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CONTENT/ SOMMAIRE/ INHALT/ CUPRINS

Media Representation of the Victims of Terrorist Attacks. An ethical and legal analysis of articles published by *The Telegraph*

Iulia AŞTEFANEI[1]

ABSTRACT. The current research continues previous explorations on the online media representation of the victims of terrorist attacks from an ethical and legal standpoint. The paper focuses on the interdependence between journalism, media ethics and media law by analyzing the manner in which the private British newspaper *The Telegraph* chose to cover several terrorist attacks which happened in Europe.

Keywords: Ethical portrayal, legal analysis, victims, terrorist attacks

An overview of the ethical press regulation in the United Kingdom
The Independent Press Standards Organisation

The Independent Press Standards Organisation (IPSO) (Independent Press Standards Organisation 2014) from United Kingdom replaced The Press Complaints Commission in 2014, which was in charge of regulating the British printed newspapers and magazines. It functions as an independent regulator for the printed and online press by holding the members of IPSO accountable for their materials which violate the human rights and the

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[1] MA Communication and Advertising, SNSPA, Bucharest, iulia.a145@yahoo.com

ethical provisions stipulated in the Editors' Code (IPSO, Independent Press Standards Organisation 2019). It supports the freedom of press, while encouraging the journalists to maintain a righteous attitude. Every media outlet which publishes content in the UK or has a UK audience is welcome to join, with the condition of agreeing on the Editors' Code, creating an effective process for handling complaints and respecting the Complaints Committee's decisions.

Regarding the Editors' Code, IPSO stated that "It should be interpreted neither so narrowly as to compromise its commitment to respect the rights of the individual, nor so broadly that it infringes the fundamental right to freedom of expression – such as to inform, to be partisan, to challenge, shock, be satirical and to entertain – or prevents publication in the public interest". In the code it is mentioned, with the imposition of being respected, the right to privacy. It states that it is improper to photograph people without their consent in places where a certain level of privacy is expected and the fact that editors have to justify the intrusions into an individual's private life.

A part of the Editors' Code is dedicated to the "intrusion into grief or shock", stating that in the case of covering a subject which involves an individual's grief or shock, the approach has to be made with sympathy and the publication has to be handled carefully. The provisions regarding the right to privacy and the intrusion into grief or shock have to be taken into account by journalists when covering terrorist attacks. After the terrorist attack which took place in Manchester in 2017, IPSO updated the journalistic guidelines for covering events of this kind. The document provides key points for reporting on major incidents and key questions, which could invoke the ethical principles and moral values of the journalists. The key questions which could apply when covering terrorist attacks are "Does it show anyone who is injured or dead? Are they identifiable? – If so, how will you prevent intrusion into grief or shock when publishing the content?", "How will you approach someone who has been involved in the major incident, or their family or friends?", "Are you publishing any information which could lead to the identification of the person who has been injured or died?" (IPSO, Independent Press Standards Organisation 2017).

The guidance elaborated by IPSO after the terrorist attack which took place in Manchester shows that the journalists might have needed a set of standards which they could take into consideration when covering major events of this kind. After the terrorist attack which took place in Manchester in 2017, Daily Star had been found by IPSO to have breached several clauses. The case titled "12629-17 Gorman v Daily Star" was initiated by Pauline Gorman, who filed a complaint to IPSO, stating the fact that Daily Star, a daily tabloid newspaper, breached the Editors' Code of Practice, by not respecting Clause 1 regarding Accuracy, Clause 2 regarding Privacy, Clause 4 regarding Intrusion into grief or shock and Clause 6 regarding Children in an article headlined "Slaughter of the innocents". The newspaper had published photographs of individuals who had died or were missing in consequence of the terrorist attack which took place at a pop concert. Pauline Gorman, the complainant, filed the complaint because Daily Star published a picture of her daughter in the article about the attack, stating the fact that she was missing. The mother stated that the publication of her daughter's photograph and linking it with that event and other missing or deceased people had been traumatic for their family and it also violated her daughter's right to privacy. Independent Press Standards Organization found that Daily Star violated the Editors' Code by four clauses. The first clause breached was Accuracy, due to the fact that the newspaper had published unverified information regarding a child. In the following day, the newspaper published an apology addressed to the complainant's family, which the committee considered to be adequate as an attempt to fix the situation created. The Clause 2 regarding Privacy and the Clause 6 regarding Children had also been breached by publishing a photograph of a child, without asking for consent and intruding in the child's private life. The committee had agreed that the situation created by Daily Star had repercussions among the complainant's family, but it reached the conclusion that Clause 4 regarding Intrusion into grief or shock had not been violated, due to the fact that the complainant's daughter had not been in the situation presented by the newspaper.

IMPRESS

On 25 October 2016, this regulatory system was recognized as the UK's first press regulator by The Press Recognition Panel because it had met the Royal Charter criteria on Self-Regulation of the Press. (IMPRESS n.d.) This regulator of the press was designed using the recommendations of Leveson, in order to have a society in which journalism and its practitioners are not influenced financially or governmentally. As it is stated on their website, Impress is empowered to assess whether a news media outlet respects the journalistic standards imposed by the system and decide on complaints filed against the publishers regulated by the company, while also providing an arbitration scheme for the publishers. This scheme represents an alternative to going to court and the decision is taken by an arbitrator who is chosen by the Charted Institute of Arbitrators. (Impress n.d.) This regulator can also issue advisory notice to publishers regarding press intrusion in people's lives.

The Standards Code, which has to be respected by the members of Impress, is described as "practical and responsive" regarding the veracity and authenticity of the content published on online platforms, while also aiming "to protect the public from invasive journalistic practices and unethical news reporting". (Impress n.d.) The Standards Code presents what represents public interest, continuing with a list of ten clauses and guidance information on each of them. The clause number 3 relates to publishing pictures or identification of children who are under 16 years without the consent of the children or a responsible adult, mentioning the fact that it does not apply to "images of general scenes". The clause number 7 relates to people's privacy, mentioning that intrusive newsgathering or reporting should be done without intruding into a person's grief or distress. The guidance on clause number 7 states that "Children should always be treated as a special case. This means that children may have a heightened expectation of privacy, depending on the circumstances." The guidance available states that the clauses are not considered to be breached if the reporting or the publication on that subject served the public interest and it "outweighs the harm caused". (Impress n.d.)

The members of Impress have to respect the Regulatory Scheme and the possibility to opt for an insurance scheme. It is mentioned the fact that the Code Committee is "composed of experts who are responsible for advising on the Boards on the Code and for drafting guidance". The Code Committee is regulating 136 publications from UK which are members of Impress and responding to complaints against them, while being also in charge of issuing advisory notice to any publisher. (Impress n.d.) The list of the complaint decision published on their website provides 19 decisions from 2017 till 2019 and the majority of them are related to clause number 1 of the Standards Code, Accuracy. Impress states that the complaint should be made directly to the publisher and therefore to the regulator if the publisher is a member of Impress. On their website people are able to complaints and ask for advisory notices, while the journalists can make an anonymous statement about the wrongdoings carried on by a news media outlet.

Ofcom

Ofcom is a UK broadcast regulator, which regulates TV channels, radio channels, video platforms on demand and other communication platforms. (Ofcom n.d.) As it is stated in the Code of Conduct for: Ofcom Board, "Ofcom is accountable to Parliament and, in a more general sense, to citizens and consumers. In support of its principles of openness and accountability, the Board will seek to lead with best practice." (Ofcom 2019) This self-regulatory system proposes rules and provides broadcasting codes. The broadcasting codes are available on Ofcom's website in the "Legacy codes" section. The first code dates back to 2005, while the last code available has been published in 2019.

The way in which is conducted the assessment of complaints is published on the Ofcom's website and it is divided in three categories: television and radio licenses, BBC channels and on-demand services. In the document of procedures for television and radio licenses in regard to making complaints it is stated that the relevant sections from the Broadcasting Code for which a complaint can be filed are Section one: Protecting the Under-

Eighteens, Section Two: Harm and Offence, Section Three: Hatred and Abuse and Section Four: Religion. (Ofcom 2017) The Broadcasting Code consists of ten clauses and guidance, rules which apply for on-demand services and the legislative background of the code. It has been published on January 2017. The section two explores the limits of harm and offence, mentioning that the "relevant legislation includes in particular, sections 3(4)(g) and 319(2)(a), (f) and (I) of the Communications Act 2003, Articles 10 and 14 of the European Convention on Human Rights, and the BBC Charter and Agreement." (Ofcom 2017) The section three which is related to "crime, disorder, hatred and abuse" covers materials which could incite crime or disorder. It is mentioned that the meaning of "terrorism" is represented by the definition provided by the Terrorism Act 2000 in section one. (Ofcom 2017) The section eight deals with intrusion into people's privacy. In the section "Suffering and distress" it is mentioned the fact that broadcasters should not reveal the identity of people who have died or are victims of violent crimes and accidents if the families have not been informed first. In the same section it is mentioned that broadcasters should not intrude into people's lives if there is an emergency, accident, a tragedy, "even in a public place". (Ofcom 2017)

Relevant legislation of the United Kingdom

The legislation of a country should provide a detailed legal framework consisting of national laws and regulations for an efficient and upright functioning of every public and private domain which exists. Therefore, they have to respect the national laws relevant for the protection of victims enacted by the Queen and the legislative bodies such as the Data Protection Act 2018, the Protection from Harassment Act 1997, while the journalists in Scotland are compelled to respect in addition the Victims and Witnesses (Scotland) Act 2014 enacted by the Scottish Parliament.

In regard to the profession of journalism which is based on gathering information in order to inform the people, the legislation of United Kingdom should be accessed and respected when covering terrorist attacks and reporting on victims and their families. In United Kingdom the rights of the

citizens are protected by the Human Rights Act 1998 which was enacted in order to "give further effect to rights and freedoms guaranteed under the European Convention on Human Rights". (National Legislative Bodies 1998) Article 8 - Right to respect for private and family life stipulates in the first paragraph that "Everyone has the right to respect for his private and family life, his home and his correspondence." In the second paragraph are mentioned the exceptions in which the public authority could interfere with the exercise of this right. (National Legislative Bodies 1998) Therefore, journalists who are covering terrorist attacks should respect the right of privacy of the victims, of the victims' family members and witnesses unless the dissemination of private and personal information regarding them represents an exception mentioned in Paragraph 2. In regard to journalism as a profession, in the first paragraph of Article 10 - Freedom of expression stipulates that everyone has the right to freedom to express their opinions, to receive and disseminate information and ideas while in the second paragraph it is mentioned that this right involves duties and responsibilities and it could be limited by certain "formalities, conditions, restrictions or penalties as are prescribed by law" with the mention that these are "necessary in a democratic society" in the interests of multiple aspects. (National Legislative Bodies 1998) Journalists should take into consideration out of those aspects the formalities, conditions, restrictions and penalties which exist in order to regulate the public safety, the protection and reputation of others and aim at preventing crime or disorder when covering terrorist attacks and disseminate information about the victims and their families. The Data Protection Act 2018 was enacted in order to ensure that personal information about people is protected and used uprightly by organizations, companies, government, other institutions or people. Personal information refers to details which make or help to make a person identifiable such as contact details, ID numbers, subjective data and sensitive information including race, health, political or religious views, biometrics, genetics and other affiliations. (B. 2020) The information collected about an individual should be used "fairly, lawfully and transparently", "for specified, explicit purposes" and "in a way what is adequate, relevant and limited to only what is necessary", according to the Principles stipulated in Chapter 2 of the Data Protection Act 2018. (Bodies, Data Protection Act 2018 2018) In Chapter 6,

Part 5 - The Information Commissioner, Section 124 - Data protection and journalism code it is mentioned that the Commissioner must create a code of practice which contains "practical guidance in relation to the processing of personal data for the purposes of journalism in accordance with the requirements of the data protection legislation" while promoting "good practice in the processing of personal data for the purposes of journalism". (Bodies, Data Protection Act 2018 2018) The Commissioner may issue a penalty notice which requires the persons who failed to respect the practical codes to pay an amount of sterling set according to the matters mentioned in Section 155 such as "the nature, gravity and duration of the failure" and "the damage or distress suffered by data subjects". (Bodies, Data Protection Act 2018 2018)

The right to receive and impart information as it is stated in Article 10 while serving the journalistic profession with its implied duties and obligations should be motivated by the public interest to that subject, which might outweigh the infringement of certain laws aimed at protecting the victims. When covering and reporting on terrorist attacks, journalists might be found guilty of harassing the victims, their families and the witnesses under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 which aims at "protecting persons from harassment and similar conduct". In Section 1 - Prohibition of harassment it is stipulated that "A person must not pursue a course of conduct which amounts to harassment of another, and which he known or ought to know amounts to harassment of the other" while in Section 2 - Offence of harassment it is stated that the people who are found to be guilty of this offence can receive the imprisonment sanction for maximum six months or/and receive a fine not exceeding level 5 on the standard scale. (Protection from Harassment Act 1997 1997) The Victims and Witnesses (Scotland) Act 2014 enacted by the Scottish Parliament in order to protect and support the victims and the witnesses stipulates in Section 1A - Further general principles applicable to victims which should be taken into consideration when covering terrorist attacks as a journalist. (Bodies, Victims and Witnesses (Scotland) Act 2014 2016) It is stated that victims should be treated in a respectful and sensitive manner and that their needs should be taken into consideration, especially when dealing with victims who are children, while ensuring that victims are protected from repeat victimization, intimidation or retaliation. In Section 9 -

Protection of victims it is mentioned that the authority must protect the privacy of the victims by preventing the identification of the victims and the disclosure of any images of the victims and their family members.

The media portrayal of terrorist attacks' victims should serve the public interest while being created with respect towards the ethical standards and principles of journalism but most importantly it should respect the human rights of the people involved and the afferent legislation which exists in order to set a degree of responsibility and protection for the citizens of the United Kingdom.

The Methodological Approach and the Research Questions

The current study is the second in a series aimed to explore the media representation of the victims of terrorist attacks and to observe how it is constructed in accordance with the ethical codes and standards and with the supranational and national legislation. The methodological approach remained the same[2]. For the reader's convenience we reiterate it in the following paragraphs.

In order to have a clear perspective regarding the ethical and legal framework aimed at protecting the human rights and, implicitly the victims of terrorist attacks, the literature review consisted of exploring the representation of terror attacks in the media, the available journalistic ethical codes enacted by the press regulators, the national legislation, as well as the legislation of the European Union. The theoretical approach of this research paper led to the research questions regarding the noninfringement or the breach of the ethical and legal acts and generated the indicators for the assessment of the articles published on the online platforms of the newspapers. The research questions which were subsequently answered in the research paper were

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[2] Aştefanei Iulia, "Media Representation of the Victims of Terrorist Attacks. An Ethical and Legal Analysis of Articles Published in Le Monde", *Studia Universitatis Babeş-Bolyai Ephemerides*, 66/2021, pg 41-42.

"To what extent does the selected news media outlet respect the ethical codes available?",

"To what extent does the selected news media outlet respect the articles from the supranational and national legislation aimed at protecting the victims' privacy?"

"Does the way in which the UK's legal frameworks is constructed influence the media representation of the victims?"

"Does the media representation of the victims of terrorist attacks differ from an ethical and legal perspective if the attacks had happened in the country of the respective news media outlet?".

The methodological design of the data collection

The quantitative and qualitative analysis of the news pieces published by The Telegraph were used in order to explore and evaluate the media representation of the victims of terrorist attacks.

The qualitative method used for gathering information about the media representation of the victims of terrorist attacks was the content analysis due to the fact that the examination of the articles was furtherly quantified in order to provide an answer to the research questions and to have a clear view of the subject of this research paper. The sampling consisting of articles which included information about the victims was analyzed according to the indicators generated by the literature review. The content analysis of the articles was quantified in a table divided in three sections: the analysis of the visual elements, the analysis of the text regarding the disclosure of personal data about the victims, the indicators for evaluating the noninfringement or the breach of the ethical and legal framework.

The indicators for the analysis of the visual elements i.e. the existence of visual elements with the victims, the existence of intrusive visual elements with the victims, the existence of visual elements in which the recognizable features of the victims were easy to identify might have been influenced by the personal interpretation of the visual elements and therefore, this represented a limitation of the qualitative analysis of the research paper. The media

representation of the victims included the media representation of the people who were present at the moment of the attack and had been physically and/or mentally affected by it. Furthermore, it is important to be taken into consideration the fact that the data coding of the articles which respected or breached the ethical and legal frameworks was conducted in accordance with these indicators.

