



# FENOMÉN 2020: Komunita v mediálnom priestore

Anna Sámelová – Mária Stanková – Ján Hacek (Eds.)



UNIVERZITA KOMENSKÉHO V BRATISLAVE  
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### **Abstrakt:**

*Globálny náhľad na komunitu v mediálnom priestore.* V príspevku sa na predstavu komunity v mediálnom priestore pozrieme z pohľadu tzv. globálnej žurnalistiky. Tento novinársky štýl má potenciál priniesť epistemologický posun v porozumení a reflexii diania okolo nás, keď nás nabáda spájať zdanlivo nesúvisiace príbehy z rôznych kontinentov do jedného uceleného globálneho príbehu. Mení globálne na lokálne a z množstva komunit po celom svete robí – v prípade potreby – jednu globálnu komunitu. Prinajmenšom vo verejnom diskurze je predstava komunity čoby spoločenstva ľudí s určitými spoločnými záujmami, spôsobom života či životným priestorom, späť skôr s menšími než väčšími sociálnymi skupinami. No globálne výzvy, ktoré stoja pred nami (ako novinármi, ale aj ako ľuďmi, obyvateľmi planéty vo všeobecnosti), vytvárajú potrebu vnímať planétu ako celok. Pri témach ako sú migrácia či zmena klímy, je tak nutné v našich myšliach predefinovať pojem komunita tak, aby sme dokázali reflektovať čo najucelenejší a najpresnejší obraz reality okolo nás.

**Kľúčové slová:** globálna žurnalistika, globalizácia, globálny náhľad, globálna komunita, epistemológia

### **Abstract:**

I would like to look at our notion of community in media through the lens of so called global journalism. This journalism style has a potential to bring an epistemological shift into understanding and reflection of the world around us by its effort to connect seemingly unrelated stories from different continents into a single coherent story. It changes global to local, and—if needed—creates one global community out of many smaller ones. The picture of a community as a group of people with certain common interests, way of life or space of living, is, at least in public discourse, linked to smaller rather than larger social groups. However, global challenges we face (we as journalists as well as we as humans and terrestrials) generate the need to view the world as one single whole. In some cases such as migration or climate change is therefore essential to redefine the concept of community in a way we could reflect as holistic and accurate picture of the reality as possible.

**Keywords:** global journalism, globalisation, the global outlook, global community, epistemology

## Introduction

“*the others*”

*The shock of recognition! In an electric information environment, minority groups can no longer be contained – ignored. Too many people know too much about each other. Our new environment compels commitment and participation. We have become irrevocably involved with, and responsible for, each other.*”

Marshall McLuhan and Quentin Fiore, *The Medium is the Massage*<sup>1</sup>

Marshall McLuhan coined the influential term global village<sup>2</sup> back in the 1960s. Since then, global society has changed even more than this Canadian media theorist could have imagined: today there is no question about whether we should report ‘on’ the global village, but rather how we can effectively report ‘from’ the global village. Given the increasing number of global challenges and megatrends as well as a shift to a globalized order, with changing roles for borders and nation states, there is an increasing need to perceive and reflect the global community as a whole. Due to globalisation we now find ourselves in much closer contact with peoples and countries on the other side of the world. Despite the fact that globalization is virtually everywhere—in fact, it is almost impossible to hide from—in many, journalists included, still see it as something rather abstract. We cannot see the wood for the trees.

Global journalism, with a global outlook, could help make the globalization process more concrete, making the interconnections created by globalization more visible and tangible for audiences through a new lens. This up-to-date approach, building on the existing but separate strengths of the best domestic and foreign journalism, could support the development of more diverse and accurate content that reflects the realities of today. At the same time, it could open a question of global multi-society contract journalists should have with the society, instead of social contract concluded with just particular public or community. We should become transnational communicators “who seeks the trust and credence of global audience”<sup>3</sup>, i.e. of global community.

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<sup>1</sup> McLUHAN, Marshall – FIORE, Quentin: *The Medium is the Massage*. London : Penguin Books, 2016, p. 24.

