



SPECIAL EXAMINATION: 2021

PAPER: JOURNALISM 2A

SUBJECT CODE: JNS2AA2

EXAMINERS: MR. STEFAN KRIEK

TIME: TAKE HOME
EXAM

MODERATOR: MRS. ELNA ROSSOUW

MARKS: 100

THIS PAPER CONSISTS OF 21 PAGES. YOU MUST ANSWER ALL THE QUESTIONS IN ONE WORD DOCUMENT/HAND-WRITTEN DOCUMENT AND SUBMIT IT ON BLACKBOARD IN THE “EXAM” TAB AND TURNITIN. *YOU SHOULD INCLUDE YOUR STUDENT NUMBER AND SURNAME IN THE DOCUMENT NAME WHEN YOU SUBMIT*

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.

TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

- Minimum of one and a half (1.5) pages per question (written or typed – Arial: 12, 1.5 sp.)
- Since this is more in line with an academic essay, each answer must have *a minimum of three (3) in-text references*, and these *must come from the articles provided in their respective appendixes* (so question 1 needs references from articles in appendix A etc.)
- You do not need to include a bibliography

GUIDELINES FOR SUBMISSION:

- The primary portal for submission is the JNS2AA2 Blackboard site. An “EXAM”, as well as a TURNITIN link, will be created where you will submit your exam.

- IF IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO SUBMIT ON BLACKBOARD FOR TECHNICAL REASONS YOU MAY SUBMIT ON THE FOLLOWING PLATFORM (AS DETERMINED BY THE LECTURER): email to skriekuj@gmail.com
 - PLEASE DO NOT SUBMIT ON ANY OTHER PLATFORM IF YOU HAVE ACCESS TO BLACKBOARD!
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ANSWER ALLTHREE (3) QUESTIONS:

QUESTION ONE (1)

Despite claims that journalism should be objective, truly objective journalism is impossible. There have even been calls that objectivity should be abandoned in journalism.

*Read the three (3) articles in **addendum A** and critically discuss whether or not you think objectivity has any place in journalism.*

(40)

QUESTION TWO (2)

*Do newspapers have a future in an increasingly digital climate? Read the two (2) articles provided in **addendum B** and critically discuss your answer.*

(30)

QUESTION THREE (3)

"The view that identities are constructed through media representation is based on the assumption that the media is a representational system" (Wasserman, 2009: 260).

*Read the two (2) articles in **addendum C** and discuss the South African **news** media's reporting and representation of one, or both, of the following subjects (since sexuality and gender are strongly interlinked, you may discuss both). In your answer, refer mainly to **newspaper** media.*

- Sexuality (gay, lesbian, pansexual, bisexual etc.)
- Gender (male, female, transgender, cisgender, non-binary etc.)

(30)

TOTAL FOR EXAM: [100]

Addendum A (for question 1)

1. Viewpoint: Can journalism be objective?

By Steven Chua (2018).

I just recently talked with a friend who said, “Objective? Are we still pretending that journalism can be objective?”

This is a sentiment that I’ve been running into more and more as time has gone on.

For example, we regularly get emails or calls telling us that we should be sticking up for one issue or another. In other words, being urged to take a side, which is the opposite of being objective.

Objectivity should always have a place in news reporting. There is a time and place for opinions, but that should be reserved for opinion columns, like what you’re reading now.

When people say objectivity in journalism is dead, they are often referring not to news reporting, but rather to commentary and punditry. And very often, they are referring to American media personalities.

Tucker Carlson, Bill O’Reilly, Rachel Maddow, Van Jones, Sean Hannity, Rush Limbaugh, John Oliver, this list could go on for a long time, are not reporters. They are commentators and should not be confused with journalists.

On the Canadian end, there are fewer figures as popular or polarizing, but I often see people criticizing or praising the “journalism” of people like Ezra Levant, Margaret Wente, Christie Blatchford, Rex Murphy, Rick Mercer or the late Rafe Mair.

Again, these are not journalists; they are commentators.

Finally, I’ve also encountered the debate about the objectivity of actual news reporters. Many tell me that since people are prone to their own biases, we should stop trying to create objective news.

I would say that absolute objectivity is impossible, the same way absolute perfection isn’t possible.

That doesn’t mean we should stop trying to reach for it.

The consequences of giving up on this goal are huge, and we're already seeing them in the United States, where punditry appears to be steadily replacing actual reporting, which is the logical extension of what happens when people start devaluing objective journalism.

Just flip on the television at any time of day and you'll see this. Very, very often, you'll see a pundit. Not a reporter.

The end result is clear. A destabilized, hyper-polarized society where people even have trouble agreeing as to whether the recent Florida mass shooting victims are real, or just "crisis actors."

I'd prefer to keep that mess away.

