



BETWEEN IDEALS & PRACTICES

**JOURNALISTIC ROLE PERFORMANCE
IN TRANSFORMATIVE TIMES**

BETWEEN IDEALS & PRACTICES

Masthead

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Accessibility Statement

JRP Canada is committed to providing an event that meets the access needs of its participants with content that is physically and digitally accessible. This includes anticipating, identifying and reducing barriers to accessing knowledge-mobilization processes. In recognizing accessibility as a dynamic, ever-changing and community-rooted process, JRP Canada is additionally committed to the continual improvement of its accessibility functions.

Scan the QR below to hear audio recordings of the articles in this magazine.



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Letter from the publishers

While organizing the Between Ideals and Practices conference we had dreamed of an event that prioritized diversity and accessibility and brought together scholars from the Global North and South who were studying journalistic role performance. We are thrilled that the conference turned out just as we had hoped. There were 12 panels, including two French panels, and a total of 42 presentations, 11 of those virtual, plus our two in-person keynotes in the School of Journalism in The Creative School at Toronto Metropolitan University.

The insightful and energetic discussions on the most important issues facing journalism in newsrooms around the world, along with critical analysis and conversations that explored the evolution of methodologies that evaluate practice in those newsrooms, will provide the groundwork for further development of this rich area of study for researchers the world over.

We hope this magazine helps to capture some of those enlightening moments, and gives everyone from those who attended the conference to those who are just hearing about it now the chance to reflect on knowledge gained from around the globe.

Nicole Blanchett and Colette Brin

Letter from the managing editors

Our identities as students are bound to our eagerness to know, and to know abundantly. That's what this conference provided us with—an opportunity to delve into the deep end of learning that exists in research-centred spaces, and to be the ones shaping what the spaces can and should look like.

From planning the conference agenda, to creating podcast episodes with international researchers, to working at making knowledge mobilization accessible, our hands-on involvement in all the processes of the event were indispensable to our growth as academics. And when the conference day came around, everyone made space for us in their conversations and panel discussions.

As diasporic students who are perpetually seeking stories and academia where our communities play the title roles and where the sources speak our mother tongues, being surrounded by knowledge beyond the West and thinkers who looked like us was joyful. We hope we chronicled that joy—which facilitated much of this endeavour—within the pages of this magazine.

Sama Nemat Allah and Anna Maria Moubayed



Meet some of the JRP Canada and Conference Team.

Kneeling front row, left to right: Yanika Saluja, Nanthana Balachandran, Thelacsana Rajaganapathy, Atiya Malik, Kayla Thompson
Standing back row, left to right: Jaelyn Mika, Martha Nyakuan Gai, Sama Nemat Allah, Colette Brin, Cheryl Vallender, Karen Owen, Nicole Blanchett, Anna Maria Moubayed

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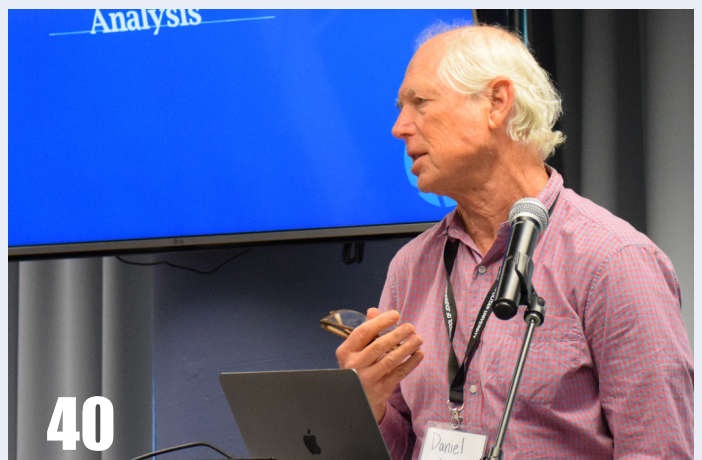
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Land Acknowledgement

This text is a direct transcription of Karyn Pugliese's (Pabàmàdiz) land acknowledgement, delivered orally on May 24, 2023 at the Between Ideals and Practices conference in Toronto Metropolitan University in Tkaronto, Turtle Island.

By Karyn Pugliese (Pabàmàdiz)

Kwe Kwe. That's how we say hello—Kwe Kwe. I want to talk before I do the land acknowledgement.

I just want to talk a little bit about why we do to them and where they come from. So in the history of Indigenous People, First Nations People, when you would go to visit somebody else's land, you would, first of all, arrange that they would know that you were coming. And then you would thank them and acknowledge that it was their land that you were on, that you were coming in a peaceful way, in a good way— hopefully, in a peaceful way, in a good way. And you would acknowledge the land.

And so later, as we started having Chiefs meetings and political meetings, this tradition came into the political meetings of First Nations People. And you would see Chiefs like the National Chief get up and recognize that he was on a land of other people—very often, they were held in Ottawa—so that would be my land, Algonquin land. And you would acknowledge the Chief, and the Elders and the youth and the women in the room. And then there'd be prayer and there'd be ceremony. And you do this to thank people for allowing you to be peacefully present on their land. So that's why we do them. In Canada in 2015, of course, there was a Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

And growing out of that came the tradition of other people who are not First Nations or Indigenous recognizing that they are on Indigenous land. Probably more than 80 per cent of land in Canada is unceded territory, and the other is covered by treaty. So you're either on treaty land, or on unceded land. And that's something that we still haven't resolved in Canada.

So I also want to take a little time to explain that in this land acknowledgement, because I want it to be meaningful and not just a formality, I'm going to refer to Toronto as the place of the Treaty of The Dish with One Spoon. So that's a treaty that was signed with the Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabe after the French and Indian War. Newcomers are considered to be incorporated into that treaty. And it's by treaties in Canada that Canada was built: there is no Canada without treaties.

So the Dish with One Spoon, what that means if you can picture a dish with one spoon, is it's about sharing. It's the ultimate image that you could have in your mind of sharing where you have a dish and there's one spoon in it. The dish represents the land in southern Ontario from the Great Lakes to Quebec and from Lake Simcoe to the United States. And when you're talking about land and the dish with one spoon, it means sharing responsibility for the land. We don't believe that we own the land. We believe that we're responsible for it and that means all the life: two-legged four-legged and life that lives in the waters, that lives upon the land. And so with the acknowledgement today, I acknowledge those who are Elders, youth and women in the room, and we are in Toronto, the Dish with One Spoon Territory.

The Dish with One Spoon is the treaty between Anishinaabe, Mississauga and Haudenosaunee that bound them to share the territory and protect the land. Subsequent Indigenous nations and peoples and Europeans and all newcomers have been invited into this treaty in the spirit of peace, friendship and respect. I thank the Anishinaabe, the Mississauga and the Haudenosaunee for allowing us to be present on their territory. Thank you.



Above: Karyn Pugliese's (Pabàmàdiz) delivers a land acknowledgement to open the Between Ideals and Practices conference.

Accessibilizing Academia: Best practices and lessons learned

By Sama Nemat Allah

What would happen if we created spaces founded on and driven by access? Instead of viewing accessibility as an afterthought — as an extraneous or immaterial additive that invariably falls on the disabled individual to ask for — how would an academic space change if accessibility was sewn into its fabric?

This article hopes to articulate a different truth about the intersections of accessibility and academia, and will do so while presenting best practices and lessons learned from our May 2023 Between Ideals and Practices conference.

As a disabled journalism student, I am rarely impervious to the ways both the industry and the institution paving my path to it are inaccessible to me and my kin. Media and scholarship demand an expediency that my chronic fatigue cannot provide, move at a pace my disabled body can not keep up with and speak in a language that my neurodivergency often resists. When I require support and accommodation, I have to ask — or rather plead — for it. My needs are treated as abnormal and burdensome.

Although Canadian universities are required by law to accommodate disabled students and faculty, studies show that disabled academics don't feel welcomed, included or represented in scholarship. Disabled researchers and instructors, for example, are among the groups that experience the highest levels of harassment, social exclusion and unfair treatment within post-secondary institutions. And with disabled students in Ontario being nearly 24 per cent less likely to attend university at all, it too often feels like higher education environments don't care that we're left behind.

Born out of these experiences was my role as an accessibility coordinator for our Canadian conference focusing on the transformation of journalistic roles. We wanted to develop a blueprint for organizers and academics to shape and futurize higher education environments that are designed for everyone. Disabled people are a part of every team, every audience and every community. Once we accept this as a fact and not merely as an indeterminate possibility, access becomes core to cultivating any space, academic or otherwise.

Putting best practices into practice

Accessibility Statement: One of the first and most imperative ways to “accessibilize” a conference at an organizational level is by creating an accessibility statement. This communicates a commitment to meeting the needs of anyone accessing your organization's physical or digital spaces. It's important for this statement to be created and approved by everyone within your collective so it becomes the fulcrum of all content produced and decisions made. Because disability justice practices see accessibility as a dynamic and collaborative process, it's critical you return to your statement frequently even after its creation and implementation: as your organization learns, grows and changes, so too should your commitment to bettering access standards.

As an example, take a look at JRP Canada's accessibility statement found on the Editor's Note page at the beginning of the magazine.

Event Registration and Accessibility: During the registration process of your conference, ensure there is a place for attendees to see what access points you offer as well as request an accessibility service. This provides organizers an opportunity to meet access needs, to apply for more funds for additional accessibility features and opens the door for communication between you and those you hope to support.

What you learn from registration should inform the creation of your accessibility guide—a one-stop shop for accessibility information for your conference or event. We drew inspiration from Tangled Art + Disability Gallery's Crippling the Arts Access Guide. Written in plain language, these guides provide detailed information about the event space (including but not limited to the locations of nearby parking spots and airports, accessible entrances, bathrooms, elevators and stairs), as well as the event's access points (American Sign Language interpretation, audio description, live transcription and captioning, scent-free zones, food sensitivities and relaxed rooms/presentations) and should also contain a synthesized event

agenda with timings and locations. You can see an example of our [guide here](#).



Guides should be offered before the event so attendees know what to expect and can plan their experience accordingly. Also be sure to survey participants after the event to see what worked well and what didn't.

Along with surveying them on their own accessibility requirements—like podium height, interpreters and preferred seating—be sure to provide presenters and speakers with guidance on how to make their presentations more accessible. Our team offered all presenters a [slide template](#) that outlined aesthetic (font size, colour contrast) and oratory (giving visual descriptions of themselves and images, speaking in plain language) tips to support them in making all the material disseminated at the conference accessible.



Virtual Accessibility: Always offer people the option to attend your events, seminars and conferences virtually. The ubiquity of technology, social media and virtual conferencing in and beyond the academic realm has created boundless possibilities for furthering accessibility. But when we don't take proper advantage of those access practices, we miss out on simple ways to promote inclusion. Virtual access shows that we've, as disability justice artist, activist and academic Eliza Chandler puts it, "anticipated" our audience exactly as they are.

When an academic conference offers alternative options of entry using online video conferencing platforms like Zoom, for example, it can decrease barriers for international, immunocompromised,



chronically ill or [spoonie guests](#)—disabled people who rely on [Christine Miserandino's Spoon Theory](#) to explain their energy or capacity levels on a given day—to participate in the event. Zoom and other platforms' software can also provide guests tuning in virtually or in-person with live captions, in the

language of their choice.

