



## SUPPLEMENTARY EXAMINATION: JANUARY 2022

PAPER: JOURNALISM 1B

SUBJECT CODE: JNS1BB1

LECTURER: MR. STEFAN KRIEK

TIME: TAKE HOME  
TEST

MODERATOR: XXX

MARKS: 100

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THIS PAPER CONSISTS OF 20 PAGES. YOU MUST ANSWER BOTH QUESTIONS IN ONE WORD DOCUMENT DOCUMENT AND SUBMIT IT ON BLACKBOARD IN THE "EXAM" TURNITIN LINK. SUBMIT WORD DOCUMENTS ONLY. NO PDF

### GUIDELINES FOR PREPARATION:

- The exam paper will be distributed via an "EXAM" link on Blackboard ONE WEEK before the exam date on the timetable.
- This is a take-home exam, and therefore it is an open book exam. However, all the information you need to answer these questions are included on this exam paper. Thus, should you have trouble accessing your readings; you need not worry as this is an all-inclusive exam.
- You can spend ONE WEEK to prepare and write your answers to this exam. The exam should be submitted on Blackboard BEFORE MIDNIGHT on the exam date.
- A note on essay questions/ discussions: Please note that because you have access to all the necessary readings, we require insight and depth in your answers, especially essay questions. You cannot rely on just putting down information – you should engage with the provided readings and show insight. Do not just rewrite the slides!
- For Question 1, you must reference, and these references MUST come from the 3 articles provided in Addendum A. You must reference at total of 6 times, and must reference each article at least once
- For Question 2, you must reference, and these references MUST come from the 3 articles provided in Addendum B. You must reference at total of 6 times, and must reference each article at least once
- You do not need to include a bibliography.

### TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

- If typed: Arial 12, 1.5 spacing.
- Minimum of two (2) pages for Question 1 and 2 (minimum of 700 words per question )

### GUIDELINES FOR SUBMISSION:

- The primary portal for submission is the JNS1BB1 Blackboard site. A Turnitin link will be created where you can submit your test.
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**ANSWER THE FOLLOWING TWO (2) QUESTION:**

**Question 1**

“The Earth is an extraordinary piece of evolutionary engineering that has self-regulated itself for millions of years. That homeostasis is now being destabilised by human activities. Scientists tell us it is not too late to fix this, but we need to start the repair work urgently. Journalists can facilitate that.” (Watts, 2020: para. 5)

*Using the above mentioned quote as a starting point **and** the three (3) articles provided in Addendum A, critically discuss what role journalist must play regarding the climate change dilemma.*

**[50]**

**Question 2**

*By referring to the three (3) articles provided in Addendum B, critically discuss how journalists should go about reporting on PUI (Poverty, Unemployment, and Inequality)*

**[50]**

## **Addendum A (Question 1)**

### **1. Climate crisis: does journalism actually make a difference?**

**By Jonathan Watts (2020)**

“Will this story make a difference?”

It’s a question journalists ask themselves all the time. The answer is rarely clearcut, and there is no shortage of stories that barely make a ripple. But there have been a number of occasions in recent years on the Guardian’s environment desk when the answer has been a resounding yes.

The media is part of a social nervous system, alerting the public to remote danger in the same way neurotransmitters tell the brain the tips of the fingers are being burned. We serve as amplifiers that enable weak or remote voices to reach a wide audience and centres of decision making. And, of course, we also have a role as watchdogs, holding political authority to account.

These roles – of transmission, amplification and investigation – are all vital elements in any effective response to the world’s environmental breakdown.

The Earth is an extraordinary piece of evolutionary engineering that has self-regulated itself for millions of years. That homeostasis is now being destabilised by human activities. Scientists tell us it is not too late to fix this, but we need to start the repair work urgently. Journalists can facilitate that.

That is because we can connect the local and the global, which is an essential part of any solution. The climate crisis, collapse of natural life support systems, rise of zoonotic diseases and the pollution of air, water and soil are often first apparent in distant regions and poor communities, though the cause and ultimate consequences can be found in wealthier and more densely populated cities. As we have learned with Covid-19, unless problems are identified and dealt with early and at a local level, the health and economic costs can be horrendous as they later spread and expand across the world.