(Source: <https://www.prpeak.com/opinion/viewpoint-can-journalism-be-objective-1.23206137>).

2. In defence of journalistic objectivity

By Reg Rumney (2015)

The appearance in public of senior editorial members of the Independent media group in ANC garb has occasioned a vibrant if sometimes bitter debate about independence and partisanship.

What set off a lively and sometimes-acrimonious debate was an article by Daily Maverick writer Marianne Thamm, who raised the idea of journalistic "objectivity".

She wrote: "The myth of the objective journalist has long been shattered. It never existed. Journalists are human and by nature gravitate towards specific ideologies and ways of thinking shaped by a myriad of influences and factors. We are not blank slates. Ultimately, however, our job is to monitor and to hold power to account — whatever its colours."

One of our greatest liberal journalists, Allister Sparks, long ago questioned the use of the term.

The idea of objectivity arose in the US in the early 1900s, according to one account, because press associations serving many newspapers need to give one presentation of the facts for all newspapers.

The real problem with objectivity is not only that it assumes journalists or any person can be a completely neutral fact-sifting machine, without a particular history and position in society that shapes what and who that person understands.

The real problem is that the idea of objectivity is associated with a set of journalistic rituals that may prevent journalists seeking out the truth of a particular news event or topic.

Those rituals prefer seeking “balance” and “fairness” to getting to the bottom of what is going on.

It has even been suggested that “balance” is incompatible with objectivity, in the sense of a lack of bias.

An example of this was the quoting of the security police in every story that involved state brutality. Quite simply, the security police of apartheid South Africa could not be trusted. Reprinting their statements without subjecting them to scrutiny served only to muddy the waters, especially since the papers were banned from printing statements from the ANC. The security police lied routinely. Journalists should at least have raised big red flags when quoting them.

Another example is the Goldilocks structure of a news piece. Two opposing views are quoted, and a third viewpoint, somewhere in the middle, is proposed as the concluding truth. The middle road is not always the best place to be. What is the golden mean in an article about whether HIV causes Aids?

And yet throwing objectivity out along with ideas of perfect neutrality is dangerous. The idea that all truth is entirely constructed either individually in our own heads or socially in groups, rules out the possibility of external reality interacting with, and changing, our conceptions of truth.

For me, it makes it impossible for anyone to change their minds when confronted with evidence. The apocryphal quote from John Maynard Keynes about this is, “When the facts change, I change my mind. What do you do, sir?”

While we can dispense with “fairness” because it begs the question, “Fairness to whom?” and “balance” I don’t think it is wise to dispense with including not just “the other side” of the story but as many different voices as possible.

As a journalist, I found that the chief boon of being forced to seek the opposing point of view, based on the legal idea of “audi alteram partem” was that it sometimes changed the direction of my article entirely from its initial conception, because I encountered new evidence.

Also, an article that doesn’t quote anyone sounds dry and lifeless. An article with competing and contrasting voices has dynamism. I force myself to remember that not everyone who reads what I write will be persuaded by the main thrust of the article, and some at least may be quite pleased to see an opposite point of view. The audience

doesn't always read what we write, or hear or view what we broadcast, in the way we intend it to be read or heard or seen.

From our end of the story, a complete absence of "bias", which is how objectivity is sometimes framed, is clearly not possible. So, yes, we should be careful about assuming that our own ideas, political and economic are God-given and common sense, not a product of our education, our personal and political histories, and our experiences. And yes, we should respect the views of others, especially the views of those people who do not get much attention because they lack power or status.

But we can't function as journalists if we believe there is no version of events that captures reality better than others. And let's be clear. This is not a simple matter of being a "mirror". Facts are not lying around like pebbles to be picked up. It often takes hard work to filter out fact from rumour, assertion and counter-assertion, and even data.

So what do we do? The best answer I have come across is the approach proposed by Bill Kovach and Tom Rosenstiel, in their book *The Elements of Journalism*.

Their answer is the "journalism of verification", making the task of seeking the truth central to the profession of journalism.

The final, absolute truth is impossible, since even science changes its mind, frequently, but that doesn't mean we cannot aim at the best approximation of truth. If we are in the business simply of asserting different truths, we might as well write poetry. There have been times when I have considered this, but the audience expects something else.

To reiterate: as journalists we are in the business of trying to establish the truth, however difficult this may be. As Kovach and Rosenstiel write, "The first principle of journalism – its disinterested pursuit of the truth – is ultimately what sets it apart from all other forms of communication".

(Source: <https://thoughtleader.co.za/regrumney/2015/01/22/in-defence-of-journalistic-objectivity/>)

3. An argument why journalists should not abandon objectivity

By Alex S. Jones (2009)

'... objectivity does not require that journalists be blank slates free of bias. In fact, objectivity is necessary precisely because they are biased'.

