



Challenges
أخلاق
Media Ethics & Journalism
in the Arab World: Theory,
Practice & Challenges Ahead

أخلاق
أخلاقيات العمل الإعلامي
التوافق بين مهنة الصحافة والمصلحة العامة

أخلاقيات الإعلام العربي
The Responsibilities of Professional Crisis Reporters
Media Practices
Proceedings
Proceedings
Proceedings

Institute for Professional Journalists
in cooperation with the Heinrich Böll Foundation

Proceedings of Conference
Media Ethics & Journalism in the Arab World:
Theory, Practice & Challenges Ahead

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These proceedings are dedicated to our friend and colleague Maher Abdallah of Al Jazeera TV channel, who was killed in a tragic car accident in Doha, Qatar, on September 11, 2004. He was a dynamic speaker and participant in the conference. He contributed invaluable insights and was appreciated by all those who met him. He will be missed by the Institute for Professional Journalists and its network of collaborators.

9:30-10:30



Magda Abu-Fadil
 Director, Institute for Professional Journalists
 Lebanese American University

Introduction

Your Excellency, Information Minister Samaha, excellencies, distinguished guests, friends and colleagues, ladies and gentlemen.

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you to Lebanon, to LAU, and to our third media ethics conference.

The Institute for Professional Journalists takes pride in being a trailblazer on the issue of media ethics. We began with the idea that we need a code of ethics. So we drew one up, based on existing codes. By the second conference we had modified the name to “guidelines for good journalistic practice.”

Participants agreed that the word “code” was too harsh and implied a law. The last thing we needed was another law. What we’re promoting is a mode of behavior that is recognized, accepted and adopted because people are convinced that it’s the right thing to do.

You cannot force ethics down people’s throats.

Our first event in 2001 drew a stellar crowd of speakers and guests. We followed up in 2002 with a slightly smaller group, but the devoted followers of our cause stayed the course with us. One of them has broken the record by attending all three — our dear friend Marcello Scarone from UNESCO in Paris.

I’d like to extend my profound gratitude to the Heinrich Böll Foundation of Germany for sponsoring our conference. They approached me almost a year ago, out of the blue, I might add, to ask if I’d be interested in organizing an event on media ethics, which they were willing to underwrite. Naturally, I accepted — being devoted to the cause of journalism.

So, once the idea crystallized, I had to start finding speakers who cared as much about the subject as I. Then there was the matter of the mix and seeing that we had the right balance of local, regional and international participants to add substance to the deliberations.

I must admit that some speakers kept me guessing to the last minute whether they’d show up. It’s not easy when you’re trying to get the BBC, Al Jazeera, guests coming from Palestine across the bridge to Jordan, people on deadline, people who are supposed to be in Iraq covering events there, and even people who are uncovering the behind-the-scenes stories behind the stories in Iraq. I even asked Sy Hersh of the New Yorker magazine, but he declined because he was busy covering the unfolding horrors of Abu Ghraib and still has a lot more on his plate.

Even at the 11th hour, two of my speakers bowed out for different reasons, and we’re sorry they couldn’t join us, but have slightly modified the program, to make up for their absence. I’d like to thank the substitutes for their help.

One of our speakers, Mark Damazer of the BBC, almost didn’t make it because of the tragic events in Riyadh when two BBC journalists were shot, one fatally. Which brings up the question, how do we practice journalistic ethics under fire?

A speaker at our last conference said you can’t do ethics in a 250th of a second — the time it takes to shoot a picture. He was right. You have to have the principles drilled in you before you start playing with people’s lives or changing the course of history. After all, today’s journalists are tomorrow’s historians.

And now, without further ado, allow me to introduce Ms. Kirsten Maas, director of the Middle East Office of the Heinrich Böll Foundation. Kirsten is well versed in media matters, having worked for papers in her native Germany. She's also been involved with NGOs for many years and will share with us the Heinrich Böll Foundation's vision on media in the Middle East.



Kirsten Maas
Director, hbf Middle East Office

H.E. Samaha, Dr. Nassar, ladies and gentlemen,
I am honored to welcome you on behalf of the Heinrich Böll Foundation and to say a few words related to the conference topic, though I am not a media professional any more.

The Heinrich Böll Foundation, which is associated with the Green Party in Germany, is a legally autonomous and intellectually open political foundation. Its foremost task is to promote informed democratic opinion, socio-political commitment and mutual understanding. The political values of ecology, democracy and solidarity are chief points of reference.

Heinrich Böll — as some of you might know — was and still counts as one of the most famous writers in Germany. His belief in and promotion of citizen participation in politics is the model for the foundation's work in Germany and abroad.

In its work in the Middle East, the Foundation seeks to strengthen civic action, intensify the exchange of ideas and experiences and keep alive people's sensitivity to change. In doing so, the Foundation strives to facilitate regional debates as well as a dialogue with Europe on issues of democracy as well as cultural globalization and sustainable development. We support Arab civil society organizations dealing with these issues and promote various forms of cultural expression.

Independent and pluralistic media are certainly a very central pillar of active citizenship. As we believe that the media should be independent and pluralist, however, this freedom has certain boundaries: Decision makers are required to guarantee a maximum of media freedoms alongside a minimum of compatibility with the "public good" and democratic principles.

Media ethics should be used to enhance the quality of information, not to silence unwanted voices. Our task is to find and support ways and instruments that enhance responsible action.

Responsibility however should not be loaded on the shoulders of journalists alone. What are the options for media professionalism and objectivity when there is an environment of institutional secrecy, rigid media legislations, restricted freedom of expression and political participation, and a number of social taboos? Journalists also need a sense of economic security, access to information, and the right to expression and to keep sources confidential.

Media ethics therefore address different target groups, including:

- journalists who are required to deal with their profession in a responsible way
- media outlets that are required to provide the economic conditions for journalists to work in a responsible way, and
- the state that is required to provide the political conditions for responsible reporting and to protect the freedoms and rights of journalists.

With media tapping into every aspect of daily life, media ethics are at stake everywhere in this world. Economic pressure and political interests constrain the media not only in the Middle East. But there are some particular issues worthwhile looking at with regards to this region.

The role of the media is particularly delicate when it comes to reporting in and about situations of crisis and con-

flict. The war in Iraq has raised many questions about the responsible handling of information and images, both in the “West” and here in the region.

During the last decade, the Middle East has witnessed an enormous development of Arabic news media. There is an increasing debate on how far media, especially the Internet and satellite channels can be a factor in bringing about change.

However, the new media do not only provide new spaces of freedom, but also pose new challenges for ethics. Which ethical problems are specifically created by the new media? What challenges lie ahead for the Arab world?

Responsible reporting cannot mean a 100 percent objectivity. Journalists are human beings and therefore are bound to have different perspectives. This however should not prohibit balanced reporting, and exploration of all sides of a story. Being capable of doing that requires not only an open and responsible mind, but also professional knowledge and working techniques. Media ethics are to be discussed as an integral part of journalism training.

We are therefore extremely happy to have had a chance to cooperate with the Institute for Professional Journalists which has not only outstanding expertise in journalism training, but had already organized events and published materials on professional ethics during recent years.

This conference bringing together regional and international experts seeks to generate a common understanding of professional norms and values.

We hope that this conference will provide a space for innovative ideas on how to go about media ethics particularly in the region and will encourage further exchange in the future.

I would like to conclude by thanking Magda Abu-Fadil and Dr. Mahmoud Tarabay for their most committed and creative efforts in putting together this conference. Without their knowledge, enthusiasm and commitment, this would not have been possible.

Abu-Fadil: Dr. Riyad Nassar, LAU’s president, is about to retire, after decades of dedication to this institution. He’s taken time from his busy schedule of farewells to be with us today and to welcome you all.



Dr. Riyad F. Nassar
President, Lebanese American University

It’s a pleasure to have you all. It’s very impressive to see such a distinguished crowd attending the third conference. I’m grateful to the Institute to be able to organize these three conferences. I’d also like to thank the Heinrich Böll Foundation for supporting this conference. When I looked at the topic, media ethics, I felt there’s a need for many other conferences, about ethics in all fields. We need ethics in business, we need ethics in education, we need ethics in politics.

I believe the best way you can develop a society is to train your people properly. Law and order is fine. You can impose this. The best way to create a better society is to train people to discipline themselves, to do the right thing. Law and order can be supportive, not an initiator.

We’re in an age where people are revolting against law and order. Forcing people is not always successful. The best way to achieve a goal is to train individuals in societies, in schools, in organizations to do the right thing. I hope what you’re doing here will be done in other fields. It should be an incentive to other departments in LAU — organizing conferences on ethical behavior in other fields.

I'm sure LAU will continue to play a major role in this process and I hope to see you again in the future. I'm sure this will be a very useful conference to all of us, as the previous ones were. I hope what we talk about here will be, partially at least, implemented and will be an incentive to other groups to organize conferences along these lines.

We're grateful to our (information) minister, and for sharing this with us.

Abu-Fadil: Finally, I'd like to welcome His Excellency Information Minister Michel Samaha, who is no stranger to this profession of hardships. As a young reporter I covered him, when he was a university student and very involved in politics. I see he hasn't changed much — still causing a stir and attracting attention. In fact, when I went to invite him to our conference, I took an article I'd written in 1972, with a picture of him leading a group of campus demonstrators. We both had a good laugh.

I hope we're both wiser now, not just older.



H.E. Information Minister Michel Samaha

First, I'd like to thank LAU for this meeting and for providing the opportunity for communication between the Lebanese, Arab and foreign media and sources of expertise.

I'd like to thank Magda Abu-Fadil and Dr. Tarabay in particular for the preparation. I'd like to thank Kirsten Maas from the Heinrich Böll Foundation for their sponsorship. I'd like to sincerely thank Dr. Nassar, not just for what he stands for at LAU today, but for all his service (which I don't think ends when he retires from the field of education) and for embracing ethics at the university.

Other Lebanese and Arab information ministers may be embarrassed in a similar position. I'm here because I'm an information minister. I believe I'm here to develop the fact of communication, not to judge performance.

To develop communication, we should reintroduce ethics that protect absolute freedom. This freedom's limits are ethics and traditions and what's acceptable in society. The media community is twofold: people of the profession and recipients. Both have their ethics and exigencies.

What's required of the media is to search for the truth, because that's the essence. Recipients expect the media to convey the truth to enable us to formulate public opinion. While the truth may be incomplete, the search for it independently is what we seek.

That's why I'm not embarrassed to check myself and my staff members from interfering in the work of journalists who seek the truth. I urge them to seek all colors of the opinion rainbow.

Although we're fairly advanced in Lebanon, we're still far from practicing democracy in freedom, because liberty is an important open-ended space that is filled with two basic elements: the ethics of the search for the truth and the culture of democracy.

The culture of democracy is the culture of accepting facts and opposing opinions to these facts. The media's job is to convey all interpretations of opinions and not distinguish between proponent and opponent, particularly in the audio-visual sphere.

There may be print media representing disparate political parties and cultural movements and citizens may opt for one or the other, but in the broadcast media, I should not be made to choose between myself and my democratic values by having allied and opposing TV stations, by having state-run and private TV and radio stations, one for well-heeled politicians, and another for politicians without the big financial resources.

TV programming that enters homes without permission and is received by public opinion must represent all colors of the public opinion rainbow to enable citizens to formulate well-informed and free views.

A journalist must be a cultured person, an advocate, a judge, urging others to offer their opinions when they think that silence is golden and protects politicians. If a crime is committed, silence becomes an accomplice. There's much to demonstrate in the last six or seven decades that media were accomplices in the general political cover-up of the truth.

I urge TV program producers to exercise restraint when preparing cultural and educational shows, bearing in mind that the medium penetrates people's homes. We see too many uneducated or uncultured program producers, while real educators are ensconced in universities and cultural centers, unable to communicate via modern means.

I urge Arab and Lebanese TV program producers to respect people's minds, morals, families and values, to provide ample space for real dialogue, not become arenas for rooster fights. We're in dire need of rational dialogue to address the world at large, to recognize us as we are, not as we're often portrayed through fundamentalist Western thinking, or radical religious fervor in the East, or via deviant Zionism in the East and West.

Our communication spaces, through all media and in all languages are important and we make good use of them, notably those online and on TV.

What's more important than a code of ethics is respect. A code of ethics requires recipients to be knowledgeable about the subject. I don't believe we can achieve anything if we're not educated. Here's where I agree with Dr. Nassar, in that all sectors require ethics. In fact, some sectors need it more than the media, since they're the suppliers of content to the media.

Everyone looks to post-war Lebanon as an important venue for democracy and freedom. But I'd venture to say that we haven't recuperated the freedom my generation lived in the 1960s and up to the war, because, frankly, politicians came to the political arena with a war mentality.

That's why you should help us and future generations to regenerate democratic culture in Lebanon and the Arab world, as all else is in vain without it.

If we're to cooperate — media organizations and civil society groups seeking real change — we should promote cross-cultural dialogue, not monologues. We must accept each other's differences since they enrich the topics we discuss.

We can make quantum leaps through diversity of thought.

In conclusion, I apologize for Seymour Hersh's absence. He suffers in the country of democracy. There's an ongoing debate in his magazine (New Yorker) about publishing two new articles that are more dangerous than what was published about Abu Ghraib prison.

When this democracy passes through a lobby and policies and states' interests, it becomes hampered.

We in Lebanon and the Arab world want to be pioneers and should break down the barriers in our own way, in alliances with civil society in two key areas: truth and culture.





11:00-12:30

Session I – Media Ethics: Reality and Challenges

Chair: Edmond Saab

Christian Oussi, Media Consultant to Deputy Prime Minister Issam Fares

Mark Damazer, Deputy Director, BBC News

Maher Abdallah Ahmed, Head of International and Media Relations, Al Jazeera



كريستيان أوسى
مستشار إعلامي لنائب رئيس الحكومة اللبنانية عصام فارس

أخلاق الإعلام، أم الأدبيات الإعلامية؟

إنه سؤال كبير يطرح مع فورة الوسائل الإعلامية عملياً وتكنولوجياً، وهو أمر فرض نفسه بعد الخمسينيات من القرن الماضي. مع ارتباط صنّاع القرار والشرائح المجتمعية مباشرةً بوسائل الإعلام التي صارت موجهةً وناقدةً بما يشبه الوصاية على مختلف التيارات الفكرية والسياسية والاقتصادية والثقافية.

وبالفعل، شهدت مسألة الأدبيات والأخلاقيات التي يفترض أن تحكم عمل الإعلامي نهضةً لافتة منذ التاريخ الذي أشرت إليه آنفاً، علماً أن إحدى الدول الأكثر ديمقراطية وتأثيراً في حركة التحرر العالمي وهي فرنسا، سارعت، بطليعية، إلى فرض مبدأ الالتزام بالأدبيات الإعلامية، بما يشبه ميثاق شرف، وضعت نقابة الصحفيين لديها سنة ١٩١٨ ثم راجعته ونقحته بصيغة معدلة سنة ١٩٣٨ ليصير واحداً من موثيق الشرف الأكثر تأثيراً، لاحقاً في حركة الالتزام الإعلامي بأدبيات المهنة.

وأكد الميثاق المذكور مسؤولية الإعلامي في حمل صفة الصحفي، بحيث يفترض بمن يجب أن يكون صحافياً مستحقاً التسمية أن يتحمل مسؤولية كاملة فلا يكون سبباً لضياع في الرأي، ولا يشوه حقيقة ولا يلجأ إلى أساليب غير مقبولة. ولا يضمن نتاجه وسيلة لكسب الربح أو المنفعة الشخصية، ويحافظ على السرية المهنية ولا يستعمل الحرية الإعلامية ليحقق مآرب خاصة أو شخصية. ومن أبرز مواد ميثاق الشرف الفرنسي أن على الإعلامي واجب احترام العدالة وحفظ الأولوية لها، والا يقرن أو يدمج بين دوره ودور رجل الأمن.

وكرت السبحة من هناك، ليتضح للجميع مدى الحاجة إلى الالتزام بمجموعة مبادئ تضع حدوداً للالتزامات التي يفترض أن يتقيد بها الإعلامي خصوصاً، وقد صار جلياً أن "الصحافة هي مرآة المجتمع"، وانها قد تتخطى موقعها كسلطة رابعة نصاً، لتصبح السلطة أقوى بالفعل... والأمثلة السياسية لأكثر دليل على هذا القول، في كل بلدان العالم، وصولاً إلى لبنان، الذي لطالما خاضت فيه الصحافة بوجوهها، معارك مع السلطة السياسية، لتثبت بذلك موقعها وتؤكد أهميتها.

وبالفعل أقرت جمعية الناشرين الأميركيين ميثاق شرف خاصاً بها عام ١٩٢٦، واعتمدت جمعية الصحفيين المتخصصين

الاميركية ميثاقها عام ١٩٩٦، في أيلول من هذا العام.

ومن أبرز عناوين الميثاق المذكور، أن الصحفي لا يهدف إلا إلى الحقيقة ويسعى إليها، وعليه أن يقارن بين مصادر أخباره ليتفادى ما هو غير صحيح، وان يسأل عن الدافع عند مصدر خبره ليسرب له الخبر وعليه أن لا يهون أو يبسط من أمر جليل، وان يدعم تبادل الآراء وان يكون صوت غير المسموعين.

وفي عنوان لافت، يؤكد الميثاق أن من واجبات الإعلامي العمل على تخفيف الضرر، وان يكون داعماً لمن قد تسيء إليهم أخباره. وأن لا يسبق الأحكام فيطلق التهم جزافاً بحق أناس، وان يعمل باستقلالية، فلا يكون مرتبباً بما يقيد لمصلحة آخرين على حساب حق المجتمع بالمعرفة. وان يظل بعيداً عن النشاطات التي قد تسيء إلى مصداقيته وان يرفض الهدايا والخدمات والتقديمات والالتزامات السياسية، وان يكون شجاعاً، وان يكون قادراً في الوقت نفسه على الاعتراف بخطأ ارتكبه وان يرفض أي ضغط قد يمارس عليه ليقدم نتاجاً غير أدبي في مجال عطائه. بمعنى انه نتاج يجافي الحقيقة.

وتطورت الالتزامات لتشمل إلى المقال الصورة والعنوان والتلفزيون والتحقيق والمقابلة والحوار الالكتروني، وشبكة الانترنت والبث الفضائي ... الخ

وربما، انطلاقاً من كل هذا السرد، ينبغي أن نسأل: ما هو دور الأخلاقيات الإعلامية في بناء دولة القانون وأي دور ينبغي للإعلامي اللبناني أن يمارسه في بلد يعاني من تجاذبات حادة تعيشها منطقة الشرق الأوسط وتضعه على فوهة المج هول الآتي، ومن كلفة حادة يفرضها التصميم على الخروج من مأزق الماضي، ومن سلسلة تناقضات لا تنتهي في حياته السياسية اليومية، وفي جهاده الاقتصادي والمجتمعي والثقافي؟ بمعنى آخر، كيف يمكن للصحافي في لبنان أن يسهم في بناء لبنان الذي نحلم به جميعنا، وأي ميثاق شرف يجب أن يلتزمه ليؤمن هذه الغاية؟

سأسرد عليكم بعض المقاطع بما اعتبره واحداً من أهم موائيق الشرف الإعلامية على المستوى العالمي اليوم، وهو بكل بساطة ميثاق الأخلاقيات الإعلامية لمقاطعة كيبيك الكندية، الذي تم إقراره في تشرين الثاني ١٩٩٦. من ابرز العناوين الواردة فيه، أن على الصحافي أن يخبر ويحلل ويعلق على الحقائق، بما يساعد مواطنيه على فهم أفضل للمحيط الذي يعيشون فيه، وعليه أن يدافع عن حرية الصحافة وعن حق الرأي العام في المعرفة. وان يخدم مصلحة الرأي العام، وان يأخذ دوره وواجباته ومسؤولياته بكل جدية، وان يفرض على نفسه الأخلاقيات نفسها التي يطلبها هو من صناع القرار وتطالب الشرعة الإعلامية الصحافي بأن يسعى لثلا تسيء أخباره إلى الأقليات وتضرّ بها، وان يرفض أي موقع أو وظيفة أو تقدمة قد تؤثر على استقلالية حكمه أو تزرع شكاً في عقول الرأي العام.

ألا ترون أن مثل هذه الأحكام التي اعتمدها جمعيات الصحافيين في بلاد بعيدة، تصلح ميثاقاً أخلاقياً للصحافيين في كل العالم؟ فهل نحن على الطريق السوي؟

ما من شك في أن كثيراً من الزملاء ختطوا لنفسهم السير على سكة ميثاق الشرق الأخلاقي، في عملهم الإعلامي في لبنان، إلا أن كثيرين في المقابل لا يزالون خارج هذا الخط.

إذن، أين نحن من موائيق الشرق والأخلاقيات المثالية هذه التي ذكرت؟

في ٤ شباط ١٩٤٧ أصدرت الجمعية العمومية لنقابة الصحافة اللبنانية "ميثاق شرف المهنة"، وهي مجموعة أسس خلقية تضع الإطار العام لعمل "الصحافة".

والصحافة هي الجسم، الصحافيون أطرافه، واليد تمتد إلى ابعده من حدود مساحة الجسد.

وأنتي أرى أن الخطوة الأولى تكون بوضع نص واضح للأخلاقيات الإعلامية اللبنانية، كي نكون أقله، على غرار بعض الدول التي سبقتنا من دول العالم الثالث في هذا المجال، وأنتي اسمي: ألبانيا، أذربيجان، بنغلادش، البوسنة - الهرسك، غانا، وقرغيزستان، ملاوي، ... الخ

لقد كان الصحافي اللبناني رائد الصحافة العربية، وحمل لواء الحرية إلى جميع شعوب المنطقة، ولا تزال صحافته تاجاً يزيّن هامة المنطقة ... وهذا هو الميثاق الأهم قبل وضع العناوين الأخرى.

فلنحافظ عليها هكذا فلا تصير وسيلة من وسائل العمل السياسي النظامي.



Mark Damazer
Deputy Director, BBC News

Those who curdle at the idea of “responsibility” probably won’t like the idea of “modesty” much better.

But the fact is that journalists mostly have to do a lot of things quickly — newspapers and broadcasters alike. News journalism — even current affairs journalism — does not proceed at the same pace, or with the same rhythms, as academic work. Sometimes it is clear that governments too can be rushed. Policy decisions are taken, and explanations given, that are often less than perfect — even if for understandable reasons.

But historians simply don’t work at this pace. They have different tools at their disposal and have the valuable commodity of time before they have to come to conclusions. And even then, as we all know, historians cannot be guaranteed to agree. But still — their disciplines should remind us of our limitations when confronted by confusion and rush.

How often do we portentously use the phrase “Journalism is the first draft of history?”

Like many clichés, it has an element of truth. But do we choose to emphasise the “first draft” part of the phrase — with its obvious admission that there are subsequent drafts that reveal more of any story or issue — or do we, a little more self-indulgently, emphasize the grandeur of the word “history” with its resonance of something grand, worthy of study and seriousness?

Of course some narratives that we provide soon after an event contain many, or even most, of the salient parts of a story. Thus a reporter who said on the day of 9/11 that the attacks on the Twin Towers would cost many lives and would have a profound effect on the USA was not taking a big journalistic risk in saying as much — and saying it rapidly after the event. It would not have been a sensible exercise of journalistic modesty to have suggested that, actually, 9/11 was no big deal.

Or to take another example: When the UN Security Council failed to pass a second resolution in early 2003 explicitly sanctioning the war against Iraq, it would have been perverse for journalists to have argued anything other than that it was a heavy diplomatic defeat for Tony Blair and George Bush.

But a large number of stories do not easily lend themselves to a certainty of tone — and sometimes we think we know more about a story than is actually the case.

Let me — by way of a brief diversion — turn the clock back the best part of 70 years. On the face of it Britain’s Royal Family abdication crisis in 1936 was, and is, a straightforward matter. The then king, Edward VIII, wanted to marry an American divorcee, Mrs. Simpson. Public opinion would not stand for it. The king faced a choice between his love and his throne — and he gave up his throne. End of story. Maybe.

Yet here we are almost 70 years later and still some of the key documents have not been released from the archives. The maneuverings of the politicians and members of the royal family are still not clear. I make this point as a reminder of the elusiveness of the concept of “final truth.”

Final truth is a rare commodity. It is one of the tenets of liberal pluralism and liberal political thought that absolute truth — at least in the secular sphere — are not absolute truths at all. (For those with the appetite for unfashionable philosophy — I recommend Karl Popper’s “Open Society and Its Enemies.” There are still a lot of those enemies about.)

So how does this apply to contemporary journalism?

Let me go back to the war in Iraq last year. Surely we all knew that the military logic was absolutely, overwhelmingly in favour of the U.S.-led coalition as it swept north towards Baghdad. And yes — for the most part BBC journalism, and many others, reflected that.

And, on the other hand, it was absolutely right that we reported on the individual travails the coalition confronted. If military sources reported — apparently authoritatively — that Umm Qasr had fallen then it seems reasonable — even with hindsight — that we reported this. Though it turned out not to be accurate.

So when the following day Umm Qasr was reported as still the scene of a battle, rather than the scene of a victory, we could report that too. And so on until Umm Qasr was safe for journalists to enter — and they could report free, at least to a degree — of intermediaries.

On these detailed, fast-moving, narratives journalists can swerve where the sources lead them and it is genuinely a pity that in the “fog of war” the military information was so erratic. It is not, however, a journalistic sin that we used military sources and attributed information to sources that subsequently turned out to be poor.

And so it was also with the so-called “uprising” in Basra. There was no uprising. And although I wished we had been more cautious I know why we reported the non-existent uprising and, again, it was not a sin.

But we too should ponder on our mistaken emphases and blind spots. Let me provide some examples where we reported almost nothing — and analysed too little. The war, militarily, was probably won by the B-52 bombing of the Republican Guard south of Baghdad. There were no embedded journalists there — and for obvious reasons. The audience did not get the flavour of this story at all — neither the military impact of the bombing, nor, for that matter, the casualties that ensued. Though surely this part of the narrative was more to the point than other stories from the war we were able to tell.

Nor were we able to report from the west of Iraq, where special forces seem to have secured large parts of the country, thus stopping Saddam Hussein from using any bases there had he so chosen. Nor do we know quite what happened at the oil fields, which survived the conflict largely unscathed.

Does any of this matter given that the larger frame of reference was that the Americans would win? I think it does. Because during the course of the war much of the reporting did not make it clear enough — in some cases not for the want of trying — that there was much that we did not know because we could not see or hear.

Surely it would have been better to have been more transparent with our audiences and say, more explicitly than is custom, what it is that we didn't know — and why what we didn't know may have been more important than what we did know.

Even in Iraq now — where news gathering is painfully limited because of the risks involved — there is a huge amount we don't really know. We do know that the coalition is encountering more problems than its leaders bargained for. But do we have a reliable, fullish picture of what's going on outside Baghdad?

From my seat in London I am anxious about this. Solid certainty about what is going to happen in Iraq does not seem easy — and is that tone of doubt or uncertainty properly reflected in reporting? It's a question, and I hope and think that in the BBC we have grasped this point. But not perfectly.

Some of our projection of omniscience is silly — and made possible by technological advance. In Afghanistan satellite dishes enabled us to move forward with the Northern Alliance. This enabled us to ask questions about all kinds of things to journalists on the front line — where the action was, and where there was an echt Afghan backdrop. But what was the point in asking these journalists about the latest thinking in the Pentagon? None at all. The best of them made decent, informed guesses but they didn't have even the agency copy of the briefing a few hours earlier thousands of miles away in Washington.

The fault did not lie with these journalists but with those of us who encouraged them to answer the wrong sort of question in the first place. They would have been more than justified in breaking a taboo and simply saying “I don't have the foggiest idea what the latest thinking is in the Pentagon. I don't know and I can't predict.” I doubt the audience would punish us for outbursts of frankness on these lines.

My penchant for restraint should not be read as a desire to revert to the safest form of conclusion — epitomized by the phrase “only time will tell.” Time will indeed tell — though it would be more valuable to know how much time will elapse before whatever is to be told is told. No — I would rather have good correspondents exercise professional judgement. But judgement suffused, where appropriate, with an admission of doubt, uncertainty, the fragmentary nature of some evidence, a self-conscious awareness of the multiplicity of views that swirl around stories and issues, and, an understanding that deadlines can distort.

The audience won't punish us for a more explicit acknowledgment of our frailties. They are more likely to trust us more.



ماهر عبد الله مدير قسم الإعلام والعلاقات الخارجية، قناة الجزيرة، قطر

في كثير من الأوقات يُضطر الصحفي لأن يقف مع نفسه ويتساءل متى يكون الوقت مناسباً ليقوم بعمله ومتى يجدر به أن يتوقف ويعمل بإنسانيته. لأنه في كثير من الحالات يصبح الصراع حقيقياً. وأقرب مثال على ذلك هو لزميل لنا في قناة «الجزيرة» كان يراقب ما تنشره الوكالات والمحطات. فنقل خبراً عن الوكالات عن قصف إسرائيلي على حيٍّ من أحياء رفح. هذا الكلام منذ حوالي سنة تقريباً. قام المصور بتركيز الصورة على جثتين هامدتين لسيدتين قذفتا من منزلهما إلى الشارع جراء قوة الانفجار. وبشكل عفوي عمد زميلنا إلى تقريب الصورة على الوجه ليفاجأ بأنه ينظر إلى أمه وأخته. بالطبع، في مثل هذه الحالة يقتضي المنطق أن لا يكتب هو القصة، بل زميل آخر. لكنه هو الذي كان في الميدان واضطر لكتابة القصة. والسؤال هنا من هو في الحقيقة الذي يقوم بالكتابة، أهو الصحفي أم الإنسان الذي بداخله؟ هذا جزء من المفارقات التي نعيشها من خلال حياتنا الصحفية. لقد عشت أكثرية حياتي الناضجة في لندن وكنت دائماً لا أزعم أنني وصلت إلى درجة من عقدة النقص أمام الغربي. كنت أشعر أنني كصحافي صقلت تجربتي في عاصمة أظن ما زالت هي الأرقى على الصعيد الإعلامي. وكنت مضطراً لأن أراجع حساباتي حول تعريف الحرية وأخلاقيات المهنة من الصحفي الغربي. مفارقات غريبة عشناها حطمت كثيراً من الأيقونات النظرية على مصداقية الغربي وأخلاقياته، على خرافة إسمها الموضوعية، خرافة إسمها الحياد. أعني بخرافة ما هو أقرب إلى الأسطورة منه إلى الشيء الحقيقي. أحد مصادر القوة لدى قناة «الجزيرة» أن صحافييها يتحدثون العربية والإنكليزية. عادة يكون هناك حاجز لغوي عنيف، مما يضطر الصحفي الغربي إلى تشغيل أول عراقي يلاقيه مترجماً له. إن الترجمة فن. هي علم ومهنة متواضعة. جميعنا نتقن لغتين أو ثلاثة لكن هذا لا يجعل منا مترجمين. أضف أنك أنت أصلاً أسير مترجم عراقي، يعيش تحت أكثر النظم الديمقراطية في العالم - نظام صدام حسين - هو مضطر لأن يكون حذراً جداً فيما يترجمه. إذاً فأنت أسير مرتين (لا اللغة لغتك ولا المترجم بحكم الواقع قادر على أن يترجم كل ما يعرف). هذا فيما عدا قصة الوعي السياسي. أنت كصحافي مضطر لأن تنظر إلى الأمور من زواياك الخاصة التي تظنها الأهم. أما المترجم، فإذا هو لم يدرك هدفك من السؤال وهدفك من رواية القصة، يقوم هو بتحويل الكلام برؤيته الخاصة. أنت إذاً أسير أكثر من طرف في التعامل مع القصة، ثم تزعم أنك تنقل بدقة وأنت تتحدث عن التعبير «under-fire».

مارك أشار لقصة البصرة. سلمنا من مطب المصادر الرسمية الأميركية هناك. فنحن كقناة «الجزيرة» كان عندنا مراسل في البصرة. طوني بليز كان يتحدث في البرلمان عن شعب يرقص في الشارع، ومصور الجزيرة كان يصور في الشارع. وكنا ننقل تعليقاته حية عن مدينة محاصرة معرضة للقصف ليس فيها أحد. بعد ساعة من هذا التقرير وبصدفة غريبة "غير مقصودة" قُصف الفندق الذي يقيم فيه مراسل «الجزيرة». ولكي نظن ان القصة مصادفة كان لا بد من صاروخ آخر للتأكيد على أن المسألة خطأ. الكلام عينه طبعاً ينطبق على مكتب الجزيرة في بغداد. فالصاروخ الأول من الوارد أن يكون صدفة لكن الصاروخ الثاني قطعاً لم يكن كذلك. الأمر كان أكثر وضوحاً في أنه غير مقصود في أفغانستان لأن أربعة صواريخ نزلت على المكتب. هذه هي الخلفية الحقيقية للصحافي سواء محدودية ما عنده من معلومات أو محدودية ما يعرف ليس فقط عن البلد لكن عن الثقافة العامة، لأن هذه الحرب خيضت بأهداف معلنة لها علاقة بالثقافة. أربعة أشهر قبل بداية الحرب، تحدث كولن باول عن العراق كبداية لتغيير الشرق الأوسط! فمشروع التغيير كان جزء من العملية القتالية. الخلفية الثقافية للناس التي مفترض أن تغييرهم كانت جزءاً من تصور الصحافي في تغطيته. فأية أخلاقيات ستفيدك أكثر من الإلتزام بمهنتك؟ نعود للمبادئ وهي من أوليات التقرير المعلوماتي البسيط، إذا أنت فاقد للصلة. لأن اللغة هي مجال التواصل الأخطر والأهم الذي نملكه في حياتنا.

لا بد من الإشارة إلى ان الحديث عن الاخلاقيات يجب أن يضع في الاعتبار المواثيق. الأطر التي نتحدث عنها مختلفة كثيراً. عندما أتحدث أنا عن دولة خليجية صغيرة غير ما يتحدث مارك عن عاصمة إعلامية عريقة. إننا نعي الافتراضات التي يتحدث عنها الجميع. لكن هناك افتراضات لا نعيها، نطلق من انها مسلمت. يمكن استثنائياً بناء مجتمع مدني حقيقي غير موجود في الوطن العربي حتى هذه اللحظة، تكون الصحافة جزءاً منه. هنا لا بد مما ينعكس علي مهنياً وأخلاقياً.

بينما الانسان الذي يعيش في لندن أو نيويورك يتحدث عن مجتمع مدني حقيقي سيشكل قطعاً نوعاً من الدعم المعنوي له في التعاطي مع المادة الاعلامية.

جزء من المطلوب تغييره الآن في العالم العربي هو الوضع القانوني للأشياء كلها لتسود دولة القانون. في عالمنا العربي ليست هناك ثقافة قانونية تحكم لا المهنة ولا أخلاقياتها على الصعيد الصحافي. فأى كلام عن اقتباس مواثيق أخرى سيغفل هذه الجزئية؟

الكندي في كيبك أو الإنكليزي في لندن أو الفرنسي في باريس عنده مجموعة قوانين تطورت عبر سنوات طويلة لتؤسس ما يشبه الثقافة العامة. ما عادت المسألة مسألة قانون ودستور يحمي الصحافي. هناك ثقافة عامة تنحاز الى الصحافي أو على الأقل تساهم في توضيح الحدود بين السياسي والصحافي. فهذه أطر كثيرة كبيرة والأهم منها الآن ما يشبه التدخل الحكومي في عالمنا العربي، وهو التدخل الإقتصادي في العالم الغربي. منذ فترة، كان لدينا ندوة في "الجزيرة" مع بعض الصحافيين اليابانيين. محرر كبير في صحيفة كبيرة في اليابان يتحدث عن أزمة وقعت فيها الصحيفة مع شركة كبرى. لكن حجم الشركة التي كانت أخلاقياتها الوظيفية وردت في تقرير لغير صالح الشركة القابضة قالت: "إذا عدتم إلى هذا الموضوع أو لم تعتذروا عنه سنوقف كل الإعلانات". تصور لو كنا نتحدث عن شركة بحجم مايكروسوفت. فما عاد السلطان الوحيد الخيف هو سلطان الدولة. سلطان الشركة الآن أخطر. في عالمنا العربي كيف سينعكس الوضع على أخلاقيات المهنة؟ لا أدري.



— *How do we solve the problem of access to information and the sources that will provide them when we're covering certain topics and manage to disseminate correct news?*

Saab: We used to teach journalists the basics. How to find sources, who to go to, why we needed to double-check sources, that's important.

Damazero: There are stories where you're short of sources and there are stories where there are too many sources. The question is not simply to get hold of the source, but, as I alluded to in my presentation, to be aware of what the limitations of your sources are. Sometimes you can't get more than one source. If you're looking at intelligence and security issues, whether it's about Iraq or anything else, bluntly, getting hold of a decent intelligence source is blood out of a stone. It's not like picking bananas off a tree. It's very, very hard work. You then have to assess whether your single source, who mostly will want to remain anonymous — intelligence sources don't like going on the record — is good enough. That comes back to the BBC's row with the government last year.

There's no manual for this. There's no code. There's no ethical chapter that tells you how to assess or weigh a source. It's the difference between good journalism and bad journalism. It's the difference between experience and immaturity. It's really very, very difficult. The best of journalists (a) have a large number of sources, and (b) know how to use those sources, and (c) know what the limitations are.

— *How do you reconcile ethics with covering national causes?*

Abdallah: We're a means to exchange information, not banners for causes. If journalists are advocates of causes, they hurt themselves and the profession.

— *Mr. Abdallah, you present a program on Al Jazeera that is a religious program. You just said that the American onslaught on the Middle East is, to a large extent, a cultural onslaught. Therefore, you felt it was the responsibility of stations like yourselves to respond to this cultural onslaught. How do you mix that with what you just said that it's not your business to take a stand, but rather to present the news and what about the fact that culture in the Arab world is changing? I'm from a minority in Lebanon and I would like to see some changes in cultures in the Arab world. Why do you feel it's your obligation to defend culture and what exactly is the onslaught?*

Abdallah: I didn't use the word "onslaught." What I said is that part of the declared objectives of the Americans is change. They went into details a couple of weeks back, how many teachers they want to train and how many jobs they have to create in the next five to 10 years. I didn't say that Al Jazeera is counterattacking them there. What I said was that the war had a cultural dimension and I was criticizing Western journalists who came with zilch background on culture. What I was saying was that we had the advantage. Never said it was our duty as Al Jazeera or as journalists to counter whatever onslaught, invasion you want to choose.

What is interesting, we have to have a mission and being a journalist is a mission. There are things related directly to this issue of culture. An example that says plenty to me: Does anybody here know how many Iraqis were killed in this war? That's a very cultural thing, because these are not animals out there. When we showed a couple of American prisoners on Al Jazeera, every single white man I met was saying "very uncivilized showing prisoners of war." But how many hundreds of humiliated Iraqis were actually shown on all TV stations, including the picture of Saddam Hussein? Because at the end of the day, he has become a prisoner of war. The humiliating pictures that he was seen in, I did not see any eyebrows raised over the way the Iraqi prisoners of war were shown on TV. That's a cultural thing. When you showed a couple of British soldiers, all hell broke loose. Never mind that Alistair Campbell (British PM Tony Blair's media adviser) found himself in a situation where he had to resign. The fact remains, when you show the Americans you're uncivilized, when you show hundreds of Iraqis, you're civilized. That's a cultural dimension in this war and every other war.

In Afghanistan the war finished two and a half years ago. Can anybody here tell me how many Afghans died? Nobody bothers to count.

— *When I heard Mr. Abdallah speak about separating the person from the journalist, I relived moments I experienced two weeks ago when I was exposed to arrest for half an hour and beaten up by security forces. I was told they were trying to maintain security on the airport road. But I had to choose between conducting myself as a journalist and defending my life. I still feel the pain from bruises and contusions from the scuffle. Why do we live this dichotomy in Lebanon, between freedom of the press and the powers of security forces that convey their information to the media by force? I was told after the incident that I was forbidden to relay what happened to me.*

Oussi: I don't think one can separate the journalist from the human being. I call for strengthening journalists' defenses. We can't ask journalists to be demigods. Journalists are human beings who reflect their societies and are affected by what happens around them. To preserve what values journalists still have, we have to prevent interference by politicians. We should provide some breathing space. No news today relies on just one source. Let's also remember that journalists in Lebanon are protected by laws that respect the secrecy of sources.

— *I have a comment and a question. I'd like to comment about the abuse of the fourth estate in using its power. In our case, a university, some papers threatened to boycott our news if we did not advertise in them. What does one do in such a case?*

Abdallah: Who cares? If they don't want to advertise, it's their loss.

— *You said objectivity in the media is a myth. Do you think Al Jazeera observes media ethics?*

Abdallah: As the British say: "It's not what you say, it's the way you say it." Everybody is subjective, one way or the other. The adjectives we use unconsciously. We have to be careful. Between the 400-500 terms we usually use, a few may slip through that reflect our cultural biases.

A report by BBC veteran correspondent John Simpson on Iranian elections was very accurate and objective in describing reformist Mohammad Khatemi and his conservative opponents. But the visuals were quite deceptive. When the camera showed men at prayer on the conservative side, it focused first on old shoes at the entrance to a prayer hall, to indicate that poor people would vote for the conservatives, and at a rally for Khatemi, the camera zoomed in on beautiful women, to show the more liberal inclination of the candidate. That was a powerful message. If we think every journalist is objective, or should be objective, we'd be very surprised to find out that everybody has an agenda.

Saab: On the matter of objectivity, there is a basic struggle. Publishing pictures of veiled women, in some Arab papers, is dependent on cultural considerations, not political factors, or the esthetics of the picture. Let's not lose track of the purpose of this conference, which is to establish traditions and guidelines in free, courageous, transparent and honest media. This logic contradicts the logic of a region being overrun by wars like in Iraq and Palestine, where religion, ethnicity and linguistic differences are factors. Even if a journalist descends to Earth from heaven, he'll find himself surrounded by people who resemble him and that there are restrictions to his being objective with them since he could be contributing to the loss of a cause.

— *Can we separate a journalist from his nationalism? The leading international news agencies may refer to Iraqi resistance fighters as terrorists. They call Palestinians terrorists. The Voice of America would be less than nationalistic if it referred to Iraqi fighters as "insurgents." Some agencies refer to Hamas fighters as "militants." We applauded when Al Jazeera came on the scene and covered news from the Arab perspective. Some Arabs also criticized it for providing a platform to Israeli officials.*

Damazer: That's a very rich and good thing. I absolutely understand that being English and of a certain age colors my world view. But I don't accept that because I am who I am, it makes it impossible for me or the BBC to be impartial. I personally don't like using the word "objective" because it implies that there is some scientifically precise truth that can be extracted from a story. If you hit it you're 100% right, and if you're not, you're wrong. It's about an attitude of mind and a set of journalistic tools that enable you to be impartial and fair. Impartial is a little bit different from being objective. My job is not to give comfort to the British public, still less the British government. I don't feel that we in our journalism fall on the wrong side of this boundary between being part of a culture (because we are who we are), that our job is to give comfort to that culture.

To give you some concrete examples: When we talk about British troops in Iraq, we don't say "they're our troops" and we don't use the word "we" to describe what's going on in Basra, where the British are in operational command. They're the British troops. Just as the American troops are the American troops, the Iraqi troops are the

Iraqi troops. I don't believe that the right thing for the BBC in the war against Iraq is to put up a big Union Jack at the bottom of the screen saying "it's our war." That's not the right way to explain what's going on.

In the Falklands in 1982, when Britain was fighting against Argentina, we got into a terrible row with the government and a lot of newspapers who felt that the BBC's behavior by not adopting the language of patriotism was equivalent to treachery. I don't buy it and we will continue to report on these things with a language and a terminology that is not the terminology of the government.

How else is this fairness and impartiality to be achieved? It's about exposing your audience to a range of voices, many of whom they will not agree with. And it's about the tone of voice you will adopt when you're interviewing and reporting on that range of voices and not having an entirely different tone of voice for one set of people that you might have with another. Or at least you've got to demonstrate the evidence why you're approaching some voices with a particularly different tone. There has to be a reason for it which the audience has to understand. It can't simply be a reflex that because we don't like them, whoever they are, that we treat them in a different way. Finally, on the question of precise language, on some of these emotional words that have been talked about by my colleague from Al Jazeera, we are very, very shy about using the word "terrorist" to describe an individual who shoots or murders somebody who happens to be a civilian. I may feel as a private citizen that it's terrorism, but that's neither here nor there. The fact is that I'm completely aware that one man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter. And in our language, therefore, we don't simply go for the obvious, and easiest, and most emotive way to sum up a story. And again, we get into quite a lot of trouble for it, but it doesn't cause me any grief that we get into that kind of trouble. So, I do think that it's possible to be fair and impartial even if you belong to a particular culture. And that you don't have to adopt the language of the government or the consensus around you.

— *It seems not only is Al Jazeera controversial but those who work there. My question is directed at Mr. Abdallah. You referred to priorities of news reports. Why don't we start with our journalists with simple issues, the ABC's of good journalism? Journalists cover conferences, roundtables, not just wars, and we find the news totally unrelated to the events, as if they'd landed from another planet. When we talk about media ethics, we shouldn't expect an ideal situation with civil society. Let's start incrementally, with part of the guidelines for good journalistic practice that deals with accuracy, access to information and sources. Are we looking for ISO certification? Or are we after a luxury item, attainable in the Third Millennium?*

Abdallah: I said we should return to the basics, not to delay the search for ethics, but found it to be a luxury, just like we view democracy in the Arab world. We need clean water and bread and then we'll call for democracy. That doesn't mean I don't want democracy, but bread and water are more important. Since we're in the middle of things, we have the advantage of knowing the culture, the region, the geography. What Al Jazeera is proud of is that part of its heritage goes back to the BBC. But there's a severe lack of information with Western journalists covering the Middle East.

— *To follow up on what Mark said about the BBC not showing the Union Jack, not getting overly patriotic, the flip side of that coin was in the American media. You had anchor people wearing flags in their lapels, you had flags fluttering in the background as part of the graphics. That was part of the whole scene, the buildup to the war and since. What's your take on that? How do you view that? Do you think that has any value added? Does that lend any credibility to journalism or journalists in general?*

Damazer: Well, obviously, I don't. I have a few observations to make about it. I go to America a fair amount. I know others of you do as well. It's almost impossible to underestimate what 9/11 meant for Americans across the continent. This is by now a well-worn theory. But, clearly, in the Middle East and in much of Europe, where terrorism has been, if not rampant, in existence for many years, as has war, the approach to individual acts of terrorism is probably somewhat different from what happened on 9/11, where (a) the scale was much greater in terms of an individual act, and (b) the sense of complete shock and trauma because the Americans had been completely insulated. The overreaction you got in some American networks was a reflection of that. The best piece I've seen that we've done on this was an interview with Dan Rather a year after the event. Dan Rather is the chief anchorman of CBS News. He's an extremely good and distinguished journalist. Shortly after 9/11 he began to refer to following orders from the commander in chief, he was far more deferential to Bush than he'd ever been in his life before. We went back to interview him a year later and he said he'd got it wrong and he couldn't believe that he'd done it and said it and he was full of journalistic remorse about it.

I must say, with appropriate modesty, we've not been tested in the same way. We haven't had a plane going into St. Paul's cathedral and killing 3,000 people, and heaven knows how I'll react. But I do think that cool is better than warm and keeping your distance, however unpopular it is, from the tremendous emotion that's swelling around you, is a better journalistic bet than being caught up in it.

2:00-3:30



Session II – Access to Information/Objectivity

Chair: Jamil Mroue

Rafik Nasrallah, Beirut Bureau Chief, Abu Dhabi TV

Brian Whitaker, Middle East Editor, The Guardian

Marcello Scarone, Program Specialist, Division for Freedom of Expression,
Democracy and Peace, UNESCO, Paris

رفيق نصرالله

مدير مكتب قناة أبو ظبي، لبنان



لم تعد هناك معلومات مكتومة إلا لدى جهاز واحد نتعارف عليه باسم الاستخبارات...
عندما تخرج المعلومة من هذه اللداشة... هي اذن في طريقها الى العلن. وإن اختلقت الهمسائل.
ولأن السمله بلقت مفتوحة... والارخص الاعلامية صارت مستطيلة وليست كبريهية ه فإن المعلومات تبدل مكشوفة او متيسر. إنكشافها.
بعد النصف الثاني من عقد التسعينات في القرن اللصبي صغرت الارخص، وصال غلبت المعلومة يتجولون كل الحلدوه (هم) تعد هناك
نظارات سبوهام أعلام العرزيه وصال المشاهد شريكاً بلحلته بل هو في فضوليته ويده التي تعبت باللفظليات احد صناع الحلدت وتقولاته.

للغن. يظل السؤال: كيف تحصل المعلومة؟ وكيف يتم التداول بها؟

لا يوجد مصححي او اعلامي بشكل عام داخل جدران مغلقة .

هائماً... البلعث عن المعلومة بصليقة ملحج وفضولي له وسثيل احياناً في اقلعة اكبر شبكة من العلاقات له ثلاث عيون، وارباع اذان...
وعليه ان يكون قليل الكهوليسطيرونه تحثبه الحركه والحواس، في وقت تتسلك فيه مصادر المعلومات وتتعدله في مواقع مختلفة تتجولون ما
نسميه المصادر، الى صناع الحلدت انفسهم.

نحن في زمن المعلومات التي تتداولها في لحظة: أي إعلام اللحظة. فإما ان نكون داخل هذه اللحظة لتصل اليها ان لا نكون خارجها.

هناك شخصية تفرغ نفسها للهو يتسبب متقلبه حبال تداول المعلومات، ولا اعتقد ان هناك من يستطيع ان يلعب بالاستقلاليتها
الكلمة، وانفه حر، وبعبره، ولا يخضع للتبع من ذاقية قراءة المعلومة ونقلها... للغن ثمة مقلييس يقرضها اليقوه الهميه اللده لهذه الحظرة
ان تلكه حيث لا يمكن ان نسلم أسلساً بوجهه وسيله إعلامية حرة باللفظية فكلما الحلدت مغلقة احياناً على سرية ما ه فإن أي وسيله
إعلامية لها محاسبات ما يلخنها الحاصل على المعلومة يعرزيه الاعتبار.

للغن في زمن الانكشاف الفضائي العالم ه يكون مستوح التلخل نسيي خلاصة اعلام مجتمع واعه وقد يكون عكس ذلك اعلام مجتمعات
اقل وعيداً.