The Guardian makes those connections because it has an internationalist and social perspective and is not owned by a tycoon or corporate interests. This independence sets it apart from most other media organisations, which have a narrower domestic and economic focus, or see their role as entertainers to distract readers, or echo-chambers that reinforce prejudices. Instead of putting distance between the UK and the rest of the world, we are more likely to explore what links us together, which is essential if we are going to address global environmental problems.

Finding out how people are affected and fighting back at a local level was a goal of the Green Blood series on the threats posed to environmental activists and journalists who cover the mining sector. This has made a difference. Soon after the findings were published by the Guardian and its 35 partner media organisations, Guatemala's constitutional court upheld a request from indigenous campaigners to suspend operations at one of the largest nickel mines in Central America due to the facility's environmental impact.

Similarly, reports of human rights abuses and environmental negligence at the North Mara goldmine in Tanzania prompted multinational corporations such as Apple, Nokia and Canon to review their supply chains. The refiner, MMTC-PAMP, and the mine's owner, Barrick, have subsequently organised an inquiry into risk management practices at North Mara. The Guardian continues to scrutinise the operator's promise to pay more heed to the concerns of the local community and environment.

Similarly, the Defenders series on the killings of environmental and land activists continues to have ramifications. In the past two years, two of those profiled have won landmark lawsuits. In South Africa, courts ruled against a proposed titanium mine that would have torn up land belonging to the Xolobeni community on the Wild Coast. In Kenya, judges awarded \$12m in damages to the residents of the Owino Uhuru shantytown for deaths and health impacts from a nearby lead smelter for recycling batteries.

In both cases, local activists risked their lives to campaign against powerful economic interests because they were concerned about pollution and other forms of environmental degradation. Media coverage did not decide their cases. But without the international spotlight, their courage and determination would not have received the kind of prominence that can sway opinion.

A recent case in point concerned Chinese mining company plans to explore coal deposits in Zimbabwe's Hwange national park. Local conservationists were keen to get the message out internationally because domestic reports suggested the government was ready to put economic interests above the sanctity of one of the world's most important homes for elephants, rhinos, cheetahs, giraffes and other wildlife. It worked. Days after stories were published in the Guardian and other media, the authorities announced they would block the plan.

Similarly, in Brazil, the world's biggest meat packing company, JBS, announced in September it would axe suppliers linked to Amazon deforestation. This policy was a turnaround from its previous stance and followed a series of articles by the Guardian in collaboration with Repórter Brasil and the Bureau of Investigative Journalism about the company's lax oversight of its supply chain.

Of course, many other factors are involved in such decisions. Measuring the influence of a story is far harder than counting page views and social media shares. But it is clearly important or corporations and governments would not spend billions on public relations campaigns to avoid negative publicity. In that vein, the Guardian has taken several major steps to try to shape public opinion in favour of greater action on the climate crisis.

The biggest environment reporting project of recent years was the Polluters, an old-school piece of investigative journalism that aimed to name and shame the fossil fuel companies, financial companies, public relations firms, thinktanks and politicians that have contributed the most to the climate crisis. This was a cross-disciplinary collaboration of more than 20 journalists across environment, business, investigations, data journalism, video, podcast, graphics and foreign news desks in five countries, with support from universities and NGOs.

After eight months of preparation, the newspaper and website led with hard-hitting exposes every day for a week. This intense focus demonstrated the importance the Guardian places on a topic of growing public concern. It generated debate across the political spectrum and within the boardrooms of some of the world's biggest companies, and it contributed – along with the upsurge in climate activism – to a growing number of announcements by the likes of BP, Shell and several banks and insurance companies to accelerate the shift away from carbon-intensive industries.