In his book "Losing the News: The Future of the News that Feeds Democracy", author Alex S. Jones, a 1982 Nieman Fellow and director of the Joan Shorenstein

Centre on the Press, Politics and Public Policy at Harvard University, describes in its prologue his purpose and intent in writing about the “genuine crisis” in news. “It is not one of press bias, though that is how most people seem to view it,” he contends. “Rather, it is a crisis of diminishing quantity and quality, of morale and sense of mission, of values and leadership.”

In this excerpt from the chapter “Objectivity’s Last Stand,” Jones reminds readers how objectivity assumed its role in the tradition of American journalism, what “authentic journalistic objectivity” looks like when practiced well, and why it matters so much to the future of news reporting.

To my mind, a great deal of what makes journalism good is entwined with what I would term authentic journalistic objectivity, as opposed to the various flavors of phony or faux objectivity. I believe it is essential that genuine objectivity should remain the American journalistic standard, but we may be living through what could be considered objectivity’s last stand.

I define journalistic objectivity as a genuine effort to be an honest broker when it comes to news. That means playing it straight without favoring one side when the facts are in dispute, regardless of your own views and preferences. It means doing stories that will make your friends mad when appropriate and not doing stories that are actually hit jobs or propaganda masquerading as journalism. It sometimes means doing something that probably is not done nearly enough—betraying your sources! A journalist uses charm and guile to help extract information that can benefit the public, and then spills the beans to the public. And sometimes the source of the information feels betrayed. Objectivity also means not trying to create the illusion of fairness by letting advocates pretend in your journalism that there is a debate about the facts when the weight of truth is clear. He-said/she-said reporting, which just pits one voice against another, has become the discredited face of objectivity. But that is not authentic objectivity.

After describing what critics of objective journalism find as its faults and detailing the historical roots of objective journalism, Jones returns to a discussion of how journalism—with objectivity at its core—has been thought of by those who set forth its principles.

But what, exactly, was objective journalism? Were all-too-human journalists supposed to stop being humans and somehow expunge all the prejudices that they carried inside them? Were they to be objective, meaning that they would approach each new subject like a blank slate without opinions? Enemies of objectivity argue that because journalists must be free of bias to be objective, and because this is impossible, it follows that objectivity is a false ideal. As a group, journalists probably have more opinions than most, and it is very rare that a reporter starts working on a story without having some notion as to what happened—in other words, a point of view. But objectivity does not

require that journalists be blank slates free of bias. In fact, objectivity is necessary precisely because they are biased.

In their book *The Elements of Journalism: What Newspeople Should Know and the Public Should Expect*, Bill Kovach and Tom Rosenstiel, describe what they call “the lost meaning of objectivity.”... As [they] point out, “In the original concept, in other words, the method is objective, not the journalist.” It was because journalists inevitably arrived with bias that they needed objectivity as a discipline to test that bias against the evidence so as to produce journalism that would be closer to truth.

They argue that the quickening of objectivity as the American journalistic standard was born of a desire to have a more scientific way of approaching news. The nation’s faith in science was surging, and the scientific method seemed suited to journalism. Scientists begin their research with assumptions. They have expectations of what will happen, but they don’t know what will happen. They have, in other words, their own opinions and beliefs—their point of view or even bias—about what is likely the truth, and they do their research to test those assumptions. Their objective, scientific inquiry is not one that is without bias, but one in which bias has to stand up to evidence and results.

This is the sensible and realistic approach to objectivity that might be termed *genuine objectivity*. It begins with the assumption that journalists have bias, and that their bias has to be tested and challenged by gathering facts and information that will either support it or knock it down.

Often, there is information that does both, and that ambiguity needs to be reported with the same dispassion with which a scientist would report variations in findings that were inconclusive. If the evidence is inconclusive, then that is—by scientific standards—the truth.

But journalistic objectivity is an effort to discern a practical truth, not an abstract, perfect truth. Reporters seeking genuine objectivity search out the best truth possible from the evidence that the reporter, in good faith, can find. To discredit objectivity because it is impossible to arrive at perfect truth is akin to dismissing trial by jury because it isn’t perfect in its judgments.

In concluding this chapter, Jones writes:

My sense is that most Americans want the same thing—that their news should be rooted in a verifiable reality that can be confirmed and that faithfully represents the ambiguity that reality usually includes. The national conversation is the means we have for interpreting and analyzing that core of objective news, and it is inherently subjective and opinionated. But if a fundamental confidence in the iron core disappears, if it is viewed as just another collection of facts assembled by someone with a political

agenda, then one of the most important supports for our democracy will weaken, and the conversation may well become more of a cacophonous Tower of Babel.

