

JOURNALISM AND TABLOIDIZATION

Maja Vojinović², Nada Torlak³, Tatjana Davidov⁴, Dozet Darko

Abstract: Topics related to the media, journalism, the transformation of journalism, the transition from traditional to new media, inevitably lead us to the analysis of the current media situation. The issue of tabloids and tabloidization is essential for understanding the reconstruction of new media. It is a fact that tabloids do not respect the principles of journalistic code and ethics, that tabloid content is in opposition to quality, investigative, analytical journalism, but they still lead us to think about the causes of such phenomena. In this paper, we will deal with the topic of journalism, journalistic code, ethical dilemmas, tabloids and tabloidization.

Keywords: media, journalism, journalistic code, ethical dilemmas, tabloidization.

Introduction

In the system of journalistic thinking, the first association with the history of journalism links us to Gutenberg and the printing press from the 15th century, which was the forerunner of the media age, because two centuries later the first newspapers appeared „when the media age actually begins” (Baćević, 2004, p. 15). First, books appeared, then newspapers, magazines, journals that made the wealth of content and information available to a wider audience.

The written word remains as a permanent testimony of a person’s thought and leads to the exchange of ideas and opinions that raise a person to a higher level of consciousness, because in order for someone to leave a written mark, he or she must be educated and qualified. (Vojinović, 2022, p. 17).

Print media and journalism, in the true sense of the word, experienced the greatest boom in the history of mankind in the period up to the 20th century. With the appearance of film, radio and television in the 20th century, a new era opens for the survival of traditional, printed media, as the oldest social media. The interweaving of tabloid and socially responsible journalism led to the development of investigative journalism. Unlike tabloid journalism, which is dominated by images and the absence of journalistic ethics, investigative journalism penetrates deep into the core of current problems, i.e. deals with analysis and research.

A word about journalism

At the base of each profession, there are at least three other professions. To be a good journalist, one must be literate, educated, agile and well organized. If one has a developed sense of psychology, sociology and management, it can be talked about a good journalist. The role of the journalist is not only to write and distribute the news, but also to draw that news through the socio-psychological and economic context, in order to provide a complete answer. It is a complex process. Those who do not understand journalism should not read newspapers. Journalism is a profession that requires work, discipline and dedication while respecting the basic principles of the journalistic code. A journalist is a person who objectively and expertly creates and communicates news. The news must be accurate, precise, credible, socially responsible, with a high degree of moral responsibility towards the topic and the

² Maja Vojinović, The Faculty of management, Sremski Karlovci, University „Union-Nikola Tesla“, Belgrade, PhD. Corresponding author: vojnovic@famns.edu.rs

³ Nada Torlak, Faculty of culture and media, Belgrade, Megatrend University, Belgrade, PhD

⁴ Tatjana Davidov, Modern Business School, Belgrade, PhD

audience. The journalistic style can vary according to the audience, the topic, but the code must be respected. This is where one comes to the sphere of objective, investigative, analytical journalism. However, there is always the other side, which refers to low-quality, irresponsible, unethical, discriminatory, sensationalistic journalism with a lack of critical awareness, i.e. tabloid.

The Code of Journalists of Serbia is based on truthfulness, resistance to external pressure, work principles, respect for personality, advertising, independence and privileges, attitude towards colleagues, protection of journalists. The point on which one would dwell longer is truthfulness. Respecting the truth is the most sacred obligation of a journalist. (Pavlović, 2004, p. 250).

Tabloids, tabloid history

Tabloid journalism emerged in the era of change from traditional to new media, the Internet.

Benjamin Day began to introduce topics from everyday life, from the street, the market, from the life of the rich into newspapers. The price of his newspaper was extremely low, and the circulations were huge. What the journalists of that time saw was that the newspaper was selling a good sensationalist headline and continued to write about interesting topics that quickly gained a wide readership, i.e. a mass audience. (Vojinović, 2022, 26).

Huge, global, geopolitical, economic, media, migrant changes have led to the emergence of tabloidization. Smaller formats, commercial content, big picture, sensationalism in newspapers, started to take precedence over traditional, investigative journalism, all under the slogan of survival in the market. The emergence of modern technologies, the Internet, Web platforms, blogs, social networks, applications, instant journalism, has brought the print media into a serious crisis. The speed and flow of information, the accelerated pace of life, have contributed to the fact that the mass audience, without critical thinking, is looking for entertainment, sensation, an image without a lot of text. Everything has become instant, ad hoc, never more media placement and never less critical awareness. Almost all media convey the same news, in the same way, under the slogan fast, easy, efficient, because „what is not published, is not happened” (Torlak, 2014, p. 578).

Ethical dilemmas

It is indisputable that in the process of considering the journalistic code, the profession, print media, investigative journalism and the tabloid press, one has also touched on the ethical dilemmas that accompany every process of transformation. From an established, one-way flow of information, at the transition to a new, digital age, one has found itself in an era of multi-directional flows, attitudes, angles of observation, due to globalization. The Internet has widened or narrowed the range of activities, from general to particular, from global to personal, from group to individual, borders, planetary, geopolitical, are erased, the world has become a global village under the leadership of social networks: Facebook, Instagram, Tik-Tok, Viber, etc. Communication is accelerated, and therefore easier. It follows from this that the

information must be selected. How and in what way? All these social, political, and economic changes also affect changes in ethical paradigms and introduce dilemmas among scientific workers on how to respond to the challenges of modern society in the most comprehensive way possible, and not to err on the side of ethical principles and codes of conduct. Fields of ethical dilemmas are opening up in the new media. One of the most significant ethical dilemmas is the question of online socialization: is it really possible to have a certain form of socialization and realistically experience some action without the physical presence of subjects and objects. What kind of experience are we talking about in a qualitative sense? Elaboration of this dilemma is an attempt to answer the problem of human alienation: did humanity begin to alienate even before the appearance of social media, and their appearance is only an attempt, a way to save man and his communication in the XXI century, or are social media leading towards escapism and simulating closeness? (Donev, Kaluđerović, 2016, p.123).

Conclusion

One can state that the subject of media, journalism and tabloids is complex. It demands to delve into all aspects of social reality, selectively, critically or for fun. The decision is up to the mass audience. It is a long period of time from the 15th to the 21st century. That's six years of development, transformation, construction, reconstruction, peace, unrest, crises, attempts to take off again, falls, but like in any other profession, the media profession is exposed to constant changes and adjustments in order to survive on the market. The intention of the authors of this work is not to answer all the questions related to the current topic, but to encourage the readership to seriously approach the reading of each, including this written reading, because for everything there is a cause, way, justification or unjustification, and it is up to researchers to critically penetrate into the essence of the problem.

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