الاجهزة التي تسليقتا على نقل المعلومة تستلجننا بتقنياتها العلية لأن نكون في الحلدت قبل ان تتمكن من إعطاء هببة للحلدت، التقنية
العلية، والمتيق ان تراه في المستقبل احكامت الطوقه على بعض شخصانية الحلدت. لهذا اصبح الصحفي اسير هذه التقنية التي بلقت
تشكل الواسطة عبر العرزيه قبل الكلمة بالهنا صارت مهمة تغيير الحلقه بصعبه وبقتم المعلومات اصعب.



Brian Whitaker
Middle East Editor, The Guardian
Objectivity and Newspaper Ethics

Objectivity is a word that I usually try to avoid because there is so much confusion about what it really means. It doesn't necessarily mean neutrality, and it doesn't mean the sort of bland journalism that tries to please everybody and offend nobody.

Another common mistake is to think of objectivity in terms of the end result, when in fact it's not the result but the way of getting there.

Let me explain that. Producing a newspaper — or a TV programme for that matter — involves a series of choices and value judgements: deciding who to interview, what questions to ask, what to include in the report, how much space to give it, and so on.

If I asked everyone in this room to make a list of today's news items and place them in order of importance, I'm sure people would come up with a variety of different lists. In effect, each list would be each person's opinion of what was most important; there wouldn't be any objectively "correct" list. Each list would be valid, so long as the thought processes that had gone into compiling it were valid, so long as you had a proper rationale for your choices and followed professional criteria. Or, to put it another way, so long as you didn't let other, non-professional, factors come into it, such as placing a particular story at the top of the list because it said nice things about someone who happened to be your best friend.

So what exactly do we mean when we talk about objectivity in journalism? My own personal definition is that it's a way of compiling, evaluating and selecting information in order to get as close to the truth as possible. Not absolute truth, but the most accurate picture we can give on the basis of what we have been able to find out. This is rather an abstract definition, so let's look at what it means in practice. I think the key points can be summarised by the initials F-H-T... fairness, honesty and transparency.

Let's take these one by one, starting with fairness — and I'm going to quote quite a lot here from two documents: the written guidelines for journalists issued by my own paper in London, The Guardian, and the Washington Post.

FAIRNESS

There was a famous editor of The Guardian who wrote, back in 1921: "The voice of opponents no less than of friends has a right to be heard... It is well to be frank; it is even better to be fair."

This is the essential principle of fairness, and The Guardian's present-day guidelines emphasise the point. They say: "The more serious the criticism or allegations we are reporting the greater the obligation to allow the subject the opportunity to respond."

The Washington Post makes the same point in a different way. It says:

Reporters and editors of The Post are committed to fairness. While arguments about objectivity are endless, the concept of fairness is something that editors and reporters can easily understand and pursue. Fairness results from a few simple practices:

1. No story is fair if it omits facts of major importance or significance. Fairness includes completeness.
2. No story is fair if it includes essentially irrelevant information at the expense of significant facts. Fairness includes relevance.
3. No story is fair if it consciously or unconsciously misleads or even deceives the reader. Fairness includes honesty — levelling with the reader.
4. No story is fair if reporters hide their biases or emotions behind such subtly pejorative words as "refused," "despite," "quietly," "admit" and "massive." Fairness requires straightforwardness ahead of flashiness.

The Guardian also goes into some detail about dealing fairly with quotations. It says: "Direct quotations should not be changed to alter their context or meaning." This, in effect, allows quotations to be changed a bit, so long as the meaning stays the same. Some papers — I think the New York Times is one of them — don't allow quotations to be changed at all, though personally I think some flexibility is needed.

For example, in my job I interview a lot of Arabic speakers and sometimes they don't express themselves very well or make grammatical mistakes. In that situation, fairness says that a reporter should not make them look silly, so I often tidy up the quotes and, where possible, read the corrected version back to the person being interviewed. In addition to that, if the quotation has to be translated from a foreign language then the words are not going to be exactly the same as the original. This needs to be treated carefully, though.

The Guardian had a bad experience recently when an American official — Wolfowitz, I think — made some remarks about Iraq which were translated from English and printed in a German newspaper. A Guardian reporter, rather stupidly, then translated the remarks from German back into English — and of course the result was not what Wolfowitz had originally said.

There are also issues relating to the use of anonymous quotes. The Guardian's guidelines say:

We recognise that people will often speak more honestly if they are allowed to speak anonymously. The use of non-attributed quotes can therefore often assist the reader towards a truer understanding of a subject than if a journalist confined him/herself to quoting bland on-the-record quotes. But if used lazily or indiscriminately anonymous quotes become a menace.

One problem with anonymous quotes — and this happens particularly in Arab countries — is that the anonymity doesn't always promote better understanding. Officials often remain anonymous so that they can disown the statements later.

Another point worth noting is that the Guardian and a lot of other newspapers now have a policy of avoiding anonymous pejorative quotes (those that say bad things about someone else) on the grounds that if someone is to be criticised, then the person making the criticism should either be identified or shut up.

Finally, under the heading of fairness, I should mention the issue of fairness with questions. It is unfair to ask no-win questions of the "have you stopped beating your wife" variety.

Honesty

Fairness is closely related to honesty, and in the passage that I read earlier from the Washington Post they are lumped together when it says: "Fairness includes honesty."

This is true, but I think it's better to treat honesty as a separate category, because there's a danger of trying so hard to be fair to someone that you end up being dishonest. For example, it would be highly misleading to talk in a historical article about Germany's "animal-loving vegetarian leader, Adolf Hitler."

The point is that fairness does not necessarily mean being nice to people; sometimes honesty requires us to do the opposite. When the known facts indicate that someone is a tyrant or a dictator, then "tyrant" or "dictator" is what we should say. We have a saying in English: if it walks like a duck and talks like a duck, then you should call it a duck.

This brings us to the question of honest terminology. Governments (and others) often choose words that present what they are doing in the best possible light — for example, the so-called "targeted killings" by Israeli forces. Journalists have to watch out for these and, if necessary, replace them with words that better describe what is actually going on.

A similar issue arises when there are two conflicting versions of events. The rules of fairness say we should report both versions, but this is open to abuse if one side issues a denial that is intended merely to cause confusion about what really happened. In some situations it's clear that one side must be telling the truth while the other is not. If we have reason to believe that a particular account of events is false, then honesty requires us to give the reader an indication of this.

Being honest with the readers also means not leaving out significant facts. This is more difficult than it sounds because what is a significant fact in a 600-word story may seem less significant if you are only allowed 400 words. Also with a long-running story, such as the Israeli–Palestinian conflict or the situation in Iraq, there may be differences of opinion about how much of the background needs to be mentioned.

One final point about honesty: newspapers are not infallible, and when we get something wrong we have a duty to correct it. That means making clear that it is a correction and not trying to disguise it in some way as many newspapers do. In any case, a newspaper that readily owns up to its mistakes is more likely to be trusted by its readers than one that does not.

Transparency

Transparency means what you see is what you get — that whatever appears in the paper is there for sound journalistic reasons and not because of some ulterior motive.

To do this successfully, a paper should (as the Washington Post puts it) “avoid conflict of interest or the appearance of conflict of interest, wherever and whenever possible.” Conflicts of interest usually arise in one of three ways:

1. Freebies, as they are known (e.g. free trips offered by companies or governments)
2. The activities or interests of a journalist outside work
3. A journalist’s financial interests

On the question of freebies, the Washington Post is very strict. It says:

We pay our own way. We accept no gifts from news sources. We accept no free trips. We neither seek nor accept preferential treatment that might be rendered because of the positions we hold. Exceptions to the no-gift rule are few and obvious — invitations to meals, for example. Free admissions to any event that is not free to the public are prohibited.

The Guardian is a bit more flexible. Its rules say:

The Guardian and its staff will not allow any payment, gift or other advantage to undermine accuracy, fairness or independence.

In practice this means that some free trips are accepted, though when this happens it has to be mentioned in the relevant story. Most of the free trips are for travel articles, where we include a note at the end.

There is also quite a tradition in Britain of companies sending gifts to journalists just before Christmas. The Guardian’s rule is that gifts worth more than £25 should be returned politely or donated to the paper’s annual charity raffle.

Journalists’ activities outside work are a controversial area. Clearly they need to be free to live their own lives. The question is at what point it starts to interfere with their credibility as a journalist.

Once again, the Washington Post takes a strict view of this. It says:

We avoid active involvement in any partisan causes — politics, community affairs, social action, demonstrations — that could compromise or seem to compromise our ability to report and edit fairly.

The guidelines go on to point out that although the paper has no control over the activities of members of a journalist’s family, their behaviour could also be a compromising factor.

The Guardian’s rules are less specific, but they set out the general principle:

Guardian staff journalists should be sensitive to the possibility that activities outside work (including holding office or being otherwise actively involved in organisations, companies or political parties) could be perceived as having a bearing on — or as coming into conflict with — the integrity of our journalism. Staff should be transparent about any outside personal, philosophical or financial interests

which might conflict with their professional performance of duties at the Guardian, or could be perceived to do so.

One thing the Guardian does make very clear, however, is that journalists must not write or make news judgments “about any individual related by blood or marriage or with whom the staff member has a close personal, financial or romantic relationship.”

As far as journalists’ financial interests are concerned, both the Guardian and the Washington Post have very strict rules, particularly for journalists who write about financial matters. They have to disclose all their financial interests to the paper and they are not allowed to write about companies in which they have an interest. The Guardian’s rules also say that while journalists are allowed to own shares, they are not allowed to trade in them, i.e. buy and sell them on a regular basis.

It should be apparent from all this that although there are some guiding principles, there are not necessarily any hard and fast rules, and where there are rules, there will always be exceptions to them.

The best way to approach it is to think carefully about what you are doing and ask yourself how it might be viewed by other people if they found out. Would you be able to give them a convincing explanation, or not?



Marcello Scarone
Program Specialist, Division for Freedom of Expression,
Democracy and Peace, UNESCO, Paris

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It gives me great pleasure to be here among you in Beirut for a third time and being able to share ideas and exchange points of view with you on such important issues as freedom of expression, ethics of journalism and media in general.

The right to freedom of information, commonly understood as the right to access information held by public bodies, is now widely recognised as a fundamental human right. There is a massive global trend towards legal recognition of this right as countries around the world that aspire to democracy either have adopted, or are in the process of preparing, freedom of information laws. This represents an enormous change from even 10 years ago, when less than one-half of the freedom of information laws now in place had been adopted.

There are a number of good reasons for growing acceptance of freedom of information as a human right. If anything, it is surprising that it has taken so long for such an important underpinning of democracy to gain widespread recognition as a right. Public bodies hold information not for themselves but as custodians of the public good. As such, this information must be accessible to members of the public in the absence of an overriding public interest in secrecy. In this respect, freedom of information laws reflect the fundamental premise that government is supposed to serve the people.

There are, however, a number of more utilitarian goals underlying widespread recognition of the right to information. The international human rights NGO, ARTICLE 19, Global Campaign for Free Expression, has described information as “the oxygen of democracy.” Information is essential to democracy at a number of levels. Fundamentally, democracy is about the ability of individuals to participate effectively in decision making that affects them. Democratic societies have a wide range of participatory mechanisms, ranging from regular elections to citizen oversight bodies, for example of the public educational and/or health services, to mechanisms for commenting on draft policies or laws.

Effective participation at all of these levels depends, in fairly obvious ways, on information. Voting is not simply a technical function. For elections to fulfil their proper function — described under international law as ensuing that “the will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government” — the electorate must have access to information. The same is true of participation at all levels. It is not possible, for example, to provide useful input to a policy process without access to the policy itself, as well as the reasons it is being proposed. Democracy is

also about accountability and good governance. The public have a right to scrutinise the actions of their leaders and to engage in full and open debate about those actions.

They must be able to assess the performance of the government and this depends on access to information about the state of the economy, social systems and other matters of public concern. One of the most effective ways of addressing poor governance, particularly over time, is through open, informed debate.

Freedom of information is also a key tool in combating corruption and wrongdoing in government. Investigative journalists can use the right to access information to expose wrongdoing and help root it out. As U.S. Supreme Court Justice Louis Brandeis famously noted: "A little sunlight is the best disinfectant." Commentators often focus on the more political aspects of freedom of information but it also serves a number of other important social goals. The right to access one's personal information, for example, is part of basic human dignity but it can also be central to effective personal decision-making. Access to medical records, for example, often denied in the absence of a legal right, can help individuals make decisions about treatment, financial planning and so on.

Finally, an aspect of freedom of information that is often neglected is the use of this right to facilitate effective business practices. Commercial users are, in many countries, one of the most significant user groups. Public bodies hold a vast amount of information of all kinds, much of which relates to economic matters and which can be very useful for businesses. This is an important benefit of freedom of information legislation, and helps answer the concerns of some governments about the cost of implementing such legislation.

These rationales for freedom of information legislation apply equally, if not with more force, to developing countries as to more developed countries. Democracy is not the preserve of a few select countries but a right of citizens everywhere. Every country in the world needs adequate checks and balances on the exercise of public power, including through freedom of information and the public oversight this enables. Freedom of information can be particularly effective in exposing corruption where there are few other safeguards, as grassroots experience in India with this right has amply demonstrated.

Freedom of information is most commonly understood primarily as a right to access information held by public bodies upon request. This is a central aspect of the right, but it clearly goes beyond that. One further element, addressed in most freedom of information laws, is the obligation on public bodies to publish, even in the absence of a request, key information, for example about how they operate, their policies, opportunities for public participation in their work and how to make a request for information.

One further aspect of this right is starting to emerge. Unlike the other two aspects of the right, which relate to information already held by public bodies, this third aspect posits a positive obligation on states to ensure that certain key categories of information are available. International NGOs for example, have argued that states are under a substantive positive obligation to ensure that citizens have access to information about human rights violations. This is of particular importance in the aftermath of a period of serious human rights violations, as part of a renewed commitment to democracy and to respect rights.

In such cases, it may not be enough simply to provide access to information already held by public bodies; it may be necessary to go further and collect and compile new information to ascertain the truth about the past abuses. The importance attached to this is reflected in the truth commissions appointed in a number of countries. It is essential that information about past abuses is readily available in an accessible form if the nation as a whole is to be able to deal with those abuses and move on.

Over the past 10 years, there has been a dramatic growth in formal recognition of the right to freedom of information. Numerous international bodies, including the UN and all three regional systems for the protection of human rights, have recognised the fundamental importance of this right, along with the need for legislation to guarantee it in practice. Many newly democratic countries have adopted new constitutions which explicitly recognise this right. In other countries, superior courts have interpreted long-standing constitutional guarantees of freedom of expression as embracing the right to freedom of information.

Perhaps most significant, however, is the veritable wave of freedom of information laws sweeping the globe. Such laws have been adopted by countries in every region of the world over the past 10 years, with the possible exception of the Middle East, and in many more countries, laws are in an advanced stage of preparation. Notwithstand-

ing their natural tendency towards secrecy, governments are realising that they can no longer resist the imperative to pass legislation guaranteeing a right to access the information they hold.

The laws which have been adopted certainly vary considerably in terms of the extent to which they guarantee the right of access in practice. Some serve more as fronts for repressive media legislation than to ensure access to public information. Most, however, are inexorably forcing the governments to which they apply to be more open.

A number of international bodies with responsibility for promoting and protecting human rights have authoritatively recognised the fundamental and legal nature of the right to freedom of information, as well as the need for effective legislation to secure respect for that right in practice. These include the UN, Commonwealth, OAS, COE and AU. This is supplemented by growing consensus at the national level of the importance of freedom of information as a human right and as a fundamental underpinning of democracy, as reflected in the inclusion of a right to freedom of information in many modern constitutions, as well as a dramatic increase in the number of countries which have adopted legislation giving effect to this right in recent years. Collectively, this amounts to clear international recognition of freedom of information as a human right.

The United Nations

Within the UN, freedom of information was recognized early on as a fundamental right. In 1946, during its first session, the UN General Assembly adopted Resolution 59(1), which stated:

Freedom of information is a fundamental human right and ... the touchstone of all the freedoms to which the UN is consecrated.

In ensuing international human rights instruments, freedom of information was not set out separately but as part of the fundamental right of freedom of expression, which includes the right to seek, receive and impart information.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1948, is generally considered to be the flagship statement of international human rights. Article 19, binding on all states as a matter of customary international law, guarantees the right to freedom of expression and information in the following terms: In November 1999, the three special mandates on freedom of expression — the UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Opinion and Expression, the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media and the OAS Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression — came together for the first time. They adopted a Joint Declaration which included the following statement:

Implicit in freedom of expression is the public's right to open access to information and to know what governments are doing on their behalf, without which truth would languish and people's participation in government would remain fragmented.

Freedom of information should be guaranteed as a legal and enforceable right permitting every individual to obtain records and information held by the executive, the legislative and the judicial arms of the state, as well as any government-owned corporation and any other body carrying out public functions.

All three main regional systems of human rights — within the Americas, Europe and Africa — have formally recognised the importance of freedom of information as a human right. The following section describes the development of these standards.

Organization of American States

Article 13 of the American Convention on Human Rights (ACHR), a legally binding treaty, guarantees freedom of expression in terms similar to, and even stronger than, the UN instruments. In a 1985 Advisory Opinion, the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, interpreting Article 13, recognised freedom of information as a fundamental human right, which is as important to a free society as freedom of expression. The Court explained:

Article 13 ... establishes that those to whom the Convention applies not only have the right and freedom to express their own thoughts but also the right and freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds... [Freedom of expression] requires, on the one hand, that no one be arbitrarily limited or impeded in expressing his own thoughts. In that sense, it is a right that belongs to each individual. Its second aspect, on the other hand, implies a collective right to receive any information whatsoever and to have access to the thoughts expressed by others.

The Court also stated: “For the average citizen it is just as important to know the opinions of others or to have access to information generally as is the very right to impart his own opinion,” concluding that “a society that is not well-informed is not a society that is truly free.”

Council of Europe

The Council of Europe (COE) is an intergovernmental organisation, composed of close to 50 Member States. It is devoted to promoting human rights, education and culture. One of its foundational documents is the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (ECHR), which guarantees freedom of expression and information as a fundamental human right at Article 10. Article 10 differs slightly from guarantees found in Articles 19 of the UDHR and Article 13 of the ACHR, in that it protects the right to “receive and impart,” but not the right to “seek,” information. The political bodies of the Council of Europe have made important moves towards recognising the right to freedom of information as a fundamental human right. In 1981, the Committee of Ministers, the political decision-making body of the Council of Europe (composed of Member States’ Ministers of Foreign Affairs) adopted Recommendation No. R(81)19 on Access to Information Held by Public Authorities, which stated:

I. Everyone within the jurisdiction of a member state shall have the right to obtain, on request, information held by the public authorities other than legislative bodies and judicial authorities. ...

In 1994, the 4th European Ministerial Conference on Mass Media Policy adopted a declaration recommending that the Committee of Ministers consider “preparing a binding legal instrument or other measures embodying basic principles on the right of access of the public to information held by public authorities.” Instead, the Committee of Ministers opted for a recommendation on access to official documents, adopted on 21 February 2002. The recommendation provides for a general guarantee of the right to access official documents, noted below, as well as specific guidance on how this right should be guaranteed in practice.

Features of an FOI Regime

Despite the fact that legislation in different countries varies considerably, there are some common themes which can be identified as regular features of a freedom of information regime. Furthermore, certain mechanisms or standards in national legislation can be identified as best practice approaches, justified by the principle of maximum disclosure, which should be promoted in other countries.

It was argued previously that freedom of information, and particularly the right to access information held by public bodies, is a fundamental human right, part of the right to freedom of expression.

Some rules on restrictions are recognised in regional human rights treaties and many national constitutions. Pursuant to this provision, restrictions must meet a strict three-part test. International jurisprudence makes it clear that this test presents a high standard which any interference must overcome.

First, the interference must be provided for by law. This requirement will be fulfilled only where the law is accessible and “formulated with sufficient precision to enable the citizen to regulate his conduct.”

Second, the interference must pursue a legitimate aim, such as those listed in Article 19(3) of the ICCPR.

Third, the restriction must be necessary to secure one of those aims. The word “necessary” means that there must be a “pressing social need” for the restriction. The reasons given by the state to justify the restriction must be “relevant and sufficient” and the restriction must be “proportionate to the aim pursued.”

In the area of freedom of information, this three-part test implies that the law should conform to the principle of maximum disclosure. The principle of maximum disclosure establishes a presumption that all information held by public bodies should be subject to disclosure and that this presumption may be overcome only where there is an overriding risk of harm to a legitimate interest. It also implies that systems and processes should be established which ensure that members of the public can in practice access information and that public bodies should make all reasonable efforts to facilitate this access.

Why is all this important for the ethics of journalism and of the media? Simply because the process of seeking, receiving and imparting information, at the very heart of the journalistic profession, is a two-way process that has

rights and privileges, but also duties and responsibilities. Over the last few minutes, I have tried to outline many of these rights and privileges of journalists and individual citizens to access publicly held information. It is their duty to present this information in a professional, ethical, truthful and accurate way, in line with the highest levels of professional conduct. Otherwise, not only will the public not trust the media, but even more worrying, this could provide an excuse for authorities to legislate in a way that is harmful to freedom of expression.

I trust that this conference will contribute to making these ideas clear and in furthering the cause of freedom of expression in Lebanon, the region and, indeed the world.

Thank you very much.

Session II

— *How can we utilize Internet sources? How can I write, if I quote something from Arabic.com or AME? How can I do that in a newspaper?*

Mroue: You have to attribute.

— *There's no code of ethics. There are no guidelines. Is it up to me to write the story and support it with a quote from Arabia.com saying that the source is Arabia.com?*

Scarone: I think this touches on something important. We need to keep one thing in consideration. There's no doubt the Internet and all the new technologies are bringing a whole new dimension, that we're accessing more information. It's incredible. That's why it's called the information revolution. But let's not forget one thing. The Internet, as modern as it is, and as great a medium as it is, is just that. It's one medium. It's a modern medium, but it's just one medium. The message remains what you and I and all of us make as news. I think, and the institution I represent, believe there's no need to change the ethical aspects of journalism, particularly the exchange of information. In other words, the ethics you use for traditional reporting could be just as valid, with the adjustments of the technical issues, but not of the content.

So, when many people discuss the necessity for new ethics, we're not so keen on that idea, although we do understand. People get taken aback by the new possibilities. If you have information on the Internet, and you're a journalist, you still have to verify that information just as you would if it came from word of mouth or from a traditional media source.



3:45-5:30



Session III – Distorted Images/Stereotyping

Chair: Mona Knio

Anthony Löwstedt, Press Freedom, Middle East Coordinator, International Press Institute, Vienna
Khodor Dimassi, PR Director, UAE University



Anthony Löwstedt

International Press Institute; Webster University, Vienna
Stereotypical Images of Arabs in the Mainstream Western Media

The problem of anti-Arab bias and hateful and hurtful symbolism in Western entertainment and news media is urgent and evident to any impartial observer. In this paper, I will attempt to provide an overview of the extent and nature of the problem, briefly look at some of the ramifications of international law on the issue, and outline some of the ethical ways of counteracting the bias and the hate speech. The guideline for establishing these counter-strategies is the question: How can freedom of expression be safeguarded whilst mobilizing against deeply unfair stereotypes?

First of all I would like to make the assertion that freedom of expression is a basic human right. That means that it cannot be reduced to any other right. There is, however, a partial exception with the right to life, often considered even more basic than other basic rights. In case published material incites to violence, there is in every country in the world some sort of legislation that can lead to punishment of the ones responsible for that publication, especially if a causal link can be drawn from the publication to actual violence taking place. The most important limits, and perhaps the only acceptable limits, to the freedom of expression are there to protect human life.

Yet, in some cases people give their lives for the freedom of expression. In principle, that goes for every journalist, writer, or artist who is murdered because of what he or she was about to publish or had already published, and for any human being who is killed for expressing a viewpoint or an opinion. In today's world, that happens on average more than once a week. And so, the label "basic," in freedom of expression as a basic human right, is after all justified. At least as long as people sacrifice their own lives for it, freedom of expression is sometimes, but not always, more basic than human life itself.

The scourge of anti-Arab bias in Western mass media goes back centuries. Edward Said's classic study on "Orientalism," a specific kind of Western racism targeting Muslims and Arabs, points at some of the roots of that bias. The competition between Christianity and Islam, the world's main missionary religions, led to bitter conflicts since the European Middle Ages. But it was especially during the era of colonialism — militarily imposed undemocratic rule around the world by Western European powers during the 19th and 20th centuries — that the racist stereotypes of Arabs became entrenched in Western thinking.

In 1998 the U.S. scholar Greta Little identified five stereotypes that have persisted during the last two-and-a-half centuries of Western literature on Arabs for adults and children: (1) Arabs are dirty and lazy. (2) Arabs are ignorant, superstitious and silly. (3) Arabs are irrational, cruel, and violent. (4) Arabs mistreat women. (5) Arabs hate Christians and engage in slave trade (nowadays: in hostage-taking). Of course, there are exceptions, but not many, and not prominent. Moreover, Arabs are often portrayed as needing Western guidance and Western values.

Despite this massive misinformation campaign, Westerners are not all racist against Arabs. Luckily, there are a million Arab-Americans and many millions of Arabs in Europe today, among others, who can set people straight. There are also good examples of anti-racism, factual and sympathetic publications and corrections, by Arabs and non-Arabs. Yet, since September 11, 2001, much more damage has occurred. In the wake of terrorism, Arabs are now targets of racial profiling worldwide by states, not just the USA, and corporations. Some Arab-American children are now denying their cultural heritage and their cultural identity, trying to pass as Latinos or Indians, rather than

face mobbing by their peers. This is collective punishment, a crime against humanity which can usefully be defined as punishing people for things they did not do.

One of the worst examples of this kind of racism is the book, "The Arab Mind," by Raphael Patai, which was published in 1976. The book was recently reissued and used extensively by the US military to "educate," or better, to brainwash its own soldiers in preparation for invading Iraq in 2003 and for the ensuing U.S.-led military occupation of that country, as the Guardian's Brian Whitaker showed in an excellent recent article. Apart from its perpetuation of the stereotypes mentioned, Patai's long chapter on the purported Arab sexual taboo ridden with shame and repression is supposed to have helped shape the despicable U.S. military torture techniques during that occupation.

How can these kinds of publications be marginalized? I think this is the difficult but necessary question. If I said: "How can these kinds of publications be stopped?," I would be inviting censorship. Marginalizing should be enough, or as Bernard Shaw once said: "The worst thing you can do to your enemy is not to hate him, but to ignore him."

Let me start in the year 1946, when the Nuremberg trials of Nazi war crimes were adjudicated by judges from the victorious allied countries. The case of Julius Streicher, a rabid Nazi publisher, brings the extent of incitement to violence to a head. He was found guilty, sentenced to death, and executed by the allies. With this sentence, the Western countries themselves acknowledged the enormous powers of the mass media with regard to hateful symbolism. But they failed to marginalize the racism, and to some extent instead drove it underground.

Similarly, in Rwanda's genocide in 1994, the media played a huge role, and Ferdinand Nahimana, a founder of Radio-Télévision Libre des Mille Collines, and Hassan Ngeze, former editor of Kangura magazine, were sentenced last year to life in prison by the International Rwanda War Crimes Tribunal for their roles in stirring up the ethnic and political hatred that cost 800,000 lives.

On June 4th this year, a new media outlet candidate for charges of accessory to genocide was suggested by Nigel Parry of the Electronic Intifada (EI), a Palestine-based website. The candidate is CNN, Cable News Network, based in Atlanta, Georgia, USA, but implicated in the charge are also other mainstream U.S. news media. The title of the EI article is "Time to Put the U.S. Media on Trial for Complicity in Genocide?" I will now try to evaluate some of the merits of this charge.

EI has long monitored CNN's coverage of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and repeatedly complained to the network of bias. It considers the lack of self-regulatory and disciplinary mechanisms, such as media councils, in the USA to blame for the stunning bias in that coverage. To the U.S. media, with a few minor exceptions, one can only complain directly to the medium itself, aside from suing in court. But it is very difficult to discipline the U.S. media over misrepresentation in civil courts, where "malicious intent" must be proven. EI documents the bias in the article, and claims it has complained to CNN, but with no effect. For example, CNN and other mainstream U.S. news media keep on calling time periods during which only Palestinians are killed by Israelis, "periods of calm" or "relative calm," and when Israelis are killed by Palestinians as a "flare-up in violence," thus portraying Palestinian attacks as provocations, and even denying the existence of Israeli attacks. Furthermore, Israeli attacks are commonly labeled "retaliations" with a reference to a previous Palestinian attack. The Palestinian attacks however are seldom called "retaliations," and they are seldom reported with the context of a previous Israeli attack. Vastly underestimated Palestinian death tolls are usually figures taken over by CNN uncritically from Israeli army spokespersons. Palestinian children killed by Israelis are referred to as "bodyguards."

These kinds of severe mistakes are not corrected by CNN, despite EI and others urging it to do so. Obviously, journalists have the right to be wrong, the right to make mistakes, but this precious right is abused by the media when they become perpetrators of systematic misrepresentation.

The systematic distortion of facts by the privately-owned U.S. mainstream mass media is the reason, according to EI, that the USA is able to finance the Israeli army with over \$2 billion or thereabouts every year, more than any country has ever received in aid from any other country. With a complicated system of credits and loan guarantees, the USA possibly spends more on the average Israeli citizen than it does on the average U.S. citizen. Enough U.S. taxpayers, however, feel that this sacrifice is needed, since Israel, apparently, is under constant attack, apparently through no fault of its own. Therefore, EI suggests that legal experts look into ways of making media accountable, not just in order to save Palestinian lives, but Israeli lives as well.

In my opinion, the EI charge of genocide is exaggerated. However, I personally believe Israel can be shown to be perpetrating apartheid, which is also a crime against humanity under international law, like genocide. The case of ethnic cleansing may in my opinion also be made. Around 3,000 Palestinians have been killed by Israelis during the last 3 1/2 years, tens of thousands have been injured, the Palestinian economic and cultural infrastructure has been demolished. Many Palestinians have been forced to leave their homes and their home country. And 900 Israelis have been killed by Palestinians, and hundreds more injured. This is not genocide, but it is atrocious all the same.

The incitement to violence in CNN, if any, is indirect. It does not call for extermination of the “vermin” or the “traitors” as the Nazi and the extremist Rwandan media did. And so the case against CNN is not as easy to make. But this kind of racist slant should not be excused. The pressure should be kept up. CNN should at least start improving its fact-gathering, and announce corrections, on the air as well as on its website. For this reason I welcome the EI article; not for its title and its provocative challenge, but for its substantial and important content and discourse analysis. Finally, just because racism is not direct does not make it less dangerous. Subtle and subliminal messages can do even more harm than direct incitement.

Meanwhile, racism against Arabs in Hollywood is plumbing new depths. Jack Shaheen, an Arab-American film critic who has researched and dealt with the problem for many years, says anti-Arab depictions in contemporary mainstream U.S. movies can be compared with judeophobic depictions in German Nazi films. The statement is almost hidden in the middle of a recent article of Shaheen’s in the intellectual magazine, *Index on Censorship*. It is perhaps best so. It comes with a context which must be repeated here, as well: There are exceptions in Hollywood. Although these are minor exceptions, there weren’t any at all in the entirely state-controlled Nazi film industry. Another important difference is that Shaheen may publish his critical books and articles on American and Western anti-Arab and anti-Muslim media content in America. Of course they are almost completely ignored by Hollywood as well as by the other mainstream mass media. They are marginalized, but not censored. But, unlike the racist publications mentioned above, the anti-racist literature should not be marginalized, especially not under the present socio-political circumstances.

How can we instead marginalize racism, and bring anti-racism into the Western mainstream? What can be done against anti-Arab media bias in general? Unfortunately not very much, except rather labor-intensive work. It is in the long-term interest of the world that freedom of expression be safeguarded, and irresponsibility, that is, the abuses of this freedom by the media themselves, even if malicious intent is present, is likely to remain more tolerated by the international community than violations of the freedom of expression, especially those violations that are legalized. Nevertheless, I would like to mention six measures by which anti-Arab bias in the Western media can be (and should be) challenged, in ethical ways.

1. The use of self-regulatory mechanisms must be coordinated in effective anti-racist media campaigns. We must speak up. Enough letters to the editors, the directors, or the ombudspersons will eventually force even the most staunchly anti-Arab editors, directors, and publishers to take note. Such letters should call for the adoption by media outlets of self-regulatory internal statutes including clauses against racism, discrimination, etc. (see the “Proposed Guidelines” drafted by IPJ/IPI and discussed at the Beirut roundtable in 2002.) Most media organizations, including CNN, have adopted a code of ethics: so one should call for accurate reporting in line with the spirit of their own codes. Larger self-regulatory mechanisms, media councils, could in my opinion improve the credibility of U.S. media, and improve their reporting. But due to hard-headed resistance from the U.S. media professionals themselves, these are unlikely to become reality any time soon. But there are many other media accountability systems, as Claude-Jean Bertrand has indicated, for example: journalism reviews, critical journalism and media classes and academic program, liaison committees, alternative media and media monitoring publications (such as Shaheen’s publications, the Electronic Intifada, or FAIR), regular accuracy and fairness questionnaires (as Globo does in Brazil), etc.
2. CNN, the big five Hollywood studios, and the other mainstream Western media must be challenged by effective and qualitatively superior competition in the marketplace, as is already partly the case, for example, with the Arab satellite television news networks Al Jazeera and Al-Arabiya, or the Egyptian film director Youssef Chahine. There is a compelling market logic to this strategy. During the invasion of Iraq, it became evident that people around the world who knew Arabic increasingly turned away from the Western news organizations to Al Jazeera and Al-Arabiya in order to get informed about the war. This became a signal to some Western organizations to change their perspective, at least some of the time. The boycotting of racist media will have the same effect. Just don’t buy or tune in to them any longer.

3. More than ever, we — the freedom of expression community — must also fight those who attack and try to censor Al Jazeera and others for trying to put across Arab perspectives. (See IPI's website for documentation of such violations, carried out especially by the USA and Israel, and for protests and resolutions against them.) Freedom of expression must be available to all, it is a human right.
4. Having the honor to participate in this conference on media ethics in this volatile region I would like to call upon the local governments to do more for freedom of expression. Serious violations in the sphere of freedom of expression by certain repressive regimes in the region provide an opportunity to certain western elites to brand the value of freedom of expression as a strictly "Western value" which needs to be enforced upon others. In particular Islam is being targeted as an intolerant religion which stands against freedom of expression. However, the Quran states in Sura 4, Verse 194: "...when you hear Allah's communications disbelieved in and mocked at, do not sit with them until they enter into some other discourse..." Moreover, in Sura 6, Verse 68, we read: "And when you see those who enter into false discourses about Our communications, withdraw from them until they enter into some other discourse." These verses clearly call upon Muslims to be tolerant and to do no more than withdraw from such company, and even that only while the mocking continues, and to actually rejoin the same company when they have changed the subject of conversation. How far this is from ordering Muslims to kill, attack, threaten, imprison or otherwise silence such people is abundantly obvious. Arab and Muslim governments could and should do much more for freedom of expression, among other things in order to raise media standards and the quality of media content in those countries, but mainly because it is an intrinsic good. In reality, freedom of expression is of course a universal phenomenon, not tied to any cultural sphere more than another, although it is more or less repressed by political entities. It can be found in ancient Egypt as well as in the Quran or in Bernard Shaw's recommendations. And so, pressure on these Arab and Muslim governments to rid their legislation and their practices of repressive measures can do a lot of good.
5. Western news and entertainment media may be changed from within. Now is the time for Arabs and anti-racists to apply for jobs there. They are sorely needed. And the whole world is watching. The Western media will eventually need to play along here too, if nothing else then for them to stay in the market. In order to provide competent staff it is also crucial that media communications and journalism courses are taught to large numbers of Arab students, and that they are taught well.
6. More stringent anti-monopoly laws in the Western countries and the European Union are also very likely to alleviate the problem. The tabloid media by far exhibit the largest amount of racist media content in the news, and they are often conglomerated with the most commercialized, and — inadvertently or not — the most racist entertainment providers. Over the last 25 years, these corporations have relentlessly been consolidating and extending their hold on the national, regional, and global media markets. As their owners' and publishers' wealth and power is augmented, their interests increasingly coincide with those of the political and military elites, as Noam Chomsky and Edward Herman showed in their classic "Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media." Just two names should suffice to put that point across: Rupert Murdoch and Silvio Berlusconi. We Westerners should therefore also lobby our governments and legislators to reverse the trend towards concentration of media ownership, and to do more to fight the stereotypes, rather than exploit them, and promote cultural diversity in the media.

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Khodor Dimassi

PR Director, UAE University, Al Ain

The Role of Mass Media in Distorting the “Image” From a Public Relations Perspective

I would like, first, to thank Mrs. Magda Abu-Fadil, the director of the Institute of Professional Journalists (IPJ), and all her staff, and Ms. Kirsten Maas from the Heinrich Böll Foundation for making it possible that all of us, respected colleagues, could meet to discuss important issues of our profession.

I am replacing Dr. Alfred Mutua who could not make it at the last moment for urgent matters, and I would like to believe what is usually said that: “the replacement could sometimes be as good as the original.” I hope so.

I will talk about the role of mass media in creating a distorted image from a public relations point of view and the consequent fact that mass media are becoming a separate target audience instead of being a neutral tool by which we reach our target audiences.

I therefore have to stress on the issue of responsibility versus the issue of seeking and revealing, at all costs, the reality and the truth; knowing with absolute certainty that “the image” we depict and adopt about anything, is the result and the reflection of the “perception” we form about that thing, and knowing also that, due to human inefficiencies, limitations, differing backgrounds and tendencies, and lack of information and knowledge, the perception we form about any reality is almost always different from what the reality is even when we directly live and sense it, let alone being told about it through a theoretically unbiased source or medium, and even worse when told through a human naturally embedded biased source we call “media.”

This observation is in no way meant to criticize the human race in general or media personnel in particular, but it is to state the fact that all of our questions and queries about reality are mere attempts to explain and understand it (this is why differences and distortions are inevitable) rather than attempts to verify its existence (which is possible, and could be answered by either “yes” or “no”).

Public Relations is defined as “an organized effort and campaign to have good and fruitful relations with certain public audiences (target groups) defined by the nature of entity this effort is done for, with the aim of achieving the mission and objectives (short term and long term) of this entity by showcasing and promoting its positive aspects and competitive edges.”

In this regard, mass media should be viewed impartially and theoretically as a tool through which someone could reach the public audiences that he is not directly able to reach by himself. This for sure contradicts the way media institutions and their personnel view themselves as messengers of the truth (reality), whether it is good or bad, pleasing or embarrassing, and constructive or destructive.

From a public relations perspective, this is making the PR role more difficult and more sensitive, because this is turning the media into one more independent target audience that the PR activity has to tackle and deal with.

Not only this, but the difficulty comes from the fact that this target audience is different in culture, nature, capability, and authority from the other regular audiences. Therefore, it requires far greater and more specialized resources to handle it, in terms of budgets, cultures, contacts, laws, regulations, ethics, and expertise.

To explain and prove my point about the role of media in distorting the image, I will state in detail two cases and then I will suggest and recommend ethics for the media in general and the Arab media in particular to follow in order to minimize the image distortion.

Case # 1:

It’s that of the institution that I represent, the United Arab Emirates University (EU), which was chartered in 1976 as the first university in the UAE. Today, EU is by far the largest university in the country and among the largest in the Middle East and Africa with 17,000 students enrolled during the academic year 2003–2004, approximately 40,000

graduates/alumni, nine well structured and accredited colleges offering 66 distinguished undergraduate and six graduate programs, and a cutting-edge research activity and information technology infrastructure in terms of faculty, labs and the largest wireless Web connection network in the whole region.

Yet the university feels that the image related about it through the media is not equivalent or truly reflective of the university's achievements in the academic and research fields. Moreover, the university's image is often negatively distorted and consequently deeply harmful to EU's effort to successfully accomplish its mission.

This is partly due to the unbalanced coverage that some media give to minor and irrelevant events or accidents happening on campus, and in other part due to some cultural, social, and political reasons like when the media take EU for a "settling ground" of certain issues related to the national educational systems (e.g.: gender segregation), or even of certain personal issues that strongly exist in a conservative, yet developing society, like the UAE's, with a moderately low population where the citizens, in many ways, know each other.

Following is a list of some distorting media actions (coverage):

- A minor fire due to an electrical short that left a black mark on the outlet and surrounding wall, and was stopped by self-security shutdown of the electrical installation, becomes: "A collapse of the electrical system due to bad contracting."
- A small fire in the auditorium due to cigarette smoking, which was put off in seconds by the installed fire extinguishing system, becomes: "A fire that was almost going to be a big catastrophe, due to constant violations of the instructional fire hazards codes at the university and the failure of the security system and personnel to detect and prevent these violations."
- News about one student who did not find a job after graduation, becomes: "Unemployment rates are on the rise in the UAE due to lack of strategic planning at all universities in general and the public ones in particular, resulting in curriculums that do not meet the needs of the labor market."
- A delay in registration services of a handful of students among the tens of thousands enrolling at EU, would turn into: "Bureaucracy and lack of customer care are reigning at EU, the largest public university in the country and one of the largest in the area, providing more evidence of the benefits of privatization."

Case #2:

It is related to the fundamental and generations-long Arab-Islamic-Israeli conflict, when all media channels and agencies covered in detail the news about Israel's bombardment of the outskirts of Beirut (first week of June 2004) at a time when the summer season is starting in Lebanon, and when Israel is facing all sorts of reactions from the uprising (Intifadah) in Palestine with nothing coming out against it from the areas it bombarded around Beirut. This could make tourists refrain from coming to the country just when the local economy is in deep need of their spending, resulting in deeper recession, more hardship, and lesser ability to resist the occupation and the aggression.

This situation, as dangerous, critical, sensitive and complicated as it is, should be worthy of our (the media's) profound enlightening reflections, and thoughts before taking any action. I know that sometimes we exaggerate the theory of "conspiracy," but don't you think that, as a result of this last round of Israeli attacks, we, and particularly the media, could easily serve Israel by fulfilling its wishes of simply covering the news of the aggressions, when we obey the sacred ethical code of "seeking and unveiling the truth" regardless of the self-destruction we commit by our own hands and praise ourselves that we have a message to cherish and carry?

I know I could be offensive and rude in my conclusions, but I don't want you to think of me as such. I only hope that each and every one of us would look at "responsibility" as the guidance for "reality," and that, in our efforts to adopt a set of ethics for the Arab media, to put "responsibility" at the helm.

To do so, we should first all agree and remember that there is no such thing as a "universal code of media ethics," and that any code of laws or ethics is a reflection of, a development from, or a result of a certain ideology or creed; which in turn is: "the definition of life (creation, essence and forms of life), the human being, and the universe, the interrelationships between these three entities, and between them and the concept of 'before and after life'."

Then, we should agree on the specific ideologies and creeds that we want our code to derive from; and in our case they should be the three holy religions of Islam, Christianity, and Judaism because they respectively repre-

sent the population of the Arab world, and more importantly because they do not disagree on the issues of ethics regarding information gathering, analysis, and dissemination.

Consequently, we should all discuss and hopefully agree, here at IPJ today that based on:

- All religious teachings, request the responsible usage of information by verifying it first through a thorough authenticity and credibility checkup of its sources, and then by declaring what is absolutely “true” of it only if deemed necessary to preserve people’s lives, rights and belongings but also through suitably defined settings and channels and in adherence to certain procedures like people’s consent, material evidence and witnesses,
- The everlasting universal wisdom of responsible usage of information expressed in many proverbs like: “Not all what is known should be said” (*هلا كل ما يعلم يقال*) and like: “For every situation there should be a proper saying” (*لكل مقام مقال*).
- All of our own modest practical life experiences (of mine and of yours, dear respected colleagues).

Based on all of the above, we should have the courage, sincerity, respect and appreciation of our souls to declare the first and most important commandment of the Arab media code of ethics as: “The responsibility in seeking, proving, analyzing, and declaring the truth.”

This is the only chance we have, from a public relations perspective or in fact from any other perspective, to reduce and hopefully to eliminate the media tyranny of manufacturing distorted images about anything, especially the deeply hurting falsifications and fabrications of stereotypes about Arab societies, nations, and states, and about the Islamic ideology, that are inciting international conflict and confrontation which might lead to global chaos and turmoil that in turn would definitely bring down civilization and cause world destruction.

Finally I want to tell you that I am very happy, from a PR point of view, for the dramatic improvements and advancements in the information technology field and the increasing number of Internet and electronic mail users because they are permitting a more direct contact with the public sectors and audiences, therefore decreasing the chances of distorted images and stereotypes.



Labib Nasir

Media & Information Coordinator, Miftah, Jerusalem

Stereotypes, Distorting Images and Changing Realities: Palestinian–Israeli Conflict

Being a Palestinian university student in southern Georgia, in the U.S., I was faced with many stereotypes, some about Arabs, and some about others, all equally demeaning and offensive. It’s truly amazing to hear students at universities ask questions based on stereotypes they had learnt misunderstood and distorted. These questions and comments ranged from “Do you ride camels back home?” to the more informed question, “So do you really hate Jews?”

My answer to both questions was always a resounding NO. I usually followed up with a question asking where such ideas came from and would get another ill-informed answer such as “Well you guys have been fighting for ever there haven’t you?” To which I usually and perhaps snappishly answered with another NO! After a brief pause absorbing the shock I would continue with a brief history lesson depending on who my interlocutor was.

Stereotypes feed off of terminology, which can reshape thoughts and reinvent the norms of reality. An example of this would be the U.S. officials’ typical statement which always starts with America’s recognition of Israel’s right to defend itself. Even when Israel is blatantly attacking and in no way defending, the statement will start with “Respect Israel’s right to defend itself.” Following this logic, a myth is created whereby the occupier is defending itself by invading and killing the occupied. As silly as this sounds to an informed person, it sets the mood and already disrespects and dehumanizes the victims while distorting information and freeing it from basic logic. When

Israel breaks international law and expectations by firing missiles at Palestinian urban neighborhoods killing women and children, extra-judicially assassinating another political leader or invading and destroying schools, homes, crops, roads, airports, institutions, lives and more.

Terminology is a very powerful tool. Many examples regarding the Palestinian–Israeli conflict will reflect the bias and distortion of information, which can change perceptions and form opinions that are in sync with those who can afford to influence them. The so-called “security fence” is in fact an annexation and expansion wall. The militants or as they are now more commonly and frequently known as “terrorist” that attack Israeli military tanks bent on destroying Palestinian homes, are in fact defending their people and have an inalienable and internationally recognized right to resist attacks on their homes and neighborhoods. Illegal Jewish settlements, or more accurately colonies, are in fact built on stolen Palestinian property against international laws and inhabited by terrorist, racist ideologically fanatical armed settlers; they are not civilian Jewish “neighborhoods” or “communities.” Presenting them as such is not only a distortion of the truth harming the Palestinians; it is in fact a distortion of truth that is harming Israel and the friends of Israel who are turning these stereotypes into influential prejudices.

The Israeli military establishment has been tactfully labeled the IDF (Israeli Defense Forces), giving the image of being merely on the defensive, never the offensive. However, it is far more suitable to label them the IOF, since even Sharon has recognized that what the Israeli army is embarked on is an occupation. Barak’s last minute 2000 offer, at Camp David, to save his faltering political career has been labeled and often only known as Barak’s generous offer, I suppose a spider web of a state on 15% of historical Palestine is what the media refer to when they speak of his generosity.

The biggest irony, a joke really, is Bush’s oft-cited remark that Sharon is a “man of peace.” It is reassuring to know that murderous war criminals (found guilty at least indirectly in their own country) can redeem themselves so easily to the U.S. administration. Shame! To drive the point further Sharon has opposed every single peace agreement, even the one with Egypt in 1979.

The press has a responsibility to expose these lies and not repeat them under the guise of “fair and balanced” reporting. With the U.S. reshaping its media ethics and values by simplifying topics and fitting them all into the “good v. evil” paradigm, journalists are learning to dance accordingly. The press should have a responsibility to represent the voiceless and to challenge legitimacy of a government’s version of a story, placing things in perspective and not allowing the foe to be the judge or equate the occupier and the occupied with the same party.

The visual media have become highly developed in recent years and are a powerful tool that has forced itself into every house. The power of such a tool has been used to project certain agendas. When the attacks on the Twin Towers took place back in 2001, the visual media focused on fewer than a dozen children and one adult supposedly “celebrating” the news of that attack. The headlines showed the plane hitting the towers and the only other image that day was the “Palestinians celebrating.” There were celebrations and grievances all throughout the world in different parts, yet somehow it was the image of Palestinian children, who probably did not understand what they were seeing, celebrating on all headlines throughout the media. Many Americans did not know what a Palestinian was prior to this distorted, agenda-packed image. Another example would be the funerals of Palestinians versus the funerals of Israelis. The camera seems to always find the mourning and crying relatives of the settler and that image is broadcast throughout the world. When Palestinians are killed, they show the march of the armed section of the funeral and seem to never relate or touch upon the humane level which, believe me, does exist but is yet to be, or is very rarely, exposed.

The list of distorted information used and repeated is long indeed. Similarly dangerous, if not more so, is the distortion of information through omission. Allow me to elaborate. Many times it is what is not reported that is misleading and serves to distort the truth. A recent example is “Operation Rainbow” in Rafah which claimed the lives of close to 50 Palestinians though the cited figure in the media was 40 dead with the addition, and excuse, that most of them were militants. This ignored three-year-old Tamer and three-year-old Rawan, both killed by Israeli troops during this operation. All in all, there were 14 children killed, 11 of whom were under 16. Is this not worth mentioning? The armed fighters who were killed made up 17 of the total deaths and they were not killed in combat, but as a result of gunship missile attacks. This was never explained or even hinted at in the media coverage.

Another recent example of things not said is CNN’s latest report on human rights abuse in the region, particularly in the wake of the Abu Ghraib torture scandal. Each and every Arab country, as well as Iran, was mentioned and a

U.S. report citing violations of each country listed was quoted. The CNN report shows a map and talks about Lebanon, Jordan and Syria, then the out-of-place voice of the narrator says “the list goes on,” as they geographically skip to show Tunisia, Algeria, Egypt and continue to cover each and every country in the region. They list violations in Arab prisons and the use of extra-judicial assassinations in some Arab countries, namely Algeria. In the same U.S. State Department report, Israel is mentioned with plenty of violations including its record of abuse of detainees and prisoners as well as extra-judicial killings, yet somehow, the CNN report mentions all the countries of the region except Israel. Maybe it should have said Arab countries, along with Iran, equating all Arabs with Islam.