(Source: <https://niemanreports.org/articles/an-argument-why-journalists-should-not-abandon-objectivity/>)

Addendum B (for question 2)

1. SA media faces 'grim future' as it battles falling revenues – Reuters study

By Lameez Omarjee (2019)

Newsrooms are going to have to rely on subscription and membership models to ensure their sustainability in the face of declining revenues across various mediums, a study by the Reuters Institute found.

The recently released Reuters Institute Digital News Report for 2019 unpacks SA's media landscape. It shows that, while consumption of news in print form is declining, consumers are increasingly relying on digital platforms to get the news.

The research was conducted using a questionnaire completed by a sample of the English-speaking population in South Africa. It was completed between January and February 2019.

"Despite relatively high trust levels in the news overall, revenue for news media has been on a downward path for several years, with a 12% drop in ad spend last year for television, 5.6% for radio, and 7.7% for print," the report states.

"With newspaper circulation dying, broadcast revenue dropping and journalism resources eroding, news is going to have to increasingly rely on subscription and membership models to sustain volume and quality."

The research shows that, of those sampled, 16% of respondents claimed to pay for online news. There has also been a "surge of goodwill" through reader donations to independent publications like *Daily Maverick* and *amaBhungane* to support their investigative reporting.

"But this is an uncertain form of income, and with no sustainable revenue model available currently, South African media houses are facing a grim future," the report warned.

Daily Maverick, Daily Vox, GroundUp, New Frame and *amaBhungane*, rely on a combination of donors and crowdfunding. "AmaBhungane has been particularly successful when it comes to crowdfunding, with it listed as the single biggest source of revenue in 2017 and 2018," the report noted.

Print decline

Consumption of print media is also continuing its decline, as data for the first quarter of 2019 shows that newspaper circulation declined 5% year-on-year, the research indicated. "Daily newspapers were the biggest losers, with a 10.5% drop, but weekly newspapers were almost as badly affected, with a 7.9% decline year-on-year," the report read.

Data for the last 10 years shows a 49% drop in circulation for newspapers. "No newspapers have a convincing route out of the print mire into a sustainable digital future," the report read. Paywall and subscription models implemented by papers like *Mail & Guardian* and *Business Day* are showing "disappointing numbers". The study pointed out that most digital advertising revenue goes to big social media and search platforms.

Meanwhile, 90% of respondents said they get their news online, including on social media. Data measured by IAB South Africa shows 11 of the top-15 local sites are news sites, but this does not necessarily translate into digital revenue, according to Reuters.

Respondents also indicated that they share news online, with 36% using messenger apps, 40% using social networks and 39% commenting on news using social media or news websites.

Social media is increasingly becoming a gateway to news. "A third [of respondents] said they prefer to come across news via social media, ahead of direct access (28%) through a news website or app."

In its conclusion, the Reuters Institute stressed that the opportunities afforded by the digital world must be leveraged to rebuild ties between producers of news and those who consume it.

(Source: <https://www.fin24.com/Companies/ICT/sa-media-faces-grim-future-as-it-battles-falling-revenues-reuters-study-20190616>)

2. Are newspapers dead or adapting in the Age of Digital News?

By Tony Rogers (2019)

Some say the Internet will kill off papers, but others say not so fast.

Are newspapers dying? That's the raging debate these days. Many say the demise of the daily paper is just a matter of time—and not much time at that. The future of journalism is in the digital world of websites and apps—not newsprint—they say.

But wait. Another group of folks insist that newspapers have been with us for hundreds of years, and although all news may someday be found online, papers have plenty of life in them yet.

So who's right? Here are the arguments so you can decide.

Newspapers Are Dead

Newspaper circulation is dropping, display and classified ad revenue are drying up, and the industry has experienced an unprecedented wave of layoffs in recent years. A third of the large newsrooms across the country had layoffs between 2017 and April 2018 alone. Big metro papers such as the Rocky Mountain News and Seattle Post-Intelligencer have gone under, and even bigger newspaper companies such as the Tribune Company have been in bankruptcy.

Gloomy business considerations aside, the dead-newspaper people say the internet is just a better place to get news. "On the web, newspapers are live, and they can supplement their coverage with audio, video, and the invaluable resources of their vast archives," said Jeffrey I. Cole, director of USC's Digital Future Center. "For the first time in 60 years, newspapers are back in the breaking news business, except now their delivery method is electronic and not paper."

Conclusion: The Internet will kill off newspapers.

Papers Aren't Dead—Not Yet, Anyway

Yes, newspapers are facing tough times, and yes, the internet can offer many things that papers can't. But pundits and prognosticators have been predicting the death of newspapers for decades. Radio, TV, and now the internet were all supposed to kill them off, but they're still here.