We also know we can and should do more. As Greta Thunberg and others have pointed out, the climate and nature crises are so pressing they should be the subjects of the top headline on every news website and TV channel. There are still countless untold and under-reported stories. Scientists tell us the world needs to accelerate an energy, transport and food system transformation on a scale unprecedented in history. That is both alarming and exciting.

Business as usual is not enough. Nor is journalism as usual.

(Source: <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2020/oct/09/turning-up-the-spotlight-how-our-climate-coverage-has-made-a-difference>)

## **2. Why climate journalism matters**

**By Elif Cansu Ilhan and Meri Baghdasaryan (no date)**

*What is the climate journalism?*

In the light of the ongoing climate crisis and the rise of climate strikes all over the globe, the contribution of journalists to informing public discourse should not be overlooked. Climate journalism fulfills a unique role in covering one of – if not the most – pressing issues of our time. It includes coverage of the latest environmental predictions and scientific data, as well as reporting from climate summits and conventions, thereby contributing to the public debate on climate crisis. Thus, climate journalists, serving as public watch dogs, join forces with environmental scientists and activists on raising awareness, advocating for solutions, and finding ways of overcoming the climate crisis.

*Why do we need climate journalism?*

It is imperative to fight the growing climate crisis with a multi-angle approach. Limiting global temperature rise at 1.5°C is the first step that will enable humanity to protect the climate favourable to life as it is and secure the continuity of our ecosystems. Fulfilling this goal requires the collective work of governments, nongovernmental organisations (NGOs), the wider public, business, industry, and governments. To make this collective work a reality, however, it is very important to impart scientific discoveries to all these parties and deliver them accurately, responsibly, and in an easily understandable form. As a relatively new branch of science, the terminology used by climate science is open to misunderstandings. To overcome these misunderstandings and avoid the unintentional spread of misinformation or outright intentional disinformation created to mislead on purpose, it is essential to have journalists siding with the well-being of our current habitat. One important example of what can happen in the absence of committed, high-quality climate journalism is the example of ExxonMobile. One of the biggest oil companies in the world, ExxonMobile discovered the relationship between fossil fuels and climate change nearly half a century ago, yet they hid this information, deceived the public, and robbed humanity of a generation's worth of time to reverse climate change for the continuity of cash flow and short-term profit.

*Who can be a climate journalist?*

With the advancement of digital technologies and emergence of citizen journalism, climate journalism benefits from the contributions of not only environmental journalists, but also climate activists and environmental organisations as well as concerned citizens of Earth. This means that the high calling of climate journalism can currently be implemented by a variety of actors. It is important to note, however, that all climate journalists should undertake the duties and responsibilities that underpin journalistic

ethics, such as accuracy, transparency, independence, respect for rule of law and human rights, and so on in order to be deemed trustworthy and effective. Additionally, as journalists reporting on scientific topics and matters of activism that constitute public topics, they should have the proper knowledge of the relevant terminology, scientific facts, an awareness of the diplomatic efforts surrounding the climate crisis, and a keen understanding of how determinantal a conflict of interest is to high-quality and trustworthy journalism.

### *Things to keep in mind while engaging in climate reporting*

Climate journalism covers uncomfortable subjects related to climate crisis, from ecological collapse to the threat of rising sea levels – topics that often alarms readers and depicts a sad and depressing future. Hence, it is important to know your audience and frame your message accordingly, as well as use both rational and emotional appeals along with understandable language in order to enable all readers to relate to the cause. Helping to make the public eager to act against this crisis, as opposed to fomenting hopelessness and despair, is also vital to empowering individuals with accurate knowledge of scientific facts, the short history of this crisis, the parties that have the responsibility to act, their range of power, and of course, what they can do as individuals to contribute while recognising the need for larger climate activism to hold the largest polluters to account.

It is also the responsibility of climate journalists to know that climate journalism is a rights-based form of journalism. The climate crisis affects the most vulnerable first as well as the hardest. The ones most affected by this crisis are the ones who contribute the least to it, whereas the ones who have the most capacity to avoid the catastrophic results of the crisis are the ones who are most contributing to it in the first place. This also means, however, that the latter group are the ones with the most capacity to also fight against this crisis. Therefore, good and responsible storytelling is key to presenting the topic in a way that makes the public both aware and empowered to act.