The terminologies and assumptions used by the media are creating skewed realities. Many of these items come from government spokespeople and are repeated as facts by the media and eventually become the norm. For example the word “pre-empt” is a term invented by Israel and used so frequently to justify wanton attacks on innocent people, claiming that the troops have such great intelligence that they can detect when a Palestinian is thinking of carrying out an attack. The media unquestionably have adopted and used this term indirectly justifying an unprovoked attack. Distortion is becoming systemized as a result of lazy journalism, compounded by enormous pressure on those who wish to cover a different perspective of the conflict, and followed by an organized negative campaign against the journalist or the newspaper, TV stations or radio channels that dare. Lobby groups such as AIPAC or news networks such as Murdoch’s Fox News have labeled journalists and media personnel with warnings prior to hearing their report. For example, Robert Fisk, “an Arabist/troublemaker” and “controversial director Michael Moore.”

It is also worth noting that Israel has control over the foreign press in Israel and the Palestinian territories, through closures on areas that can ban media personnel from covering and reporting facts on the ground. Harassment of journalists, restriction on movement when traveling to Gaza and the West Bank, and the withdrawal of press cards are always lingering. Recently, BBC was boycotted by Israel for airing a documentary on Vanunu and the nuclear Dimona facility in Israel. One has to really assess the losses he/she will endure the minute he/she decides to swim upstream and question the oppressors and their great influence over the media and high ranking officials in different governments, most importantly the U.S. administrations, specifically the current radical pro-Israel government.

Instability and hate in the region are on the rise; while Israel continues to expand an occupation with impunity and an arrogant belief that they are above the law. Israel is further aided by the likes of Donald Rumsfeld referring to the West Bank and Gaza as the “so-called occupied territories.” Journalists are under enormous pressure for they do not want to be on the hit list of the pro-Israel camp. Often, it is not the journalists so much as the editors sitting in their offices abroad. Information delivered right to your desk, which is well written and sourced, is more workable in the pressured world of journalism with crouching deadlines. Systemizing distortions is sometimes blatantly done and other times comes as a result of repetition and avoiding confrontation or negative campaigns by the rich and powerful spin doctors against the journalists or institutions.

To demonstrate the effects of distortions, I will examine a number of case studies in which distortion is systematized and is feeding stereotypes through dangerous avenues. I will talk about some of the pseudo non-partisan think tanks, which are making a conscious and powerful effort to shape opinions in order to empower and justify the occupation even further.

I would like to start by talking about the Middle East Media Research Institute (MEMRI). The website states that they are “an independent, nonpartisan, nonprofit organization providing timely translations of Arabic, Farsi, and Hebrew media, as well as original analysis of political, ideological, intellectual, social, cultural, and religious trends in the Middle East.” However, when taking a closer look at the material on its website, it becomes quite obvious that MEMRI is anything but non-partisan for they blatantly promote “the continued relevance of Zionism to the Jewish people and the state of Israel.” MEMRI does in fact translate material in an accurate manner, but the distortion takes effect in material they choose to translate. MEMRI attributes articles to sources that had not published the material in question. MEMRI translates parts of an article and leaves out other segments.

Brian Whitaker, in his article “selective MEMRI” for the Guardian, concludes that “To anyone who reads Arabic newspapers regularly, it should be obvious that the items highlighted by MEMRI are those that suit its agenda and are not representative of the newspapers’ content as a whole.” Further examination has shown that MEMRI’s president and co-founder is Yigal Carmon, spent 22 years in Israeli military intelligence and served as advisor to PMs Shamir and Rabin. The seven most senior staff members named on the page, which today disappeared from

MEMRI's website, are in one way or another affiliated with Israel. Mr. Carmon, or should we call him Col. Carmon, has given briefings to lawmakers on Capitol Hill, accusing Arab media of being anti-Semitic solely for representing the voice of the Arab governments and continuously calling for terrorist attacks against America. It appears any criticism of the state of Israel immediately warrants an accusation of being anti-Semitic. (Even "The Passion of the Christ," the biblical story, was attacked as anti-Semitic.) This is a blatant example of distortion in the media. A pro-Israel body is being regarded as a non-partisan source of information and is being used by lawmakers and journalists as factual material.

I would like to discuss another dangerous study which I came across. The BBC children's website offers a "Guide to the Middle East Conflict" in which the BBC presents the conflict and its issues to children between the ages of 11 and 14. The "guide" was shockingly pro-Israeli. There is no mention of the word "occupation" and both the Palestinians and the Israelis are portrayed as equal. Simplifying history and repeating false information in a manner that is misleading to children who are at an impressionable age is an outrage. When citing history, the report talks about both Israelis and Palestinians being displaced in 1948 giving the impression that there is some sort of equal comparison between the two in a blatant misrepresentation of the facts. Palestinians are fighting against Israeli "control" the report says, and draws comparison between the PLO and Israel as equal partners with equal "sacrifices" for the sake of peace. Also, there is a quiz section at the end of this report, which reaffirms the distortions learnt and suggests that Jerusalem, a city occupied in 1967, is Israel's capital, without, for example, mentioning that the UK does not recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, and for that matter neither does international law or even the pro-Israeli U.S. government. Interestingly enough, the National School Curriculum, the body responsible for this section, aims to teach its students legal and human rights and responsibilities underpinning society and the importance of resolving a conflict "fairly." We, at MIFTAH, have written a letter to complain about this biased study. Recently, the study has been amended, yet it still fails to mention the word "occupation."

A third case study provided by Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting shows that only four percent of U.S. networks report that violent events are actually taking place in an area illegally occupied by Israel, in contravention of international law. The reporting transforms the illegal Jewish-only settlements/colonies built on Palestinian land into benign "Jewish neighborhoods" and makes Israel appear to be engaged in self-defense. There have been some very slick PR campaigns to ensure that distortions are systematized with no room for error. The news is often filtered several times over, going through Israeli government press offices, American-hired PR firms, Israeli consulates and finally, just in case something managed to slip in, so-called media watchdogs, which include groups like "Camera" and "Honest Reporting."

Another case study, conducted in the Bay Area by an organization called "If Americans Knew" concluded that Israeli deaths are covered at far higher rates (2-25 times greater than Palestinian ones). Their examination included the San Francisco Chronicle, which has been accused of being pro-Palestinian in the past. They report that during an extended period of time, 93 Palestinian children were killed but generated only six headlines while four Israeli children were killed but generated six headlines. Interestingly enough, the San Francisco Bay-based organization attempted to meet with the staff of the Chronicle to present their results to a team of editors and got a negative reply. The newspaper's "reader's representative," Dick Rogers, wrote in an e-mail that his job was "not to defend the newspaper," but he has refused to set up a meeting with Chronicle editors. Rogers termed the report "incendiary." Earlier, a pro-Israel group contending that Chronicle coverage was "pro-Palestinian" had been granted a long meeting with eight top Chronicle editors. Their complaints received news coverage and an apology.

There are so many cases that are resulting in the Palestinians finding themselves faced with being convicted and judged by their oppressor. Distortion is so well organized and stereotypes are embedded in a way that is difficult to undo and easier to simply adopt and jump on the bandwagon. Taking a stance and making the right decision is never easy, and is very difficult when it comes to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Today the media has an authority in the way it projects an idea or even distorts historical facts for the sake of agendas of injustice and abuse of freedoms. Further, the media can project certain people as being less than human, thus affecting the viewer/reader and his/her judgment of how worthy such a person is of decent life and liberty. Stereotyping and wrong reporting are inflicting harsh and cruel judgment against the victims of such distortion. That is very dangerous and will certainly backfire someday.

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Session III

— *Anthony, you said something about boycotting racist media and Labib said something about letters to the editor or writing to different media for clarification or correction. My question is to both of you. To what extent can boycotting and writing to the editor be successful and how?*

Löwstedt: I don't know. It's impossible to say for sure. A lot of media will welcome this kind of feedback. They want to know, for just commercial reasons, what the audience out there thinks. It could be useless, wasted energy. But rather than doing nothing, it perhaps only does good as therapy for yourself to send that thing out. Dialogue is preferred over violent conflict. I think it's better to write to the editor than to bomb the newspaper office.

Nasir: I'm not sure how effective boycotting is, because in order to boycott, you have to have everybody boycotting. Somehow it never works out that way. Writing letters or calling, I do this almost daily. I call CNN, I call BBC, and I'll tell you, they don't like to hear from me. Many times they hear "this is Labib" and I get sent from one to another and I never get to talk to the editor in chief or whoever I'd like to talk to. But I think it's still good to write letters and to document and to keep it somewhere sourced. We have letters on our website. We keep track of all the letters that we write. Many times it's more useful to send not just call and give a complaint, give your version, well written and shove it in their face. This way there is no excuse. But it doesn't mean it will bring results. You have done what you had to do and it's documented. I believe in the long run it will come in handy.

— *Two of the speakers have made a very good case about stereotyping against the Arab world. Is it not a two-way street? We do stereotype a lot. A speaker in the previous session said that in the West, they don't know anything about the Arabs. I do believe that the Arabs don't know many things about the West.*

— *To follow up on what Aref said, I wish there were more organizations like Miftah, more articulate spokespeople for the Arabs like Hanan Ashrawi and Labib. The Arab world definitely needs them. Not only does one need to document, to "shove in their faces," to quote you, but you really have to do your homework. The biggest drawbacks of Arabs is that there aren't enough people who speak articulately in enough languages, understanding different nuances of languages, understanding different cultures, not to belabor the point, who can get the message across. How often have we heard Arab spokespeople in front of a microphone, on the air, live, not able to express themselves? Hanan Ashrawi is a perfect example of someone who is articulate, and she's a minority of one. We really need more people to do this sort of job.*

Dimassi: I do know the importance of what you just said. It's very important to be able to communicate. But it's my belief that the best way to change stereotypes is to lead by example, especially at the top level — the governmental, political level. If we talk about the Islamic culture, it was spread in the Far East without a war.

— *It's not just about Islam. It comes as a total surprise to some people in the West when I tell them my name may be Abu-Fadil, it sticks out like a sore thumb, I'm not a terrorist, and guess what, I'm a Christian. Did you know that Christianity began in the Middle East, not out in the Midwest, or the Deep South, with all the holy roller Baptists, for example? It blows their minds. How many people are able to bring that across? You take your average American who doesn't know enough. How many people have made an effort to go out to the little church groups, the little clubs, the scouts. I see this all the time. I lived in Washington and covered it for 15 years. All these Arab officials and diplomats wanting to go to parties all the time, to be entertained in Washington and New York, not making the effort to go out into the little towns and talking to people. They're not going to make the effort, they don't care. You have to take the message to them. And in order to do that, you'd better do it in their own language.*

Löwstedt: I agree with everything Magda said, except there's one more dimension to it. I may be a bit paranoid, it might be a bit of a conspiracy theory. Whenever they have an exchange of comments between an Israeli and a Palestinian, the Israeli guy looks really comfortable, the Palestinian is sweating and screaming. I think they actually turn up the heat and they turn down the volume in his earphone. I have no proof of this, it's just what I'm seeing.

— *Someone from an Arab satellite channel was on "60 Minutes" and literally her microphones were not working. So she was responding to questions she was not hearing. Conspiracy theory or not, it does happen.*

— *I remember James Zogby, who is president of the Arab American Institute, he told us "don't rely on official media services in Arab embassies because they're not doing a good job. Don't be lazy to send letters, whenever you see that writing letters or emails would change something." This work is a process. Communication is a process. It takes time. We should do it by organizing ourselves. We talk about civil society in the Middle East and the Arab World but I don't think they're doing a good job in trying to correct this bad and negative image in the Western media.*

Nasir: I want to follow up and agree with what Aref was saying. We tend to be emotional and reactive. That hurts us. Maybe it's also the feeling of helplessness. We don't follow things through like we should. The example of this is what happened in Jenin, which was a war crime, yet, not being able to sell ourselves to our audience backfired and it became a negative thing that we wanted to bury. We need training, we need to learn cultures as well as languages in order to be able to address the people in the language they understand. This doesn't mean you have to change your message. You just have to change the way you give the message in order to reach the person.

— *I'll be the one American here, so I'll speak with some trepidation, I suppose. First, I grew up in south Georgia and the problem that Labib described is very, very real. I think there are a whole lot of different definitions of objectivity and goes to your question. I often say that where you stand depends on where you sit. The question here was about Western journalism as if we were all monolithic. I'm an owner of a group of papers, which has been very opposed to the racial profiling of Arabs in the post-9/11 era and supportive of Palestinian efforts, among other things. So, I think the American media is not of one voice.*

It's the tradition of every government and every culture to villainize its enemies. It's not simply two governments that are at war or in political adversarial positions. We end up villainizing the entire people of that country or that part of the world. We're now remembering World War II in the United States with a great deal of nostalgia and we can remember the "Japs" headlines of that era, the "Krauts," and other ways that citizens of those countries were demonized and made less human. I think there's a lot of that that goes on as well. So that it does become a burden in every culture, wherever there are political differences.

I do think there are some differences between fundamental racism and political disagreement. There may be political positions that come out of a misunderstanding of a culture or even a racist dislike of a culture. The cartoon you showed, for example, from the LA Times struck me as a political cartoon only. It happened to take the side of Israel but a person would be free to do that in a political environment, whereas there are some other presentations — some that Anthony described — that might be more fundamentally racist in their presentation. I think we do need to distinguish those two kinds of things. Anyone may not have a full understanding of a Palestinian position, or some other group's position, but that's a different kind of problem from a matter of racism and racial derogation.

— *In addition to boycotting and sending letters, I was wondering, why don't we in the Arab World act, instead of react, by addressing people in the West, offering them alternative sources of information. Let's say by sites on the Internet, addressing children and adolescents, and so on. Colorful and attractive sites on the Internet offering our point of view to whatever problem, not only political, but all aspects of life.*

Dimassi: I'd like to stress again that we've spoken with the word "we" have to do, "we" have to say. Unless we put the political systems and governments on board, we cannot win this contest.

— *I beg to differ on that. Governments tend to be obstructionists and they move at such a slow pace. If I were to depend on them, I'd never get anywhere. I'd rather it be private initiative. As for what Amina brought up about children, this is something I suggested in 2002 in Abu Dhabi, and said children should be in touch with children, across the oceans, through websites. Why not have a news service for kids, run by kids, supervised by adults, so that kids can communicate with other kids and explain to them their problems? They share fears, they share problems across all sorts of political divides. Why do we have to wait for some ossified adults, who are probably the problem them-*

selves? Someone should pick up on that. There was something called the Children's Express that was based in New York and there's a British version of that. The U.S. edition folded for lack of funding. I think we can pick up on that. We have a lot of very creative people in this part of the world and I think kids would get a real kick out of that and it would be a very dynamic process and it would be something positive for a change.

Dimassi: I agree 100%. We should not wait for anybody but the effort should be twofold. You have to also deal with them (governments) and try, while you're doing your thing privately and on an individual level, and on the social/group level, you have to put pressure on them.

— *A question to Mr. Dimassy. This morning you said some papers refused to publish news and asked for money. Can you clarify and specify what the media content you gave was to make them refuse to print the news. You also said you did things and overcame the issue, or had changed your way of doing things. What did you do as a university to overcome the problem?*

Dimassi: Thank you for asking this question. It wasn't a case of newspapers asking for money. We had to advertise because we're a big university. We have to advertise in some media channels, concerning programs, like the MBA program. We tackled private targeted media channels. Some of the newspapers asked to advertise in them. That's the issue. I thought of two things, either to include them later on, which means that we needed a big budget, or to give them some news and favor them.

— *This is a problem that all PR agencies are facing in the Middle East. Connecting the advertising with the editorial, the advertorial. But there's a way to let the media who are thinking this way learn a lesson, which is to totally ignore them. Your advertising campaign was studied based on market needs. You chose newspapers based on circulation. Try not to have a quid pro quo. This is what I face in my work and ignoring them is a very good result.*

— *I have a comment about Labib's contribution and a question. The comment is that the translation service, MEMRI, that you talked about is not only influencing public opinion in Washington but also in Germany and as far as I know also in Russia. So what they do is basically translate articles. They have a very selective selection which focuses on Arab anti-Semitism and present this via free e-mail to German decision makers, foundations, NGOs, whatever. So people who are interested in the Middle East and don't speak Arabic use this as a very common reference. There has been a debate about this in the German media. There have been German journalists who criticized this. There has been no reaction from Arab embassies, from Arabs living in Germany to say, "let's put some money together and do something like an Arab MEMRI." The translations are correct and you cannot prohibit this institution or say that they present incorrect translations. It's just a very selective approach they have.*

My question is concerning massacres. I'd like to know, especially from the Jenin experience, what role do massacres play in the media? I'd like to refer to a German historian who's just published a book on the role of massacres during the last century in the media in order to mobilize their own constituencies and audiences against the enemy. In the case of Jenin, it was very quickly labeled as a massacre but there's no definition which prohibits the label as a massacre. As far as I know, if you kill more than four civilians at one time, you can call it a massacre. How many people were really killed was never revealed. And then there was this media war about was it a massacre or not? I have a feeling there's a hunger for violence perpetrated by the other side to mobilize their own people.

Nasir: We sometimes ruin a good thing by being emotional. Everybody was talking about Jenin as a massacre when there was nobody reporting really to verify. What happened there was terrible. It was in no way justified and it is a war crime but we wear our emotions on our sleeves. We use terms that take away from our arguments. We should just present the facts and let the people see things as they are without giving things labels. I don't think we should stoop down to the level that the Israelis are using against us, whether through terminology or through creating an organization like MEMRI. We can create an organization that addresses and provides resources and information to the foreign journalists in a way that is easy, sourced and verifiable. People respect that. I think in the long run people will respect you more and institutions such as MEMRI will eventually lose their credibility because they're one-dimensional and insulting people's intelligence.

— *I think the focus should also be on the message, both in content and format. Just go to Google or Yahoo or any of the search engines and try to find something about Lebanon. What will you get on the Arabic sites? A lot of junk. Amateurish stuff that can hardly be taken as a document you can use. I'm talking like an Arab educator and trainer who struggles sometimes to get some information on the Internet.*

— A comment to what Labib said. I think there should be, not a MEMRI-like organization but some sort of monitoring of racism against Arabs. This is needed. There are lots of organizations that monitor anti-Semitism in all kinds of languages, and this kind of monitoring should get specialized as well. This brings me to a conference I attended three years ago on media ethics in the East–West context. One of the conclusions was that there are differences in Western and Arab media ethics. One of them is that Western media ethics tends to focus on racism in negative terms. It's anti-racist, whereas Arab media ethics focuses on positive terms. The media should be multi-cultural, should be inclusive, should promote cultural diversity. I don't know how much that's worth but it explains a little. We've been dealing here with some sociological theories. Brian Whitaker said Arabs know a lot about the world but a little about their local political conditions. I think the Americans are the opposite. They know little about the world but a lot about and are involved in their local politics. I think it's important for Arab and Western cultures now not to polarize too much but to try to find common ground, even in such a specialized field as media ethics.

— The problem is with us. We don't move. Everybody sits down and depends on the other. All the Arab information offices all over the world, all they do is to monitor what is said about their president and their country. What does the Arab League office do all over the world? I mentioned this to Amr Moussa and I will mention it when I go back. They should monitor. A group of people decided to send all the pictures of all the civilians killed in Iraq on the Internet to our friends all over the world, and especially in America. We got very good response. They said they never heard about this, they never knew about it because we have reached them in their homes. We need to move. Intellectuals, NGOs, journalists, do it person-to-person, as a group.

— I understand from somebody inside the New York Times they did bring an ombudsman in response to the volume of protests from Arab-Americans about the New York Times' slanted coverage and that there has been a slight change and that they do have an ombudsman who's trying to institute some kind of balance. So letter writing and flack and concerted action can bring results.

Nasir: I don't consider MEMRI to be a monitoring group. It's a lobby group and it has an agenda. That's why I said we shouldn't do what MEMRI is doing. Monitoring the media and initiating action reports against news items is very much needed and is very important. There are a few sites where a letter is already written exploiting a certain topic, the address is there and you just send it. I think we should help such organizations and support those efforts. I'm not saying we shouldn't monitor, we definitely should monitor and expose but not tell lies or partially monitor because that will only backfire. That's just not ethical and stooping down to a level which we don't like and which we are fighting against.



بات الكم الهائل من الفضائيات والمحطات يعكس القيم التي كرسست تخلف مجتمعاتنا.

أخلاق المهنة.. أخلاقيات العمل الصحافي.. من يحددها؟؟

إن الصحافي لا يعمل ليستهلك الآخرون نتاجه فقط. إنه يكتب أو ينقل الأحداث والقضايا بأسلوب يعبر عن نفسه وعن آرائه وقناعاته وهو يضع الكثير من ذاته وأفكاره في أسلوب تعامله مع الأحداث. والأسلوب الذي يعتمده الصحافي يعكس رؤيته كإنسان بالدرجة الأولى. إنه إما يرضي نفسه أو لا، قبل أن نصل إلى مرحلة إرضاء القارئ أو المشاهد. وما يفعله الصحافي ليلا مس بعض المعايير المطلوبة مهنيًا هو أمر لا يؤثر فقط على الآخرين بل إنه في الحقيقة يؤثر في الصحافي نفسه بالدرجة الأولى.

تشهد قاعات التحرير في كبريات الصحف والمحطات الإخبارية نقاشات دائمة ومستمرة حول الكثير من التسميات والتصنيفات التي تطلق في أحيان كثيرة جزافاً على أشخاص وأحداث. بعض الصحافيين تحدث عن مأزق إحدى الصحف اللبنانية في تسميات تتعلق بالعمليات الانتحارية في العراق وكيف يتم التمييز بين الشهيد والقتيل والمقاوم والمحتل.

من المحال الحديث عن أخلاقيات الصحافة قبل الحديث عن أخلاقيات المجتمعات التي نعيشها ومدى ديمقراطيتها وقدرتها على طرح الملفات الحساسة والمهمة فيها.

هل من الأخلاق تصنيف الضحايا وجعلهم في مراتب تختلف ما بين فلسطين والعراق والجزائر والسودان؟

قبل أقل من شهر بثت إحدى الفضائيات البارزة تحقيقاً غنياً في مادته وصوره عن المثليين جنسياً في باكستان. أما الصحافي الذي تناول القضية فتحدث عن النجاسة والعهر الذي يعيشه هؤلاء المثليون وأغرق مادة حيوية لديه بجمل تحمل الكثير من المواقف السلبية والآراء والأحكام الشخصية فضاعت مادة كانت تستحق التوقف عندها.

إن كثيرون منا يمارسون في الصحافة القناعات التي تربوا عليها وبات الإعلام منبراً لهذه المفاهيم ومكرساً لها.

إنها ليست الأخلاقيات الإعلامية التي ينبغي مراجعتها بل مفهومنا للصحافة والإعلام. وليس من العدل مقارنة تجاربنا بتجارب الإعلام الغربي الذي له تقاليد وتجربة قديمة في هذا المجال. وأعني بالتجربة كل ما تحويه من إيجابيات وسلبيات.

لا يمكن للإعلام وحده أن يتمكن من تكريس تقاليد مهنية من دون تغيير فعلي في مجتمعاتنا وأنظمتنا السياسية، إذ من المحال التعاطي مع الإعلام كأنه شئ منفصل عن أوضاع المجتمعات والدول وبالتالي فإن الإعلام مرهون بحصول تبدلات مرادفة لها علاقة بالتعليم والحريات والمؤسسات الديمقراطية والقضاء. فنحن في لبنان مثلاً نعيش حياة سياسية هشة بشكل كبير ومعرضة دائماً للتأزم، فكيف يمكن الحديث عن إعلام وأخلاقيات إعلامية فيما المجتمع بأكمله مقيد؟

عارف حجاوي

مدير، مركز بير زيت للإعلام، رام الله

مسؤوليات الصحافي في أوقات الأزمات



يحط النزاع على منطقة من المناطق فتتبدل الأحوال فيها على الخبز والخياط والتاجر، وعلى الصحافي أيضاً. لكن يتبدل الحال على الصحافي أكثر. يصبح الصحافيون في مناطق النزاع أثرياء حرب؟ ليس بشكل مطلق. تمشي سوق الصحافيين في وقت النزاع وتتسرب خيراتهم إلى من يدفع أكثر، وربما ينشأ عن هذا خلوص ساحة الإعلام المحلي - الموجه إلى أهالي البلد - من الإعلاميين الجيدين، فهم يهاجرون إلى الوكالات العالمية والفضائيات. أقول هذا وفي ذهني فلسطين. وتضطرب معايير المهنة وأخلاقياتها.

9:00-10:30



Session IV – Responsibilities of Professional Crisis Reporters

Chair: May Kahale

Diana Moukalled, Senior Correspondent, Future TV, Lebanon

Aref Hijjawi, Director, Bir Zeit Media Center/BBC Correspondent, Ramallah

ديانا مقلد

تلفزيون المستقبل، لبنان
ندوة الأخلاق الإعلامية



في الليلة الرابعة من انطلاقة الحرب على العراق، فوجئت باتصال من بيروت من أحد مسؤولي التحرير في المحطة التي أعمل فيها. سألني هذا المسؤول بما يشبه الحدة كيف لم نعلم بأن الدبابات الأميركية دخلت مدينة إربيل؟ إنها المدينة التي كانت محور تغطيتي للحرب.

شعرت بالحيرة والارتباك فأنا لم أشاهد هذه الدبابات لكن أحد الزملاء من فضائية عربية أخرى كان وصل للتو إلى مدينة إربيل ويبدو أنه لم يكن ليجعل من دخوله كصحافي (مرموق) إلى المدينة يمر عبثاً، فشرع يقول لقناته على الهواء من خلال هاتف الثريا أنه يرى الدبابات الأميركية تجول في المدينة وأن الحرب تكاد تنطلق من شمال العراق. خرجنا إلى الشارع ولم نجد شيئاً. كانت المدينة تغط في هدوء مريب لكن من دون دبابات.

عشرات الصحفيين الغربيين والعرب عاشوا على تماس مع الحرب في شمال العراق دون أن يعيشوا الحرب فعلاً. هذا الواقع أصاب في العمق طموحات كثيرين في تحقيق السبق الصحافي وبالتالي جعل الكثير من الصحفيين يقدمون مواد مختلقة في أحيان ليست بقليلة في محاولة منهم للإيحاء بأن جبهة الحرب في شمال العراق ليست هادئة وبأن لهم دور وأنهم نجوم هذه الحرب والصدى الفعلي لأحداثها.

كنا نتابع ونسخر من زميل آخر يقف على حدود سوريا والعراق شمالاً لينقل ما يحدث في مناطق أخرى وغالباً ما كانت معلوماته مبالغ فيها أو غير صحيحة على الإطلاق ما دفع إحدى الصحافيات لأن تقول أن عملها اليومي هو تكذيب الأخبار التي كان يقولها ذلك الزميل..

إن كانت هذه الأمثلة تبدو مضحكة بعض الشيء إلا أن وقائع أخرى كثيرة شابت التغطية الصحافية للحرب على العراق وقبلها حرب أفغانستان وتشوب يوماً مجريات الأحداث الكثيرة التي تعصف بمنطقتنا وهذه الوقائع تجعل من حقيقة عدم التزام الإعلاميين والإعلام بشكل عام بالمصداقية وبالتالي بأخلاق المهنة أمراً شديداً الوطأة والخطورة.

فعلى رغم أن الإعلام العربي واكب التطور بمعناه التقني وابتات المحطات الفضائية تحاكي الكثير من الشبكات العالمية من النواحي الفنية وحتى التغطية الإخبارية والسبق الصحفي، إلا أن الأداء المهني نفسه وأسلوب المعالجة لا زال بشكل عام تقليدياً ونمطياً وخاضعين إما لقيم المجتمع أو لقيود الحكومات والسياسيين والناظرين أو في حالات بارزة لبعض الحركات الأصولية وللأجندات الخاصة ببعض الدول وللرؤية الخاصة ببعض الإعلاميين أنفسهم وهذه في حد ذاتها باتت ظاهرة تستحق المتابعة.

لقد سبق التقدم التقني للإعلام فهمنا لأصول المهنة وبالتالي صياغة أخلاقها وبتنا نتكل على تفسيرات ذاتية وأحياناً شعبية لها.

في الانتفاضة الحالية تعرف المواطن العربي عن كذب على شكل الملابس الداخلية، والأعضاء الداخلية من كلى ومصارين، للفلسطينيين. ونسج الصعافيين أن الجسم الإنسان حرمة، وأن لتقسية المشاهد حرمة. كل ذلك لاستجداء فوج للدموع. وفي الانتفاضة تأسس الإعلام الفلسطيني المحلي واحدا من أبسط أعمى أخلاق المهنة وهو وجوب الإبلاغ أسية من يقتل، يقتله قبل إذاعة الاسم على الهواء. لا بل قد أذيعت أسماء عددا أشغول مكللة بعبارة اللغز على أنهم شهداء، ثم قلموا من قبورهم بعد سلعتين وتكلموا الخير.

ترافق حلة التراجع حلة غياب للقانون، وهذا يقتض الملبس واسعا على استهداف الصعافيين. ولذلك يستكت الصعافى عن نقل الأخبار والتحليلات بشأن تجالوتات المليشيات المسلحة ويغيب جرحه من الحقيقة.

وقد يأتي الاستهداف من الطرف الآخر. لقد سحبت قوات الاحتلال الإسرائيلية البطاقات الخاصة بالصعافى من كل الصعافيين الفلسطينيين في الأسابيع الأولى من الانتفاضة، وما زال هذا سريلا. وقد تستهدف القيمة المحتلة الصعافيين استهدافا. فقدت للبلدين من طلالبي بعد أن تخرجوا وعملوا في المهنة. كان عمله أيها زهرة يحمل تحميرا عند قتل، وكان عصام التلاويح يحمل ميكر وفهنا عند قتل في حادثة أخرى.

في خضم الصراع يصعب الصعافيين بالهوان من الجنون: تروح أحلامهم يوجب الاحتلال المغلثم وينعته بلقبح التعتيت ويستعسج قسميه كيو في عنان، يصنع ذلك وهو يبت من محطة تلقين صغيرة لا تتجاوز مدينته. وتروح أحلامهم يخبر مستمعيه بلنهم شعب جبار سيقول المختل، ثم بعد حقيقة يتخذ هيئة الضحية ويتبدل للهجته.

كثيرا ما يتهاون عنص العهمة للصالح المتقلل الملققي - وما كنت لأرض هذا النوع من العلاقة بين المذيع والمستمع لولا أنني أعرف مديعي بلدي، وأعلم أن انفجار اتهام الملققية جرب حميد لا يتغلغل إلى أعماقهم. وأناه يعده لا أرى من أخلاقيات المهنة أي نوع من التهيج.

واجب الصعافى في منطقة التراجع أن يحافظ على أعمى مهنته: هل يسمح الطبيب الجيد للتقسد أن يداوي مريضه وهو في حلة انفجار؟ ومثله قلما يجب أن يكون الصعافى.

فالاعلامى - في جريدته وإذاعته وتلفزيونه - يعطي الناس الخبر ويسليهم ويتقهم. وفي منطقة النزاع كثيرا ما يطغى الخبر وتراجع الثقافة وتختفي أو تكاد التسلية.

وعرضي ختمنا أخذت عن لهن من ألهان الجنون الإعلامي: في معهد الإعلام في جامعة بيرزيت، بفلسطين، قمتا مؤخرنا بلنتاج بيرلمج ميقصهه - وهنا موطن الجنون - تاريخ الموسيقى الكلاسيكية الأوروبية. والبرنامج ليس حلقة ولا اثنتين ولا عشرين، بل هو أربع وخمسين حلقة. وعرضي أقل للحكم: تقوم بيت بيرلمج الآن عشرين إذاعات في كل أنحاء فلسطين في وقت واحد. ربقا ربقا أن نثبت أن الصراع لا يجبه أن يلغى الثقافة، وأن الشعب الفلسطيني المذبح يصارع احتلالا شرسا يريد أن يهشم للعهد قلام.





Nayla Razzouk
Correspondent, Agence France-Presse, Beirut/Middle East

Let's say his name was Jawad. Let's say he was there when the bomb went off. Let's say he lost an eye, his right arm, and 11 members of his immediate family. Now, let's say you arrived there, then and there. In the midst of all this bloodshed and terrible, terrible tragedy. What could you possibly ask him? What would you want to ask him?

Let me tell you something, you ARE going to sound pathetic. Whatever you are going to say will sound pathetic, out of place and will be an invasion of privacy.

But when faced with such a situation, these are not the questions you ask yourself.

In such situations, believe me, you do not have time for theories. You are in an obviously dangerous place: there could be another bombing; people around you could turn violent — and they often do in Iraq —; the man may be too weak or distressed to speak for long; there may be other journalists waiting for their turn to interview him; and mostly, your editor is harassing you to get the story out and quickly.

You are not heartless, you just do not have the time.

But you are also thinking that the anger that you are feeling at the terrible sight in front of you is confined to the hospital room where you are, and this is not fair. What happened to the man was not a private matter, he was a victim of events beyond him and his family so his suffering should not remain in the dark. If something so terrible happened to him, then people should know about it.

You are thinking: this is the only way to let people know about his ordeal.

Driven by this noble thought, you start asking questions and then you go back to your computer to write down the story.

By the time you send your story, there is news of another bombing somewhere else, and there is another man who loses his wife and children, and is laying on a hospital bed, barely able to breathe. And you find yourself in the same dilemma. What do I ask him? Do I sound pathetic? Is this an invasion of privacy? Do I have the right to be there? Am I repeating myself?

It is only much later that one really thinks about it. Was it ethical?

It is usually when people ask you about it, like today, or when you encounter similar situations where you are in the I-have-already-done-this-story mode. You want to write about all these people and incidents, but there is no possibility.

When you enter a hospital room filled with 12 people who were wounded in a bombing, do you have the right to choose which one or ones to interview and mention in your story? Is it by who has lost more? Is it the gravity of his or her case? Do I choose the child, the elderly, the mother? They all think that the media is a means to resolve part of their ordeal. Are we playing God?

Everyone remembers the tragedy of a little boy named Ali who during the invasion of Iraq had lost his family, his arms and his legs. It was painful to see him, take his picture or interview him. But the media attention to his case, brought help that took him abroad for treatment and care.

Then there was the little boy who was crushed by a U.S. military vehicle in a schoolyard, there was the story of the little girl who lost her eyesight, and it goes on and on. Once you publish a story and people read it or see it on television, you are bombarded with pleas by other people who want you to write their story. Their individual stories are of course all important, but no publication or journalist could publish all the suffering one encounters in Iraq. Dilemma. Do you interview minors without the consent of parents? Well, ethics tell you not to, but during wartime, many chil-

dren lose their parents or are separated from them. Do you sit there and ask yourself existential questions? No, you have no time.

In times of crises and armed conflicts, ethics for journalists stop being mostly about freedom of expression and democracy. It is not about accepting gifts, money, paid trips, dinners or bribes from sources. It becomes more about security, safety and ways to continue covering the events.

Under the previous Iraqi regime, we were constantly under the threat of being expelled from the country, which meant for us that we would not be covering the war. We had personal minders who wrote daily reports about us. Any wrong move led to the expulsion of the journalist. And many were in fact expelled.

The international media, and the Western media in particular, did not use so confidently the words “dictator” and “terrorism” under the former regime. Journalists who wanted to be granted entry visas to Iraq practically never used these words. Today, these two words are practically the only way the former regime is referred to, especially in the Western media. Is it ethical? Again, there was no other choice.

Today, with all the security hazards in Iraq, the foreign press has been targeted by both the occupation forces who have actually killed journalists, and Iraqi groups who have kidnapped and killed foreigners. Just like during the invasion, many journalists cover the events from their hotel rooms. There are even Western television stations that maintain cameras on the rooftop of their hotels to grab general views of the city and only have their reporters step out to the front lawn of their hotel for the stand up. As for the content of the report, they pick it up by making a few telephone calls or using news agency stories. Is it ethical? Do they have any other choice?

We only learned about these things when these world leading media organizations would call us from their headquarters in the Western world to ask us to prepare reports for them. Why we ask? Because their own journalists and crews were not allowed to go out.

Due to the security situation and the kidnappings, many Western media organizations have resorted to sending out their Iraqi staff on stories, especially in hot spots like Fallujah and central Iraq. Some of these Iraqis are not journalists. They are mostly drivers and translators. They have no experience in the media. They are not aware about the ethics of journalism. Do we trust their reports?

Once a foreign journalist told me: “I will not trust these reports, even if they were made by Iraqi journalists, because they cannot be objective to a story so close to home and so controversial.” Of course, I was angry, and immediately responded: “Then I do not think your distinguished newspaper should be publishing articles by U.S. journalists, embedded with the U.S. army.”

By the same token, can we trust reports by embedded journalists who live, eat and share difficult experiences with army battalions? Some reporters tone down their reports or face the fact of being forced out of military units because the reports that they had written did not please the soldiers or their commanders. This has happened. Journalists cannot afford being kicked out of their embedment, simply because the “competition is there” and there is usually no chance to cover events by any other independent way. So can we trust their reports?

There is also another question that is often raised. Many media organizations do not want to be the first to publish controversial reports. It is not until other media outlets publish reports or some scandal breaks out that they actually publish the reports. Is it ethical to keep important information away from the public?

Many Iraqi citizens had reported various ways of abuse in Iraq at the hand of the coalition forces occupying and controlling the country. Even the Red Cross did.

There have been reports about abuse at the infamous Abu Ghraib prison, but it was not until pictures were shown by the media, the American media, I might add, that people started to believe. There was no tangible proof of the abuse yet and the coalition authorities — which many journalists most of the time believed blindly — had been denying. Is this ethical?

Then, there were reports that the first media organization to publish the pictures and reports about the abuse taking place, had brokered an agreement with U.S. authorities to delay publishing the pictures and the reports for

about two weeks. Now, we are talking about a major television network in the U.S. that brokered a deal for in my personal opinion, at least partial censorship. Is this ethical?

Last but not least, let us not forget technology. Today, journalists are not the only ones working in their field. There are also bystanders. A bystander is anyone with a telephone, a fax machine, a pocket digital camera or Internet access. And you know what, all these are getting more accessible because technological advances are ensuring that they are getting easier to use and cheaper by the day.

Journalists and editors were still debating whether to publish news of the abuses at Abu Ghraib prison, when people around the world were sending them to each other, from country to country, across the globe. It may have been the reason why the mainstream media organizations finally decided to publish them.

Blood or body parts, do we publish them? Is it ethical to publish them? What about pictures of dead people? Why do we publish pictures of dead Iraqis and not dead coalition soldiers? I once witnessed a scene where a mob nearly attacked U.S. soldiers because they allowed journalists to take pictures of a dead woman. Their explanation was that just as U.S. rules do not allow pictures of dead soldiers, the local people's religion and traditions do not allow pictures of dead women to be taken. Where do ethics stand there?

Just as bloodshed is not the most effective way to resolve issues, showing bloodshed is not the most effective way to reach people.

Beyond the noble principles of ethics in journalism, most of the time journalists think of accountability. Am I going to be sued, expelled, punished or attacked? Many times, ethics are limited to accountability. Coalition officials have instant access to all the media outlets and call up editors and journalists if they are not happy with the coverage. The Iraqi people do not read world newspapers, so journalists would be less inclined to watch out. Is this ethical?

There are many, many questions of ethics that one encounters in times of crises and armed conflicts. There are no specific answers to each and every situation, because journalism is like life: you never encounter the same situation twice. There may be general rules for ethics, but there are no specific formulas for each situation.

Most of the time, journalists will have to make sure they always behave in a way that respects the principles they stand for, their organization's reputation and mostly, mostly the dignity of the people they are interviewing. They should remember that the people in front of them are not numbers, wounded, killed, refugees or scoops. They are people. Journalists should also remember that they are the eyes through which the world is seeing a particular situation. Just as people do not like seeing blurred or fabricated images, journalists should present coverage with as much integrity and accuracy as possible. And, mostly, journalists should remember that they have to make it out safely in order to be able to continue the coverage.

Making decisions happens in a split of a second during armed conflicts and crises. One decision could cost a life. It may be your life, that of your colleagues or those of the people around you. Ethically, journalists should make sure to stay alive and refrain from endangering the lives of people around them. In a dangerous situation, do I send my local driver to see what is happening? What if this father of five is killed? Whenever there are clashes, do I ask the driver to go ahead so that we can see what is happening or do we go back? What if occupation forces open fire and kill him?

Someone once told me that in a fraction of a second, you don't have time to think about ethics. But, then while covering armed conflicts, in a fraction of a second, you should not have time to do anything unethical because you are risking your life and that of people around you.

Session IV

— *Anyone who'd like to watch a documentary about non-embedded reporters, I urge them to see a film called "War Feels Like War."*

Diana, I agree that media people reflect their societies' values but we haven't dealt with the issue of preconceived ideas. Don't you think that Arab journalists who went to Iraq started with the theory that nothing good comes from America and the West and that American journalists went with a conviction that this (the war) is good because it frees a people from a dictator? So there were preconceived ideas that, consciously or unconsciously, affected the focus and coverage.

As for what you said about gays and what was shown, the mere mention of such topics in the Arab world, despite all the terminology to deflect from criticism of what is being shown, the mere fact of airing it is new and wouldn't have happened years ago. So we have to put things in their proper context.

Turning to Aref, you're a correspondent for the BBC and there are terms that are carefully chosen. On our Arab satellite channels there's an abundance of adjectives, like "the cruel occupation," "Israeli criminality," which are used in preaching to the converted. Palestinians on our screens are portrayed as victims, martyrs, casualties or would-be martyrs, meaning heroes. We don't see ordinary Palestinians, in their homes, a mother cooking for her children. Is the media's job to show us ordinary life or just crises, bloodshed, casualties carried on stretchers being rushed to hospitals?

Moukalled: Journalists definitely reflect the values of their societies. Arab and Western journalists in Iraq, in general, reflect their societies. Some people covered on the basis of their convictions that this was an occupation, and that the (Saddam Hussein) regime was right. There was no accountability. Maybe those who deviated from that thinking were held accountable. We were subjected to many pressures in that respect.

As for the Pakistani gays story that was aired, it should be broadcast. But I think the way the matter was portrayed, and it was a visually rich episode and interviews, reinforced people's preconceived views about these gays. That's dangerous. It didn't contribute to their acceptance and arguments to discuss who these people are and to admit that they live among us.

Hijawi: I agree that ordinary life deserves coverage and remind everyone that media isn't just the news. It's the Palestinian media's duty to reflect the cultural dimension, including light fare like food and lifestyles just as we do on Lebanese TV. If it's well handled, it will spread to the entire Arab World. Areas of conflict or not, there should be attempts to cover culture and entertainment in a professional way.

— *Palestine on Arab TV channels is where people die, or where people blow themselves up. What I'd like to know is what Palestinians think of "Al Hurra" because it's the only TV channel that showed me ordinary Palestinians living normal lives. I saw several reports on Gaza and its history and the Crusaders who were in it and the historical sites there. That's something I haven't seen elsewhere. What do you think of Al Hurra?*

Hijawi: It's misleading. Al Hurra wants to escape from the intifada. I wish everyone could escape from the intifada, without forgetting it. The Palestinians' view of Al Hurra is that it's the worst satellite channel ever. Of all the people I know nobody likes it at all and nobody respects it. The 5,000 people I've spoken to about Al Hurra feel that way.

— *I have a two-pronged question. What distinguishes Aref's situation — being a son of Palestine on the scene —*

from those of Diana and Nayla who go to conflict zones and need a little orientation in the use of the terminology and in understanding the nuances? The other thing is the issue of accuracy at the expense of speed. This is a major issue worldwide. How do you deal with this when a scoop is at stake?

Hijjawi: The foreign eye may see more, clearer and more accurately. I benefit from colleagues who come from abroad and in our conversations I find out more about my region than I do. If a journalist combines his own home-grown knowledge with the knowledge of outsiders he's enriched. Foreigners are also enriched when they come to the region. Mixing with people is useful.

Razzouk: He's right. When a journalist goes to a country he/she doesn't know well, even if we're Arabs and have been there several times, there's dependence on local journalists. If someone goes to cover an event in Ramallah and doesn't know the city, he/she may first head to the BBC or to local papers or listen to radio stations to understand what is happening before attempting to cover. You can't understand events unless you know how the people themselves understand them. It's the fastest way to get the pulse of the place.

As for accuracy and speed, it's difficult. You're struggling to get out the news and are still fishing for information and fear someone else will beat you to it. There's always a conflict. For us, in news agencies, we can't disseminate news unless we're 100% sure of it. It may be at the expense of speed. If you make a mistake once, you lose credibility.

— *What do you think of peace journalism? Some people say journalists have the obligation to take an active role in conflict prevention or reconciliation or whatever stage the conflict is in. Others say if journalists engage more than to cover events, they lose their impartiality. Do you think it's doable at all?*

Hijjawi: That's a strange concept to me, that a journalist should shed his journalistic hat and wear a peacemaker's hat. There are many examples of this in Israel but they're not success stories. A journalist is a journalist.

— *Regarding what Diana said, I don't think at this time we can link performance with society. A journalist's performance has been surpassed by many issues, relating to credibility more than a reflection of his society. The example of Arbil, where a reporter for an Arab satellite channel said U.S. tanks had entered the city when they hadn't. A reporter for a leading British news organization opened a war front that wasn't open. That has nothing to do with society.*

Moukalled: I meant the shortage of journalistic credibility in general terms.

— *Furthermore, when groups of journalists turn into militias. The BBC decided yesterday that its correspondents in danger zones would be accompanied by armed guards. CNN in northern Iraq, with Brent Sadler and his team, tangled with people near Tikrit. Fox news in Arbil set up barriers in front of their hotel rooms, relied on guards and closed entry to their hotel. We're at a different stage from what we discuss as ethical societal behavior. What Nayla said about embedding: We saw British and American journalists with well-established organizations go live and report from atop tanks, in military garb, saying things like "we're entering, we don't know where, but we're advancing." Who's "we?" Are you a journalist, or the British army or the American army?*

Moukalled: You're talking about Iraq. You're saying this as someone working for the BBC, not an Arab news organization. In local stations, Arab journalists in general have positions that reflect their societies, on political and other matters. We see religious programs that are politicized with a religious flavor. All social issues are being presented from one dimension. "Al Ikhbaria," which was a quantum leap for us, presented a new perspective on how regional and Iraqi stories were covered. The matter of martyrdom and martyrs came out of how we view things. They weren't based on professional considerations. That doesn't nullify CNN's and Fox' mistakes, that's another matter. But I reiterate that we cover according to how we view each other and how we think. I don't think we've reached the stage where we really have high professional standards and let's discuss how we're performing.

— *I'm not saying we have professional standards, I'm pointing to the errors in performance that exist everywhere, we shouldn't just focus on that other issue.*

— *On February 10, a Russian plane crashed in Sharjah (UAE). It was my first encounter with this kind of news. Two things happened. A journalist for one of the UAE papers was beaten up by police officers in Sharjah. He was the*

talk of the town for a week. Another journalist who was almost assaulted by the police in turn attacked three officers, got an exclusive and it was picked up by all the wires. Is that ethical?

— *Journalists covering conflicts have a problem with colleagues who try to foment unrest to create news. Some even receive risk primes from their employers. At Fatima's Gate in southern Lebanon, journalists used to egg people to toss rocks onto the Israeli side to fabricate news. We should discuss these matters because they're unethical.*

— *It's interesting what Nayla said about the balance between speed and accuracy. I'd like you to elaborate on it more. I noticed that stories on Reuters were appearing after appearing on The Associated Press. I asked a Reuters reporter if this was slowness or the result of something else. He said they have a policy of insisting on accuracy rather than speed. This is particularly because Reuters is also a financial organization. So if there was an attack on some oil installation in Saudi Arabia, that could affect the oil markets so they do have to double-check these things before they put them out, even at the expense of appearing after AP or the other agencies. So, how do you make the decision between speed and accuracy, or between speed and incompleteness?*

Razzouk: I suppose if you ask any person from the three main organizations — AFP, Reuters and AP — he'd tell you the same thing. We'd wait to get confirmation before filing any story, even at the risk of being late. It's not only Reuters. It not because of the oil market. All three news agencies work in the same way and all three have had experiences where they were mistaken and they would run corrections. If you write "correction" while searching news agencies, you'd find a lot on the wires. There's no clear rule on how to proceed but speed is definitely one of the most important things in a news agency. You're not a newspaper where you have time to publish and can wait until the next morning. If you have one minute of delay after the other news agency, your editor is definitely going to call you and tell you're late.

— *I'd like to follow up on that, having worked for AFP for six years. From personal experience, a story some of you may have heard about: coverage of the hijacking of Al Jaberiya (Kuwait Airways) to Mashhad in Iran to Larnaca in Cyprus to, eventually, Algiers. I covered the hijacking in Cyprus for five days, the tossing of a couple of bodies on the tarmac. We lived at Larnaca airport waiting for something to happen. The final night before the plane took off for Algiers, I was manning the desk at the airport. We had people on the roof, on the tarmac and someone on the far end of the airport and photographers. I was sitting next to Reuters and next to AP. They had more resources and equipment that we didn't have. I kept an open phone line. As most of you probably know, there are British bases in Cyprus and SAS troops. At one point we heard an explosion and thought the British troops had stormed the plane. Reuters jumped the gun and ran with the story that the plane had been stormed. When you consider how many time zones we have to cover, some stories were already being published. Can you imagine the reaction if you'd been a family member of a hostage or known someone on that flight? My bureau chief was on my case, asking if they'd died and I kept saying we hadn't confirmed it, didn't see smoke, there was no fire, there was no screaming. There were several hundred passengers on that 747. It turned out to be a backfiring engine from a parked truck and that's what people heard in the dark. Thank God we didn't run with that story. We would have looked like fools.*

— *Diana, the example you gave about the homosexuals, I understand you didn't like the way it was handled. If it were covered objectively, how would the public have reacted? There would have been a stir because people aren't that accepting of the subject matter. How can you maintain a balance between objective coverage and society's negative reaction, given that laws also prohibit homosexuality?*

Moukalled: We aired many controversial stories, like honor crimes, and there were strong reactions. If it's done properly, people will accept it. But I don't think the reaction will be what we imagine it to be. In the past 10 years we've been seeing things we weren't used to and people have become more accepting.