Contrary to expectations, many newspapers remain profitable, although they no longer have the 20 percent profit margins they did in the late 1990s. Rick Edmonds, a media business analyst for the Poynter Institute, says the widespread newspaper industry layoffs of the last decade should make papers more viable. "At the end of the day, these

companies are operating more leanly now,” Edmonds said. “The business will be smaller and there may be more reductions, but there should enough profit there to make a viable business for some years to come.”

Years after the digital pundits started predicting the demise of print, newspapers still take significant revenue from print advertising, but it declined from \$60 billion to about \$16.5 billion between 2010 and 2017.

And those who claim that the future of news is online and only online ignore one critical point: Online ad revenue alone just isn’t enough to support most news companies. Google and Facebook dominate when it comes to online ad revenue. So online news sites will need an as-yet undiscovered business model to survive.

Paywalls

One possibility may be paywalls, which many newspapers and news websites are increasingly using to generate much-needed revenue. The 2013 Pew Research Center media report found that paywalls had been adopted at 450 of the country's 1,380 dailies, though they won't replace all the lost revenue from shrinking ad and subscription sales.

That study also found that the success of paywalls combined with a print subscription and single-copy price increases has led to a stabilization—or, in some cases, even an increase in revenues from circulation. Digital subscriptions are growing.

"In the age of Netflix and Spotify, people are coming around to paying for content again," wrote John Micklethwait for Bloomberg in 2018.

Until someone figures out how to make online-only news sites profitable (they've also suffered layoffs), newspapers aren't going anywhere. Despite the occasional scandal at print institutions, they remain trusted sources of information that people turn to cut through the clutter of (potentially fake) online news or for the real story when social media outlets show them information on an event slanted in any number of ways.

Conclusion: Newspapers aren't going anywhere.

(Source: <https://www.thoughtco.com/adapting-in-the-age-of-digital-news-consumption-2074132>)

Addendum C (for question 3)

1. Queer people fight for fair representation in the media

By Carl Collison (2017)

Associated Press recently announced its acceptance of the gender pronouns “they”, “them” and “their” when referring to nonbinary people — a move hailed as a positive step in securing greater visibility for queer identities.

Already in effect online, the change will be included in the 2017 AP Stylebook on May 31, regarded as the template for most major newsrooms in the United States.

The entry reads: “In stories about people who identify as neither male nor female or ask not to be referred to as he/she/him/her: Use the person’s name in place of a pronoun, or otherwise reword the sentence, whenever possible. If they/them/their use is essential, explain in the text that the person prefers a gender-neutral pronoun. Be sure that the phrasing does not imply more than one person.”

Media Monitoring Africa director William Bird says: “This is a significant step forward. When one of the major wire news services does this, making it more reflective of the audiences they speak to, it provides an opportunity to advocate and say to other media houses: ‘Have you seen this?’ It might sound like a small thing, but organisations could now approach their media as to whether they will be following suit and if not, why not?”

“Also, it’s a small, easy change that can be implemented. And one which has the potential to be a good conscientising tool, because this is not language that is common in the media. Although I imagine the *Mail & Guardian* has discussed these things and has a policy on it.”

Although this may be true, the *M&G* is by no means above reproach. After being featured in this newspaper’s Friday section, artist Dean Hutton — who identifies as nonbinary and prefers the pronoun “they” — took issue with what they felt to be an erasure of their identity. The article saw all Hutton’s preferred gender pronouns replaced with references to “the artist” or “Hutton”.

Following a telephonic apology from the arts editor, however, Hutton now says: “It was handled incredibly well; the way which she spoke to me. So, something that could have been experienced in a violent way was mitigated by an editor who understands what it is like to be misidentified.”

Bird says that, given the sensitive nature of reporting on gender identity, errors are bound to creep in.

“What is clear from research we have conducted into sexual orientation, gender identity and gender is that even those in the media who are aware of these issues perpetuate

some of these stereotypes. And when it is pointed out to them, they would say something along the lines of, 'Wow, we've got to change that'."

For Hutton, the media needs to be more mindful. "In general, journalists, subeditors and editors sit in an incredibly powerful position, with no experience of being othered. Because of this position, they are willing to let a set of essentially random style rules overrule an individual's dignity and right to dignity in the way in which they wish to be addressed and identify," they say.

The problematic ways in which queer people are represented in the media goes further than an unwillingness to break away from these "essentially random style rules".

Anastacia Tomson, a transgender woman and author, says: "I've been the subject of numerous headlines suggesting that I was 'born in the wrong body' or a 'woman in a man's body'. My body is neither 'wrong', nor is it a 'man's body'. I'm a woman, and it is my body. It is perhaps unique and different to some other bodies, but it is nonetheless my body.

"Those sorts of phrases strip us of agency over our bodies and serve only to reduce our personal histories and experiences to stereotypical, reductive and inaccurate concepts.