ASL interpretation: Standardizing ASL interpretation and Communication Access Realtime Translation (CART) services for all events, online or otherwise, also ensures that d/Deaf and hard of hearing community members can have access to all content and information shared in your events. Consider whether you want ASL interpretation on-site or virtually, or whether you want event recordings to be interpreted after-the-fact.

Social media: Accessiblizing your social media presence begins at structuring your posts for a screen reader, a tool that transforms text on a computer screen or device to voice for Blind, visually impaired and low-vision users. In other words, translating a largely visual culture into a verbal one. An uploaded graphic, illustration, photograph or media should always be accompanied by alt-text or an image description that clearly and accurately gives an account of what someone would be seeing.

An image description allows you to navigate and translate

this visual experience to your audience. It also has space for some creative interpretation from you as the translator. Some questions I ask myself when I'm writing image descriptions include: Is this image in colour or black and white? Can I carry the reader through the image's background, middle ground and foreground? Or is it better to carry them clockwise through the image? But as an image describer, always make sure you're in conversation with your community: are your descriptions too short or too long for them? Too abstract or too plain? Implement suggested changes that make your images more accessible.

If there are people featured in the image, it's best practice to ask them how they'd like to be described. Is there a racialization, ethnicity, disability or gender presentation that they would like mentioned? Err on the side of a general denomination or description (simply stating the individual's name, for example) if you're unable to retrieve that information from them. But never make assumptions about identities and how someone would like to be perceived/described. See the description below for an example.

Image Description:

A photograph of Sama Nemat Allah, a light-skin femme-presenting Egyptian individual with black curly hair and large square glasses, wearing a black leather jacket, a KN95 mask and sunflower earrings, seated leaning against a white wall. She is holding a Canon camera that's hanging from her neck by a floral camera strap.



If your post includes a link, make sure to use a shortener like [bit.ly](#) to reduce the number of characters. Make your hashtags user-friendly by capitalizing the first letter of every word to avoid them being read as a jumbled up singular word.

Transcriptions: Provide captioning and transcriptions for all audio and video content. Using transcription tools like Otter.ai or Zoom can be great starting points for your transcripts. But with the AI's tendency to mishear (I've seen "synonym" be transcribed as "sin a name") and its inability to make notations of silences, laughter or statements said sarcastically, it's important to allocate human resources to reviewing the text and making sure it syncs up with the audio. It's also important to consider [privacy issues](#) and [data storage](#) practices for these types of technologies.

Plugins: You can also implement accessibility plugins in the backend of your website to allow users to increase webpage contrast, change font sizes, underline and highlight links or get rid of animations and page styling that may be distracting. Wordpress and other website builders offer [a number of accessibility widget](#) options, but others may require additional money, maintenance or coding. Make sure to incorporate a keyboard navigation system onto your website for users not using a mouse. Run your website through an accessibility checker such as the [WAVE Web Accessibility Evaluation](#)



Tool to check for its compliance with accessibility standards.

Intellectual Accessibility:

The academic system gives rise to language with needless complexity, referred to as opaque writing by anthropologist Victoria Clayton in a 2015 [Atlantic article](#). It excludes and marginalizes not only those outside of the field of academia, but also those with cognitive or learning disabilities or enminded differences—like [Mad-identifying folks](#) (a reclaimed socio-political identity for communities whose mental states have been pathologized/criminalized, often labelled as “mentally ill” or as having “mental disorders”) or Indigenous people who identify with a decolonial experience of thinking and being. Offering research papers, studies or presentations in plain language, while unlikely to create total access, will mobilize more knowledge in a more accessible way. And a plain language communication approach done effectively stays true to an original text while concurrently relaying the vital information it houses. While there is no definitive standard for writing in plain language, using shorter sentences, opting for the most commonly used words and using an active rather than a passive voice are all tips that work in conjunction to make works more digestible. For reference, look back to the “In Summary” sections attached to the articles in this magazine, including this one.

But because the use of jargon is almost unavoidable in most academic productions, it’s best practice for academic conferences to offer printed or digital glossaries for guests to access during and after the event. Sending out a collaborative glossary spreadsheet for speakers to define/clarify important terms, jargon and concepts employed within their presentations can make for an effective, community-borne access point.

This publication in and of itself is an example of a collective measure of intellectual accessibility in motion. With a team of student reporters creating easily digestible articles of each panel, including simple language summaries, attaching QR codes when possible and in offering the magazine online, we’ve collectively translated an exclusive academic space into an inclusive tangible one.

Lessons Learned

If you’re looking to lead with access—for accessibility to be foundational to the creation of your academic event—make sure you allocate money for accessibility from the get go. ASL Interpreters, CART services, accessibility coordinators or consultants, and the creation of this type of magazine will all require

Guides should be offered before the event so attendees know what to expect and can plan their experience accordingly. Also be sure to survey participants after the event to see what worked well and what didn’t.

funds to facilitate. And while most of the aforementioned practices can be implemented with the right time, effort and careful consideration, at the end of the day, there were a number of opportunities for access that we simply couldn’t seize because we underestimated our budget needs.

For example, with more funding, we could have had a live ASL interpretation for the panels and keynotes. This would have required travel costs for a team of at least two interpreters, at a rate of approximately \$250 each for every hour of interpretation. Because our conference included concurrent panel sessions, to provide interpretation of the entire event we would have needed several more interpreters, amounting to more than \$10,000.

Although we planned to offer an ASL interpretation video after the event that captured both the opening and closing keynote presentations, we were unable to finance it because we didn’t account for the additional costs to the provider for video editing and captioning, or realize we would need two interpreters due to the length of the video. Asking an ASL service or organization for a quote early on in your planning process is the best course of action to ensure you’ve allocated enough money, but keep in mind that they will likely require a script or audio of the presentation before providing you with an accurate estimate, which might be difficult to get before the event. We hope to be better prepared next time to offer what should be a default part of every space and one that enriches the experiences of those that have an alternative means of communication.

Accessibility is not an isolated act, but an on-going endeavour—the more we learn about our needs and those of one another, the more we’re able to make time and space for those needs in our academia. For example, while none of the researchers we shared the “jargon” spreadsheet with were able to make additions, it was still an important space to foster and one that we hope to try creating again. It also taught us that accessibilizing cannot fall to one person, but that a joint enterprise of care requires the labour of all participating parties to truly be brought to fruition.

We saw these acts of collective access come to life in our conference. When we requested that presenters self-describe—an access point that gives blind and visually-impaired folks an idea of what someone looks like—we heard as, one after another, speakers outlined the colour and length of their hair and the details of their outfits. Many presenters used the accessible slideshow template we provided them with before the event. The webs of care and access, as transformative justice educator Leah Lakshmi

Piepzna-Samarasinha names them in their book *Care Work*, were not “an unfortunate cost of having an unfortunate body” but a “collective responsibility that’s maybe even deeply joyful.”

It’s also important to remember that disabled creatives, students and scholars are experts in their own experiences so immeasurable gratitude must be given to them for carving out these spaces of interdependence and safety for themselves and one another.

If you’re looking to lead with access—for accessibility to be foundational to the creation of your academic event—make sure you allocate money for accessibility from the get go.

At the end of the day, what accessibility asks of us is community care. What lengths are we willing to go to to ensure that what we produce can be seen, heard and consumed by everyone and not just by bodies and minds that align with an arbitrary and exclusionary status quo? For me, the answer is as far as possible.

When we naturalize accessibility, we also naturalize disability, and tell disabled people and academics alike that they have a place in our gatherings, in our scholarship and in our communities.

Plain language summary:

- Using lessons learned from our *Between Ideals and Practices* conference, this article highlights some ways academics and academic organizations can create more accessible conferences, content and spaces.
- Create an accessibility statement that communicates your organization’s accessibility goals

To make your social media more accessible:

- Include image descriptions and alt-text on all visual media
- Offer captioning and transcripts for audio and video content
- Capitalize the first letter of every word on a hashtag
- Shorten links using websites like bit.ly

Event tips to keep in mind:

- During registration, be sure to survey the access needs of presenters and attendees and provide speakers with guidance on creating accessible material

- Always offer attendees an option to attend events virtually and provide live captioning and ASL interpretation (if funding permits)
- Share an event accessibility guide that explains the location space, accessible entrances and washrooms and outlines access points in your event like American Sign Language interpretation, audio description or options for food sensitivities.
- Use plain language—a way to communicate in clear, straightforward and simple terms—to share academic information or offer definitions/ explanations of jargon.

Some lessons learned:

- Make sure to account for accessibility when creating your budget—research estimates for ASL interpreters, CART services and accessibility engineers/coordinators when applying for funds or grants
- Accessibility is a never-ending process that needs community support to work.

Role performance research in journalism studies: The evolution of the Journalistic Role Performance project

‘The news and journalism do not work in a straightforward way and the roles of news professionals are always open to re-imagining’

By Drew-Anne Glennie

From an academic perspective, journalistic role performance studies are relatively new, but they're making their mark. Established in 2013, the Journalistic Role Performance (JRP) project analyzes the state of journalistic cultures across 37 countries, with its network including full democracies, transitional democracies and authoritarian regimes.

“We believe that role performance research more accurately

portrays what the practice of journalism looks like in different countries and regions, being useful for carrying out comparative research on a local, regional or large scale level,” explained professor Claudia Mellado, the principal investigator for JRP, in her keynote speech at the *Between Ideals and Practices: Journalistic Role Performance in Transformative Times* conference.

The second wave of the JRP project, ongoing since 2019, is



Above: Dr. Claudia Mellado, the head of the Journalistic Role Performance project and a professor of Journalism at the Pontificia Universidad Católica de Valparaíso in Chile, presenting her keynote address at the *Between Ideals and Practices* conference.

a three-stage mixed-method design. Researchers measure role performance in stories from significant print, online, TV and radio outlets, then survey the journalists who produced them to measure role conception and perceived enactment along with collecting information at the institutional and societal level.

In its first decade, the JRP project has uncovered critical information on journalistic role performance. Mellado said while the influence of Western journalistic professionalism has led to a rigid understanding of journalism that pigeonholes news into fact and opinion, norms change and such binary expectations rarely hold. In practice, news professionals adapt their missions and practices according to fluctuating circumstances, devising and performing duties that evolve into “a complex, simultaneous and often contradictory set of roles.”

The study has also shown that journalistic cultures everywhere are made up of multiple role performances, and that the social mission journalists aspire to achieve does not always match the one that is realized. Journalistic role performance is a “permeable hybrid set of practices and narrative devices,” according to Mellado: “In short, the news and journalism do not work in a straightforward way and the roles are always open to re-imagining.”

The same could be said of the JRP project itself. Conscious of existing limitations and difficulties, Mellado outlined three areas in which the project could be enhanced going forward. As it stands, manual analysis of journalistic practice requires tremendous human investment – a reliable automatized system is needed to analyze larger quantities in real time.

Mellado also hopes to go past analyzing the finished project to see role performance “backstage” of the news production

process, which includes organizational routines, interaction with sources, data-gathering and verification processes. “Although these aspects of performance cannot be seen by the audience because they don’t necessarily get captured by the final version of the news story, they provide us with crucial information about how news professionals construct and reconstruct their profession from the inside,” Mellado explained.