### *Climate journalism: The way forward*

We currently live in an era of information wars where accessing credible information and critical coverage of topics of public interest is of crucial importance. Having united journalists, scientists, and activists, climate journalism carries the duty to communicate the verified, impartial, and accurate messages of public importance with regards to climate change and the climate crisis. Thus, climate journalism plays a vital role in shaping the public discourse on the climate crisis in a responsible manner, enabling the people to act and shape the green and sustainable future that they want for themselves, their children, and the future of life.

(Source: <https://www.cdnee.org/why-climate-journalism-matters/>)

### **3. There are genuine climate alarmists, but they're not in the same league as deniers**

**By Dana Nuccitelli (2018)**

Those who debunk climate change misinformation often face a dilemma. We're flooded with such a constant deluge of climate myths, where should we focus our efforts? Climate misinformation is propagated via congressional climate hearings, conservative media outlets, denial blogs, and even from some genuine climate alarmists.

Specifically, there has recently been a debate as to whether Skeptical Science – a website with a database of climate myths and scientific debunkings, to which I'm a primary contributor – would be more useful and effective if it called out misinformation from 'alarmists,' and if it eliminated or revised its Climate Misinformers page.

There is some validity to these critiques, and in response, Skeptical Science is renaming the page 'Climate misinformation by source.' But the site is run entirely by a team of international volunteers, and as such, opportunity costs must be considered. Time devoted to refuting alarmists is time not devoted to debunking the constant deluge of climate denial.

*Unlike deniers, climate alarmists are not influential*

Climate deniers are obviously incredibly influential. Despite their lack of supporting evidence or facts, not only do 28% of Americans continue to believe that global warming is natural and 14% that it's not even happening, but deniers also dictate Republican Party policy. Republican policymakers constantly invite deniers to testify in congressional hearings, including many of those featured on the Skeptical Science misinformers page.

There is no symmetry on the other side of the aisle. In those same congressional hearings, Democratic Party policymakers invite mainstream climate scientists to testify. Their party policy is based on the consensus of 97% of the climate science community.

Ultimately, the issue boils down to a warped 'Overton Window' – the range of ideas tolerated in public discourse. In the real world, we have climate deniers on one extreme, alarmists on the other, and mainstream climate science in the middle. But the public discourse is warped – we instead have a heavy focus on climate denial among conservative media outlets and policymakers, a heavy focus on mainstream climate science among reputable media outlets and liberal policymakers, and the alarmists are largely ignored. Michael Tobis nicely diagrammed this in the climate Overton Window:



### *But there are some alarmists*

That being said, there are a few reasonably well-known individuals who could be accurately described as climate alarmists. The most prominent is Guy McPherson, who decided in 2002 that climate change would likely drive humans to extinction by 2030. Sixteen years later, we're now more than halfway to 2030 and the global human population has grown from 6.3 bn to 7.6 bn. It's quite safe to say we won't go extinct in the next few decades.

McPherson's case basically boils down to arguing that feedbacks like large methane releases will soon kick in, causing a rapid spike in global warming that will lead to global extinctions. One of his primary pieces of supporting evidence is that Earth System Sensitivity – which describes how sensitive the climate is to the increased greenhouse effect over millennia – is higher than the shorter-term climate sensitivity.

That was essentially the gist of a recent study profiled here in the Guardian. Over millennia, global temperatures and sea level rise will continue to rise beyond what climate models predict will happen over the next couple of centuries. But these are slow feedbacks, and as such won't kick in within the next few decades. Scott Johnson did a very deep dive into McPherson's flawed arguments, for those who want to learn about them in greater detail.

As another example, Peter Wadhams predicted in 2012 that the Arctic would be ice-free in the summer by 2016. In fact, the summer of 2012 saw a dramatic decline in year-to-year Arctic sea ice extent (down to 3.6 million square km), which Wadhams believed would become the norm. That hasn't yet been the case – there were 4.7 million square km of Arctic sea ice in the summer of 2016.