— *To Nayla, how do you justify giving attention to a specific boy, like the Iraqi who lost his legs and arms, and not others who lost fewer body parts? What, ethically, prompts you to say this is a very important story while you were watching other boys who just lost one part of their body?*

Razzouk: It's a very difficult decision to make. It's an impossible decision to make. When you're standing there and they're all looking at you, waiting for you to decide which one you're going to speak with. It's a very difficult moment. The problem with us in news agencies, we only have 700 words, so you can't put everything in that 700—

word piece. And then you have an editor telling you to cover something else. Even if you don't cover all the stories in front of you, if you take one example and write it in a way that englobes all the suffering that you saw that day in every single one of them, then you've done your duty. If you take one case and build on it, from the other cases, then you would have reported what you saw. You're there to report what you're seeing. You're not there to give an opinion or to raise ethical questions. The entire world cannot come into that room. A reporter is a means to see what is happening. When you're in that room, you have to pretend that people cannot see what's going on unless you tell them.

— *The question is for Nayla. There are gaps in covering wars, like the fall of Baghdad, or capture of Saddam Hussein. Is this a closing of doors to information from military sources or does it reflect orders from editors not to talk about these matters?*

Razzouk: We, journalists, were at the Palestine Hotel. We were surprised to find the Americans in Iraq. We were told by people in London and Paris. We didn't know. They called us to tell us the Americans were in Baghdad. We went looking for them in Baghdad. In a war you can't move about as you would under normal circumstances. There were no phones, people didn't leave their homes, most Iraqis had deserted the city. There was no central authority to ask what was happening. You'd go to cover victims of an explosion and then come across other victims in another incident that you weren't even aware of. There was difficulty and impossibility of coverage.

— *It's not true all journalists remained in the Palestine Hotel. I'm speaking about Al Hayat-LBC-SAT. Our team stayed in the hotel. We were the first to report the fall of Baghdad. The problem was that people had left the hotel. We had the choice of staying in the hotel and being exposed to the attack and having our equipment stolen and have our correspondents taken hostage or to leave. I remember Al Jazeera's team packed up and left. As did Al Arabiya. We stayed with some TV crews and news agency reporters. Our proof is that our correspondent was in his room when U.S. troops barged in on him and gave him a cigar.*

Razzouk: Nobody left the hotel. Al Jazeera and Abu Dhabi TV weren't even staying at the Palestine Hotel. They were near the river and that's where they got hit.



11:00-12:30



Session V – Political Context of Media Ethics

Chair: Mona El-Sabban

Naomi Sakr, Professor of Communication, University of Westminster

Ahmed Lamnadi, Professor of Communication & Journalist, Radio-TV Marocaine

Mahasen Al Emam, Director, Arab Women's Media Center



Naomi Sakr

Professor of Communication, University of Westminster, UK

Competing Codes of Ethics and Evolving Journalistic Practice in Arab Satellite TV

New media technologies have created new challenges and dilemmas, which often have an ethical dimension. The political context clearly has a bearing on the way these challenges and dilemmas are resolved. In my talk I want to explore the challenges confronting reporters and editors working for Arab satellite channels. First, by way of introduction, I want to consider perspectives from which to approach codes of ethics. Secondly I shall address the political context surrounding satellite TV and how it has affected ethical norms in recent years, particularly by throwing up questions about editorial autonomy and self-regulation. I will end by mentioning one way in which journalists have responded to these questions.

A great deal of academic work has been done on cataloguing Codes of Ethics over the past 20 years. A big international compilation was released in Prague in 1983 and updated in the mid-1990s, after the breakup of the Soviet Union. If you delve into this literature, you are likely to come away from it thinking that — wherever they are enunciated — ethical principles of journalism sound rather similar. This approach might loosely be described as universalist, in that it emphasises the points that all codes tend to have in common, such as aspiring to truth, objectivity, social responsibility, professional integrity and so on.

Kai Hafez, a scholar based in Germany, recently published a comparison of codes of media ethics in Western and Muslim countries. He made comparisons under five headings: truth and objectivity; protecting privacy; freedom of expression; promoting good international relations; respecting social traditions and standards of morality. He concluded that there was considerable agreement across cultures, especially on the first three of these headings.

Alternatively, one might focus on differences from one ethical code to another. One might also look for the influence of particular circumstances at particular times. Changes in codes show up over short or long periods. For example, Egypt spent 10 years outside the Arab League between 1979 and 1989, which may explain why references to Arab unity disappeared from the Egyptian Press Code between its 1972 version and the revised version of 1996. Today we can see short-term changes taking place before our eyes in Saudi Arabia, where contradictions are mounting between the ethics formally prescribed in the official Media Charter and the informal code adopted in response to the exigencies of day-to-day news coverage.

For example, one of the first clauses in the 1982 Media Charter states that “pressmen should ... stay away from whatever may sow dissension or create hatred and spite.” It is hard to see how the Saudi media could cover the Muhayya and other bombings in Saudi Arabia, or the Al-Aqsa intifada, or the U.S. and British occupation of Iraq without being accused of sowing dissension or creating hatred and spite. Yet the Saudi media are covering these events. Similarly, the formal Media Charter contains ethical strictures related to women. It states: “While recognising that women are men’s sisters, the media will observe in their programmes the nature of women and the role she is called to play in society without that role conflicting with such nature.” Yet, today, the phrase “the role she is called to play in society” comes up time and again in current media discussions about women’s status. In many cases the media are saying that women must be allowed a far greater role in society, thereby demonstrating that codes of ethics can be reinterpreted and practices do change. Saudi Arabia’s state TV news channel, Al-Ikhbariya, launched at the start of 2004, started out giving high visibility to female news presenters.

Basically, in the satellite age, the agenda for media coverage is dictated by a mixture of national prescriptions and the interaction of channels. Thus Saudi journalists from Al-Ikhbariya are being trained alongside staff from Al-Arabiya and Al-Iraqiya, which suggests that they are being trained according to a single set of professional standards, not one carved out specifically for Saudi Arabia.

Contemporary commercial pressures are liable to have an impact on media ethics. Research on the professional conduct of Chinese journalists shows that, traditionally, there was a strong level of agreement with the authorities that the journalist's main objective is to help the government make and implement successful policies. For many years this objective was given priority over getting the news out while it is still news. Thus news about disagreements or failure would be held back until somebody had tried to sort the matter out. Timely news is worthy money to readers, but the pricing of Chinese newspapers has not been geared to making profit, so they could afford to put face-saving above timeliness. Now, it seems, as Chinese media become more commercially oriented, this practice is starting to alter.

In the Arab world, a long and bitter history of imperialism, colonialism and Zionism has long made advocacy journalism seem more important than timely or balanced news reporting. Understandably, strictures against helping imperialists or foreign monopolies are contained in the honour code of the Federation of Arab Journalists. These concerns remain relevant today.

Moving on from general examples of the way political and economic contexts can intersect with the ethics of journalists, I want to focus on ethics in satellite news broadcasting. The practice of broadcasting 24-hour news, with much live transmission, creates a number of ethical challenges, which can be grouped under the headings of objectivity, privacy and integrity.

Under the heading of objectivity comes the question of sources. How many sources do you need to check your facts when you are racing against the competition to be the first to break a story? Objectivity also encompasses choice of terminology. We all know how contentious terminology is on Arab satellite TV. Under privacy comes the challenge of what to show and what not to show on the TV screen. Live broadcasting of the aftermath of car bombings and shootings raises questions about showing casualties when the families of those people have not been informed. But showing violence, or hiding it, is also a matter of objectivity. If journalists report violence in a way that suits the aims of one side better than the other, they are no longer reporters, but partisans. Under the heading of integrity, we can include the increased temptation to plagiarise in news reporting. Cases have come to light in the U.S. media. These can be attributed in part to the pressure of competition. But the issue of plagiarism has been mentioned in this conference already and needs no further discussion here.

Instead, a key question that emerges is whether the environment of 24-hour news channels and live broadcasting creates pressure for journalists and news presenters to have more autonomy — to take more responsibility for making instant decisions in the heat of the moment — or whether it creates a need for central authorities to be more prescriptive. These are two conflicting approaches and they have clashed openly since Al-Jazeera came on the scene.

Al-Jazeera differed with the Arab States Broadcasting Union (ASBU) at the end of the 1990s. ASBU set up the Satellite Channels Co-ordinating Committee, comprising both private and state channels. In 1998, this committee adopted an Honour Code (or code of ethics) for Arab satellite channels to follow. When various Arab governments set up special free zones for satellite media, they said the Honour Code would apply in the zones. The ASBU committee informed Al-Jazeera that it had to abide by the code if it wanted to be a member of the committee. Al-Jazeera refused. So here was a clear distinction between prescription and autonomy in deciding what constitutes ethical practice.

Much is said about the Qatari government's influence on Al-Jazeera behind the scenes. In day-to-day practice, however, editors, journalists and presenters at the station find themselves making instant decisions about coverage. Many non-Qatari journalists, TV crews and documentary filmmakers have watched Al-Jazeera teams at work and concluded that they have considerable autonomy in making editorial decisions. In contrast, centralised prescriptions in some other channels tend to leave journalists paralysed. Sometimes they end up taking no decision at all, for fear of breaching the codes of practice imposed on them. The Code of Ethics espoused by the Egyptian Radio and Television Union allows no autonomy for journalists. The list of prohibitions is too long to be memorised. So when disasters happen — an EgyptAir plane crashes or the President falls ill during a speech — media practitioners are left wondering how to react. Sometimes they switch the cameras off for fear of making "mistakes."

In the current political context, there are stronger forces ranged on the side of prescribing what journalists should do than they are on the side that promotes autonomous decision-making. International norms, approved by bodies such as UNESCO and the International Federation of Journalists, see codes of journalistic ethics as a matter to be decided not by administrators or law enforcement agencies but by journalists themselves. Yet, in the Arab world, voices from the U.S. are now added to those of the majority of Arab governments in favour of curbing the autonomy of Arab journalists. There are at least three areas in which U.S. policy makers are trying to restrict Arab journalists' freedom of action.

One is the use of sources. Whereas many Arab governments might be content to see journalists relying on a single official source, Al-Jazeera and others following its example have prided themselves on balancing their reporting on conflict situations by checking their information with both sides. But I have heard a representative of the Coalition Provisional Authority insist that this is not enough. They want Al-Jazeera to delay its reports until they can be checked not only with the two opposing sides but with an "impartial" source as well.

A second contentious issue is the choice of terminology in respect of categories such as "suicide bomber," "martyr," "invasion," "occupation" and "resistance." Kuwaiti shareholders withdrew from Al-Arabiya in its early weeks because they rejected the term "invasion" applied to the U.S. entry into Iraq. Now U.S. officials are objecting to the term "resistance" applied to attacks on U.S. forces in Iraq. Thus U.S. pressure has been added to pressure from Arab governments for journalists and editors in Arab satellite channels to prefer one term to another.

A third area is the handling of scenes of carnage after car bombings and other attacks. Al-Jazeera has taken a pioneering approach on this. I have heard it argued that Al-Jazeera's coverage seems sensationalist to Western eyes mainly because Western media have avoided showing the worst effects of war. When Ibrahim Hilal was editor-in-chief of Al-Jazeera, he said: "If I hide shots of British or American people being killed, it is misleading to the British and American audience. It is misleading to the Arab audience if they imagine that the only victims of this war are the children and women of Iraq. They have to know that there are victims from both sides."

Here again, however, Arab channels are coming under strong pressure not to show certain types of violence. U.S. officials have used the term "incitement" to describe the screening of scenes of violence against U.S. troops. Some Arab TV journalists arriving at the scene of a car bomb or other attack have been accused of knowing about the incident in advance. In May, Robert Tappan, Director of Strategic Communication for the CPA, told National Public Radio in the U.S. that, "If a potential terrorist tips off a news organisation that something is about to happen, I think that a responsible reporter or news organisation is duty bound to try to head off any sort of terrorist act."

The presenter interviewing Mr. Tappan pointed out to him that news reporting is not about taking sides.

In other words, the political context is creating a paradox. Arab satellite news broadcasting creates conditions of speed and competition that call for greater journalistic autonomy, in the sense of journalists deciding for themselves and among themselves what is ethical and what is not. But, at the same time, the context in which these channels have developed recently has included heavy external as well as internal pressure to limit that autonomy.

This may be why solidarity among journalists is emerging as an important component of the codes of ethics that Arab journalists are starting to devise for themselves. Solidarity within the profession is one means to safeguard mechanisms of autonomous decision making. Only joint action can strengthen efforts by journalists to make professional decisions on their own behalf. Solidarity with colleagues is recognised in various parts of the world as a component of journalistic ethics. For example, the code of the Venezuelan Association of Journalists contains a clause stating that "a journalist should give his support to his colleagues when they are being unjustly persecuted."

Arab journalists, including those working for satellite TV channels, have shown solidarity with each other on a number of occasions in the past year. A large group in Dubai joined in signing a letter to the Spanish embassy in protest at the imprisonment in Spain of Al-Jazeera's correspondent, Tayseer Allouni. A large group walked out from a press conference given by Colin Powell after a journalist and cameraman from Al-Arabiya were killed in Iraq in March. In Cairo in May 2003, Arab media representatives joined with the International Federation of Journalists to sign a communiqué in which they urged journalists to come together to devise their own codes of ethics and to safeguard the freedoms on which all journalists depend. One clause called for condemnation of the "sacking of journalists for reasons related to practising their job or expressing their opinion."

The fact that journalists are organising together to defend their right to set their own standards seems to be a new and important development in the political context.

الدكتور أحمد لماندي صحافي وأستاذ الإعلام والتواصل، الإذاعة والتلفزة المغربية أخلاقيات العمل الصحفي في المغرب : التطور و الارتباط بالمحيط



مقدمة

تعد أخلاق مهنة الصحافة من المواضيع التي أصبحت تشغل بال الإعلاميين في المغرب وخاصة منذ بداية الألفية الثالثة، حيث أخذت الحديث عن مفهوم أخلاق المهنة وعن التعديلات التغييرية التي تحتاجها. كما أخذت المقاربات لفهم إشكالياتها وتحدياتها تتعلم معها.

العقدان الذي أخذتها أخلاق مهنة الصحافة في الخطاب الإعلامي الوطني، حملت نتيجة انفتاح سلسلي وحقوقي وإعلامي يعرفه المغرب منذ التسعينات.

هذا الاهتمام البالغ بأخلاقيات المهنة يأتي كذلك في وقت تنهاه فيه الجريدة في تناول مصطلحات كانت يلاأمس تعتبر من التلميذات، مما يلفتنا إلى التساؤل حيوان فبعية الارتباط بين أخلاقيات مهنة الصحافة والبيئة التي يعمل فيها الصحفيون وخاصة المحيط السلسلي.

تهلّف هذه الورقة إلى الإجابة عن الأسئلة التالية :

١- ما هو تأثير المحيط السلسلي على آداب مهنة الصحافة؟

٢- هل يتوقف فهم وضعية وتطبيق أخلاقيات المهنة على وضعها في الإطار والمحيط الذي تطبق فيه.

المحيط السياسي:

لا يمكن الحديث عن أخلاقيات مهنة الصحافة إلا إذا وضعناها في سياق البيئة التي يشتغل فيها الصحفيون. إن آداب مهنة الصحافة ترتبط ببيئتها (١) ، رغم أنها قضية تهتم الصحفيين، تحقما كانت، إيديولوجيا كانت، وهي السلسلية. إذا كانت مؤسسات الإعلام تربطها بالمجتمع علاقات عضوية وعميقة، فيما يخص الطريقة التي تنظم بها هذه المؤسسات وتراقب (٢) ، فلا يتكّن فهم أخلاقيات مهنة الصحافة إلا إذا استقرّنا المحيط السلسلي والإعلامي القلنوني الذي تتبلّج فيه هذه الأخلاقيات.

المغاربة والعملية السياسية : موجة جديدة من التحرير السياسي وإنشاء ثقافة جديدة

منذ بداية التسعينات، بدأ المغرب يعرف مناخا سياسيا جديدا يتسم بالانفتاح على المجتمع المدني ومحاولة ديمقراطية المؤسسات السلسلية، هذا الانفتاح سمح للمهاجرين والخبيرة الصحفيين بلانفوس في خطاب جديد ومناقشة مواضيع ذات اهتمام وطني. اتسمت التسعينات بلعلاجات همت اللدستهر، والسلطة التشريعية. لقد عرف سنة ١٩٩٢ تغييرات أدت إلى تقييد المؤسسة التشريعية وتمكينها من مراقبة الحكومة وسحب الثقة عنها إذا اقتضى الحال. أما سنة ١٩٩٣، فقد أنشأ غرفة ثلثية سميت مجلس المستشارين، تتكون من منظمات نقابية ومؤسسات عملية وقارية.

المحيط الإعلامي:**- الإعلام المكتوب**

الانفتاح الذي عرفه المغرب منذ بداية الألفية الثالثة، كان له تأثير إيجابي على الإعلام الوطني وخاصة الصحافة المكتوبة. خلال هذه الفترة، قفز الإعلام المكتوب قفزة كمية ونوعية حيث ازداد عدد الجرائد الوطنية وخاصة المستقلة منها، إذ بلغ عدد الجرائد أكثر من ٧٠٠ عنوان، زيادة على ١٧٠٠ عنوان مستورد من الخارج (٨).

لقد كان للتطور الديمقراطي الذي يعرفه المغرب حاليا أثرا إيجابيا على أداء الصحف الوطنية، حيث ازدادت جراتها وازداد هامش حريتها في تناول موضوعات عدة. وقد أخذت الجرائد المستقلة الصدارة في تناول موضوعات كانت بالأمس من المحظورات أو الطابوهات.

كما أن الصحف الوطنية وخاصة المستقلة أصبحت أكثر مهنية وتحاول بعض المؤسسات أن تشتغل كمقاولات صحفية بما يتطلب ذلك من جودة ومهنية أكثر.

رغم هذا التقدم، فإن الصحافة المغربية وخاصة الحزبية منها لازالت تعيش عدة مشاكل منها، قلة المبيعات، حيث تباع ١٣ جريدة يومية لكل ألف مواطن. هذا الرقم يضع المغرب في المرتبة الثالثة مقارنة مع جيرانه، فتونس مثلا تحتل المرتبة الأولى بـ ٤٨ نسخة لكل ١٠٠٠ مواطن، تليها الجزائر بـ ٣٨ نسخة لكل ١٠٠٠ مواطن (٩).

إن بزوغ بعض المقاولات الصحفية المستقلة التي تشتغل في جو من التنافسية وبأليات التدبير الحديثة، جعلها تشتغل بمهنية لإرضاء القراء، مما أدى بالمهنيين إلى الحديث عن الاتفاقية الجماعية وأخلاقيات المهنة كأدوات مهمة لتطوير العمل الصحفي. غير أنه لازالت هناك صحافة حزبية تشتغل بطرق تقليدية حيث يعتبر الصحفي مناضلا خاضعا لسلطة السياسي ولا يعالج الخبر طبقا لمفاهيم مهنية ولكن يأخذ بعين الاعتبار الخط السياسي وإيديولوجية الحزب المسير للجريدة.

- المشهد الإعلامي السمعي البصري

تحتكر الدولة الصحافة السمعية البصرية منذ ما يزيد على ٧٨ سنة. احتكار الدولة للإعلام بدأ منذ أول بث إذاعي سنة ١٩٢٨. حينما حصل المغرب على استقلاله وأسس أول تلفزيون وطنية سنة ١٩٦٢، رسخت الحكومة هيمنتها على الإذاعة والتلفزة بوضعها تحت وصاية وزارة الإعلام.

لعب الإعلام السمعي البصري دورا هاما في تأطير الرأي العام وفي إخبار المواطنين بالإنجازات التي تقوم بها الحكومات في الميادين الاقتصادية والاجتماعية.

وكانت الحكومات المغربية تعتبر الصحافة السمعية البصرية كأداة للتعبير عن سياساتها (١٠).

لقد كان قطاع الإعلام السمعي البصري يستعمل لتمجيد ما يقوم به الوزراء، وأسس بذلك ما سمي بلغة الخشب، حيث كان الرأي الآخر قلما يسمح به على شاشة التلفزة أو أمواج الإذاعة. هذا الواقع كان يعكس مناخا سياسيا معين عاشه المغرب آنذاك أثر على تسيير الإعلام العمومي واشتغاله مهنيا.

هيمنة الدولة على الإعلام العمومي أدى إلى ظهور انتقادات لاذعة في الصحف الوطنية تطالب بالتغيير سواء من طرف المواطنين أو النخب الوطنية. وتزامنت المطالبة بالتغيير بانتشار أجهزة الاستقبال الإذاعي والتلفزي وغزوها المنازل المغربية. على إثر هذه الضغوطات ورغبة من الدولة في إعطاء متنفس يمكن من خلاله للمغاربة أن يعبروا عن آراء مختلفة، أسست قناة حرة، سميت ٢M أو القناة الثانية.

خلقت ٢M شرخا كبيرا في احتكار الدولة للإعلام البصري. فقد سمحت هذه القناة لعدد من المواطنين والمثقفين وأحزاب المعارضة لمناقشة مواضيع مهمة وتوجيه انتقادات إلى السياسة الحكومية. ورغم مساهمتها في تطوير أداء الإعلام السمعي البصري فلم تسلم هي الأخرى من الانتقادات، حيث اعتبرها العديد قناة فرنكفونية ونخبوية وغير منفتحة كليا على كل الشرائح

ازدادت قوة البرلمان بخلق لجن للتقصي، استطاعت هذه اللجن أن تقف عن خروقات كبيرة في تأسيس عدة مؤسسات عمومية. ورغم أن العديد من الحقوقيين صفقوا لهذه النتائج، إلا أن الكل لا يزال ينتظر معاقبة المسؤولين عن تلك الخروقات. إن الإصلاحات في الميدان التشريعي جعلت من المغرب ديمقراطية برلمانية محترمة (٣) حيث أن البرلمان أصبح له بعض التأثير على السياسة الحكومية عبر مناقشة مقترحاتها ومسائلة وزرائها، لكن رغم التغييرات الإيجابية التي حصلت في المؤسسة التشريعية فإن البرلمان المغربي لم ينل بعد استقلالية حقيقية أو دورا مباشرا في التأثير على السياسات الحكومية (٤) .

إصلاحات أخرى أدخلت في المجال الحقوقي وأكدت رغبة المغرب في تعزيز الانفتاح. فقد أنشأت وزارة حقوق الإنسان وأسس المجلس الاستشاري لحقوق الإنسان سنة ١٩٩٠، كما تعززت وتقوت منظمات حقوق الإنسان حتى أصبحت أكثر جرأة في معالجة المشاكل المطروحة على البلاد.

يجب الإشارة إلى أن انتشار المنظمات الحقوقية والجمعيات المهنية والنقابية لم يكن ممكنا لولا وجود هامش كبير من الحرية دعمته الدولة وحافظت عليه.

بزوغ منظمات حقوق الإنسان والأهمية التي تعطيها الدولة إلى معالجة حقوق الإنسان اعتبر من طرف الكثير من الباحثين والمتخصصين بأنه « مؤشر لخلق ثقافة سياسية جديدة تؤدي إلى إنشاء وتقوية دولة الحق والقانون وانفتاح أكثر على المجتمع الحديث (٥) .

أدى هذا الانفتاح إلى انتشار عدد كبير من حركات نسائية ومنظمات مهنية اجتماعية وبيئية. كان لهذه الإصلاحات وهذا الانفتاح السياسي صدى كبير لدى المراقبين والباحثين حيث اعتبرت التجربة المغربية من أحدث النجاحات في التحرير السياسي العربي (٦) .

من بوادر الانفتاح السياسي في التسعينات كذلك هو قدوم المعارضة إلى الحكم سنة ١٩٩٨، حيث سمح لها بالمشاركة في السلطة مع أحزاب أخرى. حينما تولى الملك محمد السادس الحكم احتفظ بأحزاب المعارضة في الحكومة.

الألفية الثالثة : عهد جديد وانفتاح أكبر وتحسين للسلسل الديمقراطي

منذ بداية الألفية الثالثة أعطى الملك الشاب محمد السادس إشارات قوية على رغبته في خلق مغرب حديث وديمقراطي. حيث أكد على استمرار الإصلاح وقام بإجراءات فعلية زادت من ترسيخ دولة الحق والقانون.

مفهوم جديد للسلطة

لقد جاء الملك الجديد بمفهوم جديد للتنمية. فالتنمية ليست فقط الرفع من المستوى الاقتصادي والاجتماعي للمواطنين، ولكن كذلك التنمية هي احترام حقوق الإنسان، المساواة بين المرأة والرجل في الحقوق، إدخال مفهوم جديد للسلطة يرتكز على سياسة القرب، إزالة البيروقراطية، إشراك المواطنين في مناقشة ومعالجة مشاكلهم والتواصل المستمر مع المواطنين. إذا وضعنا المفهوم الجديد للسلطة الذي يحاول المغرب أن يطبقه، في سياقه التاريخي، فإننا نجد أن هذه المقاربة تتطابق مع مفهوم التنمية الجديد «التنمية الأخرى»، هذا المفهوم يرتكز على اللامركزية، إشراك المواطن في العملية السياسية، ديمقراطية الحياة السياسية وتوسيع مجال الحرية.

إذا كان تطبيق المفهوم الجديد للسلطة أعطى أكله في عدة مجالات، فإن بعض الباحثين يرون أن التحول الديمقراطي الحقيقي يتطلب تعديلا شاملا للعقلية وللأشخاص وللقيم السلطوية القائمة (٧) .

هناك مقاومة في عدة مؤسسات لتطبيق هذا المفهوم. كمقاربة حديثة للتسيير والتنمية والتواصل، لا يمكن لهذا المفهوم أن يتطور إلا بتدابير وخطوات فعلية في الميدان. يجب مثلا تدعيم قضاء عادل، خلق توازن بين السلطة التشريعية والتنفيذية، خلق ثقافة ديمقراطية وتشاركية في جميع المؤسسات، القضاء على الرشوة والمحسوبية والزبونية.

المحيط القانوني:

يؤطر وينظم مهنة الصحافة في المغرب قانون يرجع تاريخ صدوره إلى سنة ١٩٥٨، لكنه عدل عدة مرات وأخرها سنة ٢٠٠٢. منذ حصولها أولاً قانون ينظمه الإعلام بعد الاستقلال سنة ١٩٥٨، وتعديله سنة ١٩٧٣ و ١٩٧٥، والأصوات تتعالى لتغييره عدله من يتهوه حتى يتمكن من مواكبة التحولات السيلسية الاجتماعية التي يعرفها المغرب منذ بداية التسعينات.

منذ أن دخل المغرب في مسلسل تطهير مؤسساته اللدقيقة المحيطة في بداية التسعينات، بدأ الإصلاح من طرف عدله من الأحتباب والجمعيات لمراجعة قانون الصحافة، وتكلفت التقلية الليطونية للصحافة المغربية بصفتها الممثل التشريعي للصحافيين والصحافيات من المطلبين الأثقال بتعطيد الحريات المعلمة وسد الشغرات التي يشكو منها قانون الصحافة.

حينما تولى الملك محمد السادس الحكم سنة ١٩٩٩، أعطى اشارات قوية بعثت الأمل في تيسير الحريات المعلمة في البلاده

وعلى رأسها حرية الصحافة، فقد أخذ العمل المغربي في مناسبات عدده على تيسير الحريات والمطلب بليلغة التعقيبات السللابة للحريات أو التقليل منها.

وأعلم رغبة الملك في تعطيد الحريات المعلمة وصيانة حرية التعبير أذلت حكومة عبد الرحمان اليوسفي في أحد مراجعها على أنها

ستعمل على اعتماده الانتقال في وسائل الإعلام وتيسير الحريات. في آخر سنة ٢٠٠٠ قلعت الحكومة مشروع قانون الصحافة والتشريع إلى البرلمان، بعد ما صادقت عليه في مجلسها يوم ١٥ سبتمبر من نفس السنة.

التعديل الجديد أقر بإيجاليات لكنته لها يأخذ بعين الاعتبار نكل الاقتراحات التي تقلعت بها نقابة المهنيين، الشيء الذي أدى

بهذه الأخيرة إلى رفضه ومتابعة المشاورات مع جميع التتلخات والمهنيين والمهنيين والمسؤولين قصد الاتفاق على مشروع ينص على نكل الأطفاف.

في يوم الثلاثاء ١٢ مارس ٢٠٠٢ صادقة مجلس النواب على القانون الجديد. رغم الإيجاليات التي أقر بها هذا القانون، فإن

صغته التهلئية لها ترفض الكثير من الجمعيات الحقوقية التي أذلت أن التعديلات الصادرة عليها لها تأخذ في الاعتبار «مجملا

التطلعات السيلسية الديمقراطية والإعلامية والتكثيلية التي تتطلب فعلا جديدا ومدونة شاملة تسليق التهجج العللي الذي يسير في

أجله الانتقال والحرية (١٨٨).

من الإيجاليات التي أقر بها هذا القانون هو تقيده على قسمان حرية إصدار الصحف والتشريع... والحق في الإعلام والحق في

الصحف إلى مصادره الأخرى. كذلك الإلغاء التعقيمية السللابة للحرية في العلليد من القصص والتقليص في قصص الأخرى.

هنالك تعديلات إيجالية أخرى يجب الإشارة إليها مثلا إجبار السلطة على تعليق قراناتها وتقليد آجال الأثبات فيما يتعلق بتهم

السب والتذلف والإلغاء تسليد الغرامة قبل حصول الحكم التهلئي.

لها يخل القانون الجديد من السللبات، فهو يحتوي على عبارات قليلة للتأهيلات عديده من قبل الأئمن العام والمصلح العللي للبلاد.

وأعقل كذلك حق الصحافة في الحقاظه على سرية مصادره معلومته، والإلغاء آجال الأثبات، والإلغاء التعقيمية السللابة للحرية. كما أن

القانون الجديد لها يتضمن نقل مصلاحيات الحجج والتتقيف إلى المقصاه.

أخلاقيات المهنة بين المحيط والواقع:

كما ذكرنا سابقا إن كل نقاش حول أخلاقيات المهنة يستوجب الحديث عن المحيط الذي يشتغل فيه المهنيون ومحاولة فهم

كيف يؤثر المحيط السيلسي على تطبيق أخلاقيات مهنة الصحافة على أرض الواقع.

بدأ الاهتمام بأخلاقيات مهنة الصحافة في بداية التسعينات بعد الانقراج السيلسي الذي عرفه البلد والمبدأ في صغرطة

مؤسسات اللدولة.

لقد عرف المغرب إيجالات في المجال الحقيقي من إنشله وإنارة لحقوق الإنسان والمجلس الاستشاري لحقوق الإنسان سنة ١٩٩٠،

كما عرف المشهود الإعلامي تصعلا كبيرا وحرية أكبر في التعبير. هذه التغييرات في الميدان الحقيقي أدت إلى رفع بعض المعوقات

الاجتماعية. في سنة ١٩٩٦ فشلت القناة الثانية في تحقيق أهدافها التجارية مما أدى إلى تأميمها من طرف الدولة، حيث أصبحت للبلد قناتان عموميتان تابعتان للدولة.

الانفتاح السياسي الذي عرفه المغرب في التسعينات أدى إلى ازدياد المطالبة بالتغيير في ميدان الإعلام السمعي البصري. المطالبة بالتغيير عكسته توصيات أول مناصرة وطنية للإعلام والاتصال التي انعقدت سنة ١٩٩٣ وكان من أهم توصياتها إحداث هيئة عليا للاتصال السمعي البصري. منذ ذلك الحين حصلت تطورات كثيرة في المشهد الإعلامي السمعي البصري المغربي، أدت إلى تكثف جهود العديد من الفاعلين الحقوقيين والمهنيين والنقائبيين والأكاديميين وازدادت مطالبهم بإصلاح ودمقرطة وسائل الإعلام العمومية.

حينما جاء محمد السادس إلى الحكم، بدأ باتخاذ إجراءات لتوسيع الحريات وتأهيل قطاع الإعلام السمعي البصري بهدف خلق صناعة إعلامية عصرية ومهنية قادرة على التنافس في المشهد الإعلامي الجديد. وكان من أهم الإجراءات التي اتخذت هو إحداث هيئة عليا للاتصال السمعي البصري بمقتضى ظهير شريف صدر في ٣١ أغسطس ٢٠٠٢، كما صدر بتاريخ ١٠ سبتمبر ٢٠٠٢ مرسوم بقانون بإنهاء احتكار الدولة في ميدان البث الإذاعي والتلفزيوني. (١١)

من أهم اختصاصات الهيئة العليا للاتصال السمعي البصري منح الرخص لإحداث قنوات إذاعية وتلفزيونية، والسهر على التقيد بتعددية التعبير عن الفكر والرأي، ولا سيما فيما يتعلق بالإعلام السياسي، سواء من قبل القطاع الخاص أو من القطاع العام للاتصال السمعي البصري. (١٢)

ورغبة من الدولة في استكمال تحرير قطاع السمعي البصري ينتظر أن يناقش البرلمان في إحدى دوراته المقبلة مشروع قانون يتعلق بالصحافة السمعية البصرية بعد أن صادق عليه مجلس الوزراء يوم ٣ يونيو ٢٠٠٤. يوظف هذا القانون ويحدد الشروط التي بموجبها تمنح الرخص لتأسيس إذاعات وتلفزات حرة، كما يحدد شروط تحويل الإذاعة والتلفزة المغربية والمصلحة المستقلة للإشهار إلى شركة مساهمة تحمل اسم الشركة الوطنية للإذاعة والتلفزة. ويؤكد هذا المشروع القانون على أن الإعلام حر وعلى ضمان الحق في الإعلام واحترام التعددية وحرية الرأي. الحكومة في شخص وزير الإتصال والناطق الرسمي باسمها، اعتبرت تحرير قطاع الإعلام السمعي البصري لبنة إضافية في صرح مسلسل ديمقراطية المغرب (١٣).

هذه التحولات المهمة التي يعرفها الإعلام العمومي المغربي كان لها صدى كبير لدى المهنيين وعدة منظمات حقوقية وثقافية وباحثين ومختصين. فالصحافي ووزير الإعلام السابق أكد أن تخلي الدولة عن احتكار الإعلام السمعي البصري يستند على ترسيخ بناء دولة الحق والقانون (١٤). وأكدت النقابة الوطنية للصحافة المغربية إن ما قامت به الدولة في مجال تحرير القطاع السمعي البصري يعتبر شيئا إيجابيا (١٥).

إلا أن الترحاب الذي لقيه قرار تحرير قطاع الإعلام السمعي البصري من طرف الجميع، بما فيهم النقابة التي تمثل المهنيين، لا يعني غياب انتقادات لاستراتيجية الدولة.

فالنقابة الوطنية للصحافة المغربية، مثلا، عبرت عن تحفظها للطريقة التي أسست بها الهيئة العليا للاتصال السمعي البصري، لأن أولى خطوات إصلاح القطاع لم يكن محط نقاش من طرف الجميع ولم يطرح أي مشروع أمام البرلمان كما أن اقتراحات جميع الفاعلين المختصين لم تؤخذ كلها بعين الاعتبار. فالمنطق الفوقي، تقول النقابة، هو الذي حكم آليات وتنظيم إصدار النصوص المتعلقة بتحرير القطاع السمعي البصري.

كما وجهت النقابة كذلك انتقادها لبعض المحظورات المنصوص عليها في هذا المشروع والتي اعتبرتها فضفضة «كالإخلال بقيمة المملكة المغربية والمس بالأخلاق العامة».

النقابة تتخوف «من أن ترهن هذه المقتضيات تحرير القطاع ومؤسساته العمومية في توجيه رسمي وقريب من السلطة، وقد تكون أداة للتحكم في تطور المجال السمعي البصري انطلاقا من رؤية أمنية ومتخلفة كما هو الواقع الآن» (١٧).

الطيب الأزرق يؤكد على «أن القانون المغربي بصيغته الراهنة، يكتسي محدودية بالغة في تكريس أخلاقيات مهنة الصحافة، ويتنافى في عدة مقتضيات أخرى مع التقييم الأخلاقية المثلى التي يكرسها اللدستين وتكريسها مبادئ العدالة» (٢٥).
ومن جهته يؤكد الصحفيون جمال المحافظ عضو الهيئة الوطنية المستقلة لأخلاقيات مهنة الصحافة وحرية التعبير على ارتباط المحيط بـإسكالية أخلاقيات المهنة، حيثما أشار إلى أن تخصص المهنة يتكهن بـمبطلها تعصمه من خلال زيادة تيسير هلمش الحرية المسؤولة (٢٦).

خاتمة

تطرق هذه الورقة إلى نوعية الارتباط بين أخلاقيات مهنة الصحافة والمحيط الذي يشتغل فيه المهنيون. تبين لنا من هذا العرض أن إسكالية الأخلاقيات في الصحافة لا يتكهن فهمها إلا إذا استقر أن المحيط السياسي اللذي يهتس بـبلده في المحيطين الإعلامي والقانوني.
عرف المغرب تطورا في صقلية مهنيته السياسية مما أثر إيجابيا على المهنيون الحقيقي في البلد. سمح هذا المناخ بتأسيس مشهد إعلامي جديد اتسم باستقلالية أكثر وحرارة في طرحه و مناقشة مواضيع كانت بالأمر من المحظورات.
لكن أعلام هاته الإيجليات، لأننا المسلسل، اللذي هو المحي يعرف بعض التسلسل. كما أن الإعلام رغم القفزة النوعية التي عرفها لأن التبع بعض عواقب تشبيهه وتقلد من جودته وحرية.
لا يتكهن الحديث عن أخلاقيات مهنة الصحافة من الحديث عن الإعلام و مناقشة القننين اللذي يهتس به. هذا الأخير رغم إيجليات عدله من فصوله فهو يقسم سلبيات تقبل من تكريس أخلاقيات مهنة الصحافة.
ولأن الكل واع بأن المحيط القانوني، كما يقول جمال الدين التلجي، يعتبر الخطأ مصدره للرؤية التي على الصحفيين أن يدافعوا بها على مهنتهم فقد بدأت بعض الأوساط الحكومية والسياسية تتحدث عن احتمال تعديل قننين الصحافة. كما أن الإصلاحات التي يعرفها المغرب في الميدان السياسي والإعلامي سوف تخلق متاعلا مماثلما لتخصص أخلاقيات مهنة الصحافة، نظرا للمعي الجميع بالارتباط المبرهن بين أخلاقيات المهنة وصحافتها.

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٨- محمد عبد الرحمان يراة (٢٠٠٢). الصحافة المكتوبة بللغري: التوزيع والنشر: اللدان البيقوله: وان الشتيهكي للنشر، ص: ٩٨.

٩- محمد عبد الرحمان يراة. الرجوع السابق: ص: ٩.

وكانت لها انعكاسات على حرية الصحافة، لأن حرية التعبير والحق في الإعلام تشكل الركائز الأساسية لمفهوم حقوق الإنسان. هذا الوضع الجديد الإيجابي رافقه اهتمام كبير بأخلاقيات المهنة. وخوفاً من أي انزلاق «وفي سبيل تحصين المهنة من أي خرق وأوقات أخلاقية وأدبية أصدرت النقابة ميثاق الشرف الذي يركز على ضرورة احترام أخلاقيات المهنة وعدم ممارسة كل ما من شأنه أن يلوث سمعة وشرف الصحفيين والصحافة على حد سواء» (١٩).

هذا الميثاق صادق عليه المؤتمر الثاني للهيئة الصحفية في ٣٠ ماي ١٩٩٣. وبعد تنظيم عدة ورشات وندوات في موضوع أخلاقيات المهنة، شكلت النقابة يوم ٢٤ نوفمبر ٢٠٠٠ لجنة للمتابعة تضم إلى جانب الهيئة النقابية، عدة جمعيات حقوقية. وبعد حوار وعمل متواصل بين النقابة وعدة جمعيات حقوقية كمنظمات حقوق الإنسان وجمعية هيئة المحامين بالمغرب والجمعية المغربية لمحاربة الرشوة واتحاد كتاب المغرب، والفدرالية المغربية لناشري الصحف، تم تأسيس الهيئة الوطنية المستقلة لأخلاقيات المهنة في شهر يوليو ٢٠٠٢.

إن دور هذه الهيئة هو تدعيم حرية الممارسة والالتزام بأخلاقيات المهنة والتصدي لأي انتهاك يمس آداب وأخلاق المهنة الصحفية من بين المبادئ الأخلاقية التي نص عليها ميثاق الشرف (١) البحث عن الحقيقة، (٢) احترام التعدد، (٣) الدفاع عن حرية الإعلام (٢٠).

هذه المبادئ مستمدة من بنود الدستور الذي ينص على حرية التعبير والرأي ومن المبادئ العالمية لحقوق الإنسان. فيما يخص البحث عن الحقيقة لا يمكن للصحافي أن يعمل في هذا الاتجاه إلا إذا توفرت الإرادة عند جميع السياسيين والمسؤولين لإمداده بالمعلومات التي يبحث عنها. فبعض المؤسسات لازالت تحتفظ بالخبر وتعطيه لجهة إعلامية دون أخرى. إن الهيئة الوطنية المستقلة لأخلاقيات الصحافة وحرية التعبير واعية بالصعوبات التي يمكن للصحافي أن يلاقها في محاولة التزامه بهذا المبدأ الأخلاقي حينما أكدت في ميثاقها، على ضمان حق الصحافي في الوصول إلى كافة المعلومات والأخبار في جميع الوقائع والأحداث المتعلقة بالحياة العامة (٢١).

أما احترام التعدد كمبدأ أخلاقي في مهنة الصحافة، فإن الحرص عليه تعزز كثيراً في الصحافة الوطنية نتيجة ديمقراطية الدولة وضمان حرية أكثر للمهنيين، إلا أنه من الملاحظ أن إبراز آراء مختلفة في مواد صحفية يحترم أكثر في الإعلام المكتوب، وخاصة الصحافة المستقلة. أما في الإعلام العمومي فما زال الصحفيون يعتبرون موظفين ويصعب عليهم أحياناً التقيد بهذا المبدأ. فيما يتعلق بالدفاع عن حرية الإعلام، فإذا كان هذا الحق يضم الاستقلالية والحرية في النقد والتعليق عن الخبر، فإن الصحافي لازال يجد صعوبات في تطبيق هذا المبدأ الأخلاقي. فالصحافي في بعض المنابر الإعلامية لا يتمتع باستقلالية تامة والحرية الكاملة في التعليق عن الخبر، لأن هذا قد يؤدي إلى إلحاق الضرر به.

فالتقرير الأخير للنقابة الوطنية للصحافة المغربية يؤكد على أنه، بالرغم من الجهود الذي تقوم به الدولة في سبيل ديمقراطية المشهد الإعلامي لازالت هذه الأخيرة تمسك بزمام الأمور في المشهد الإعلامي بصفة عامة.

إن احترام أخلاق المهنة رهين بالبيئة السياسية التي هي الأخرى مرتبطة بالمحيط القانوني. «وبدون محيط ملائم سيصبح الهم الأخلاقي مجرد ترف زائد للمثقفين وخليطاً من الأوهام» (٢٢).

حين تحدث جمال الدين الناجي عن تأثير المحيط على أخلاقيات المهنة ركز على أن القوانين تشكل مرجعية لأخلاق الصحافة والمصدر الأول لاستيفائها وتأسيسها، وعلى أنه كلما قامت الدولة بحماية حق الصحافي في الحصول على الخبر، كلما ترسخت أخلاق المهنة (٢٣).

ويقول الطيب الأزرق المحامي ورئيس جمعية مساندة حرية التعبير والهيئة الوطنية المستقلة لأخلاقيات الصحافة بالمغرب. إن التنصيص على «الحق في الإعلام مع مراعاة أحكام الدستور وأحكام القانون وأخلاقيات المهنة لا يمكن أن يكون ناجعاً إذا لم يكن مشفوعاً بالاعتراف، بأن الصحافة سلطة قوامها حرية الرأي والتعبير وأداة لممارسة الرقابة على الشأن العام باستقلالية مكفولة» (٢٤).



محاسن الإمام مديرة مركز الإعلاميات العربيات، عمان

عند الحديث عن مبدأ الحرية وأخلاقيات الصحافة فإنه لا بد أن نشير إلى ماهية هذه الحرية وحدودها وإطلاقها إلى المدى الذي لا تقيدده محله و السلوحي المتأقبة عن ذلك خلصة إذا علمنا بأن من يلدن أن يتلك المشسلسات الصحفية أن الإعلانية في العليد من دول العلم احتكارات أو رؤوس أمهال محتوية أو شرسات اقتصادية لها مصالها.

وقد تتنازل الصحفية في العليد من اللول عن جالب من عريتها من أجل دعم تحقيق هدف قيمي داخلي أو في سبيل مصالحها الخلرجية.

وإن عدنا إلى المهره قليلاً نجد أمثلة توضح ذلك فقد كان عد من الصحفيتين الإيطاليتين الريمونين في مطلع الثمانينات يفتنن بأن نقد الصحفية الحكيمه متخبة يكون مقيدا في اللول الليقراطية الحديثة أو المهودة.

وقد شعر أول محرر للصحيفة لهيوند "هبرت بوا ميري" و أحد أعظم الصحفيتين في القرن الماضي بأن الأئمة اليلسة أو العربية التي حدثت في فرنسا عام ١٩٨٥ فإن نوعا من اللتلتونية على شكلة حكم الرئيس شارل ديغول كان نفس نوع من الليقراطية.

وفي اليلان فإن الصحفية الليقراطية اليلانية لها تشعير يلجج و لم تكن خلقة على مباتها من عقد اتفاقية مع الحكيمه العسنية لتعيز من اسلن لها في يكرن اشتراكت أن لا تقوم الصحفة اليلانية بتس أي أخبار أو تعليقات عدائية حول العسرين على مصالها.

والعلمون في الصحفية بشكل عام و الصحفيون بشكل خاص هم يتس يحملون في أيديهم وقلبيهم حرية غلمسة منظمة من اللقيم الأخلاقية التي يمكن أن تشكل تحيرا أو حتى قسراء إنها تتشأ جرحيا من طبيعة المهنة و جرحيا من اللقيم المسلدة في اللول التي تعمل فيها الصحفية.

وفي بعض الليقراطيات الليسرالية فإن التنس يتم قبضه بشكل مباتس إما من قبل الحكيمه أو خلفة الأحتاب السيلسية كما إنه في دول أخرى فإن الشرسات الخلصة وذات الأهداف اليبعية تتحكم بالقبوه و في بريطانيا يتمتع التنس ببعض الحمية من قوه المسوق مع الإعلانه بالاستقلال السيلسي.

وهنالك وجهة نظر علمة ترى أن دول ولسائل الإعلام هو دائما كما كان، إن الصحفية والإذاعة دائما تلجج وتنسوه وتتجمع وقد تم القول أن لليه تأثيراً قليلاً على الحياة السيلسية والترجج في وجهة النظر هذه أن دول الصحفية قد تغيره وإن قوه ولسائل الإعلام قد زادت بشكل ملحوظة خلال السنوات الأربعين اللغسية وهنالك مصداق يلدلة أقل للمعلهمات بينما أصبحت السيطرة على ولسائل الإعلام من أيدي أقل.

وفي نفس الوقت فإن الصحفية و الملبث الإذاعي والتلفزيوني أصبحت أقل مصداقية وإن اللسائل المتوفرة للجمهور في مراقبة الإخبار أصبحت غير قادرة على السيو مع التمه والتغير التكنيولوجي في مصالعت تدهاه تعقداً لهذا فالصحافة تلس قوه تجسبه والتكنها أكثر من أي وقت مضى سلطة يلا مسؤلية.

يلد و انصعا من التجارب و الأحداث، كل دولة مهما كانت سديدة الثقة بنفسها و أفضلها وقيتها ووعي الناس لليه فإنها في ظروف صعدة تتخذ من الإجراءات ما يلزم اليقفه تقيدا أسلسيات اللسلتير الأخلاقية الصحفية وتقوم بتوجيه المشسلسات الإعلانية و الصحفية العلمة لليه وبتنيدها خلصة تحقيق الأهداف العلمة للوهلة يلا تليه عليها مصالحها الخاصة بعض التنس عن المباح.

ويلا نسبة اللول التلمية و معظمها لليه ولسلتيه لأخلاقيات الصحفية مليئة بالمباح و التطيرة و التقدمة بواجبات الصحفية وأهميتها و دولها في المجتمع فهي تعيش متلقصاً و انصعا بشأن التطبيقه القعلي للمباح الأخلاقية الصحفية. ففي الوقت الذي تطلب به هذه اللول ولسائل الإعلام في اللول الأخرى خلصة اللسائل المشيرة بأن تكون مصافة و مضمومة في تعلمها مع قضايلها المحلية و اللولية

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Thèse de doctorat. Université de droit, d'économie et de sciences sociales de Paris – Paris II. P : 270

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- ١٢- المرجع السابق ص: ٧
- ١٣- حديث صحفي لوزير الاتصال. بيان اليوم، ٨ دسمبر ٢٠٠٣، ص: ٤.
- ١٤- محمد العربي المساري. ورقة أقيمت في ندوة بالعاصمة المصرية حول حرية الإعلام وحقوق الإنسان في الوطن العربي. بيان اليوم، ٣١ يناير ٢٠٠٣، ص: ١٣.
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- ١٦- المرجع السابق. ص: ٢٦.
- ١٧- المرجع السابق. ص: ٢٧.
- ١٨- تقرير حول أوضاع حرية الصحافة والإعلام في المغرب ٢٠٠٢-٢٠٠٣. النقابة الوطنية للصحافة المغربية الرباط، ص: ١٢.
- ١٩- الجمع العام الثالث ٢٣-٢٢ نوفمبر ١٩٩٦، الرباط: النقابة الوطنية للصحافة المغربية، ص: ٥.
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- ٢٣- جمال الدين الناجي، المرجع السابق.
- ٢٤- الطيب لزرق (٣ مارس ٢٠٠٤) أخلاقيات مهنة الصحافة بين التشريع والواقع. العلم
- ٢٥- الطيب لزرق (٤ مارس ٢٠٠٤) مهنة الصحافة بين التشريع والواقع. العلم: ص: ٨.
- ٢٦- حسن حبيبي (٢٦ أبريل ٢٠٠٤) صحافة الطرطورار. الاتحاد الاشتراكي، ص: ٥



وفي الحقيقة فإن الصحافيين الـ ٥٠٠ الذين يعملون مع القوات الأميركية يتقيدون بـ ١٢ صفحة من التعليمات التي أعطاها البنتاغون من أجل تغطية التنازع وتسمح التعليمات بنشر العصب في شكل مباشر عندلها تعتبرها السلطات الرسمية متناسبة ويملك البنتاغون أيضا أن يقهر منح بث أي العصب.