"Too often, those who are retelling our stories will either twist the narratives to fit their own preconceptions, or will simply be insensitive to the nuances and complexities that surround transgender identity."

Clinical psychologist Itumeleng Mamabolo says: "The heteronormative way of engaging with people is problematic because it assumes that there is a norm and everyone is measured by that standard. Making assumptions about somebody and writing that they were, for example, 'born in the wrong body' implies that there is somehow a 'right body' to have been born in. For someone trying to come to terms with themselves as a complex being, this will cause added distress and trauma."

In a bid to prevent these incidents from recurring, Tomson says she has taken to "briefing journalists beforehand and insisting they read a style guide on appropriate language for discussing trans issues prior to undertaking interviews".

The style guide Tomson refers to is the *Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (Glaad) Media Reference Guide*, "to be used by journalists reporting for mainstream media outlets and by creators in entertainment media who want to tell the stories of LGBTQ [lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and questioning] people fairly and accurately".

Glaad chief executive and president Sarah Kate Ellis writes in her introduction to the reference guide: "Media coverage of LGBTQ people has become increasingly multi-

dimensional, reflecting both the diversity of the community and the growing visibility of LGBTQ people's families and relationships."

Tomson says: "I think that although representation might have improved in recent years, there is still a long way to go. Queer is still seen as outlandish, deviant or sensational. Too often, portrayals of queer identity lose the complexity and humanity of the individuals involved, and seek to simplify the pertinent issues so that they fit into the often flawed mainstream idea of what constitutes queer."

Shaun Westley, a reader of *The Daily Voice*, laid a complaint with the press ombudsman in July last year against the Western Cape-based newspaper, after the paper ran a front-page headline that said: "Maak die moffie vrek".

Westley says "the paper's argument was that they were speaking the language of their readers. But my argument was that language, in itself, is a tool of violence and that these micro-aggressions ultimately shape people's perceptions of others and how they classify them."

His bid to have the newspaper apologise for having "perpetuated the dehumanisation of the gay community" was ultimately dismissed.

Athena Marsden is a 23-year-old transgender woman who, after being interviewed for a feature in a local newspaper, says: "I was quite shocked at the way in which my transness was positioned in the article and how there was a blatant disregard for gender identity.

"Prior to the interview, the journalist and I had spoken about how to refer to me, but he chose to write about me in a way that made me feel objectified.

"I can't really remember if I approached the paper about the article as I was in the thick of exams, but to a degree I felt that my complaint wouldn't be taken seriously. I think it's really easy to feel reduced to 'that angry trans woman'."

South African media houses may not be perfect in their coverage of lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, intersex and questioning (LGBTIQ) people, but Bird says significant progress has been made.

"In South Africa we've improved quite a bit. In the late 1990s, there were the stereotypical portrayals of queer people, you know, marching through the streets during Pride parades, wearing women's clothes or whatever. But this in itself was a major shift from how reporting had been done before.

“More recently there was the shift towards victimisation. So a strong focus on reports of corrective rapes and murders.

“Still, South Africa is remarkably progressive in that we are generally open to talking about these issues. In many other African countries there is a reluctance; it is generally seen as deviant behaviour.”

Delane Kalembo is the programmes officer at the organisation African Men for Sexual Health and Rights (AMSHeR), which has been conducting sensitisation workshops with journalists in West African countries for the past four years.

“We initiated the programme in that region because we found that journalists there always reported on homosexuality in derogatory ways. So we undertook work with media organisations in sensitisation workshops on the issues LGBTIQ people face. For example, when referring to someone who is intersex, not to use the word ‘hermaphrodite’. In this way, we are trying to work towards ensuring a greater humaneness in the way they report on queer issues.”

According to Kalembo, the programme has yielded the desired results. “We monitored how they frame these issues in their reports and there has been a complete improvement. We are now hoping to replicate this in other regions as well as speaking to education institutions to have a module around LGBTIQ sensitivity included in journalists’ training.”

The organisation might have their work cut out for them, because not everyone is pleased with the work they are undertaking.

“At the start of one of our workshops, the police came in and ordered us to stop. They said we could not come into the country to influence their journalists. We eventually continued the series of workshops, but had to be extra cautious about having any possible snitches in the sessions.”

Ignoring the state-sponsored threats to their work, Kalembo says: “We also have civil society organisations in the region engage with media around breaking stories and what should be picked up in those stories, because so often only the sensational is picked up on. The violation of those persons’ rights were never at the heart of the story.”

For Tomson, this kind of active engagement is needed to ensure accurate representation of queer people in the media.

“We really need straight and cis allies to heed the call and to support the idea that prejudice can never be accepted or tolerated. I think it’s important to work at dismantling the idea that there is something broken, immoral or wrong with queer identity because,

in many instances, this is the fundamental starting point from which stigma and prejudice grows,” she says.