<sup>2</sup> Term coined by Canadian media theorist Marshall McLuhan in the 1960s (many references, for the first time in the essay *Gutenberg Galaxy*—by McLUHAN, Eric – ZINGRONE, Frank (Eds.): *Essential McLuhan*. London : Routledge, 1997, p. 121). McLuhan even predicted the existence of the internet. His term describes the phenomenon of the entire world becoming more interconnected as the result of the propagation of media technologies. All parts of the world are being brought together by the internet and communication forms such as *Skype*, which allow us to communicate and connect with others around the globe. All those stories, messages, opinions, posts, and videos sent around the global village can, however, cause also miscommunication and misinterpretations in various cultural contexts.

<sup>3</sup> WARD, Stephen: *The Invention of Journalism Ethics: The Path to Objectivity and Beyond*. In *McGill-Queen's Studies in the Hist of Id (Book 38)*. Montreal : McGill-Queen's University Press, 2015, pp. 390-391.

This paper aims to briefly summarise the foundations of global journalism style in relation to the global community we all live in, building on both, theory and practice. On theoretical background brought by theorists such as Peter Berglez from Sweden or Stephen Ward from the United Kingdom, but also sociologists such as Ulrich Beck or Anthony Giddens in the background. And on practical experience from teaching journalists in the field during immersion visits to communities all around the world (with emphasis on communities in countries of Africa) as well as future journalists in Academia.

### What is global journalism?

Even though we live in a globalized world, media coverage often fails to reflect this. Global journalism responds to these shortcomings through an approach to reporting that explores, analyses and reflects on the relations and interconnections between people and events in different parts of the planet. All too often in the media, there is a hard distinction between 'domestic' and 'foreign' news, despite the fact that we live in an ever more globalized world. The global issues we face cannot be covered accurately from either a 'domestic' or 'foreign' perspective alone. It means that journalism "requires a major change in serving the public"<sup>4</sup>.

Stephen Ward speaks about the 'globally-minded ethics' to serve the changing world that journalism inhabits. He explains that "global journalism ethics holds that transnational principles of human rights and social justice take precedence over personal interests and national interests, when they conflict"<sup>5</sup>. Putting the global community, one global whole, to the forefront and the centre of attention. Similar assumptions seen and reflected from diverse theoretical perspectives have in the last decade and further been challenged by a number of prominent media theorists, including Peter Berglez, Simon Cottle, Shani Orgad, aforementioned Stephen Ward and many others.

While some newsrooms have a 'global news' section, this is not the same as 'global journalism'. What the latter describes is not necessarily a greater emphasis on international rather than domestic issues, but a fundamentally different approach to reporting and editorial practice when covering the same stories, founded on intercultural communication, global imagination and shift in narration. Issues such as migration, climate change, industrial pollution, tax evasion and many others simply cannot be accurately grasped and analysed through a narrow lens. Long-sighted vision cannot see local issues clearly, just as a near-sighted perspective cannot glimpse international issues. But what about a different journalistic vision, bringing together

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<sup>4</sup> WARD, Stephen: *The Invention of Journalism Ethics: The Path to Objectivity and Beyond*. In *McGill-Queen's Studies in the Hist of Id (Book 38)*. Montreal : McGill-Queen's University Press, 2015, p. 391.

<sup>5</sup> WARD, Stephen: *The Invention of Journalism Ethics: The Path to Objectivity and Beyond*. In *McGill-Queen's Studies in the Hist of Id (Book 38)*. Montreal : McGill-Queen's University Press, 2015, p. 391.

the foreign and local at the same time? This is what is meant by a global outlook in reporting. As such “global journalism is endowed with a particular epistemology, defined as the global outlook,” explains Peter Berglez<sup>6</sup>.

### Where does global journalism come from?

The need for a global approach to journalism can be understood as a long overdue reaction to the changing *status quo* of the world, its shifting power structures and the complex dynamics driving this transformation, rooted in the growing crises we face in a globalized context. Global journalism did not materialize out of the blue: the fact it has emerged just now is not an accident. Swedish media theorist Peter Berglez, having in mind variety of theorists and their works (Ulrich Beck, Nancy Fraser, Anthony Giddens, David Harvey among others), has identified two factors in its development<sup>7</sup>:

1) **The crises we face, which were once local, have suddenly become global, human condition itself has become cosmopolitan.** This is exemplified by the coverage of migration: not that long ago, this topic was considered almost exclusively a foreign issue, sometimes culminating in crises somewhere far from the EU or the so-called developed world. But recently, as the effects of these crises have been felt at our borders, it is now treated as much as a domestic as a foreign issue. In this content, a global approach to coverage is better suited to covering migration and other issues.

