implicit ideological assumptions in the samples (Alam 2009). Section 57 of the ICT Act-2006 was analyzed by close reading. One of the objectives of the study was to investigate whether the freedom of blogs was hampered by the legal situation.

There are more than two dozen laws relating to freedom of expression in Bangladesh but the ICT Law (2006) is the only one that specifically applies to writing in digital media. So, to this study the ICT Law of 2006 was the one that was most relevant. The law analysis helped to identify the legal barriers, and the interviews with the bloggers, lawyers, academics and the journalist helped to highlight the social and religious obstacles to the enjoyment of freedom of expression in the blogosphere.

Freedom of expression as depicted in the newspapers

The newspapers supported the freedom of expression of the bloggers. They portrayed the killings as crimes and demanded that the killers should be brought to justice. The Daily Star and the Prothom Alo have the highest circulation among English and Bengali newspapers, and both these newspapers framed the killings as condemnable crimes.

A news story by the Daily Star – headlined ‘A shocking crime’ – stated that the killing of bloggers for free thinking or free speech was a brutal crime, and a number of headlines in the newspaper took a clear stance on the issue. Some of the examples are: ‘Blogger brutally killed’; ‘A fearless soul’; ‘Rajib was targeted for blog’; ‘Death for Rajib’s killers demanded’; ‘Brave blogger, goodbye’; and ‘The brutal killing of Avijit Roy’.

The Prothom Alo also described these killings as brutal and horrific crimes, and did not show a slant to any particular political party. ‘Immortal Rajib Haidar’; ‘Rajib was killed for his writings’; ‘Trying to finish the different school of thought, and ‘Hit on free mind’ were among its headlines.

The New Age framed the killings as gruesome and macabre, the Janakantha described them as brutal and *the* Ittefaq framed the killing of the bloggers as brutal and shocking. Hence, five among the seven newspapers framed the killings as condemnable and took the side for freedom of expression.

All in all, during the examined periods 263 items were published by the newspapers – and 57 per cent appeared on the front page.

Moreover, it was found that 67 per cent of the articles were mainly about the killings, whereas the killings were mentioned in 26 per cent of them. (Seven per cent of the articles were essentially about freedom of expression, with only references to the killings; one item – categorized as ‘other’ – was a letter from a reader.)

Table 1 shows a comprehensive scenario on the issue of blogger killings as covered by the newspapers.

Table 1. Coverage on killing of bloggers by the newspapers (per cent)

	Daily Star	New Age	Prothom Alo	Ittefaq	Jana-kantha	Naya-Diganta	Manabjain	Total
On front page	48	69	28	59	66	60	77	57
> 600 words	45	38	30	30	42	13	40	35
Article focus:								
Killing is main theme	57	65	65	73	62	77	73	67
Killing is mentioned	28	27	26	24	30	20	23	26
Op-ed on freedom of expression	14	8	9	3	8	3	3	7
Sum per cent	99	100	100	100	100	100	99	100
Number of items	44	26	43	37	53	30	30	263

Comments: Items are news stories and editorial comments (Op-eds).

Table 1 shows that all the newspapers selected for the study published articles related to the killings on the front page. Moreover, while a majority of the articles focused on the killings, the killings were also mentioned in articles focusing on other issues. And, adding to this, in connection with the killings, there were items published as op-eds on the question of freedom of expression.

Bangladesh has had to deal with this type of militant attacks for quite some time. It started with Professor Humayun Azad in 2004, and an editorial in the *New Age* said, 'The attack on Avijit Roy ... is reminiscent of the attack on Humayun Azad on the night of February 27 2004 – for the uncanny similarities in manner, cause and context ...' (*New Age* 2015). The killing of Rajib was commented as follows:

The gruesome killing of Ahmed Rajib Haidar ... by some unnamed assailants ... in the capital Dhaka yet again betrays how dearly people still have to pay for practicing their right to freedom of expression in a country that claims to be a democracy (*New Age* 2013).

When Avijit was killed, a commentary in the *Prothom Alo* ran,

... the person, who was trying to uphold the right of freedom of expression by writing in his own blog site Mukto mona, has to be killed only for his writings? ... does this country only belong to the fanatic groups, or also belongs to the free thinkers? (*Gayen* 2015).

After the arrest, imprisonment and murders of bloggers, insecurity became a great concern for free thinkers since insecurity hampers the environment of free thinking (*BBC* 2013b). Thus, not only were social and religious factors creating a bar for freedom of expression, but there were legal issues as well. The mainstream newspapers blamed the culture of impunity for this situation; they wanted proper judicial enforcement.

Another article published in *Prothom Alo* about Rajib Haider's murder quoted a police officer as saying, 'Rajib was killed for his writings,' and 'Rajib wrote many things about Jamat-Shibir, Rajakar, anti-liberation and trade by the name of religion on Facebook and his blog. Seems he was killed for his ideological stand and writings' (*Prothom Alo* 2013).

Similar thoughts were put forth in the *Daily Star*, where it was obvious that freedom of expression had strong support. In the article 'Horrible Hacking of Avijit Roy', it was argued that,

This is not only an attack on an individual, but an attack on freedom of thought and our national ethos of a secular, liberal Bangladesh ... we strongly believe that ideas should be countered by ideas, not ruthless acts of violence (*Daily Star* 2015b).

A signed editorial, written by the *Daily Star's* editor, stated: 'All murders are bad and highly condemnable. But murdering for differences in thoughts, values and ideas is by far the worst' (*Anam* 2015).

Similarly, the New Age hated the culture of intolerance. An editorial headlined ‘Killers of Rajib should immediately be brought to justice’ framed the killing as gruesome and macabre, and named Jamaat-e-Islami and Chhatra Shibir and the anti-liberation forces as the likely killers. The editorial also blamed the government for not ensuring the security of the people of the country:

Whoever might be behind the macabre killing, it is, in the first place, a manifestation of the failure of the incumbent government to ensure safety and security to protesters at Shahbagh in general and organizers of the protests in particular (New Age 2013).

Two of the Bengali dailies, the Ittefaq and the Janakantha, showed hatred for the militants, whereas the other two other, the Manabjamin and the Naya-Diganta, were critical but also tactical – they did not write about freedom of expression and, furthermore, they sensationalized the killings.

A troublesome legal environment

Although Article 39 of the Constitution of Bangladesh recognizes that freedom of expression is a basic right of citizens, the legal situation for virtual media, as well as the blogosphere, is not favourable to bloggers. With the emergence of new technology, the ICT Act-2006 was passed on 8 October 2006, and a section of the law – Section 57 – conflicts with the very principles of freedom of expression.

Section 57 is focused on the publication of fake, obscene or defaming information in electronic form, and a stormy debate ensued on the passing of Section 57.

The law may be used to detain people who criticize the government for indefinite periods and, as Biddle states, ‘the law appears to have been written, and now fine-tuned, to satisfy the political needs of government actors who wish to retain broad power over critical voices in society’ (Biddle 2013). In the Daily Star, Sultana Kamal, a human rights advocate, was quoted saying: ‘Section 57 is so vague that law enforcers can interpret it if they want to arrest anyone’ (Daily Star 2015c).