The indicators for the qualitative analysis which presented information about the ethical and legal frameworks were divided in general indicators which were applied for the media representation of all the news media outlets and in special indicators which were applied individually according to the country of the publication. The general indicators i.e. the noninfringement of the ethical codes and the noninfringement of Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights were applied to all the articles The Telegraph, Het Nieuwsblad and Le Monde due to the fact that they are European newspapers. The special indicators were designed in accordance with the national legislation of the United Kingdom. For the evaluation of the articles published by The Telegraph the special indicator was the noninfringement of Data Protection Act 2018.

The research method provided descriptive statistics which analytically described the media representation of the victims and therefore, it represented the most suitable approach to gather, select, and evaluate the online articles published by The Telegraph, in order to answer the research questions and provide a better understanding of the importance of the journalistic ethical codes and the legislation aimed at ensuring the victims' protection.

The Analysis of The Telegraph

The Daily Telegraph, better known online as The Telegraph, is a private British newspaper owned by the Telegraph Media Group with a circulation of 317,817 per printed issue and 213,868 online subscriptions. It was founded in 1855 under the name "The Daily Telegraph and Courier" and in 1937 it merged with its rival publication, The Morning Post, and became "Daily

Telegraph and Morning Post", gaining recognition as a newspaper of record due to its large readership and by meeting the high standards of journalism. (The Telegraph Corporate n.d.)

The broadsheet newspaper has covered the relevant international and national events in printed form throughout the years, while also having addressed a wide range of subjects, including economics, politics, science and human-interest stories to its readership. Since 1994, due to the evolution faced by technology, the readers of The Telegraph have been given the possibility to access the news pieces and articles of the newspapers on the online website.

The brand's standards of providing stories of high journalistic value are being met in the online environment as well as in print, due to the fact that The Telegraph is regulated by the Independent Press Standards Organisation (IPSO). As a member of IPSO, the newspaper has to respect the Editors' Code which is set in accordance with the journalistic values, the people's protection and the freedom of the press, while complaints under the code of ethics can be filed and handled by the Complaints Committee.

The methods used to evaluate the online news materials published by The Telegraph, while taking into consideration the noninfringement or the breach of the ethical and legal framework aimed at protecting the human rights, were the quantitative and qualitative research. The qualitative analysis of the online content was discussed in accordance with the Editors' Code which ought to be respected by the publication.

The quantitative analysis was limited to 401 articles in total, divided in 241 news pieces covering the three attacks which happened in the United Kingdom, 51 news pieces about the three attacks which happened in Belgium and 109 news pieces reporting on the three attacks from France. (See Figure 1) The descriptive statistics show that the three attacks which had happened in the United Kingdom received the highest media attention from The Telegraph and this could be due to the national public agenda's interest.
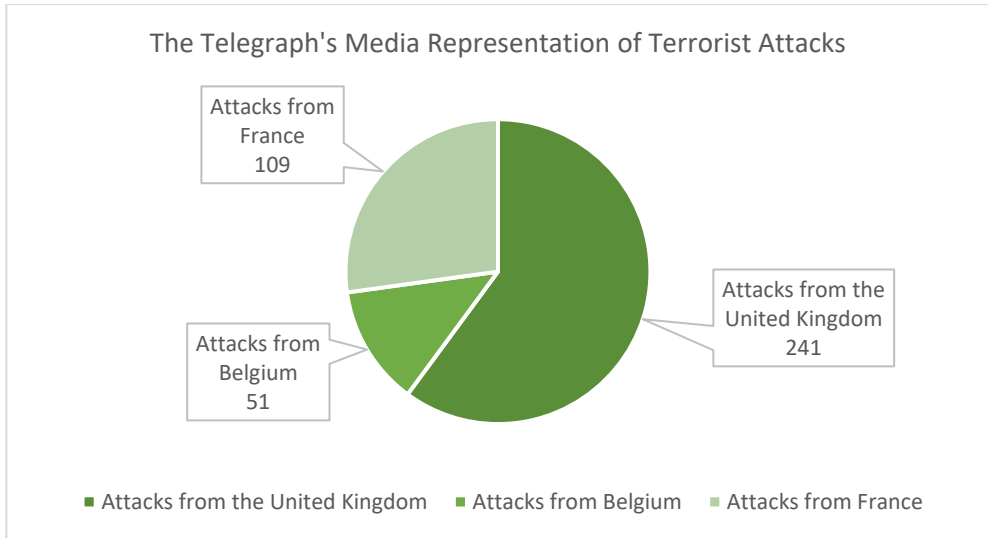
Figure 1

The preliminary sampling had been furtherly quantified based on two indicators: the existence of visual elements with the victims and the existence of personal data about them i.e. full name, age, profession, nationality. After the assessment of the sampling it had been concluded that out of 401 news media materials 184 of them had shared visual elements or personal information about the victims and were relevant for the subsequent quantitative and qualitative research. (See Figure 2)

In order to understand how The Telegraph positioned in regard to the subject of this research paper, the sampling consisting of 184 articles which contributed to the newspaper's media representation of terrorist attacks was primarily evaluated by descriptive statistics which showed that the online portrayal of the victims of the attacks which had happened in the United Kingdom was included in 66,8 per cent of the articles. Furthermore, the research analysis of the sampling was evaluated according to the pre-defined indicators of the qualitative research.

The Representation of Victims and/or Their Families in The Telegraph' News Pieces

- Manchester, May 2017, 66
- London, March 2017, 28
- London, June 2017, 29
- Brussels, March 2016, 16
- Liege, May 29, 4
- Brussels, May 2014, 2
- Paris, November 2015, 11
- Paris, January 2015, 12
- Nice, July 2016, 16

Legend:
- Manchester, May 2017
- London, March 2017
- London, June 2017
- Brussels, March 2016
- Liege, May 29
- Brussels, May 2014
- Paris, November 2015
- Paris, January 2015
- Nice, July 2016

Figure 2

The Online Media Representation of the Victims of Terrorist Attacks which happened in the United Kingdom

The quantitative analysis based on the data coding of the journalistic materials published by The Telegraph about the terrorist attacks from the United Kingdom showed that out of 241 articles 123 of them had shared information about the victims. (See Figure 3)
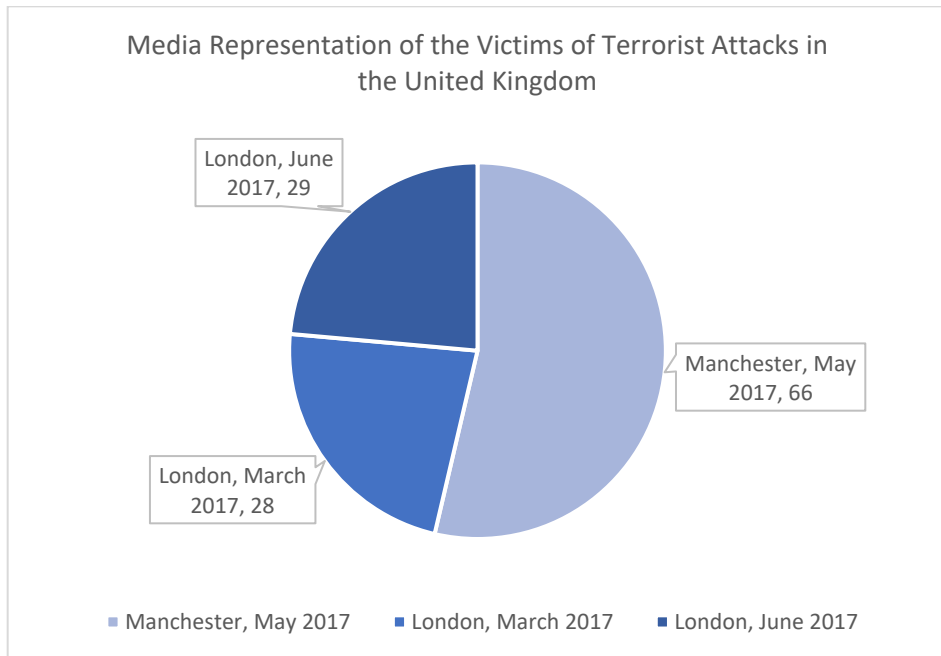
Figure 3

The Online Media Representation of the Victims of London Attack from June, 2017

The quantitative analysis of the 123 articles which included information about the victims of the United Kingdom attacks showed that the media representation of the victims of London attack was included in 18,8 per cent of the articles, similar to the media attention received by the victims of attack which happened in March. The descriptive statistics which resulted after the quantitative analysis of the personal data i.e. full name, age, profession, nationality showed that out of 29 articles 86 per cent of them had included the full name of the victims. (See Figures 4 and 5)

The Analysis of the Body Text

- 4, 14%

- 25, 86%

- The number of articles with personal data about the victims
- The number of articles without personal data

The Analysis of the Personal Data about the Victims

- 4

- 0

- 25

- information including the full name
- information with exception of the full name
- no information
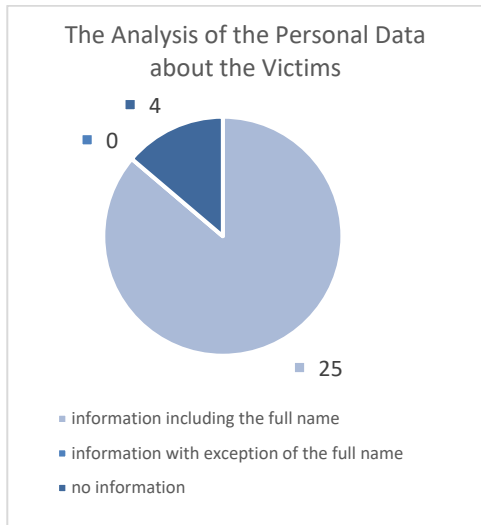
Figure 4

Figure 5

The qualitative analysis of the visual elements showed that every article had included visual elements, 26 of them included pictures in which the recognizable features could be easily identified, while 4 articles included intrusive photographs of the victims. The content analysis of the photographs which were defined as intrusive according to the pre-defined criteria mentioned in Methodology did not include recognizable features of the victims. (See Figure 6)

The following part of the qualitative analysis of the personal data and visual elements with the victims was conducted in accordance with the established indicators designed in order to assess the noninfringement or the breach of the ethical and legal framework of the United Kingdom. The content analysis showed that the online media representation of this attack's victims respected the ethical and legal framework, as well as the Editors' Code enacted by the Independent Press Standards Organization. (See Figure 7)
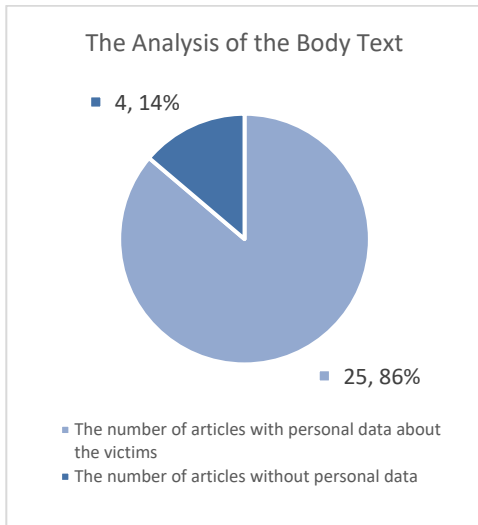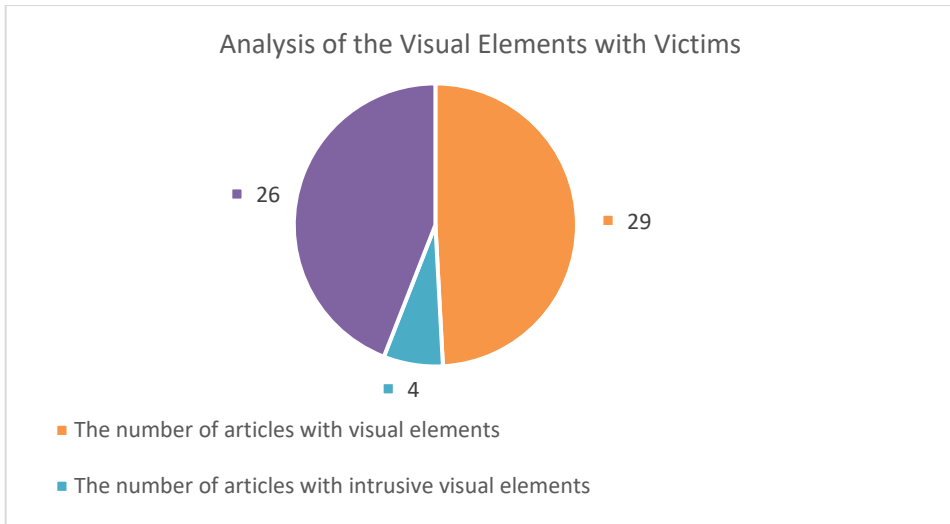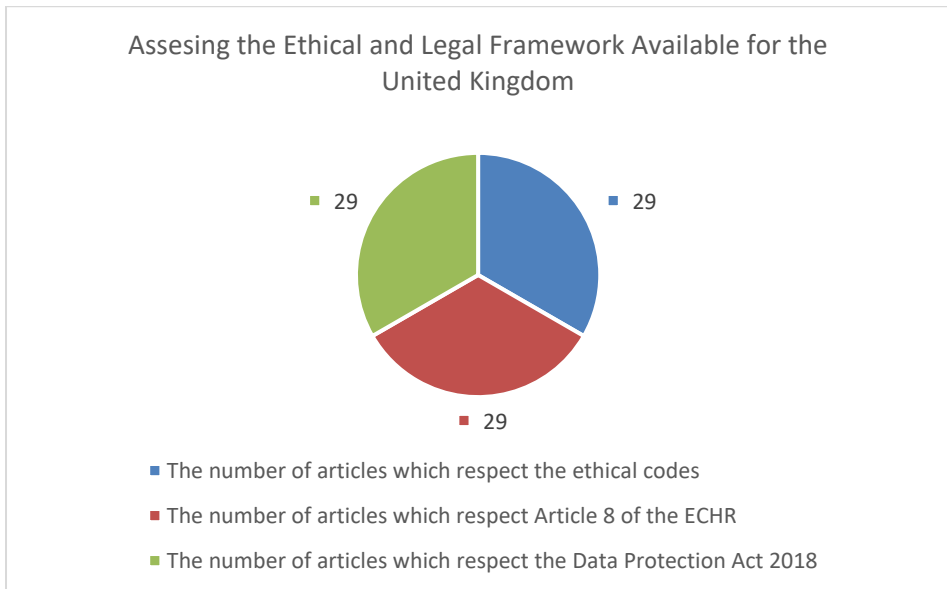
Figure 6

Figure 7

The Online Media Representation of the Victims of Manchester Attack from May, 2017

The data coding of the 123 articles which included information about the victims showed that the media representation of the victims of Manchester attack was presented in 54 per cent of the articles. This statistics could be motivated by the fact that the attack had the highest death toll out of the three attacks and that the targeted victims were children. According to the indicators designed for the personal information of the data coding presented in Methodology, the quantitative analysis showed that out of 66 articles 83 per cent of them had included personal information i.e. full name, age, profession, nationality while the qualitative analysis showed that all 55 articles included the full name of the victims. (See Figures 8 and 9)

The Analysis of the Personal Data about the Victims

- 11
- 0
- 55

- information including the full name
- information with exception of the full name
- no information

The Analysis of the Body Text

- 11, 17%
- 55, 83%

- The number of articles with personal data about the victims
- The number of articles without personal data