It's worth noting that Wadhams gets most of the climate science right. There is absolutely a long-term decline in Arctic sea ice, which is in the midst of what many have described as a 'death spiral.' And Arctic sea ice is thinning rapidly. The Arctic will eventually be ice-free in the summer, but not within the next few years. According to Met Office Chief Scientist Julia Slingo, 2025–2030 would be the earliest date for an ice-free Arctic summer, and 2040–2060 is more likely. Wadhams also believes that there may soon be a large methane release from the Arctic, but a review of the relevant research suggests this isn't a near-term concern:

"There is no evidence that methane will run out of control and initiate any sudden, catastrophic effects. There's certainly no runaway greenhouse. Instead, chronic methane releases will supplement the primary role of CO<sub>2</sub>."

### *Climate denial is a much bigger problem*

Wadhams has received some mainstream media attention, including in the Guardian, but his more alarmist warnings are largely ignored. There certainly isn't a powerful political party basing its climate policies on his inaccurate predictions.

And that's really the key point. While there are people on 'both sides' who spread misinformation, there are far more on the denier than the alarmist side, who are generally far wronger, and the deniers also have a far greater influence over policymakers.

There's certainly nothing wrong with debunking overly alarmist claims – in fact, it's a worthwhile endeavor, and some groups like Climate Feedback do just that. But debunking uninfluential alarmism comes at a cost. It diverts resources away from addressing the never-ending flood of misinformation coming from climate deniers who currently control the climate policy platform of the party in charge of one of the most powerful countries on Earth.

(Source: <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/climate-consensus-97-per-cent/2018/jul/09/there-are-genuine-climate-alarmists-but-theyre-not-in-the-same-league-as-deniers>)

## **Addendum B**

### **1. Voices of the poor are missing from South Africa's media**

**By Herman Wasserman, Tanya Bosch, and Wallace Chuma (2016)**

Poor communities in South Africa feel that their voices are not heard and their issues not taken seriously by the media.

This is clear in the findings of an international research project on the role of media in conflicts arising from transitions from authoritarian rule to democratic government. It focused on four countries – South Africa, Egypt, Kenya and Serbia.

The study shows that in all four countries, citizenship conflicts are frequently reduced to judicial factors. The media's approach to conflicts is to look at them from the perspective of rights rather than cultural factors.

In South Africa, rather than wilful distortion or neglect on the part of journalists, the findings expose systemic problems underpinning news agendas and coverage.

The project, now in its second year, has drawn on content analysis of print media and interviews with journalists and activists.

#### *Understanding conflict in South Africa*

South Africa's formal transition from apartheid to democracy in 1994 is often heralded as peaceful and smooth when viewed in institutional and procedural terms.

But there are lingering problems. Dissent over the unrealised dividends of democracy for the poor and widespread perceptions of government as corrupt have resulted in ongoing protests.

Anger over unemployment, housing, water and sanitation, electricity, corruption in municipalities, and health and crime have all been listed as reasons for the rising number of protests which started in the early 2000s.

The protests are not only aimed at getting basic public services such as water, sanitation and electricity. They are also part of wider disillusionment at the failure of democracy to meet basic needs as well as an attempt by the poor to be heard and included in democratic discourse and policy-making.

This “rebellion of the poor” can thus be considered “democratisation conflicts”. They are similar to those in other transitional democracies where the struggle for equality and human rights did not end with the advent of formal democracy.

While it is widely acknowledged that violent protests are becoming more prevalent in South Africa, the role that the media plays in the cycle of protest and violence is not widely understood.

Our ongoing study indicates that South African community protests receive unfavourable coverage. The reporting also routinely fails to provide depth and context to explain the underlying issues that lead to the protests.

Frequently protests are reported only inasmuch as they inconvenience a middle-class audience, for instance to inform them where traffic may be disrupted.

While journalists are often sympathetic to protesters, they strive for “objective” coverage so as not to come across as supporting a particular side. The result is superficial and limited reporting. Underlying structural issues are not unpacked.

