The Changing Nature of Media Work and the Institutions that Support it

Ahmed Saleh Mahdi[1*], Dr. Jaafar Hammadi[2]

[1*]*University of Religions and Denominations/ Department of Media Management, Iran.*
[2]*Prof. University of Religions and Denominations/ Department of Media Management, Iran.*

Email: [2]jaafar.hammadi@gmail.com
Corresponding Email: [1]ahmed.salih@gmail.com*

Abstract: The expanding nature of media work and the institutional and organizational frameworks that foster new media activity are the topics of this topical issue. The media sector has seen substantial economic, structural, and technical changes throughout the last several decades, including shifting ownership patterns and digitizing media creation, distribution, and consumption. At the same time, methods used in the media industry are being used in other fields. The ten articles in this issue examine the practices of media work in organizations across sectors, including the music business and the public sector, as well as the new professional roles and duties developing in the news media industry.

Keywords: Organizational Communication, Journalism, Media Work, News Media.

1. INTRODUCTION

The unrelenting advancement of technology, altering audience behaviors, and the globalization of information distribution are driving dramatic change, like the work done in the media. This transition encompasses not just the jobs of conventional journalists but also a wide variety of professionals engaged in producing, curating, and disseminating material across various channels. (Castells, 2009) The institutions that support media work are also going through considerable adjustments at the same time as media work is adjusting to the dynamic changes. (Deuze, 2007)

Throughout its existence, the media industry has been dominated by the more conventional forms of print, broadcast, and radio sources. (Napoli, 2011) Traditional models have been rendered obsolete due to the proliferation of the internet and other digital technologies, resulting in the emergence of a period characterized by continual connectedness and fast innovation. (Jenkins, 2006) There has been a redefinition of who may be deemed a media professional due to the democratization of content production made possible by social media,

blogging, and online platforms. (Couldry, 2013) This has led to blurred borders between amateurs and conventional journalists.

The proliferation of user-generated content, influencer marketing, and citizen journalism has posed a challenge to the previously established standards, resulting in a wider variety of voices and points of view. (Singer, 2011) Because of this, the whole nature of working in the media has been disrupted, and as a result, institutions have been forced to reevaluate the roles and responsibilities they play in an ever-changing environment.

Institutions that were formerly able to exercise a monopoly on the distribution of information are now struggling to adapt to the decentralization of the production and consumption of media. Traditional newsrooms are confronted with the problem of adjusting to a news cycle that operates twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, and meeting the needs of an audience that expects real-time updates and interactive participation. Platforms for social media have emerged as significant forces in influencing public discourse, giving rise to novel dynamics in which information is disseminated quickly and unpredictably.

In addition, there has been a change in the methods used to monetize work in the media industry, with advertising models developing to fit online platforms and influencers. The capacity of media organizations to navigate the complexity of digital advertising, subscription models, and audience engagement methods is increasingly inextricably related to the economic survival of these institutions.

Even though media seems indispensable in today's society, it takes much work to keep it running smoothly. According to Deuze (2007), the job of media organizations includes creating content, goods, services, and branding. Professionals in the media sector do more than report the news; they also engage in a wide range of complementary actions designed to boost the popularity of media goods and services (Malmelin & Villi, 2017). Numerous academic works (e.g., Laaksonen et al., 2019; Malmelin & Moisander, 2014) in media and journalism have highlighted how the rise of new digital actors and changes in consumer behavior need strategic communication and branding actions. As a result of consumers' media habits, the media industry has changed (Villi & Picard, 2019). As a result of the new digitalized media environment, platform-centric practices such as incorporating social media into media work (Nielsen & Ganter, 2018) are emerging. With so much rivalry, media companies must consider implementing strategic communication and branding efforts (e.g., Laaksonen et al., 2019; Malmelin & Moisander, 2014) to survive.

These elements, along with many others, have affected the methods of working in the media, the substance of the work done in the media, and the organizational dynamics present in media organizations. New professional roles emerge to satisfy the requirements and labor needed to make media content suitable and successful on various news channels, ranging from social media to mobile applications (Cohen, 2019; Karlsen & Ytre-Arne, 2021). Changes are frequently driven by technological transformation. To cope with new technologies, media workers must have digital competencies (Oberlander et al., 2020). In addition, the ongoing economic, structural, and technological shifts that have occurred in the media industry over the last few decades, such as shifting patterns of ownership and the digitalization of media production, distribution, and consumption (Villi et al., 2020), as well as the constant need to innovate as a result of these shifts (Kung, 2013), have compelled institutional responses in media organizations. Examples include the creation of new media

outlets and processes, such as cross-sector cooperation, specialized formats, and intra-organizational development networks.

Additionally, as a result of the growing influence of the media in society (e.g., Couldry & Hepp, 2017), new types of media work are appearing in other businesses whose primary objective is to interact with their respective audiences. These include entities such as businesses that make it a component of their strategic communication to generate professional and similar material to that produced by the media, as well as communications firms that develop content for their clients in communication and marketing. It is also possible to claim that the growing prominence of public social media and the expectations placed on discussion require the possession of media skills by all workers (Pekkala, 2020). These growing settings raise the question of what media work is like when it is done outside of the media sector and what principles are driving it. Specifically, they raise the question of what ideals are motivating it.