والشركيون الأميركيون الغريبون في دفة من التحقيقات المعصورة حول الجنود الأميركيين اليهوديين والعلنين على القتال لن يروا عصب الأسرى والقتلى الأميركيين التي يشتهل محطة الجزيرة القطرية كما إنهم لم يروا حتى الآن عصب جثث اللذين العراقيين المقطعة بعصا ويخ المقاتلات الحليفة في العراق.

وقال وزير الدفاع الأميركي دونالد رامسفيلد عن العصب العراقية للجنود الأميركيين التي يشتهل قناة الجزيرة أنه سيكون من المشسفة أن تبث عصب هذه في الولايات المتحدة.

وأعلنت المخططات التلقينية كما بعد ذلك إنها لن تستخدم هذه العصب ولم تظهر سوى عصب جثة قتيل لم تعرف هويته.

وقد نال جدل أخلاقي كبير حيثما أرسل الجيش الأميركي في الرابع والعشرين من تون قرارا بنشر عصب جثتي علي وقصي ابني الرئيس العراقي السابق صدام حسين ليثبت للعراقيين إنهما قتلا. وقام قباص في بغداد بنشر العصبين في متسحة تظهران رأس علي والنصف الأعلى لجسده وعصبين آخرين قصي مع عصب للأخوين. كما على قيد الحياة للمقارنة.

يشان أن التقليل داخل الجيش الأميركي كما تشير الصحف الأميركية تقضي بعدم نشر عصب القتلى.

لكن نشر هذه العصب قد يكون عملا صعبا بالنسبة لإدارة احتجت عندلها بث تلقينيات عربية مشاهد الجنود الأميركيين قتلوا خلال غيرها العراق في آذار.

وقال مسؤول في وزارة الدفاع الأميركية إن العصب تتقوت من منطقة إلى أخرى بشأن ما يمكن عرضه في أجهزة الإعلام.

وتراوحت رده القبل الصحفية العلنية حول نشر العصب المنكورة من ناحية الأخلاقيات الصحفية وقال خبيره الأميركيون إن نشر العصب له ما يبرره ويتشى مع تقليد فدا يرجع إلى أيام الإسكتل الأثري وأتفق مع هذا الرأي خبيره في الإعلام وقالوا إن عرض عصب التعملة بعد مقتلهم تقليد يرجع إلى وقت الإسكتل الأثري منذ وفاته عام ٢٢٣ قبل الميلاد وأشلى يول والفينسيون الأستاذ بكلية الصحفية في جملة فهمه "من سمع ليس تخمن رأي فحيزي توفي الإسكتل الأثري في سن صغيرة ٣٧ عاما وضعها جثمانه في العسل وعرضه في نعش رجلي وعافظها عليه لأطول مدة تكنت حتى يتمكن الناس من إلقاء النظرة عليه."

لكن افتتحة صحفية فرانكفورت وهنلسلو الألمانية المستقلة انتقلت نشر عصب علي وقصي.

وقالت الصحفية: "تحدث هنا عن الكرامة الإنسانية بصرف النظر عن الجرائم التي أتهم علي وقصي بل يتكلمها إلا أن عرض

العصب يمثل انتهاقا للمبادئ الأساسية للعالم المتحض."

وقال يوب ستيل وهو خبير في الأخلاقيات الصحفية في معهد بيوتيت يقللها أن هناك هدفا صحفيا مشروعا وراء نشر العصب ولكنه صرح أيضا بأن نشرها يتعارض أيضا مع اعتبارات إهارة الرئيس الأميركي السابق علي عرض الأسرى الأميركيين في الحرب العراقية في التلقينيات العربية.

وقال: "هناك تعارض بل تناقض وربما نقلة حيزي تهيئة الحكمة بقوة نشر المعلومات يعينها ثم تعبه بعد ذلك وتخطي بشدة

معلومات أخرى وتنتج نشرها."

أما ميتو بلتيو رئيس رابطة رؤساء تحرير الصحف الأميركية فقال إن العصب لها قيمة صحفية وأنها تتقدم غرضا سياسيا وهو إظهار

إن إهارة يوش أحزمت بعض التجلحات في تحقيق أهدافها في العراقه ولكنه أعصاف: "أرغب أن تكون الإدارة متفتحة وواقعة

بالنسبة للمعلومات وهما مثلما كانت في هذه الحالة لكن هذا ليس حوال هذه الإهارة علة."

وفي موقعها على الإنترنت عرفت صحيفة "يو إس آيه توي" عصب الجثتين ومعها تخليق يقول تخليق من الخبر. العصب هي ففة

بمعلومات توفيقية) واستله عله تجيب من الترهين على الإنترنت من العصب.

وكتب أحد لهم الهائلة رويتن يقول: "لم تتعلموا من سجل الجنود الأميركيين القتلى في شوارع مقالته وشكرتون نفس الخطأ؟"

فإنها في الوقت نفسه لا تسمح بتطبيق هذا المطلب على وسائل إعلامها المحلية عند تعاملها مع تلك القضايا المحلية التي قد تتناول قرارات مهمة تؤثر على المصالح الوطنية العليا أو تمس مسؤولين كباراً في الدولة وتفرض تعتيماً إعلامياً حولها وبذلك تدفعها إلى إخفاء الحقيقة عن الشعب.

ولا نريد العودة إلى الوراء في التاريخ كثيراً فهناك في التاريخ المعاصر والقريب أمثلة كثيرة على العديد من الدول الأكثر ديمقراطية التي سخرت وسائل الإعلام والصحافة ووجهتها في ظروف محددة من أجل دعم المصالح الخاصة وربما دفعتها للتخلي عن المصداقية والحقيقة في أخبارها في سبيل ذلك.

وهناك الكثير من المؤسسات الصحافية و الصحافيين من قبلوا بهذا الدور في التخلي عن الالتزام بالمبادئ العامة للمهنة في سبيل المصلحة العامة باعتبار أن المصلحة الوطنية تتطلب ذلك في الظروف الطارئة التي تواجهها الدولة.

وقد اعتبر حجب بعض الأخبار عن القراء أو عدم تقديم الحقيقة الكاملة فيها أو تشويهها أحياناً يصب في سبيل المصلحة الأمنية للدولة أو خططها الاقتصادية والعسكرية أو أهدافها النهائية التي تنفذها أو تعد لتنفيذها.

غير إنه بالرغم من ذلك فإننا نجد بعض وسائل الإعلام في دول يتخذ رؤساؤها قرارات مبنية على معلومات خاطئة يجزون فيها ببلدانهم في صراعات دولية مكلفة اقتصادياً ومالياً وبشراً تقوم بواجباتها بالمطالبة بضرورة إظهار الحقيقة للناس وإظهار مبررات هذه القرارات عبر وسائل الإعلام بعيداً عن خداع الرأي العام.

ونشير هنا إلى ما قامت به هيئة الإذاعة البريطانية في الأسبوع الأخير من شهر حزيران من عام ٢٠٠٣ بعد الاحتلال الأميركي البريطاني للعراق باتهام رئيس الوزراء البريطاني توني بلير بأحداث التغييرات على الملف الخاص بأسلحة الدمار الشامل في العراق بعد فشله في إثبات امتلاك العراق للأسلحة المحظورة وهو الأمر الذي أثار حفيظة الحكومة البريطانية ونشرت الإذاعة تصريحاً لمسؤول كبير في المخابرات البريطانية قال فيه إن رئاسة الوزراء قد بالغت وأضفت وأعدت صياغة بعض الحقائق في التقرير الأصلي الذي قدمته المخابرات حول الحجم الحقيقي لأسلحة الدمار الشامل التي أتهم العراق بحيازتها.

وبث الإذاعة في نفس الوقت برنامجاً عن أسلحة الدمار الشامل الإسرائيلية تحت عنوان "سلاح إسرائيل السري" وذلك رغم الضغوط القوية التي مارسها اللوبي اليهودي في لندن لمنع إذاعته واعتراض إسرائيل عليه في ضوء ما تضمنه من انتقادات لاستثناء تل أبيب من جهود نزع أسلحة الدمار الشامل في المنطقة.

واعتبر مراقبون أن عرض الإذاعة لهذا البرنامج في هذا التوقيت كان بهدف إحراج الحكومة البريطانية والرد على الضغوط التي مارستها ضدها وأيضاً كشف الازدواجية التي تتعامل بها لندن وواشنطن مع قضايا الشرق الأوسط.

فالانتقادات التي وجهتها الحكومة البريطانية إلى الإذاعة البريطانية نتيجة محاولتها توصيل المعلومات الصحيحة إلى مشاهديها ومستمعيها تتناقض مع مزاعم حرية الرأي والتعبير والشفافية والديمقراطية التي تدعي هذه الدول أنها تدعمها وتدافع عنها، واتهم المعهد الدولي للصحافة الحكومية البريطانية بمحاولة التأثير في أسلوب الإذاعة في نقل أخبار الحرب على العراق وتسخيرها لصالحها. ولعل ما حدث خلال الاحتلال الأميركي البريطاني للعراق من أمثلة شاهد على كيفية تصرف وسائل الإعلام القوية في تغطية هذه الحرب.

ووصفت إحدى وكالات الأنباء تغطية وسائل الإعلام الأميركية للحرب على العراق خلال شهر نيسان عام ٢٠٠٣ قائلة:

(على شاشات التلفزة الأميركية يلف الغبار الكثيف الحرب على العراق كما يتصبب الجنود عرقاً وتضيء القنابل الأميركية ليل بغداد غير إن المشاهد لا يرى دماً ولا يسمع بكائاً).

وصور الحرب التي تعرضها هذه الشاشات لا علاقة لها بتلك التي تبثها الوسائل الأخرى الأجنبية والأوروبية منها بشكل خاص والتي تظهر صور قتلى وجرحى مدنيين أو عسكريين من الجانب العراقي وأسرى حرب أميركيين.

كما أن التظاهرات ضد الحرب التي تحظى بمكانة جيدة في الشاشات الأجنبية يشار إليها بشكل وجيز فقط في محطات التلفزة الأميركية الكبرى التي تتنافس في البث المباشر المتواصل حول الحرب ضد العراق.

وتناول بايبر مدى تأثير وسائل الإعلام على المواطن الأميركي الذي يتلقى معلوماته وثقافته في الأساس عبرها فيما يغلق أمامه أي مصدر آخر للمعلومات بحيث يصبح الشعب الأميركي أسير هذه المصادر المعلوماتية دون غيرها وهذا ما نجحت فيه جماعات النفوذ والضغط اليهودية والصهيونية من خلال وسائل الإعلام العديدة التي تسيطر عليها.

وتنص معظم الدساتير الصحفية في العالم على حق الصحفيين في رفض الكشف عن مصادر معلوماتهم التي ينشروها أو ينوون نشرها ومنع تنصت الشرطة على الاتصالات الهاتفية التي تجريها وسائل الصحافة ومحاسبتها عليها إلا إذا كانت تتعلق بالأمن الوطني أو تتطلب ضرورة تدخل الشرطة لمنع جريمة معينة.

ففي مطلع شهر أيلول عام ٢٠٠٢ احتج الاتحاد الدولي للصحفيين على قيام الشرطة الدنماركية بالتنصت على محادثة هاتفية بين محرر صحفي ورئيسه بشأن إشاعات بوجود قائمة ليهود دنماركيين يتم تمريرها بين قوائم الإسلاميين المتشددين .

وقال ايدن وايت أمين عام الاتحاد إن التسجيل الصوتي لهذه المحادثة بين الصحفي ستيف ماتيسن مع رئيسه تم الإستماع إليها يوم الاثنين أثناء جلسة سرية بجمع محاكم كوبنهاجن التي قرر خلالها القاضي إلزام الصحفي بالكشف للشرطة عن مصادره التي إستقى منها هذه الإشاعة.

وأكد أن تصرف الشرطة لا يعكس الإساءة لإستخدام السلطة ولكن يؤكد احتقار بعض قياداتها لحقوق الصحفيين ووسائل الإعلام، أوضح أن التقرير الذي نشرته صحيفة «بيلاندز بوست» التي تعتبر ثاني أكبر صحيفة في الدنمارك يقوم على شائعات منتشرة في مدينة اروس التي تقطنها جاليتان يهودية وعربية كبيرة بخصوص وجود قائمة لإغتيال يهود دنماركيين دون الكشف عن أية تفاصيل أخرى.

وأشار الى أن رفض الصحفي ورئيسه الكشف عن مصادره يعرضهم لغرامة أو سجن لمدة تصل الى ستة اشهر حيث يحمي القانون الصحفيين من الكشف عن مصادرههم إلا فيما يتعلق بمعلومات هامة عن التحقيقات التي تجريها الشرطة و التي تتعلق بجريمة خطيرة تهدد الأمن القومي للبلاد .و أكد وايت أن الأمر يكشف مجددا طبيعة الضغوط المتزايدة على الصحفيين للكشف عن مصادرههم حيث تستغل وسائل الإعلام من اجل التوصل الى الأدلة ، وكذلك يعكس انتهاكا للحقوق الأساسية .

وبينما تعتبر المصدقية من أهم الأسس التي تركز عليها محتويات الأخبار الا أن الأحداث أثبتت أن أهم الصحف العالمية التي تعرف بتأثيرها الواسع وتركيزها في دساتيرها ومبادئ عملها وتأكيدا على هذا المبدأ قد سقطت في نشر أخبار وتقارير مزورة سواء كانت محلية أو عالمية.

ففي منتصف العام ٢٠٠٣ استقال اثنان من كبار محرري صحيفة نيويورك تايمز بعد فضيحة قيام أحد صحفيها بتزوير و انتحال موضوعات صحفية نشرتها الصحيفة التي بدأت مهمة صعبة لاستيعاد مصداقيتها التي فقدتها في فضيحة التزوير التي أضرت كثيرا بسمعتها.

وتحدثت الصحف الأمريكية عن قيام الصحفي جيسون بليير من نيويورك تايمز بتلفيق التحقيقات الصحفية والغش والنقل من مطبوعات أخرى واختلاق أحداث وتفاصيل غير صحيحة في التقارير التي كان يكتبها للصحيفة وتبين من التحقيق انه أختلق تفاصيل لم تحدث في ٣٦ مقالة من اصل ٧٣ مقالة منذ أن تم تكليفه بتغطية الأخبار المحلية الأمريكية، وتحتوي المقالات أخطاء في الواقع كما أخلاقيات المهنة.

واعتبرت استقالة مدير تحرير الصحيفة هويل رينز و المحرر الإداري جيرالد بويد خطوة إيجابية، وكان رينز قاد الصحيفة إلى النجاح ودفعها الى الفوز بسبع جوائز بوليتيزر محطمة الرقم القياسي .

وكانت استقالتهما بمثابة القبول الرسمي بمسؤوليتهما عن الفضيحة التي أندلعت بسبب المحرر الشاب جيسون بليير الذي ثبت انه لفق العديد من التقارير .

وأثارت فضيحة بليير موجة من المراجعات الأخلاقية و النقد الذاتي وتوجيه الاتهامات ولم يتمكن رينز من تصحيح الوضع كما ذكرت الصحيفة المباشرة.

مشيراً الى فيلم بثته وسائل الإعلام في أوائل الستينات لسحل جثة جندي أميركي في شوارع العاصمة الصومالية خلال تدخل عسكري أميركي في البلاد.

وخلصت دراسة أجريت لحساب مجلة "دليل التلفزيون" في لوس أنجلوس الى أن عدد مشاهدي التلفزيون الذين يتأذون من مشاهد العنف أكبر من العدد الذي يتأذى من مشاهد العري أو من التعليقات التي تحمل إيحاءات جنسية. كما خلص المسح الذي شمل ١٠١٥ بالغاً من مختلف أرجاء الولايات المتحدة الى أن ٧١ بالمائة قاموا بتغيير قناة المشاهدة لتجنب رؤية مواد يعدونها مؤذية بالرغم إن ٩١ بالمائة أشاروا إلى أنهم لم يقوموا قط بالاتصال بشبكة تلفزيونية للشكوى من هذه المواد.

قال نحو ١٧ بالمائة ممن استطلعت آراؤهم أن صور العنف والدم كانت أكثر المواد إيذاء على شاشة التلفزيون مقارنة مع ثمانية بالمائة للغة الخارجة وستة بالمائة للعري أو التلميحات الجنسية.

وأشارت المجلة الى أن شبكة ان. بي. سي التلفزيونية لم تتلقى شكوى واحدة في العام الماضي عندما تفوه بونو مغني فريق «يو٢» بلفظ ناب أثناء بث حي لحفل توزيع جوائز جولدن جلوب التلفزيونية.

أحياناً قد لا يقتصر تشويه الحقيقة على أحداث بعينها بل قد يأخذ صوراً أخرى من بينها قيام وسائل الصحافة و الإعلام بدولة ما تعد ديمقراطية بحملات هجومية، قد تكون مبررة أو غير مبررة، على دول أخرى لاتخاذها سياسة معارضة أو مخافة للدولة الأولى تجاهه قضية دولية أخرى.

وهنالك أمثلة عديدة جرت وتجري في العالم على مثل هذه الحالة من أمثلتها ما ذكرت صحيفة واشنطن بوست الأميركية خلال شهر أيار/ مايو من عام ٢٠٠٣ من أن فرنسا ستقدم رسمياً اليوم شكوى ضد حملة تضليلية بحقها في وسائل الإعلام الأميركية منذ تسعة أشهر من دون أن تسعى الحكومة الأميركية في البحث عن المحرضين عليها. و نقلت الصحيفة عن مسؤولين فرنسيين قولهم أن هذه الشكوى التي لا سابقة لها وردت في رسالة وقعها السفير الفرنسي جان ديفيد ليفيت وستنتقل الى الحكومة و البرلمان (الكونجرس) الأميركيين. وقال هؤلاء المسؤولون أن لا شك لديهم من أن مصادر هذا التضليل التي تهدف على حد قولهم الى التشهير بفرنسا بحجة إنها كانت متواطئة مع نظام صدام الخلوغ نابعة من الإدارة الأميركية نفسها.

وبحسب الفرنسيين فإن الأمر يتعلق بفريق الصقور في وزارة الدفاع الأميركية أو بالمقرين منها. وتدهورت العلاقات بين فرنسا و الولايات المتحدة الى أدنى حد بسبب معارضة باريس مع موسكو و برلين للحرب على العراق. وأوردت الرسالة المؤلفة من صفتين لائحة من المقالات المتهمة التي نشرتها الصحف الأميركية بدءاً بنبا أصدرته نيويورك تايمز في أيلول (سبتمبر) حول مبيعات أسلحة فرنسية للعراق.

كما إن سجلات التاريخ و أحداث الماضي القريب و الحاضر تعطي أمثلة كثيرة على كيفية قيام وسائل الصحافة و الإعلام في الدول القوية و المؤثرة على الساحة العالمية بقوة إنتشارها و تحكمها في مهاجمة المواقف و الآراء المتعلقة بالصراعات و القضايا الدولية التي تخالفها حتى ولو كانت مواقف وآراء عادلة تتفق مع الشرعية الدولية و حقوق الدول و الشعوب.

ومثال على ذلك فقد كشف الكاتب الأميركي مايكل كزليتز باير النقاب عن أن مؤسسات ومنظمات يهودية و صهيونية في الولايات المتحدة تمارس ضغوطاً و تهديدات و تشن حملات التشهير ضد كل ما يحاول كشف المخططات الإسرائيلية و الصهيونية أو الدفاع عن حقوق الشعب الفلسطيني ودعم القضايا العربية.

وأوضح الكاتب في دراسة أصدرها مركز زايد إنه تعرض هو نفسه لضغوط و تهديدات بسبب كتاباته عن دور المخابرات الإسرائيلية بالتعاون مع المؤسسات و الجمعيات الصهيونية داخل الولايات المتحدة.

وكشف باير عن ماهية هذه الضغوط و دور الإعلام الأميركي وكيفية تعامله مع القضية الفلسطينية والصراع العربي الإسرائيلي منذ بداية طرحه على الساحة الدولية و تدخل الولايات المتحدة بشكل مباشر في هذا الصراع وتأثير ونفوذ هذا الإعلام بكافة وسائله المرئية و المقروءة و المسموعة وغيرها على تشكيل و توجيه الرأي العام الأميركي تجاه كافة القضايا على الساحة الدولية.

وقال ٦٥ بالمائة بان الصحف يجب أن لا تتمكن من الصدور بحرية.

وعبرت أعداد متزايدة من الذين تم استطلاع رأيهم عن اعتقادها بأنه يجب أن لا يسمح للصحافة بانتقاد المرشحين السياسيين وان لا تستعمل كاميرات مخفية لجمع الأخبار وان لا تتمكن من نشر أسرار الحكومة.

ويتم اتهام الصحفيين بأنهم «قوة وحشية» بدون مسؤولية، ولكن مجموعة من ٢٠٠ محرر وكاتب ومنهج ومراسل صحافي يعملون في المملكة المتحدة امضوا العام الماضي في العمل تحت شعار: (إذا لم نكن نحن، فمن يكون. وإذا لم يكن الآن، فمتى). وقد اصدروا معا كتابا حول التغطية الإخبارية للعام ليكون دليلا «للتغطية الأخلاقية» في أوقات الصراع.

بالنسبة لمعظم الأمريكيين فان صدمة الحادي عشر من أيلول /سبتمبر، بما فيها مدى ردة الفعل العالمية، كانت عنيفة وغير مستوعبة بسبب أن وسائل الإعلام حظرت تغطية أحداث عالمنا المتداخل، لقد قللت الصحافة الأمريكية التغطيات العالمية التي تقوم بها بنسبة حوالي ٨٠ بالمائة خلال العقدين الأخيرين.

ان فشل الصحافة الأمريكية في التغطية الدولية، والاتجاه نفسه ينمو في بريطانيا، لم يؤد فقط الى جهل الشعب حول تأثير ثقافة وحكومة ما على العالم ولكن قد يكون فعليا فاقم الصراع.

وفي عصر المعلومات فان الصحفيين هم مراقبون غير منفصلين ولكنهم مشاركون فعليين في طريقة تفهم المجتمعات و الطوائف لبعضهم البعض وفي طريقة إشعال الأطراف للصراعات.

لقد أراح الصحفيون أنفسهم دائما بنظرية "إننا فقط نقل الحقائق" وسمي ذلك بالعقد الأخلاقي، ولكنه خيار بين الحقائق، تلك التي يتم كتابتها وتلك التي يتم حذفها، حيث يحل مبدأ أخلاقي آخر، مبدأ المسؤولية الأخلاقية.

وقد عمل اكثر من ٢٠٠ خبير إعلامي بتكاتف لمواجهة التحدي لوضع إطار لمساعدة أنفسهم وزملائهم لتغطية الصراعات بطريقة تكتشف وتتفحص التعقيدات، ومحتوى الصراعات وإمكانياتها. وكان من نتيجة عملهم الخروج بكتاب (تغطية الصراعات) بالإضافة إلى ذلك توصلوا إلى وضع قائمة لمساعدة المراسلين الصحفيين في الاندماج بالتفكير والعمل وفق المضامين الأخلاقية في عملهم.

وخرج المشاركون بعد نقاش بدليل عملي للتغطية الصحفية الأخلاقية للصراعات في القرن الحادي والعشرين من خلال وضع ما يحتاج المشاهدون والقراء ان يعرفوه من الأخبار العالمية وما يمكن أن يعلموه ليقوموا بتقديمه لهم.

ونعتقد في هذا المجال أن مثل هذه المبادرات من قبل الصحفيين أنفسهم التي انبثقت من واقع الأزمات التي تمر بها المهنة

الصحفية أو تعيشها والانحرافات التي يقوم بها البعض - صحفيون ومؤسسات - أثناء ممارسة المهنة هي مؤشر على تأكيد قدسية هذه المهنة والوعي بأهمية التقيد بأخلاقيات الصحافة التي أكدتها جميع دول ومؤسسات العالم ومنظماته والدعوة لضرورة تلافي الأخطاء التي يقع فيها بعض العاملين بالمهنة سواء عن قصد أو غير قصد خاصة في تغطية الأحداث الدولية المهمة والصراعات السياسية والعسكرية لتكون المصدقية وخدمة الناس واطلاعهم على الحقيقة وسماع الرأي الأخر والتنبيه الى عدم التغطية المتحيزة والمنطلقة من المواقف الشخصية أو المصلحية التي تمثل طرفا واحدا خاصة في الصراعات الدولية.

ولابد من القول انه مهما تنوعت أشكال الخروج عن المبادئ الأخلاقية الصحفية ومواثيق الشرف الصحافي وأسس وأهداف

المهنة الصحفية سواء من أشخاص بعينهم أو مؤسسات صحفية و إعلامية متنفذة توجهها رؤوس أموال لمصالح شخصية أو

اقتصادية أو سياسية فإننا نؤكد أن هذه المبادئ لابد وان تستمر في تشكيل الأهداف الثابتة و المقدسة للمهنة و العاملين فيها ليس

في القول ونقل الحقيقة للشعوب فقط بل وفي الدفاع عن الأهداف التي وضعت من اجلها ليكون العمل بهذه المبادئ السامية لمهنة الصحافة هو الأصل خاصة بالنسبة للأجيال الجديدة والقادمة من الصحفيين.

وقالت صحيفة وول ستريت جورنال احد المنافسين الرئيسيين لصحيفة نيويورك تايمز إن المشاكل في الصحيفة تفوق فضيحة بليز وتضرب بجذورها في تفضيلها المتزايد لصحافة الرأي بدلا من الصحافة المباشرة.

وقالت أن افضل الأنباء التي يمكن ان تنتج عن إضراب الحاصل في التايمز سيكون إعادة إحياء معايير الصحافة القديمة.

ولم تستطيع صحيفة نيويورك بوست التي هاجمت صحيفة نيويورك تايمز و اتهمتها بانها ليبرالية بشكل كبير ولا تتحلى بالوطنية مقاومة إغراء وضع إعلان ساخر لوظيفة شاغرة في نيويورك تايمز على صفحتها الأولى وجاء في إعلان إن الصحيفة تبحث عن شخص محب للثقافة الفرنسية لشغل منصب المحرر التنفيذي وقال الإعلان: «يفضل أن يكون المرشح للوظيفة محبا لمهاجمة الولايات المتحدة أما احترام الحقائق فهو اختياري للمرشح».

وعلى الرغم من المجادلات و النقاشات التي تتم حول أهمية وجود الدساتير الأخلاقية وضرورة تقيد الصحفيين بها طوعاً وعدم خرقها أو الخروج عليها فإننا نادراً ما نقرأ استطلاعات للرأي العام توضح رأي الفرد ، الذي هو الهدف النهائي للخدمات التي تقدمها الصحافة بالصحافي وبمهنته.

فالشعب الألماني مثلا لا يضع الصحفيين في مكانة عالية في المجتمع، ففي مسح أجراه معهد اليزباخ أظهر أن ١٣ بالمائة فقط من سكان ألمانيا (الغربية سابقاً) يضعون الصحفيين بين الناس الأكثر احتراماً بينما حصل الأطباء على نسبة ٧٧ والمهندسون على ٦٠ بالمائة.

وهذا الرأي تجاه الصحفيين يرتبط بعدة حقائق:

- الصحفيون غالباً ما ينتقدون ولهذا يبدون انهم يرهقون الدولة والشعب.
 - وسائل العمل والسلوك لدى القلة من الصحفيين تبدو وكأنها صفقات عامة للصحفيين.
 - الفوائد التي يدرها عملهم عليهم بالنسبة لكل شخص في دولة ديمقراطية.
 - لا يوجد امتحان نهائي للصحافي بعد فترة التدريب العملية.
- وخلال الستينات والثمانينات أجاب مشاهدون وقراء ومستمعون بنسبة اكثر من اليوم على سؤال فيما إذا كان التلفزيون أو الإذاعة أو الصحف تقدم تقارير كما حدثت حقيقة، وهناك أسباب عديدة لانخفاض المصدقية لكن الناس مع دور فعال لوسائل الإعلام والصحافة يجب أن يسألوا أنفسهم حول مساهمتهم الشخصية لهذا التطور، أن الدستور والقوانين تعطيهم الحق أن يكشفوا الانتهاكات و الأخطاء والسقطات للصحافة، ويتهم الصحفيون بحق بقلة المصدقية إذ وخلال حكمهم على تصرف وسلوك الآخرين يطبقون مقياساً لا يعتبرونه مقياساً ينطبق على أنفسهم.
- ومن المقلق إن ثلث الصحفيين في ألمانيا تحت سن الخامسة و الثلاثين يعتبرون إنه من المبرر الحصول على وثائق سرية عن طريق دفع المال للمصدر لهذا فإنه بالنسبة لكثير منهم فإنهم لا يجدون خطأ في استعمال طريقة (صحافة دفتر الشيكات).
- وفي الولايات المتحدة أظهرت الأبحاث الأخيرة أن الصحافة تقيم دورها كـ(كلب حراسة) أكثر مما يقيمها الجمهور. ويؤمن ١٠ بالمائة فقط من وسائل الإعلام بأن نقد الصحافة للقادة السياسيين يمنع هؤلاء القادة من القيام بعملهم، ولكن ٣١ بالمائة من الشعب يعتقد بأنه يتعارض مع قيام القادة بواجباتهم.

ونشرت مؤخراً معلومات مقلقة فقد أشارت وثيقة حول استطلاع وطني استياء كبيراً تجاه الصحافة الأميركية وممارستها، واستعمل الجمهور كلمات مثل: متغطرة، عديمة الإحساس، متحيزة، غير دقيقة وعاطفية في وصف وسائل الإعلام.

أجرى (منتدى الحريات)، وهو مؤسسة دولية غير متحيزة مسحا أشار الى أن ٥٣ بالمائة من المشاركين فيه قالوا بأنهم يعتقدون بأن الصحافة تمتلك حرية أكثر من اللازم، وهذا يشكل زيادة بنسبة ١٥ بالمائة نقطة عن مسح مشابه اجري عام ١٩٩٧. وقال ٤٥ بالمائة في عام ١٩٨٥. وقال ٣٩ بالمائة بأن وسائل الإعلام تضر بالديمقراطية فعليا.

Session V

— *I'd like to raise an issue about a story I worked on: the sale of Jordanian land to Israel. It was a very sensitive issue and I had very good sources. But touching on it was dangerous. However, my editor told me to go ahead and write it. The next thing I knew, I was being visited by Jordanian intelligence officers. He saved his skin. I asked if we could publish and he said we could. He should have told me not to write it.*

In another incident, the editor was a bit better with me. When I wrote about carcinogenic substances being mixed into the bread we consumed in the country, it was an important, non-political subject. That editor ran the story. The next day he got a call that I should be hauled to jail. The editor defended me but stopped the follow-up story the following day. That's why I left traditional media and escaped to the Internet because in Jordan there's still no law to prevent me writing what I want on the Internet.

— *Regarding editors-in-chief, we have editors in Egypt who've been there for over two decades. I think it's the same thing in other Arab countries. The prevalent mentality is the same in national papers. I also have a question to Dr. Sakr about reality television. It's a new trend in the Arab World. It's being aired increasingly on the Arab channels and there's been a controversy regarding reality TV. We've got our own cultural limits. So what do you think about that and does it relate to the code of ethics? In the Arab World, self-censorship was part and parcel of the journalist's work. Does it still apply and has it taken a new form?*

Sakr: On reality TV, I think it's useful to go a lot deeper into what are the pressures that determine that those formats are introduced into the region? It counts as local production to a degree, but what actually is being acquired is a foreign format, a Western format that aspires to be a global brand. The decisions to acquire those formats are taken for a number of reasons, partly because in some of the channels some of the decisions are taken by expats. When "Who Wants to be a Millionaire" format was acquired, by a channel which I won't name, the decision was taken by a British managing director at the time who had links with the company that produced it. So that pattern of program acquisition has been set in train during a period when there have been expats, Westerners working within the channels as advisers of financial accountants and giving advice that such programs would improve ratings and bring in money.

Why do they acquire foreign formats? Because there is a lack of local production. You've got hours to fill. If you haven't got challenging local production, and the compelling viewing that will get you the rating, this is an alternative. It's ethical in the sense that it's to do with getting rid of censorship so that you can make programs which are relevant and credible and challenging, and, therefore, interesting.

On the question of self-censorship, I think it's very much still with us. Instant decision making is still very tentative and it's practiced on a relatively small scale. The pressure to err on the side of caution is still very much there.

— *A former Lebanese beauty queen sued a Gulf editor and the editor of an Internet site for publishing news that she'd had sexual relations with a Gulf businessman who died of a heart attack. She's said to have cashed \$170,000 for the night. She got \$100,000 and her business manager got \$70,000, the story goes. The newspaper editor got six months in jail and the Internet site editor got three months. Ten days after the verdict, the newspaper editor was pardoned by one of the rulers. Was what the editors published ethical? And should we repeal jail terms for journalists in such cases?*

Workshop Part I

Monitoring and Evaluating Media Practices



— A journalist was invited to travel from Dubai to Shanghai and then asked to write about it as a news item covering the maiden voyage. Is there conflict of interest?

— The question of newsworthiness is fascinating. If you ask that question of yourself, “is the story of the flight from Dubai to Shanghai so valuable as a news story that it would be worth the air ticket if you were to pay that? The answer might be different according to the place where you were going to publish it. There’s a difference between a travel supplement inside a newspaper once a week, which is known to be a vehicle for advertising. The standard of newsworthiness might be different from the one you’d apply in the main part of the daily newspaper. Had you been required to pay for that, would the news be still fantastically valuable?

— It was newsworthy because it was the first Arab airline to fly a direct, non-stop flight from Dubai to Shanghai.

— In my experience as a journalist since 1986, I worked in four papers, with various news agencies. I believe we should have codes of ethics within news organizations. Editors should have guidelines on how to deal with their reporters. There are sensitivities that must be considered.

— The airline story has many angles. Unfortunately, in the Arab world, there’s a lot of linking of news with advertising campaigns. That puts pressures on journalists and it comes from the newspaper’s administration. If the administration has certain criteria, it would bar the undue influence of advertising on the news. I’m facing this in Jordan with the telecommunications company. Nothing negative is ever written about the company because the newspapers cash in millions in advertising revenue, despite the fact that there’s much to be said and written about. The fault lies with the papers’ management that ties the news with the ad. If we had ethics in the newspaper’s administrations, in Jordan or the rest of the Arab world, it would draw a line between the two areas.

— I’m one of the first people to call for these guidelines for good journalistic practice. But can we do it realistically without jeopardizing the source of income? You’re calling for a boycott of some sort. Some people really can’t afford that because it would mean they’d close shop, they’d stop functioning as a news organization. For them, that would be like committing suicide. Unfortunately, conflict of interest is not even an issue in the Arab world. It’s tragic. It’s not viewed as an issue. So it’s something that has to become part of the education. You have to educate journalists and editors and publishers that you can’t possibly accept gifts and write fairly about someone if you’re taking money from them, or gifts, or free trips. With the older generation it’s probably too late anyway. So you have to work from the beginning. Drum it into people’s heads so that, hopefully, the up-and-coming generations will understand that you don’t do these things.

— It’s good you raised the problem of conflict of interest and money. In Lebanon you don’t have large-scale censorship but the biggest problem is that of proximity. All the ministers are someone’s cousin, or someone’s best friend, or someone’s neighbor. I’ve had problems where the editor wouldn’t want me to corner, or be too insistent, with so-and-so minister because he’s his friend. As for reporters, having good contacts is a good thing for reporters. But where’s the line drawn? Many of the most prominent reporters, who I see every day when I’m covering news, are too friendly with those officials. But then again, they get the stories while others don’t. What about invitations? Are those acceptable? Are they not?

Tarabay: You’re linking access to good information with good relations to your sources.

— If it’s any consolation, I was in Washington for 15 years. I covered all the major beats — White House, State Department, Capitol Hill, Pentagon — a lot of those “wonderful” reporters are very chummy with the administration and that’s the only way they’re getting their stories. A person we all used to look up to when I was going to journalism school (and investigative journalism was *the* big thing with the story of Watergate that toppled President Nixon), is today *the* big star who writes books because he’s so chummy with the administration. People are horrified at some of the stuff that’s been coming out.

Skene: Washington is very much that way. Maybe the better analogy is state capitals, which are also relatively small. I'm in Tallahassee, the capital of Florida. It has perhaps 40 reporters from different newspapers around Florida and the usual secretaries of departments. I think the answer to that is disagreeing without being disagreeable. If people feel they've had a fair chance to tell their story and you've reflected their view fairly, you've not brutalized them, you'll get a response. Ask them questions to get them to open up. Let them know you're genuinely interested, not just in a comment, but that you'd like to get them to elaborate. I think that helps a great deal. At least, if you get the complaint the next day, your editor sees his friend at the social club, or the restaurant, you at least have the response that the person has to admit his views were reflected fairly. He may not like the way the story was written, but your objectivity, fairness and balance are improved by that. Your relationship with him over time, when the story is good, when they've got something to say, they realize you're there ready to listen.

— Some of these people you're supposed to hold accountable, in Lebanon you get to see them frequently at social venues. You get to mingle with them a lot because the country is very small. If you're seen with them on a regular basis, does that affect your credibility or your assessment of them in the eyes of the public? Are you not supposed to be seen with these people?

Skene: Ultimately, you may need to make a choice with some people about whether the relationship is friendship or whether the relationship is a professional one. The way I've done that — Tallahassee is a small town — is to treat some of them as friendly relationships but at some level both of us understand that they're policymakers and I'm a reporter. I've said on occasion, "I'd like to come in Monday and talk to you about that for a story. Let's not do it here at dinner." So you set yourself a different venue and a different framework. It's the same thing you do in a non-personal relationship where a source wants to talk to you and tell you a story off the record, but "I want to come back at the end and let's agree on things that I'm going to quote you on and I want to ask you some questions for the record." That's one way of handling it. If somebody just started opening up to me and I'm starting to click on "this is a story," at some point I'm going to give them the Miranda warning: "You have the right to remain silent..." At some point you might say, because the friendship does matter at some level, "we ought to stop and not talk about this here and come back and talk about this in a professional setting."

— Is freedom of expression only for those who can afford it? The question of freebies, of failure to resolve conflicts of interest is a question that especially comes up in countries that aren't so rich. If you look at the freedom of expression index (Reporters Sans Frontieres' ranking) you see that the top countries are all rich in the North Atlantic region. They're North American or West European. The lowest one of all of those is Italy at rank 50. But that's still in the first quarter of the world's countries. This is the disturbing possibility, that press freedom is for those who are rich, who can afford it. On the other hand, because of this discussion, it should be said that press freedom and freedom of expression are ideals. They don't exist anywhere. In the West, journalists are parts of the elites. They're celebrities themselves. They have interests that coincide with those of the other elites.

— I'd like to take this discussion a step further. Although we don't have it here, we seem to be going the way of more broadsheet newspapers which is newspapers and TV stations paying for stories. How do we feel about that? Is it ethical for a newspaper to pay for an exclusive? Is it ethical for a TV to pay access money for an interview or for something like that? Maybe we're still not at the level that we do pay these big sums of money, but maybe in the future we will. It's a practice I've come across a lot in my work with Northern European countries, and we're talking big money here.

— I lost £ 25,000. I have a brother, who for about three days was the most famous terrorist on the face of the earth. If you remember the Oklahoma bombing — my brother was accused for three days of that. Being a Palestinian known for his activism in London, somehow the police leaked the story to The Sun, of all newspapers. But the Sun journalist didn't come and present himself as a Sun reporter. He said "News International," which publishes The Times and The Sunday Times. I went to my lawyer and said they were harassing me. They stayed in front of my house for 6–7 hours. The lawyer started negotiating with their lawyer. They were offering me money for my side of the story. Imagine how a Palestinian would explain a situation for the Oklahoma bomber, had he been an Arab. This is part of what I referred to yesterday when I said about economics being the equivalent of states in this part of the world. The Arabs use political blackmail and in the free world it's business that's doing the blackmailing. It's not only access money. There are a lot of ways you can be harassed. It sounds funny when somebody that was on the payroll of a business partner comes to us in the Third World and teaches us about ethics. They only see the unethical things that we do. Unfortunately, it's being institutionalized in the West. Italy was mentioned. It's worth studying.

Skene: It does seem to me that the level of general social, political and business corruption probably has a correlation to the amount of that kind of activity and unethical behavior in the press as well. It becomes part of a whole ecosystem of money-driven transactions.

— When you speak about ethics, I do not like the idea of saying “why are you coming to us to teach ethics when you guys over there (don’t practice it)?” Freedom of expression as a whole is a universal value. Ethics of journalism should also be universal values. When I come here to speak about what ethics should be or should not be, I’m not even thinking I’m in Beirut. You might say this is not sensitive to the cultural or political or economic realities of where you are. But I think the concepts are universal. The way you adapt them to the local area is, of course, a practical issue but it’s not a conceptual issue.

Freedom of expression has two areas: one is the regulatory aspect, the legislative aspect; but it also has the journalistic side, the ethical side. Or, as we like to call it, professional conduct. In terms of the ethics, there’s also a division. We talk about the ethics of journalists. A journalist should do, or not do, certain things, should not take gifts, should not take bribes, should try to tell the truth, all the classical ethical things. But many of you are saying: “What happens when he/she tries to publish a story and the editor, either because of conflict of interest, or, for economic considerations, doesn’t?” That creates a new concept, which we’re trying to examine now, which is ethics at the journalistic or media corporate area. In other words, there’s an increasing need for ethical behavior by these leaders — the editors, the publishers, the corporate leaders of media. Very often we’re seeing increasing internal censorship — journalists trying to do an ethical job but being blocked at the top for a variety of reasons. These codes of corporate journalistic standards or ethics is a very important issue and it needs to be looked at. The most important thing is that they have to be strictly voluntary and created and monitored only by journalists’ associations or publishers’ associations, and internal to the profession only. There has to be a clear distinction between the reporting and the management ethics.

— I’d like to comment on Nayla’s issue. There is a problem of not having a culture that enshrines the media’s rights vis-à-vis the public, politicians or any people covered by reporters. This should prompt us to produce a guide, not just about journalistic ethics, but to educate people on how to deal with the media. A former Lebanese president once slapped a journalist over a dispute. So we have to educate them on how to interact with the media and how journalists should be respected.

— I wanted to respond to Anthony’s point that you only get freedom of expression if you’re rich and you can afford it. If you look at it the other way round, national economies thrive on lack of corruption. How do you get to lack of corruption? Through the rule of law. How do you get to the rule of law? Through freedom of expression. So you could turn it the other way round and say that you only get rich if you have freedom of expression.

— Unfortunately, the comments so far suggest that professional ethics can’t be absolute because of the differences in standards and circumstances. There’s also an indication in a general drop in ethical standards and implementation. There also isn’t enough training of journalists, particularly in Third World countries. It’s doubtless a big challenge facing journalists. Business journalism has special requirements. Political journalism has its own challenges. Which brings up the whole matter of financing the media in Third World countries. I think the outlook towards the media affects their ethics. It’s true that there’s a personal dimension to journalists’ ties with their sources but being friends doesn’t mean being sold out to sources. The question then arises: who holds whom accountable? There’s also the question of how does one implement ethics?

— I have an example of two journalists in an Arab country. One of them goes to nightclubs with senior government officials and obtains news that way and the other steals the news from the courthouse he’s covering from the secretary who is unaware of the theft. Both are obtaining exclusive news that way. What’s ethical? Some countries have a policy barring foreign workers from changing jobs, and therefore, changing employment sponsors, particularly in the Gulf. We suffer from this in the United Arab Emirates. Not only are we restricted, we’re also unable to write negatively about shareholders or advertisers in the media companies. If we do, we may be deported. So if the journalists just follows management’s orders, does that mean they are being bribed?

Tarabay: Let’s narrow down the discussion. One person said friendly relations with sources meant being beholden to them, another said that wasn’t the case.

— I’m not saying journalists shouldn’t talk to politicians, but because Lebanon is a small country, we see journal-

ists who become associated with politicians, who seem wedded to them. Does that mean they've sold out? The journalists needs the sources, so where's the limit?

— You should steal the information, as long as it's in the public interest.

— It seems what we're discussing here is a mixed bag of everything. We all know there's the newspaper's agenda or policy, as with other media. There are also editors who act as filters. The editors go along with the medium's direction or policies. So whom do you follow as far as financing? You can't tell me that Lebanese media aren't beholden to financial interests. In Arab countries, they get their marching orders from the Ministry of Information. So it's true, as someone said, we steal news or make it up. Let me explain.

I remember a colleague here was with us at Al Liwa'a newspaper in Sidon. We had a colleague who was a stringer for United Press International. Whenever the bureau chief in Beirut would call and ask if something was going on (during the Lebanese civil war), he'd say, "let's make something up. Who will know the difference whether there were five or more killed in a gun battle, or if there was an explosion somewhere. Let's shake things up." This is media creativity.

Tarabay: Let's not mix up whether you work for Lebanese or Gulf media. You already have an idea what their policies are. You chose to work there, you weren't forced into it.

— That's true, but many of the companies are breaching their contracts with the expatriate journalists in the Gulf. What would you classify that?

Tarabay: That's one thing. You also said you were trained for a couple of weeks on how to refer to members of the royal family in the news content, but that's also part and parcel of the organization's modus operandi.

— On the matter of journalists and their relationships with officials, I remember Ted Koppel once flew with President Clinton to Moscow and in a live interview from there embarrassed the president with questions about Monica Lewinsky, so he didn't abide by the relationship and the fact of going on his plane.

— But the difference between American and Arab journalists is that reporters flying on Air Force One have to pay their own way. They don't ride for free.

— Back to the issue of stealing, you should steal the information but you should be absolved of a crime or a felony if you steal it. Here's an example from Britain. In 1994, The Guardian newspaper knew that the Conservative secretary of defense was on a short holiday to Paris. He'd gone to stay at the Ritz Hotel with a woman who was not his wife. In order to break the story, not just in a sensationalist way, they (newspaper) sent a fax to the Ritz Hotel with the British parliament's logo on it and asked for a copy of the bill that he'd paid. Of course the Ritz obliged and sent the fax back with the bill and, in fact, it was taxpayers' money they had used for this holiday. When the Guardian reporters did this, they broke the law in Britain. You're not allowed to pretend you're a member of parliament. But the government left it with a questioning of the editor-in-chief. They asked him to come to parliament for questioning and that was it. He's broken the law but wasn't punished because this was in the public interest. And that is a sign of a functioning democracy, that journalists are able to break the law in the public interest in order to spread the information. In this region I can imagine there are a lot of countries that are on this threshold.

Skene: There's no substitute for responsible ownership of a news organization. All of us are lamenting the absence of responsible ownership, whether it's Rupert Murdoch or local owners who are much more interested in their profits and financial resources than they are in covering the news. A lot of these issues arise because people are afraid of something — losing the job, profits, advertiser. One of the ways to deal with this in an organization that would like to do well, do good, is to create an environment in which the editor, the reporter can discuss it. If the editor is afraid of losing his job because the publisher will be angry that his reporter has written a story, you over-compensate. If you have a rule, people exceed the rule, they're more conservative than the rule is, because they're afraid of getting too close to the line. People need to talk about these things.

The editor of The Guardian newspaper, maybe he thought he could avoid going to jail, but he had to be prepared to go. He had to overcome the fear that he could be imprisoned for that action and make a choice that it's worth it. At some point you may have to decide, "I'm not afraid of losing this friendship." The newspaper I worked for for a long

time actually threw an advertiser out of the newspaper, refused to take his ads, because people were complaining that they would want you to put an ad in the newspaper, buy a refrigerator for \$100, and they would walk through the store and there would be no \$100 refrigerators “but let me show you the \$200 refrigerator.” After one warning, they stopped taking the ads. It’s more important for us to maintain our integrity with our readers than it is for us to have your million dollars.

Once you decide you’re not afraid of the fear, a lot of opportunities open up. But when people feel like if they stick their heads out of the foxhole they just get shot at, they quit sticking their heads out of the foxhole. Owners who allow that to occur are the starting point for creating this whole environment, whether it’s having to rely on freebies because you won’t pay your reporters enough for their stories, they take gifts and are on somebody else’s payroll, whether it’s not having the money to protect your integrity when you go chasing a story and when you’re not prepared to be open and honest about your dealings or asking questions.

— A lot of those observations about integrity and credibility work in a situation where the readership or the audience of a specific media outlet is measured in an accurate, sustained and plausible fashion. If you have media outlets that don’t measure the fluctuations in readership, then credibility is a difficult concept to maintain. I come back to the story of the Jordanian telecoms companies because those companies want their brand associated with a good newspaper brand and a good newspaper brand is one that has got credibility, which means it’s got a solid readership and it would know that that readership will lose faith in the newspaper unless that newspaper tells all the news about the telecoms companies, bad as well as good. The credibility then serves the advertiser and the advertiser will recognize that even some bad news is actually good news because it’s a credible newspaper and they’re associated with it. But it only works in a truly commercial operation where people are really measuring the actual readership and the volume of the readership actually matters, which is not the case in a large proportion of Middle East media.

Skene: If you’re not acting ethically, if your readers don’t trust you, why should they exert themselves to stand up for you to write to the minister who’s trying to come down on you for some behavior of yours? You’re right that there’s this spiral of effects, and one of them is that one newspaper is so consistently trustworthy that people come to trust it and act on their behavior and become empowered by the fact that somebody is willing to stand firm. There’s a press critic in the United States who had a statement that freedom of the press is guaranteed to everybody who owns one. Newspapers who are responsible yield some of their ownership of the press to people who write letters to the editor, encourage them, and in selling advertising.

One thing that matters is independence in government itself. The other thing that is important in the development of a democracy is not only an independent press, but an independent judiciary. When there are political pressures on judges who are otherwise trying to do justice, the news organizations need to stand up for those as well because they’re going to protect against majoritarian impulses or the dictatorial impulses of a government.

— It’s basically a problem of public interest. As a media researcher, I live in an environment where I cannot know what percentage of people watch this TV station or that program and which is the most watched reality TV show. These are things that are not documented. So in that kind of environment, I’m wondering how important the public is in financing a certain newspaper or a certain TV station, knowing that we don’t know the relationship between the two and because sometimes the funding is not reliant on more credibility, more people watching, more advertising than other sources of money.

The more important issue is the concept of public interest. I look through the literature, laws. I don’t understand if there’s a concept of public interest in the Middle East. I don’t see laws written to cater to the public interest. They’re there to protect people in power. Libel laws protect more public officials than they protect normal people. If you’re a public servant you’re more accountable, your work has to be more transparent because that’s how democracy functions. What’s also missing in discussion of the media in the Arab world, there does not exist the tradition of serving the public through public media, through public institutions. We’re going from authoritarian media straight into private media. So the discussion on the changes does not even have the ability to compare with the tradition of serving the public.