Journalists list time pressures and juniorisation of the newsrooms as some of the reasons for limited in-depth coverage.

And commercial pressures also result in media focusing on protests as drama in an attempt to attract the interest of middle-class audiences.

### *Fighting to be heard*

Very few media articles about protests include interviews with protesters. It seems that protesters’ voices remain unheard, even as their actions are reported. Communities report that photographers are often sent to take photographs without being accompanied by reporters to interview them.

Activists from poor communities report that they only get media attention when they go to extremes, such as causing damage. Protesters told researchers that when they called the media to cover their issues, they were asked if “anything is burning”. If nothing is burning, journalists don’t come and don’t report.

Activists report that with the failure of government channels of communication, and poor media coverage of their plight, the only way to be seen is to create a violent spectacle.

They say that participating in government-created spaces for engagement, such as ward councils and municipal integrated development plans, does not lead to satisfactory responses.

This suggests that protest actions follow a calculated logic, despite activists' impressions that they are often depicted in the media as being out of control.

While there is some coverage in the media that protests are related to structural economic circumstances, they do not reflect the frustrations experienced by communities over government's empty promises.

Also, scant regard is given to the failure of participatory processes to address grievances. No attention is paid to the failures of capitalism to address inequality. The heavy-handed response from government to silence protest is also underplayed.

Media coverage differs noticeably depending on the respective outlets. In print, the Daily Sun provides the most coverage of protests. This bears out the tabloid's claims to provide news from the perspective of the poor and the working class.

Compared to their upmarket print media counterparts like the Mail & Guardian and Business Day, the Daily Sun is also the most critical of most aspects of democracy. It is often the only newspaper where sources are ordinary citizens. For media serving the middle class, sources are mostly drawn from officials or the elite.

#### *Improving reporting of community protests*

The activists we interviewed believe that media could play a big role in boosting democracy in the country by highlighting the issues poor communities face before they spill over into violent conflicts.

A focus on community politics could shine a spotlight on the most marginalised and vulnerable citizens, and in turn could help focus government attention where it is most needed. Media coverage – favourable or unfavourable – added pressure on government to quickly resolve issues.

Activists felt that they would prefer not to have to go to extremes to get media attention. But they also recognised that their protests kept community issues on the agenda.

(Source: <https://theconversation.com/voices-of-the-poor-are-missing-from-south-africas-media-53068>)

## **2. How portrayal of protest in South Africa denigrates poor people**

**By Steven Friedman (2019)**

Protests in the townships and shack settlements where most poor people live in Johannesburg, Tshwane and Cape Town are in the news. These are the three metropolitan areas controlled by the opposition Democratic Alliance (DA).

The party insists that the protests have been organised by the governing ANC. The DA has laid a charge against the ANC with the police, claiming that it has proof of the party's involvement.

Much of the media have supported, denouncing the ANC for disrupting the calm of these cities in a cynical attempt to embarrass the main opposition party during the current national election campaign.

The effect is, not for the first time, to denigrate poor people by offering a distorted picture of their lives and to keep alive spurious claims about protest which hail back to the era when the apartheid system governed the country.

The consensus between parts of the media and the DA presents protest in South Africa as something abnormal, which must be organised by sinister forces if it is to happen at all.

Protests are still presented as unusual events — the media insists that there has been a “wave of protest” triggered by the election campaign. But protest is commonplace in townships and shack settlements, where most poor people live.

Every now and then — as now — the media announces that protest has increased. In reality, South Africa has experienced constant high levels of protest since 1973, when workers in the port city of Durban struck for higher wages, with only a brief pause between 1994 and 1997. This was prompted, no doubt, by hopes that democracy had ended the need to protest. So, what the media really mean when they announce a “wave” of protest is not that there are more protests, but that they have noticed them more.

At the same time as attention was fixated on protests in DA controlled areas, Klerksdorp and Potchefstroom in North West province and Steynsrus in the Free State were also gripped by protest. None of the commentaries mention these events, which happened in ANC municipalities and so couldn't have been caused by a desire to embarrass the opposition.