Indeed, the offences listed in Section 57 are sometimes ambiguous and vague. For example, while there is a prohibition against obscenity, the word ‘obscene’ is not defined. What kind of material will be counted as obscene? And obscene to whom?

Another part of the law that says a person may not ‘prejudice the image of the state or person or [...] hurt religious belief or instigate against any person or organization’.

Clearly, also this is open for misuse and misinterpretation. For example, what is the meaning of ‘the image of state’? And if a blog writes about an extra-judicial killing, can it be considered a crime? How will the courts decide if the image ‘of a person’ has been prejudiced? If bloggers accuse anyone of corruption in social media, will that entail the ‘prejudice of a person’? Moreover, the penalty of the offence under section 57 (2) of the ICT Act is imprisonment of a minimum of seven years which may be extended to 14 years and the accompanying fine may be extended to BDT 10 million.⁷

As discourse analysis theory says, language and terms are not merely a means of communication, they have an inherent meaning which conveys a concept (D'Angelo 2002; Entman 1993). Similarly, the legal discourses mentioned above are not mere words – they help to create a situation which obstructs the freedom of expression of the bloggers.

Interviewees' reflections and responses

The overall situation forced many of the interviewed bloggers to change their writing, and in some cases they stopped blogging altogether. In personal interviews, one subject (Interviewee 1) said that they had had to edit some of their previous posts since the situation did not allow any free writing, and another (Interviewee 2) admitted to self-censoring their work.

A third pointed out that the killing of bloggers had become a routine matter, and since the law and the government could not ensure their protection they were now afraid to write freely. This person also had to anonymize their blog account name in order to ensure their protection (Interviewee 4).

One said, 'a tendency to leave the country to somewhere else increased among the bloggers, because they did not find the country safe to reside in anymore' (Interviewee 9). In a similar vein, another (Interviewee 6) stated that bloggers could speak more boldly if they wrote from overseas, because the social and legal situation in Bangladesh was not safe for them.

To sum it up, all of the interviewees were of the opinion that freedom of expression was at risk. The bloggers controlled themselves and altered their way of writing and sometimes had to stop writing completely.

One of the interviewees (Interviewee 1) said that they had used to write on religious intolerance, prejudice, dogmatism and politics of religion, but after a death threat they had now given it up. This interviewee regarded illiteracy as the ultimate cause of this situation because it did not allow people to think rationally and accept criticism on an issue like religion. On the other hand, the same interviewee continued, people were not always properly informed about the blog writings. Although they didn't know about the content of the blogs, they adhered to the common perception that blog writers were all atheists.

Another interviewee (Interviewee 2) expressed somewhat different views and emphasized that the bloggers should maintain more responsibility. If someone disagrees on religious issues, they should express their views in a logical and responsible way.

The interviewees were of the opinion that religious fundamentalism and people's silence were hampering freedom of expression, as intolerance and insecurity created threats to writing freely. In view of the circumstances, many bloggers had changed their minds about writing about religion and some had given up their blog writing altogether. Some thought that by exploiting people's sentiments about religion, the

fundamentalists were trying to create difficulties for freedom of expression, as practical communication can be misinterpreted and mislead.

Conclusion

In a democratic set-up, human rights are, along with freedom of expression, a recognized core value. But in reality, as this chapter shows, the practice of freedom of expression is not fully safe and sound in Bangladesh. The country has in the last few years witnessed several murders of journalists and bloggers, and the social, legal and religious values that prevail significantly affect the practice of freedom of expression. Thus, while the country as a whole is progressing, a section of people – the religious fundamentalists especially – has recently become more intolerant and aggressive.

The findings of the content analysis showed similarities with the interviews. Some newspapers were of the view that religion is people's personal choice, and that bloggers can have their personal opinions about particular religious beliefs and also reveal them. On the other hand, the legal situation, in light of the analysis of ICT Act (2006), places burdens on the practicing of freedom of expression in blogs as well as on social media. This is because the section 57 of ICT Act (2006) creates the scope to criminalize online content. It is a threat for bloggers as well as Internet users. This section has been severely criticized by legal and social activists and they often mark it as a black law. To ensure freedom in online content, many experts believe this section has to be dropped from the law.

The killings and prevailing local values like conceptualizing bloggers as 'atheist' have had significant effects on the practice of freedom of expression. From the interviews it is clear that some bloggers feel threatened by the serial murders and, as a result, they have started rephrasing and rewriting their previous and present writings. Some have even stopped writing blogs and changed their blog names for reasons of safety. However, another school of thought is discernable. Its proponents think that bloggers should be more responsible when they write about religion and should not put forward improvident criticism.

Notes

1. Bangladesh experienced her liberation war in 1971 to achieve independence from Pakistan. The anti-liberation force collaborated with the Pakistani Army. These anti-liberation forces were brought before the International War Crimes Tribunal in 2010 as the ruling party, the Awami League, promised to bring the war criminals to proper trial in their 2008 election campaign.
2. Jamaat-e-Islam of Bangladesh is the largest Islamic political party. The party was strongly opposed to the liberation war of Bangladesh.
3. Bangladesh Awami League (BAL), the present ruling party which formed the government of Bangladesh in 2008 and also in 2014.

4. Hefajot-e-Islam is a non-political Islamic ideology based on a group organized by Madrasa (Islamic education based institution) teachers and students. It was led by Ahmad Shafi, the director of Hathazari Madrasa.
5. Ansarullah Bangla Team is a so called extremist jihadist group named Ansar Al Islam, also known as Al-Qaida in the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS)
6. *Ekushey Boimela* is the national book fair of Bangladesh. It takes place in Dhaka for the whole month of February and is dedicated to the martyrs who died on 21 February 1952 for the cause of establishing Bengali as one of the state languages of the then Pakistan.
7. A rough translation of Section 57 (1) can be found on *the Daily Star* website: <http://www.thedailystar.net/frontpage/free-speech-vs-section-57-130591> [Accessed 2 August 2017].

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Chapter 11

The October 2012 General Strike of the Tunisian Journalists¹

Taoufik Yacoub

The revolution of 14 January 2011 in Tunisia put an end to 23 years of authoritarian rule by the former president Ben Ali. The country has since then lived through a period of democratic transition during which it has tried to rid itself of the very heavy legacy of the old regime, by acquiring new political institutions and laying the foundations for a genuine rights-based state. A profound reform of the media and journalistic profession was also necessary to ditch old practices and old reflexes that have lasted for decades.

The election of a Constituent Assembly on 23 October 2011 allowed the Islamist party Ennahdha, banned for decades by the deposed regime, to obtain a relative majority. This enabled Ennahdha to form a provisional government with the help of two other parties – hence its name, the Troika. The head of government was Hamadi Jebali, one of the historical leaders of the Ennahdha party. The coming to power of a party of Islamist obedience literally divided the country into two camps. Most of the secular political and social forces feared that through its majority, Ennahdha, would choose to create a society far from the modernist aspirations to which Tunisian elites were much attached.