— Morocco has taken a revolutionary step to bring in public broadcasting, based on the European model. That’s to their credit. Perhaps other Arab countries can adopt that. Once you get into the idea of public service, public broadcasting is a good venue for that and it’s something that really ought to be looked into.

— We talk of media ethics but know full well that many of our media are ruled by political funding. In the last (Lebanese) municipal elections I was a correspondent in southern Lebanon. There were two experiences that taught me that I couldn't work without building defenses against all these interferences. When I worked for An-Nahar I covered the shelling in the Sheba'a Farms region. There were stringers or reporters who only got paid L.L. 300,000 (under \$200) and who reported the news inaccurately. They made up the news just to make money. So the media should prepare their journalists, first, by hiring the right elements, and not recruiting amateurs. And, shouldn't we guard against temptations by raising journalists' salaries? When I covered the elections, I was subjected to pressures from town mayors and political notables who handed us envelopes full of cash to write favorably about them. How can we protect ourselves from such interference?

— If it's against a media organization's rules to freelance, and you get a scoop and your editor-in-chief prevents you from writing the story, is it ethical to sell the story or give it to the wires?

Skene: Why not, for the record. It's your product. It may affect your long-term relationship with that outlet. Somebody is going to be interested in that story. There's nothing like the fear of being beaten by the other guys to make an editor more interested in your story.

— Dima touched on a very interesting point that should have been central to this discussion, which is the reality of the Middle East. When we talk about ethics in the West, you need to isolate ethics on their own. But there's a lot that's taken for granted which we do not talk about, as if we can just borrow the ethics and translate whatever news organizations have in the West. Neil, for example, talked about an independent judiciary. This is part of a culture. Subconsciously, a journalist will always know if he goes to court, he's almost sure of a fair trial, whereas in none of the Arab countries can you be sure of it, especially if the issue has something to do with politics. The judiciary is part of this culture that is taken for granted. The whole concept about public interest is very much related to the concept of participation. If you don't have public participation, if you're a non-citizen, how can you have an interest in something that doesn't concern you? The reason an Englishman or an American has a public interest is that he knows in four years he's going to kick an idiot out and hopefully get another idiot in. Whereas in the Arab world we seem to be stuck with them the rest of our lives. There is always a dilemma, what precedes what. With culture and law it's the same. Is it the culture that reflects itself in a set of laws or is it the laws that will create a culture?

Naomi refers to the non-existence of measurements of circulation. In Jordan, a successful newspaper is not necessarily the newspaper that sells most. They have a system that is widespread in most Arab countries: all government organizations have to subscribe. I know a leading Arab newspaper in London, which wasn't friendly to one Arab regime, and one day the editor-in-chief received a phone call from an Arab information minister saying: "We're seriously considering 2,000 subscriptions to your newspaper." There are no measures as such. But good circulation or bad circulation is how much the government is going to allow. Is it going to be a must on every ministry, or limited to this ministry or that ministry? I know one newspaper that practically doesn't sell a single copy but is considered among the top five because the editor was very friendly with a lot of prime ministers. You go there and find The Times, and Mr. Nobody at all the offices. If it's money you're after and a good name, anybody who's anybody in Jordan will read you. But I can assure you that you can go to all the bookshops and all the stalls and not find that newspaper. There is a tradition, there's a culture, there's an environment that goes much wider than a code of ethics or a code of conduct. That should be kept in mind when we talk about it.

— In the United States of America, it's not acceptable for a journalist to let his or her opinion show in his or her stories when covering presidential elections. But why is it that some large media organizations support one presidential candidate over another.

Skene: That's the norm in daily newspapers. The daily newspapers generally separate the reporters who are writing the news stories and are trying to be neutral, not express whatever their political interests might be in the story. Separate that from the editorial pages, where a different group of people might be writing editorials saying "we support George Bush," or whoever the candidate for senator is. The interesting thing which is a bit of a qualifier to the assumption to your question is that, increasingly, reporters are also going on television spouting off, engaging in random acts of punditry that express various types of assessments of what's going on that are not "I'm for George Bush or I'm for the other guy," but, rather, are off-the-cuff predictions, assessments about the political impact of this or that, questions that may be favorable or unfavorable, and so on.

Then you've got a whole set of newspapers and magazines in which people are writing much more subjectively and analytically — basically assessing the record of people in a more judgmental way. The newspapers that I work with now, that are weekly papers, have been very opposed to racial profiling, Muslim profiles, the whole PATRIOT Act, sequestration of people without notice. The day of the 9/11 attacks I wrote a piece for one of those papers saying this is going to launch a wave of suppression of civil liberties in the United States if we're not careful and that piece ran in the paper. It was ahead of where everybody else was. What you see on TV is a lot of the same-ness but papers are different.

— Back to the issue of culture and law and what comes first. I firmly believe that, besides major issues adopted by societies that become givens, laws are specific. They emanate from legislative people or sources, like the Koran, then become prevalent and are adopted and become part of the culture. We've had the matter of repealing sectarianism in Lebanon. Do we ban it from ourselves before we check it off our laws? In our case here, we can benefit from others' experience if we find it beneficial, taking our realities into account.

— To return to Lebanon, there's simply no money in the newspaper business. There are very few readers. The largest paper around prints 20,000 copies. The advertising market is bad. Even the most respected paper, An-Nahar is losing money. As a result of that, all newspapers have a hidden sponsor, or phantom. All the journalists are on someone's payroll. For journalists, there simply are no opportunities. There is no way to move forward or fulfill whatever goal we're there to fulfill. So, as a result, all the journalists want to leave. At the beginning of one's career one can be very enthusiastic but then you want luxury, to pursue a story properly, to have proper means. We don't have that. There's always the material aspect of things that prevails and hinders whatever ambitions journalists have.

Skene: One answer is that all you're afraid of is poverty.

— Not just poverty. Even the means to write a story. Even spending time on a story is a luxury.

Skene: We were talking over lunch of the concept of the lonely pamphleteer — the sole person sitting in their garage just wanting to write the truth as best as they can discover it or know it. Occasionally they get contributions, occasionally friends, family and everybody else helps. Those are the cases that have advanced journalism. That's not a cultural or institutional answer to this problem, which is a very real one. But again it may be one of those places where somebody is stepping outside the culture.

— I'd like to take this a step further and follow up on what we were saying during the break. Something I've been proposing for quite some time, that ought to be looked at very seriously and is not being considered adequately by our young graduates and young reporters, and that is the Internet, and blogs.

One of the things that's not given adequate attention is online journalism. I keep telling young reporters and repeatedly tell my former students not to expect to graduate and land the greatest job in the world and get a byline every day and to make a lot of money. It's not a job where you're going to make money, unless you're taking bribes all the time. Likewise, you're not going to make it on the evening news, you're not going to be the star of the TV show just because you have a degree in journalism. It doesn't work that way. You have to work very hard. We've all paid our dues. Some people expect they'll get it on a silver platter. And because Lebanon has been suffering from severe recession for the last several years, and because the market is very small, as would be a small town anywhere in the U.S. But, unlike a small town, here you have too many publications. There's a glut of them — very few of them substantive. The advertising market is very limited and there's a monopoly on the advertising market. It's sort of like a tug of war. And you don't want to alienate your advertisers because you'd be cutting off your nose to spite your face.

If you want to get known, you can do it, not just in the little market of Lebanon but worldwide through the Internet. How do you do that? If not your own site, then through something called your own blog, which is weblog, which is like your own little diary on the Internet. It really doesn't cost that much. You can start by writing stories, linking to sites, have a nice little design. Some existing websites provide you with a format, where, all you have to do is enter the information. They already have the design. There are at least two or three major ones, some are free. And there are ways of getting around some of these restrictions. And there are restrictions in Arab countries. In the Gulf there is censorship of certain websites. You cannot access them. There are ways of getting around that and this is where young reporters ought to explore these avenues and channel their energy so that they will not be frustrated

by the small market. And perhaps this will lead to something else and bigger and better for them eventually, instead of sitting and vegetating or being in a rut.

The former president who slapped a reporter who was offended by him because of some copy the gentleman in question had written, it's ironic that it almost coincided with the Monica Lewinsky stories at the time. Everyone was saying: "Imagine if Clinton had gone and whacked some reporter, what a stir that would have caused."

— The story that was published by the editors of the New York Times a week ago apologizing for the way they covered "Operation Iraqi Freedom" and not having shown some distance from the government. I'm very curious about this story. For me, it could appear like the newspaper trying to regain its credibility and have the audience come back and reestablish itself as a watchdog. On the other hand, could it be truly out of professionalism, professional ethics that there be questioning? I want to know exactly what's the background and the reaction of the public. How does the public react to self-corrective measures? I know it happened before with journalists inventing stories during the war in Iraq, like interviewing people they never saw and saying things that never happened. We saw several of those stories come out in USA Today and the New York Times. What's happening to these people? Is that just a measure of self-correction within the institution or are there legal measures to punish people who lie?

Skene: None of this had any legal requirement to it. They weren't responding to any legal threat or any other kind of threat, either when they published the Jason Blair story a year ago or in the apology three weeks ago. It was all generated by the newspaper itself. We had a discussion earlier about the rush to print. When do you stop to check? The hijacked plane, the Oklahoma bombing. It really was pretty dramatic. The first reaction that you kept seeing and hearing on TV that day was it must have been terrorism. They kept picking at which group it might have been, and so on. It never seemed to dawn on somebody that there would be somebody there in Oklahoma doing this. There are cases where we get it wrong. All of us get it wrong in some fashion, at some point. What's interesting from one perspective is that two entities got it wrong on the weapons of mass destruction story: one was the entire intelligence community of the U.S. government, not to mention Tony Blair's and everybody else's, and the other was the newspapers, which were doing their own investigation in reporting but were also relying on the same sources like (Ahmad) Chalabi to make some of these assessments. What was happening was that there was insufficient skepticism of what they were hearing. Journalists weren't being smart about it, they weren't thinking deeply enough. In the environment of the time, which basically was still the flag waving on television, there wasn't a huge pressure to lean into the wind, to push back against the prevailing forces and opinions that were coming at you. What the Times was apologizing for, I think was a genuine effort to try to set the record straight. Knowing (New York Times editor) Bill Keller a little bit, I think that's a genuine commitment on his part to neutrality.

— On the New York Times, it's ironic that someone like Judy Miller, who's considered the star and someone who's covered wars before, with all this access, would have played along with someone like Ahmad Chalabi and discredited the paper of record. What disturbs me is that the talking heads, the experts they always get to pontificate on issues such as the Middle East are always the same group of suspects, including Judy Miller. It's always the think tankers, not just the neocons. To readers and viewers in this part of the world, it's also people who have no credibility as Arabs such as Fouad Ajami, who's considered an Arab Uncle Tom. He has a very bad reputation in this part of the world, and especially in this country, as a Lebanese and as a Shia. But to people in Washington, he's such an articulate guy, he knows the inside story, he is the Middle East expert. There's also Shibli Talhami. But there are other people out there, not just Hanan Ashrawi, who can speak very articulately but they're not being given a fair chance and it's unfortunate that Americans keep getting rehash of rehash and there's some sort of filtering system that we have to be able to penetrate. They're not giving you the entire picture. It affects American foreign policy and, ultimately, it'll reflect badly on the United States and the U.S. is going to suffer who knows what else because of this fortress mentality against news coming from sources other than these people who seem to have a lock on the main talk shows and newspapers and editorial boards, etc.

Skene: There are a couple of principles of general application. One is that they are trying to set a standard for their own behavior. Newspapers need to be in the position of sometimes calling for the resignation of ministers and policymakers, or for their apology, or something else. If we're unwilling to apologize when we make mistakes as journalists, leaving aside whether the correction is sufficient, we have to apologize for our errors if we want to call on people to meet those same standards when they're policymakers. The second point is that we need to be very careful about the things we believe so firmly that we refuse to entertain contrary points of view. We all need as journalists to do what all those news organizations have not done in this case, which is to be more open to those contrary views which are not the prevailing conventional wisdom.

— I'd like to return to the Lebanese reality. News organizations are really suffering here. But the problem is that these organizations have become unable to modernize themselves. The decision makers have reached retirement age and won't let go. We need new blood so that fresh graduates are given a chance. Instead of top journalists cashing in \$10,000 per month, they should distribute it among 10 journalists.

— The young journalists won't feel depressed because of conditions. I've been in the field for only two years. We found out that nothing was being applied from everything we learned about media ethics. It's not an attractive topic. As for Lebanese media, it's not just the financing. They also suffer from the owners. Most of them are politicians or supporters or key figures or in the government. And if they're not top politicians, the employees are partisans. So if they see wrongdoing, they won't write about it. Furthermore, if there's a scoop or a scandal, it's not published because the political environment doesn't lend itself to that. No paper will adopt an issue unless it fits in with its own policies. There's another matter. Politicians use the pressures of money or power. Finally, you spoke about courage. In Lebanon courage means staying at home and being unemployed.

— Ethical guidelines should be reinforced by peers. They should also be respected and adopted by media organizations. A journalist who can be bribed into killing a story is definitely unethical. But what about media organizations, a local radio station, a newspaper that opts to increase its revenue by not hiring extra journalists to cover stories that deal with local communities' problems.

— Everybody keeps talking about Fouad Ajami and you're not paying much attention to the new rising Fouad Ajamis. Mouaffac Harb now introduces himself as a neocon in Washington. The Lebanese journalists seem to be very anxious about their situation. I would strongly recommend that you visit some neighboring countries and some other Arab countries. I don't like what's happening, but in all fairness, you have to visit some Arab countries. The only countries you shouldn't visit are Algeria and Kuwait. These are the countries that speak relatively about freedom of expression and journalists having the right to say what they can. Things have to be taken in proper context. To come back to The New York Times, I'm not sure of the intentions of the apology. We're journalists, we're talking about scenarios here. Nobody knows for sure what was happening.

But let me remind you of three major stories that were reported all over the place. Story number 1 was the son of Colin Powell is head of the licensing department for TVs. He sat with the Big Five and they were dealing and wheeling. We're going into war, you're going to need licenses, we'll give you licenses, provided you toe the official line. That was hugely reported. That's what I call the Iraqi Baath approach to the media. That's extremely significant for two reasons. One is it was wheeling and dealing on freedom of speech. Second, it was the son of the secretary of state who was dealing with this, which is another typical Arab approach to politics.

The second story was the hugely announced and publicized visits of Condoleezza Rice to all the major editorial rooms. The main theme was: "We're going to war, and we need a war discourse." The hint was, "We're going to fight and we'll need you behind us." That's why they dared create a lying department at the Pentagon, and they dismantled it soon after that. You may laugh, but that's what the British did in World War II. They had a propaganda machine. There was a department which was almost a ministry with a budget equivalent to the ministry of education at the time. That was taken very seriously. This is where as a Middle Eastern, Arab, Third Worlder I'm worried now what freedom means, what democracy means. I think globalization has been working in reverse and we, the Arabs, are globalizing our codes of ethics.

The third one which is very significant, especially to us in the Middle East, I think the editor-in-chief of CNN had an editorial meeting with all the people in charge of news and told them exactly that: "This country is going to war, and we have to reflect that in the way we report the news." If this is happening in the United States of America, that should be a hint for us to rethink another model to look up to. I personally favor the way the British covered the war. You had The Guardian and The Independent go all the way.

To come back to The New York Times, I'm not sure if they actually meant what they said. They're not discovering that they got it wrong. I think they knew from day one that they would get it wrong. That's where the apology comes from. You intentionally agreed with Condoleezza Rice, when she visited you, week in, week out, and now it's gone so bad.

In the States there's a lot of freedom when it comes to internal policies. The real fight is very dynamic. The discussion is very healthy when it comes to local issues and internal policies. But when it comes to foreign policy, what

someone referred to as the think tanks, and I call them the un-think tanks — Washington alone has 75 institutes with the Middle East or Islam or Arab in them — that employ tens of people, maybe five or six speak Arabic. They don't even know the area. They cannot even locate Lebanon on the map and yet they will show you 100 papers presented at Harvard or Berkeley University claiming to know the area. Richard Perle was such an expert. What does he know about the area? Look at the mess he's done in Iraq. When it comes to foreign policy there's a certain streak of American thinkers (I'm using this very loosely) that are involved with this. The American public is not willing to listen to anything happening outside the United States. The statistics are a maximum of 5% of news outside the United States. That's not the Middle East, that's the whole world. Japan means a lot more to the United States than we do. So you can imagine how much knowledge these think tanks have. That's part of the responsibility we should take up.

— May I follow up on the papers they produce on the Middle East? I used to attend a lot of those think tank meetings, conferences, roundtables, etc. It's true very few knew the region or, as in the case of Iran, when the Islamic revolution took over, there were a lot of "ancien regime" Iranians living in exile, writing all these policy papers, trying to affect the U.S. government and who had not set foot in the country for years. It's true they spoke Farsi and maybe got letters, somehow, in and out of Iran, but they didn't know what was happening on the ground and they really didn't have a clear picture. Another scenario you have is of self-appointed experts on the region who know maybe a smattering of Arabic and who go on these parachute trips — a couple of days in Beirut, a couple of days in Amman, maybe a whole week in Jerusalem — traveling around the region, talking to diplomats (Western, usually), maybe a few dissidents and get a very shaky picture. So you don't get much substance. And then they go write these wonderful policy papers and produce these books that sell a lot and pass them off the definitive studies. This is what people are swallowing in Washington. It's really pathetic. It affects the lives of people around the world. It's a very, if not cavalier, ruthless approach to foreign policy.

— Just one practical observation in relation to why is it that the un-thinkers dominate the media scene in the U.S. and the thinkers in the true sense are barely visible? It's the campaign of hounding and smearing and villifying anybody who's got something credible and sensible to say. The "Campus Watch" campaign that is operated by the Internet and via the media against anybody who actually does understand the region, may get called anti-Semitic. The fact that they are Arab-American or Arab born is highlighted. The automatic refrain that they are a critic of the White House or U.S. foreign policy is a campaign of intimidation against the true thinkers which is an added factor in the dominance of the un-thinkers.

Skene: The passion a lot of you bring to this cause is very admirable. There's clearly a press organization but it sounds like it may be a publishers' organization. I wonder if there's a way to organize journalists into a journalism club that could bring a certain amount of solidarity to a common cause. When one journalist is wrong, all journalists are wrong. Regardless of the rivalries of their news organizations competing for stories, can stand for certain principles of freedom of expression and openness in government and independence. It strikes me that there's a lot of independent activity, a lot of frustration. Pick your shots. You're not going to change the culture and the law overnight.



9:00-10:30



Session VI – Ethics of New Media/Globalization

Chair: Marcello Scarone

Fadi Ismail, General Manager, O3 Productions, Dubai

Imad Bachir, Director, Faculty of Information, First Branch, Lebanese University, Beirut

Tala Abu Taha, Operations Director, Trans-Arabian Creative Communications Services, Amman

فادي اسماعيل

مدير عام شركة O3 للإنتاج - دبي
أخلاقيات المهنة وعولمة الإعلام



أخلاقيات الإعلام هي أن تفكر بعقل بارد في صناعة الخبر والتقرير بحرفية، بمهنية، شمولية، مسؤولية، وبحد معقول من عدم الإنحياز Impartiality وليس الموضوعية. ولكن لنكن صريحين في عصر التنافس، وفي عصر السبق لاكتساب المشاهدين والحصول على أفضل نسب المشاهدة Rating وهي ظاهرة جديدة: هناك مأزق يتجسد في كيفية إجتذاب ما يسمى بالشارع العربي، وهو شارع هائج ومليح يغلي بالأحباطات والألام والغضب والكبت والحيلمان، أن تقولوا له ما يريد أن يسمعه لا يحتاج إلى شجاعة وينجح في تصعيد الـ Rating، أما أن تقول له أو تريه ما لا يريد أن يسمعه فهو عمل في نهاية الشجاعة، ونحن بأمر الحاجة إليه لكنه لا يجذب Rating ولا يسعد من يتفوه به تشبهاً على جذب الجماهيرية والانتساب أي شعبية. هل الربح على المدى القصير من خلال مغلفه مشاعر الناس أهم؟ أم العمل على المدى البعيد يتطلب إعلامي أهلاً فيه مقدان أقل من العواطف والتأثير من العقلانية هو الصالح والتكيف السبيل إليه ومن يلهو إليه؟ سؤالاً يرسم الجميع.

هناك ظاهرة عالمية للهبطية Transnational تتمثل في الفضائيات العربية، فلم يعد الشأن الوطني ينحصر في الإعلام الوطني بل أن الجمهور العربي من المحيط إلى الخليج إن شاء تعلقاً بالفضائيات ويراجعها وأخبارها وحواراتها تظهره وحدها ما يزين الأذواق والمدارك والعرف والبرهنة السيلسية أكثر مما فعلت دعوات التبعية وأحزابها خلال نصف قرن.

هنا أتوقف عند أمرين: إن المقصود أي القنوات التي تدعي أنها موجهة للمشاهد العربي التحليلية والعربية و MBC و LBC و أبوظبي ومن إنحياز وطني Bias لم تقضي على الإعلام المرئي المحلي فالإحصاءات الأخيرة تثبت أن القناة الأولى في السعودية هي القناة الرسمية وكذلك في مصر.

الأمر الثاني هو أنه بسبب فسقوة مساحات حرية التعبير أصبحت المنشآت والمطلبات والالتبغيات تأتي عن طريق الفضائيات العربية التي تهبط بشكلها إلى شبه متلبس للتليارات والأحزاب والآراء السيلسية والتفكيرية أي وتكثف وتطبق التعبئة Mobilization الجماهيرية قد أُنيطت أو أُناطها الجمهور المحيط إلى الفضائيات والتي أصبحت مطالبة في المؤتمرات الإعلامية ولقاءات الخبراء بلعب دور تغيير طبيعي فعال في مجتمعاتنا وهو لئلا من الأحزاب، من أن تكون تلك الفضائيات تقلل الأذوات أو القدرات أو حتى التطبيقية التأسيسية لذلك الأمر الندي ليس من المقصود أن يكون ضمن جدول أعمال سيلسي تحريضي مقتصر للفضائيات من ناحية مهنية ولا من ناحية رأس المال التجاري الندي بل أن أسسها لإبلافة العليد منها.

تختلف تلك المقدمة والإيكم المتعلقين:

مخاطبة الغرب بعقله ومن داخل منظومته الثقافية حتى يستمع لنا، ولماذا عليه أن يستمع لنا على كل حال، وماذا نستطيع أن نقدم له ما لا تقدمه له الـ BBC و Channel 4 و PBS و ABC من نوعية برامج وقيم انتاجية فنية وميزانيات ضخمة واقتصاد يواكب ذلك؟

أريد أن أنهي نقطتين كما بدأت، لعلهما أكثر إيجابية.

١- إنطلقت MBC 2 قبل نحو عامين وكان هناك خشية من أن الجمهور العربي العريض يريد فقط الدراما العربية أو المكسيكية ولا يريد المسلسلات الغربية باللغة الإنجليزية لأنه قد لا يفهمها، أو يستوعبها. أنا لا أتكلم عن مجتمع كلبنان أو غيره يمكن للكثيرين فيه أن يتكلموا الإنجليزية. أتكلم عن النجاح الهائل الذي حققته MBC 2 في عدة دول وخلاصة سريعة من ذلك أن الناس متشوقون لمعرفة العالم والتمتع به.

٢- أنا منحاز بحكم عملي في مجموعة MBC الى الأفلام الوثائقية، أكثر من البرامج الإخبارية والحوارية. أعتقد أنه بعد أن أعينا الضجة فيها ومنها، حان الوقت رغم كل شيء، لبعض الهدوء والعقلانية وإحلال مساحة ثقافية وإعلامية رصينة متميزة للأفلام الوثائقية في أوقات الذروة وليس في منتصف النهار عندما لا يشاهد الشاشة أحد، وثائقيات تتكلم عن مواضيع حيوية وحياتية بعمق وجدية ومسؤولية لأنها ليست رد فعل سريع لحدث، وثائقيات قد تؤدي إلى جرعة أكبر من المسائلة والتأمل والمراجعة. أنتجنا ضمن 03 Productions خلال ١٨ شهرا الأخيرة نحو ٦٠ ساعة وثائقية، واخترنا ربما أكثر من ١٠٠٠ ساعة من الأسواق العالمية وأغلبها لصالح قناة العربية. مثال على ذلك سلسلة لن تجهز إلا عشية الانتخابات الأمريكية بعد بضعة أشهر وهي أشبه Course 101 US Politics مقسمة على أربع ساعات تلفزيونية كلها عن أمريكا السياسية والمؤسسات والتأثير والنفوذ والقوانين عن أمريكا التي يحبها البعض ويكره سياستها الكثيرون ولكن القلة تفهم تركيبها ونشأتها وكيفية تنظيم ديمقراطيتها. هذه هي مساهمتنا، ربما ننجح في بيع هذه الحلقات الى إحدى الشركات الأمريكية لعلمهم يرون كيف نراهم . هل أحلم بالمساهمة في العولمة ولكن باتجاه معاكس؟ ربما.

عودة في الختام الى أخلاقيات المهنة والتي هي ان تتجاوز السطحية الى ما وراء الخبر، الى عمق الظواهر الاشكالية والمرضية في مجتمعاتنا وسياستنا وسياسات الحكومات والاحزاب وأجهزة الدولة وممارساتها، هذا يقتضى ان نلجأ الى التحقيق Investigative Journalism لكن كلنا نعلم أنه من النادر أن يتمكن الصحفي في الغوص في خلفيات القضايا السياسية والقرارات والأجتماعات وأحداث العنف والقتل، وكيف تجرى؟ وفي ذلك ان Investigative Journalism بمعظمه لا يزال في عالمنا العربي في إطار التمنيات واليبتغيات والاحلام، لأنه وبصراحة هذا الامر يصطدم دائماً بمحذورات أمنية لا يمكن تجاوزها بسهولة. كذلك نشكو من الصحفيين والمراسلين والذين لديهم الجرأة والمعرفة والتدريب على القيام بذلك بدقة ومسؤولية ودون مواقف مسبقة تتحكم في تفكيرهم من نوع نظريات المؤامرة السائدة، أن تحقق في قضايا لها علاقة في اسرائيل وأميركا فهذا مسموح ومشجع، ولكن ان تحقق في قضايا مجتمعاتنا ودولنا وإقتصادنا فهذا أمر واقعي، أملي اننا نشهد تغييراً بطيئاً لكنه يتقدم ويبدأ بأختراق الحجب والموانع والتابو، لعل الجيل الجديد من الشباب المرسلين والمخرجين المسلحين بالكاميرات الديجيتال الصغيرة، يتمكنون في المستقبل القريب في إنجاز مشروع إنتاج برامج شبيهة بـ 60 Minutes و Envoye Special او Panorama او Frontline وأؤكد لهم ان كل الفضائيات فكرت في هذا ولم ينجح أحد على الاطلاق فيه حتى الآن.

قد تكون العولمة أمراً مرغوباً به أو مكروهاً لكنها على أية حال ليست خياراً إرادياً، فنحن لا نقف على أرض محايدة ولنا حرية الاختيار: إما أن تكون معنا أو نقتلها. نحن في غالب الأحيان نكلمنا مع الحداثة ونكلمنا مع الحداثة ونكلمنا مع الحداثة. نحن نكلمنا مع الحداثة ونكلمنا مع الحداثة. نحن نكلمنا مع الحداثة ونكلمنا مع الحداثة.

لنحاول رؤية الأمر كما هي بقدر الإمكان ونقتلها مع تسمية الذات الأمارة بالسوء أو الإنجيل: بدلاً من السماح عربيًا عن العولمة في الثمانينات كمصطلح عندنا انتشر في الكتب والمقالات والمقالات أو الأثر الثمانينات أو الأثر الثمانينات.

ما يهمنا هنا هو الإعلام والعالم العربي: فمتذنباً نشأة الفضائيات، إتسبت العولمة كعملية فكرية وثقافية وإعلامية متداولة وواجب قضاها وأحب أن أؤرخ لهذا لا مقتصرياً بل انطلاقاً من قناة MBC في لندن ١٩٩١.

وهم من وجهة العولمة سادت أيضاً في سبوق المصطلحات كلمات تجسيرة تخصصات المحضرات ونهوية التاريخ. من الواضح أننا في العالم العربي نكلمنا معنا فنال فتلقى ولا نصنع فقلد ولا نبتكره فسلين ولا نبادر، فلحقه ونفقته ولا نتقدم.

متذنبات السبعينات، واليهوئيسكي وغيرها من المتذنبات إلى العالم ثلاثية نحن من التبعية الثقافية والإعلامية، من تعلقنا بالمعلومات من الغرب إلى الشرق والمحسوب أن من الرقعة إلى الأخرى.

في سنة ٢٠٠٤ ماذا تغير؟

إذا كنا لتشهد التسلسل والحمص في أعتاق العالم، وإذا كانت سلكياً تطرقتا بهوات من أصالة الرقص العربي فإن البعض يحب أن يرى في هذه الظواهر وغيرها هجوماً عربيًا مضاداً ونلجأ في العولمة ونأخذها ونلأطرح ليس نصلها ون البعض يرى أن ليس للعرب والمسلمين عولمة مضادة أو بديلة اللهم إلا إذا اجتهدنا تصديق الإلهاب وعمليات القتل الجماعي التي تقوم بها الجماعات المتطرفة تودعنا نلجأ لا يمكن أن نقلدهم.

لنتواضع قليلاً لإعلامنا صحیح وریختن و اسهتسیستل یرس ونهوتن ویکل والواشنتن بهست لا تتأثر لها كلمة الفصل في الكشف عن المستور من الخبايا السياسية وتقليد من هم صحتوا الأحداث Movers & Shakers ومن هم شخصيات العام ومشاهيرها، فإننا عربياً للعدا والإحصاف لسنة في جموعه كعلماء. نحن هنا واتكلم أسلسنا عن الفضائيات، لدينا بعض التقدير على البادئة الإعلامية ونقل بصوت وصورة من لا بصوت لهم في عالمنا القوي. لكن علينا أن نعرف أن مبادرتنا مصهورة في المحاور والمحسوب في أماننا التهمير والأزمات، وإن ملناها خصصنا في فلسطين والعراق. هنا في هذه الأماننا، أصبحت الفضائيات مصدراً للمعلومات. و أن تكون مصدراً لأي شيء هي أن تكون في قلب العولمة لكن مصدريتنا تبقى على أهميتها جرتية على الخريطة العالمية الإعلامية.

لنتنظر في أوضاعنا بعد ثلاثين عاماً من سبتمبر: على الغالب فإن ما نصلده وما نتلقاه يصعب في خلة الصدام بين المحضرات والثقافات والسياسات سواء كان ذلك نتيجة فهم صحیح للمصالح أو خلطها للعلاقة الإسلام والغرب. ما يأتي من الغرب يعظمه يؤسس على تهتم ليس بجلبه لكننا إستعملنا. ما يأتي من عدنا أي ما نصلده مبلشرة من فضائياتنا أو ما نتلقه وسلفنا الإعلام الغربية نقلاً عن فيلية عنده لا يتش بل الكثیر من الجوان المحضري ولا التقلير الثقلي في.

لا نحتاج إلا إلى جرعة حقيقة من النقد الذاتي حتى ندرك أن فضائياتنا يعلمها الصراخ ويراجعنا أغلبها لا نعبر إلا الجراح والدماء ولا تسلط فيها الأقواء إلا على الاختلافات والتمايزات وليس على ما هي أو ما يمكن أن يكون متقلير أو مشترك.

إن القربة العالمية التي نجهلنا إلى أعضائه فيها لا يصحح ما نصلده ونسمعها فيها ونعنها إنها قربة سلام وصحة ذلك لأن ما يجري عولته بسرعة هائلة في أماننا هو قيم الاختلاف والتنافر والحدس والإحباط.

عربيًا من فلوهم؟ هل فلوهم الفضائيات ونسعى أن العلمين فيها ولها هم ايضاً جنة من مجتمعاتنا بيلها وعليها الكثیر من الثقيرين وحتي الجموع يريد منها المزيد من التعبير عن الغضب والألم وننتقلها لأنها لا تفعل أكثر. كثيرون يهونون لتحويل الفضائيات إلى أعتاب ثورية تغير الواقع المهترع والمهلل والتي لها نتج سنوات المتضال وأعتاب وعتبات الشهرة في المس بها.

الكثير من المثقيرين والخبراء يلوهم ويريد من الفضائيات ضلطة الغرب بلغته، كأن مجرد الترجمة هي الحل في حين أن الأصعب هو

تجدد الإشارة إلى أن العمل الصحفي عمل رسالي بطبيعته والصحافة جاءت لتساهم في تنمية المجتمعات لا لهدمها وتخلفها، وجاءت لتخفف التوتر بين الجماعات وبين البلدان وليس لبث الشائعات وتوتير العلاقات، وجاءت أيضا حتى تساهم في نقل المعرفة وتعزيز الحوار وليس من أجل تزوير الحقائق وضرب القيم الاجتماعية السائدة في المجتمعات على تنوعها. أصبح من الصعب على الانسان في عالمنا الحاضر أن يتبين طريقه ويؤمن عيشه دون معرفة الاخبار ودون إدراكه لما يحيط به. بناء على ذلك فإن الصحافة مرآة للمجتمع الذي تنمو فيه. وقال نبليون ذات مرة "لا أعرف بلدا الا عندما أقرأ صحفه."

ما نستخلصه في هذه العجالة أن الصحافة اللبنانية والعربية ما زالت تفتقر الى التدريب والتطوير باتجاه احترام ميثاق الشرف الاعلامية وما زال الصحفيون العاملون فيها بعيدين عن إحترام المعايير والالتزام بأخلاقيات مهنتهم الرسالية الجميلة التي تفترض توافر الشجاعة وعدم السكوت عن حقوق الوطن والمواطنين، وكما هو موصوف في قيمنا فإنسان ساكت عن الحق شيطان أخرس.

بالانتقال الى تأثير تقنيات الاعلام الحديث على مهنة الصحافة واخلاقياتها يذكر أن ميثاق الشرف المعمول فيها والمعتمدة من الصحافة الغربية والعربية على السواء لا تشير الى فروقات بين وسائل الاعلام التقليدية والوسائل الاعلام الحديثة بما فيها إنترنت. ورد في «وسائل الاعلام والاخلاق» وهي مجلة الكترونية تصدرها الخارجية الاميركية (٢٥،٥،٢٠٠١) أنه من بين ٣٣ صحيفة أعضاء في الجمعية الاميركية لمحري الصحف، تعتمد ميثاق شرف إعلامية، فقط إثنان تشيران الى إنترنت وكيفية التعامل مع مصادر المعلومات المتوافرة على إنترنت. وبالنسبة للصحافة العربية، فإن أحدث ميثاق الشرف التي أعلنت مع إنتشار تقنيات الاتصال الحديثة ومصادر المعلومات الالكترونية لا تشير إليها إطلاقا.

قد يصح القول ان العمل في وسائل الاعلام التقليدية لا يختلف عن العمل في وسائل الاعلام الحديثة لناحية احترام المعايير والضوابط التي تفرضها أخلاقيات الاعلام، ولكن دخول تقنيات الاتصال الحديث عالم الاعلام أضافت على الصحفي أعباء جديدة لناحية ضرورة أملاكه مهارات اضافية وانتاجية ولناحية تحليه بقدرات تغنيه في الوصول الى مصادر المعلومات الالكترونية. ولعل الحاجة الاساسية التي تفرض نفسها على الجسم الاعلامي بشكل عام والجسم الاعلامي العربي بشكل خاص هي ضرورة العمل على توفير معايير يستطيع الصحفي من خلالها تقييم المواقع الالكترونية التي يستخدمها للوصول الى المعلومات. هذا بالإضافة الى ضرورة تطوير المهارات التقنية لدى الصحفيين في البلدان العربية وتدريبهم على إستخدام مصادر المعلومات الالكترونية والتفاعل مع الكمبيوتر ومع شبكة إنترنت في عملهم الصحفي وعدم التعاطي مع الكمبيوتر كأنه آلة كاتبة فقط.





أجزم أننا لو سألنا صحافياً لبنانياً أو عربياً عن قصة صحافية أنتجها ثم ندم على ما ورد فيها من مغالطات بحق أحد الأشخاص أو إحدى المؤسسات والهيئات على اختلافها، لأجابنا بالنفي. ولو حددنا له بعضاً من إنتاجه الصحافي الذي لا يحترم المهنة وأخلاقياتها لناحية احتوائها على معلومات خاطئة ومؤذية، لاجترح الف حجة وحجة يبرر من خلالها فعلته. لم يعدت الصحافي العربي على الاعتراف بالخطأ، وهو في غالب الأحيان، يرد السبب إلى جهل في أصول المهنة وأخلاقياتها وليس إلى تقصير في احترام الموثيق. فقد لا يلام الصحافي اللبناني أو العربي على عدم مهنيته في أحيان كثيرة، فهو لم يخضع إلى عملية تأهيل على هذا المستوى عندما التحق في العمل الصحافي، ولم توفر له مؤسسته الإعلامية الكبرى منشورات ومعلومات حول هذا الموضوع. أكثر من ذلك فإن عقد العمل الذي أبرمه مع مؤسسته لا يلزمه باتباع ميثاق خاص ولا ميثاق عام. لو أحصينا وسائل الإعلام العربية، بما فيها الصحافة والراديو والتلفزيون، لوجدنا أن الذي يمتلك منها ميثاق شرف خاص به أو يلتزم ميثاق شرف معين لا يتجاوز عدد أصابع اليد، ومن ضمنها ما تم الاعلان عنه حديثاً (صحيفة الحياة، تلفزيون الجزيرة، وميثاق الشرف الذي اقترحه معهد الصحافيين المحترفين في الجامعة اللبنانية الاميركية). إضافة إلى ذلك فإن الصحافة العربية في معظم مؤسساتها لا تعير اهتماماً ولا تسعى لامتلاك كتاب خاص بالاسلوب والمعايير التي تتبعها في الحصول على المعلومات ونشرها. والمعروف أن الكتب الخاصة بأساليب الكتابة الصحافية التي تتبناها أو تعدها المؤسسات الإعلامية تحتوي على تعاليم وإرشادات تقع في نطاق الموثيق الإعلامية وأخلاقيات «أجمل مهنة في العالم» كما وصفها الروائي الكولومبي غبريال غارسيا ماركيز.

يتذمر بعض الصحافيين لدى مواجهتهم من الأكاديميين وحثهم على احترام المهنة وأخلاقياتها وموثيقها، وغالباً ما يردون بأنهم ليسوا أنبياء. في حقيقة الأمر ليس المطلوب من الصحافيين أن يكونوا أنبياء وهم كغيرهم من البشر ليسوا معصومين عن الخطأ. ولكن في الوقت نفسه، ليس المطلوب منهم أن يكونوا شياطين ومثيرين للفتن ومروجين للشائعات والافتراءات على حساب ميثاق شرف مهنية وقواعد أخلاقية تمثل العمود الفقري لإتقان العمل. إن المطلوب من الصحافيين يتمثل في أمر واحد وهو أن يكونوا رسلاً أمينين ينقلون الرسالة الإعلامية بكل عناصرها التي تجعل منها قصة صحافية صادقة لا شوائب فيها.

يذكر الصحافي نجم والي (الحياة، ١٩٩٨، ٣، ١) أن الصحافيين اليوم في مرحلة أخرى وزمان آخر. وهم ليس كما يقول الصحافي الإيطالي المشهور أوجينيو إيسكالفارو "الصحافيون ناس يخبرون الناس ما حدث للناس." إنهم يقولون ما يعتقدون به. وهم يعتقدون أنفسهم حكماً عالمون بكل شيء. ويضيف والي "الآن أبصرهم يسيرون وجهاز الهاتف النقال بين أيديهم، يقودون سيارات حديثة أوتوماتيكية، يعتقدون صفقات مع رجال السياسة، يتحدثون في كل محطات الراديو ويظهرون أيضاً على شاشات كل برامج المحطات الفضائية، يتحدثون عما يفكرون به في صدد قضايا حدثت".

يوجد في قيمنا وتراثنا الكثير من الأقوال والدعوات التي تحث على إتقان العمل وتبين الحقائق. من هذه الأقوال ما معناه زمن قام منكم بعمل فليتقنه، أيضاً أعلوا الحديث (الخبر) عقل دراية لا عقل رواية. لذلك فإن ما طرحه الزميل مارك دمازر من بي سي في ورقته في اليوم الأول من هذا المنتدى حول اللورد نيكولس واجتهاده في مجال الصحافة المسؤولة، يأتي بناء على المخزون القيمي والتراثي للبشرية بشكل عام.



Tala Abu Taha
Operations Director, Trans-Arabian Creative Communications Services, Amman
New Media

What is the definition of new media?

A generic term for the many different forms of electronic communication that are made possible through the use of computer technology. The term is in relation to “old” media forms, such as print newspapers and magazines, that are static representations of text and graphics.

New media includes:

- Web sites
- Streaming audio and video
- Chat rooms
- E-mail
- Online communities
- Web advertising
- DVD and CD-ROM media
- Virtual reality environments
- Integration of digital data with the telephone, such as Internet telephony
- Digital cameras
- Mobile computing

Ethics of New Media

The growth of the online publishing industry has created a thicket of ethical and professional questions for journalists. Has the line between advertising and editorial content been blurred at some Web sites? Will partnerships and affiliations with non-media corporations influence coverage of the news? How should an online publication handle links to other sites on the Web?

There’s been a lot of talk recently about ethics and integrity in new media, most of it terribly confused, uninformed and incoherent. Obviously everyone has a right to their opinion, and from here journalists start to face new ethical dilemmas.

To address these problems, some new media organizations have adopted ethics policies, editorial guidelines or disclosure statements and posted them to their employees.

Developing a series of protocols that editors and online journalists might use as guidelines for framing their own policies and procedures on issues related to content reliability; database information; linking; potentially offensive or harmful content; journalistic integrity and commercial pressure.

Summary Of The Guidelines

1. Online Content Reliability Guidelines:

To provide accurate and reliable information to its users, by ensuring information on the website is edited to a standard equal to the print or broadcast standards.

2. The Ethical Use of Database Information

Data to be available in a responsible way consistent with the organization’s mission and journalistic values:

- Be sensitive to individuals' privacy rights when compiling and making databases available.
- Particularize data only when public right to know outweighs individual privacy concerns.
- Reveal the authorship/ownership, scope, validity and limitations of the data available to the public.

3. Linking

To maintain the site’s credibility, links should be clear, responsible and reflect journalistic values.

To accomplish that:

- Links should be clearly identified as either editorial or commercial, meaning links that the site has received money to include.
- All sites referred to in text, either by URL or site name, will be reviewed for taste, relevance, currency and accuracy.
- Before linking to a potentially offensive site, editors should explore alternatives, including increased storytelling, listing URLs in text, and posting intermediate pages providing a synopsis of the offensive materials.

4. Editorial Control of Potentially Offensive or Harmful Content

The challenge is to maximize information and participation while minimizing offensive or harmful content. In order to strike this balance, online news organizations should formulate standards regarding permissible language and behavior for the interactive areas. These standards should be made known to users and should be applied consistently and fairly.

5. Journalistic Integrity and Commercial Pressures

It is understood that the technology of the new media is evolving at a rapid pace and that, as a result, new advertising models, including tracking technologies, are being drawn and will continue to evolve. Therefore, it is recommended that the editorial content and reader privacy be protected from commercial intrusion in the following ways:

- The audience should be able to clearly distinguish between editorial content and advertising, including advertorials and other advertising models as they emerge.
- News organizations that enter such partnerships will be diligent in the protection of their primary contribution, which is independent reportage.
- Current and future tracking technologies (such as “cookies”) will be used responsibly so as not to intrude upon or in any way violate the privacy of the reader.

Code Of Ethics

Seek Truth and Report It:

- Journalists should be honest, fair and courageous in gathering, reporting and interpreting.

Minimize Harm:

- Ethical journalists treat sources, subjects and colleagues as human beings deserving of respect.

Act Independently:

- Journalists should be free of obligation to any interest other than the public's right to know.

Be Accountable:

- Journalists are accountable to their readers, listeners, viewers and each other.

Media Globalization

Preliminary Definition: “An unprecedented compression of time and space reflected in the tremendous intensification of social, political, economic, and cultural interconnections and interdependencies on a global scale.”

Stegler, p. ix

Time and space are no longer issues and are irrelevant

Deterritorialization

Globalization On The Web: What Happened?

Expansion of international commerce

o Arabia Online E-Commerce

Rising importance of private capital flows

o Arabia Online Capital Up to 20 Mil – major share holder used to be Prince Al Waleed

Increasing travel and migration

o Dubai Media City & Dubai Internet City

o Online travel packages and online bookings

Increased communication and interaction between peoples

o Creation of Mid East portals such as Arabia Online, alawaba, bbc arabic, cnn arabic.

In Conclusion

The World Wide Web has become the ultimate tool for Globalization.

Session VI

— Tala spoke of online journalism and its proliferation. It's known that sites are mushrooming on the Internet and there are no legal restraints. So anybody, even a non-journalist with the proper tools and knowledge, can create a media site and practice journalism without any supervision or accountability. In Lebanon, if a publication is produced, the law stipulates that there be a director in charge who is answerable to the authorities and who is a member of one of the two professional associations. Even if the owner is not a media person, the director is supposed to guard against offenses to the public or individuals. So, do you think the time has come to legislate for controls on the Internet?

Abu Taha: There should be internal housekeeping for online and new media. But to pass laws that the government would use to control new media as they do traditional media is not advisable. My escape was online journalism so that I could write more freely. As with anything else, there are always mistakes and good things at the beginning. It's up to the user/browser to find out which site is reliable and which isn't. It would be a mistake to legislate this. Anything has mistakes. We learn from them over time. The cyber community is still small in the Arab World and it's easy to single out websites that lack credibility. They lose users and traffic. The bigger sites, like Arabia.com and AME have internal guidelines and editors who make stringent standards requirements. So there's no need for the government to interfere.

— A comment to Fadi. With reference to satellite channels, and based on my personal experience in Egypt, I think most Egyptians would prefer to watch satellite channels for two reasons: the newscasts, which are more credible and don't have imposed official news items and because they're more open socially. But for purely economic reasons, most Egyptians can't afford to buy a dish and decoder to receive much of the foreign fare. That's why cafes are usually full of patrons who pay symbolic fees to watch satellite programming they're unable to get at home.

Ismail: I agree. You complemented what I said. Financial reasons may prevent many people from watching satellite stations. Those who own dishes may not always watch the satellite channels and may sometimes prefer local programs. But I can assure you that the ratings indicate that in all the satellite channels, the newscasts are peak viewing hours. Newscasts in all-news and general programming satellite channels draw a high percentage of viewers that equals, if not exceeds, entertainment shows and reality TV.

— I have two comments. The first is directed to Mr. Ismail and the second to Dr. Imad Bachir. Regarding Arab satellite channels, we speak of them in a general way — Al Jazeera, Al Arabiya, etc. But the stations are more complex than that. What he raised about dialogue versus discourse with the West is an existing problem in society. We're going through a period of gravity loss on all fronts. It's true we can't hold satellite stations responsible for the creation of political parties and the recreation of a philosophy for the region. But talk about exporting terrorism or the status of Iraq, etc., when the West sees that matters have reached its shores, it goes on high alert. The terror in Algeria, on the Mediterranean rim close to Europe and the killing fields in Lebanon during the war were limited because they weren't exported. But when the violence got out of hand geographically, everybody was mobilized and it became a big deal internationally, particularly post-9/11.

We don't have a discourse we can address (to the West) and, if you notice, in most of the Arab satellite channels programs, there are religious leaders and clerics who try to address the Western mind which is rational and skeptical. The problem isn't just with the satellite channels but with the structure of society at large, politically, economically, intellectually. We are people who today have nothing to offer. I'm not saying this out of depression.

The second point refers to what Dr. Imad Bachir said. It's true journalists have to address themselves directly to sources of information. But in Lebanon there are no statistics and there's no census and it's one of the most modern countries in terms of knowledge. If you have no census, how can you discuss social, political and educational matters? Everything in the Arab World is based on estimates or guesswork. Furthermore, one item we researched

was found in nine ministries and to get some data from each ministry we need to wade through tons of bureaucracy. Our problem isn't just high tech sources of information but of elementary sources.

Bachir: About online sources, if they're available, journalists should make use of them. Journalists should have the skills to do online research. That's the key point in my argument. I agree we don't have statistics. All our papers and production is an estimate. But if journalists make a bit of an effort, in more than one area, they would provide content that dovetails with the symbols of the age we're living in. If they worked harder, we'd have better journalistic content.

Ismail: On addressing the West, every time I hear this I imagine millions in London or Paris or New York are waiting every day to hear what Al Arabiya or Al Jazeera or Abu Dhabi TV or LBC have to say or that they would understand what we say. All there is to it is that if one of the (Arab) satellite channels receives a tape from Bin Laden and broadcasts it, it becomes fodder for international news agencies and reaches the West. Other than that, we don't address the West and that's not the job of the satellite channels, nor is it their philosophy nor language nor capability. Briefly, when we in the satellite channels adopt media ethics we'd be serving our societies in the best way and contribute to positive change.

— A question to Tala. She concluded by saying that the World Wide Web is the ultimate tool of globalization. I'm afraid I disagree. Having listened to Fadi's introduction about Shakira and shawarma, and given the lack of infrastructure in the southern hemisphere, Shakira would be known on TV years before we get to see www.shakira.com. I think it's the matter of access. Even in a country like Jordan, you have the famous city in Irbid, which is the Internet city. But if you travel south or other areas in Jordan, you wouldn't find access to the Internet. It is a tool.

Abu Taha: Satellite channels or any other tool that make globalization very successful don't yet have full interconnection that you see through the Internet. You can discuss anything through the Internet. But on satellite channels there's still a limit. They cannot discuss sex, but you can do it through the Internet. You cannot discuss taboos in the Middle East on TV but you can do that through the Internet because you're the unknown user. Nobody can see you, nobody can listen to you.

— Mr. Ismail, I heard something like the satellite news stations only show people hurting and only emit emotions — something along those lines. I saw that as a criticism of overly exposing victims of violence, like Al Jazeera in Iraq. Ethically, you can go too far. But looking at media ethics, and comparing it to scientific methodology, the latter is a lot like media ethics. It's about finding out the truth, it's about double-checking. Scientific methodology in the last 40 years has moved away from a positivistic attitude of just being able to find the facts. It's gotten a lot more complicated. One of the main things is that it's not just about how to do research in science, exactly as it is in journalism, it's not just about how to report. It's also about what to report. It's about the territory of journalism. I'd like to refer to a German who has formulated principles of democratic journalism. What he puts as his top priority to report is to report human rights violations. This is what every journalist has a duty to do. Trying to cover up human rights violations is the worst sin journalists can commit.