On the flip side, the JRP project is also moving to incorporate the audience into the equation, revealing the actual effect of journalistic role performance on-the-ground.

The JRP project has already created significant value for a broad variety of scholars. According to Mellado, many high-profile theoretical dilemmas can be addressed and studied using JRP data, such as the role of public media, political infotainment, citizens in the news, service journalism, democracy and the watchdog role of the press.

“Our project takes roles at the channel to capture myriad phenomena affecting and impacting journalism,” explained Mellado, “and to capture the complexity of journalistic and media cultures around the world, their styles and the broader patterns of social system in which they are embedded.”

Following a big round of applause from the audience, Mellado fielded questions. “I’m sort of taken aback by the scale of your ambition, what you’re trying to achieve with the project,” said one participant, before probing about audiences’ normative frameworks around the world. Discussion in the Q-and-A mostly centred on requests for elaboration on the JRP project’s methodologies, results and scope, before everyone headed off for a full day of panels to further unpack the transformation of journalistic roles around the world.

Plain language summary:

- The first presentation of the Between Ideals and Practices conference was offered by Dr. Claudia Mellado that focused on the different journalistic cultures from the Global North and South that have shaped the past, present and future of the Journalistic Role Performance (JRP) project.
- There are three levels of analysis in the JRP project. The first analyzes articles by journalists, the second examines survey responses from journalists, and the third looks at other factors like type of ownership of the organization or the level of democracy the organization operated in. Analysis revealed that standards in media are always changing and journalists adapt their work to these changes.
- In journalistic cultures everywhere, the social mission journalists want to achieve isn’t always reflected in their work. Going forward, Mellado wants to look at including the audience, other types of “backstage” news workers and automating coding of stories.

‘Uncertainty in the media environment’: Changing landscape leads political journalism to shift perceptions and platforms

By Sarah Grishpul

Researchers find that traditional roles and perceptions need to evolve to keep up in a transitioning online environment

With the decline of print journalism and an increase in digital reporting, researchers who study the industry say journalists should expect to compete alongside emerging technologies and risks.

I-Chun Lin, a PhD student from the University of Leeds’ School of Media and Communication, believes the steady decline in the circulation of print media has shifted traditional journalistic roles. She shared her research in a panel moderated by Karyn Pugliese, a visiting Indigenous journalist in the School of Journalism at TMU and the editor-in-chief of Canadland.

Lin’s findings revealed that the interventionist and watchdog roles had decreased among print media while the infotainment role increased among online platforms.

“The infotainment role is the only role that performed more significantly on social media than in the print,” said Lin, based on her study on Taiwan’s newspapers. “In other words, political news on Facebook pages far more frequently contained sensational or emotional elements.”

Interview results from these newsrooms revealed that journalists are typically asked to preserve in-depth reports and news analysis for print media while publishing sensational or sidebar news stories for social media.

“[Journalists] need to integrate print journalism with social media to find new advertising revenue,” Lin said. “Social media became a vital role to influence journalistic perception and [journalists] started to adjust their role perception to fit into the new platform.”

According to Young Eun Moon, a postdoctoral researcher at the Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communication, American newsrooms are treating social media sites like Twitter as a type of news kiosk. Journalists are encouraged to self-commodify and build a brand on the app to generate audience engagement.

“Self-marketing on Twitter has become a new norm in the field,” said Moon. “This American setting—a culture emphasized on exclusive individuality—motivates journalists to orient social media use for the production of unique news that no other journalist knows.”

While American journalists often rely on Twitter to promote content and breaking news, her comparative study of South Korean journalists revealed that those reporters utilized social media from a more collectivist approach.

“In South Korea, political journalists never use Twitter for their self-branding because they think that their personal behavior on social media may harm their news organization’s reputation,” said Moon. Rather, reporters convene in a Telegram or Facebook chat room to “ensure equitable distribution of information” in exchange for journalistic autonomy.

Elsayed Darwish, a professor at the College of Communication and Media Sciences at Zayed University, spoke on the current challenges Arab journalists face with the continued closure of newspapers, higher overload, layoffs and an increase in commercial data use.

Darwish’s study indicated that many journalists had either left the field or were instead working as freelance or part-time employees.

“Nowadays, journalists are under pressure from technology because these technologies are bypassing the journalists. They are talking directly to the audience,” said Darwish, commenting on social media algorithms and AI bots like ChatGPT.

“There is uncertainty in the media environment, we are witnessing news avoidance from the audience,” he said.

According to Davis Vallesi, a PhD candidate from York University’s Communication and Culture program, it is getting more difficult to maintain objectivity as a journalist.



Much discussion has surrounded the idealized practice of objectivity, including whether or not it should remain a goal or is even possible for journalists to attain.

During Vallesi’s presentation, he passed around a bright red ball labeled “the ball of truth” to engage the audience in his questions about whether the notion of journalistic objectivity is important to them when reading or producing news content.

Some argued that nobody can believe in objectivity these days, while others, including Vallesi, insisted that there is still value and journalists should not abandon the idea altogether.

“I think objectivity is still valuable, but we have to look and say these traditional ways of doing things, are there inequalities inherent to that? Does it limit the diversity of voices?” said Vallesi.

Vallesi also stated that journalists must be adaptable to change, especially in response to the advancements in technology, society

and democracy.

"Journalism ought to be a reflective practice, it's evolving and responsive rather than static," said Vallesi. "There isn't just one way of doing journalism that fits all situations, all geographic areas, all types of stories."

As the roles and routines of journalists continue to change, Darwish questioned whether such traditional role classifications

remain relevant as the industry is shifting to a different, online environment.

"Why should we judge the people who are working in the online environment based on the traditional classifications?" said Darwish. "If you are playing or performing the role of the watchdog, is this better than the infotainment role? Online media has different requirements."



Above left: Panelist Elsayed Darwish from Zayed University participating in a discussion on journalism and objectivity in a panel on shifting landscapes in media systems.

Above right: Davis Vallesi of York University tosses his red "ball of truth" to engage the audience in a discussion about journalistic objectivity in his presentation examining Canadian reporting practices and democratic ideals.

Plain language summary:

- Media researchers believe journalists will have to deal with the risks and changes that come with the rise of technology in the industry.
- University of Leeds' I-Chun Lin's analysis of Taiwanese news revealed that the infotainment role is the only role that increased in online platforms, with journalists being asked to leave more in-depth news analysis for print media.
- For researcher Young Eun Moon, social media is being used by American journalists to build their individual identity and brand. This is not seen with South Korean journalists who believe this might hurt the reputation of their news organization.
- Elsayed Darwish from Zayed University shared research which shows many Arab journalists left the field or switched to working part-time.
- Davis Vallesi of York University noted that it is important to consider the inequalities efforts to obtain objectivity can create, especially in a field like journalism which is "evolving and responsive"

Reluctant journalists and evolving methods: New frameworks for studying journalistic role performance

By Prarthana Pathak and Anna Maria Moubayed

Best practices in communicating with journalists develop as methodologies evolve

Researchers from around the world agreed that while getting journalists to participate in academic research may be difficult, it is crucial to the study of journalism.

Kicking off a panel moderated by TMU associate professor Nicole Blanchett, Tim Vos, a professor at Michigan State University, said more fieldwork could mitigate limitations found in previous journalistic role performance studies that rely on content analysis and surveys.

Referring to Singer's call for more ethnography, where researchers spend time talking to and observing people in a certain environment to study the culture and systems, Vos said such practice would provide a better idea of how the monitorial and watchdog roles are present in newsroom processes, not just in the content produced.



Above: Toronto Metropolitan University's Nicole Blanchett presenting on a panel about the evolving methods of journalistic research.

Vos believes this might help unpack the differences between what journalists profess to be the importance of these functions compared to how often they're performed.

"What we found in studies is that journalistic practitioners talk a big game about these two roles, but very little is shown in journalistic content," he said.

A multi-stage methodological approach of studying role performance that included empirical observation, action research and triangulation with survey findings from sampled local populations would be ideal, said Vos.



Anna von Garmissen and Wiebke Loosen from Leibniz Institute for Media Research in Hamburg and Corinna Lauerer from the LMU Munich were next on the panel. This team from the Worlds of Journalism Study (WJS) explored how journalists, news organizations and the institution of journalism are now facing

increased levels of risk and uncertainty. During their presentation, they shared findings from a representative survey of journalists in Germany that highlighted prevailing challenges related to precarious employment conditions, public discredit, and hate speech. In addition, journalists in Germany perceived their editorial autonomy was slightly decreasing.

Lauerer said the current WJS survey of 1000 German journalists also found some shifts in perceptions: journalists ranked economic-oriented or consumerist reporting as less important, and discrediting disinformation as most important. There was also an increase in journalists wanting to educate audiences in order to motivate them to participate in politics.

Referring to the change in role perceptions, Lauerer said "What we think we saw is a reaction to the Ukraine war and the pandemic in Europe. Both caused an immense need for information."

Nicole Blanchett brought the panel to a close by discussing the

challenges of getting journalists to participate in academic research. Blanchett shared findings from a newly published paper in Journalism Studies, co-authored by Claudia Mellado, Colette Brin, Sama Nemat Allah and Cheryl Vallender, that analyzed the recruitment process for the Journalistic Role Performance project, including interviews with Canadian journalists who were reluctant to participate in surveys.

She said some journalists felt the survey didn't allow them to provide context for questions that needed nuanced answers, or they didn't see the value in the research. Another issue in getting surveys completed was interference from newsroom management.

Problems experienced in Canada were mirrored in other JRP team efforts in both the Global North and South. Journalists from around the world noted they were deterred by organizational interference or by having little room for nuance or contextualization in survey answers.

Blanchett said researchers can implement best practices to challenge these impediments by providing an option for contextualized answers or comments in surveys and, where possible, allowing journalists who are uncomfortable with surveys to do interviews. Building better relationships with journalists, allowing them to engage during the development of the study and accepting their criticism on areas of improvement are also critical.

Journalists who understand the research will vouch for its worth "and help spread the word with their colleagues," creating a "snowball effect" that leads to more journalists from a given newsroom participating in academic research, she said.

The panel came to an end with a lively discussion with the audience that covered everything from the challenges of ethnographic work in digital environments to distrust in journalism.



Plain language summary:

- Observing and working with journalists in the field is important to unpacking differences between journalism ideals and practices, according to Tim Vos of Michigan State University.
- Researchers Anna Von Garmissen and Wiebke Loosen from Leibniz Institute for Media Research in Hamburg and Corinna Laurer from the World of Journalism Study say the uncertainty experienced by German media is due to a lack of resources, unpredictable work conditions and hate speech against journalists.
- TMU associate professor Nicole Blanchett and the Canadian JRP team found that journalists often don't have the time to participate in academic research and feel that surveys don't give them space to provide context to answers, which makes it difficult to recruit newsroom participants.
- Building stronger relationships with journalists and allowing them to be part of processes like survey development is necessary to gaining their cooperation.