There were also concerns about Ennahdha's intentions to control the media, especially the public media, which it considered unfavourable to it. Unfortunately, these concerns were not unfounded or exaggerated. Upon taking power, Ennahdha attempted to control the public media, thus perpetuating the practices of the fallen regime. Various means were used to put pressure on journalists and editors to change their editorial lines, which led to growing tensions between the executive and journalists, led by the National Union of Tunisian Journalists (SNJT). The tensions quickly turned into a long and painful battle that culminated a year later, on 17 October 2012, in the first general strike of journalists in Tunisia. It was also the first general strike of the press in the Arab world.

What were the various stratagems and tactics used by Ennahdha to secure control over the Tunisian media? And what were the means of resistance of the journalistic

Yacoub, Taoufik (2017). The October 2012 General Strike of the Tunisian Journalists p. 149-161 in Elsebeth Frey, Mofizur Rhaman and Hamida El Bour (eds.) *Negotiating Journalism. Core Values and Cultural Diversities*. Göteborg: Nordicom.

body and civil society? Finally, how was the general strike of journalists used as the ultimate weapon in pushing back the Islamist government and forcing it to accept democratic rules and let the press play its role of fourth estate? These are the central questions which this research will try to answer.

Methodology

The main objective of this chapter is to provide an account of an episode that is considered a major event for professional journalists and press specialists in Tunisia. I will analyze its root causes and the immediate reasons for its triggering. I will also try to show that this strike was the ultimate answer to a methodical plan that was developed and applied for months by the Ennahdha party in order to domesticate public, and sometimes private, media.

To achieve this, I have used historical and documentary methodology. The best way to reflect past events and make them meaningful is to situate them in their political and social contexts while analyzing their underlying and immediate causes (Prost 1996). The researcher starts by collecting materials relevant to the research from the different available sources, and after conducting external and internal criticism of its sources, he or she proceeds to link historical facts by performing multiple cross-checking. In this quest for truth and this reconstruction of facts, the researcher must demonstrate intellectual honesty and ‘distancing and impartiality’ since absolute objectivity is impossible (ibid:228).

In this study, I have used four types of sources: print and online media content, in-depth interviews and testimonials, SNJT archives, and a number of reports published by the SNJT and other national and international NGOs. About 180 newspaper and magazine articles and news articles were consulted and communiqués from the Tunis Afrique Presse (TAP), the national news agency, were scrutinized. Public media were most used since they have tended, since 14 January 2011, to cover events in a balanced way. However, I also consulted the content of the private media in order to cross-check. The bulk of the analyzed content is available online.

In-depth interviews with a number of people, who had a direct or indirect relationship with the events, also allowed me to acquire valuable testimonies. In-depth interviews were conducted with two members of the SNJT executive board: Rezgui Ayman and Chakakou Mohamed. Both are practicing journalists. I also interviewed Bouriga Jamel, former editor-in-chief at Assabah newspaper, Atrous Essia, a journalist at Assabah newspaper, Khedir Jelmen Chadia, a journalist at National Television (ETT), Labidi Kamal, President of INRIC until its self-dissolution in 2012 and currently president of the Tunisian association, Vigilance, and Belaid Habib, former CEO of National Radio (ERT) and currently a member of the HAICA.

These in-depth interviews helped to understand a lot of facts and allowed me to carry out a great deal of cross-checking.

The SNJT graciously made available to us its private archives, including all the minutes of the meetings of the Executive Board, the expanded Executive Board and the ordinary and extraordinary General Assemblies. This gave me valuable insights into the events and enabled me to live from inside the role of one of the main protagonists in this conflict. Annual or episodic reports prepared by a number of official or civil society bodies have been of great assistance to us in obtaining documentary and statistical data. What is missing is the official archives of the administration and the state which are only consultable in Tunisia 30 years after the concerned facts.

The general strike of journalists, which is the subject of this research, took place on Wednesday, 17 October 2012. But the temporal extent of the study will cover almost a year, starting in October 2011 and ending in October 2012. This is necessary to understand the underlying reasons for the strike and the main points of discord between, on the one side, the provisional government which emerged from the 2011 elections and, on the other, the National Union of Tunisian Journalists (SNJT) and the National Authority for Reform of Information and Communication (INRIC).

From January to June 2012, the incidents multiplied and tension between the two camps steadily increased. But the months of July and August 2012 were a real turning point in the crisis. Following a number of events and decisions taken by Lotfi Zitoun, Minister-Counsellor in charge of political affairs at the head of government, the SNJT became certain that Ennahdha would continue to apply its control plan to the public media. Escalation was therefore inevitable and the process of triggering the general strike of journalists commenced at the end of August 2012.

Legal vacuum and procrastination of the Troika

The two interim governments that had assumed office following Ben Ali's flight to Saudi Arabia had taken some initiatives with regard to the press – especially two Decrees-Laws to regulate the media scene after the Revolution. Decree-law 115, on the freedom of the press, printing and editing, granted Tunisian journalists, for the first time, the same immunity as enjoyed by public officials in the exercise of their functions. Decree-law 116, meanwhile, concerned the freedom of the audio-visual media and created an 'Independent High Authority for Audiovisual Communication' (HAICA), a regulatory body for public and private media (see chapter 2 on the three countries). The government of Beji Caid Essebsi left the task of promulgating these decrees to the government that was to emerge from the elections.

However, after the victory of the Islamist party, it seems that Caid Essebsi was more inclined to think that there was much to fear for press freedom and free expression under a government dominated by Ennahdha, and that the Decrees-Laws constituted a guarantee against a possible temptation to seize public media (Labidi 2016).

The attitude of the government of Jebali with regard to the decrees-laws was very ambiguous if not outright contradictory during the first weeks. Hamadi Jebali had never

ceased to declare in public that he was for the freedom of the press and for the application of international standards on media law and ethics. But his entourage and his two advisers, Ridha Kazdaghli and Lotfi Zitoun, were less positive about press freedom. Their public utterances, particularly after February 2012, were not very reassuring. Zitoun finally declared that ‘the government has no intention of implementing the decrees-laws ... and will revisit them, insofar as they have not been the subject of the consensus of professionals of the sector.’ At a press conference, the INRIC denounced ‘the double language of the government’ and the ‘multiplication of contradictory and discordant statements’ (Dami 2012). Taking advantage of the declared hostility of the owners and directors of the television and radio stations (STDM), with regard to the details of the decree-laws defended by INRIC and the SNJT, Zitoun adopted the role of neutral mediator in order to achieve his purposes. He prepared ‘a National Consultation on the legislative framework for the information sector’ scheduled for 27 and 28 April 2012, only three days before INRIC was to present its final report. The conference was boycotted by key stakeholders, including journalists and their main representative, the SNJT (La Presse de Tunisie 2012a).

How can this inextricable imbroglio be understood? In retrospect, it seems that the information and communication portfolio escaped, in part, from the head of the government and became the informal prerogative of Lotfi Zitoun, who had the eye of Ennahdha’s leader, Rached Gannouchi, in Jebali’s cabinet. Ennahdha had an interest in adjusting these decree-laws and delaying their implementation for as long as possible. The party wanted to take advantage of the legal vacuum in order to appoint loyal men to the key positions in the main public media.