Ismail: I think Mr. Hijawi, the BBC correspondent yesterday had a talk and I commented by saying we don't see normal Palestinians in news. We see super heroes, super dead, super victims. We see Palestinians on stretchers going into hospitals, we see kids fighting Israeli tanks, we don't see normal everyday people. This is in response to what we report. The problem is, there's a vicious circle. People in the streets are angry, are hurt. Satellite channels are showing them what makes them more angry. I'm trying to criticize that approach to news. I'm not criticizing a particular station or a particular policy. Just trying to describe a particular situation and how I perceive it.

— I beg to differ with something that Tala brought up about the Internet being that accessible. Yes, it's easier to work through the Internet than through print, or broadcast media, and there are ways to circumvent certain restrictions. However, in the Arab world, very tragically, a lot of sites are banned, censored, blocked, and I've seen that. And I've seen it even at Dubai's Internet City. I was horrified to find that out. I've just come back from trips to, among other places, Tunisia, which is a real rigid police state and trying to check my email was next to impossible. That was bad enough. In Morocco, that was so-so, Egypt was a little easier. But when I'm told by academics and professionals in the field in Dubai that they cannot access any site they like because there are offensive words that block those sites, it blows my mind. Why are they going around promoting the Media City or the Internet City when you don't have free access to the medium and the messages?

Abu Taha: From my experience, there's a way to go to the website by hacking that. It's into how to use the Internet.

— When we're talking about ethics, this is quite unethical. We're going in a roundabout way to extract information.

Abu Taha: I'm not saying spreading worms or viruses through an Internet network, but if my government blocked a site that I really want to read, I have my ways to go through it and access it.

— Rather than mobilize the entire journalistic community to protest that?

Abu Taha: This is a tool but I will do all the other things to let my government know I resent what they are doing.

— My question is addressed to Dr. Bachir. Is it good media ethics if a student graduates from journalism school and is offered a job in a non-licensed site to work at the site? In Lebanon, we have political and non-political publications and they're licensed by the Ministry of Information and are subject to the laws, which means they fall under a managing director. Is it ethical for journalists in Lebanon working for non-political publications on the Internet to publish political content online? Either we free up all media or control websites. It's a dangerous phenomenon and we're witnessing it.

Bachir: If the aim is to return to the question you asked, let me assure you there is no online journalism in the Arab World. There are print media transferred to the Internet. As for the second comment, I'm for freeing all media. That's where we're heading. In Britain you can fill out an application at the post office to publish a daily paper. It's not limited to permits. There are other conditions that may be more difficult to fulfill than just the matter of the law.

— Most of my work is through Internet journalism. From my experience, with the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, the Internet is the only medium where we're actually competing with the pro-Israeli story, and many times winning battles. So, I disagree. I think the West is thirsty for news from our perspective, even if it starts as translations. We're not going to give them what the BBC gives them but we will give them something that they are thirsty to hear about. Regarding satellite channels' coverage of violence, I agree. I think local TV stations are doing a better job because on Palestinian local TV, you do see a lot of documentaries, a lot of programs. The criticism is that there isn't enough.



11:00-12:30



Session VII – Media Practices

Chair: Mona Ziade

Neil Skene, U.S. Journalist, former editor of Congressional Quarterly, US

Sonia Dabbous, Assistant Editor for Political and Diplomatic Affairs, Akhbar Al Yom, Cairo

Magda Abu-Fadil, Director, Institute for Professional Journalists, Beirut



Neil Skene

U.S. Journalist, former editor of Congressional Quarterly

Your First Obligation is to Your Reader

I seem to be the visiting authority on the American way of journalism, and there is reason to wonder why you would want to hear from me at all. The New York Times just confessed to a lack of professional skepticism with respect to its reliance on sources, including Chalabi, for its exposes on weapons of mass destruction. Most other daily newspapers were similarly credulous about President Bush's justifications for going to war in Iraq, and there was precious little depth or perspective about those reasons. Heaven knows we have spent vast quantities of air-time and dead trees on crime and celebrity. We wrote a lot more about exposing Janet Jackson than we did about exposing the name of a CIA agent.

It's the worst system of journalism in the world — except for all the others.

Think about this. When called on the telephone by people they do not know, more than half of Americans say they do not approve of the job George Bush is doing. There is no sense of danger in saying that to a complete stranger on the telephone. And moreover, there is enough skeptical reporting now going on that fully half of the people who approved of Bush six months ago no longer do. This is not because all those people have made personal inspections of the world and concluded Iraq is a mess. It's because they have read things in the papers and seen things on television that have led them to their conclusion.

I can think of a lot of problems with American journalism, but we have the distinct advantage that the problems are a result of our own shortcomings as journalists, not a result of censorship, personal threats, or control of the journalists by politicians.

One of the reasons people dislike the press — and this is not just an American thing, because you will find it familiar — is that we alone among all the business enterprises give space and publicity to our adversaries and critics. Think about it. When is the last time the U.S. government or the Lebanese government or any other government published the critical letters the president receives about his decisions? Never. Their whole machinery is devoted to making the people in office look good.

When is the last time the president went to a conference devoted to making his behavior more truthful and honest? What about General Motors? Microsoft? ExxonMobil? The hardware store on the corner?

But journalists support journalism reviews, conferences like this one, and write lots of stories about their own lapses. When a person goes on television and criticizes the press, we don't shut them off — we publish it. We probably give a lot more time to our critics than to an explanation of what we do and why we do it.

We are here to talk about our behavior as journalists — our practices, our decisions, the way people see what we do. We want to do it better — more responsibly, more successfully. We need to be sure we're not cowed by our

own obsession with our own misbehavior and censor our work. The biggest problem for American journalists at daily newspapers is that they are afraid of offending their readers, of provoking them. This is the attention-deficit world. It's hard to make people stop and think — they just reflexively protest any challenge to pre-existing judgments. The problems you undoubtedly see in the American media are not problems of excessive zeal in ferreting out untold stories but a preference for punditry and celebrity over serious questioning, reporting, story selection.

A lot is being said at this conference about various aspects of media practices. I want to focus on just a couple of them.

The first is integrity. The journalist's first obligation is to his or her readers. Think about that. What do my readers expect of me on this story? It's not the point of this conference, but that question can help you shape your story as well, by thinking to yourself where the reader will be confused or need further background or information. That part of the obligation means providing depth and understanding of the subject and the most honest, truthful assessment of the facts that you possibly can give.

But while you are providing the best version of the truth that you can humanly create, you also need to tell them as much as you can about how you know what you know, and to also let them know information that helps them evaluate your own perspective. If you have engaged in some action that might compromise your independence — a source paid for your trip, or gave you a gift, or bought lunch; you hold stock in a company that might benefit or lose in this issue; whatever the compromise might be — just tell your readers. And you know what? When you decide that you are going to disclose it, two things will happen: First, you will start to reconsider your own behavior, and second, you will start to cause others to reconsider their behavior. If you receive a gift and follow assiduously the rule that you must disclose, you will think twice about accepting a gift next time.

I want to give you an example. At one of the newspapers where I am an investor, the editor called me about an ethical issue he was facing. This was not a big political story. He was editing an annual "Summer Guide," suggesting interesting things to do around the waterfront area where he lives. One of the ideas was for an elaborate massage, pedicure, facial — all those cosmetic treatments. It would cost about \$2,000. The policy he and I grew up with, at a very prominent and financially successful newspaper, is that we paid our own way. But he was now at a weekly paper, with little budget for such things. He couldn't do this story if he had to pay, and the practitioner was perfectly happy to provide the treatments at no charge to a journalist who was going to write about the experience and presumably encourage others to try it.

The rule is that freebies are discouraged, but the overriding principle is to act with integrity toward your readers. Your readers don't care whether you pay or not; your readers care whether you are selling your soul and fooling them along the way. So tell the readers that the treatments were provided at no cost, but there was no limitation or understanding about what you would write. Your evaluation of the treatments is wholly independent.

Richard Reeves, a well known journalist and author in the States, suggested many years ago — so long ago that I cannot find the source — that bylines should have more than just a name and maybe "Staff Writer." He suggested that they might say, "By Richard Reeves, who had a cold, was late to dinner, and couldn't reach two key sources." So another part of this integrity is whether you are fair to your readers in the gathering of information. Did you cut corners? Don't state as facts things you are not sure about. Write the most accurate, verifiable sentence you possibly can based on your reporting and your knowledge. And then tell the reader what you couldn't accomplish — couldn't reach the company, or the government agency, or the individual.

But let me note right here that you also owe integrity to the people you deal with in gathering information, and that includes the bad guys as well as the good guys. Don't ambush someone right at the end of the business day, asking for lots of information on deadline. After spending the day collecting one allegation after another about me, you call me up just before 5 p.m., I'm out of the office (perhaps left for the day) and you add, "Mr. Skene could not be reached for comment." And then tomorrow you are not very interested in hearing from me.

There is also an obligation to those from whom we obtain information — our sources, other news organizations, documents — to represent them fairly, to consider the effect of making them part of the story, and in some cases to protect them. If we make commitments as part of the process of obtaining information, we need to honor those commitments.

While integrity sounds like a simple, straightforward dictum, it is often difficult to determine the “right” thing to do. How does one deal with a source thought to be lying, or not entirely credible? How does one handle incomplete information or inadequate understanding? How does one present (or not) an accusation that is not fully proven but is “probably” correct? How does one a writer deal with the possible of her own subconscious bias, or opinion, or financial interest? What is to be done with information that is provided with qualifications, including the qualification that it not be attributed to its source or “used” in an article? What is the extent of a “right to reply” by those who claim to have been wronged somehow in a previously published article? How does one deal with censorship or threats, or with legal proscriptions and risks?

The biggest leadership challenge for editors and publishers is to create a news organization with truth and honesty flourish. You’d be surprised how hard that is. The recently departed editor of the New York Times, Howell Raines, was fervent in the pursuit of truth and, in my view, produced a newspaper that has not been excelled before or since. Yet within his own organization, people’s suspicions and knowledge — truth, in other words — were ignored as political forces prevailed.

Every news department needs to develop its ability to discuss and decide these issues. They are every bit as important as decisions about news judgment — how big the headline will be, how much time to devote to a story, whether a photographer will be assigned, whether it is worth travel expense, what facets of the story should be focused on. How to deal with sources, how to resolve ethical dilemmas, is part of the process of making news decisions. If you are an editor, you want to make these decisions as openly as possible in your news organization, so that others can learn from your thinking process, just as Plato would learn from Socrates. If you are a reporter, you can help set a standard. Talk to other people about an ethical issue, and propose your own solution. Ask, “How do you see this?” Ask about other cases where something similar might have happened. Make your news organization a place where you can talk about these issues.

And if there are places like this one where you can broaden the discussions to your colleagues in other organizations, take advantage of that.

I know there is a problem with pay levels of journalists. I want to come back to that and issue a challenge to newspaper owners and directors. But first, I want to put this issue in some perspective.

I made three trips to Eritrea to teach journalists there who were organizing independent newspapers, for the first time in the country’s motley history. I went to the newspaper offices. Some of them were down dirt alleys, in two-room offices with a couple of light bulbs and old desks and broken chairs. The most stable of the newspapers, Setit, had more offices and even a television set, but its staff was poorly paid. But they were proud of the status they held, and they wanted to be respected by the government and by their readers. They were hungry for any information and advice that would make them better. Sure, they were financed by people with political or even business views. And among the seven or eight papers in the relatively small capital city of Asmara, the political leanings of each paper were generally known. Today, many of them are in prison in undisclosed locations, and have been for three years. Some of them are probably dead.

Journalism is a commitment that surpasses the desire for income or economic status. Status will be a matter of integrity. It is difficult to eat integrity, and it will not keep you out of the rain and cold. So clearly only some people will be true journalists, independent of economic and political pressures that distract them from the pursuit of truth. All that said, I believe publishers should consider the business opportunity they have in developing a distinctive reputation for integrity. The New York Times is not the most authoritative, well regarded newspaper in America — even with its recent notoriety — because it has journalistic monks who have renounced worldly goods. It is what it is because it has paid to hire the best people, and the result is that it has opportunities to expand while many newspapers without that commitment are shrinking in the face of new kinds of competition. That paper has thrived when many others are now out of business.

When we talk about news councils and ethical standards, the first place we should look should be the owners of newspapers, not the journalists. Publishers need to declare, publicly, their devotion to integrity and quality, and provide their journalists an adequate standard of living so they are not implicitly left to rely on tips and gifts. And then, in return, the publishers should expect absolute integrity. They should expect consistent reliability in the accuracy of the journalist’s reporting, and they should expect unblemished integrity in the journalist’s ethical behavior.

I want to speak about one other aspect of media practice that I think is very important and gets too little attention. That is the matter of balance. We hear discussions about “objectivity” in our stories. I’m not sure we can be totally objective. Indeed, the process of reporting is often one of taking a skeptical position, of asking challenging questions. You can ask challenging questions nicely. You should plan your interviews in such a way that you don’t get into quarrels. But the most successful journalists have a toughness of mind that isn’t swayed by this sentiment or that, but instead looks past the fads and conventional beliefs and certainly beyond the world according to the official spokesmen and keeps asking questions and looking for contrary evidence.

But the best journalism, the most useful journalism, is journalism that leans into the prevailing winds. The most famous episode in our country is the Watergate scandal. It has now been 30 years since President Nixon resigned as a result of that scandal, and it came about largely because two young and unknown reporters at the Washington Post thought it looked suspicious that five Cuban-Americans on their own broke into the Democratic Party headquarters at the Watergate office complex. They started asking a few questions, like why a rich-looking lawyer was sitting in the courtroom when the defendants pleaded. You just look around you and ask questions.

The most recent years of my career have been with newspapers that have a clear point of view about the world. It would include a concept of personal choice, intelligent appreciation of arts and music, avant garde in terms of evolving cultural activities (“hip” is a common word), appreciation of differences among people and cultures, a strong sense of social responsibility. When people like George Bush come along, are born on third base and think they’ve hit a triple, we let loose with abundant criticism. We review restaurants, comment on music and theatre, and generally express our professional judgments. Our choice is to hire authoritative writers, people who know about the subjects they write about. But if you are looking for enthusiasm about George Bush’s foreign policy, you are wasting your time.

This is not new in America, of course, because it goes back to the vitriolic criticism heaped upon John Adams by people who shared Thomas Jefferson’s anti-Federalism views, and then heaped upon President Jefferson by the partisans of John Adams. It is the most common way in which an independent press develops, because a particular collection of philosophies tend to group around publications that view the world in somewhat similar ways. In Nashville, Tennessee when I was in college there, the city had two newspapers, one fiercely Republican and the other loyally Democratic. I often commented that readers never were sure what the truth was, but they knew there was a fight.

But what is the obligation of balance even for opinionated writers, for commentators, for “analysts” of the news? It is, once again, to be first of all a journalist interested in the best approximation of the truth. Every now and then, George Bush does something right. After all, even a stopped clock is right twice a day. I thought, for example, that George Bush’s trip to Baghdad at Thanksgiving was a brilliant act of political positioning and leadership. How much we write about that is up to each editor, but I think you can’t be in the position of saying that everything this guy does is nonsense. I don’t agree with Ronald Reagan on a lot of things, but my view as a student of American government is that he was a highly successful president who belongs in the top fourth, and maybe the top ten, of American presidents. It was not his mastery of issues, that’s for sure, but it was his sense of confidence and sure-footedness about what he thought was good for America. I probably agree with more of Bill Clinton’s policies than with Reagan’s, but I don’t think Clinton was as successful as president and leader. I think he lacked a moral and philosophical compass.

That’s what I mean by intellectual objectivity and balance. You are journalists, not partisans. You may express strong points of view, but you are not captive to a political position. You work hard to walk all the way around an issue, see it from all sides (not just “two” sides), and then convey your best judgment, and your best articulated argument, about what it all means.

I have spoken so far as if these were straightforward choices, like, “Always choose black.” That’s not the case. You need to work at it, model it for others, watch how others make decisions.

Judgments about news — decisions about a story’s significance, prominence, components, legality and fairness — often require balancing factors in conflict. When choices need to be made, reporters and supervising editors need to develop an effective method of discussion and resolution. Decisions about ethics are critical to the integrity and credibility of the article, of the reporter, of the publication. Whether you are taking part in an internal discussion of ethics, or interviewing a source, there are some techniques that will improve the outcome. Let me list a few:

1. Ask “green light” questions, rather than questions that assume something or cut off discussion. Don’t ask “yes-no” questions. Ask, why or what, not do or can. “Tell me your experience.” “What happened next?” Ask clarifying questions. Ask help — “help me understand...”
2. Think about your readers. In fact, think about two or three different specific readers. Your mother. Your high school teacher. Think what they would want to know from this person, and what it will take for them to understand this person’s position.
3. Go through a thinking process constantly. I often say that the journalist goes through a cycle of activity: Observe what is going on. Ask questions. Think about what you learn. Focus on the most interesting or important aspect of the information. Write down the results as a draft. Think some more. Ask more questions. Focus again on whether new information changes the perspective. Write. Review, by reading the piece as a newcomer would read it.

Decisions are often difficult. But the best decisions happen in an environment of open discussion and clear standards, where all the people involved know that the decision should come down to what is right for the reader.





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A Study of the Egyptian Press

Codes of ethics, as applied to mass communication media, are of recent creation. They are so recent, in fact, that most countries in the world have not accepted or formulated media discipline norms, whether self-imposed or not.

The very speed of communication; the vast and growing sophistication of methods of news collection and dissemination; the increase in economic pressures in a highly cost-intensive industry needing to make profits, are but a few of the contributory factors that have led to changes in mass communication media. These, in turn, have caused dissatisfaction with the conduct and performance of the media.

In the early days of printing, "The Press" was primarily a means of individual expression, comment and criticism. In Egypt, the press goes back to 1828 when the first daily newspaper was published and its name was Al Waqae Al Mesreya. Mohamed Ali published it in the era of the Ottoman Empire. At that time, there were no press laws, but the ruler's decision was considered a law. That's why governments thought of establishing charters to clarify journalists' duties and rights, while giving rights to the society in terms of social, cultural, and intellectual norms and beliefs. There are internal press laws that are used within the country's borders and there are international charters.

As late as 1880, Egypt had no laws regulating the press. Rather, "royal will" had the power to toss a journalist into prison for allegedly exceeding the limits. Such arbitrariness could not continue. The growing number of local and foreign publications made legislation inevitable.

When applying to the Ministry of Interior in 1875 for a permit for Al-Ahram, Selim Taqla chose his words very carefully. The newspaper he intended to produce would restrict itself to the publication of "wire release; news on commercial, agricultural, and domestic affairs; matters pertaining to morphology, grammar, and the Arabic language in general; terms on medicine, sports, historical events; literary material such as proverbs, anecdotes, poems, and stories; and other such material that can be published without broaching political matters." Nevertheless, in 1879, the Khedive Ismail had Selim's younger brother, Bichara, imprisoned for an article that appeared in the newspaper's supplement. "The oppression of the peasant," as it was called, reeked of "politics." The Khedive released Bichara after three days, but only upon the intervention of the consul-general of France, with whom the Taqla brothers had subject status.

As this incident illustrates, the press, even while enjoying immunity under the Capitulations Systems, was a perilous profession. A dramatic change, though, would come by way of Egypt's first Publication Law, as it was called, the text of which appears in the book "Freedom of the Press in Egypt: 1798-1924," by Khalil Sabat, Sami Aziz, and Yunan Labib Rizk. Promulgated on November 26, 1881, the new 23-article law established a number of restrictions. For example, no periodical could publish articles dealing with political, religious, or government administrative affairs without official permission. Newspaper owners were required to pay insurance fees of LE 100 for daily publication and LE 50 for publications appearing three times a week or less. The law gave the minister of interior the right to suspend or close down a publication on grounds of safeguarding public order, religion, or morals. The minister was also empowered to prohibit the import or sale of newspapers.

Soon after this law was promulgated the Orabi Revolution erupted and the law proved an effective government weapon against mouthpieces for the uprising. In 1882, the British occupied Egypt. It is commonly believed that the occupation authorities stopped enforcing the Publication Law since the British consul-general in Egypt, Lord Cromer, was a reputed advocate of press freedom. The authors of "Freedom of the Press in Egypt," however, discovered otherwise; the law remained in operation for another 12 years. Developments over the first decade of the 20th century would inspire authorities to change their mind on the Publication Law. In March 1909, under the government of Butros Ghali, it was reinstated.

However, it was not until the assassination of Prime Minister Ghali in February the following year that the Publications Law was applied on a wide scale. Once again, newspapers could be suspended or closed by a decree by the minister of interior instead of by judicial ruling. The outbreak of war, the declaration of the British protectorate over Egypt and the imposition of martial law, finished off the rest of the nation's minor newspapers.

The Declaration of February 28, 1922 and the Constitution of 1923 ushered in a new era.

“The constitution provides for the respect for civil liberties in every sense. It states, ‘Freedom of belief is absolute and freedom of opinion is guaranteed. Every individual has the right to express his ideas through speech, writing, pictures, or other media within the limits of the law, and the press is free within the bound of the law.’”

Focusing on Egypt as an example of a Middle East country, the press is regarded as a tool of nationalism and politics. As such, freedom of opinion in the press is often considered to compromise national security and the wellbeing of the state. Past Egyptian administrators justify their control of the press on grounds that the majority of the people are irresponsible. Therefore, freedom of opinion would expose the state to danger. Let us have a quick look at freedom of opinion in the press under Presidents Nasser, Sadat, and Mubarak.

Direct censorship in Egypt includes press laws, codes of ethics, and dismissal of journalists, seizure of papers and books, and withholding newsprint from opposition papers. These forms vary from self-censorship to elimination of any kind of criticism against the president. The following case study, mentioned in Jane Laftwich Curry and Joan R. Dassin’s book “Press Control Around the World,” examines the above in details. When Nasser and the army officers came to power in Egypt, the press shifted its support from the previous king to Nasser. Nasser and his revolution repeated the motto of the regime: “Unity, freedom, and socialism,” claiming the desire to lift press censorship. But Nasser’s opponents took advantage and attacked him for failing to allow democratic institutions in the country. Consequently, the government re-imposed censorship one month later and warned journalists against any spreading of criticism about the revolution. In 1956, when Nasser became president, article 45 of the constitution stated, “Freedom of the press, publication, and copyright is safeguarded in the interest of public welfare within the limits prescribed by the law.” In the late 1950s, Nasser expressed his discontent with the press performance for devoting more space to “sensational accounts of crime, divorce, and sex than to government development programs” (Curry and Dassin, *Press Control Around the World*, 192).

On May 24, 1960, five major publishing houses were nationalized under the Arab Socialists Union. Mohamed Hassanein Heikal, who was a close friend to Nasser, wrote an article named “Reorganization, not nationalization.” This article was meant to justify the nationalization of the press: “The press is an authority whose function is to guide people and actively participate in building their society exactly as does the people’s assembly (the parliament).” After the nationalization of the press, editors and columnists had to abide by the new rules imposed on them and had to encourage themes such as “Arab unity, Arab socialism, and Revolutionary Spirit Society of Sufficiency and Justice” (Curry and Dassin, *Press Control around the World*, 193) and attack themes such as Zionism and Imperialism. At the end, journalists practiced self-censorship because they either feared the government or they wanted to live in luxury, as the new system was more financially rewarding.

Even the press syndicate, under nationalization, could not hold its general assembly in 1962 and 1963 and elections were postponed. But four members of the syndicate’s board of directors resigned as protest against the illegal delay of the elections. So, finally, the government permitted the syndicate to elect a new board. Then came the 1967 War that shook the foundations of Nasser’s regime and many critics of the regime called for reform and political freedoms.

Although Anwar El Sadat wanted a free press, there was still censorship. Civilian censors from the government were resident in all newspapers and they checked all copy to be printed. In 1972, the press syndicate appealed to the government to remove censorship except for military matters. Sadat promised to lift censorship as soon as the journalists adopted a code of ethics. The code was adopted by the syndicate’s general assembly in February 1973. But, instead of fulfilling his promise, Sadat took drastic actions against the press and 64 intellectuals lost their job in newspapers, radio, TV, and theater; 27 were journalists working for daily newspapers, and among them were four top editors of Al-Ahram. It wasn’t until the 1973 war that Sadat’s point of view about the press began to change. “Armed with the confidence the war gave him” as Curry and Dussin said, Sadat asked the Egyptian media to follow an open information policy.

Following the October War, Heikal criticized Sadat for depending on the Americans to arrange the Arab-Isreali conflict. Heikal kept warning Sadat, in his weekly column in Al-Ahram, that there had not been any change in America’s pro-Israeli policy and that Sadat was falling in the negotiation trap set by the Americans and the Israelis. This criticism was more than Sadat could accept and he dismissed Heikal from the editorship of Al-Ahram. After which he abolished censorship except for military matters allowing more freedom of opinion for the press. The

negative aspects of Nasser's era began to be written by prominent journalists, writers, and thinkers such as Ali and Mustafa Amin and Galal El Din Hamamsy. Thus, Sadat did not criticize Nasser directly, but he did it in the name of freedom of opinion. Sadat said, to justify his act, that he did not want press censorship, but it was clear that the press needed reorganization so that the editors could not publish harmful campaigns or attack somebody based on personal reasons.

In 1975, Sadat formed the first press council in Egypt to approve the publication of newspapers and licensing of journalists (Curry and Dussink, *Press Control Around the World*, 198). To draw up a code of ethics was among the functions of the press council. The first article stated that the press' duty of watching was over their government through free writing and constructive criticism. Also, worth mentioning is that Sadat, in 1976, initiated a multiparty system.

In 1980, Sadat imposed the "Law of Shame" saying that there are some people who "exploit freedom and democracy" and people who do not know what shame is must be reprimanded. Those found guilty under the law could be deprived of all the advantages of political expression up to five years. The law of shame was criticized by the weekly *Al-Shaab* as it would be used to protect Sadat's regime from any criticism (Curry and Dussin, *Press Control Around the World*, 205). Thus, it was clear that Sadat encouraged, at the beginning, freedom of expression and wanted the opposition press to grow and flourish, but when this freedom went too far in criticizing him and his government, he cut it off.

Under Mubarak's regime, the Center for Human Rights Legal Aid worked hard to defend freedom of expression by criticizing law 93/1995. This law, which is dubbed the "Press Assassination Law" imposed long prison terms plus heavy fines for journalists guilty of libel. New amendments to this law included a provision granting authorities the right to arrest journalists without charge. In cases when journalists are not prosecuted for their opinions, authorities censor their publications. Some Islamist lawyers have misused the constitutional right of direct claim and filed cases against writers, intellectuals, and artists, claiming that they offended Islam. Fifty-one journalists and writers were taken to court using direct claim in 54 court cases. The most prominent people tried in this way were the editors of *Ruz-el-Yusif*, actress Yusra, and poet Abd-Al-Muati Higazi (*Saying What We Think*, CHRLA, 1).

Law 93, issued in 1995, changed articles 199, 302, 306a and 308 and abolished articles 178, 306b, article 135 of the penal procedure code number 150/50 and article 67 of the Egyptian Press Syndicate Law 76/70.

Article 188 stated that the publishing of false information that would endanger or disrupt the public welfare would result in the imprisonment of its publisher, or would oblige him to pay a fine, or both. Law 93 made the imprisonment mandatory and the fine was increased to a minimum of LE 5,000 and a maximum of LE 10,000 from the previous range of LE 20–LE 500. The law stated that anyone would be punished for publishing news, rumors, false propaganda, statements, or slogans that would disrupt the public welfare. The statement "if it was related to the peace or general welfare" was replaced by "if it intended to offend the general peace; or cause terror among people; or harm the public welfare; or [cause] contempt for the state's institutions or their officials."

After Law 93, article 302 was changed to charge the writer as guilty for defaming a public figure on the basis of intentions and wills. Thus, to publish any news story, article or column about a certain figure, the writer had to collect documents and investigate well to obtain solid evidence for his article. If such evidence was not found, the journalist or writer was put under the threat of losing his job and being put in prison. Article 303 was based on the previous one, article 302, stating that in case publications were intended to defame a public figure, the publisher would be liable to a minimum imprisonment term of a year instead of 24 hours and a maximum of three years instead of two. The fine was raised to LE 5,000–LE 15,000 instead of LE 20–LE 200.

Article 306a stated that anyone condemned of tarnishing a woman's reputation would be sentenced to one year of imprisonment instead of a month, and a fine of LE 200–LE 1,000. Article 308 stated that anyone condemned of defaming a family would be sentenced to two years in prison and a fine.

Article 135 of the penal procedure code and article 67 of the Egyptian Press Syndicate law were repealed meaning that journalists could be imprisoned without trial for an unlimited period of time.

After a series of meetings, over 2,000 journalists demonstrated peacefully on June 2 before holding a conference attended by political party members and members of the People's Assembly who opposed the law and supported

the journalists. The conference demanded journalist's rights in guaranteeing press freedom. The meeting resulted in a strong opposition to the law and a memo was sent to the president to express the journalists' views.

On June 17, the syndicate council formed a committee to assure that there were no violations of the recommendations proposed in the meeting. On the 21st, Mubarak met with the members of the syndicate council and approved the establishing of a committee to work on a new draft. On July 15th, Shura council speaker Dr. Helmy formed the committee. A series of meetings and negotiations resulted in a new draft of press law by March 15, 1996.

On June 30, 1996, President Mubarak signed two laws. Law 95 concerning penal codes and Law 96 concerning the organization of the press. The new Law 93/96 introduced several changes to Law 95:

- Article 3 stated that the press should play its role freely and independently to prepare the public for a free atmosphere that should lead to development and serve the interest of the nation and the people.
- Article 4 stated that there should be no censorship on newspapers. However, in some cases, such as emergency and war crises, limited restrictions should be imposed for the sake of public security.
- Article 5 stated there should be no confiscation or delay of newspapers by administrative means.

The following are some of the important changes in the penal code of the 1996 law:

- Article 188 — anyone who was accused of publishing false or misleading information was punished by imprisonment for up to one year and a fine between LE 5,000 and LE 20,000, or either.
- Article 303 — anyone accused of libel would be imprisoned for up to one year and be charged a fine between LE 2,500 and LE 7,500. Those convicted for libel concerning a public figure would be imprisoned for up to two years and fined LE 5,000–LE 10,000, or either.
- Abolishing the minimal punishments stated in articles 172, 176, 178, (178 repeated), 179, 181, and the third paragraph of article 309 and the first paragraph of article 309a repeated. The punishment should not exceed a year imprisonment and a fine with a minimum of LE 10,000 and a maximum of LE 5,000 or either.

It is true that the new laws imposed less severe punishments on journalists, but still they were considered restrictions to freedom. Although the president insists that the press is free, he mentions it is free within the interest of the public welfare. Journalists and writers still have to take care while gathering and publishing information to avoid committing a crime. They still have to check the credibility of their sources and possess solid evidence in order not to cause any harm to the public.

At the 4th Journalists' Conference held at the Egyptian Press Syndicate in February 2004, the head of the syndicate read a message from the president canceling imprisonment for publication crimes. He added that legal changes would follow this step, which is a move towards more freedom and democracy.

Legal Actions Against Al-Shaab Newspaper

In actual practice the current law (95/96) has been applied to several cases that have ended up in Egyptian courts. The cases concern the writings of "Al-Shaab" opposition paper, which is currently closed and is the mouthpiece of Al-Amal opposition political party.

The International Principles of Professional Ethics in Journalism were prepared by several consultative meetings of international and regional organizations of journalists between 1978 and 1983. The following organizations participated:

1. International Organization of Journalists
2. International Federation of Journalists
3. International Catholic Union of the Press
4. Latin-American Federation of Journalists
5. Latin-American Federation of Press Workers
6. Union of African Journalists
7. Confederation of ASEAN (Association of South East Asian Nations) Journalists

The following principles of professional ethics in journalism were prepared as an international common ground and as a source for national and regional codes of ethics. This set of principles is intended to be promoted by each professional organization through ways most adequate to its members.

- Principle I: Peoples' right to true information
- Principle II: The journalists' dedication to objective reality
- Principle III: The journalists' social responsibility
- Principle V: Public access and participation
- Principle VI: Respect for privacy and human dignity
- Principle VII: Respect for public interest
- Principles VIII: Respect for universal values and diversity of cultures
- Principle IX: Elimination of war and other great evils confronting humanity
- Principle X: Promotion of a new world information and communication order

Journal Charter and Code of Ethics of 1972

This law states that every professional journalist must adhere to the principles of honor, honesty and impartiality and to the ethics and traditions of the profession. Journalists have to abide by certain articles in the law, meaning total adherence to the basic instruments which guide the struggle of Egyptian people, particularly the charter of the National Action (1962), the declaration of March 30, 1968 and the program of National Action 1971, and to all the principles and objectives defined in them.

Code of Ethics (1983):

Adopted by the Supreme Council of the Press in Egypt in 1983. It says:

We, the Egyptian Journalists, believing in the glory of the journalistic profession and the connection between journalists' consciousness and the consciousness of public opinion, are honored to declare this Charter and to be committed to it.

First:

The concept of journalism is tied to freedom of the press. Protecting the honor of the press is a right. The activities of journalists should be based on telling the truth and on loyalty. The truthful written word and the other kinds of press media belonging to it is the responsibility of journalists.
The protection of public opinion and public taste.

Second:

These six points of honor of the press require commitment to the following:

- Journalists are prohibited from harming each other personally.
- The journalists should be committed to the rights of the citizen.
- The journalist should not illegally benefit from his job.
- News and commentaries transmitted to citizens should be authentic.
- The journalist's responsibility is complete; he should not throw it on the shoulders of the editor-in-chief, claiming that he was only obeying orders.

Third:

The journalist enjoys the following privileges:

- The right to express his opinion and respect the opinions of others.
- To protect himself from any material or moral aggression.
- The right to obtain correct information.
- The right to disclose those who may deceive him by providing him false information.
- He should be insured against plagiarism.
- The right to enjoy in full the rights guaranteed to him by laws.

Fourth:

The implementation of this charter depends on the consideration that the principles of this charter are a trust on the consciousness of the journalists.

Conclusions and Recommendations

There is a controversial debate about Egyptian press laws and whether they really offer freedom of expression as claimed. About this issue, Richard Jacquemond says that we should first describe the phenomenon known in Egypt as "paper democracy." The political opposition is increasingly kept out of positions of real power, yet it enjoys a great freedom of criticism through the printed media that the parties are permitted to publish.

Furthermore, journalists across the board have recently shown remarkable militancy in defending their professional rights. After 12 months of mobilization, they finally succeeded in winning the re-examination of a law that was threatening their freedoms under the pretext of combatting defamation. In a parallel development, for the first time since the nationalization of the press in 1960 there has been a blossoming of national and regional dailies and periodicals, numbering upwards of 500 and all more or less independent of the political parties.

Moreover, the vitality and openness of intellectual debate in Egypt has a lot to do with the fact that the government, by breaking with the monolithic policies of the Sadat era and reconnecting with some elements of Nasserism, has permitted the expression of diverse tendencies and opinions within its own cultural and media apparatuses. Over the past 10 years, the leftist secular intelligentsia which had been sidelined during the years of “counter-revolution” (Sadat’s presidency, 1971–1981) has made a remarkable comeback, and, importantly, has given the government the means to regain the ideological initiative in the face of the Islamist opposition. For example, much use is made of editorials, essays, and televised broadcasts and soap operas, which now serve as official government ideology — the *tanwir* (enlightenment). This basically involves promoting the leading figures, and the values, of the Arab *Nahda* (renaissance): patriotism and tolerance, religious belief and rationalism, freedom, and reformism.

On the other hand, some journalists see that there is no freedom of expression as there is still censorship in Egypt that prevents parts of some articles from being published.

Law and freedom are two distinct and controversial issues and in the end both are multifaceted and intricate. Law is usually known as the codified rules. With establishment of laws social culture should always be taken into consideration.

In the end, the law is concerned with placing controls or guaranteeing that individual freedom doesn’t destabilize the freedom of others. Nonetheless, nowadays many believe that the law shouldn’t curtail human freedom and a mature legal system should try to ensure a balance between freedom and human rights, and, the welfare and security of society.

In the Arab world, the state mistakenly gives priority to the security and stability of society over individual freedom. In addition, freedom is mostly a privilege given to ruling elites when it shouldn’t be a privilege, especially not of a certain social class or of the government.

The Arab states should attempt to achieve independence from oppression imposed by society and state, like in several important institutions as in mosques or churches. These institutions should respect citizens, accept other world cultures and value human rights. Also in establishing laws, the state should dismiss concepts of what is religiously acceptable or unacceptable as formulated by religious institutions.

Legislations in effect now in the Arab world give certain legal standing to the idea of freedom. However, freedom is recognized in the International Declaration of Human Rights set forth by the United Nations. The United Nations also recognizes religious freedom as well as civil and political freedom.

In various Arab legislations freedom of expression and civil/political freedom are respected yet in others despised. After the examination of these laws, four major observations should be made.

First, Arab legislations take advantage of the fact that the media can be simply manipulated by the state via its laws. Newspapers and books can be confiscated. Broadcasting stations can be closed down and journalists and any source of information can be punished under state law.

Second, Arab legislations concerned with regulation of the press only consider the public interest. They say that journalism is dangerous, and that it should be restricted through harsh punishments, supposedly to defend the public interest, security, and beliefs of the Umma. It’s very confusing how Arab governments pass blurred and clashing legislation establishing punishment, while discussing the importance of democracy. Journalists cannot possibly express their opinions under a formidable law that restricts and endangers their personal safety.

When freedom is the issue, there are strict controls in Egyptian legislation that can also be found in any Arab country. For example, in the Egyptian law of the press and publications, there are almost 11 articles in section 14 about

crimes related to the press and freedom of expression. Article 181 prohibits “contempt of a king or president of a foreign state.” Article 178 similarly mentions “possession of photography damaging the reputation of a country.”

Third, Arab legislations restrict and cast doubt on the generally accepted rights of free distribution of information and the right of journalists and the public to obtain information. The only Arab countries whose legislations allow journalists to obtain information are Egypt, Sudan, Yemen, Jordan, and Algeria. Still, in these countries information sharing is restricted and national and international newspapers can be censored and confiscated. Other Arab countries are under extreme limits like forbidding Internet access. Also, articles, 77, 121, 472 prevent sharing information or making statements without permission from senior officials.

Surprisingly it is also forbidden to publish political, economic, industrial and judicial information that can be found easily in international media. That includes statements or documents of intelligence services without clearance.

Lastly, in more than a dozen Arab states restrictions are imposed over the ownership of newspapers or publishing houses. Newspapers can't be issued without a license. Before being granted a license, certain conditions must be met, like capitals or deposits. Many Arab states adopt public ownership of newspapers in order to control them, and foreigners can't own newspapers. Twelve Arab countries use censorship excessively and authorities have the right to suspend publications for as long as they please.

Arab legislations are not tolerant of freedom of expression, especially in publishing. This is evident in the firmly established history of dictatorial traditions that pervade many aspects of our society. Arab elites repress legislators and impose political tyranny. The parties that support them haven't succeeded in accomplishing their unrealistic intentions for almost a century now. They have thrived in restraining their own citizens and violating the essential right to freedom of expression. To justify these violations the elites call for conservation of religious beliefs rather than “Westernization,” in order to protect the nation's identity.

Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Convention of Expression, promise the right to express opinions without interference. The article also establishes freedom to receive and give ideas orally or in writing, unless they damage others' reputation or national security. In addition, it gives citizens the right to communicate amongst each other, and obtain information in tandem with legal guarantees to make this information available.

The United Nations Human Rights Committee points out that limits to freedom of expression should be precise and specific, and they should not entail the risk of losing the right itself.

In spite of all this, Arab legislators' conscience isn't in any form disturbed. They provide rights in the constitution, but then suppress them through other laws. When accused of this, they feel no shame.

The information revolution not only influenced the press, but all the media. Distances between countries nowadays are no obstacle to the publishing of a newspaper as it can be distributed electronically and read by people all over the world. Now the state has a harder time controlling sources and the circulation of information.

The tighter the controls of Arab legislation over access to information, the higher the appetite of Arab citizens for “Western” information. If Arab legislatures wanted to censor the Internet or remove satellite dishes, soon the technology would allow for satellite dishes the size of a fist, impossible to track down. As for the Internet, it is now accessed without state agencies, thus can receive no control from the state.

One development that is paving the way for Arab freedom is the appearance of pan-Arab satellite channels and newspapers. They are published in non-Arab countries, so they are not under strict rules or extreme censorship. In addition to operating with a substantial amount of freedom, they are also tolerated by Arab officials.

The information revolution and the worldwide flood of information have undoubtedly forced Arab legislatures to accept the idea of freedom and change.

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يجب طرح السؤال

ما هي أخلاقيات العمل الاعلامي؟ هل هناك أسس وقوانين يتبعها الصحفيون؟ لماذا نحن بحاجة لمواثيق شرف مهنة الصحافة ومن الذي يقرر المعايير المتفق عليها؟ هل من الضرورة أن يلتزم كل من يمارس مهنة الصحافة بأسمى المعايير الأخلاقية والجدارة المهنية والسلوك المحترف؟

اسمحوا لي أن أعرض عليكم نسخة معدلة من ميثاق الشرف المقترح الذي لا زلت أعمل على تطبيقه في المؤسسات الاعلامية اللبنانية وأتمنى أن يكون مثالا يقتدى به في مؤسسات المطبوع والمرئي والمسموع في جميع الدول العربية. لنكن صادقين مع أنفسنا، لتقبل النقد الذاتي. فمن منا لا يخطئ؟ أليس الاعتراف بالخطأ فضيلة؟ الأخطاء الفادحة التي أراها وأسمعها وأقرأها يوميا في كافة وسائل الاعلام تزيدني قناعة الى مدى حاجتنا الى ميثاق شرف يقلل من التجاوزات غير الأخلاقية ويساهم في نهضة المهنة التي لطالما كانت محط انتقادات لما قد تسببه من مشاكل وحروب وفضائح. فحينما تركز التغطية على السلبيات وتتجاهل الايجابيات وحينما يفقد الصحافي المحترف توازنه المهني، ينحط مستوى الاعلام ويلحق الضرر للجميع.

فلراجع سويا أهمية المعايير التي أشرت اليها بدأ بالمصادر:

المصادر

من البديهيات الا يتخذ الصحافي من آراء الآخرين آراء له. لذلك يجب تحديد مصادر المعلومات الواردة سواء كانت من مؤسسات اعلامية أو مصادر أخرى.

هذه النقطة مهمة جدا نظرا للتقارير الواردة في الآونة الأخيرة حيث كشف النقاب عن فضائح اعلامية/صحافية في الولايات المتحدة الأميركية تمثلت بسرقة مضمون مقالات أو أحاديث لبعض ناس واستعملت من قبل صحفيين (وأحدهم مرموق) على أنها أصلية. والنتيجة أن هذه الحوادث أحدثت دوبا هائلا في كل المؤسسات الاعلامية لأنها تطعن في مصداقية الصحفيين والاعلام ككل.

إذا حللنا المضمون في كثير من الجرائد والمجلات مثلا، نرى مقالات لا يمكن لهذه الوسائل أن تكون قد حصلت عليها بطريقة شرعية لأنها مكلفة.

فلاشتراك في خدمات توفر مقالات عن البيئة مثلا أو التعليم أو الموضة أو عن العلوم و التكنولوجيا أو بما يخص الفلك و أخبار النجوم والمشاهير، كل ذلك يتطلب ميزانية ربما غير متوفرة لدى المؤسسة الاعلامية، فنرى المحرر ببساطة تصل حد الوقاحة أحيانا، يسرق هذه المعلومة أو تلك دون التعريف عن مصدرها لأنه وبكل بساطة بحاجة الى مادة يملأ بها صفحات مجلته.

هذا غير مقبول أخلاقيا. اذا تعب غيرك في الحصول على هذه المعلومات، كيف تقبل ضميريا أن تأخذ ما هو ليس لك؟ من البديهيات في الصحافة أن يعزز الصحافي المعلومات الواردة عنده من مصادر مجهولة بمصدر أو مصدرين و/أو بمعلومات وثائقية. لماذا؟ كم من مرة قرأنا أو سمعنا أن فلان الفلاني مصدر رفيع المستوى، أو مصدر موثوق به قال أو هاجم أو تحفظ عن الادلاء بـ أو أشار الى... كذا وكذا.

أين الأخلاق وأين الاحتراف والمصداقية؟ ما الذي أصبح يعتبر تضاربا في المصالح؟
 ر يقبل صحافي تذاكر سفر وغرف فنادق في منتجعات ووجبات في مطاعم أو من دول تروج للسياحة. والمطلوب من الصحافي انتاج ريبورتاج تلفزيوني عما شاهده خلال رحلة قام بها. هل سيؤثر الحافز المالي على تغطيته الاعلامية؟ و ما الذي يحدث في حال كان الفندق دون المستوى والمطاعم غير نظيفة والبلد غير آمن؟
 هل يستطيع هذا الصحافي تغطية تكاليفه في السفر؟ هل توفر له الجريدة أو شبكة التلفزة بدلات سفر واقامة للمهمات الصحافية؟ وهل يكمل هذه البدلات بالهدايا من المنتجعات والفنادق وشركات الطيران والمعلنين وغيرهم؟ ما ثمن كل هذه الدعاية؟ ومن المستفيد الحقيقي ومن هو المتضرر الأكبر؟

يجب الا يؤيد الصحافي أية سلعة أو خدمة تجارية عن طريق الدعاية لها، والا يعد بمقال مقابل اعلان.
 يترتب كذلك على الصحافي أن يكشف عن أية مبالغ يدفعها بشكل مباشر أو غير مباشر بهدف الحصول على مقابلة والا يدفع المال للأشخاص الذين قد يكونون مصدرا للمعلومات.

لنفترض جدلا أن صحافي دفع مبلغ من المال الى شخص على اتصال بعصابات بهدف الحصول على سبق صحفي في قضية قد تؤدي نتائج التحقيق فيها الى محاكمة مجرم أو الاطاحة برئيس شركة متورط في فضيحة مالية؟ هل هي الطريقة الأمثل لاستقصاء المعلومات؟ هل سيضطر الصحافي الى دفع النقود كلما احتاج لمصادر وهل سيبتزه الوسيط يوما ما؟ وكيف يؤثر ذلك على صحة ودقة المعلومات؟

عليه أيضا أن يشكك بدوافع المصدر قبل أن يتعهد بعدم ذكر الأسماء.

وماذا عن الصحافي الذي يغطي الأخبار الاقتصادية ويحصل على معلومات قد تسبب في هبوط أو ارتفاع أسعار الأسهم أو يتمكن بطريقة أخرى من جمع الأرباح من خلال عملية بيعه وشراؤه أسهما يعلم، من خبير مالي، أن قيمتها سترتفع خلال أيام أو ساعات؟ هل يستغل مكانته الصحافية لتحقيق مكاسب شخصية؟

من جهة أخرى، قد يحصل صحافي آخر على جائزة تكرمه لعمله الدؤوب والمحترف في تغطية كارثة بيئية ويتم في السياق نفسه، لفت أنظار الرأي العام لتجاوزات شركة هندسية أو متعهد مجمع سكني. قد يواجه الصحافي معضلة اذا تبين أن للمنظمة المانحة للجائزة أهداف سياسية تتنافى مع أهداف مؤسسته الاعلامية أو معتقداته الخاصة، لا سيما ودوره الأساسي هو إيصال الخبر بطريقة دقيقة وعادلة وليس بالضرورة الترويج للمنظمة البيئية.

ثم هل يقبل جائزة مالية وحوافز أخرى كرحلة الى الخارج لحضور حفل توزيع الجوائز مثلا؟

ليس هناك جواب يطبق على كل الحالات، فهذا يعتمد على سمعة المنظمة المانحة للجائزة والسبب في اعطاء الجائزة وحتى على نوعية المقال المطبوع أو التقرير التلفزيوني أو الموجود على الانترنت.

الدقة - العدالة

تحدث في المقدمة عن الأخطاء، وهنا أكرر أهمية أن يعترف من ارتكب الخطأ، بخطأه عندما يتبين له أن المعلومات غير دقيقة أو غير صالحة للنشر، فيقوم بتصحيحها وتنقيحها حتى لا يؤدي ذلك الى الحاق الضرر بالآخرين.

على الصحافي أن يكون على دارية تامة بالمعلومات المتعلقة بالصور التي بحوزته وألا يقوم بالتلاعب بها. قد تبدو هذه النصيحة واضحة لكن كم من مرة رأينا صورا لناس في مواقع لم يزورونها قط أو لأشخاص خذفوا من الصورة لأنهم على خلاف مع أهل الحكم. أما المسنين من المشاهير، فهنالک تصميم من قبلهم على نشر صور لهم في شبابهم فقط.

يجب على الاعلامي الا يتلاعب بأشرطة التسجيل الاذاعية أو الفيديو أو المعلومات المتحركة والغرافيكس لأغراض غير قانونية و مخلة بالأداب وعليه كذلك أن يبين الفرق بين الصورة الرمزية والصورة الوثائقية.

فعلى سبيل المثال اذا اضطر المقدم التلفزيوني أو الصحافي أن يغير أو يوه صورة ضحية لاستعادة وقائع جريمة أو اذا احتاج الى

أولاً: من هو هذا المصدر؟

ثانياً: هل هو فعلاً موثوق به؟ من يقرر ذلك؟ ربما أراد هذا المصدر استغلال الصحفي لمهاجمة أخصامه عبر وسائل الاعلام. في رأيي، بواب المبني (الكونسييرج) مصدر موثوق به لأنه يعرف أسرار الحي. لكن هل أريد استعمال هذا المصدر بالذات لاستقصاء معلوماتي؟ ربما، اذا كان شاهد عيان في حادث، لكن لكل نوعية من الأخبار مستوى معين من المصادر يؤثر على مصداقيتها.

ليس من الضروري تعريف المصدر اذا كان الصحفي هو نفسه شاهد العيان، كتواجهه مثلاً لحظة وقوع حادث تصادم عدة سيارات مع صهريج ينقل سائل غير معروف. فالصحافي رأى آثار الاصطدام وسمع دوي صفارات سيارات الشرطة والاسعاف والمطافئ واستنشق رائحة السائل. لكن التأكد من محتوى الصهريج وأسباب الحادث يتطلب التعرف على الشخص المسؤول الذي هو في مركز يخوله التحدث عن الحادث.

الهدايا

أما بالنسبة للهدايا، فهنا نجد كما هائلا من الدلائل والنصائح عن هذا الموضوع المثير للجدل.