Figure 8   **Figure 9**
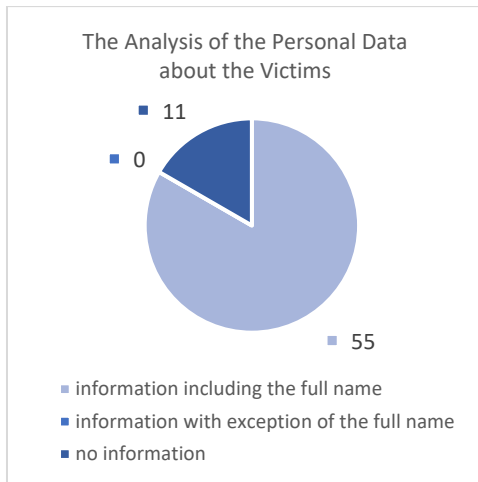
The qualitative analysis of the visual elements based on the data coding regarding the visual elements with victims showed that 58 articles out of 66 included visual elements, while 56 of them shared pictures in which the recognizable features of the victims could be easily identified and 4 of them included intrusive visual elements. As it was stated in the methodology, the

video materials which were included in the articles had been removed and this was considered a limitation of the research paper which ought to be considered. (See Figure 10)
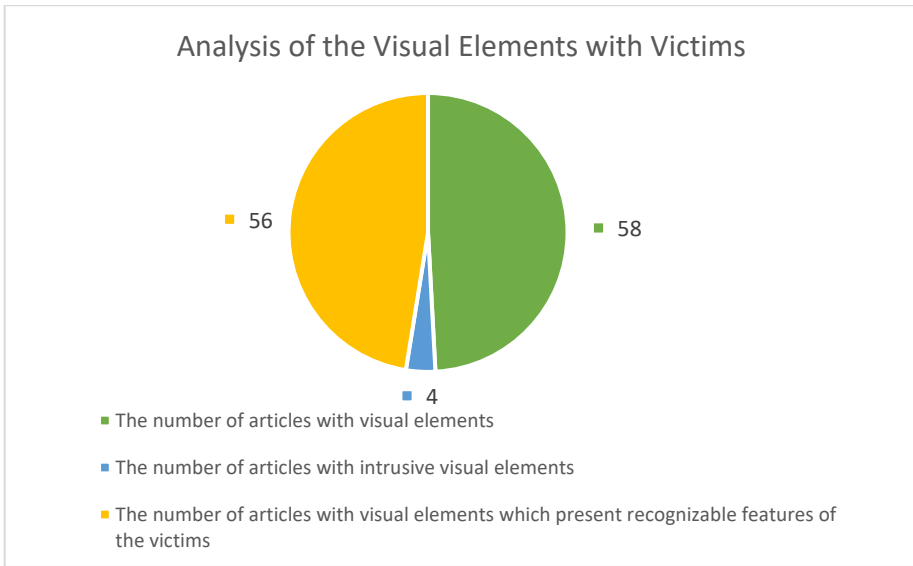
Figure 10

The following part of the qualitative analysis was conducted in accordance with the established indicators designed in order to assess the noninfringement or the breach of the ethical and legal framework of the United Kingdom. The content analysis showed that all 66 articles in which the victims had been represented in the online medium respected Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights and the Data Protection Act 28 and 62 articles respected the ethical journalistic codes. The visual elements which were considered unethical showed injured victims and according to the Editors' Code of Practice published by IPSO they could had been sanctioned under the Intrusion into grief and shock article. (See Figure 11)
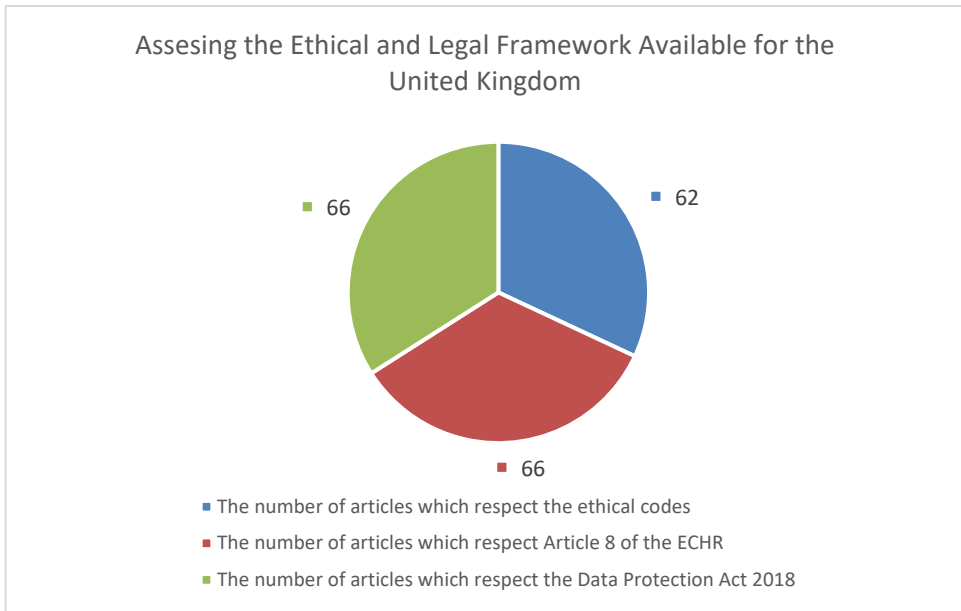
Figure 11

The Online Media Representation of the Victims of London Attack from March, 2017

The descriptive statistics showed that the media representation of the victims of the attack which had happened in London was presented in 15,3 per cent of the articles. According to the indicators designed for the personal information of the data coding, the quantitative analysis showed that out of 28 articles 89 per cent of them had included personal data i.e. full name, age, profession, nationality while the qualitative analysis showed that 23 articles included the full name of the victims. (See Figures 12 and 13)
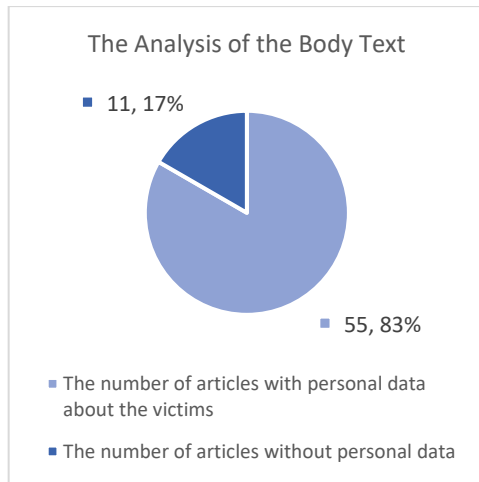
The Analysis of the Personal Data about the Victims

- 3
- 2
- 23
- information including the full name
- information with exception of the full name
- no information

Figure 12

The Analysis of the Body Text

- 3, 11%
- 25, 89%
- The number of articles with personal data about the victims
- The number of articles without personal data
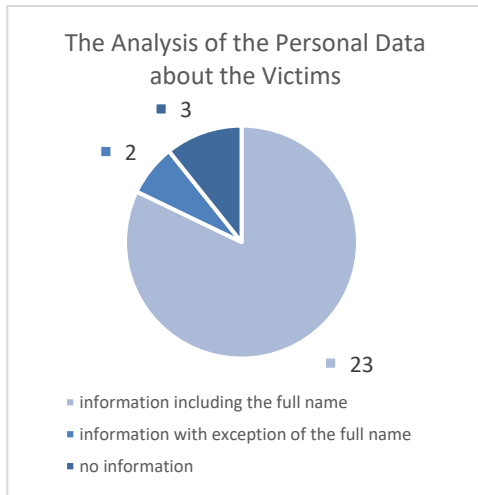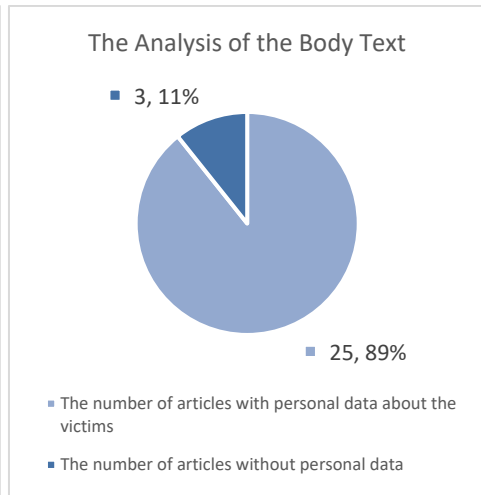
Figure 13

The qualitative analysis of the visual elements based on the data coding regarding the visual elements with victims showed that 25 articles out of 28 included visual elements, while 24 of them shared pictures in which the recognizable features of the victims could be easily identified and 7 of them included intrusive visual elements. (See Figure 14)


Analysis of the Visual Elements with Victims

- 24
- 25
- 7
- The number of articles with visual elements
- The number of articles with intrusive visual elements
- The number of articles with visual elements which present recognizable features of the victims
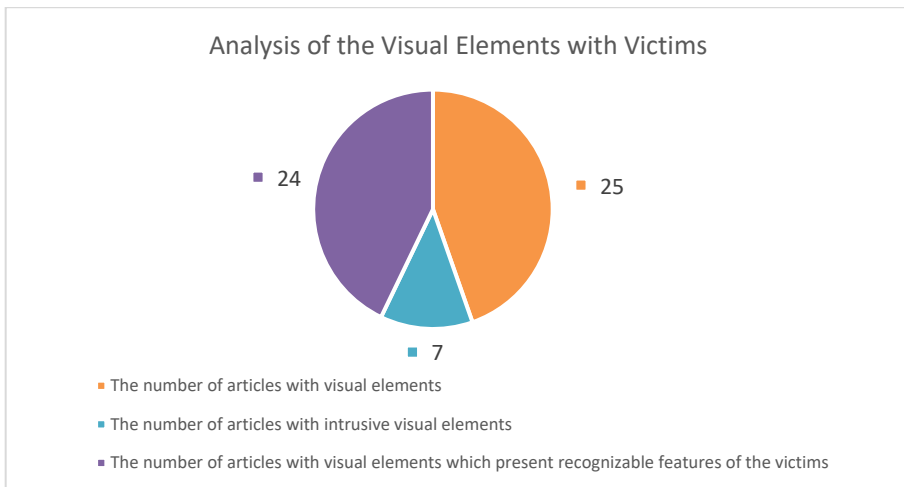
Figure 14

The subsequent section of the research analysis showed the results of the qualitative analysis based on the established indicators for evaluating the noninfringement or the breach of the ethical and legal framework. The content analysis showed that all the articles respected Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights and the Data Protection Act 2018 and 22 articles respected the ethical journalistic codes. The visual elements which were considered unethical showed people who were in a critical condition, being carried on a gurney or laying on the street. According to the Editors' Code of Practice the publishing of these pictures could be motivated by the public interest, while being an intrusion into moments of grief, shock and distress. The media representation of the victims of the London attack is more intrusive and unethical than the media representation of Manchester attack victims because the visual elements included in these articles presented people in a more critical state. (See Figure 15)

Figure 15

The Online Media Representation of the Victims of Terrorist Attacks which happened in Belgium

The quantitative analysis based on the data coding of the journalistic materials published by The Telegraph about the terrorist attacks from Belgium showed that out of 51 articles 22 of them had shared information about the victims. (See Figure 16) The descriptive statistics highlighted the fact that the attack which happened in Brussels, in March 2016 had received the highest media attention regarding the media representation of the victims. This information showed that The Telegraph's media coverage and media attention could be influenced by the number of fatalities and casualties.

Media Representation of the Victims of Terrorist Attacks in Belgium

- 2
- 4
- 16

- Brussels, March 2016   - Liege 2014   - Brussels, May 2014
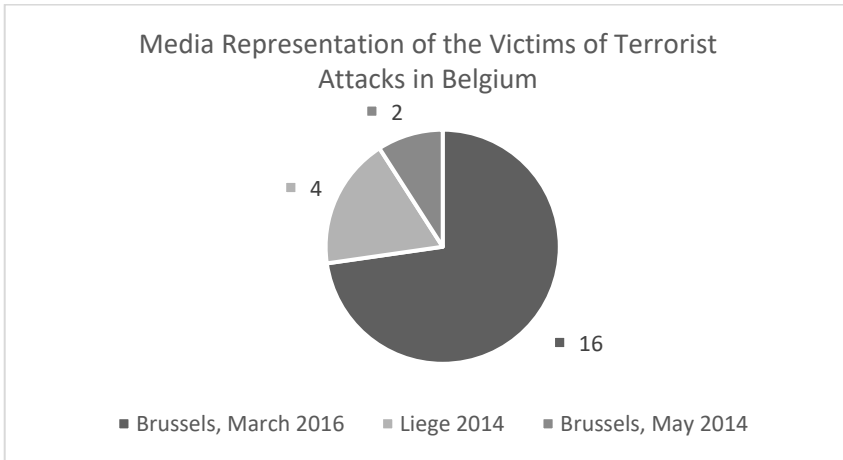
Figure 16

The Online Media Representation of the Victims of Liege Attack from May 2018

The Telegraph had published 5 news pieces on the online platform regarding the terrorist attack which had happened in Liege and 4 articles had met the criteria to be included in the established sampling for the quantitative and qualitative analysis. According to the indicators designed for the assessment of personal information about the victims, the quantitative analysis showed that all 4 articles had included the full name of the victims. (See Figures 17 and 18)
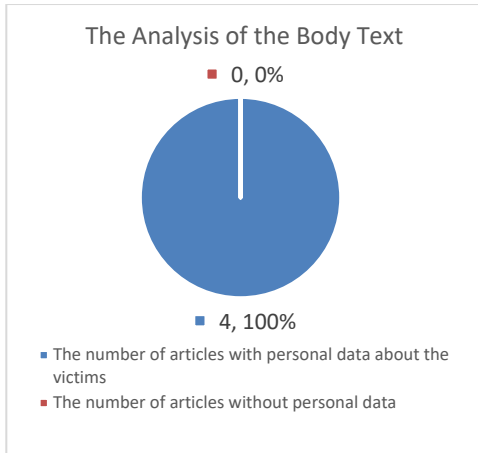
Figure 17
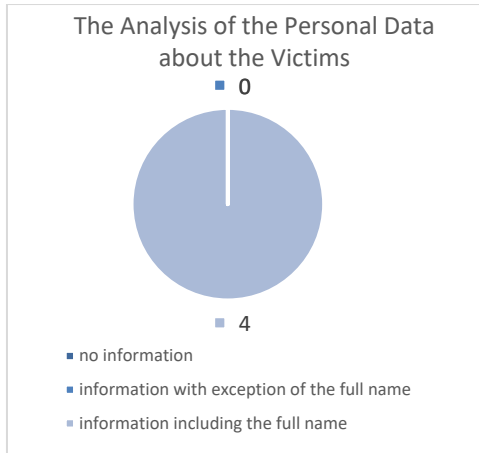
Figure 18

The qualitative analysis of the visual elements with victims based on the pre-defined criteria showed that one article out of the 4 had included photographs with the victims in which the recognizable features could be easily identified. (See Figure 19) The photographs were not intrusive and were used to create a portrait of the victims.
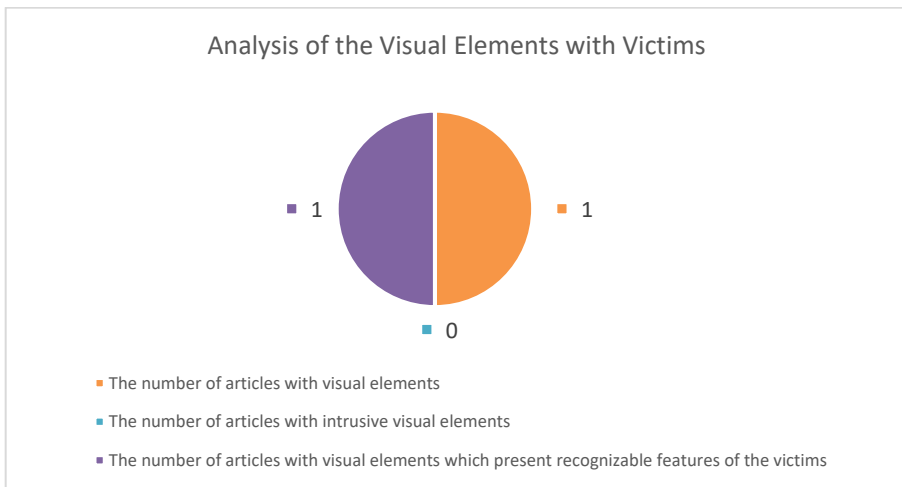
Figure 19

In order to evaluate the noninfringement or the breach of the ethical and legal framework by The Telegraph regarding the media representation of the victims of Liege attack, the qualitative analysis based on the content analysis of the personal data and the visual elements. The results concluded that all articles respected the ethical codes, Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights and Data Protection Act 2018. (See Figure 20)

Figure 20

The Online Media Representation of the Victims of Brussels Attack from March, 2016

The data coding of the 22 articles which included visual elements or personal data about the victims showed that the media representation of the victims of the Brussels attack which had happened in March, 2016 was included in 16 news pieces. The quantitative analysis based on the indicators designed for the evaluation of personal data showed that out of 16 articles 50 per cent of them had included the full name of the victims. (See Figures 21 and 22)

The qualitative analysis of the visual elements showed that 15 news media materials had included visual elements, while 9 of them shared intrusive photographs and 10 has published pictures in which the recognizable features

could be easily identified. (See Figure 23) The content analysis of the intrusive visual elements showed that one article had included gruesome pictures with the victims which violated the moral dignity and privacy of the people.