Appointments and attempts to control the public media

The Jebali government’s first change at the head of the public media occurred just ten days after taking office on 26 December 2011. Jebali announced, by a press release on a Saturday afternoon, the appointment of six general directors and directors and three editors-in-chief at three of the most important public media organizations: The national news agency Tunis Afrique Presse (TAP), Tunisian Television Establishment, and the SNIPE company, which publishes two daily newspapers, La Presse de Tunisie in French and Essahafa in Arabic (TAP 2012a).

This decision caused a general outcry among journalists, political parties and civil society. The SNJT expressed ‘its refusal of the mode of appointment’ by asserting that certain designated persons were ‘devoted servants under the despotic regime of Ben Ali and that others are related to corruption cases’ (TAP 2012b). INRIC took the position of ‘strongly denouncing these decisions’, considering them ‘a return to control and censorship practices and submission to the political diktat’ (TAP 2012c). Chokri Belaid, spokesman for the Democratic Patriotic Movement and one of the fiercest opponents of Ennahdha, meant that these nominations were ‘likely to make the media

simple propaganda machines' (Ben Brik 2012). A large protest demonstration was organized in place of the Kasbah, opposite the seat of the government, to express the protesters' refusal of any form of guardianship on information. The event brought together hundreds of journalists from the public and private media, representatives of civil society and parties and members of the Constituent Assembly (TAP 2012d). Artists, bloggers, trade unionists and ordinary citizens were also present (TAP 2012e).

At the end of this protest rally, talks were held between a SNJT delegation, chaired by Nejiba Hamrouni, and the government adviser, Ridha Kazdaghli. The meetings resulted in the cancellation of the appointments of the editors-in-chief of the two SNIPE newspapers and the director of information of the first channel of national television (La Presse de Tunisie 2012b).

Several indications suggest that Ennahdha did not consult its two allies in the Troika. Indeed, the spokesman of the Ettakattoul party, one of the Troika members, was among the protestors at the Kasbah and publicly condemned the actions of the government (Soueidi 2012). Neither *Congres pour la Republique*, CPR, Ennahdha's second ally, seems to have been informed, as an INRIC member revealed that 'the Authority has received several phone calls from allied parties of Ennahdha, they were not aware of these decisions' (African Manager 2012).

At the end of April, it was the turn of the National Radio to be absorbed by Ennahdha. On 24 April 2012, Habib Belaid, the CEO of the National Radio, learnt from his service driver (sic!) that a new CEO had been appointed in his place (Belaid 2017). To the astonishment of the journalists in the organization, it was discovered that the appointee was a technician who dealt with sound archives and with a service record that was far from brilliant (Sboui 2012). As it turned out, the new CEO stood close to the Ennahdha party and was appointed to the position in order to carry out the party's instructions. Not so surprisingly, there was widespread discontent that resulted in a series of resignations.

Propaganda, harassment and violence

Ennahdha had over time developed a very critical discourse with regard to the media. The media, it was said, inflated all the problems of the elected government and concealed all its achievements. A term often used in order to slander those accused of not being in favour of Ennahdha was 'the media of shame'.

These ideas, repeated endlessly by politicians and on social network sites, and even in mosques, generated an explosive mixture. Indeed, this discourse had been increasingly radicalized over time, growing into an incitement to hatred and violence.

A real strategy of harassment and destabilization of journalists developed, and several stratagems and means were used for this purpose, in particular dozens of Facebook pages. The phenomenon was so widespread that we began to talk about the 'Facebook militia' (Fouad 2012).

Many of these pages had a lot of resources and human resources, which suggests that they were not individual initiatives but the work of professional bodies. The Union of Journalists denounced the collaboration between Ennahdha and the people behind certain Facebook pages. (These 'Facebook reporters', really supporters of the new regime rather than journalists, attended press conferences and covered events that were boycotted by the real journalists.)

However, even more serious than the Facebook campaigns were the attacks on the journalists that were merely doing their job. The most exposed were those who carried out fieldwork, and were in direct contact with the public. Correspondents working in small provincial towns were also vulnerable because they were easily identifiable. From October 2011 to May 2012, the SNJT recorded 17 attacks committed by Islamist groups against journalists (SNJT 2012:13).

The sit-in at National Television (ETT) which lasted more than 55 days, during the months of March and April 2012, was typical in this respect. Tents and camp beds were set up at the entrance to the facility, and a daily supply of water and food was provided. Armed with megaphones, the Islamists began every afternoon to insult the journalists by calling them 'corrupt' and 'enemies of Islam'. Journalists, as well as visitors to the television station, were also harassed at the entrance and exit of the television station, and all was done with the knowledge of the police officers, who could not do anything because the prosecution had deemed there should be no intervention unless there was bodily harm and destruction of property (TAP 2012g).

Countdown during a hot summer

In hindsight, it can be estimated that the months of June and July 2012 were a turning point in the evolution of the situation. We saw the last elements that would contribute to the blockage and lead to the total confrontation between the two protagonists and the resultant general strike.

After having been alone on the political scene for many months, a serious competitor to Ennahdha appeared as the party Nidaa Tounes (Appeal of Tunisia) was born. Founded by Beji Caid Essebsi as a simple initiative in April 2012, it was officially launched as a political party in June 2012. Claiming to be social-liberal, Caid Essebsi considered himself above all a Tunisian nationalist and progressive. His goal was to create a 'front that would bring together a group of centrist and left-wing parties to participate in the next parliamentary elections' (Ben Abdallah 2011) and thus constitute a real counterweight to Ennahdha.

After holding its ninth congress in mid-July, the Ennahdha Movement started experiencing several problems: a decline in popularity in surveys and pressure by its allies within the Troika for a profound ministerial reshuffle and a more equitable distribution of portfolios.

But the most serious problem for Ennahdha was undoubtedly the deadline of 23 October 2012. This marked the end of the one-year mandate given to the National Constituent Assembly (NCA) and the provisional government to both draft the new Constitution and organize legislative and presidential elections. Nothing had been done so far, and voices had begun to be raised demanding a government of National Union as soon as 'the legitimacy of the ballot boxes' came to an end on 23 October.

For its part, the UGTT, the main trade union in the country, which had had a role in the political life of the country since the struggle for national independence, launched in mid-June what was known as The National Dialogue Initiative. It was call for concerted action to reach consensual solutions to all the country's major problems during this transitional period (Assabah News 2012). At the beginning of October, the date of this Dialogue Conference was fixed for the 16th of the same month – one day before the date of the general strike of journalists which was fixed for 17 October (Al Asouad 2012).

In anticipation of a busy and disturbed comeback, in addition to the growing popularity of Nida Tounes, the Jebali government apparently decided to launch its assault against the public media during the summer season; a period when party political activity is on the back burner and public opinion was rather preoccupied by the summer holidays.

As usual, it was Lotfi Zitoun who was going to take care of matters. He chose to start the clean-up with the radio: on 2 July 2012, four national radio directors and four regional radio directors were changed at once, unilaterally and without consultation. He was questioned by some media about the reasons for the new appointments. He told them that they had been decided by the CEO of the National Radio, Mohamed Meddeb, who was appointed the previous April, and that the changes were within the government's prerogatives according to the laws in force (Weslati 2012). For Kamel Labidi, President of INRIC, these decisions were the straw that broke the camel's back. He decided on July 4 on the self-dissolution of the Authority proclaiming that, 'we refuse to serve as decor, simple showcase for the parade' (Belhassine 2012).