2) **The world is undergoing seismic geopolitical changes.** The Westphalian order, built around the sovereign-state and its associated power structures, is now giving way towards a post-Westphalian order. This changing context needs to be understood and reflected by journalists themselves.

To cope with these changes, journalism requires new skills and knowledge. Global journalism is becoming global version of local journalism, with aim to construct neighbourhood consisting of seven continents<sup>8</sup>.

### The ‘global outlook’: a shift in the perception of reality

You certainly know the feeling of discovering a new city you have just moved to. At first, you get to know the immediate surroundings, street by street, a shop here, good coffee there, delicious pasta around the corner. In short, you get a ‘domestic’ outlook. At the same time, you commute to your new office in another part of the city, and take your family to stroll around some of the highlights in the old quarter—you go back and forth, crossing white spaces on the map, without even leaving the subway. This is closer to a ‘foreign’ outlook, focusing on remote places without a clear connection with your local neighborhood. You continue with both, and suddenly, in one moment, everything changes. All of a sudden you realize that previously far away

<sup>6</sup> BERGLEZ, Peter: What is global journalism? In *Journalism studies*, 2008, Vol. 9, No 6, p. 847.

<sup>7</sup> BERGLEZ, Peter: *Global Journalism. Theory and Practice*. New York : Peter Lang Publishing, 2013, pp. 52-53.

<sup>8</sup> BERGLEZ, Peter: *Global Journalism. Theory and Practice*. New York : Peter Lang Publishing, 2013, p. 36.



streets are actually much closer than you have previously imagined. You find out there is a hidden shortcut between the grocery, your flat and your favourite bookshop, which you previously assumed was much further away than it actually was. You realize that walking just a hundred meters around the corner will get you to the bus-stop from where you can get to your work much faster and explore the surrounding on the way. And surprise, surprise the beautiful park you took a long metro ride with your family to visit is actually in walking distance from your flat, if you are willing to go through a rundown industrial zone. Suddenly you can see how the city's parts are related to each other, and find interconnections where you did not expect to find them. Your outlook becomes global: the 'domestic' and 'foreign' have now come together.

This metaphor illustrates the epistemic and cognitive shift journalists encounter when they adopt a global outlook to their reporting. Previously unseen interconnections and relations suddenly appear from places and stories they did not previously even think about connecting. In this way global journalism, with its global outlook, widens the understanding of the world and our role in it. It broadens the (imaginable) boundaries of our understanding of the world, of contexts and relations, and moves it to a new level, changing it from a dichotomy between a domestic versus foreign outlook to a relations-based global outlook. At the same time, it brings new ways of interpreting and arranging the reality, focusing on global interconnections and relations rather than on events, with the aid of a global imagination<sup>9</sup>.

It is, however, not that easy. It requires journalists and editors to develop a new skill set. For a start, it means admitting the very existence of global interconnections and our own role in these developments something many people are surprisingly reluctant to do. Similarly, switching from the fragmented viewpoint of the 'foreign' outlook to the unified reality of the 'global' outlook can be more difficult than it might seem. Berglez explains that the global outlook is not built on technology. Just because we can broadcast from other parts of the planet does not mean we do global journalism. Global outlook is more about a particular kind of knowledge, and it rests on an epistemological foundation. It evolves from "his or her mode of explanation, the angle chosen, the selection of sources (Reese, 2007), the mixture of verbal comments, or the choice of background material."<sup>10</sup>

There were, of course, global events and issues covered widely by media around the globe, Central European media including. So-called migration crisis in the EU or

<sup>9</sup> Imagination as such refers to the capacity of our minds to form images and concepts of something that is absent. According to Shani Orgad (ORGAD, Shani: *Media representations and the Global Imagination*. Cambridge : Polity Press, 2012) global imagination is then the ability to at first reflect on the existence of diverse, interconnected and interrelated social, political, economic, ecological, cultural, and other contexts and power structures. In the second row, it enables us to fill in the gaps. Understand and/or anticipate unknown parts of the stories and relations, understand and/or anticipate how those contexts and structures interact and influence each other and relations between them. To have a global imagination, a person must be able to pull away from the situation and own context and think from an alternative point of view, especially when covering culturally and/or geographically distant contexts.

<sup>10</sup> BERGLEZ, Peter: What is global journalism? In *Journalism Studies*, 2008, Vol. 9, No 6, p. 847.