Reporting, relationships and resources

By Kaitlyn Stock

How journalists' emotions and newsroom routines impact their relationships with the audience and the enactment of traditional journalistic roles

From Egypt to Kenya to Iceland, researchers are seeing the struggle journalists face as relationships with and expectations of the audience constantly evolve.

In a panel moderated by Toronto Metropolitan University associate professor Lisa Taylor; Hossam Elhamy, assistant professor and researcher at the College of Communication & Media Sciences at Zayed University, and Rasha El-Ibiary, associate professor and researcher at Future University in Egypt, shared their findings about the factors affecting infotainment journalism in five Arab countries. They argued that story subject-type had the greatest influence on this journalistic role.

Overall, they saw an increase in the infotainment journalistic role in Egypt and a decline in hard-news reporting, with the rise of entertainment shows that mimic the hard-news style; however, there were differences dependent on the size of the organization.

"Large media institutions tend to play an infotainment role more than medium or small-sized media outlets [in Egypt]," said Elhamy.

Cecilia Arregui Olivera, a research assistant at Aarhus University, discussed how the interactions (and lack thereof) between national and foreign journalists in Nairobi, Kenya have an impact on their role orientations and performance. She also received a rousing round of applause when she announced she had recently successfully defended her PhD dissertation.

During her presentation, Arregui Olivera focused "on the norms and values" Kenyan journalists, editors, media critics and foreign correspondents uphold, as well as "the constraints they face, and reflections on their own practices."

Arregui Olivera explained that local and foreign journalists are constantly aware of each other's work while reporting in Nairobi. This awareness is somewhat centred on the long-standing perception that foreign news amplifies negative views of Africa.

"Afro-pessimism is this long criticism towards the Western news media to stereotype and marginalize Africa... I think foreign correspondents, and local journalists have this [idea] very much ingrained in their brain," said Arregui Olivera.

Despite this issue, Arregui Olivera said that in the few occasions in which local and foreign journalists work together, locals offer context to ongoing situations in Kenya, while foreigners can exercise their role as watchdog journalists and cover events that may be controversial for locals to report on. However, her findings also suggest that local journalists tend to be in tension between trying to imitate the style and standards of foreign correspondents, while at the same time, attempting to offer counter-narratives to the traditional representations of Kenya abroad.

Researchers Valgerður Jóhannsdóttir and Jón Gunnar Ólafsson from the University of Iceland examined journalistic role changes of Icelandic journalists during the last decade. Their findings revealed that Icelandic journalists are more likely to follow classic journalistic roles, such as scrutinizing those in power in order to give people the information they need to make informed decisions.

Jóhannsdóttir and Gunnar Ólafsson interviewed 30 journalists who mainly noted how important it is for the media to understand information overload, misinformation and disinformation.

Despite the journalists disagreeing that outside forces such as politicians influence their work, they did agree that many felt pressure about how many clicks they were receiving on stories and that this was more pronounced at smaller outlets.

"It became this really competitive aspect, and very linked to the fact that they realize that they need advertisements and clicks," said Gunnar Ólafsson. However, Icelandic journalists remained determined to find alternative ways to get the stories out that the public needed to hear.



Above: From left to right: Rasha El-Ibiary, Hossam Elhamy, Cecilia Arregui Olivera and Valgerður Anna Jóhannsdóttir presenting on a panel discussion on the relationships between newswriters and their audiences.

Plain language summary:

- Hossam Elhamy of Zayed University and Rasha El-Ibiary from Future University in Egypt found that a story's subject in Arab news greatly impacted the infotainment journalistic role. In Egypt, large media institutions played more of an infotainment role.
- Cecilia Arregui Olivera, a researcher at Aarhus University said local journalists offer context to situations in Kenya, while foreigners perform the watchdog role for more controversial events. She also noted there is tension over stereotypes of Africa that are amplified by foreign media.
- Journalists interviewed by Valgerður Jóhannsdóttir and Jón Gunnar Ólafsson from the University of Iceland followed traditional journalism roles, noting a need for media to understand mis/disinformation.

How language and the internet are shaping African journalism

By Natalie Vilhoff

‘Journalists find greater freedom in using their mother tongues,’ yet many explore the role of English and struggle to find identity in a postcolonial context

As news organizations shift towards digital platforms, communities of different cultural and socioeconomic status are adapting to an environment where news is easier to reach.

In a panel moderated by TVA journalist Marie-Claude Paradis-Desfosses, journalism experts presented their research around how news organizations in countries including Gabon, Algeria and the Democratic Republic of the Congo navigate digital media practices amid concerns with language, funding and pressure from biased players.

Riva Vianney M'boumba-M'boumba, researcher at Grenoble-Alpes University, said that in the rural communities of Gabon, the access opportunities or flexibility of digital platforms has allowed easier news access to rural communities. However, there is a disbalance between an “entrepreneurial” desire to enter the field and the socioeconomic status of the country.

“This deployment [of digital news platforms] in rural areas is obviously marked by precariousness, because these areas are completely neglected, completely disconnected from the rest of the country.”

He explained that until recently, rural coverage by traditional national media was insufficient. “This multiplication and diversification of digital media was born out of a desire to provide spaces for broadcasting in rural areas,” he said. “Some journalists and social actors have seized the opportunity to produce editorial content from regions marginalized by national media.”

Local media production is further encouraged by events such as visiting politicians, but M'boumba-M'boumba explained that this has a downside. “It can weaken the quality of journalism,” he said, especially if journalists might want to appear favourably to figures they're reporting on, or if funding from subjects of the story is involved.

“There is tension between journalistic ideals and professional practices in rural areas,” he said.

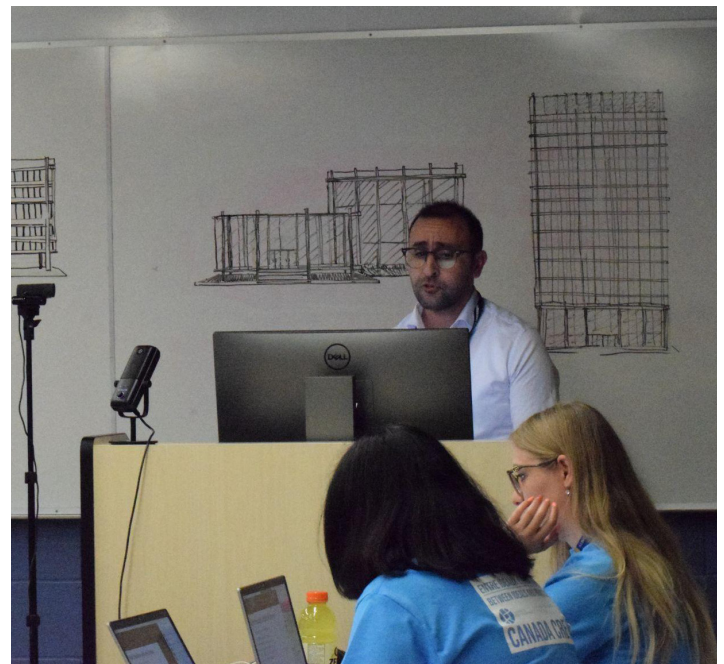
As Gabon's rural communities strive towards more representation among national news, journalists and journalism schools in Algeria are focusing more on English-based reporting

in order to improve connections with Western research and the visibility of Algerian Universities and journalists abroad.

“English is the first global language for scientific research and communications,” said Redouane Touati (photo), a researcher from the Université Yahia Farès de Médéa.

Including more English-language instruction alongside Arabic will serve as a “bridge towards global communication,” he explained. It will eliminate the possibility of misunderstanding due to translation when accessing data from original sources, making it easier for journalists to cover international events and allow them to study in universities across the world.

Touati also highlighted the importance of not being hasty with the integration, and making sure that teachers receive



Above: Redouane Touati, a researcher from the Université Yahia Farès de Médéa, discusses the state of Algerian media education in a panel on post-colonial journalism evolution.

good English training. However, assimilation for both teachers and students will be difficult because English is not familiar to them.

In response to an audience question about the risk of “flattening” or generalizing communities within Algeria under Western-catered journalism, Touati said that while English-language journalism is beneficial on a national and international scale, it shouldn’t be a push against local journalism—which might be in Tamazight, Arabic or French and more accessible and representative of local communities.

The importance of considering the role of language in journalism studies was also brought up by David Cheruiyot, professor at the Centre for Media and Journalism Studies at the University of Groningen.

He mentioned the debate around English as the lingua franca, or common language of research. While some hold the position that English is crucial in building journalism-research fields, the use of English as a “sterilization filter” has become a hindrance towards a more meaningful engagement with scholarly works in other languages.

Cheruiyot added that it’s important for Africa-oriented scholars to find a “voice” within journalism studies. “Especially within the English-speaking world, we don’t see a lot of research from African countries.”



In a recent [essay](#), Cheruiyot highlighted aspects of the sub-field of African journalism studies, including its aim to provide non-Western perspectives to global journalism debates, and the importance of relying on research from within the continent.

He added that while encouraging African knowledge production, there must be caution placed on not creating a “core within the periphery.”

“The world powers have strategic interest in some countries like South Africa, Kenya, Ghana, Nigeria or even Egypt,” Cheruiyot said. “And these are countries that also enjoy the advantage of being studied a lot.”

In his research focused on the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Pierre N’sana Bitentu, from the Université Libre de Bruxelles, observed the rise in local languages being used in reporting.

“The RDC is home to several tribes and a rich linguistic diversity,” he said. Despite having four national languages, French is the official language and is widely taught in schools.

Due to the inaccessibility of education for nearly 40 per cent of the population “those who speak French enjoy a certain prestige, because they are considered part of the elite,” Bitentu said. He added that this ideology expands to the media.

However, rather than being used disparagingly, there has been a rise in the use of local languages in platforms such as television, radio, print and political debates. “French is beginning to lose its media presence,” Bitentu said, because the newsroom landscape is changing.

“There is a young generation of journalists who have arrived thanks to digital platforms such as Youtube, and have ended up finding a space in traditional media. And they’ve never used French on television—they arrived with Lingala,” Bitentu said.

Highlighting the importance of local language in journalism, Bitentu said that using their native language helps to build a better connection between journalists and their audience, and allows journalists to focus more on writing rather than the grammar of a second language.

“Journalists find greater freedom in using their mother tongues,” Bitentu said. “They express themselves more freely.”

Plain language summary:

- ❑ Research by Riva Vianney M'boumba-M'boumba from Grenoble-Alpes University revealed that while news access has improved thanks to digital media, rural areas are still neglected and misrepresented in the news in Gabon.
- ❑ Journalism education in Algeria is shifting towards English-based reporting to improve connections with Western research and improve visibility of Algerian journalism abroad, according to Redouane Touati from the Université Yahia Farès de Médéa. Touati emphasized that while studying media in English is important to journalism on a national and international scale, it shouldn’t take the space of studying and practicing local journalism (which is reported in the Tamazight, Arabic or French language).
- ❑ David Cheruiyot from the University of Groningen pushed for African researchers to find their voice in journalism studies and to consider the English language’s centrality in media and its impacts on how we engage with marginalized cultures, societies and languages.
- ❑ Pierre N’sana Bitentu, from the Université Libre de Bruxelles saw a rise in local languages being used in reporting in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. A younger generation of journalists and new platforms of delivery are leading to more reporting in the Lingala language instead of only in French

The complexity of beat reporting

By Apurva Bhat

Experts explore role performance within politics, sports, finance and investigative journalism

New research on beat reporting shows that despite evidence of sensationalism in the news, objectivity and impartiality remain critical components to journalists no matter what their specialty or mode of delivery. But there are still unique challenges in the coverage of certain beats.