Zitoun was probably comforted by the fact that the radio appointments in early July had gone smoothly and not caused much noise or provocation. He chose the end of the month of Ramadan, the fasting month whose end is crowned by the Eid, to effect the changes at the head of the Tunisian Television Establishment (ETT) and Dar Assabah.

Despite some protests from journalists, the appointment of the new CEO of ETT, who knew the organization well since she had been director of its second channel since January, had not really posed big problems for Zitoun. It was completely different with Dar Assabah.

Indeed, its new CEO, Lotfi Touati, had the perfect credentials to unite everyone against him and trigger a deep crisis within the company, sparking sit-ins, hunger strikes and street protests. Touati was previously deputy editor-in-chief at *Le Quotidien*, a French language newspaper which is part of the Al Anouar stable, and after

2011 he had discreetly rallied the Ennahdha ranks (Kalima 2012). Touati's aggressive attitude and provocative decisions did nothing to calm the situation. He dismissed the editor-in-chief, Bouriga, and appointed in his place a person previously dismissed for gross misconduct. Outside collaborators known for their critical attitudes towards Ennahdha were prohibited from continuing to publish their articles in Dar Assabah's three newspapers.

The protracted conflict, which lasted more than 50 days, mobilized public opinion and civil society and national and international organizations concerned with press freedom (Atrous 2016).

Zitoun against all

Nejiba Hamrouni, President of the SNJT, responded quickly to the appointments and called for an extraordinary general assembly of journalists for 24 August 2012. About 700 journalists were present, and the principle of the general strike got unanimous support (SNJT Archives 2012a).

Once the strike was publicly announced by the SNJT, Lotfi Zitoun promised a 'total and open war' against all those he suspected were his 'enemies'. Zitoun used all means to scare and even terrorize those who criticized him or criticized his decisions (Rezgui 2016). He first threatened to publish a 'black list' of corrupt journalists who were compromised with the old regime. He then organized a campaign on Facebook in protest against the Jebali government's lax attitude towards 'the enemies of the revolution' and the losers of the elections 'that spread on the media and on Facebook unfounded, lying and humiliating rumours' (Business News 2012). He subsequently called for a series of demonstrations in Tunis and in provincial towns. Always present at these popular meetings, Zitoun harangued the crowds present, and repeatedly attacked 'the media of shame and corrupt journalists' (Le Temps 2012).

This pressure and continued agitation stimulated a protest movement against Zitoun, not only among journalists, but also among politicians, NGOs and civil society in general. This period of extreme tension convinced the SNJT that the situation was blocked and there was no hope that the government would make concessions. This pushed Hamrouni at the end of September to confirm the strike order for 17 October 2012 (Chakakou 2016).

A few days later, and following a meeting of the President of the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) with the head of government in the presence of Zitoun, things changed dramatically. After this meeting, responding to journalists who had asked him if the problems of the journalists were to be resolved and if the appointed CEO of Dar Assabah was to be dismissed, Zitoun replied that 'all solutions are possible' (Alfajr News 2012).

IFJ pressure was not the only cause of this sudden change. It is now known that there were deep discrepancies between Jebali and his advisor, and that Zitoun had managed

media policy on his own. During a meeting in early September 2012 which brought together Jebali, Zitoun, Ghannouchi, the President of Ennahdha, and some members of the party, there was a violent quarrel between Jebali and Zitoun. Jebali allegedly blamed Zitoun for mismanaging the press policy and corroding the relationship with journalists and asked him to dismiss the CEO of Dar Assabah in order to calm the situation. The latter refused, supported in this by Ghannouchi (Ben Hamadi 2012).

What was the reason for the change that took place in the meantime? It seems that the attack on the US embassy and the burning of the nearby American school on 14 September, which left four dead among the Salafist attackers, completely upset the situation. At that time, according to recent statements by Jebali, there was a real threat of American withdrawal from Tunisia (Negueze 2016). This probably gave Jebali more arguments to impose his point of view and to make concessions to journalists. He was aided by pressure from the two Troika allies who were demanding a quick solution to this problem in view of the date of October 23, feared by all three parties.

The epilogue: The general strike of Tunisian journalists

The executive bureau prepared the practical details of the general strike and informed journalists in the various public and private media. The journalists had been called to their media outlets without working, and then assembled at 1 pm at the headquarters of the SNJT. It was expected that the print and online media would not cover any current events. The television and radio stations would limit themselves to news headlines focusing on the strike. As far as the TAP Agency was concerned, it would only cover important information and releases (SNJT Archives 2012b). A systematic work of information and communication was carried out with the journalists of the different media to explain to them in detail the modalities of the strike (Chakakou 2016).

17 October was a beautifully sunny day. People started gathering at ten o'clock in the morning in front of the SNJT headquarters. As the hours passed, the crowd grew to such an extent that car traffic became impossible at times. All ages and all conditions were represented. There were a lot of journalists, of course, but there were also many familiar politicians, many representatives of civil society, intellectuals and artists and ordinary citizens. There was also a significant presence of Arab and international organizations, notably the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ), which was represented by its Secretary General and the Arab Federation of Journalists (FAJ) represented by its Vice President. The latter said that journalists from 320 media outlets, affiliated to his organization, had observed an hour long strike that day, in solidarity with their Tunisian colleagues (Rezgui 2016). The representatives of the main NGOs related to the press field, were also there. Moreover, the strike was widely publicized internationally – dozens of foreign journalists and television crews came to Tunis to cover the event (Chakakou 2012). This international support far outstripped

journalistic circles. Some diplomatic circles accredited in Tunisia expressed more or less openly their support for the strike.

A multitude of banners celebrating the freedom of the press and the will to move forward, were deployed. Slogans supported the struggle of the Dar Assabah hunger strikers and declared a determination to see all demands accepted and endorsed by the government. The most urgent concerned implementing Decrees-Laws 115 and 116 and the HAICA, respecting editorial independence and the non-use of unilateral appointments.

By the middle of the day, the first counts of the signed lists of the strikers already gave figures exceeding 90 per cent and it did not fall below this level. At the National Television, a minimum service was respected, consisting of a few news flashes written very briefly and presented in voice-over, focusing mainly on the strike and its causes. Several talk shows were presented on that day of 17 October and they discussed the problems of the Tunisian press and its future. It was the same for public and private radio stations in the capital and the different regions of the country. The TAP agency also scrupulously respected the strike and published only a few dispatches concerning the event. The online information sites also displayed the strike slogan and published only some information about the events of the day.

The next day, Thursday 18th, there were few newspapers and those that appeared took the form of very light editions with a very limited number of pages and the content was dedicated exclusively to the strike and the problems of the press and journalists in Tunisia (SNJT Archives 2012c).

This general strike of journalists, which was a first in Tunisia and throughout the Arab world, was an opportunity for Tunisian journalists to unite around the ideal of the defence of a newly-won freedom of the press, defying a power determined to return to old practices.