Figure 21
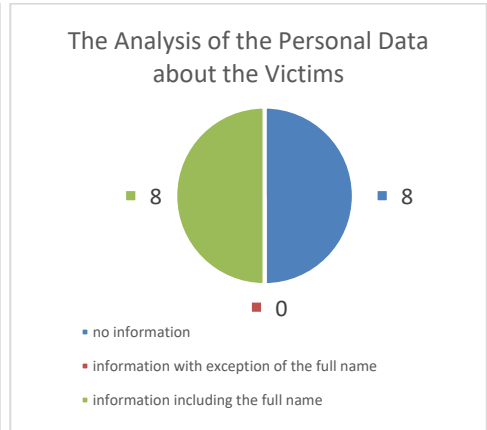
Figure 22
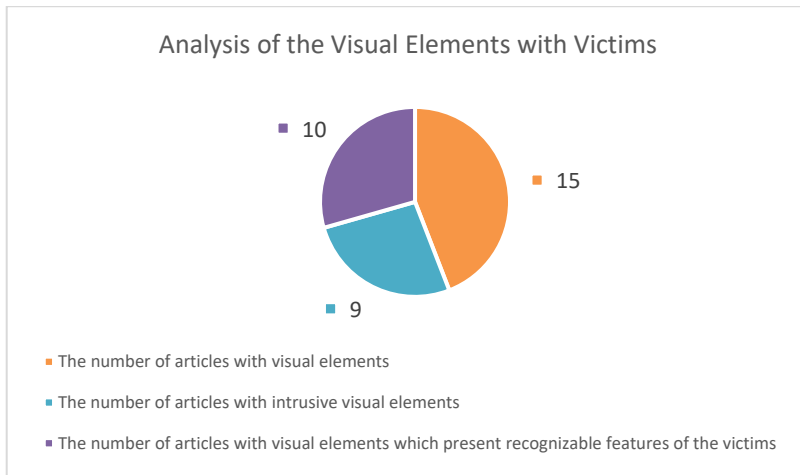
Figure 23

Furthermore, the qualitative analysis which was based on the data coding and content analysis of personal data and the visual elements with victims in accordance to the ethical and legal framework available for the

United Kingdom showed that out of 16 articles 11 did not respect the ethical codes, while all of them respected Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights, as well as the Data Protection Act 2018. (See Figure 24) The visual elements which were considered unethical showed people who were in a serious critical condition and could also be described as photographs with a high emotional impact for the audience. Therefore, according to the Editors' Code of Practice enacted by the Independent Press Standards Organizations, The Telegraph could had been sanctioned under the breach of Intrusion into moment of grief or shock due to the physical and mental state of the victims at the moment the photographs had been taken.
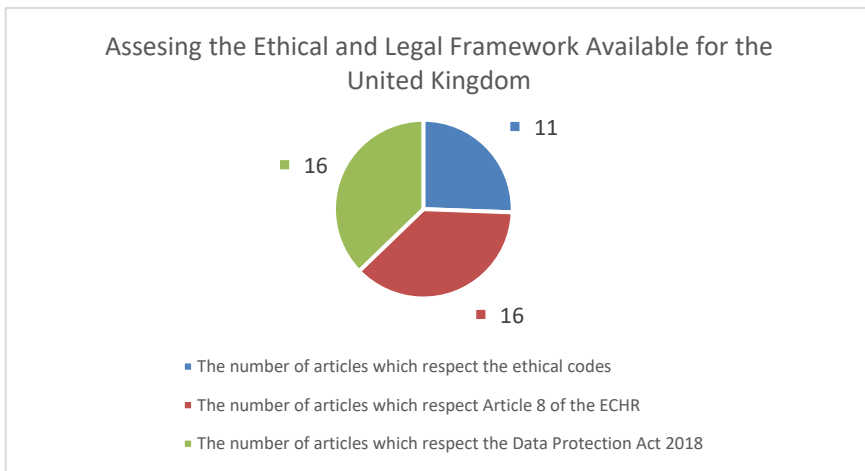
Figure 24

The Online Media Representation of the Victims of Brussels Attack from May, 2014

The analysis of the 9 articles about the Brussels attack from 2014 published by The Telegraph showed that the media representation of the victims was included in 2 articles which did not include visual elements with the victims.

According to the indicators designed for evaluating the personal information, the quantitative analysis showed that both articles had made public the full name of the victims. (See Figures 25 and 26)
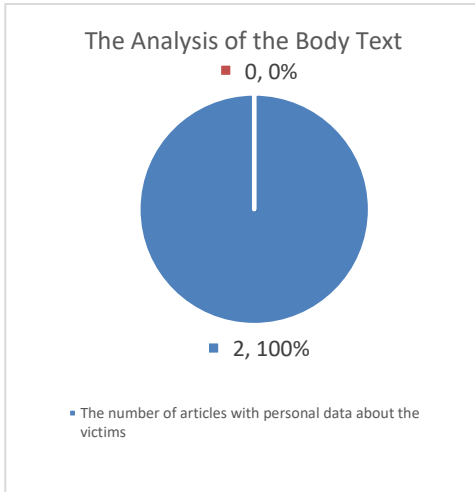
Figure 25
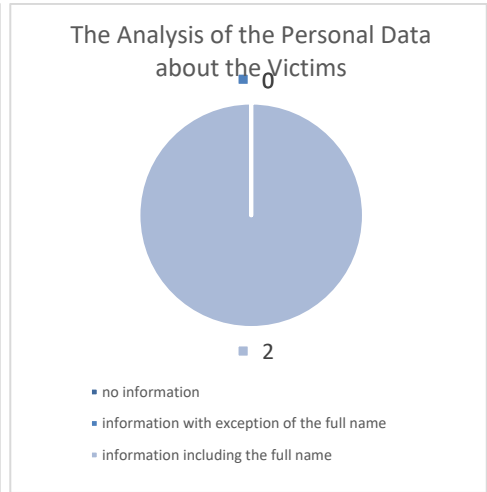
Figure 26

The qualitative research of the articles which included the media representation of the Liege attack victims in regard to the ethical and legal framework available for this newspaper concluded that both articles respected the ethical codes, Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights and Data Protection Act 2018. (See Figure 27)
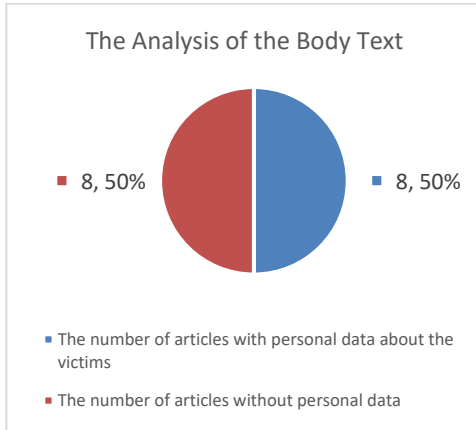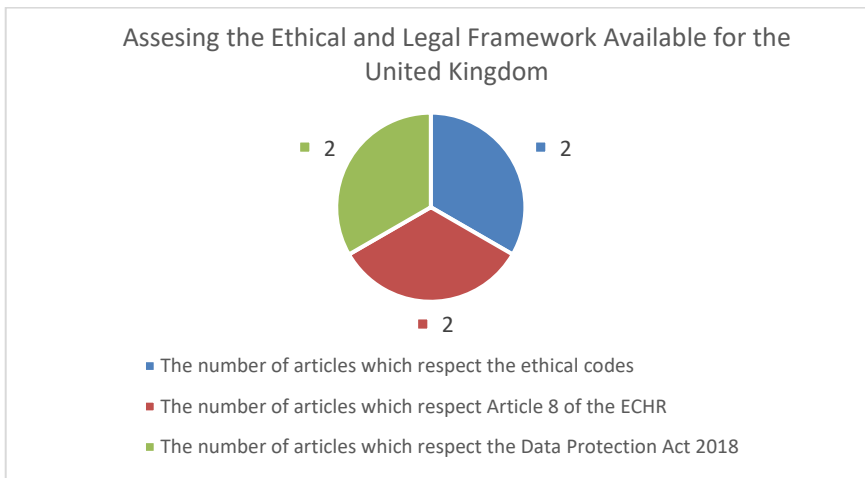

Figure 27

**The Online Media Representation of the Victims of Terrorist Attacks which happened in France**

The preliminary quantitative analysis based on the data coding of the 109 journalistic materials published by The Telegraph about the terrorist attacks from France which had met the pre-defined criteria i.e. existence of visual elements and/or personal data about the victims showed that 39 articles were representative for this research paper's analysis. (See Figure 28) The sampling was furthermore assessed by analyzing the descriptive data which resulted due to quantitative analysis and the content which contributed to the online media representation of the victims.
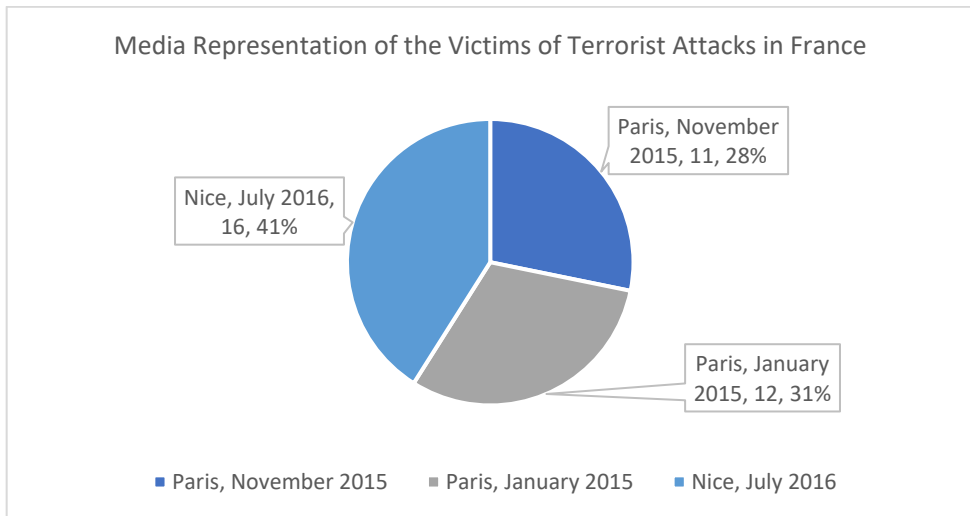
Figure 28

The Online Media Representation of the Victims of Nice Attack from July, 2016

The preliminary data coding of the 39 articles which included information about the victims published by The Telegraph showed that the media representation of the Nice attack's victims was included in 16 online materials. The descriptive statistics regarding the personal data of the

victims showed that out of the 16 articles 50 per cent of them had included personal data about the victims. The qualitative analysis of the 8 articles which included personal information showed that 7 of them included the full name of the victims. (See Figures 29 and 30)
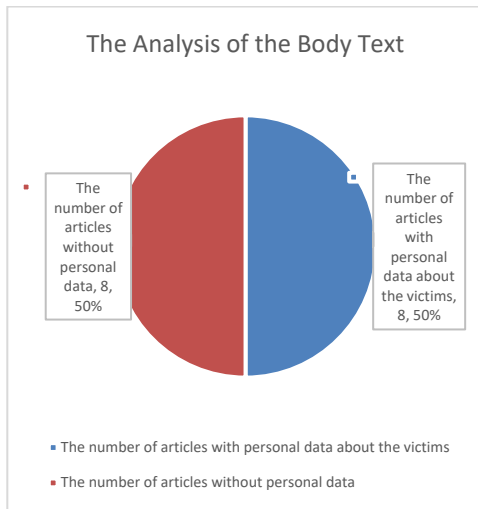
Figure 29
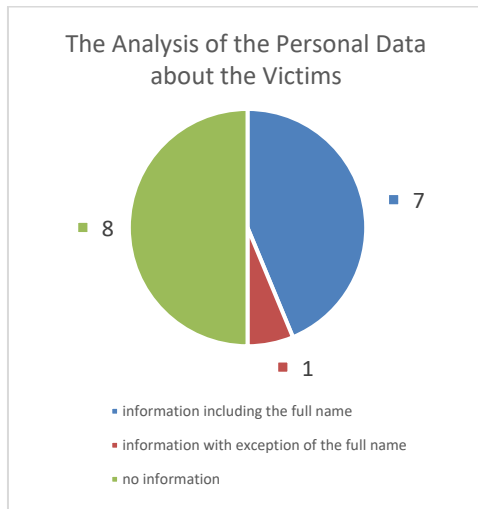
Figure 30

Furthermore, the qualitative analysis based on the data coding for the visual elements with victims showed that out of 16 articles 12 had included visual elements with victims, out of which 7 articles had included intrusive visual elements and 6 articles had included visual elements in which the recognizable features of the victims could be easily identified. The results of the content analysis showed that 58,33 per cent of the 26 news pieces had included intrusive visual elements of the victims. (See Figure 31) As an observation, it is important to be taken into account that they were defined as intrusive elements the photographs with the deceased persons surrounded by people who might have been family members despite the fact that they were covered. Moreover, the picture with the covered body of a deceased child was also considered as intrusive due to the emotional impact it might have had on the family members and because it was a child and therefore, it was considered unethical.
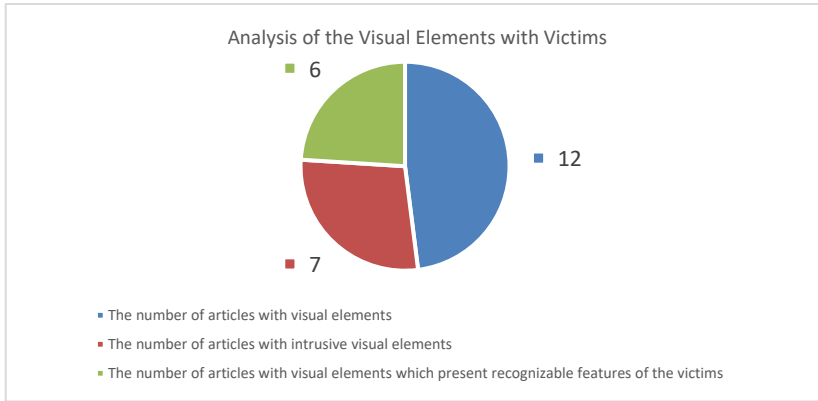
Figure 29

The subsequent results of the content analysis were achieved through the content analysis and the quantification of the information in accordance with the pre-defined indicators based on the ethical and legal framework of The United Kingdom. The qualitative analysis of the 16 articles showed that 9 articles respected the ethical codes and that all 16 articles respected the Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights and the Data Protection Act 2018. (See Figure 32) The visual elements which were defined as unethical showed people who were in a critical condition or the covered bodies of the deceased victims. Therefore, it cannot be argued that the published visual elements with those victims served the public interest mentioned in the Editors' Code of Practice which ought to be respected by The Telegraph.
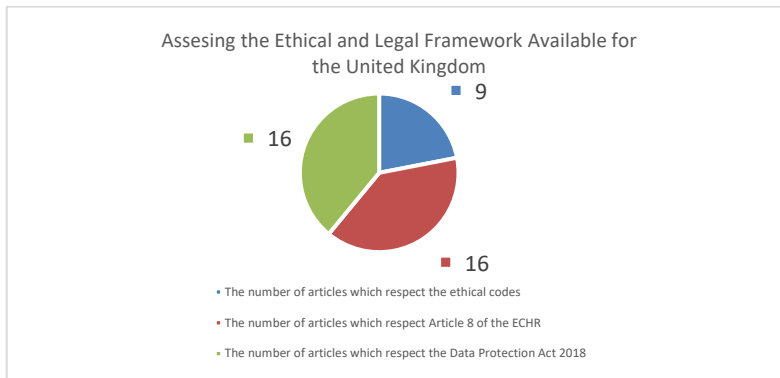
Figure 30

The Online Media Representation of the Victims of Paris Attack from November, 2015