In a panel moderated by TMU journalism professor April Lindgren, the dynamic discussion started with research on how political journalists in Austria and Germany present themselves on Twitter. Maximilian Eder, a research assistant at the Department of Media and Communication at LMU Munich, did a manual

content analysis of roughly 900 tweets from 149 influential political reporters regarding the so-called Ibiza affair, an Austrian political scandal.

Eder suggested that because political scandals have become an everyday phenomenon, and political polarization is growing, there could be an expectation that journalists might be less likely to be objective and impartial when covering these scandals. However, his research showed that this isn't the case.

"Sixty per cent [of the tweets analyzed] did not attack a certain topic or politician," said Eder. "Although it's a very



Above: Brian Ming Hang So (left), program director of the Financial Journalism stream at Hong Kong Baptist University, presenting his research on the evolving roles of financial journalists in a beat-reporting panel moderated by TMU's April Lindgren (right).

polarized media, we see that objectivity and impartiality are still of importance, even on Twitter.”

Daniel Jackson, a professor of Media and Communication at Bournemouth University, presented the preliminary findings of a study that sought to explore understudied roles in sports journalism. The goal of the study was to understand how these roles differ depending on a variety of variables, such as domestic or foreign coverage and private versus non-profit news organizations.

Jackson and his team conducted a manual content analysis of nearly 50,000 sports stories published in 37 countries in 2020. According to their findings, sports news is characterized by high levels of interventionism and infotainment.

Jackson said sports reporters have a longstanding image in the industry, and within academia, of essentially being fans who cheer for their idols while failing to keep their distance from them – but the researchers’ analysis suggests something different. Sports journalists performed “limited watchdog functions” and also weren’t “mouthpieces or cheerleaders for the powerful.”

Role performance of sports journalists was also fairly stable no matter the socio-political context, indicating that sports reporting roles are practiced in more universal ways than other beats.

“This could be a result of globalization of sports media, which has had a marginalizing effect on how sports should be presented,” said Jackson. “It’s less vulnerable to some of the aspects of censorship, political influence, too.”

Brian Ming Hang So, an associate professor of practice and program director of the Financial Journalism stream at Hong Kong Baptist University was up next to discuss his research on what roles financial journalists perform.

“When I was a journalist, I noticed that financial journalism was under-researched in the field,” said So. This trend has continued despite a significant increase in financial news around the world, particularly in the last few decades.

Through interviewing 20 Hong Kong journalists, So discovered that the majority placed strong emphasis on their duties as disseminators providing market-centered information.

He also outlined the challenges facing journalists covering the financial beat: “You may think that their role is passive and easy but the new media era has led to an ultra-high-speed stock market, extra content requirements and an increase in the number of listed companies,” he said. As a result, financial journalists have fewer resources to perform a watchdog role.

The presentations concluded with Rui Alexandre Novais from Universidade Catolica Portuguesa-CEFH, who focused on the role of investigative journalists’

Novais examined over 6,000 news stories, data from surveys on the general role orientation of Portuguese journalists, and interviews with 12 senior journalists.

He found that investigative journalists stick to a specific beat. For instance, investigative journalists working within the economic news beat would only focus on news pertaining to that beat. “If it’s politically related, they will send it to their colleagues,” said Novais.

The interviewees also mentioned restrictions they’ve encountered. Despite being senior reporters, the journalists sometimes struggle to comprehend complex financial information received in public relations material, Novais said. Furthermore, accessing documentation is difficult because the primary players are banks or regulators, and none of them have an open access policy.

During the post-presentation Q-and-A session, the future of beat reporting was discussed. Lindgren suggested that a greater emphasis could be placed on highlighting that these beats, while focusing on specific job orientations, could do so much more important work. Sports, for example, could focus on concerns in equity, diversity and inclusion issues, or financial factors – moving outside the usual borders of sports reporting.

Plain language summary:

- Despite an expectation for less objectivity in reporting amid rising political scandals in media, Maximilian Eder’s research on political journalists in Austria and Germany revealed that 60 per cent of tweets studied related to the Ibiza scandal “did not attack a certain topic or politician.”
- While sports reporters are often seen more as fans than journalists, research done by Daniel Jackson and his team from Bournemouth University showed little “cheerleading” for the elites. Sport journalism roles were also practiced more consistently globally than other beats.
- Brian Ming Hang So found that journalists on the finance beat placed a lot of emphasis on sharing information about the markets, but had fewer resources to perform the watchdog role.
- Novais found that financial jargon and inaccessibility to bank documents were difficulties encountered by Portuguese investigative journalists reporting on the economy.

Representation and journalistic responsibility

By Drew-Anne Glennie

Experts discuss how journalistic norms and ideals impact public perceptions

Strictly adhering to traditional journalistic roles can have dire consequences when it comes to representation, whether it be a story on unhoused people or the Muslim community, according to researchers on a panel moderated by Toronto Metropolitan University instructor and freelance journalist Shenaz Kermalli.

Nadi Haq, a postdoctoral fellow at Cardiff University, Zoomed in from Wales to speak about her study, which used concepts developed by cultural theorist Stuart Hall. Hall said that journalistic norms and ideals, such as objectivity, legitimacy and balance, both distance journalists from their work and uphold the hegemonic status quo, which in the case of Haq's study is Islamophobia. Haq found that stories in the British press repeatedly framed Muslims in an unduly negative light. She explained that it is the norms of journalistic roles themselves that serve to perpetuate the problem.

Based on her interviews with British journalists, Haq argued that objectivity both curtails challenging anti-Muslim bias and protects journalists who reproduce it, while unreflective balance means that minority voices have lesser weight than dominant ones even when they are represented.



Professor Laura Moorhead from San Francisco State University shared her findings on the [San Francisco Chronicle's 2016 Homeless Project](#). The goal of the project was to get journalists to write different kinds of stories about homelessness. However, a content analysis showed that the content produced wasn't that different from the types of stories that had always been done.

Journalists claimed to be giving a "voice to the voiceless," but most articles did not quote non-white men or women and only 50 per cent quoted women at all; 70 per cent quoted white males, but female and non-white journalists did have more source diversity.

When journalists included sources with lived experiences of homelessness, the articles were more positive, longer and had more sources. A big issue, though, was that 92% of articles quoted experts, and only experts, often the same ones over and over. As such, experts and white males became the default voice of homelessness.

Darsana Vijay, a PhD student at the University of Toronto's Faculty of Information hailing from Kerala, India, explained that in India misinformation is employed by elite-owned/aligned media to spread their ideology, including the marginalization of minority groups. Alternate outlets like The Wire provide another voice, grounded in the conventional tenets of journalism like inclusivity, transparency, verification and reporting, but even then there can be issues.



Vijay examined a Wire series on an app called Tek Fog that was reportedly designed to spread misinformation. The Wire later [pulled the story](#) because of concerns over the veracity of reporting, and is conducting an internal review. Nevertheless, the piece showed how the voice of what Vijay described as the "tech bro" is fetishized, distancing the journalism from the political and justice dimensions of the story.

During the question period, one of the attendees – a journalist working in Toronto – probed Moorhead on reliance on the same expert sources, admitting that she herself has done it before. Moorhead said that professional norms and structural constraints like deadlines and word-counts push journalists to keep writing the same story. As such, the next phase of her research is looking further into how the work of journalists with good intentions winds up at odds with how they perceive themselves.

Lisa Taylor, a Toronto Metropolitan University journalism professor attending the panel, asked Haq how to distill the valuable lessons shared in her presentation to Taylor's undergraduate students. "The most important thing in terms of upcoming journalists is to be aware of these institutional factors," Haq said. "You can still, as a journalist, find small ways, small chinks in the armour of institutions you work in."

Haq added, "This issue of negative representation of minorities... it's been going on for decades and it doesn't seem able to be fixed. I think all we can do is to try to keep pushing back against that and try not to get too disillusioned in the process."



Above: Presenter Darsana Vijay from University of Toronto's Faculty of Information and moderator Shenaz Kermalli in a panel on exploring representation of marginalized communities.

Plain language summary:

- Nadi Haq from Cardiff University found that in the British press, Muslims were frequently represented negatively. Interviews with British journalists showed that journalistic objectivity rarely changes these representations and protects journalists who recreate bias in their journalism.
- Professor Laura Moorhead, who explored reporting of the houseless community in San Francisco, explained that most articles supported a harmful norm of only citing white, male "experts," but including those with lived experiences frames houseless communities more positively. (**Note: we use the newer term houseless instead of homeless here because community members are not necessarily without homes – or belongings, love, and community – but rather don't have a government housing address.)
- Darsana Vijay from University of Toronto's Faculty of Information says in India misinformation is used by elite media to spread their own agenda (like a series that was specifically created to spread inaccurate information). Outlets like The Wire have the potential to offer more inclusive and transparent reporting but other issues can emerge (like an article that had to be pulled because of questions about its accuracy).



Journalism and democracy: The role of journalists in Latin America and East Asia

By Prarthana Pathak

How do political, economic and cultural factors intersect to influence how journalists' serve the public?

Different political climates can result in journalistic practices being closer to or further away from Western journalistic ideals, according to experts from Latin America and East Asia.

Discussions on democracy around the globe started with University of Edinburgh's Ricardo Ribeiro Ferreira who explained that most research on media in Brazil is focused on political economy and less on the professional practice of journalism. He also noted that the quality of democracy is in a state of decline in Brazil, despite the fact it is a democratic country with a political environment akin to India and South Africa.

In terms of journalistic practice in Brazil, labour precarity is a crucial driving factor: "Working conditions and job insecurity are more than a deficiency in the news industry," said Ferreira. His study

found that due to journalists' labour conditions and their interest in moving up the ladder at news organizations, their reporting suffers. Journalists work in a "non-democratic" way, which leads to an unfair representation of key political events.

Ferreira concluded that in contrast to previous perceptions, journalists "emulate American watchdogs, but actually they're pursuing specific motives," including engaging with political powers on their own terms in order to advance their personal agenda.

Jesús Arroyave from Universidad del Norte was joined by his colleagues, Carlos Cortés-Martínez and Andrea Cancino-Borbón to discuss their research, which aimed to compare Johan Galtung's conceptual framework on peace journalism with journalistic role performance regarding the armed conflict in Colombia. Colombia has been in conflict for over sixty years.



Assistant professor Sonya Fatah started the panel with an informative land acknowledgement and briefed the audience about the university's name change from Ryerson University to Toronto Metropolitan University. "It's an important part of our understanding as we discuss these issues today, and how it connects to the role of a journalist," said Fatah. She described the 'Dish with One Spoon' Treaty, emphasizing the importance of interpreting our place in society and acknowledging the privilege of our democracy.

Right: Assistant professor Sonya Fatah from Toronto Metropolitan's School of Journalism moderating a panel on the state of journalism in different democracies.