This fierce struggle of journalists led by their union, which lasted for almost a whole year and was concluded by this general strike, had some concrete results. In a laconic and unclear press release, the government announced its decision to implement the Decree-Laws while regretting that the SNJT took the decision to carry out its strike threat despite the promises given (Ben Hédi 2012). Some officials, including, Lotfi Touati, were removed. The audiovisual regulatory body HAICA was created. But many other problems remained unresolved. This largely explains why a second general strike of journalists took place, less than a year later, in early September 2013.

Conclusion

In retrospect one can draw some conclusions and have a fairly faithful image of the year's events and twists and turns. This is thanks to some information that has been communicated by prominent figures who have since left the political scene, in addition to leaked information. One can put together this chronology of events despite the

absence of Tunisia's official archives and those of the principal protagonist, Ennahdha.

Ennahdha, and especially its hard wing, had on its accession to power a pre-established plan to clean up the public media sector of all the elements that it considered hostile towards it. It would seem that the minister-counsellor, Zitoun, who was supported and protected by Rached Ghannouchi himself, took possession of the press policy from the very beginning of the Troika government.

However, Zitoun seems to have underestimated the potential resistance of the journalistic body, and the unprecedented mobilization of the journalistic body was the main factor that finally forced Ennahdha to retreat. Here, a determining factor was the President of SNJT, the late Nejiba Hamrouni. Her integrity, commitment, deep belief in freedom of the press and unbridled combativeness, at the expense of her private life and even at the expense of her own health, were important reasons behind the positive outcome of the crisis.

This strike constituted a strong signal addressed by journalists to those in power. It declared that they would defend, by all possible means, the gains they had obtained. They also understood that nothing was gained once and for all, and that other battles would be necessary in the future – freedom of the press is an everyday struggle.

Note

1. In memory of the late Nejiba Hamrouni, President of the SNJT, who dedicated her short life, so rich in fighting, to freedom of the press and expression.

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Appendix 1: The Shared Horizon's methodology used in Part II

Elsebeth Frey

As mentioned in the preface, *Shared Horizons* is a development and collaborative research project between journalism teachers and researchers at the journalism studies in Dhaka, Oslo and Tunis.

The Department of Mass Communication and Journalism at the University of Dhaka (DU) in Bangladesh is the oldest of the three, founded in 1963. The Department of Journalism and Media Studies at Oslo and Akershus University College of Applied Sciences (HiOA) in Norway celebrated its 50th anniversary in 2015. In 1967, two years after Oslo, Tunis got its journalism education at Institute de presse et des sciences de l'information (IPSI) at the University of Manouba in Tunisia. Regarding bachelor students in journalism, DU has four batches, and the departments in Oslo and Tunis each have three classes. Oslo also has three small classes with students in photo journalism. In 2013, *Shared Horizons* conducted a survey sampling 644 bachelor students in journalism in the three departments, including the photo journalism students in Oslo.

There are many dilemmas to analysing journalistic core values across three very different countries. As we wanted to compare the way of looking at core values in news journalism, finding patterns that could point towards a national view or that of a transnational understanding, we had to scrutinize a wide population of respondents. Surveys are recognized as useful to cover multiple questions given to a larger population, and since our intention was to investigate how journalism students think about journalistic principles, both the ideals and core values in practices, we found that a *quantitative survey* would be the best way to perform our comparative research.

The questionnaire was made in mixed national groups, drawing on the benefits of having local knowledge of the meaning of journalism concepts, the media landscape and outlets as well as the local languages. The survey was intended to be conducted as a Lime Survey, and it was in Oslo.

As for the journalism education in Dhaka, they thought that if the survey was done online, they might not get an adequate number of replies within the scheduled time. Therefore, to get a maximum response, they surveyed the students physically present in the classrooms and exam halls and used hard copies of the questionnaire.

At IPSI, in Tunis, they decided to survey 100 students out of a total of 175, also due to technical and online problems.

As a total of 439 students in the three countries answered, it gave an overall response rate of 68 per cent. However, not every student answered the two open-ended questions: here we only got 406 answers.

The students answered 25 questions (see Appendix II), most of them multiple choice, but there were also two open-ended questions. After this, the answers were translated into English. We have to take into consideration that, although the students answered the questions in their native languages, Bengali, Norwegian and Arabic, there may have been misunderstandings due to translation. In addition, we may not know exactly what the students mean, as we only have the alternatives in the survey they felt to be nearest to their opinion. There is also the possibility that the students felt obligated to cross off the answers they thought their teachers would expect them to.

In order to rule out any differences according to gender, it should be noted that half of the respondents are female and half are male. Furthermore, we tested for gender bias, but in regard to results used in Part II, we did not find any. Due to the fact that they are students, it is also important to take into account that about one-third of the students in Dhaka and Tunis and 66 per cent of the Norwegian students have practical experience in journalism. In this respect as well, they should be good respondents for thoughts about journalistic core values.

As for the *Shared Horizons' qualitative interviews*, we did them because we wanted to delve deeper into concepts and views as well as to examine if the notions of journalism students, journalism teachers and working journalists differ. In-depth interviews give the opportunity for interviewees to elaborate their thoughts more freely and provide richer material. Hence, using a common interview guide (see Appendix II), 47 semi-structured interviews with journalists, teachers and students from the three countries were conducted.

All interviews were done face to face: 18 from Bangladesh, 9 from Norway and 20 from Tunisia. There were 24 females and 23 males, and the ages of the interviewees ranged from 20 to 69. Some of the students interviewed did not have journalistic practice, whereas others – being students, journalists and journalism teachers – had practice. Some even had more than 30 years of journalistic experience. The journalists worked on different platforms: radio, television, online and newspaper. All interviews were, as with the survey, done in the interviewees' native language, transcribed and then converted into English. Although we have put considerable work and effort into translating correctly, there may be some nuances missing that could influence the results.

In addition to dataset 1 (the survey) and dataset 2 (the interviews), there is also a third dataset, which is derived from a 2016 *roundtable conference*, where seven women reflected upon five questions about the notion of objectivity, press freedom and how journalists should relate to power (see Appendix II). All of them are former or present journalism students in our departments; one of them is a bachelor student

in journalism; two are master students; two work as journalists; one is a journalism teacher; and one works with communication.

When referring to those who answered the survey, we call them respondents. We refer to the people who were interviewed for dataset 2 as interviewees, and when quoted, each has a number, since all of our interviewed people are anonymous. As for the seven participants at the roundtable conference, they are called interviewees, and each is given an identifying letter from A to G.

• • •

All chapters in Part II use the methodology that is described above.

In *Chapter 3*, Elsebeth Frey uses results from the survey's questions about objectivity, fact and context. Her chapter also includes comments and answers from dataset 2. Furthermore, Frey also encloses results from dataset 3.

In *Chapter 4*, Hamida El Bour compares notions about how journalists should relate to power. From dataset 1, El Bour uses findings from how the watchdog role is perceived (from the question about the functions of the media) and from two questions about journalists relating to power. In addition, she includes results from dataset 2, the qualitative in-depth interviews with journalism students and teachers as well as working journalists.