We are interested in theoretical and empirical studies investigating the shifting character of media work and its new institutional settings, and we have solicited submissions for this issue. The ten essays included in this collection focus on three primary topics: new forms of media work in media organizations, developing forms of social media work, and unconventional organizational settings for media work. In the following paragraphs, we will provide a synopsis of each article according to its topic.

Moving on to digital competencies in journalistic work, Salvador Reyesde-Cózar et al. (2022) undertake a systematic study to explore what the research suggests about the digital skills new professionals should learn in journalism. This review examines what the literature suggests about the digital skills that new professionals should acquire in journalism. This information is essential for journalism schools and other academic institutions that train aspiring journalists in the future. The results highlight the dearth of research that has been conducted on some critical facets of digital competence, in particular those that are associated with personal development, emotional condition, and the attainment of a high degree of digital expertise.

The discussion then moves from newsrooms to Mediapolis, a media cluster in Finland that operates as both a center and a network for various media enterprises and organizations. Mediapolis facilitates cross-sector collaboration between public (non-commercial) and private (commercial) media organizations to produce shared value and co-create innovation. Sari Virta and Nando Malmelin (2022) investigate the management of complexity, organizational tensions, and dualities in such cross-sector cooperation inside a media cluster with similar strategic-level ambitions. The essay addresses the dynamics of various organizational orientations and business logic, the disparities between visionary planning and actual actions, and the conflicting organizational interests that might arise within a cluster structure.

The first four articles in this themed issue discuss different aspects of working in the media within the framework of various media organizations. First, Mathias Felipe de Lima Santos (2022) investigates the intricacies of the professional responsibilities of data journalists and how those duties connect to the structural characteristics of news organizations. The research focuses on ProPublica, a nonprofit news organization known for its data journalism and production of investigative journalism. According to the research findings, data journalism

exemplifies the blurring of conventional professional boundaries and the emergence of hybrid profiles of workers in the media industry. Journalists must broaden their skill sets to include coding and design, while professionals not involved in journalism must strengthen their writing abilities. Such fuzziness and hybridity are fundamental components of ProPublica's professional culture, which, in turn, reflects the organization's structure.

Johanna Suhonen (2022) demonstrates in her paper, a comparable negotiation and blurring of boundaries can be found between the journalistic and management professional ethos of editors in business newsrooms. This is the case regardless of whether the editors are reporters or managers. The field of business journalism provides an excellent setting in which to investigate the intersection of the professional discourses of journalism and management. Because of their intimate connections to the financial and commercial spheres, business media editors tend to pick up management tendencies from their sources. This subsequently results in a new hybrid professional ethos that mixes the values of journalism with the management practices that are now prevalent.

As the importance of social media continues to grow, there has been a growing need for a particularly new kind of labor in the media. Mark Badham and Markus Mykkanen (2022) use a relational approach to media audiences to clarify how news media organizations are engaging their audiences on social media by linking the work done in media organizations to the context of social media. They do this by linking the social media context to work done in media organizations. They do this by drawing on public relations theory and analyzing the substance of postings made on Twitter and Facebook by nine newspapers in Australia, the United States of America, and the United Kingdom. By using this technique, they demonstrated that most of the time, the social media accounts of the newspapers that were analyzed were used for the distribution of news rather than for audience interaction.

An opposing viewpoint to engagement is presented in the article written by Jessica Edlom (2022), which uses qualitative interviews to investigate the adoption of social media in the music business. This is an industry in which participatory cultural norms are rapidly becoming the norm in strategic communication. Edlom conceptualizes her results via the idea of engagement imperative, which she defines as the ongoing need to promote audience engagement. This requirement affects communication professionals' competencies, duties, responsibilities, and identities. Therefore, strategic communication is increasingly active in the media, and it is distinguished by the logic of involvement imposed by social media platforms and the participatory culture they foster.

In their essay, Brooke Erin Duffy and Megan Sawey (2022) make an additional effort to develop a theory on the newly growing employment phenomena in social media. Workers in social media, such as community managers, social media editors, and social media managers, are members of a relatively new category of digital laborers. Based on data collected from interviews, the authors propose that work related to social media is structured by a visibility paradox: Even though most social media professionals do produce exposure, their job often needs to be noticed since it is done behind branded accounts. By drawing a connection between this idea and more extensive discussions on the gendered valuation of labor in the digital economy, the authors demonstrate that employment related to social media has a subordinate position and is commonly undervalued in organizations and by members of the general public.

The growth of digital technology, known as "digital disruption," has significantly impacted media creation, dissemination, and consumption. The disruption of traditional journalism, broadcasting, and publishing paradigms has brought up difficulties and possibilities. More people's opinions may now be heard thanks to the democratization of content production, although some have raised questions about the integrity of the available material.