“Active protection of human rights, liberties and freedoms for people — especially those in minority groups, such as queer folk — must be a prerequisite.

“We also need to carefully interrogate who is telling these stories. When it comes to matters of queer identity, those best qualified to speak are those who are queer themselves. It all comes down to agency. We don’t need to be patronised or condescended to; what we need is a platform for our own voices to be heard.”

When media and state combine forces

Diane Bakuraira is a gender non-conforming Ugandan activist who says that, after being outed in the Ugandan press, her life “was never normal again”.

“It happened after I told my story about being a gender nonconforming person living in Uganda to a British newspaper. The Ugandan media saw the article after it was posted online. But they twisted the story completely, changing my story to something else. The impact of that was really disturbing for me, because before that — before the article and the [Anti-Homosexuality] Bill coming into effect — I had always lived my life openly. People never really cared how I identified.

“But after that article, my life was never normal again. I lost some of my friends because of the lies this paper wrote about me. I had to change my movements, switching from using public transport — which, of course, costs me a lot more.

“Emotionally, too, it has really tainted me. I had to stay away from work and seek refuge, because I was attacked one night on my way home from work. They beat me very badly, shouting that they knew the kind of work I do and where I work; that I must move out of that area because they don’t appreciate my kind of people living there. I eventually had to relocate; move out of an area I had felt safe in before that.”

A report titled From Torment to Tyranny — Enhanced persecution in Uganda following the passage of the Anti-Homosexuality Act 2014 found that, in 2012, 19 cases of persecution perpetrated against Ugandan LGBTIQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer) people were reported.

This figure had, from December 20 2013 to May 1 2014, rocketed to 162.

This, the report noted, “represents an increase of between 750% and 1 900% on previous years — an increase which can only be explained by the passage of the Anti-

Homosexuality Bill and the virulently homophobic atmosphere this has engendered in Uganda”.

The virulently homophobic atmosphere is exacerbated by mainstream media, which Bakuraira refers to as “hatemongers” — a sentiment shared by Mutyaba Gloriam, programmes officer at queer rights organisation, Freedom and Roam Uganda.

“Media in Uganda has misrepresented us on so many occasions, causing not only government but the general public to hate us. During the period of the Anti-Homosexuality Bill, there was a lot of media outing during that time. The tabloids that were publishing these stories and outing people were doing it for financial gain, because that story trended for about a week – every day there were different people being outed,” says Gloriam.

Although the Bill was overturned based on a technicality, Gloriam says: “We still face the consequences of that Bill. And this is where the media comes in, again: when the Bill was passed, the president made a statement at a press conference announcing this. But when it was nullified, he didn’t come out and clarify that. There was no press to cover that. So there are people who think the Bill still exists and so continue to suppress us and our work.”

Bakuraira adds: “This is why we never share our stories with media here. They always twist our stories. We just don’t trust mainstream media.”

(Source: <https://mg.co.za/article/2017-04-06-00-queer-people-fight-for-fair-representation-in-the-media/>)

2. The representation of the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Trans-gendered people

By Alan Ford (2002)

Introduction

The Bill of Rights enshrined in the South African Constitution clearly and unambiguously outlaws discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender and marital status (Act 108 of 1996, chapter 2, paragraph 9). Yet Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Trans-gendered (GLB&T) people remain stigmatised and marginalised in South African society. GLB&T people are confronted on a daily by social and institutional discrimination and little is known about the challenges and concerns facing them.

Representation in the media

Issues affecting GLB&T people are virtually absent in the news media and, on the rare occasions they are represented, they are often misrepresented. Preliminary monitoring by the Media Monitoring Project (MMP) reveals that articles and photographs published in the news media fail to capture the diversity and complexity of GLB&T people.

Majority of coverage is received during Gay Pride Week and this is often limited to photographs taken at the annual March. The media's coverage of Gay Pride Week tends to be reported as just another event and a source of entertainment to the public. It is common practice for newspaper and television reports to carry photographs of people dressed as drag queens, with a lot of emphasis on fashion. Such emphasis is a misrepresentation as "drag queens" only represent a segment of GLB&T people. In this regard the media needs to broaden its representation of GLB&T people from its limited representation.

Preliminary monitoring reveals that articles and photographs published in the news media fail to capture the diversity and complexity of GLB&T people. For example, a photograph published in the *Sunday Independent* (30/09/01, pg. 1) focused attention on drag queens at the Gay Pride March and comments on the attire of the participants. The caption at the bottom of the photograph reads, "The other rainbow nation was out gender bending in Johannesburg yesterday. Fishnet stockings, spandex, sequins and some impossibly high heels were part of the 12th Annual Gay and Lesbian Pride Parade. Pamphlets and condoms were handed out like candy. While this year's march had a celebratory feel, there was a lone protestor who said discrimination against gays was still rife in black communities." The issue of racism and discrimination against homosexuals is mentioned but not further explored, and focus is clearly on the "gender bending" nature of the event.