Two of the survey's 25 questions dealt with corruption. In addition, the open-ended question on press freedom in the survey allowed for the students' comments on corruption as an obstacle to press freedom. Findings from these questions contribute to *Chapter 5*, as Solveig Steien compares and analyses the respondents' answers. Steien contextualizes the answers with information about the current state of the issues and exemplifies with concrete cases from the survey and its open-ended answers about press freedom and its implications, i.e., corruption and how it hinders press freedom.

In *Chapter 6*, Margrethe Håland Solheim looks into 406 answers to the two open-ended questions: 'What kind of limitations on press freedom exists in your country?' and 'Describe how you find the situation for freedom of expression in your country' (dataset 1).

In addition, Solheim did her own qualitative interviews with ten journalists in Colombia. Notably, the interview guides from the *Shared Horizons* project and the project in Colombia are slightly different. The interviews in Colombia probed the interviewees' journalistic values and asked to what extent they were able to work according to these values. The interviews were done in different cities all around the country.

Whereas also the interviews in Bangladesh, Norway and Tunisia (dataset 2) focus on core values, these interviews contained only a few questions about the interviewees' journalistic work. Nevertheless, the interviewees in Bangladesh, Norway and Tunisia gave many practical examples from their daily work. Solheim systematizes the interviews from Colombia with the *Shared Horizons'* interviews with journalists: ten from Bangladesh, eight from Tunisia and eight from Norway. That makes a total of 36 interviews used in her chapter, and 15 of the interviewees are female and 21 male.

Appendix II:

***Shared Horizons'* survey: Questionnaire for the students in the journalism bachelor programme:**

We kindly ask you to answer this questionnaire about your opinion on core values of journalism. Please, read each question thoroughly, and choose one of the suggested answers. There are also two open ended questions where we ask you to write a comment.

Before you start answering, remember that the survey is about professional journalism, *not* about bloggers or citizen journalism. To answer some of the questions you have to imagine yourself in the position of being a journalist.

There are 25 questions.

Question no. 1: What do you think is most important when making a news report /news article? Choose one of the alternatives below:

- Let the facts speak for themselves
- Give priority to facts
- Give the facts a context
- Give priority to context & analysis
- The truth is independent of the facts
- I don't know

Question no. 2: Consider the following scenario: You are interviewing two important politicians. You also have a lot of facts obtained elsewhere. Your editor tells you to shorten the news story. Where in the story will you cut? Choose one of the alternatives below:

- I will mainly cut facts
- I will mainly cut in the opinions
- I will cut both in facts and political opinions
- I don't know

Question no. 3: To what extent do you find it possible to achieve objectivity in news journalism? In this case, objectivity is defined as the belief that a journalist may cover a story independently of his/hers personal thoughts, background, beliefs and knowledge. Choose one of the alternatives below:

- Always
- In most cases
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- Never
- I don't know

Question no.4: Who decides the content of your news journalism? Please indicate on a scale of 1 to 6 your opinion (1 = least important, 6 = most important):

	1	2	3	4	5	6	I don't know
People outside the media house							
The owner of my media outlet							
The editor(s)							
My colleagues							
Myself							

Question no. 5: Imagine that you are covering a serious accident, and that you may perform your profession as you see fit. Do you believe that your personal values influence the way you write an article, take your photograph or choose your sources? Please indicate on a scale of 1 to 6 your opinion (1 = I totally disagree, 6 = I totally agree):

	1	2	3	4	5	6	I don't know
Who I am as a person is of no consequence							
Of course it matters who I am							

Question no. 6: How important is immediacy as a factor in news journalism? By immediacy we mean the quality of bringing fresh news quickly. Choose one of the alternatives below:

- Very important
- Other factors can be more important
- No, it is not important
- I don't know

Question no. 7: What is the most important role journalism plays in society? Please indicate in a scale of 1 to 6 your opinion (1 = least important, 6 = most important):

	1	2	3	4	5	6	I don't know
Watchdog							
Agenda setting							
Being an arena for public debate							
Inform about what is happening in society							
Educate the public							
Entertainment							

Question no. 8: You are digging into corruption, and you also interview different persons about this. If you publish your story, could your sources risk danger for their own safety? Choose one of the alternatives below:

- Yes, they could
- Probably
- Probably not
- No, sources are free to speak
- I don't know

Question no. 9: You are on the same story about corruption. Could you as a journalist risk danger for your own safety? Choose one of the alternatives below:

- Yes, I could
- Probably
- Probably not
- No, I am free to report anything
- I don't know

Question no. 10: How do you think journalism should relate to power? Choose one of the alternatives below:

Journalism should...

- ...challenge and defy power
- ...take a critical position towards power
- ...be neutral to power
- ...be loyal to power
- ...promote power
- I don't know

Question no. 11: Journalism is often said to have a controlling function towards power. In your opinion, is it a question regarding... Choose one of the alternatives below:

- Political power
- All types of power
- I don't know

Question no. 12: When you make a news story and have ethical dilemmas, what will mostly influence the way you think about the dilemmas? Choose one of the alternatives below:

- It depends totally on the story I am working on
- The principles of press ethics are more important than my news story
- I don't know

Question no. 13: The principles of press ethics you relate to in your journalistic work, do you consider them to be... Choose one of the alternatives below:

- National
- Mainly national
- Mainly universal
- Universal
- I don't know

Question no. 14: In an ethical discussion about your working methods and the result (the published story), what do you think is most important? Choose one of the alternatives below:

- Acting ethical correctly is most important
- The result and the methods cannot be separated
- The result means everything
- I don't know

Question no. 15: If you have to choose between respect for religion and freedom of expression, what do you choose? Choose one of the alternatives below:

- Respect for religion above freedom of expression
- Freedom of expression above respect for religion
- I don't know

Question no.16: In your opinion, what is the most serious threat to journalism? Please indicate in a scale of 1 to 6 your opinion (1 = least important, 6 = most important):

	1	2	3	4	5	6	I don't know
Lack of press freedom							
Lack of media regulation							
The journalist's difficulties in getting access to sources							
Self-censorship							
Corruption							

Question no. 17: Use the following definition when answering the question: By press freedom we mean that the journalists, editors and the media are free to publish what they want. Do you have press freedom in your country? Choose one of the alternatives below:

- Yes, we have press freedom
- Yes, but with some limitations
- There are many limitations
- No, there is not press freedom
- I don't know

Question no.18: What kind of limitations on press freedom exist in your country? Write your answer here:

Please notice that this question is about press freedom, not freedom of expression.

Question no. 19: By freedom of expression we mean the right every human being has to express their thoughts freely. Describe how you find the situation for freedom of expression in your country. Write your comment here:

Now, this question is about freedom of expression.

Question no 20: How do you think journalism should regard the readers, viewers and listeners? Please indicate in a scale of 1 to 6 your opinion (1 = I totally disagree, 6 = I totally agree):

	1	2	3	4	5	6	I don't know
Only as consumers on a market							
As citizens participating in society							
Both as consumers and citizens							

Question no 21: Do you find that there is coherence between what you learn in your journalism studies and how the media in your country are performing journalism? Choose one of the alternatives below:

- Yes, always
- Quite often
- Rarely
- No, never
- I don't know

Now follows just a few questions about yourself and your place of study:

Question no. 22: Where do you study? Choose the right alternative below:

l'IPSI (Tunisia)
DU (Bangladesh)
HiOA (Norway)

Question no. 23: In which year of your journalism studies are you? Check the right alternative below:

Norway and Tunisia: year 1 year 2 year 3
For Bangladesh: year 1 year 2 year 3 year 4

Question no. 24: Do you have journalism practice? By journalistic practice we mean working for a professional news organization. If you have six months all together, answer yes. If you have less than six months practice, answer no. Check the right alternative below:

No
Yes

Question no. 25: Gender? Choose the right alternative below:

I am a man
I am a woman

Thank you for participation!