*Organisation*

Horror at the fact that the protest was organised harks back to the apartheid period. The authorities claimed then that black people were content with their lot. When protest erupted, it had to be because it was organised by agitators who manipulated people into believing that there was something wrong with legalised racism.

All protest is organised. So are cake sales and shopping expeditions — any activity in which human beings cooperate needs organising. But that doesn't mean, as those who mention organisation claim, that people are forced to protest by the organisers.

Unless there is evidence that organisers forced unwilling people to protest, harping on the fact that a protest is organised is like noting that people won't go to an event unless someone invites them. There's no evidence that anyone has been forced to take part in the current protests.

Anyone who knows life in townships and shack settlements will know that you don't need agitators to persuade people to protest — protest organisers simply channel existing anger. Complaining about this denies the justifiable anger that poor people feel at being ignored by both public and private power holders.

If these protests were organised by the ANC, this also says less than we are told. First, the DA and the country's third biggest party, the Economic Freedom Fighters, sometime organise protests directed at the ANC. It's not clear why these are acceptable but not those which the ANC might organise against them.

Second and more important, in the areas where poor people live, many protests are organised by the ANC — including many which are directed at the ANC.

The ANC has, for many years, dominated the townships. This continues even in those areas governed by the DA. In Johannesburg and Tshwane, the DA governs with only about a third of the vote because the ANC still wins all the wards in these areas. Since this is typical of much of the country, protests often reflect tensions within the ANC — one part is protesting at another. One reason the ANC lost Tshwane in 2016 is that its branches organised protests directed at the mayoral candidate chosen by the party leadership.

### *Denigrating poor people*

Politicians and journalists who find it interesting that the ANC organised a protest are again showing that they have no idea how township protest works. Nor does this, in the absence of other evidence, show that people have been manipulated or forced to protest.

Poor township conditions do not justify another way of denigrating the poor favoured by media and politicians — explaining protests away as “service delivery protests”.

The term “service delivery” is deeply undemocratic. It implies that the role of citizens in a democracy is to wait while those in government who know better “deliver” to them. The democratic view is that everyone is entitled to an equal say in the decisions which affect them – including a say in how government serves them. The “service delivery” explanation reduces citizens to people who benefit or suffer from decisions over which they have no control.

More important, the “service delivery” cliché doesn’t describe why people protest. The issues vary but, in each case, people are saying that their views and needs are ignored – that they have no voice. They don’t want government to “deliver” to them, they want it to listen to them. Journalists often say people are engaged in a “service delivery protest” because they cannot be bothered to ask them why they are protesting.

### *Insiders and outsiders*

None of this means that the ANC is the victim of injustice. South African electoral politics are rough and the ANC is guilty of as many assaults on the truth as its opponents.

What it does show is that the default position of the mainstream is to denigrate poor people. They are courted at election time and noticed when their protests spill out of townships, affecting the lives of the insider minority who monopolise public life.

For the rest, the insiders who dominate debate claim regularly that everything they do favours poor people — but never ask the poor what they favour. And, when poor people are persuaded by local organisers or ambitious politicians that they have an opportunity to be heard by taking to the streets, they are reduced by the insiders to passive consumers of “delivered” services or pawns in the hands of agitators.

All of which explains why poor people have been on the streets for more than 40 years.

(Source: <https://mg.co.za/article/2019-04-22-how-portrayal-of-protest-in-south-africa-denigrates-poor-people/>)



### **3. The role of journalism in eradicating poverty**

**By Dewi Seribayu (2019)**

It was many, many years ago when I had my first encounter with poverty. If you have ever been to Jakarta, you would know that it is a highly populated city filled with skyscrapers, luxury condominiums and numerous shopping malls. Then there are the densely-built shacks, informal settlements, squatters and slums - all within one city. The contrast between the rich and the poor are jarring but the people seemed unbothered by it. It was at a traffic light when a girl tapped on the window of our taxi. She looked to be about the same age as I was at that time, around 10 or 11, wearing tattered clothing with mismatched slippers that were too big for her. She asked for money and before my parents could give her some, our taxi driver waved her away. "They are a nuisance," he said. We were quiet as we watched her walk dejectedly towards a group of children huddled together. None of them had clean clothes, they were all skinny and most importantly, none of them looked happy. I remembered thinking, "We are lucky that we don't have this in Malaysia."