COVID-19 crisis happening just at the moment of writing of this paper, could be the examples. Even though it proves that global issues are not ignored by the media, it does not necessarily mean they are seen and reflected through a global outlook. It actually happens that also global events are primarily covered within “domestic vs foreign news” logic<sup>11</sup>. Journalists lack the global imagination, and their routine needs an epistemological shift from what Stephen Ward calls parochial-minded ethics, to globally-minded ethics. Journalists should become transnational communicators “who seeks the trust and credence of global audience”, and who have not their social contract concluded just with a particular public or society. Instead they have concluded something much more diffuse a multi-society contract<sup>12</sup> with global community.

This cognitive shift pushes us out of our comfort zone, beyond the borders of the established worldview we were raised and socialized in (be it display of hegemony<sup>13</sup> in journalism). Our deep reluctance to alter our accepted version of reality can mean that even when we accept something is true on one level, our minds will still resist it (a situation known as cognitive dissonance). It could also be related to something what Ward finds between parochial journalism ethics and global journalism ethics, domestic vs. foreign news logic, which tend to favour journalist’s own country, irrespectively of actual cases<sup>14</sup>. This can become especially problematic when trying to cover complex global issues, for instance, climate justice or processes related to global migration.

## **Intercultural communication skills**

Another set of skills that global journalism requires is intercultural communication. If we are trying to connect different cultural and geographical contexts, intercultural communication is therefore a must. Otherwise, we may end up, even unconsciously, projecting our own norms on different contexts, i.e. being ethnocentric. How does this ethnocentrism manifest, and what are its consequences? This fictitious story<sup>15</sup>, which we use when opening these issues with journalists during our classes and workshops, might answer that question.

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<sup>11</sup> BERGLEZ, Peter: What is global journalism? In *Journalism Studies*, 2008, Vol. 9, No 6, p. 848.

<sup>12</sup> WARD, Stephen: *The Invention of Journalism Ethics: The Path to Objectivity and Beyond*. In *McGill-Queen’s Studies in the Hist of Id (Book 38)*. Montreal : McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2015, p. 390.

<sup>13</sup> The term hegemony as we understand it in this paper “is often used as shorthand to describe the relatively dominant position of a particular set of ideas and their associated tendency to become commonsensical and intuitive, thereby inhibiting the dissemination or even the articulation of alternative ideas.” (BRITANNICA.COM: keyword ‘hegemony’). Especially part on the unquestionable dominant position of certain ideas inhibiting alternative ideas is something very relevant for journalism.

<sup>14</sup> WARD, Stephen: *The Invention of Journalism Ethics: The Path to Objectivity and Beyond*. In *McGill-Queen’s Studies in the Hist of Id (Book 38)*. Montreal : McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2015, pp. 391-392.

<sup>15</sup> Drawn and adapted from KEHINDE, Yinka et al.: *Beyond your world – Reporting the world*. One World Media, 2015.

Imagine you are a journalist on vacation in Japan. You and your friends are climbing one of the many sacred mountains in this country. As the slope is very steep and your shoes are not well suited to the terrain, you keep slipping and eventually, just as a Japanese couple pass you, fall to the ground. Your friends help you get back on your feet, but the Japanese couple start to laugh loudly in your direction.

- Why do you think the Japanese couple laughed at you?
- How could this experience influence your opinion (and articles if you were a journalist) on Japan?
- How could your article influence your audience's understanding of Japan, particularly if the majority of them have never visited the country themselves and may never do so?
- And why they did it for real?

The most common answer, based on our experience with this exercise with journalists in Central and Eastern Europe, was that the Japanese couple were simply laughing out of malice. And if those journalists were to write a story, this negative impression might colour their work and by extension, the views of their readers. This could then affect the decision of some readers not to go on holiday to Japan.

And what was the actual reason for their laughter? Saving face is very important in Japanese society, and that is why the couple laughed once they saw you were alright and were standing on your feet, they wanted to spare you further embarrassment by lightening the situation with laughter. If, as a Westerner, you only used your ethnocentric norms and understanding of the world in this situation, however, you could come away with a very different and inaccurate interpretation. This is unfortunate for any visitor, but for a journalist could end up skewing your coverage of the country as a whole and even entrench certain prejudices in your audience, too. Intercultural communication skills, global imagination and global outlook can help avoid that.