Shared Horizons' interview guide

- 1a. In your opinion, why is cross checking and verification of facts important in journalism?
- 1b. What do you do if you cannot verify the facts before the deadline of your submission?
2. Why is context important in journalism?
3. What is objectivity? Please, define it.
4. In the survey, when asked to what extent it is possible to achieve objectivity in news journalism, we got these answers:

77 % of the Tunisian students answered 'Always' and 'In most cases'. The students from Bangladesh were more divided. 46 % answered 'Always' and 'In most cases', 32 % answered 'Sometimes' and 22 % answered 'Rarely' and 'Never'. 58 % of the Norwegian students answered 'Rarely' and 'Never', and only 2 % said 'Always'.

Why do you think your fellow students answered like this?

5. Why do you think the views on objectivity differ so much between the three countries? Do you have any comments?
6. Is balance in news stories important? Why?
7. In a situation, when you as a journalist have to choose between respect for religion or freedom of speech, what would you do? Why?
8. When covering a story, what are the most common ethical dilemmas you experience as a reporter?
9. In your opinion, which news criteria/news elements dominate the news reporting in your country?
10. In your opinion, what does it mean to be neutral in reporting?
11. What is the most important function journalism plays in society?
12. In your opinion, what are the most serious threats to journalism in your country? Why?
13. In the survey, we asked about how journalism should relate to power, and gave these options: challenge and defy power/take a critical position towards power/be neutral to power/ be loyal to power/promote power. Do you have any stories that illustrate these different positions journalism could take relating to power?
14. It is often said that journalists should take a critical position towards their sources. In your opinion, what does a critical position mean?
- 15 a. In the survey, about the power relations, we got different answers from the three countries:

49 % of the Bangladeshi students and 64 % of the Tunisians answered that journalism should be neutral to power, while 7 % of the Norwegian students thought so.

Linked to these results, we would like to ask you: why do you think your fellow students answered as they did?

- 15 b. Why do you think there are differences between the three countries?
16. How would you explain the difference between freedom of expression and press freedom?
17. Can you give examples from your country where press freedom is under pressure?
18. Can you give any examples where freedom of speech is under pressure in Norway?
19. In your opinion, does journalism have any common global values? Why?
20. Age?
21. Gender?
22. In what year in your bachelor studies are you?

23. Do you have journalistic practice? If so, where did you work and for how long?

Questions to interviewees at a *Shared Horizons*' round table conference, 2016:

1. Do you believe that your personal values influence the way you write an article, take a photo or choose your sources?
2. To what extent do you find it possible to achieve objectivity in news journalism?
3. How do you think journalism and journalists should relate to power?
4. What is the difference between press freedom and freedom of expression, as you see it?
5. What kind of limitation on press freedom exists in your country?

NORDICOM's activities are based on broad and extensive network of contacts and collaboration with members of the research community, media companies, politicians, regulators, teachers, librarians, and so forth, around the world. The activities at Nordicom are characterized by three main working areas.

- ***Media and Communication Research Findings in the Nordic Countries***

Nordicom publishes a Nordic journal, *Nordicom Information*, and an English language journal, *Nordicom Review* (refereed), as well as anthologies and other reports in both Nordic and English languages. Different research databases concerning, among other things, scientific literature and ongoing research are updated continuously and are available on the Internet. Nordicom has the character of a hub of Nordic cooperation in media research. Making Nordic research in the field of mass communication and media studies known to colleagues and others outside the region, and weaving and supporting networks of collaboration between the Nordic research communities and colleagues abroad are two prime facets of the Nordicom work.

The documentation services are based on work performed in national documentation centres attached to the universities in Aarhus, Denmark; Tampere, Finland; Reykjavik, Iceland; Bergen, Norway; and Göteborg, Sweden.

- ***Trends and Developments in the Media Sectors in the Nordic Countries***

Nordicom compiles and collates media statistics for the whole of the Nordic region. The statistics, together with qualified analyses, are published in the series, *Nordic Media Trends*, and on the homepage. Besides statistics on output and consumption, the statistics provide data on media ownership and the structure of the industries as well as national regulatory legislation. Today, the Nordic region constitutes a common market in the media sector, and there is a widespread need for impartial, comparable basic data. These services are based on a Nordic network of contributing institutions.

Nordicom gives the Nordic countries a common voice in European and international networks and institutions that inform media and cultural policy. At the same time, Nordicom keeps Nordic users abreast of developments in the sector outside the region, particularly developments in the European Union and the Council of Europe.

- ***Research on Children, Youth and the Media Worldwide***

At the request of UNESCO, Nordicom started the International Clearinghouse on Children, Youth and Media in 1997. The work of the Clearinghouse aims at increasing our knowledge of children, youth and media and, thereby, at providing the basis for relevant decision-making, at contributing to constructive public debate and at promoting children's and young people's media literacy. It is also hoped that the work of the Clearinghouse will stimulate additional research on children, youth and media. The Clearinghouse's activities have as their basis a global network of 1000 or so participants in more than 125 countries, representing not only the academia, but also, e.g., the media industries, politics and a broad spectrum of voluntary organizations.

In yearbooks, newsletters and survey articles the Clearinghouse has an ambition to broaden and contextualize knowledge about children, young people and media literacy. The Clearinghouse seeks to bring together and make available insights concerning children's and young people's relations with mass media from a variety of perspectives.

We need freedom of speech most when someone expresses offensive statements. Also, we need press freedom when news stories conflict the way authorities or powerful people and organizations look at the world. These freedoms are corner stones of journalism. When respected, journalism may contribute to a free flow of transparent and pluralistic information for citizens to be well informed.

Yet, journalism's values and working methods, as well as journalists themselves, are challenged, pressured and threatened. This research anthology examines journalistic core values and how they are perceived and renegotiated in Bangladesh, Norway and Tunisia – and one chapter includes Colombia. In exploring views on journalism's values and press freedom transnationally, the comparative chapters (Part II) discuss and reflect on what journalism is.

Finally, the case studies that close the book (Part III) offer empirical examples of journalism's role in transitional periods and at times of ideological conflicts: When the right to religion collides with press freedom and freedom of expression, and when bloggers are killed for speaking out, journalism is on the line. This book contributes to local and global discussions on journalism and its core values in cultural diversities.

‘Journalism is under intensified threat. Some threats originate in economics, many others in politics and social life. This is why attention to the questions discussed in this anthology is valuable. If we are going to preserve journalism as a universal beacon, and indeed strengthen it going forward, the more knowledge we have about diversities in practice, the better our strategies can be.’

Guy Berger

UNESCO

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