The Telegraph had published 34 articles about the Paris attack on the online platform and the qualitative research showed that the visual elements included in these articles was unavailable or it had been removed, with the exception of a summary of the event consisting of 16 pictures which had been embedded in the body of some of the articles. The 16 pictures were included in the qualitative research of this article with the observation that they are not relevant for the media representation of the victims. This constituted a limitation in the research analysis of the media representation of this attack. The data coding of the 11 articles which included information about the victims of the Paris attack published showed that all the articles made public personal data about the victims, while 10 of them published the full name of the victims. (See Figures 33 and 34)

The Analysis of the Body Text

- 0, 0%

11, 100%

- The number of articles with personal data about the victims
- The number of articles without personal data

The Analysis of the Personal Data about the Victims

- 0 - 1

10

- no information
- information with exception of the full name
- information including the full name
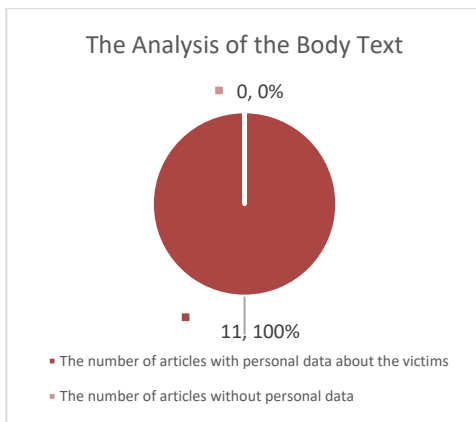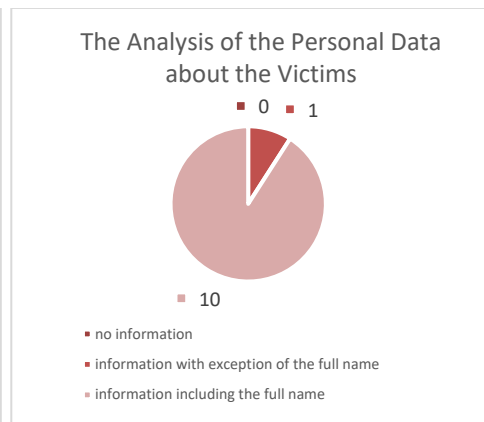
Figure 31   **Figure 32**

The qualitative analysis based on the pre-defined criteria for evaluating the visual elements showed that out of 2 images out of 5 surprised the recognizable featured of the victims who were in a critical state. (See Figure 35)
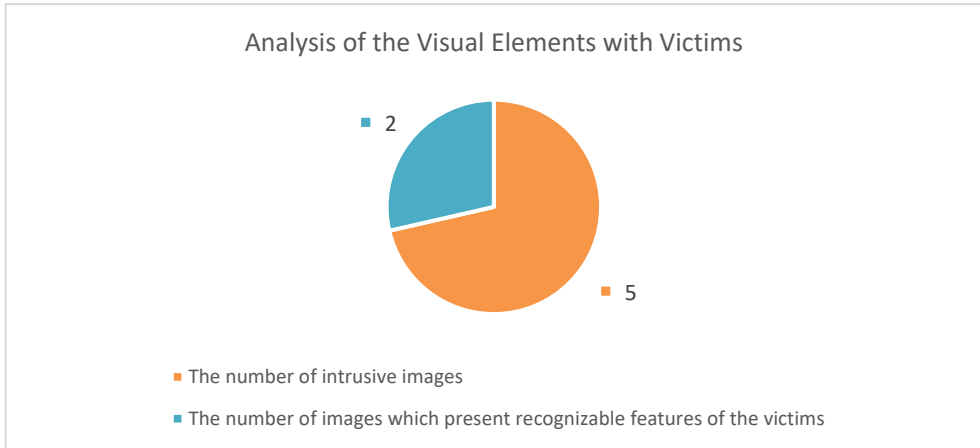
Figure 33

The Online Media Representation of the Victims of Paris Attack from January, 2015

The Telegraph had published 35 articles about the Charlie Hebdo shooting on the online platform and the qualitative research showed that the visual elements included in these articles was unavailable or it had been removed. This constituted a limitation in the research analysis of the media representation of this attack. The data coding of the 39 articles which included information about the victims of the attacks which had happened in France showed that The Telegraph had included the victims' media representation in 12 news media materials about the Paris attack from January, 2015.

According to the indicators designed for evaluating the personal information, the quantitative analysis showed that all 12 articles had included personal data i.e. full name, age, profession, nationality about the victims. The qualitative analysis of the published information concluded that 12 articles had included the full name of the victims and this could be due to the nature of the attack and the targeted people. (See Figures 36 and 37)
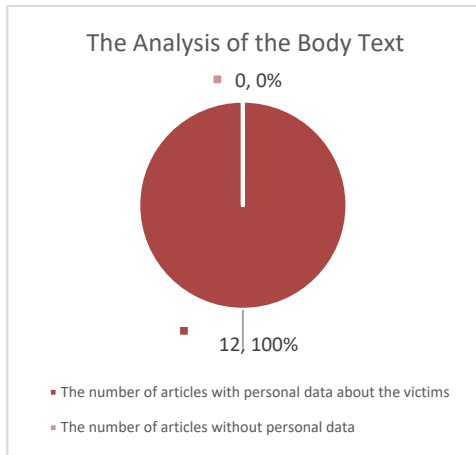
Figure 34
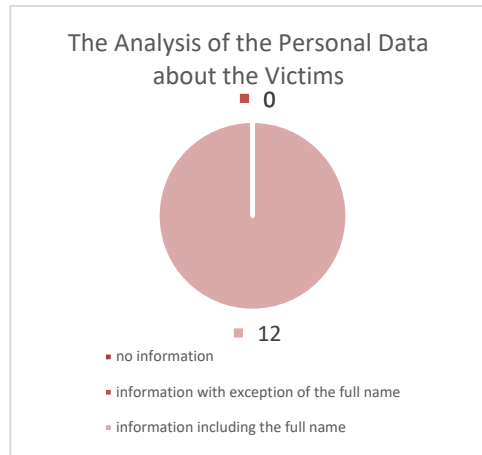
Figure 35

Conclusions

Addressing the initial research questions pertaining to the extent it respects the ethical codes, our research has shown that The Telegraph respected the ethical codes in proportion of 100 per cent in the media representation of the victims of London attack from June, 2017, 78,5 per cent for the Manchester attack and 78,5 for the London attack from March, 2017. The media representation of the victims of Brussels attack from March, 2016 was ethical in proportion of **68,7 per cent** and in proportion of **56,2 per cent** for the Nice attack. These statistics showed that The Telegraph created a more ethical media representation of the people who were victims of the attacks which happened in the United Kingdom.

With regards to supranational and national legislation aimed at protecting the victims' privacy, our analysis showed that The Telegraph respected Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights and that it is not relevant for the media representation of the victims of terrorist attacks because it aims at protecting the privacy of the people, while their portrayal in the media affects the victims' dignity and image, while it can also have a high emotional impact on them, on their families and on the

audience. The analysis highlighted the fact that the national legislation of the United Kingdom does not consist of legal acts aimed at protecting the victims' image in the media.

A clear concern regarding media ethics was observed. By taking into account the descriptive statistics representative for the noninfringement of the ethical codes it can be observed that The Telegraph and Le Monde created a more ethical media representation of the victims if the attacks had happened in their country.

Although the analysis of this paper provided answers to the questions about the ethical and legal frameworks aimed at protecting the victims and their rights while contributing to a deeper understanding of the importance of ethics in journalism, the results based on the sampling of this research paper cannot attest the general position of the selected newspapers regarding the media representation of the victims of terrorist attacks, but they underlined the interdependence between the role of journalism, the human rights and the ethical standards of this profession.

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Typologies of social structures in virtual communities – case study on mobile platforms

Andrei COSTINA[1]

ABSTRACT. This study (originally published in Romanian) aims to define certain typologies of individuals involved in virtual communities, more specifically in persistent online worlds. In this case the focus is on a case study applied to the platform called state of survival dedicated to the mobile devices segment. It is a platform that combines in one application various types of gaming with several ways of communicating and socializing. The fact that this game has become extremely popular at the beginning of the pandemic correlated with periods of severe lockdown puts it in a unique socio-cultural context which makes it extremely interesting from the point of digital anthropology research.

The methodology in use is rather traditional as a set of ethnographic and anthropological tools but adapted to contemporary necessities for studying virtual communities. The aim is to develop a form of social group taxonomy outlining their specific characteristics and eventually even the social norm.

The results do not just shape the parameters described above but also involve game mechanics and behavioral patterns as well as the way in which individuals perceive this activity and or their involvement with the virtual world that is correlated with their level of immersion. In this particular context qualitative methods are suitable, but they also have some limitations, it is almost impossible to carry out any statistical research at the level of the general population due to the structure of the platform and the way it

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[1] PhD Assistant Professor, Faculty of Political, Administrative, and Communication Sciences, Babeş-Bolyai University of Cluj-Napoca, costina@fspac.ro

functions. On the other hand, one can cover very well certain segments on a very detailed level in order to point out relevant aspects of such virtual worlds.

Keywords: Digital anthropology, virtual communities, social structures and networks, online platforms, persistent worlds, massively multiplayer online, mobile, digital ethnology, games

Introduction

The beginning of the pandemic and especially the lockdown has brought about the series of changes somewhat normal in the behavior of players that prefer mobile platforms. The present study aims to illustrate various typologies of social aggregation in such environments. The example considered for study is called state of survival. The platform is dedicated to mobile terminals and handheld devices and can be downloaded for free from all the application stores on the market.

Obviously since we are talking about a free application the main monetizing system is "in game purchases" with some help from advertising that's being targeted to the user in order to obtain various bonuses. Microtransactions are not absolutely necessary, it is not an exclusive pay to win system but for those who wish to be competitive some spending is required. The same thing goes for those who wish to access the entire array of content of the game elements such as: characters cosmetic improvements or various objects that confer superior abilities to their characters.

The entire system is designed in a modular way stressing out the social side. The entire virtual world is formed out of states hence the name which in turn are formed out of areas with interest points resources or installations that grant players bonuses areas of influence of groups like clans, alliances etc. and individual settlements with their own range of influence. Obviously, the inside of the settlement is a different module, but this aspect, along with the characters and the types of units will be analyzed separately when approaching game mechanics.

The communication modules are based on an in-game chat system in certain cases with voice support. these are structured on various levels out of which the most relevant are the micro level respectively the alliance, the workgroup, and private; the larger ones on an area level state or even world being a lot less structured and obviously much more populated with irrelevant content. Obviously, as in many other cases when we are talking about MMO massively multiplayer online platforms, communication between individuals extends towards other channels such as social networking services, namely Facebook and WhatsApp for smaller groups or private and Discord for larger groups and or individuals that are more taken with their role in the virtual world.

The narrative context is that of a postapocalyptic world where after some failed experiment a virus infects humanity transforming most of the citizens in zombie mutants. The survivors organize themselves in settlements clans and States and try to work together (or to annihilate each other) to gain access to the in-game resources. As the individual progresses new options unveil and the plot is revealed by means of the individual narrative of the characters the same for each player that are present in every settlement.

From a gameplay standpoint the platform is not designed for isolationists, those who want to play solo are marginalized from the start even if they are willing to pay for bonuses. The internal structure of the platform is defined in such a manner that would discourage and eventually stop solo players. This particular way of stimulating the social context makes this virtual world a perfect ground for this study. If other environments allow the forming of social networks with a lot of eccentric nodes in between the members of the communities, the developers of the platform state of survival have decided to make this aspect almost impossible. Subsequently social formations will look in a graphical representation more like swarms or polyhedrons without individuals that are marginally connected to a group.

It is easy to understand why in the context of the outbreak of the pandemic this platform has reached the top 10 best rated applications in Google Play store. It is not just about the narrative but also the level of the complexity of the platform. In order to better understand and research this

virtual environment in which the action is placed one needs to operationalize a few concepts tied to what Richard Bartle wood call *the world,* and the best way to do this is to analyze the game mechanics.

Game mechanics

This game was launched just before the pandemic outbreak by the publisher King's Group and at first glanced it looked just like another zombie game targeted towards users in search of a casual experience. In reality, we are talking about a very complex platform that includes numerous segments. All these modules are shaped accordingly to a certain type of game mechanic.

An important aspect that needs to be mentioned is that the design of the platform allows every player to have two distinct accounts that can be used alternatively with the same profile. These can be localized in the same state for mutual help or can be in different states to ensure a higher level of social diversity. As the afore mentioned, the social aspect but mostly the collaborative one built in this platform are extremely important in the general development of the action.

The mainframe, the skeleton so to speak, is RTS (Real Time Strategy) Basically the user is associated to a settlement in the form of a community of characters that needs to develop, accumulate resources produce units and buildings that would ensure survival. Of course, the city / colony building segment is present here, but it is not the most important. Buildings but mostly units form the so-called red line of the action as well as interaction with other players.

The basic principle is that the player sends the units (preferably along with those of other players) to carry out various operations such as: resources procurement threat and monster elimination missions that are specific to each area capture and protection of certain interest points or attacking other players. The latter is less used, in case a player is attacked by many others in a focused way, usually the group that that particular player belongs to will respond in kind in an organized way and there are very few cases in which players would risk unleashing an all-out clan war.

In the tactic section fortunately, there are only three types of units that play different roles on a classical model. These are: ranged units, high mobility (cavalry type) units, and infantry units (melee type). The combinations of the types of units are somewhat relevant to ensure success, but most of the times the most important aspect is the technological level of development for each type of unit.

In order to produce highly developed, numerous units, one needs resources and buildings within the settlement. At this point the segment of colony management begins. The user is confronted with the challenge of developing the settlement as efficiently as possible to procure the necessary resources for the survival of its inhabitants, developing defense abilities as well as unit production abilities. The whole system is simplified enough to be easily controlled from a mobile device but even though the UI is optimized enough it still requires some management abilities on part of the user.

The most spectacular component of the platform is the RPG role play game. In this context the player sends characters on certain missions and these characters must be controlled individually in order to achieve various objectives usually involving some kind of a confrontation or fight with monsters all in the pseudo isometric system. The more interesting part comes with each character's unique stories traits and abilities from an orphan girl to a retired soldier through a former convict the narrative of this universe makes this platform unique in this segment. The amount of attention to detail that the developers have put into this aspect and the fact that they are always introducing new characters or new developments of existing ones is basically their main unique selling proposal USP for this application.

Although the combination of game mechanics is rather interesting this is not the main objective of the present paper it is just a necessary step in understanding the application functionality it's immersion level and the roles that each user needs to play all these combined with top graphics voice acted dialogues and narrator speech contribute to the popularity of the platform. as the matter of fact due to this level of complexity it is not targeted towards all types of terminals it basically runs in optimal parameters starting with the upper midrange of devices.

Methodology and limitations

This paper aims to define certain typologies of communities and individuals present in the virtual world presented. In order to achieve this objective several combined methods have been used and even though some of them are more traditional in nature they are best suited to this given context because automated data mining in order to build social networks models based on strength theory is impossible.

So, we refer to observation in all its forms ei (Rosenhan, Wilkins and Levine), but participation is the keyword here. Generally speaking, when studying virtual communities beyond the mathematical approach of the graphical representation of the social network only traditional anthropological methods yield reasonable results, albeit adapted and more structured usually with the researcher taking part into that particular community or communities. It is very less likely that a complete outsider would understand the social mechanisms that tie these groups together the types of individuals that compose these intricate structures and even less likely to be able to classify them.

The methodology involved in this particular domain is in a constant state of evolution; initially it was considered that what we call a certain culture is tied directly into its geographical location and the certain set of parameters that could have been considered as local identity. Nowadays we can talk about global systems and any kind of culture no matter how remote is influenced by external factors. As the methodology developed researchers have begun to consider more and more the relationship between the online and offline environments. Some consider the online a separate environment with its own socio-dynamical principles (Soukup 2006).

Christine Hine (1998, p.14-40) because probably expressed this in the best manner even in the early days stating that the Internet can be perceived both as a form of culture in itself also as a cultural artifact. Using solely the version of standalone culture the Internet has a set of norms and practices that are both unique and specific to this particular system and entitled to be studied separately from the unmediated social existence that happens in real life. On the other hand, when we consider the Internet as a cultural artifact it exists in the wider sphere of the cultural context in which every individual dwells.