لنأخذ على سبيل المثال المقولة التي تنص على أن الصحفي يجب ألا يقبل المال أو الرحلات المجانية أو الرشاوي على أنواعها من مصادر يقوم بتغطيتها اعلامياً.

سأعطيكم أمثلة عدة تستطيعون من خلالها تقييم ما اذا كان الأسلوب المتبع مقبول أم لا:

اذا أخذنا مثلاً سياسياً مليونيراً يصطحب معه مجموعة من الصحفيين على متن طائرته الخاصة لتغطية رحلة يقوم بها لتمثيل بلده في مؤتمر ما. وفي نهاية الرحلة يقدم معاونو السياسي لكل صحفي على متن الطائرة مغلف فيه مبلغ من النقود أو هدية ثمينة له أو لزوجته.

ماذا يفعل الصحفي؟ هل يقبل الهدية أمام زملائه أو يرفضها أو يقبلها ويردها فيما بعد؟ واذا قبلها، هل يعني ذلك أنه مضطر أن يكتب فقط الأخبار ذات الطابع الايجابي عن هذا السياسي؟ وما هي سياسة المؤسسة الاعلامية تجاه قبول أو عدم قبول الهدايا؟ هل هناك قوانين داخلية صارمة تمنع الرشاوي؟ هل تعتبر الهدية رشوة؟ هل يقال للصحافي أنه اذا لم يقبل الهدية يهين السياسي أو انه سيكون منبوذاً منه ولن يدعى في المرة المقبلة لمرافقته أو أن مستشاره الاعلامي لن يزوده مستقبلاً بالمعلومات؟ مثل آخر، رئيس تحرير مشهور معروف بالخل تجاه الصحفيين العاملين في جريدته ومعروف أن مرتبه في حدود أرقام معينة. وبين ليلة وضحاها يصبح لهذا الشخص سيارة فخمة جداً ويرسل ابنه الى احدى أعلى الجامعات في الخارج. كيف حصل على هذه الثروة؟ وهل يتنافى ذلك مع عمله الاعلامي؟

وما شهدته شخصياً خلال مؤتمر نظمته في بيروت منذ عامين أن حضر صحافي يهذه المواصفات وتحدث عن أن الميثاق الذي أقترحته غير واقعي لأنه لا يتماشى مع واقع بلد كلبنان وتفشي الفساد فيه. والملفت للانتباه أن الصحفيين الشباب في المؤتمر انتقدوه بشدة وتسبب ذلك في تراشق كلامي لأنهم على علم أنه من أكبر المرشحين والمنافقين. فكيف اذا كنت أنت أحد العاملين في هذه المؤسسة؟

والمؤسف أن أحد المحررين في هذه الجريدة يقبض مرتباً شهرياً من مؤسسة تربوية يغطي أخبارها وعندما حصل أن تعرضت تلك المؤسسة التربوية لفضيحة في البلد، ركضت كل وسائل الاعلام لكشف خفايا الفضيحة وملابساتها بينما اكتفت الجريدة المذكورة أعلاه بنقل أخبار شبه خالية من المضمون لارضاء المسؤولين في تلك المؤسسة التربوية.

صحافي آخر من وكالة أنباء عالمية اعترف في خلال المؤتمر ما قبل الأخير الذي قمت بتنظيمه في الجامعة أنه قبل ساعة ثمينة من أمير خليجي ذي نفوذ في بلده حتى لا يتسبب عدم قبوله باهانة ذلك الأمير وأنه (أي الصحافي) قدم الساعة فيما بعد كهدية ولم يحتفظ بها. هل يعني ذلك، في حال عدم قبول الصحافي للساعة، أنه سيفقد الأمير كمصدر للأخبار؟

على الصحافي أن يميز دائما بين التمثيل واعادة تصوير الأمور بقالب درامي وعليه ألا يصور المواد الصحفية التي قدمها في السابق وكأنها عفوية وبالتالي ألا يزور الحقيقة باحضر ممثلين يستعملون العنف في المشاهد أمام الكاميرا. ومن المؤسف أنه خلال الحرب الأهلية اللبنانية قام صحافيون محليون وأجانب (ومنهم مراسلي شبكات تلفزيونية أميركية) باختلاق أخبار واللجوء الى افتعال معارك ودفع المال لأعضاء ميليشيات ليطلقوا النار على بعضهم البعض ليبرروا (الصحافيون) وجودهم في لبنان والمصاريف التي كلفت مؤسساتهم ميزانيات باهظة، خاصة تكاليف البث الفضائي. ولدى تعثر هذه الطريقة قام هؤلاء الصحفيون برسالة أشرطة التقارير برا عبر الحدود عن طريق سوريا أو بحرا عن طريق قبرص. وهنا علينا الإشارة الى أهمية التمييز بين التأيد وتغطية الأنباء.

السؤال الذي يطرح نفسه هنا، اذا كنت أؤيد جهة دون أخرى في صراع حربي، هل من الممكن أن يؤثر ذلك على مصداقيتي كصحافية؟ الجواب هو نعم. من الصعب الابتعاد عن الشعور الانساني الذي يحسه الصحافي وهو يشاهد مآسي الحروب ومخلفاتها لكن المحترف يعلم أن اختيار التعبيرات الدقيقة غير الحماسية لها أيضا الوقع المطلوب في نقل الأنباء ولفت الأنظار لضحايا المعارك. ومن منا لا يتذكر الفتى العراقي الذي أحترق جسمه وبترت يدها من جراء تعرضه للمعارك الطاحنة في بغداد؟ فلولا التقارير الدقيقة والمشاهد الانسانية الحية المرسله من قبل سامية نخول الصحافية اللبنانية المحترفة ومديرة مكتب وكالة رويترز في الخليج، لكان الصبي أصبح أحصائية أخرى ولما وجد من يتبناه بعد وفاة أهله وأكثر أفراد عائلته وطبعا لما اهتم أحد بمعالجته وتوفير له حياة جديدة وأمنة.

الحرية - الخصوصية

يجدر الإشارة هنا الى أن الخصوصية هي حق طبيعي يتمتع به كل انسان وعلى الصحافي احترام هذا الحق، حتى لو تسبب ذلك في فشله في الحصول على سبق صحفي. هناك أسلوب في التعاطي وما أبشع الصحافي الذي يدفع بالميكروفون في وجه متضرر من زلزال أو فيضان أو جريمة قتل ليسأله: ما هو شعورك الآن؟ التدخل بمآسي الناس وألامهم غير مستحب الا اذا كان ذلك مبررا باعتبارات تأخذ طابع المصلحة العامة. فاذا كانت مثلا الضحية التي تعرضت لاعتداء مستعدة للتعرف على من هاجمها، تكون بذلك قد أنقظت الكثيرات غيرها من التعرض لاعتداءات مماثلة.

وهنا أود الإشارة بصفتي أم الى أن يولي الأهل أطفالهم عناية خاصة، مع الأخذ بعين الاعتبار تأثير التلفزيون والراديو والأترنت عليهم. فلا يجوز اجراء المقابلات مع القاصرين الا بوجود أو بموافقة أحد الوالدين أو الوصي عليهم، الا اذا كان الهدف من المقابلة حماية مصالح الطفل أو اذا كان الطفل محط اهتمام العامة.

الانترنت

وختاما، يجب على الصحافي مراعاة حقوق النشر والبث على شبكة الأنترنت كما هي الحال مع وسائل الاعلام الأخرى. فليس أسهل من نقل المعلومات الموجودة لدينا من مصادر أخرى ونسخها كما هي والادعاء بتأليفها. لقد جند الخبراء لدراسة وضع الأنترنت القانوني لأنه وسيلة اعلامية وترفيهية تتخطى حدود البلاد وأكثر الحواجز، ما عدا تلك الموضوعية من قبل بعض الأنظمة، لأن تأثيرها يساهم في التقارب بين الناس كما أنه يثير الجدل لما تحتويه المواقع من مضامين ثورية أو مخلة بالأداب العامة أو ضد الأعراف. لذا علينا كاعلاميين التقيد بالمسؤولية نظرا للقوة الهائلة التي بين يدينا. فالاعلام سلاح ذو حدين: يدافع تارة عن من هضمت حقوقهم ويفتك طورا بالأبرياء والأشرار على حد سواء.

وشكرا.

استعمال ممثل يعيد وقائع الجريمة، يجب أن يكون على دراية تامة بالموضوع حتى لا يعتقد المشاهد أن الممثل هو المجرم الحقيقي. ان أخلاقيات العمل الصحفي تتعدى الافصاح عن تضارب في المصالح لدى الآخرين و تحاول تفادي هذا التضارب عند الصحفيين أنفسهم.

كتب فريد براون المعلق الاعلامي الأميركي ونائب رئيس لجنة أخلاقيات العمل في جمعية الصحفيين المحترفين في الولايات المتحدة، أن جذور آداب المهنة تعود الى دقة نقل الخبر و السلوك المسؤول تجاهه.

وأضاف في مقال عن موضوع آداب العمل نشر في مجلة كويل التابعة للجمعية أن أكثر المعلومات عن الأرقام والاحصائيات الواردة من مصادر جديرة بالثقة لا تحتاج للتعريف الشخصي (أي أن الشخص الفلاني كتب التقرير السنوي للبنك الدولي). لكن المشكلة قد تقع، حسب قول براون، اذا أساء الصحفي تفسير الأرقام، لأن الصحفيين مشهورون بردائهم في الرياضيات ومادة الحساب. واذا كتب صحفي أو علق على ضريبة اضافية للمبيعات دون استشارة خبير اقتصادي أو اجراء مقابلة مع الشخص الذي يقترح فرض هذه الضريبة أو أخذ رأي التجار والمستهلكين في عين الاعتبار، قد يسبب كل ذلك ببلبله في البلد أو أزمة مالية أو هروب الرساميل أو اللجوء لتبييض الأموال لتجنب دفع هذه الضرائب.

ما هي وظيفة المحرر ومخرج البرنامج التلفزيوني والمشرف على موقع الانترنت الذي يضع المعلومات التي يراها المتصفحون على شبكة العنكبوت؟

يقول أحد المحللين أن تحرير الجريدة أو المجلة أو نشرة الأخبار بدون ادراك المسؤوليات القانونية ومخاطر النشر والبت هي كمن يقود السيارة وهو معصوب العينين.

لكل بلد قوانين تعنى بقضايا القذح والذم والتعدي على الشؤون الخاصة للناس لذلك من البديهي أن يكون أصحاب مهنة المتاعب على علم بها حتي لا يتورطوا في مشاكل تؤثر سلبا على مؤسساتهم وتسبب في تعطيل أعمالهم و ملاحقتهم قضائيا. ان الأفضل في هذه الحالات استشارة محامي للتأكد من الحقوق والواجبات المترتبة على الصحفي ورئيس التحرير أو مديرية الأخبار والمؤسسة الاعلامية ككل، خاصة اذا كانت التغطية ستسبب ضجة سياسية أو فضيحة مالية من شأنها قلب الأوراق وقطع الأرزاق. على المسؤولين الاعلاميين أيضا التنبه للأحاديث و المعلومات في التحقيقات الاستقصائية، وكذلك الموضوعات المثيرة للجدل التي قد تعتبر تشهيرا.

وهنا من الأفضل حذف المعلومات التي تشهر بالآخرين تجنباً للملاحقة القضائية. أما اذا كان لا بد من نشرها أو بثها فمن الضروري امكانية اثبات التهم المنسوبة والارتكاز على دلائل متينة.

من أسس الدقة والعدالة أن يدافع الاعلامي عن مبادئ حرية الصحافة و أن يشجع حرية التعبير وأن يعمل للوقوف بوجه التحريف والتكتم عن الأنباء والرقابة.

شيء يميز في الصحافة العربية هو نشر الافتتاحيات على الصفحة الأولى من الجريدة ولقد رأينا في لبنان افتتاحيات ونشرات أخبار تبدأ بتعليقات مبنية على تراشق كلامي بين السياسيين يصل الى حد التلاسن والسباب.

وهنا من الأفضل أن يميز الصحفي بين التعليقات والحقائق وأن يضع كلا منها في موضعها الصحيح كي تفهم بوضوح، دون المبالغة بها أو التضييق من نطاقها. وعلى الصحفي أن يكتب عناوين تتماشى مع محتوى المقالات.

عندما عملت كمراسلة ومحررة في وكالة الأنباء الفرنسية كنت أتضايق عندما يصلني خبر من أحد المكاتب للوكالة يكون عنوانه بمثابة اعلان حرب مثلاً وأضطر أن أنقب بين الفقرات بحثاً عن ما يثبت أن بلد «أ» أرسل جيوشه لمقاتلة قوات بلد «ب» ويتبين لاحقاً أن كل ما حدث هو اطلاق نار عبر الحدود بالخطأ ويكون الصحفي ذكر هذا التفصيل في آخر المقال.

من الخطورة أن يحصل الصحفي على المعلومات بطريقة سرية، كالهوية المزيفة أو الميكروفون أو الكاميرات الخفية أو التجسس و التسلل و تضليل الأسباب المتعلقة بالتغطية الاخبارية. ولكن قد يحق للصحفيين القيام بذلك في حالات استثنائية بحيث تخدم هذه الأساليب المصلحة العامة، كانقاذ حياة رهينة مثلاً أو الوقاية من وقوع كارثة أو حماية المجتمع من أفة مروجي المخدرات والمعتدين على الأطفال.

Session VII

— I'd like to refer to my experience as an editor at Tele-Liban from 1975 to 1986. I received material about a woman suicide bomber. None of her family members knew what she was up to. Her father didn't know how to hide from the shame. When our reporter went to their house to interview the family, he told the mother, who was very depressed: "Rejoice! Your daughter has become a martyr." It was completely out of place and reconfirms what was said about journalists showing sensitivity during times of crisis.

— It's true the media in the U.S. are not monolithic but the problem is that mainstream media are more predominant and during the (Iraq) war they were definitely pro- the Bush administration. It seems that in times of crisis it's very difficult to ask the media to swim against the current and give alternative views. Do you see the irony when at the same time the Bush administration was trying to sell democracy in the Arab World?

Skene: Yes. I wouldn't say the press was pro-Bush. There was simply a lack of skepticism, a lack of depth and inquiry. I have to add that this was not simply a press problem. You could also see it in the United States Congress. There was very little congressional criticism or skepticism about the PATRIOT Act or any of the congressional responses. The outpouring of government money to support the families of people who died in the World Trade Center was just unprecedented. The whole political environment was very different from Oklahoma City. There's a vast number of examples in which we have not been a very good example of democracy and good character at the same time that we're trying to preach that to the rest of the world. I think a lot of the reaction in the States to the Abu Ghraib story is that we should expect better of ourselves. In a different context, that's part of what I was saying yesterday about journalists being like Caesar's wife.

— My question is about corruption and private planes and journalists who accept bribes, about journalism for rent. Don't you think it's very idealistic to talk about journalism for rent in a country so rife with corruption? I'm not justifying bribery for journalists, but can we be so idealistic when political corruption is so prevalent?

Abu-Fadil: That's true. But let me ask you, what would happen if journalists boycott news coverage? We wouldn't give them (politicians) a platform. Can someone try it once?

— Yesterday I was struck about talk regarding Morocco and the free private media were called free media, given that public media are not free. But in Lebanon that doesn't apply. Private and public Lebanese media are not free. When we pass media laws and then allow top government officials to own media, we've created the legislation for the powers that be. So what you're suggesting is very complex and difficult. Wherever we work in Lebanon we end up being bribed.

— The cases you're presenting indicate that even if there were a clear code of ethics with consensus, there would still be daily problems like what journalists would do in individual cases at all times. I'll give you examples of instances I've suffered from in recent months.

A film was shown with a group of young people in America talking to young people in Iraq. After the film was aired, I heard that one of the teenagers who appeared in the film was beaten up because some of the viewers didn't like what he said. Here the Iraqi youths in Iraq were expressing their opinions. So that put me in the position of thinking, should I have foreseen the trouble ahead of the broadcast? Another case is about a documentary film produced by a leading European TV station that aired worldwide. We received a phone call five minutes before airtime that one of the people appearing in the film feared for his life because he had information related to Saddam. This is an extreme case. But even if we wanted to sympathize with him, it was literally minutes before broadcasting the program. It was too late to do anything. These are cases that have no easy answers. The last example is about a

production idea we have about a taboo subject. All the cases we found from different countries, none agreed to show their faces on camera. They all wanted blurred faces. We may have done our homework and proper research, but how do we convince viewers to believe these cases if we can't show the people in question? Maybe we made it up? It's a dilemma. There's no ready-made answer. It required daily, sometimes snap, decisions.

Abu-Fadil: I agree, but there are basics and there's common ground in the codes I consulted and used as frameworks from which to draw what we're proposing. We're also trying to accommodate the realities of the country here. Certainly there's no one-size-fits-all, but we must agree that there are standards and common denominators with which we must go along. You as a producer, reporter and editor on the ground face daily decisions and have no choice at times but when the guidelines have been instilled in you, that there are ethics that shouldn't be overlooked, we can then act more appropriately.

— I just want to emphasize that last point. Codes of ethics are never perfect. If you look at the Press Complaints Commission in Britain, it's a very long document that keeps on getting amended. But it's good to have something. I wrote a press code for the former Yugoslav republic of Macedonia right after the civil war there. I wrote it in a hurry two years ago and I mixed up the words libel and defamation. You can find this on the Internet. You can't change that any more. But I'm very glad that the editors-in-chief of Albanian, Macedonian and Slavic ethnicities got together and signed this document. It's just 11 skeleton principles, mainly about tolerance against racism. They had a skeleton of an agreement about what is unethical. Something to start from. That's what a code of ethics should be. It should never be seen as something final but something that is in process all the time. Even with 11 principles thrown together in a hurry, you can do some good.

— There is a very huge gap between the media ethics discourse and reality. Not only in the Arab world. In the Arab world it's a very serious problem. What's on paper is not practiced. It's also the case in the United States. Medical evidence of the danger of cigarettes has always been ignored by the media. Why? Because they want to please advertisers. Another problem between what we teach, promote and reality is the fact that media organizations in 1991 accepted to be part of the military, to work within the limitations imposed by the military. I think they're also doing this today and that's not ethical. If they were to stick with what they believe in, they should have said no. That goes back to the issue of whether a journalist can be a patriot at the same time or not.

Skene: I disagree with you on the tobacco case. A lot of newspapers have refused to take tobacco advertising in the last 10 or 15 years. But stories drawn from litigation about plots by tobacco executives to cover up the harmfulness of cigarette smoking have been very much in the media. That doesn't change your larger point. There is not a code of ethics in the United States. In fact a lot of newspapers resist writing down codes of ethics partly for legal reasons. We did this when I was at the St. Petersburg Times. I actually wrote a section for the reporters' handbook on legal standards and legal rules and how to make decisions and decided not to include that chapter in the handbook because as soon as you do that it becomes another weapon to be used if there's any mistake in the newspaper. The plaintiff's lawyers kill you with your own aspirations. So some of the laws have become quite perverse in that regard. There's no question that there are a lot of ethical failings. I think there are a lot of ethical successes that we've had in terms of making gifts and outside payments and subsidies. It's highly frowned upon. It's almost non-existent. It's true that any code is no better than the people who practice it. It's in the discussions in every newsroom that articulate their own internal standards that will determine how strong a newspaper is. Some newspapers are better than others. It's partly because of the standards that they impose themselves.

— On the issue of publishing pictures, you said pictures shouldn't be misrepresented or changed. Sometimes publishing a picture may suggest things to people. You used the U.S. dollar in your presentation to discuss bribes. Are you trying to suggest that America is bribing journalists or that it is the superpower that is bribing? Is this an indication that the dollar specifically is the currency accepted by journalists? Can journalists accept other currencies?

Abu-Fadil: There's software I used that included pictures such as dollar bills. I found one of the archived pictures of a man holding dollar bills which I thought was appropriate for the subject at hand, so I used it.



Workshop Part II

Monitoring and Evaluating Media Practices

— In our discussions in the past few days I heard that in the Arab press they felt at times not everything they wrote or did came out in the newspapers. They felt that this was something to moan about. This happens all over the world, not just in the Arab press. Even major newspapers in the Western world ask for a story and go to lots of trouble to get an interview and the reporter goes to a lot of trouble to do this interview and write it on time with the deadlines and difference in time and then it's sent back. The reporter writes it again and it's sent back again. The story which may be an interview becomes two quotes in another story.

— Our speech, the amount we say is so full of rubbish, it is quite a task to edit yourself before you send something. At around 50 I'm getting to learn how to make what I say small. I was writing in a newspaper lately and then decided that 300 words was the maximum. Of course the computer counts the words for me. Then I discovered there were 30 words that could easily be dropped. So I dropped the 30. Then I wanted more thoughts to top up the story to 300. After some practice, I'm discovering that to fill the 300 words with good thoughts you need to work a lot, to collect lots of information and to think about it deeply. So if you want to write a longer letter, it takes much less time.

— I think we need to work on two tracks: one is media literacy for people on how to deal with the media and the other one is constant training of journalists on how to deal with different sectors of society. It's imperative that we have people trained in a lot of areas that are totally lacking in terms of substantive coverage like business news, the environment, medical and scientific news, the legal profession. We often have people covering courts and lawyers who know nothing about the legal profession or the laws or the whole system and how it functions. We need to have training courses in those areas. But it's also very important to have your average citizen become aware of what the media are, what their impact is and how to deal with reporters, editors, people who may invade their privacy, who pop questions out of the blue to fluster them. I'm thinking in particular of children. I'm calling for a media literacy program for school children. We need to have something like that in our schools, not just in Lebanon, but across the Arab world. We have to have some sort of awareness of the media and their impact.

Tarabay: It seems we're trying to initiate training.

— I think if you're offering training, to do so to journalists or people working in the media on how not to be libelous and how not to be slanderous and not fall into mistakes. There are ways to get away with it. If they know how not to be trapped by the laws, it's very important for them.

— I'd like to add a third track. Authorities and specialists should be encouraged to conduct studies on content analysis of certain media to know if the coverage is balanced or not. As you know, Dr. Tarabay, we carried out a pilot study at the Lebanese University about As-Safir newspaper. We still don't have the full result but you'd be amazed what we discovered. We should also encourage universities or information centers, media institutions to contribute in the publication of specialized periodicals and manuals. I don't think we have enough.

— Maybe we should find some way to encourage the media itself to help fund these training centers for journalists within the profession. The media has a responsibility towards reporters.

Tarabay: It's not a matter of finding or funding the training centers. First of all, it's the commitment. We got the funding for an advanced training course, we announced it, we sent letters, we invited people. By the deadline we

got two or three.

— Yes, we did secure funding for an advanced training course in investigative journalism for mid-level editorial staffers and specified in the invitations that it was mid-level editorial. What we got were all beginners. One was an editor, the rest were beginners. I had trouble with the sponsors, because according to the contract, this was specifically for mid-level editorial. I've had to put the course on hold and will have to re-market it and either they send us the participants we asked for or I'll have to restructure it and rewrite the contract and have it for beginners. You're almost insulting the editors when you tell them you're going to teach them something.

— I have the experience of training by force at the BBC. I used to work in the training center of the BBC World Service in London. The good thing was that any producer must go and attend the training, have some standard courses. Yes, there are some elective courses but the bulk of the courses is a must and whenever you want to go up the ladder, to become senior producer, they would look into your training record. It worked, and I believe in that. But in a country like Lebanon or even less developed country when it comes to media it's much more difficult because you don't have big companies that can do that.

Tarabay: Being a new journalist, did you attend any training workshops and how did you qualify for your job?

— I'm not a beginner, I've been in the profession for about four years. After graduation we joined news organizations and attended workshops in different places in Lebanon. We were being trained in various departments of the news media and on how to use the archives, how to obtain statistics. These workshops were basic and important. Keep in mind that at the university we had no practical training. We had no academic guidance on how to practice journalism.

— I worked in an Arab media organization that was considered modern for a long time. I never saw the organization come up with workshops for the journalists. Even if it sent reporters to attend workshops organized by Reuters or others, it would have been Reuters that had offered to train the journalists. Lebanese journalists are really down-trodden, underpaid and overloaded. Sometimes journalists work for an organization and remain in the same job and at the same desk for 10 years. They don't develop vertically or horizontally. Supervisors in media organizations pay no heed to the necessity for continuous training for their staffers. If they do develop, it's because of personal efforts. We don't know how to enforce such training and to have a system that follows standards or regulations to ensure that organizations have centers for training and upgrading one's skills or to have organizations allocate parts of their annual budgets for training. If we say stories are being published without taking ethics or guidelines into account, we must realize that journalists are exhausted and are under constant pressure. They're being asked to write two to four stories a day and don't have enough time to produce good copy. A lot is said about the subject but how to address it is the main question.

— As someone who's worked for Tele-Liban for 14 years, TL encouraged reporters and middle management to do courses. We did various courses with the Thomson Foundation, Reuters, a German institute. The problem was not so much going on the courses. Eventually the editors-in-chief would find time for the reporters and themselves. The problem was when the people came back from the courses and implementing what they had learned. Before, we talked about cultural differences. Not everything they had learned on these courses could be implemented in their places of work. So I don't know whether we need courses that are more geared towards our part of the world. Maybe done from institutes from our part of the world. The other thing was that when people came back from these courses they were never given credit for having gone. So other people were not encouraged to go on the courses because their colleagues came back from the courses and got absolutely no acknowledgement. They weren't able to share the information they'd learned.

Tarabay: So the next question is: who does the training needs assessment and who trains? Sometimes the language is *the* barrier.

— I have two or three recommendations. In Morocco, in the last two years we got a new manager. This administration encourages the training of journalists. So what we do is, from time to time, we either invite professionals from Germany, France and Britain to come to our station to train journalists or we send them to different programs offered by British or American institutions. We also pay for those who want to learn English. We encourage them to learn English. It's very important. Some of our stations do have investigative journalism, but there are problems with that because they resemble features. So I encourage courses. We also don't have investigative journalism in our schools. We need to demand real access to information. You cannot do an investigative piece if you don't have

access to information.

— Brian, as Middle East editor at The Guardian, how do you train the staff that works with you on the desk? Do they have to come with a Middle East background?

Whitaker: Not necessarily. Our person who is based in Jerusalem at the moment is in South Africa. So it was a matter of making a preliminary visit to find out as much as he could about the situation there. He didn't speak either Arabic or Hebrew. I think he started learning both while he'd been there. I'd done Arabic before and, again, I'd done a lot of preparation work in terms of getting briefings from people before I started. Another thing that we do quite a lot, I'm often asked all sorts of advice about issues related to Islam, for example, and correct terminology. So I keep various reference books for that. It's a very specialized area and it tends to be people who've already acquired some expertise, rather than training people for the job. Contrast that with the British Foreign Office where they send people for 12 months to learn Arabic if they're going to be posted in the Middle East. As far as a commercial newspaper is concerned that's a huge luxury.

The problems regarding mid-level people, I think it's a question of their own pride — the available time — because quite often they're seen by the paper as being too valuable to be released for long periods. We have three kinds of training within the paper: One is entry level, which is either internal or sponsored at a university. That is mainly as part of our diversity policy to increase the number of black journalists and so on. Beyond that we tend to do our own training. Usually if some new technology is being introduced, then people will be taken away and trained within the office for one to three days, depending on the level of use they'll be making of it. We also have, from time to time, seminars to deal with specific problems that need rectifying. For example, we've had a number of seminars on the newspaper law because there were some recent changes in the law of defamation. We also had an attempt to improve the quality of the sub-editing. We call it a master class in sub-editing. These people don't feel insulted by being invited to attend.

The other types of things we do, where people get sent away, is if somebody is put in charge of a department, they may be given some management training to deal with the staff. That's something we've not really mentioned. It's important that heads of sections know how to deliver criticism because quite often the problem is the head of the department doesn't know how to criticize, so they just don't criticize. So the problem just continues and gets worse and worse. In the end they just say this person has to go. There might have been no need for that if they'd addressed it at an early stage. That's something we're trying to avoid. The other thing we did a lot before the Iraq war was called "hostile environments training" where I was sent away for a week and you go out into the countryside and have to avoid stepping on landmines and that sort of thing. I think it's pretty similar in most newspapers but it's far less than what the BBC does. The BBC takes this very seriously.

— We have to think that training is a continuous process and it should be given to everybody at all levels and at all times. I also fully support production of a media literacy directory for the general public on how to deal with the media. Average people see the media as a black box and don't know what their rights are.

— Training is a very sensitive issue because theoretical sciences need practical sciences. My experience in the practical sciences, and as a founder of the journalists' unions in Lebanon, we got our hands-on training through printing presses. But the diploma I received in English reporting was the crowning achievement that added value to my experience.

One has to bear in mind that training varies in quality. We know that journalists begin as reporters, or stringers. Editors put together the story. That then leads to positions as section or managing editors, etc. What's more important is when a journalist becomes an analyst. What's key is listening to the radio. I logged 36,000 hours of listening to English and Arabic broadcasts during Lebanon's civil war where we had several local stations offering opposing views on the conflict, in addition to international stations that offered news that sometimes differed from what was produced locally. So training is crucial for promotion.

Whitaker: I forgot to mention how you identify training needs. You may think it's obvious but it may not be. One of the ways that's quite often used is through annual staff appraisals where the staff member discusses with the department head what has been going well and what has been going badly. From that you can identify possible needs for training, either in areas where the person needs to improve, or in order to prepare them for moving to a promotion later on. So I think identifying training needs is an important issue to consider as well as the actual training itself.

— There should be a call for training because the people who urgently need training on media ethics are those responsible for media in the Arab World — officials at newspapers or public and private TV stations.

— I'm a more recent graduate from a university that didn't offer courses in foreign languages. So learning a language was a personal initiative. In 1990 I dealt with an environmental issue in the city of Homs. It was very important. So I had to ask someone else to deal with it because I knew nothing about environmental journalism and lacked the language skills to figure it out.

Another problem facing graduates is financial in nature and bars them from pursuing training courses or workshops. I worked for two years at (Lebanon's) Tele-Lumiere and never saw an invitation addressed to that media institution to send participants to workshops. They didn't have specialists in media or media ethics at the station. Not too long ago I moved to print media with a focus on economic and business news. I had no experience in the subject. There are things that even those who study media and journalism don't know. I covered the OPEC summit in Beirut and accidentally strolled into the foreign media's press center at the Phoenicia Hotel and was shooed away by the PR and media relations person at the conference. She called on security forces to eject us from the center and we couldn't figure out why they prevented us from entering.

— When you said that journalists need to be trained in localizing the content, what about knowing where to look in a certain country for the information they want. For example, in a big organization, a lot of information can be lost. It takes somebody who's specialized in that area to find what he wants from the organization. Who's responsibility is it to have that journalist trained? Is it the responsibility of his paper or of the organization that is suffering from a lack of exposure? These journalists don't know how to mine the information.

— I think training and preparing journalists professionally is the responsibility of the news organization and of journalists themselves. One of my colleagues was a starting journalist at a news organization and was sent to interview a former prime minister. She was flustered and confused and wasn't aware of the fact that he was a former premier and didn't use the proper honorific title to address him. He criticized her for not knowing how to address him and told her to go back to her paper and have them send someone else who was more qualified. She returned in tears.

— On the issue of money and training, you can have participants pay or have them sponsored. Both ways yield good results. In some TV training courses we have had journalists pay fees so they'd appreciate the value of the training. In another previous course, for radio reporters, we paid for the training, accommodations and transportation expenses. That was also a strong incentive. I'd like to propose that for governmental institutions, deductions be made on salaries for training courses that may also be supplemented by sponsors. It's not an ideal scenario. Instead of salary raises of a certain percentage, part of the raise could be channeled into training. This way you kill two birds with one stone.

Tarabay: We need to turn our attention from training to global media versus local media. Most of our colleagues have worked for both global and local. Someone suggested that despite the abundance of satellite channels, people still watch local TV. How do we view local media in places like Dubai, which has become the Arab media center?

— Let's differentiate between two types of content in local media: news and entertainment. It's true that local newscasts aren't attractive but people need to know what's happening in their countries. Satellite stations don't focus on a country unless there's a crisis, so there's always a gap in the satellite stations that can't be filled except with local news on local channels. As for content, the satellite channels have variety. There's only one Lebanese station that has no real variety in programming and with content coming from mainly one country. The others have a mix of content from different sources of production, presenters and actors. That pleases many viewers but the need remains for local programs in each country that have their own attraction for their respective societies. Satellite channels didn't do away with the local stations. They may have stolen some of the viewers but they didn't finish them off.

— I think it's much too soon to write off local TV because all studies show that people prefer local TV if what's available to them is relevant to them. There was a study done some years ago, a comparison between viewership for "Dallas" or some American soap that was being shown and there was a comparison between Peru and Algeria.

In Algeria you had pretty much the one station showing “Dallas” and in Peru there was a choice. When there was a choice, the ratings for “Dallas” were much lower. This was at a time when other studies were showing that there was some kind of universal message to these American soaps and that people respond to them very well and so on. The alternative research showed that if there’s locally relevant media that speaks to some local needs, that’s what people will watch. If you think of a satellite stations aiming at an Arab audience of 310 million people, if you include the diaspora, there’s no way, however many channels you’ve got, that you can meet all the needs of these people in 72 hours. The local people are turning to the satellite channels because they are speaking about some local issues with candor that is not available with the terrestrial channels. If the terrestrial channels were doing their proper job of serving the public in some way, then the satellite channels might lose some of their audience.

— An interesting follow-up about what’s happening now is that in Iraq, I know for a fact, that there are dozens of applications for local TVs waiting for licenses. There’s an escapism to go for satellite channels because you can get a license. You cannot get a license in the Arab World for local channels, except in Lebanon. But usually it’s easier to get a satellite channel and broadcast and in the last six months there have been six projects of new satellite stations, some of which are niche themes, thematic. So it is still a big issue to add new satellite stations, but maybe with a local society in mind. It’s easier to camouflage it in a global or pan-Arab approach. One source of this mushrooming of satellite television projects last year and this year and I’m sure in 2005 you will see many newcomers, it is still a very good source of prestige. Don’t think most of it is for commercial purposes because the mathematics wouldn’t add up in terms of cost versus revenue.

— The huge potential for growth of terrestrial TV geared to local concerns in the Arab world is due to two reasons: Most advertising is nation-state-based (Lebanon, Egypt, Jordan). We forget that because when we watch the satellite TVs there is a general genre of advertising — Coca Cola, detergents, banks and airlines. In terms of growth, the potential for increasing advertising revenue is on more locally based advertising. But at the same time, the level of spending on advertising in any channels, whether satellite or terrestrial, is still fantastically low and it’s got a huge way to go to get anywhere near Brazil. If you measure the levels of advertising spending on TV *per capita*, this region of the world has got the lowest. In the Arab countries compared to Turkey and Cyprus, you’ve got fantastically low levels of advertising spending. The reasons for that include the lack of history and experience in doing it but also a lack of trust about who you’re actually reaching. It comes back to reliable and credible audience figures. Unless you know who you’re actually reaching, why should you bother spending any money to do it? It’s a vicious circle.

Tarabay: Think about ads. Sometimes you can see both versions of the same ad. In one ad, on the Lebanese channel you see women with no scarf or cover on their hair, and on the satellite Lebanese channel you see women with scarves. That’s how they tailor the ads to fit their guidelines.

— Let’s take an example of local TV to be factual. LBC’s program about Miss Lebanon, without giving a definition of what’s local, has all the local elements. All the heroines are Lebanese, the accent is Lebanese, the setting is Lebanese, the culture they are expressing their feelings within is Lebanese but the target audience is an Arab audience, and mainly a Gulf audience because this is where the money is. Let’s be very straightforward. The commercial channels — Future, LBC, MBC — aim their programming not to Morocco, not to Sudan, not to Mauritania, not to Iraq or Syria, but to the Gulf. That’s where advertising comes from. So where’s the dividing line between local and beyond local? Is it if “Star Academy” has Arab participants it becomes non-local? Where do we draw the line and say this is local and this is Arab? I think the line is blurred and maybe non-existent now.

— I think local is the thing you are doing in your country but on satellite it’s international. There’s a new channel in Dubai, inaugurated a week ago, that will go on international satellite in September.

— The alternative model is with satellite TV in Europe. The satellite channels have succeeded and are succeeding in Europe by doing local feeds by localizing their advertising. That’s how pan-European channels have actually taken off. There’s a mix between satellite operations and localized advertising.

— People in our societies turn to international channels and to Arab international TV networks because of what we don’t find on our stations — issues that we are not allowed to tackle on our TV. When Morocco created the first private channel in 1989, that channel was very successful for about seven years because it allowed an average Moroccan to come on the air and criticize this governor, criticize the chief of his or her area or village. Now we watch on Al Jazeera invited Moroccan or Egyptian political opponents on the air and people are thrilled. If we

had that kind of average margin of freedom on our local TV, we would be able to compete with Arab TV channels. — This goes back to naming the station “international?” What does international mean? For LBC, does it mean it broadcasts to Lebanese internationally? Or does it mean that it broadcasts to all societies all over the world? This is impossible because you cannot speak so many languages at the same time. I understand international to mean the objective was to reach Lebanese all over the world. If we define this as our target we can succeed enormously. But if we want to change this mission and reach different societies, like the GCC countries, or European or the Americans, then we have to do things other than what we do now.

Tarabay: LBC started by targeting the Lebanese. If you look at LBC–Lebanon, which is mainly a Christian station, when it goes LBC–Sat, it becomes a Muslim-oriented station. If you take Ramadan on LBC you see “*mawasem el kheir*” or “*taraweeh*.” We’re talking about a dual identity — Christian in Lebanon and Muslim on satellite.

— If I understand correctly the difference, it’s in packaging. The content is the same. It is only time-shifting, which means a program during peak time in Lebanon might not be the prime time in another time zone or in the Gulf. Therefore, we time-shift it but the content is the same. So the “international” is a packaging and a marketing tool rather than anything more drastic or strategic.

The market is much more demanding than what the satellites give. If this week Al Jazeera or Al Arabiya or any channel discusses Morocco in a talk show, when do you expect the next talk show on Al Jazeera or Al Arabiya to be about Morocco again? In one month, two months? What do you do in the meantime? You have to watch something. So that’s where the need for local programming is and will remain because satellite cannot tackle every single country.

— One important facet of satellite stations in Lebanon is that they are closer to the Arab than the international station is. So it’s like having a close cousin tell you what’s good for you, what’s fashionable, they know what you like, they know what you’re thinking and why you’re thinking it. That helps us gain this leverage, this advantage in driving the point home faster and more effectively than “Star Academy–France.” I know a minority was watching from Francophone countries, but the rest was in Arabic in “Star Academy–Lebanon.” I know it helps bring down barriers within the Arab communities and within our own different hues of Arab.



Wrapup &



Abu-Fadil: I'd like an assessment of what we've done, what we've discussed and where you think we should take it from here. Then perhaps we can propose something as a final "Beirut Declaration" or statement and then we could write it up and release it and see to it that we implement it, or try to get some sort of implementation. Let's try to visualize something that is realistic.

Maas: From the two previous days, I admire the frankness. I thought it was an extremely open event. We had all this talk about the West and the Arab world and it was addressing each other in a manner that I appreciated. On follow-ups, we might say that we would hope to be able to document the presentations here so that this would be getting back to you. I'm eager to hear what other follow-up ideas you might have. The discussions focused on this whole idea of a code of conduct, but during the conference here I saw many other topics appearing.

— This is a successful conference. We exchanged experiences. We talked about codes of ethics. The conclusion is that a lot of work has to be done. There needs to be training in the Arab media, not only for journalists, for the media managers. They need to be aware of the importance of applying certain codes of conduct. We also need a campaign addressed to politicians in the Arab world to raise the consciousness of the importance of this approach because we cannot talk about codes of conduct without discussing the environment in which media operate. So it's very important for the politicians to change their laws, allow more freedom, more access to information.

— I benefited from attending this conference. Just the interaction with professional journalists and colleagues from Arab countries provides me with hope that we're not alone and that we have common problems. This should prompt us to make three or four brief recommendations that we'd all agree to and that would be presented to press associations in the different Arab countries and use them to exert pressure on government officials to help us with access to information.

With reference to training, we should focus on the young journalists. In Egypt when workshops are offered, participants end up being journalists in their 30s and 40s with connections in the newsroom. The younger ones get left out and they're the ones who will lead in the future.

— A useful occasion. I hope in the next conference the chairs will be more aggressive in eliciting answers and input from participants in a shorter period of time. May I also recommend a topic for next year's conference: radio training. This area needs a meeting of professionals and experienced people from all over the world to brighten our path.

— It's been very constructive in lots of ways. A good deal of agreement on what the problems are and what needs to be done. It's been rightly pointed out that changes are difficult, except in the broader context of other changes for general reform everywhere. But that should not be an excuse for not doing anything. Therefore, I would also suggest that people look for new and creative ways to make use of the freedoms they already have.

— I'm one of the few people here who is not a journalist and never has been one, so I come as an outsider. I'm very happy with what's happened here and I work as an activist for the International Press Institute for freedom of expression, and also as an activist for improving the standards and practices of journalism. I'm very happy to see this very open exchange.

Secondly, I come here as an intellectual, as a media communications teacher. For that too, it's brought a lot for me

personally. To bounce about ideas like this is the best kind of catalyst for productive and creative work in that field. I'd like to say something about codes of ethics. I'd like to repeat that a very slim, very general code of ethics is better than nothing at all. Of course you can have the wrong kind of ethical guidelines, which sometimes appears in some countries. But since 1954, the International Federation of Journalists has had a code of ethics. It's 10 short points. It's less than an A4 page and it's a great starting point, and it's still valid today. The new media have not really changed the situation. Those are the basic values. The new media will change things on a more detailed level, quite radically as well, but the basic tenets of journalistic ethics are pretty easy. There are a lot of perspectives on them.

— A conclusion I drew is how media ethics is interrelated to other ethics in politics, the economy, social issues. Journalists need to be wise, courageous and skilled to work through those small breakthroughs and limit the influence of those non-existent ethics in politics and other sectors. To be practical I would suggest a workshop session with no theoretical paper like mine and more case studies whereby editors, journalists and graduates are brought together, with lots of possibilities of how to do in this situation and what to do in that situation.

One final point: I'm open for suggestions for a media-related documentary for 2005 — any proposals that would help in producing something in 2005.

— Beyond codes of ethics, which are worth the paper they're written on, the important thing is the individual actions of journalists that just push the boundary a little. It's not the big dramatic steps, the big investigations, but somebody who just wants to take one step beyond where everybody else has been and tries something new. In fact, the incremental steps may get you farther than the big ones that get everybody's attention. The rest of the journalistic community supporting each other in those kinds of things in the cause for freedom because freedom of the press is a critical part of freedom for everybody. It's not our privilege as journalists, it's the civilization's freedom. It's the open discussion of problems in a society that lets them improve.

— One recommendation would be the A4. You can have a pool of all these codes of ethics. The variations might be of interest to a lot of people, especially for people like us. Al Jazeera is now at a stage where we are drawing up our own code of ethics. I think it would be nice if the university would have a pool where it could act as a point of reference.

— There is a website, www.presscouncils.org, that has the largest collection of codes of ethics.

Abu-Fadil: And the International Center for Journalists, its IJNET has codes of ethics from around the world.

— I think EthicNet also has lots of codes of ethics.

— The other suggestion is related to ethics and many other aspects. The Arab world has a missing link between the (media) industry and academia. So maybe the university can start something along these lines. Instead of just teaching abstract theoretical approaches to the media, maybe the real needs of the market would be studied first before you design a syllabus.

Abu-Fadil: I'd like to respond by saying that when I was in charge of the journalism program here at LAU, when I was teaching undergraduates, the first thing I did was restructure the entire curriculum and create a newsroom, which was non-existent, and a student newspaper, which did not exist, and insist on internships before graduation. We've had students in most local, regional and international media based in Beirut. Students trained at major newspapers, radio stations, TV stations and the wires and they really benefited from them. Those one or two semesters were worth all the four years of college, even hands-on courses. Nothing was as valuable as going out there and interacting with real journalists in the real world. Some of them were given assignments and came back with wonderful stories that were either published or put on the air. This is one thing we insist on at LAU — practical experience, not just theories.

What we'd like to explore, and I'll toss this out as a thought, if we could get funding for our students to do training in other than local media because that has not always been easy. They've either had to do it at their own expense or [through] scholarships or assistantships. I'd like our students to do training at Al Jazeera. I have an open line to CNN where they're willing to take interns but won't pay for them.

Maas: Since you already mentioned funding, this is something we're starting this year. But, of course, as a European organization, we're not only interested in inter-Arab connection, but also towards Europe. We're doing new projects. One is placing young journalists in print, magazines. There will be somebody going to Egypt with a youth magazine, who wants to specialize in addressing youth. And somebody will be coming to Lebanon for environmental reporting. We've also designed a program of exchange, with guests we had from Germany, between journalists working on cultural issues between Germany and here. I think we will go in this direction for many different reasons. We're not only concerned with vocational training, but with the understanding of each other and have issues at stake. Globalization will be an issue on this exchange program with culture journalists.

This will be shocking, but I don't believe in conferences in the long run. This has been extremely useful but I am expected as a political foundation to organize big conferences in the Arab world and I've seen too many. We started on a different foot with this one, with the idea to do something with it. We need creative thinking. We need different instruments. We're open for such suggestions.

— This was a great experience. For me it was an achievement to have met all these distinguished journalists and now have relationships and I'm going to build on them. We already talked about different things we're going to do individually. Maybe if we form some kind of a network where we exchange information and ideas.

— This gathering was value added to me as director of the Arab Women's Media Center. I met new journalists, from another generation, I heard people sharing their extensive experiences. I hope we come up with a document that would be the basis for an Arab code of ethics.

— I, too, am not a journalist but I really benefited from the conference, particularly the way it was organized. I've attended many conferences where people talked a lot and have concluded that the best thing is training. That's why it would be useful if parts of conferences are set aside for training.

— Kirsten said there's a problem with conferences. I wouldn't categorize this as a conference. It's a roundtable. I've been to too many events in this part of the world where you have a platform at one end of the room and very far separated from them you have all the remainder of the people sitting down below. The first thing that made this such a fantastic success is the roundtable format.

It's been a fantastic collection of people and the combination of energy and experience that is here has been very invigorating to me. But I'd like to pick up on a couple of things that have been said. The theme of my two comments is under-utilization of resources.

Number one resource that is under-utilized is the International Federation of Journalists. You don't need to reinvent the wheel. There is a global organization that is speaking up on a regular basis for Arab journalists and for Arab media outlets where they need it. IFJ has direct links with only about four press syndicates throughout the whole Arab region out of a potential 17. Very often resources we don't make the most of are right under our noses. There is this tendency in these kinds of events to say: "We can't do such and such until something else has happened." And that something else depends on somebody else doing it.

— I don't know whether I'm lucky or unlucky because I'm both a practicing journalist and a professor of journalism. So it makes one have double standards. What I want to suggest is that we have an Arab media code of conduct to come out of this conference. So if we have a five- or six-point code of conduct maybe we could sneak it through to all the other Arab states.

Training programs are very important but it's very important to do it the right way. Last year we had a very interesting program with the British Council where we sent journalists to train in England. The way we did it was very practical. We advertised in the press syndicate and those who saw themselves eligible would come and apply and then we had a short list. This was to escape from the choice of the editors. We should focus more on the younger generation of journalists who are members of the syndicate. There are very strong press syndicates in many countries in the Arab world.

Abu-Fadil: The only problem with that in Lebanon is that the press syndicates are run by people who own papers and different media and there's a lot of cronyism involved. We'd have to find a mechanism. They'll find ways of getting their favorites in the training programs.

— I'd like to stress the need for a campaign of education and awareness about the media. It could be the theme for another conference. Build a bridge between us. I think this is essential to good performance of the media. The proposal of appointing speakers, I would like to go forth with it. We could nominate three or four and in each conference we can increase this number to market them. When we publish the proceedings of this conference we could mention this as a strong point.

— What's the next step? Two years ago there was a media ethics conference and guidelines for good journalistic practice were proposed. We worked on the wording. Will we come up with a code of conduct? How can we ensure implementation of the clauses if we don't follow up through a committee that would raise the issue with officials like at the Ministry of Information? The syndicates would also support it. There's also the matter of journalists being boycotted by officials who don't like certain kinds of coverage. What can we do in solidarity with these journalists who are snubbed or excluded from news conferences?

— We can do two things: to re-launch what we started three years ago with this code and try to raise awareness and work on training journalists on the matter of ethics. We should create a reference for codes of ethics on a site.

Abu-Fadil: To wrap up, we've got a suggestion for a media-related documentary, pool our efforts into a clearing-house, and I propose IPJ as that clearinghouse, for codes of conduct.

The guidelines we agreed upon can be summarized as:

GUIDELINES FOR ARAB MEDIA ETHICS 2004:

- Fairness
- Integrity
- Honesty
- Commitment to the public
- Courage to pursue the truth
- Awareness of diversity
- Solidarity with fellow journalists treated unjustly
- Skill development through continuous training

Finally, let's keep in touch with each other and build on this with the purpose of enhancing the cause of journalism and pushing the limits. Thank you all.



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The Heinrich Böll Foundation

This conference was co-organized with the Heinrich Böll Foundation Middle East Office with special contribution from Layla Al-Zubaidi.

The Heinrich Böll Foundation is affiliated with the Green Party in Germany and has its main office in Berlin. It works as a legally autonomous and intellectually open political foundation with the primary objective to support civic education both within Germany and abroad, thus promoting democratic involvement, socio-political activism, and cross-cultural understanding.

The Foundation's Middle East Office was established in Beirut in spring 2004 in order to provide spaces for regional debates, to enhance a dialogue between Europe and the Middle East and to facilitate cooperations with civil society organizations:

- The Citizenship Program focuses on debates and practical steps towards and awareness for citizenship beyond ethnical and religious affiliation with a gender-democratic approach and conflict resolution as a central issue.
- The Cultural Globalization Program promotes research and cultural expressions on the effects of globalization on culture and cultural diversity, in order to formulate authentic attempts to actively shape the process.
- The Sustainable Development Program supports organizations promoting the protection of natural resources and sustainable development with a special focus on trade policies and renewable energies.
- The Knowledge Program is targeted towards the development of inclusive information societies, involving activities on the promotion of media ethics and regional "input" around the World Summits on Information Societies.
- The Dialogue Program engages intellectuals, researchers, journalists, activists, and others from the Middle East and Europe to enhance the understanding of "the other." A website will maintain a forum to explore the differing perspectives on some of the issues above.

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