The Rise of Emerging Media
Streaming services, social media, and other online venues have become prominent in the media industry. Not only has the material distribution method changed, but so has audience participation thanks to these new mediums. Because of the rise of digital media, established media companies have had to revise their revenue structures and content initiatives to remain competitive.

Altering Company Structures
Consumers' rising expectations for free or cheap content have pressured the old advertising-based income model. There are now novel options, such as subscription models, crowdsourcing, etc. To ensure long-term financial viability and meet audience expectations for free and open access to information, media organizations are experimenting with novel methods of monetizing content.

Information and Customization
The media industry now relies heavily on data analytics and algorithmic processes. Advertisements and content suggestions tailored to users' interests are becoming the norm. While this boosts user experience, concerns regarding privacy and the possibility of information bubbles have also been addressed, underscoring the ethical implications of data usage.

Issues of Misinformation and Media Literacy
The digital age has emphasized the necessity of media literacy. Due to the widespread dissemination of information online, debunking falsehoods has become a formidable task. Media organizations play a crucial role in fostering media literacy and assuring the integrity of the news they report.

Cultural Interactions and Globalization
Digital mediums have greatly aided the dissemination of data and cultural products. While this may help people from different backgrounds better understand one another, it also raises concerns about stereotyping and the prevalence of specific stories. The media industry needs help portraying the diversity and complexity of today's globalized world via its coverage.

Threats to Journalistic Integrity:
Journalistic integrity has become more challenging in the instantaneous, networked digital media age. Ethical difficulties have arisen due to factors including time constraints, the proliferation of clickbait, and the fuzziness between journalism and entertainment. Accuracy, justice, and openness are at stake, and media organizations must overcome these obstacles.

In their essay, Brooke Erin Duffy and Megan Sawey (2022) make an additional effort to develop a theory on the newly growing employment phenomena in social media. Social media workers, such as social media managers, editors, and community members, have conceptions of participatory and democratizing remix culture by suggesting that the media work of remix, when appropriated by an anti-democratic media actor, is a method to question liberal-democratic values. Social media workers include social media managers, editors, and community members. The authors contend that counter-media publication should be seen as a type of political action or, in certain instances, as a political media critique.

In their last essay, Olli Seuri and Kim Ramstedt (2022) redirect the analytical focus to an additional unique and unconventional setting of media production known as counter-media. They investigate how remix theory might be used to analyze the work done by emergent publishers. The authors present a theoretical understanding of two news instances in the Finnish counter-media MVlehti by using notions essential to the remixing process. These concepts include appropriation and authorship. By proposing that the media work of remix, when appropriated by an anti-democratic media actor, is a method to question liberal-democratic principles, the authors expand and challenge the underlying concepts of participation and democratizing remix culture. This approach broadens and challenges the ideas that are the foundation of participatory and democratizing remix culture. The authors contend that counter-media publication should be seen as a type of political action or, in certain instances, as a political media critique.

In their article "What Happens When Journalistic Practises and Ideas About Newsworthiness Enter a Public Sector Organisation," Maria Grafstrom and Hanna Sofia Rehnberg (2022) investigate what occurs when journalistic practices and ideas about newsworthiness join a public sector organization. Their empirical instance is the digital news station VGRfokus, run by a Swedish county council. The authors use content analysis and interviews to demonstrate how VGRfokus balances bureaucratic and market ideals. This is important to understand since the channel aims to educate people and brand the organization. The concept of newsworthiness develops as a controlling guideline for what is considered proper for the channel, which helps to alleviate the tension previously there. However, in this context, newsworthiness is impacted by the effort to establish a coherent and good organizational image, showing patterns comparable to the conflicts between the discourses of journalism and managerialism outlined by Suhonen (2022). In this situation, newsworthiness is affected by the demand to build a coherent and positive organizational image. We have also seen the rise of new kinds of media organizations, all of which are working towards finding their position in the uncertain and rapidly digitizing landscape of media. Christopher Buschow and his colleagues (2022) explore one such case in their study. The Science Media Centre Germany (SMC) is a start-up news organization that needs to generate revenue for its sponsors. In the article, SMC is portrayed as a repair organization with the mission of promoting the work of high-quality media production in order to make up for deficiencies in legacy media. The authors demonstrate how SMC not only engages in activities related to field repair but also contributes to field advancement by fostering innovation and renewing journalism. The authors conclude that SMC functions as a prototype organization in scientific journalism not only because it makes direct contributions to the field but also because it demonstrates new methods of working and organizing.

2. CONCLUSION

Journalists need to be flexible, creative, and dedicated to the profession's core ideals because of the dynamic nature of the media industry and the organizations that support it. As technology improves and social expectations shift, media professionals and institutions must stay alert in tackling obstacles and harnessing opportunities to contribute meaningfully to the public conversation in an ever-changing context.

The following three papers in this themed issue further broaden the bounds of media work by concentrating on media work undertaken in contexts that are not typical of media organizations. These organizational settings include public sector organizations, a scientific communication start-up, and a counter-media outlet.

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