The interdependence between the online and offline has led researchers to pay a special amount of attention to the way in which the cultural basis of communication both mediated and unmediated are welded together. A good example is the research of Mizuko Ito (2005) in which she regards the mobile phone as a tool of techno social tethering meaning that it functions as an interface in social communication but not as an external construct but rather as an extension of every individual's communicational ability a more simplified form of telepresence. At the same time geographically bounded cultural practices significantly influenced the development of subsequent technologies involved in such modes of communication. It is probably the scenario in which the geographical location influences the most the virtual environment. Basically, we can talk about ways in which technological systems not limited to mobile devices are built socially via the ways they are being used in other words socio-technological practices that put together the cultural landscape of both mediated and unmediated communicational realms.

In this particular case these observations are emphasized since we are considering a world that can be accessed from mobile devices exclusively. naturally this is valid for the general audience and in a more traditional manner because for the more tech savvy there is always the option of using an emulator of mobile ecosystems, usually Android based, on a PC be it desktop or laptop. However, this seems to be a rather narrow niche.

Obviously electronically mediated cultural spaces tear apart any kind of traditional idea related to spatiality. At least for this one reason researchers will have to remodel the way in which they traverse these spaces. Danah Boyd (2008) proposes that instead of considering the site the location as a starting point away that will lead to a multitude of results apparently unrelated, the methodology should rather follow sets of people, places and focal points of cultural interests thus providing a coherent image even though it is multi-site.

Once this approach has been established such a methodological formula allows the anthropologist to follow monitoring study in order to better understand these phenomena that are, by definition, in a state of flux and transformation. The basic idea is that we can no longer consider a form of ethnography and anthropology of isolated communities, but instead that

of the network in which it is necessary to consider the multitudes of plans and platforms that facilitate the process of communication between individuals all combined with a set of social norms that can differ substantially from one environment to another. One can no longer talk about isolated cultures that are being studied as a particular case such as a village that has no significant contact with other cultural values. At the same time narrowing the research in any kind of space be it geographical or digital makes no sense because people cross seamlessly from one to another and sometimes function in both simultaneously.

Another contextual issue is actually one of the limitations of this study and that is attempting to observe certain ethnical communities its main impediment being the language barrier. Unfortunately, it is not the only one, other cultural peculiarities make some of these clans or alliances to be relatively impermeable to strangers. Statistically speaking (Internet World Stats) poorer areas of the planet are better represented from the sheer number of participants in these virtual worlds because they are mainly used as a way to escape the daily not so bright routine. So, the study will include only international communities that use English as a main language.

Besides participant observation another tool has come to the aid of defining the set of specific characteristics to each typology involved here it is the case study both on group clan alliance and on the individual in particular the community leader. In the same manner in order to utilize the same concepts that stand behind each parameter a form of coding in its basic sense defined by Kraut and Johnston even from the 80s.

Another limitation of this study at least in this incipient form is the lack of quantitative methods. This is due to the impossibility of automatically collating data on the level of the entire population present in the virtual world. However, this form of limitation may only change the nuances of typologies not on a fundamental level the study being focused on parameters that do not strongly rely on the quantitative nature of things.

Data collection went through a whole year from January to December 2020 on two separate accounts (a'Savii și DolithePeaceHound), passing through at least 30 communities in state 255 from the game platform with a population varying in between 1500 and 2500 users. The interaction time

with the platform was on average over 2 hours a day on both accounts, obviously on more than one occasion daily. An important note is that the data gathering process stopped at the time in which for commercial reasons the platform introduced narrative content from The Walking Dead franchise that altered significantly both game mechanics and the media content per se for more than six months.

Results

The set of results are in a primary stage basically we're talking about a preliminary study that can be developed M further detail and a vaster coverage of the collected data. On a first glance one can define general trends only and the focus falls on general common characteristics that outline the given categories.

Following the data analysis process three main trends have emerged that may be defined as categories of alliances groups or clans all with specific shared characteristics and all managed and consequence, naturally, referring to the profile of the leader but also of those who are part of the top tier of the group. Considering Bartle's (2003) typologies for individuals one can find them aggregated in the following sequence. For each typology and the purpose of providing a relevant example a group will be utilized in which both accounts have been present for at least a month thus making the nature of the social organization easier to understand on the whole.

Achievers, or those who wish to accomplish as much as possible within the game are aggregated in top communities with numerous members, a very well-defined hierarchical structure, impeccably organized activities and exceptional management of resources and "personnel". It is a type of social aggregation that is almost militaristic the rules are of any and rather strict closely watched by those responsible and the users that do not adhere to this code of conduct are immediately excluded on the 2nd or the 3rd mistake.

These forms of social aggregation may be called *competitive* because they are focused on success within the game have many members and a large part of the population consists of newer users less powerful and with less

developed abilities who seek the protection help and advice from veteran members. At the same time, they function as a maneuverable population representing brute force by sheer numbers.

The group characteristics are high member count rigorous organization, well established sets of rules, highly focused on results in the game towards the scope of the game, socializing between members is not discouraged but functional communication takes precedence and in order to avoid the formation of subgroups, militarized management and attitude. very few group decisions are discussed outside the inner circle that leads the group however there is a rather strong group cohesion but still in a militaristic sense meaning that the members will protect each other and use the resources at their disposal to achieve common goals. Despite the appearance of camaraderie loyalty does not come into play the users that do not rise to the standards will be immediately removed.

A good example is a group called Marshalls declared as being American International and led by, obviously, Marshall (US). This alliance is situated in the top three of the factions in state 255 but the other two are ethnic Turkey and Latino the first one exclusive for Turkish speaking users and the second one for South Americans with the exceptions of Brazilians. A thing worth mentioning is that the top five alliances receive significant bonuses within the general game mechanics and the first three get to participate in interstadial events where they get to compete against similar other groups from the virtual world in various challenges.

Even if the involved players are beginners, they have the obligation to take part in collective events and the unpassable rule is 24 hours without no involvement means a warning on the second warning the user is kicked out it is a rather common form of norming top tier groups, and the parameter is called AFK time (away from keyboard) which means absent from the game. All activities are organized from the bottom up on a hierarchical scale and everything is reported so that the eventual errors in organization can be corrected.

Due to its high number of members shared activities are organized in several time slots during the day considering the local time of participants. By means of all these concerted actions the alliance makes it a purpose to control as much as possible from the zones of interest and or rich in resources in order

to maintain its position in the general ranking. Any attempt of aggression from other groups is countered with maximum force and it can escalate up to the total disintegration of the attacking groups and subsequently absorbing into the alliance the relevant users from those groups and those who are willing to take upon themselves to stick to the pseudo social norm taken into discussion earlier.

On the other side of the coin one can find a combination between Bartle's socializers and explorers. It is a more *relaxed* form of organization to make an analogy, small Switzerlands in a post-apocalyptic world. Very much focused on socialization these are small communities with a maximum of 20 to 30 users involved, but who are very strong on an individual scale, generally we're talking about top 30 to 50 in the state general ranking for individuals.

These users know each other well even though they do not meet in the real world. Many times, the discussions in the group replace going out in the pub or a bar where members shared their daily problems related to family, job, or the socio economical context of the geographic area that they live in physically. It is a phenomenon that is worth further research more in depth and in more detail in future studies because it is not singular or specific to this platform but it's actually a whole class of such communities that emerged in all virtual environments along with the social distancing in real life during the quarantine periods.

The group characteristics are rather few members relatively well organized very sociable all group decisions are made in a form of democratic rule by agreement of a certain majority, rules are few and lax if they exist at all, mostly the community relies on the common sense of the users. This type of alliances has a medium level of resources at its disposal but access to any form of resources in the game is somewhat guaranteed. Even though their main weapon is discussion and diplomacy forceful actions can be very damaging to other formations by the individual force that each player brings about. Most of the times these players are hardcore veterans that can do extreme damage by themselves. Major alliances would rather avoid conflict which would be way too costly compared to what they would concede on a diplomatic level furthermore obtaining the sympathy of the relaxed group.

In the same sense loyalty between individuals is carried out to the extreme the community will protect an inactive individual for a very long time and in the case of a focused attack from an external power will retaliate with devastating force, many times making eliminating that particular adversary a purpose in itself. Since the users are so few they can organize easily and being very powerful quickly become dangerous on a global scale.

An example that would best illustrate this category is the alliance friendship declared international and led by Wendell (UK) who even though is one of the least experienced members is more active thus getting to command the group. In fact, it is a common practice within these alliances that the group would be led by novices in order for them to better learn the ropes of the game. Usually there are no fixed rules just a daily collective action that ensures the well-being of the alliance.

There are however more or less personal the part talks in the group chat with topics ranging from work issues to the activities of the members' kids on that day. External communication is also very important aspect of this group there are agreements and truces with all neighbors and all more powerful alliances, As the matter of fact, in interstate events most of the time the group will offer valuable assistance for those very competitive at the top.

On an organizational level things are relatively simple assistance is offered unconditionally, aggressive actions against other players are discouraged, and all the efforts are focused towards events that represent challenges within the game this means that most battles will be against NPCs (non-player characters), the downside of it being that it is a type of alliance less suitable for beginners because individual progress is slow, a pace better suited for the more seasoned players who have less time at their disposal to spend playing the game.

A middle ground can be found in the third category of social groups one that can be best described as *occasional*. Even though the frequency of players participating in group events is not necessarily low, besides the top tier the others do not religiously follow a schedule. Such alliances are rather successful, and this is due to the fact that they usually have many members and even though they do not regularly participate in activities there will be enough around for any occasion.

Many times, these social formations have a theme for instance the chosen example is called Big Dogs and the theme is quite obvious. Very often, these alliances divide into subgroups according to various common interests ranging from pets to favorite TV shows. The level of communication is average tasks within the group are very clear but not all users know each other and there's no strong social cohesion or feelings of belonging, camaraderie and loyalty generally applicable.

The group characteristics are weaker organization compensated by the number of actions in players, very sociable and friendly but not so tied to the community. The set of rules comprising the pseudo social norm refer more to the players behavior imposing standards of conviviality and politeness rather than issuing battle orders and organizing aggressive actions. The top tier is very coagulated and works as a driving force for the alliance mostly by power of example. There is a form of competitivity involved, this type of alliance can be found on all levels and certain users will constantly strive to be better but not at the level of the competitive alliances. Actually, those willing to accelerate their progress will tend to migrate towards the competitive type groups.

On a communicational level, things are considerably ambiguous topics and trends vary significantly and externally there is no common direction of the diplomatic speech. But what makes this type of communities really spectacular is diversity. This is probably the most eclectic category of groups they will gather users of all sorts nations and orientations of all interests and trades and last but not least various degrees of involvement into the virtual world of the game.

The example taken into consideration, Big Dogs is international as well, with English as the official language run by (who else) Big Dog (DK) Is pretty relevant for the aforementioned characteristics as it is assumed that all members are dog owners or at least dog lovers. As the matter of fact, most of the social communication is built around experiences related to four legged friends.

In spite of its diversity the group has a few norms for organizing and a hierarchical structure that is better defined as compared to the relaxed groups. Nevertheless, the level of coordination is nowhere near the competitives and

the general set of rules can be bent easily. With over 50 members the force of the group is significant but not its influence certain elements being very vulnerable in the case of a confrontation with a larger group for instance an ethnical group where the diplomatic abilities of the leader are less relevant.

This type of organization represents a good place to start, a new player will receive advice and assistance, but once used to the mechanic of the game should one desire to be more competitive one must migrate to more dynamic alliances. This also works as a very comfortable zone for "retired" players that no longer spend very much time in the virtual world but visit it occasionally.

Theoretically speaking there is a fourth category, the chaotic one, but as the name states the high social entropy element makes such alliances to lose group cohesion rapidly. None of the groups encountered throughout the data collection process had the lifespan of more than three months regardless of the nature of the players or management choices.

Hierarchical structures fall apart easily, and, in most cases, entire subgroups of members migrate or are being absorbed by other more offering alliances at that moment. As a direct consequence in practice, one cannot define this type of category unless considered as an intermediary stage or temporary category.

Conclusions

This preliminary study barely scratches the surface of knowing and understanding of a phenomenon that is so bizarre and complex. It is with the beginning to carry out similar studies may be approaching other virtual worlds though this one is still of high interest on the market. Most certainly the pandemic has altered not just the way in which users perceive media products and their consumer habits but even the means used to communicate information and convey content. At the same time social aggregation algorithms and the nature of communication in such virtual communities that exist in persistent worlds alters significantly veering towards the personal.

This can be observed also in the nature of their relationship individual versus world Bartle and also in establishing the set of behavioral parameters that we frequently call social norm. In the case of virtual communities, further research is worth focusing on the type of information propagation and understanding the ways in which social communication mediated by networks functions. Obviously, there are many similarities but also a significant number of differences between the virtual and the physical. Virtual communities have dynamics and structures of their own same as the real ones even more they influence directly the existence of the physical ones, transforming the individual perception of society and even redefining social norm in the real world. In order to better understand all these mechanisms researchers need to accelerate the development of new methods both qualitative and quantitative and also adapt existing ones to this particular environment.

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The Economy of "Symbolic Goods"

Yossi SHARABI[1]

ABSTRACT. This paper explores the concept of symbolic goods and their impact on society. Symbolic goods are goods that have value beyond their intrinsic worth, such as art, fashion, and music. The author argues that symbolic goods play a significant role in shaping our identity and social standing. They can also be used to reinforce social hierarchies and create divisions between groups.

Keywords: Symbolic goods, Social identity, Media consumption

Introduction

Symbolic Goods is a broad expression of the value of artistic and other goods for us. When I use the term "value" concerning a product, the immediate tendency is to place it in the category of the economic world, that is, a value of economic significance for us, and the claim is that this is not correct at all. Goods reflect our broad world of values, our beliefs, our social, religious, gender, and political identity and they are a broad expression of who we are in the deepest sense, a product of the course of our lives, class affiliation, the education we received and the education we acquired, our experiences that turned us into who we are.

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[1] MBA, Haifa University, sharabiyossi@gmail.com

In the first section, this article will review the market of goods, its characteristics and the sources of its legitimacy, the process of interpretation and creation of the value, and the significance of the product in the eyes of the receiver.

Let us examine the development of the visual media and its influence on social processes against the background of modernization processes, technological developments, changes in habits of leisure and lifestyle, and the availability of the media to every person in every place and the influence on the interpretation and creation of the reality and "the truth" in the eyes of the receiver.

In the first section, I will review the changes that took place in the communications media as part of the changes in industrialization technologies and modernization which led to growth, diversity, and globalization of the communications media. What is the significance of these processes on the creation of "reality" in the eyes of the receiver? Furthermore, we will examine the independence of the reporters that make information accessible to the public at large and their contribution to the creation of reality in the eyes of the receiver.

In the second section, I will look at and examine the mutual relations between the media in the State of Israel and the social reality and I will claim that despite the diversity and wealth in the quantity of media means, it does not contribute to democratic and social processes but rather preserves them and reflects the existing social political positions, strengthens the truth and presents the diversity, gaps and the fixation that exists in the social positions and classes in Israel.

Symbolic Goods

The link and ties between the preferences and reasons for identity and social standing changed in the course of history and to a great extent reflect the social cultural economic and technological changes that took place throughout the world.

The world of goods can be divided into these two categories, those that are geared to a limited audience and those to the broad public.

The market of these limited goods that are geared to small and defined audiences operates with different legality than those geared to the broad public which is mainly commercial and dictated by competition and demand.

The period of patrons on art in the Middle Ages is an example of a narrow market. The aristocratic class wanted and appreciated artworks as part of the class and social identity and detached from the market of demand.

The narrow market exists also in modern society in peer groups that define the standards and rules of evaluation. This market conforms to its rules and logic. This is a community whose source of legitimacy is the standing and opinion of the members of the community.

The narrow market of goods reflects products that function as a component in the creation of a social identity. They could include also groups and organizations that are not established such as in the world of art there are circles, salons, groups around an artist and a publisher, and others who worship his creation.

However, despite being detached from the commercial market of demands, the claim is that the community members are not completely independent. The legitimacy and standing of those created in the limited market are very dependent on the academy, the critics, and even the state. The academy is not independent. The researchers and professors enjoy state support from research budgets, the institution's ongoing funding, and even the standing of recognition and prestige that the state provides them. They are not free to state their opinion without taking into account the atmosphere among the funding entities.

Hence a narrow community is still subject to external influences which it must take into account mainly where its existence depends on financial resources, recognition, and legitimacy which comes from various entities and one must take their standing and opinions into consideration.