An earlier photograph that appeared in the same newspaper (12/08/01, pg3) also depicted a drag queen and was headlined "Woman for a day". In this instance, the caption reads, "Jessy, left, was a princess for the evening with a tiara perched on her purple bob, while Thelma Klench sported sixties blonde bouffant at a 'divas and bitches' bash at a JHB gay club to celebrate Women's Day. The party promised special rewards for those pitching up in drag and plenty of girls, and several hundred boys, unleashed their inner woman". No article accompanies the photograph and while there is a caption the photograph is not contextualised- even though the festivities are linked to Women's Day, the piece does not explore the links between this event and the commemoration of a national holiday.

While it is perfectly reasonable to cover the Annual Gay Pride March or festivities in celebration of Women's Day, which has the benefit of raising awareness of GLB&T pride, it is insufficient to report on them almost exclusively during the holding of an

annual event. It is necessary that the media provide in-depth coverage on issues about GLB&T people and represent them as being part of broader society. Coverage of GLB&T people tends to represent them as “outside the norm” as an “other” who are different from the rest of society.

The GLB&T people comprises a diverse range of people from different race, class, gender, educational system or any racial group but cut across all groups and sections of society. The media, however, has a tendency to represent GLB&T people as homogenous and amorphous, and fails to communicate the importance of some of the issues facing them. This reinforces the marginalisation and stereotyping of people who are gay, lesbian, bisexual or trans-gendered, leading to generalisations and stereotyping that can translate into discrimination. Furthermore, the media does not represent the concerns and difficulties faced by GLB&T people as being of importance and of value.

The media needs to represent different people, and the specific issues they face, in a comprehensive and thorough manner. GLB&T people should be depicted as a part of society, one that has some special interests but also one that faces many of the same challenges as every other citizen. More seriously, the media often fails to report on violence against members of GLB&T people. According to organisations such as the Triangle Project & the Gay and Lesbian Equality Project, rape, discrimination and racism feature prominently as issues of concern within GLB&T people, yet the mainstream media gives it little or no coverage at all. For example, a gay black person in a squatter camp may have a completely different experience of being gay from Steven Cohen.

It is crucial that the media represents the concerns of GLB&T people within the broader framework of human rights. This would communicate the message that issues affecting GLB&T people are of importance and value and should be treated with the same gravity afforded to issues affecting heterosexual people. Mainstreaming is important, too, because it does not make these issues and concerns exclusively the domain of GLB&T people. In the same way that violence against women also affects men and children, so violence against gays and lesbians should affect all people.

There are however, some exceptional items which deal with issues and challenges faced by GLB&T people. The first was a breakthrough court ruling that enables gay and lesbian couples to adopt children, which was covered by various newspapers, including *The Star*, *Citizen*, *Sowetan*, *Beeld* and the *Sunday Independent*. In a case testing the provisions of the Bill of Rights, Ms Anna Marie de Vos, a Pretoria High Court judge, and her life partner, Ms Suzanne du Toit, challenged sections of the Child Care Act and the Guardianship Act in the Constitutional Court which prevented them from jointly adopting their two children. The Constitutional Court ruled that such a provision was unconstitutional.

The second was an application brought by Kathy Satchwell, a Johannesburg High Court judge, to challenge the Judges' Remuneration and Conditions of Employment Act that excluded same-sex partners from various benefits available to married spouses. In terms of an amendment to the Act, Satchwell's partner, Lesley Carnelly, will now be entitled to receive death benefits if Satchwell dies and can be registered as a dependent on her partner's medical aid. Certainly, these issues need more coverage in the media and not only when the issue is raised by prominent individuals in society.

Conclusion

The media should represent GLB&T people in terms of the complexity and diversity afforded to other people. GLB&T people also have careers families, friends, needs and a wide range of interests. It is necessary to communicate and mainstream issues of interest to the gay, lesbian, bisexual or trans-gendered people through the media i.e. transform what is perceived as "other" to normal and acceptable. Mainstreaming issues of concern and interest to GLB&T people would serve to conscientise and educate people, promote understanding and tolerance, and challenge homophobia and discrimination. This could significantly contribute to lessening the marginalisation of GLB&T people and meaningfully promote the rights embodied in the Constitution. It is essential that the media represents all of South African society's diverse people and cultures and works as a force to counter discrimination.

(Source: <https://www.mediamonitoringafrica.org/images/uploads/ADUMMGLB.pdf>)