But the young me was, in one very important respect, wrong.

We may not see the poor in our cities but that does not mean that we do not have it. The poor in our urban areas live in relative poverty and that is when people lack the minimum amount of income needed to maintain the average standard of living in the society in which they live in. A little-known fact about poverty in Malaysia is that the poor are not some static group of people living in poverty year after year. Like the rest of us, they have jobs, families and children. This is even more alarming as we are so used to thinking that people who live in cities are economically sound. Isn't it disturbing to think that there are people working two or three jobs but are still unable to live comfortably? Poverty is not only defined monetarily. It is a matter of exclusion to basic privileges including education, basic civil and political rights and most importantly, the lack of opportunity. Children are more than twice as likely as adults to live in extreme poverty, according to a new analysis from the World Bank Group and UNICEF. Children suffer the most as they are not able to do anything to change their standard of living and as such, they grow up deprived of the basic privileges that they should have had.

It took me about a decade to realise that poverty is prevalent in our country. This poses the question, how is it that it took me a decade to find out that this is happening in my own backyard? It is simple, really - matters of poverty do not sell newspapers. In a market-driven industry, those who can afford media consumption affects the content in the media to a certain extent. Poverty is under-reported in the media and, when it is reported, those facing poverty are not given the space to explain what it actually means. If that is so, how will the public see and hear their struggles? How can we come

together as a community and eradicate this problem if we are not presented with an accurate representation of their lives?

Media have always played a central role in shaping opinion and policy. Reports on poverty - on the rare occasion that it is reported - are filled with statistics and jargon that is incomprehensible to us. Poverty has often been presented to us in a very robotic manner, devoid of emotion and compassion. While statistics are important, it detaches the public from this issue and in some cases, the poor are dehumanised. In order for us to stir the public, we need to appeal to their sensibilities. How so? Well, words are undeniably powerful but when it is accompanied by a well-placed photograph? It compels change. Photographs are like windows that the people can peek into, windows that can connect them to the struggles and hopelessness of poverty. Photographs show them the harsh reality of the urban poor. Photographs tell us what words cannot. Photographs tell stories. Photographs tap into the soul.

Poverty is unforgiving especially towards children. Growing up and living in this kind of environment leaves deep scars and it shapes them to be people who has a pessimistic view of the world. Poverty not only exists externally, but it can also exist within the mind and spirit of a person. Poor people struggle with hopelessness, anxiety, shame and inferiority. It is undeniable that this is the result of being voiceless and powerless. It gives an internalised worldview where many believe that they are of no value and have nothing significant to offer. As such, children grow up without aspirations and dreams. Mix with the wrong company and some may end up becoming predators and join criminal gangs. The environment that they live in is not conducive nor are there positive role models for them to build a strong moral compass from. These children not only lack moral anchoring, but they lack focus and drift through life aimlessly. But these can change if they have a voice. Without the access to a voice, those living in poverty are unable to participate directly in debate or to express their views on public policies that directly affect them. From such perspective, it can be said that the poor lack information and knowledge of actions that could be taken to improve their conditions. It's not that they don't want to, it's because they don't know how.

It is imperative that we remember the fact that the future of our country lies in the youth. These children are no exception to that. How are we going to move forward as a nation if we are unable to give these children another chance at life? If this issue persists for too long, we will create the culture of poverty, passing from generation to generation. The problem of today is tomorrow. What we cannot fix in this generation will be the problem of the future. And if we want people to see that, we must be very honest about what, and who, we mean when we talk about the poor. Be their voice. Be their change.

(Source: <https://www.unicef.org/malaysia/stories/role-journalism-eradicating-poverty>)