It is not possible to compare the narrow market to the broad market. The broad market responds to the competitive market and its demands. These are products that the free market defines their value. This market is

measured by its revenues and therefore it is directed towards diverse publics and cannot be limited to the tastes of community standing or a specific public. For example, take the commercial theater of France that today operates in three configurations: foreign shows in English and French linked to the origin, successful and popular commercial shows that are shown again, and intelligent and witty comedies for the enlightened bourgeoisie. In this manner, the theater reaches a variety of audiences that ensure its economic existence, its legitimacy, and its artistic standing (Elana Abrudan).

The two characteristics of the narrow and broad product are defined as those about the relationships between them. The differences between them define them: the ideological commitment and enthusiasm for art on the one hand, and the market that operates strictly from commercial considerations on the other hand.

Demand and consumption of cultural products are an expression of the social values and identity of standing. The commercial products are fed from the high culture, either they erase it or steal from it and they are seen as inferior but provide a response to the demands of the masses. (Elena Abrudan).

Visual Culture

The processes of modernization and technological industrialization brought about significant growth and expansion of the goods market. The demands grew, the diversity of products increased and the audiences expanded.

The influence of these processes gave expression to the development of the visual culture. Visual includes all of the fields of drawing, art, photography, film, advertising, propaganda, and more. It appeals to everyone. It does not belong exclusively to the elite and museum collections but is everywhere on the computer, in newspapers, on television, and in the shopping malls. Everywhere we shop we experience the visual experience including the public spaces in parks, and street art. Art is not only in museums or in private collections.

The visual culture is part of the global processes that change rapidly from media through texts to media using images. It is made accessible through technological means and requires an interpretive effort both on the part of the individual and on the part of the collective.

Reception Theory

The reader exposed to the written or visual text interprets it and gives it a meaning that is beyond the words of the text or the picture. This theory moves the weight and attention from the creator of the text to the one reading the text and deals with the reader and not the work of the creator. The meeting between the reader, his spirit, soul, values, education, and world outlook with the text gives the text its meaning. (Karolides 2000). This meeting calls into action the reader. It would not have happened without the meeting. People give interpretations to phenomena and structures in nature, that is how the brain works. The writing or the picture can perhaps be fiction but they stimulate the reality within the reader.

According to the Reception Theory, the text is understood as a media framework. It is the dialogue between the reader and the content of the text. The intention of the creator is not part of the dialogue.

The content of the creation is the place of meeting with the reader while often what is not written or does not exist is of significance to the reader.

The significance is not detached from the text. It is created in the course of the process of reading or watching and so on, it is not creative interpretation detached from the creation (Tompkins 1988).

Advertising markets goods with meaning that corresponds with the experience of the reader. The message is emotions, and cultural values and corresponds with the expectations of the audience by their cultural experiences.

The interpretation of the reader/observer is a reflection of the systems of social relationships. The interpretation is a social practice that releases the reader from the interpretation forced on him by the author/creator. (Jensen 1987).

The social perceptions exist with the reader before he comes across the creation and the significance that he gives to the creation is the dialogue that his perceptions carry out as the result of the meeting with the creation. The experiences of the reader in his life are reflected in the meaning that he gives the creation. That is the reason that different people and different communities will give different meanings and different interpretations to the same text.

The picture of reality is reflected through the brain of the reader while he reads the written text but mainly the visual. Social sciences deal with this greatly. One of the approaches is the "constructivism" theory (in the world of study the theory emphasizes the part of the student in the creation and acquisition of knowledge and it encourages active study and learning while doing so).

Reality is the structure that a person builds to absorb the knowledge that has already passed through the process of filtering by the mass media (not a very authentic process as the media filters information, makes it accessible as appropriate for them according to their worldviews and after that also the reader interprets it according to his worldview and the result is an interpretation of reality that is not authentic). The only reality that is authentic from our point of view is the one that he creates. Only when speaking of incidents in which the reader is not emotionally involved, such as international events, the reality is received from the reports of the mass media, with the commentary of the mass media.

The significance is the meeting between consciousness and the information that is received from the mass media (or from the written or the visual). It is derived from the system of relationships that a person has with the various groups to which he turns, belongs, or identifies.

The fact that in the visual arts, many details are missing requires and invites the reader to complete details and provide his interpretation and significance. That forces the user to have psychological and cognitive involvement.

There is no doubt that the social situation influences how a person gives meaning to written or visual media. The accessible technology expanded and strengthened the visual media through the computer, television, and more.

The ability to analyze visual media requires complex abilities and knowledge. John Fiske thinks that one must understand the codes that would enable an analysis of a visual text at three levels: Reality, representation (how it is represented that is understanding the technology), and ideology. The interpretation that the readers/observers give the same creation is so varied that it is necessary to also understand the intention of the creator. In the opinion of Kert Freedman, the interpretation of the creation is dependent on who you are and what your identity is more than what you know that you know. Therefore in the post-modern period, the emphasis is on the identity of the person who is commenting and less on the creator and that significantly broadens the different commentaries and they are varied as the number of readers receivers without relation to the intention of the creator and from here we find that in the post-modern period with the broad variety of interpretations, the truth is complex, and that is the reason that it requires knowledge for the reader to provide some commentary of value and to understand the technology, the social basis and to compare this to other commentaries.

Kerry Freedman claims that the visual media influences man and society and has a value for democratic society. It contributes to the creation of a cultural identity and enriches man spiritually.

The British researcher Ian Heywood thinks that the interpretation that the receiver gives is an expression of democracy as each person gives his opinion through the commentary he gives to the creation.

The fact that it is easy for people to respond to and interpret visual texts has expanded their use and we find them in our daily lives, it is part of our lives everywhere and they empower their social influence.

The process that the receiver goes through is called semiotics, a process of interpretation, marking, and giving it meaning. The media messages pass through using "codes" and the receiver/absorber must identify the "codes".

The codes define what is yes and what is no for example the definition of "tasty" is accompanied by the definition of what is "not tasty".

Charles Peirce defines the process of building the meaning such that it includes three stages: marking, interpretation, and concept. The process of interpretation according to Peirce is personal and individual.

Marking according to Peirce may be a visual matter and may be symbolic. For one picture there may be several symbolic meanings, for example, the Menorah for one person might be the symbol of the Israeli Knesset (Israel's Parliament), for another it might be the popular football team Beitar Yerushalayim and with a third, it might be the Jewish holiday of Chanukah.

Saussure suggests similar ties between the signifier and the signified, that is between the one who marks and the object marked.

The linkage is done by the marking based on the social and cultural experiences that he comes from. The receiver does his interpretation based on his personal experience.

The "chain reaction" is a dynamic matter, it could be an association of anything, for example, Donald Trump – President of the United States – the land of dreams – to be rich, etc."

Every stage may lead to another association which would create a different chain reaction of associations.

According to Peirce, this is an internal process with a person coming from his internal world and the cultural and social experiences he comes from. This is the process of abduction, which is a process of concluding that takes place with the receiver which includes a certain hypothesis as a possible explanation of the facts that do not have a previous explanation.

This process is very appropriate for commentary about abstract or visual things and is different from processes that have logical analogies.

From the discussion and presentation of things one can claim that man is a creature that operates from an internal world with his transformative study processes, that are based on his experience, his consciousness, his life experience, his standing, and social attachment, and does not lean on an informative study that is on objective knowledge which reaches him from the various media (I will return to this further on). The reality is that which he creates, the truth is subjective and changes from one receiver to another.

Symbolic Goods and Social Status

Various cultural goods are identified with different social classes, different tastes, and different lifestyles. Wealth and higher education are associated with the upper class and high culture. Poor culture is fed by popular culture which is created by cultural entities for profit.

According to Bourdieu, the poor class does not experience culture as the upper class does. Their experience in museums is completely different. He claims that the upper class determines the standard and the cultural tastes of the entire population and to a certain extent that is the only culture that is considered legitimate. On the other hand, the lower class enjoys popular entertainment, a culture that is geared to help them forget the daily difficulties and worries of existence. This culture is a means while the upper-class culture has an inherent value of "culture for culture" (Bourdieu 1984).

Gans claims that modern culture is characterized by sub-groups with public tastes that are chosen from a variety of options according to their world values and their education (Gans 1974).

In the second half of the twentieth century, changes began in the understanding of the social identity of a person that influences his interpretation of visual texts.

Lewis (1980) claimed, as did other sociologists, that cultural taste and social class are no longer linked to each other. According to him, cultural tastes change throughout life as part of the course of life and do not belong to a social class. The limitation of social class no longer exists, lifestyle is the basis for social changes that a man undergoes in the course of life. The person's class in an industrial society is determined among others according to his job and that is his identity it develops throughout his life and dictates his lifestyle.

Bell (1976) with the change in lifestyle and development of a variety of leisure activities, identity is related to these habits. Material matters became even more significant.

Leiss, Kline (1986) – in the world of lifestyle the public chooses goods for purchase as a means that ties them to the value and symbol they identify with.

Mitchell (1983) claims that for every lifestyle the world presents values, beliefs, needs, dreams, and different outlooks.

Different researchers analyzed nearly forty different lifestyles. Also, the media defines its target audience in terms of lifestyle and not social class.

Culture and Media Industry Changes

These processes take place parallel to dramatic and ongoing changes in the mass media market which influences the way the visual and digital media develop and the influence it has on the messages and interpretation of media information that comes to the public in enormous scopes in the world of advancing technology and an overflow of knowledge.

The changes in the culture industry began in the nineteenth century (Penny Press) 1910 the Hollywood studios were established 1920 growth in radio and television developed like a photographed radio, and in the twentieth century, it included universities, and corporate media schools. Big Five included the radio, television, newspapers, films, and magazines and they determined the public dialogue.

The Frankfurt School claimed that the processes of establishing the media world reflect the variety of voices and opinions being heard. Following the roots of the phenomena leads to the British media corporation that Lord Northcliffe established, and to the popular American journalism established by Pulitzer. For Frankfurt, the media's conduct and power is power that corrupts the public.

Giant media corporations were constructed and began to raise money from the public creating a reality of a relatively few giant corporations that control a huge variety of media and are accessible to different countries and the entire world.

In the second half of the twentieth century communication tycoons recruited their communicative strength to create political strength such as Berlusconi in Italy.

On the other hand, the empire of Rupert Murdoch is an example of the success of a man who built a professional empire managed by professionals without political interests but rather communication and economic matters managed well and gave a place and expression for diversity in both audiences and opinions. His empire included many channels that appealed to different groups with different ideas and habits and reflected well the lifestyle changes.

The technology and the internet expanded the ability of vast and varied information to reach all audiences and quality and diversity of information became available to all.

Journalist Autonomy

So how do these powerful media tools function, how do they make decisions, how are they independent, and what is the influence of their operation on the interpretation and means given by the receiver to the information that flows to him from the media?

The claim is that every news site has its preferences and its journalists serve these preferences. The newsroom serves an organization that is larger than it and is part of it, whether private or public. They are not autonomous in making their decisions.

The head organization ensures the appointment of management that would guarantee the realization of the policy and agenda of the organization. They do this through policies of funding and employment. The gatekeepers prefer to budget activities that support the agenda of the head organization. Therefore the decisions for funding and decisions of employment influence the journalistic dialogue that the channel promotes. Therefore this is not only the decision of the editing room and the editors of the channel.

In addition, there are also considerations of deadline and commercial considerations of the advertising and notices department since there are audiences that are not attracted to advertising and are not the clear target audience of the advertisers, an audience that is not a significant consumer

like the working class (Murdock 1978) or the blacks in South Africa (1984 Louw) and they do not receive expression or representation of their positions.

The newspapers are flooded with information and they decide what they want to bring to the attention of the public. The journalists are the gatekeepers as they can give information to the public if they wish to and they can block information from the public if they wish. The journalists become those who set the agenda and so they do something that has social implications (1991 Neumann – Noelle).

Tuchman (1978) claims that journalists create reality and do not expose existing reality. This is like a wall in that the journalists open an opening that presents partial information out of a panoramic picture that is hidden behind the wall, a window of information that they expose reflects their choice regarding what information they prefer to publish. Therefore, making news is the news that is chosen by the journalists and presents a partial picture of reality. That is the routine of employment of a journalist that is taught by everyone before you enter the profession. Everyone must ask the same questions (the five W), excellent methodology to get to the source of the matter but not appropriate for the complex issues. Journalists learn to tell the main part of the story in the opening, otherwise, their information will be edited.

The television brings speakers that can summarize an issue. Public relations personnel write notices to newspapers according to the formula knowing that this is the way to enter the media and put in the information that will serve their employers.

Journalists use contacts regularly to get information for quoting. The contacts need the journalists to promote their profile in public to advance their careers. Every politician develops relationships with journalists. The contacts are a small part of the population but they are the ones who create the picture of the journalistic situation that is presented to the public at large. The use of information sources limits the window of information that is presented to the public, information that is given preference to the elite public that the contacts are among them. So journalism becomes sympathetic to the certain public that presents interests of its own.

Processes of decision-making during editing include the decision of what to publish. Where? What size? These are determined by the hierarchical structure of the editorial board, therefore those who know the process and the people who determine can influence the information given to the public. Public relations people use this well in the manner that the information that is published will benefit their clients.

State of Israel

The State of Israel is a nation of immigrants whose population grew from its establishment in 1948 from 600 thousand residents to over 9 million today.

The growth is mainly thanks to the large waves of immigration of Jews from all over the world, from tens of different countries. Jews who brought with them the local culture of their land of origin find the lifestyle, culture, and language are very different from one country to another. Many Jews came from Arab countries, from Europe after the Second World War, from South America, North America, and the Soviet Union in several waves of immigration the largest was at the beginning of the 90's after the collapse of walls which brought more than a million immigrants to Israel. There were also immigrations from Ethiopia and the various countries in Africa.

Israel was established as a Jewish and democratic State as the founders of the State announced in the Declaration of Independence which reflects the spirit of the young country, its values, and its vision. However, the population of the State has very different social characteristics, different classes, and social gaps that are expressed in education, jobs, places of residence, social and political standing, in positions regarding religion and state. It is a State with high social solidarity as a result of the shared fate that led to the establishment of the Jewish State but with tremendous social tensions and serious disputes regarding religion, state, and security.

The Israeli parliamentary regime reflects well the ethnic social diversity and the differences and multiple opinions. Tens of parties strive for membership in the Parliament creating unstable governments with many parties serving in the Parliament even after the blocking percentage was raised and elections are held on average every two years.

Every community and sector has its cultural roots, its educational institutions that maintain the positions of the public through the heads of the system, whether these are rabbis of the religious systems, professors in the academy, or journalists recruited by opinion leaders who influence the public. Each public is wrapped in diverse sources of legitimacy which preserve the sectorial interpretation and prevent reality as reflected in the eyes of the public in all core issues of their existence as a sector.

Israel is a democratic country with all that relates to the enormous diversity of media working in it. Logic and diversity are to a large extent an expression of the richness of opinions of communities and sectors that live in its midst.

In terms of a society that has so many tools of expression, Israel is a democracy at its best. On the other hand, in terms of free authentic real journalism that expresses reality at its best, there is room for discussion and examination and the answer is complex.

Israel has a large Ultra-Orthodox community with various groups, Ashkenazi, Sepharadi, and Chassidim each with their own *Admor* (Chassidic religious leader) and Council of Torah Wise Elders. There is certainly no democracy there. The media reflects the position of the rabbis and the admiral. Members of the Parliament (*Knesset*) are chosen and/or authorized by the rabbis and are their representatives in the Parliament. A member of the Parliament who expresses an independent position contrary to the position of the rabbis, or a journalist who contradicts the rabbi will find himself pushed away and an outcast as has happened many times. There is only one truth and one reality and it is the one that the religious leader dictates.

Israel has a large Arab population with language, culture, customs, and lifestyle that are unique to it. It differs from the Jewish population on the basic question of existence. Their lifestyle is conservative and the internal dialogue that they carry out through the media in the Arab language ensures to strengthen the Arab identity and its basic positions. There is no room for an independent position that does not reflect the Arab Palestinian narrative. To the extent that such exists, it has no place in Arab society.

The Israeli right-wing religious public that are settlers in Judah and Samaria, enclosed themselves over the years with a system of education and media that preserve the traditional ideas and positions of the public.