“Media plays an important role as a contributor to war. But the media can also contribute to peace,” said Cortés-Martínez.

By using Galtung’s framework, the team surveyed 300 journalists nationwide to look at what they want to do versus what they’re willing to do. Although coverage of psychological damage, local civilians, non-elitists and the overall “invisible defect of war” has increased in the last five years since the signing of the peace agreement, the coverage of these issues is very minimal.

The emphasis remains on physical health and reactive reporting on the war. Even though more journalists are aware of their role in society and want to move away from official sources and include more civilian voices, media outlets are powered by elitist politicians, and that makes the media market for peace journalism very small.

“It’s important to change the role that journalists play in this country,” said Cancino-Borbón.

Dasniel Olivera from Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México believes role performance in Cuban journalism is characterized by a strong structure of loyalty with emphasis on support for the nation. He discussed the internal variations of the loyal-facilitator role within national media in Cuba.

The loyalty structure in the performance of Cuban journalism varies by geographic frame, media ownership, media platform and media outlets. For example, newspapers and radio ranked higher for the presence of loyal-facilitator roles because they focus on domestic issues and are partisan media. Olivera said that, in the case of state media, “we need to be cautious because there are variations.” However, overall, state media showed greater emphasis on support for the nation.

Misook Lee, a professor at Otsuma Women’s University,

brought the panel to a close with a presentation on the function of journalism in Taiwan, South Korea and Japan. Her research addressed the ongoing concerns about political polarization and the rise of xenophobic attacks across America and parts of Europe, and whether those concerns are an issue in East Asian society.

Lee said the media systems in Taiwan and South Korea are highly polarized because the countries were under Japanese Imperial rule with brief U.S. occupation and dictatorial governments until 1987 when they achieved democracy. Lee believes South Korea has comparatively more polarization as its primarily conservative news delivery is often criticized by the public. Japan is the least polarized because it has a stable market for traditional media. Taiwan, though polarized, had the highest press freedom in Asia in 2022.

Using the journalistic role performance framework, research showed media systems in polarized societies are in competition with authoritarian roles, hence the desire for democratization from citizens and a more liberal media market. Lee asserted that political polarization is an outcome of democracy, as opposed to a crisis of democracy.

In an enthusiastic Q-and-A, Ferreira was asked whether he had found any differences between journalists working in different environments. He said performing a particular job in the newsroom resulted in a particular way of interpreting practice. For example, if journalists “were an editor or at production level, it affected how they rationalize and justify their point of view and role in the media,” said Ferreira.

He also said age plays a role. If the journalist is younger, they are more likely to resist instruction in reporting from news organizations whereas more senior journalists embrace instruction primarily due to job security.

Plain language summary:

- According to University of Edinburgh’s Ricardo Ribeiro Ferreira, difficult work conditions in Brazilian society and media have led journalists to report in “non-democratic” ways for personal gain.
- Researchers from the Universidad del Norte’s analysis of Colombian journalists and media found an emphasis on reactive war reporting but journalists are working to centre more civilians in their journalism.
- Dasniel Olivera from Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México thinks role performance in Cuban journalism centres on strong support for elites and the nation. However, even in the case of state media there can be variations in the performance of this role.
- Misook Lee of Otsuma Women’s University believes that polarization is evidence of democracy rather than a crisis of democracy. Her research showed that polarized media in divided societies can result in opposition to state authorities, leading to a desire for more democratic politics in East Asian media systems.

Between language and politics: How do cultural factors influence journalistic identities?

By Natalie Vilhoff

In countries with different linguistic zones, journalism researchers are looking at the influence of language on professional journalistic identities.

Florence Le Cam (photo), professor at the Université libre de Bruxelles, outlined the issues for journalism in Belgium, a country with three national languages (English, French and German), each spoken in relatively separate territories.

“Flemish and French-language media, in particular, are for the most part quite distinct entities,” noted Le Cam.

“They have different audiences, and when media are presented as bilingual, they produce different media for each community.”

But through data collected on journalists’ age, their relationship with sources and public or organizational violence, among other things, the researchers found that language is not the most influential factor in the differences between Belgian journalists.

“Senior journalists—and particularly senior women journalists—



Above: Panelist Florence Le Cam in a panel conversation on cultural factors impacting journalistic roles and identities.

face more difficulties than their male colleagues,” explained Le Cam. “In this context, gender and age are variables that have hit journalists harder than the language variable.”

Major current events sometimes seem to have a greater influence on journalism than language or cultural context.

In the course of her research, Université de Sherbrooke professor Marie-Eve Carignan studied how journalism in Quebec has changed in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic. “The media is really going to have an impact on how we understand the crisis,” she said. Carignan explained that people tend to retain and value content that receives greater media coverage.

Particularly in high-risk situations, journalists play an essential role in disseminating information that helps people understand risks and take action.

“You have to explain what’s going on so that people understand, and you have to make sure that this information is properly distributed, so that people can internalize the information and understand how it affects them, so that they can take action in the face of the crisis,” explained Carignan.

But the information overload, both local and national, and the precarious working conditions put a lot of pressure on journalists. They experienced work overload and had to sort through the information to be disseminated.

Carignan observed that journalists were faced with a dilemma regarding their responsibilities. On one hand, they felt pressure to be the government’s spokespersons, even if certain measures seemed to be more political than based on public health advice. On the

other hand, journalists didn’t want to criticize measures that could potentially prevent a pandemic. “Journalists felt torn between their roles as watchdogs and protectors of citizens,” she said.

In his research comparing the media environment in Quebec and the rest of Canada, Université de Montréal professor Simon Thibault also found that the cultural “zones” show no notable differences in the degree of ideological orientation of journalists, nor in the politicization of the press.

His survey of experts in various Canadian regions showed “no data to differentiate the experts’ findings, to find indicative differences between the perception of Québec media and media in other provinces.”

Thibault found that the experts perceive Canadian journalists to have strong training and professional ethics, enabling them to play the role of watchdog. Yet they also perceive certain ideological biases, which calls into question the idea that “Canadian media can act as impartial mediators in societal debates.”

Commenting on his research of Belgian journalism, Olivier Standaert, professor at the Université Catholique de Louvain, noted that “socio-economic, historical and ideological factors are as important as linguistic ones.”

Standaert explained that in the context of globalization, national identity is becoming increasingly fluid, which means that the geographical and individual anchors of the media are beginning to detach: “Culture is likely to gradually lose its explanatory power when we try to analyze individual behavior. We live in a multilingual, multicultural world.”

Plain language summary:

- According to Université libre de Bruxelles professor Florence Le Cam, gender and age more notably affect the experience of Belgian journalists than language, despite the Flemish, French and German zones having separate media entities.
- In Canada, when comparing Quebec media to other provinces, Université de Montréal professor Simon Thibault also found that the cultural “zones” show no notable differences in the degree of ideological orientation of journalists, nor in the politicization of the press.
- According to Université de Sherbrooke professor Marie-Eve Carignan, people tend to retain and value content that receives greater media coverage.
- Olivier Standaert, professor at the Université Catholique de Louvain noted that as globalization leads to national identity becoming increasingly fluid, “culture is likely to gradually lose its explanatory power when we try to analyze individual behavior”.

Covering a public health crisis: COVID-19's effect on journalistic role performance

By Kaitlyn Stock

Researchers dissect the socio-political shifts in newsrooms brought on by the pandemic

From political polarization to lack of access to information, COVID-19 created complex and even precarious working conditions for journalists the world over. In a panel moderated by Karen Owen, an associate professor from Mount Royal University and a member of the JRP Canada team, researchers from Australia to Egypt presented their findings on journalistic role performance during the first year of the pandemic.

Xin Zhao, a senior lecturer and programme leader at Bournemouth University, shared results from a content analysis of more than 4,000 news stories from 15 national news outlets across television, radio, print and online platforms, all published throughout 2020 in the United Kingdom.

Her team's work in the U.K. supported previous studies that consistently identified the prevalence of the service role in the coverage of public health crises.

Although traditionally the U.K. journalism culture tended to demonstrate a more factual rather than interventionist role, when it came to COVID-19 stories, U.K. journalists were more explicit in using their own voice in a story. Zhao said there was also more prevalence of the civic role, and less of the infotainment role when comparing pandemic stories with the non-COVID-19 stories.

David Nolan and Jee Young Lee from the University of Canberra examined if reporting on COVID-19 reflected a 'consensus-based' approach, whether Australia's media system was becoming more polarized based on COVID-19 coverage, and how that polarization compared to reporting in the United States.

They concluded that there was no direct evidence of polarization in either Australia's or the United States' media systems, but online outlets were more interventionist. However, Nolan cautioned that "it's also hard to discern what material patterns are based on the sampling procedure because these are strongly event-based findings based on the news of the day that the sampling took place."

Comparing Australia to the United States, Nolan and Lee

ultimately discovered there were significant differences.

"The pandemic was highly, highly divisive, politicized, and indeed, politically weaponized, with disparities between governments and health services [in the United States], whilst in other places, including Australia, it was relatively consensual. There was bipartisan support for a couple of strong health measures," said Nolan.

In Egypt, however, citizens were left with little information about the state of the pandemic due to a lack of transparency and censorship. Rasha El-Ibiary, an associate professor and researcher at Future University in Egypt highlighted how journalists in the United Arab Emirates had many sources available to help produce content and provide reliable facts to their citizens "as a part of implementing the strategic media agenda set by the government."

However, she and co-author Maha Abdulajeed found journalists in Egypt faced difficulties gaining access to officials or information on COVID-19. El-Ibiary said the disparities between the two countries in terms of media and government systems make them ideal comparators.

Similar to El-Ibiary's research, Miral Sabry AlAshry, vice dean and researcher at Future University in Egypt, discussed her work on how Arab governments restricted access to information and freedom of expression. In Egypt, for example, 546 websites were blocked in 2020.

Through a group discussion with 20 journalists from Egypt, Libya, Jordan and Tunisia, AlAshry also found that journalists from these countries can be the targets of violence and imprisonment if they do not follow censorship laws. During the pandemic, Egyptian human rights activist Bahey el-Din Hassan received a 15-year sentence for posting content about the pandemic on Twitter.

AlAshry said that there needs to be solutions for Arab journalists to access important information regarding COVID-19 without facing government persecution. She suggested adopting national plans of action to help support the safety of journalists as an important step.



Above: David Nolan from the University of Canberra presenting on political polarization in Australian news, on a panel examining the effects of the pandemic on the roles of journalists worldwide.

Plain language summary:

- ❑ In a panel examining the impacts of COVID-19 on journalism, Bournemouth University's Xin Zhao shared research that indicates U.K. journalists were more obvious in using their own voice when reporting on the pandemic. COVID-19 stories also had more service and civic roles when compared to non-COVID stories.
- ❑ David Nolan and Jee Young Lee from the University of Canberra concluded that while the sampling process isn't perfect, there was no direct evidence of polarization in either Australia's or the United States' media systems. However, online platforms were more likely to use their own voices in stories.
- ❑ Rasha El-Ibiary from Future University in Egypt identified censorship and a lack of resources as difficulties faced by Egyptian journalists covering the pandemic.
- ❑ Miral Sabry AlAshry's discussion with 20 journalists from Egypt, Libya, Jordan and Tunisia found that Arab governments restricted journalists' access to information, and that a national plan of action was necessary to support Arab reporters facing persecution.

The transition to digital reporting and the integration of AI is challenging many journalists

By Sarah Grishpul

‘You have to be willing to learn, otherwise you’re going to be left behind’ say journalists and journalism researchers studying newsroom tech

The transition from print and broadcast to online newsrooms has affected journalistic roles and perceptions, as technological advancements in Artificial Intelligence (AI) and digital reporting have created new challenges and opportunities for journalists.



In a panel moderated by TMU associate professor Nicole Blanchett, Marenet Jordaan, a lecturer and researcher at Stellenbosch University’s Journalism department, shared findings on the transition to digital reporting at a South African news publication, [Netwerk24](#). In her study, she used habitus — a person’s individual place in a particular field that is understood both through their past socialization and current experience—as an analytical tool to observe the way journalists responded to the changes in their social workplace.

“One could say that journalists become socialized as they move through the newsroom,” said Jordaan, such as understanding what is newsworthy, what defines good journalism, how journalists should act and what can be considered as ethical behaviour.

Newspaper journalists in her study had to learn to adapt to new technologies and work alongside a small team of digital journalists when the print and digital newsrooms were combined. According to Jordaan, many of the journalists spoke individually about the pressure of having to be multi-skilled and generate a large internet presence. As one journalist told her, “You have to be willing to learn, otherwise you’re going to be left behind.”

Others noted concerns about the lack of internal communication, disruptions in leadership, and an influx of new staff on a regular basis. Many senior journalists, who were unsure of what

their roles were in this digital news environment, fell “back on that default newspaper mode.”

Aynur Sansakaloğlu, a postdoctoral research associate in the Media Studies Department at Technische Universität Ilmenau, described journalism to be “in a constant state of transformation” with the interplay of journalism and technology, such as AI, resulting in emerging social-technical newsrooms.

Research findings indicated that while AI technology is not a threat to journalism professionals, upskilling is necessary to prevent homogenization and enrich journalistic practices.

“Skills related to AI implementation and utilization are crucial, the ability to critically reflect on the ethical, social and cultural implications of AI is equally significant,” said Sansakaloğlu. “Journalists need to understand that AI technology is not a neutral technology.”

When it comes to ethical practices regarding the use of AI in newsrooms, Angela Misri, an assistant professor in the Journalism program at Toronto Metropolitan University, pointed out that there is a lack of ethics policy surrounding the use of AI in media.

Canadian journalists often rely on the guidelines outlined by the Canadian Association of Journalists where the definitions of AI methods and journalistic ethics are not clearly defined.

Working with Blanchett and TMU professor April Lindgren on a study on the impact of AI on journalistic roles and ethical boundaries, Misri said they found that many journalists still don’t understand how AI is being used in the newsroom.

“We need to be talking about the ethics, we need to be talking about the transparency of what we’re doing, we need to be talking about raising the literacy of AI for everyone in the



Above: Toronto Metropolitan University journalism associate professor Nicole Blanchett and assistant professor Angela Misri on a panel examining the impacts of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in journalism.

newsroom," said Misri.

Among the Canadian journalists interviewed for the study, many were adamant that AI tools were never meant to take the role of a journalist. However, Misri said that there are some audience members who believe AI takes away the bias of a journalist.

"Are we handing our honour and what we built with journalistic ethics over to an AI hoping that it rescues us from what the audience perceives of [journalists]?" questioned Misri. "How does this help with fake news? Public trust is definitely something I've been thinking about."

Towards the end of the panel, there was a lively discussion surrounding the ethical use of Sana, [India's first Artificial Intelligence news anchor](#).

"As a journalist it worries me because of representation. So, if you think that's what every journalist should look like, how do I compete with that?" said Misri. "As an academic, I have a lot of questions about who's in the room making these decisions."



When it came to the evolving prominence of AI in newsrooms, audience members had differing opinions on the possible dangers of this technology.

"We need to calm down, we're only talking about weak AI, it's not a self-thinking, self-creating magical thing," said Maximilian Eder. "Right now, we are only scratching the surface. We don't really need to worry here."

However, another audience member, Ivor Shapiro, professor emeritus at TMU, insisted that there remained a need to get ahead of the impending future of self-sufficient AI technology. He spoke on the dangers of a lack of transparency in newsrooms when it came to AI content creation.

"The most depressing slide was for people to say in newsrooms, 'we know content that we are processing to the public is generated by Artificial Intelligence, but we don't know what it is, we don't know how much there is, we can't identify where that has happened, and, therefore, basically, we cannot provide factual information to our audiences,'" said Shapiro. "It feels like a terribly sad moment."

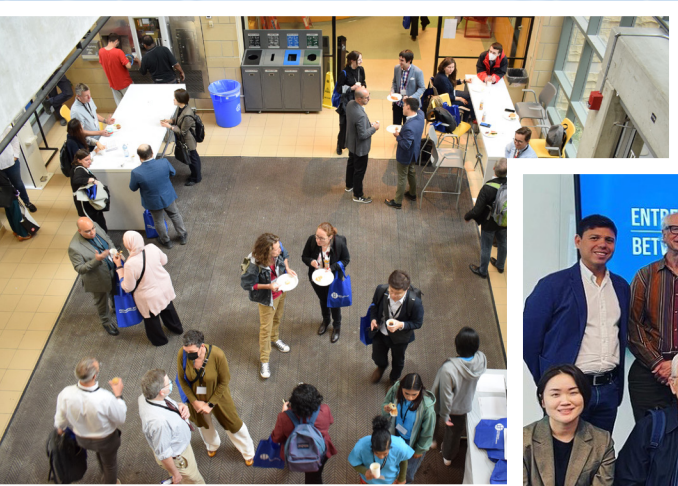


Above: TMU professor emeritus Ivor Shapiro discussing the ethical consideration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in the Q&A portion of the panel.

Plain language summary:

- Marnet Jordaan from Stellenbosch University says that as journalists move through their careers, they feel a need to behave, learn and adapt to what the newsroom/industry requires of them, leading to organizational and individual pressures.
- Technische Universität Ilmenau's Aynur Sansakaloglu believes the relationship between journalists and technology benefits both parties and while it's not a threat to jobs, AI becomes less effective when we don't learn how to use it appropriately and ethically.
- Ethics in AI and journalism was discussed by TMU's Angela Misri. Her research reveals that many Canadian journalists don't completely understand the place of AI in newsrooms.
- The panel engaged in a discussion surrounding Sana, India's first Artificial Intelligence news anchor and acknowledged the AI's potential impacts on representation, journalistic ethics and transparency

Gallery



The intersection of journalism and politics in restricted environments

By Drew-Anne Glennie

Studying journalistic role performance can help us better understand how the press works under authoritarian regimes

Experts came to TMU from around the world to discuss journalism under authoritarianism and its impact on the press. Researchers were united by an interest in journalistic role performance in contrasting, yet similar, economic circumstances.

David Blanco-Herrero, a PhD student at the University of Salamanca in Spain, shared findings from the authoritarian-socialist regimes of Cuba and Venezuela, both of which he identified as struggling economically and having low press freedom.

Previous research has shown that the loyal-facilitator and interventionist roles are common in authoritarian regimes, which

means the press supporting, representing or visibly defending the state or government.

Blanco-Herrero said the latest wave of the JRP study found interventionism was still common in both countries, but the loyal-facilitator role was only really significant in Cuba and in state-owned Venezuelan outlets, indicating at least a degree of press freedom in the latter.

Nagwa Fahmy, an associate professor at Zayed University, presented a paper she co-authored on loyal-facilitators in Arab media systems. Her team found that the loyal-facilitator role is the most prevalent role across 49 major news outlets in Egypt, Kuwait,



Above: The Between Ideals and Practices conference featured a series of panels on journalistic role performance in a period of transformation, including one exploring the impact on journalism in differing socio-political contexts.

Lebanon, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates.

Data for this paper came from 13,299 news stories published during 2020 in newspaper, television, radio and online news outlets.

Fahmy said they found the most prominent practices in local news coverage were providing positive images of the elite, defending or supporting activities and policies, promoting and emphasizing progress and success of the country, and using unilateral types of sources and points-of-view.

Anna Litvinenko of Freie Universität Berlin is studying regime-critical Russian journalists who have been increasingly censored and criminalized, particularly following the full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022.

Litvinenko, who received her PhD in Russia and previously taught at Saint Petersburg University, found that due to a variety of both individual and external factors, exiled Russian journalists' perceptions of their roles have changed over time since fleeing their country in 2022.

Restrictive laws in Russia, where even pronouncing the word "war" in relation to the situation in Ukraine can lead to a jail sentence, has shifted the reference frame for activism in journalism.

Terje Skjerdal, a professor at NLA University College in Norway and a member of the JRP project Executive Committee, studies political parallelism, or the extent to which a country's media landscape mirrors its political one.

While direct ownership has traditionally been the key indicator to determine political parallelism, Skjerdal feels that researchers need to consider media output as well. He suggested using the JRP

project's data to achieve this, which includes not only its content analysis but data on source type and diversity.

The audience – just as cosmopolitan as the panel they were attending – were particularly inquisitive about Skjerdal's applications of JRP indicators, given that authoritarian regimes are known for censorship over political diversity.

Even panel-member Litvinenko questioned how the use of a democratic concept like political parallelism could be used here. In response, Skjerdal noted that when Western researchers first posed the idea of political parallelism in the 1970s, it was used to show how different democracies approach the relationship between their media and democratic systems.

"But somehow, we need to speak about this also for more or less authoritarian countries and to me it does make sense," said Skjerdal.

Discussion with the audience also prompted comments from Litvinenko, who touched on the difficulties for journalists in exile to build a platform as well as the challenges caused by the growing gap between these exiles and the journalists still working at home.

Blanco-Herrero expanded on the differences between Cuba and Venezuela, particularly how the latter is a much younger authoritarian country and, as such, has a bit more freedom.

The impactful conversation prompted panel moderator Marcel Hartmann, a journalist and communications Master's student at the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul in Brazil and Laval University, to say, "Questions from the audience can better our research and our presentations."

Plain language summary:

- Research by David Blanco-Herrero from the University of Salamanca shows that even amid their authoritarian-socialist regimes, Cuban and Venezuelan media still hold a degree of press freedom.
- The loyal-facilitator was the most observed role in analysis done by Nagwa Famy's Zayed of Arab media systems in Egypt, Kuwait, Lebanon, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates.
- Anna Litvinenko of Freie Universität Berlin found that particularly after Russia's invasion of Ukraine, Russian journalists have been pushed towards a form of advocacy journalism that criticizes the government.
- Terje Skjerdal from NLA University College in Norway believes that researchers must also look to news stories when analyzing how a country's media system reflects its political system.

Locating your audience

By Apurva Bhat

Story styles and content today are far more in tune with what the audience wants

The evolution in journalists' roles can be observed in a variety of ways, including the rise in lifestyle journalism, TikToks generated by news organizations, and in how journalists view their responsibilities. That's according to journalism experts who shared their research on the ways journalists' roles are developing in relation to the audience's needs.