From a young age, the children are sent to religious schools where they learn in religious frameworks to obey the rabbis and adhere to the basic values of the public that they belong to. Religious journalism that represents the public is very common and the most popular are the journalists who were raised in a religious nationalistic education and maintain in their writings those positions and ideas. They paint events with the colors of reality that they see and the interpretation accompanying events as it is reflected in their eyes. The newspaper "Makor Rishon" expresses the position of this public and its editor, Chagai Segal, is a resident of the settlement of Ofra which was settled in the past by the members of the Jewish Underground and his son, Amit Segal, is the right-wing commentator of the central news channel in commercial television. Both journalists are appreciated but with a clear agenda that they do not hide.

Also, the secular left has a system of media that supports journalists with clear right-wing positions that support Prime Minister Netanyahu. The freebie "Israel Today" was established by the Jewish American billionaire Sheldon Edelson to give a platform to the positions of the right-wing public in Israel and it is spread for free in every place to reach every possible place.

On the other hand, the old newspaper "Haaretz" gives a platform to journalists who are on the left side of the political map. They are great criticizers of the Prime Minister and reflect the positions of the newspaper's publishers, the Schoken family.

Many internet channels reflect clear positions that support these sectors and others in Israel. Many television channels and three leading media systems broadcast at the same time every evening. Two of them are commercial television channels and one is a public corporation channel funded by the State. These channels that appeal to the broad public try to capture the viewers and therefore their panels include persons with opinions from all sides to enable the public to hear their position through their speakers.

The media reality is such that the public is flooded with news information from various places. It chooses the information that matches the positions and the reality in which it lives. It chooses who to listen to and who to believe. There is no one truth in media but rather there is one truth that he believes in and one reality in which he lives.

This complex reality creates a political stalemate because the public fortifies itself in its positions with the system of education and the media backing it that strengthen the legitimacy of its positions and the truth and reality in which it lives. Is this democracy at its best? Doesn't the fact that the media is a collection of opinion leaders with agenda and reality in which there is not one agreed-upon fact in essential issues show us the crisis in which we live?

My claim is that the development of the media dramatically influences society's dialogue, contributes to the deepening of rifts, raises the level of alienation fuels social tensions, and empowers them and so it threatens the democratic existence. There is not enough autonomous journalism, there is journalism that promotes an agenda.

The development of technology provides the ability of every person who holds a smartphone to send his position out into the void without filtering, inhibitions, or rules of ethics. The fact that journalists are recruited to maintain the religious and political sector on the side of the funding entities who write their agendas, raises doubt regarding the function of journalism as a keeper of democracy. There is indeed complete freedom of speech. A person says what he has in his heart but as the review shows us, what he has in his heart is his unique reality, what he interprets as a result of his education. Objective journalism has almost disappeared completely from the world.

In Israel, there are many opinions on different matters and the disputes are enormous. To prevent heated arguments we usually quote a sentence from the book of Havakook (Havakook b, d), "A righteous man lives in his faith". In other words, I will not succeed in convincing you so you might as well maintain your position and I will keep mine.

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An ethical analysis of media's usage of Artificial Intelligence. A case-study on Associated Press

Ana-Iuliana ŞTEFĂNEL[1]

ABSTRACT. This article provides a theoretical examination of the utilization of artificial intelligence (AI) by the Associated Press (AP), focusing on the ethical considerations inherent in its AI practices. With a historical legacy spanning 170 years, AP has evolved into a global news agency that embraces AI across various facets of its operations. The study explores AP's integration of AI in areas such as content generation, data journalism, language translation, and audience engagement, emphasizing the ethical dimensions of these applications.

The ethical framework employed by AP is scrutinized through an analysis of its coverage depth, content quality, and transparency. The study also delves into the ethical implications of AP's automatic content generation processes, which leverage AI algorithms for expeditious news production. Emphasizing the symbiotic relationship between AI and journalism, the research contemplates how technology can augment human capacities while necessitating vigilance against potential biases and misinformation.

Furthermore, the study scrutinizes how AP navigates ethical challenges in language translation, audience engagement, and market analysis through AI. The agency's use of AI to enhance multimedia elements, personalize content, and forecast audience interests prompts an exploration of the ethical implications of tailoring information to individual preferences. By examining the agency's multifaceted use of AI, the study contributes valuable insights into the evolving relationship between journalism, technology, and ethical responsibility.

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[1] PhD Candidate, Faculty of Political, Administrative, and Communication Sciences, Babeş-Bolyai University of Cluj-Napoca, ana.stefanel@fspac.ro

Ultimately, it underscores the imperative for news organizations to adopt principled approaches to AI integration, ensuring that advancements in technology align with ethical journalism practices.

Keywords: AI, media ethics, Associated Press

Ethics of Mass Media in the Era of Artificial Intelligence

Ethics in mass media plays a fundamental role in establishing quality standards and ensuring journalists practice their profession in accordance with these standards. Self-regulation systems aim to assist journalists in serving the public interest, forming a professional community based on solidarity, gaining public trust, and resisting political and economic pressures.[2]

This chapter aims to explain the concepts of ethics in mass media in the digital era, specifically identifying solutions that align with current needs, including those of the audience, journalists, and media institutions. The chapter is divided into two main sections to elucidate the role and functions of mass media, exploring the characteristics of ethics in traditional and contemporary mass media influenced by artificial intelligence.

As artificial intelligence systems find broader applications, ethical concerns grow regarding whether, how, and to what extent these systems should be subject to regulations. The complexity, unpredictability, and autonomy in decision-making and learning characterize artificial intelligence, posing challenges to conventional notions of legal responsibility and accountability.

The emergence of AI systems operating independently, with adaptive learning capabilities, represents a profound shift in the fundamental principles of law. This transformation is significant across various fields where AI applications are increasingly prevalent, extending beyond mass media.

Concerns related to the incorporation of artificial intelligence in newsrooms are multifaceted, extending beyond news production. Skepticism

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[2] Bertrand, J., "Media Accountability Systems". 2003, pg. 3.

arises due to the complexity of intelligent agents and the numerous applications of AI in mass media. As intelligent tools may potentially erode ethical principles and core values of journalism, debates on these issues ensue. Some argue that intelligent tools could undermine ethical principles and journalistic values, while others emphasize the need for a balance between business perspectives (profitability) and human perspectives (social and perceptual)[3].

I believe both theories are valid, provided they coexist. In cases where legitimate concerns arise about the intrusive impact of artificial intelligence on journalism (affecting core values and ethical principles), a balance between profitability and human perspective is necessary. This implies a continuous pursuit of ethical principles while addressing the current needs of both the audience and media professionals. Therefore, adapting journalistic values and ethical principles to the current context, where artificial intelligence is pervasive, becomes essential.

Continuing this chapter, I aim to present various perspectives[4] on the adoption of artificial intelligence in media newsrooms, attitudes towards technological evolution, and its impact on the press.

It is undeniable that artificial intelligence presence in journalism is steadily increasing. However, the media industry's reliance on truth and trust remains crucial, even in a highly digitized world, necessitating the urgent establishment of ethical boundaries and rules.

One common argument against artificial intelligence is the lack of transparency in its operations: data collection automation, data processing, textual analysis for fact-checking, and labeling articles. Given these clear concerns, some experts suggest that ethics in artificial intelligence in the media industry should be segmented accordingly. Regulations should cover the ethical aspects of data collection, content generation, distribution of materials, and information analysis. This approach seems relevant given the complexity of the phenomenon, as a universal regulation for each element would be

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[3] Noain-Sánchez, A. (2022). „Addressing the impact of artificial intelligence on journalism: The perception of experts, journalists and academics". Communication & Society, 35(3), 105-121, pg. 2. doi: https://doi.org/10.15581/003.35.3.105-121.

[4] ibidem

challenging. Additionally, there is a suggestion to create an individual code of ethics for each journalistic genre, considering the impact of artificial intelligence in various phases of the media industry.

In fact, the purpose of ethics in journalism is to assure both media organizations and the public that information exchange aligns with democratic values, integrity, accuracy, and fairness. The Society of Professional Journalists identifies four ethical principles underlying ethical journalism:

- Seeking the truth and reporting it.
- Minimizing harm caused by the publication of information.
- Acting independently to serve the public interest.
- Being accountable and transparent.

A report from the Finnish Media Council, part of the Media Councils in the Digital Age project co-funded by the European Commission, aims to contextualize journalistic norms, considering historical and cultural specificities. It explores how European media councils update and apply existing standards, identifying values aligned with the digital era. One highlighted issue is the labeling of sponsored editorial content or AI-generated content. While labeling sponsored content is not a new challenge, addressing the transparent categorization of press materials created with AI assistance requires innovative solutions.

Ethical codes for journalism serve as the framework for the profession, guiding journalistic behavior. However, the landscape of media is evolving, posing challenges to media councils to maintain clear and stable principles while adapting to new realities. The study suggests a trend toward a more general ethical code rather than a specific one for AI, emphasizing that a general code with minimal details effectively requires journalists to interpret the code, fostering adherence to its spirit and individual principles.

Considering the evolving media landscape and the constant changes in political, social, economic, and cultural contexts, it is essential to continuously update ethical codes to address new responsibilities. While a lengthy or convoluted ethical code may not be the solution, it should include norms serving as a guide for journalists practicing in a world where artificial intelligence coexists with familiar traditional methods.

The European Parliament has drafted numerous documents identifying legal implications and ethical concerns surrounding the use of artificial intelligence. When AI is employed to monitor or predict human behavior, it risks reinforcing negative stereotypes, fostering social and cultural divisions, and perpetuating exclusion. Additionally, it may undermine individual decision-making and equality of opportunities, presenting potential hazards to fundamental rights such as the right to life, fair trial, privacy, freedom of expression, and workers' rights.

Significant ethical, psychological, and legal questions surround the autonomy of intelligent robots and their effects on the doctor-patient relationship, especially in healthcare applications. These issues involve the protection of patients' personal data, concerns about responsibility, and the emergence of new economic and labor dynamics. Within the EU, these matters have not yet received comprehensive attention, highlighting the imminent need for an ethical code regarding AI usage to provide guidance for the responsible use of intelligent tools.

To address these complex ethical considerations, there is an urgent need for a robust and effective ethical framework guiding the development, design, production, and use of algorithms. This framework should complement existing national and EU regulations, prioritizing principles and values enshrined in the Charter of Fundamental Rights. It should reflect fundamental principles of EU law, including non-stigmatization, transparency, autonomy.

Ethical considerations: Associated Press

Associated Press was one of the first media institutions to integrate artificial intelligence and automation. Currently, AP uses machine learning in key areas: collecting, producing, and distributing news. AP has been using intelligent tools since 2014 when the Business News office began automating stories about corporate earnings.

"Associated Press was one of the first news organizations to use artificial intelligence and automation to strengthen its basic news report. Today, we use machine learning in key points of our value chain, including data collection, news production, and distribution," is the message displayed on the Associated Press website regarding the use of AI.

Next, I will mention the areas of activity where Associated Press uses artificial intelligence.

- Coverage and Expertise:

AP is a news agency with a 170-year history, founded in 1846. Currently, it delivers 2,000 articles per day, 70,000 video materials per year, and 1 million photos per year. The agency operates in 250 locations in 100 countries worldwide.

- Depth and Breadth of Topics Covered:

AP delivers news in politics, sports, culture, business, science, climate, health, education, technology, lifestyle, religion, and entertainment. Since its establishment, AP has covered complex subjects, including investigative journalism or war journalism, reporting from conflict zones. AI is used to report on sports events from lower leagues or to generate business reports.

- Content Quality:

Accuracy and Reliability of Information: AP has integrated tools, publicly disclosed on its official website, to provide information about content. It uses bylines and datelines to inform the reader about the source of the data (dateline) and the author of the news (byline).

Editorial Standards and Information Verification Procedures: AP does not use non-original content (in terms of language and formulation). If information appears elsewhere for the first time, this is mentioned. The work of others is always cited.

Fact-Checking: AI tools assist in real-time fact-checking, making quick references to new information with existing databases, ensuring the accuracy of news reporting and reducing the risk of errors or misinformation.

- Automatic Content Generation:

AP uses AI-based algorithms to automatically generate news on subjects such as corporate earnings reports and certain sports events. These algorithms can process data and produce articles within seconds, significantly speeding up the news production process for routine events.

● Data Journalism:

AP leverages AI for data analysis and data-driven journalism. AI algorithms help analyze large datasets, identifying trends and patterns that may not be immediately apparent to journalists. This is particularly valuable for investigative reports and complex data-based narratives.

● Content Enrichment:

AP uses AI to enrich news content with multimedia elements. Automated processes can add relevant images, videos, and infographics to news articles, enhancing visual appeal and interactivity.

● Language Translation:

AI-based translation tools help AP provide news content in multiple languages, allowing a broader audience to access information.

● News Monitoring and Alerts:

AP uses AI algorithms to monitor news sources and social networks in real-time. This enables the detection of events and breaking news as they happen, ensuring timely coverage of important stories.

● Audience Engagement:

AI-based personalization and recommendation algorithms help AP adapt news content to individual reader preferences, leading to increased audience engagement on digital platforms.

● Content Distribution:

AP uses AI for optimizing the distribution of news content across various platforms and channels, including social networks, mobile apps, and websites. AI assists in spreading relevant content to specific audience segments.

● Interaction with Virtual Assistants and Chatbots:

AI-based chatbots and virtual assistants on the AP website provide users with instant answers to questions and help them navigate content more easily, improving the user experience.

- Predictive Analysis:

AP uses artificial intelligence for predictive analysis to forecast audience interests and trends. This helps in more efficient editorial planning and content strategy.

- Market Information:

In addition to news reporting, AP uses artificial intelligence to analyze financial data and market trends, providing insights and reports on economic developments.

- Transcription Services:

Speech recognition and AI-based transcription services help efficiently convert spoken words, such as interviews or press conferences, into written text. This streamlines the work of journalists and significantly reduces the time it takes for information to reach newsrooms and then the wider public.

- Transparency:

Associated Press frequently provides access to webinars and articles intended to show how the agency integrates artificial intelligence into data collection, news creation, and distribution processes.

Moreover, Associated Press has published a guide with the title *The Associated Press Statement of News Values and Principles*[5]. The ethical importance of The Associated Press publishing a comprehensive 27-page guide on News Values and Principles lies in the organization's commitment to transparency, accountability, and upholding journalistic integrity. Although this guide doesn't contain a specific chapter for the use of Artificial Intelligence, there are many phrases regarding the topic, especially on the subject regarding altering information of any kind.

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[5] Associated Press. https://www.ap.org/about/news-values-and-principles/downloads/ap-news-values-and-principles.pdf.

Conclusions

In conclusion, this article provides a theoretical examination of how The Associated Press strategically employs artificial intelligence across various facets of its news production process, emphasizing an ethical perspective. The article delves into AP's use of AI, shedding light on its contributions to content generation, data analysis, multimedia enhancement, audience engagement, and predictive analytics. From the extensive integration of AI in newsrooms to its impact on journalistic workflows, AP stands as a pioneering force in embracing technological advancements while upholding ethical considerations.

The ethical dimension is accentuated through AP's commitment to transparency, exemplified by the publication of a detailed guide encompassing News Values and Principles. This commitment not only fortifies the organization's accountability but also serves as a valuable educational resource for journalists, fostering ethical decision-making in the realm of AI-driven news reporting. The ethical importance of AP's AI integration is underscored by its efforts to maintain accuracy, reliability, and adherence to journalistic standards. From fact-checking with AI tools to utilizing machine learning for real-time verification, AP leverages technology to fortify the veracity of news content. The organization's use of AI in enhancing multimedia elements, language translation, and predictive analysis not only streamlines news dissemination but also elevates the overall user experience, reflecting a dedication to audience engagement.

While AI expedites routine news reporting, journalists play an irreplaceable role in complex analyses, investigative journalism, and ensuring nuanced perspectives. The ethical use of AI, as exemplified by AP, involves a delicate balance between automation and human expertise, acknowledging the strengths of each in the pursuit of journalistic excellence.

In navigating the evolving landscape of AI in journalism, AP emerges as a trailblazer in adopting innovative technologies while upholding the core tenets of journalistic ethics. The article not only underscores the ethical importance of AI integration but also provides insights into the evolving dynamics of news production in the digital age. As media organizations

continue to grapple with the ethical implications of AI, the case of The Associated Press serves as a compelling model for responsibly harnessing technology to amplify journalistic impact while maintaining ethical standards.

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