The lively discussion began with moderator Adrian Ma, an assistant professor at Toronto Metropolitan University's School of Journalism, introducing Lydia Cheng, a PhD student at the University of Sydney.

Cheng's ongoing study examines the role orientation of lifestyle journalists. She said that research on lifestyle journalism has been limited due to a long-standing emphasis on democracy and political reporting, which has resulted in a lack of a defined role structure for lifestyle journalists. However, there is an increase in both lifestyle journalism and audience demand for it.



Lifestyle journalism focuses on the types of subject matter viewers would like to see. Before developing content, creators think about what information a viewer would want to view or would relate to: "The audience are not treated like citizens, but rather individual consumers where the content relates more to individual matters," said Cheng.

Cheng believes there is a shift in journalists' and newsrooms' emphasis on audience interaction and interest and the public's desire for newer, fresher forms of news delivery.

Journalism researchers Verena Albert and Wiebke Loosen from the Leibniz Institute of Media Research Hans-Bredow Institut conducted a study that revealed the perspectives of German journalists and citizens are identical when it comes to what journalism should prioritize. This leads to a balance between what the public expects journalists to report on and what journalists believe they should report on.

"There was a point where even journalism researchers didn't care about the audience, similar to journalists back then," said Loosen. "However, considering the audience is becoming increasingly useful and we are seeing journalists engaging in different relationship practices."

Newer types of media such as TikTok and Instagram have entered the market, prompting journalists to generate news in more innovative formats that deviate from traditional reporting patterns.

Trish Audette-Longo, an assistant professor at Carleton University's School of Journalism and Communication is conducting research on how journalists present themselves and their work on TikTok. She is analyzing about 2000 TikTok posts produced by journalists in Canadian news organizations in 2022.

"When looking at content produced under the umbrella of organizations, we can start to see that there are opportunities for journalists to collaborate," said Audette-Longo. "We can perceive that there's institutional support for experiments in storytelling, branding and editorial selection." Videos on social media are now becoming part of everyday coverage.

During post-presentation discussions on where journalism is headed, Cheng mentioned that she sees the audience relationship getting stronger, specifically in relation to lifestyle journalism. "We are seeing more lifestyle publications collaborating with lifestyle influencers and journalists," she said.

In response to a question about teaching journalism students to use TikTok, Audette-Longo said, "It's a way of having students think about the audience and how they can find diverse sources" and engaging with the audience in different ways.

During different points in the panel, Loosen and Cheng both said the audience and journalism go hand in hand. Without an audience, there is no journalism. This is why it is important to have an audience in mind and address their needs during the process of developing content.



Caption: Wiebke Loosen from the Leibniz Institute of Media Research Hans-Bredow Institut presenting on the perceptions and practices of German journalists in a panel on audience-reporter relationships.

Plain language summary:

- Lydia Cheng from the University of Sydney has observed an increase in both lifestyle journalism and audience demand for it.
- Researchers Verena Albert and Wiebke Loosen conducted a study that revealed that the perspectives of German journalists and citizens are identical when it comes to what journalism should prioritize, showing a balance between audience expectation and journalistic practice.
- Carleton University's Trish Audette-Longo's analysis of journalists and their TikToks shows a path being paved in Canadian journalism for experimentation in storytelling and audience-journalist relationships
- Researchers asserted that a relationship between the audience even during the content-development phase is foundational.

The next wave of media-systems analysis: Looking at the United States as a case study

By Prarthana Pathak

Following the highs and lows of media during one of the most strained years for journalism in the United States

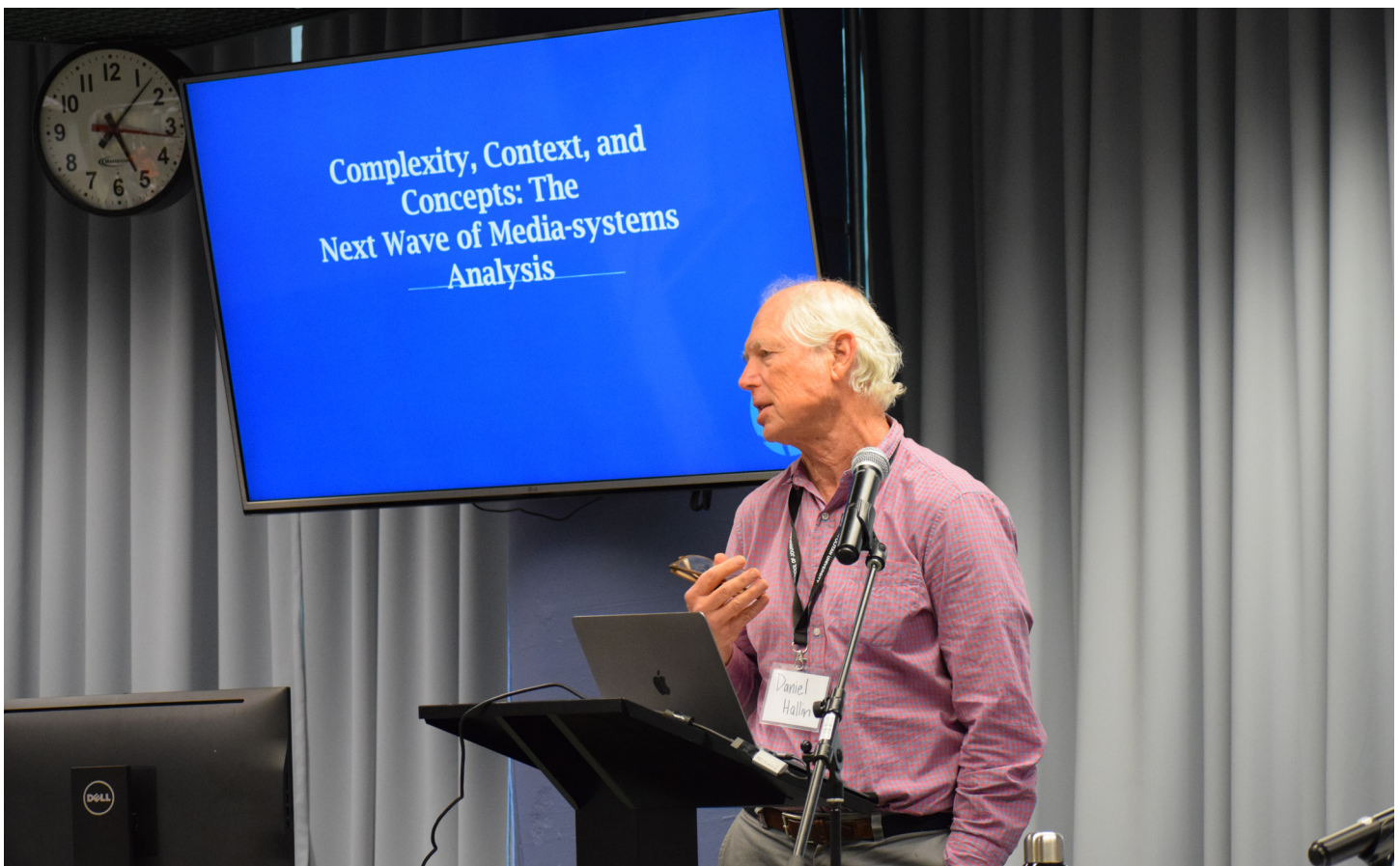
The Between Ideals and Practices conference came to a close with an informative and spirited keynote address from Dr. Daniel C. Hallin, a pioneer in the study of media systems.

The atmosphere in the room was lively, with a full house of researchers, students and journalists. Hallin was welcomed with a roaring round of applause and an introduction from JRP Canada team member Dr. Colette Brin from Université Laval. She noted that everyone in the room had likely cited Hallin at some point during their academic career.

Hallin's keynote focused on the evolving nature of

journalism and the limitations of using standardized measures for comparative analysis of media systems. He used his data collection for the JRP project in the United States as a case study, and stressed that the assumption that media systems are by nature homogenous, or consistent in behaviour and structure, is a misunderstanding.

Hallin also connected the study of media systems with a field theory approach, noting its "nature is diverse and involves contestation among different actors." In journalistic environments, this is reflected in the way professionals are



Dr. Daniel C. Hallin, professor emeritus of Communication at San Diego's University of California, presents his keynote address on the next wave of media-systems analysis at the Between Ideals and Practices conference.

constantly evolving and adapting their reporting practices based on the changing circumstances they are presented with. Hallin said it was important to analyze the types of interactions journalists have with different actors within an individual media system, which requires local knowledge.

A large question Hallin addressed using his U.S. data from the JRP project was the argument researchers have made about the rise in partisan media, the shift towards “a multi-general media environment,” and the fear of the United States becoming a “polarized liberal system.”

He noted that his data collection period occurred in 2020, one of the most strained years for journalism in the United States due to the pandemic, the polarized election, the murder of George Floyd and the response to police brutality from the Black Lives Matter movement. Despite a lot of discussion in the United States about the objectivity norm in correlation to the political climate, Hallin found that neutral reporting remained more prevalent than opinion in the sample of news stories he studied.

He brought his keynote to a close by proposing a multimethod analysis for journalistic role performance going forward. “Quantitative research can be very powerful, but it’s very important to put it together with qualitative analysis that looks at stories in detail,” said Hallin.

He also urged researchers in the room to remember that no one study can answer the big questions. He stressed it was crucial to have multiple researchers using various

methodologies to synthesize data being collected around the world.

The talk ended with a lively Q-and-A period with the audience, with Hallin asserting that “you don’t need to compare whole media systems to achieve a comparative analysis.” Researchers can do analysis using multimethod approaches such as comparing particular news segments, news practices and news genres across systems which would result in precise comparisons.

The final question was in response to Hallin’s conclusions about the news media landscape after the events that took place in the United States in 2020. An audience member asked whether researchers should be thinking more about historical-contingency methodologically, as opposed to solely thinking about what media systems do.

Hallin responded that the path to change works slowly in journalism because “there is deep inertia in news media systems.” He said the Trump era might have caused important long-lasting changes in terms of partisan coverage, but those changes haven’t yet been fully revealed. For example, even though opinionated reporting ranked low in the stories he was studying, there was a lot of opinionated reporting during this time period.

As noted in the title of his presentation, the study of media systems is complex and requires both historical contextualization and understanding of current events and news practice.

Plain language summary:

- The Between Ideals and Practices conference closed with a presentation by Dr. Daniel C. Hallin that focused on the future of media systems. Media systems are defined by Hallin as geographic spaces where media have similar/shared practices and cultural environments.
- Journalists are always changing the way they practice news based on a changing environment. Hallin said we need a good understanding of society to study these changes.
- Hallin was interested in exploring if U.S. media has become more divided and opinionated, especially because of the pandemic, the Biden-Trump 2020 election and the Black Lives Matter protests. But in the sample of stories he studied, he found that neutral reporting was more common than opinion reporting.
- He said the best way to analyze journalistic role performance is to combine quantitative research (numbers-based data) and qualitative research (analyzing words, images, stories, interviews).
- An audience member asked if we should think more about history in media analysis. Hallin said history and context are always necessary, but change happens slowly and is hard to map in a long-established industry like journalism.



JOURNALISTIC ROLE PERFORMANCE



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