### **Why is it important to include a global outlook in reporting?**

“Global North oil company known for channelling its taxes through sovereign tax havens to avoid paying its bills, drills in the river delta of the Global South country, polluting indigenous lands and forcing people to flee their homeland, cultural heritage and way of life”, is one fictitious, but realistic, example of a global storyline.

Journalism is a profession with considerable social responsibility. As the world has become more globalized and at the same time not always fair in terms of power relations and structures, journalism needs to adapt to ensure it remains relevant and vital today. Here is a list of reasons why it is important to take global journalism seriously, inspired by Peter Berglez<sup>16</sup>:

- The world has fundamentally changed. As the old Westphalian order recedes, the post-Westphalian order is becoming increasingly prominent. To remain rele-

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<sup>16</sup> BERGLEZ, Peter: *Global Journalism. Theory and Practice*. New York : Peter Lang Publishing, 2013, pp. 51-78.

vant, journalism needs to take these processes into account.

- It is not enough to divide the world into 'domestic' and 'foreign' anymore. Instead, the world needs to be understood as an interconnected complex of diverse relations and connections, of which journalists and their audiences are an integral part.
- Global journalism is essential for democratic debate. Besides providing accurate and comprehensive coverage of the crises we face, global journalism promotes empowerment and a more thoughtful, informed public discourse around these issues something all too often missing from coverage of key issues at present.
- It supports the development of a more humane and evidence-based policy environment. By allowing us to better understand how the world is interconnected, particularly the links between 'domestic' and 'foreign' issues underpinning phenomena such as migration, they enable us to act based on the 'big picture', using alternative approaches and views.
- It makes the audience and our societies more resilient and able to withstand even abrupt changes. Even when the coverage includes challenging or difficult stories, global journalism can strengthen understanding and reduce irrational expectations so that societies are better placed to withstand crises.
- Ultimately, it allows the public to better understand themselves in relation to the world and to make decisions based on this better understanding.

Johan Lindell and Michael Karlsson go bit further, and define global journalism itself in terms of interrelationships between different parts of the world, while saying that journalists must become global agents of the global public sphere instead of a nation-state or local, creating a well-informed and diverse global 'info-sphere' (again, something what Ward puts into the dichotomy between global and parochial). At the same time, they say, journalists simply need to prioritise the global public sphere just because their audience are the citizens of the world<sup>17</sup>.

Free, fair and balanced journalism has always been an important cornerstone of modernity and democracy, empowering people and societies. But the world has changed radically and journalism must adapt to ensure it remains relevant to today's challenges. With this in mind, global journalism promotes global empowerment and creates the space to debate global issues, problems and solutions. By doing so it makes societies and communities more resilient and better able to withstand the many crises we face.

### And what is NOT global journalism?

When we speak about something, it is often even more important to say what it is not. So what is not global journalism? We have, again, looked for inspiration in the works of Peter Berglez to outline some key points<sup>18</sup>:

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<sup>17</sup> LINDELL, Johan – KARLSSON, Michael: Cosmopolitan Journalists? In *Journalism Studies*, 2016, Vol. 17, No 7, pp. 860–870.

<sup>18</sup> BERGLEZ, Peter: *Global Journalism. Theory and Practice*. New York : Peter Lang Publishing, 2013. pp. 51-78.

- It is not a manual, rulebook or externally imposed set of guidelines. While human rights, environmental NGOs, for example, might develop specific protocols around discourse and framing, global journalism has evolved organically within journalism practice to meet the changing needs of the sector, and evolving socio-historical and geopolitical background.
- It does not require any predefined ideas or moral viewpoints. The point of the global outlook is to enable journalists to see and analyse global issues clearly and without preconceptions: this approach can in principle be used by different, even competing interests, such as anti-globalists and globalists or religious and secular groups.
- It is not corrective. Its primary aim is to respond to new realities, not to change them. Its aim is not to change any specific narrative or framing in the way that many traditionally corrective approaches (e.g. human rights journalism or environmental journalism) to journalism might.
- It is not designed as a substitute for either domestic or foreign journalism. Instead, global journalism aims to build on the best aspects of both to promote more responsive and far-reaching coverage of the same issues.

## Conclusion

Global journalism is not a manual or guide imposed externally on journalists for their enlightenment. On the contrary, it has evolved organically from within practice and processes in the field as well as from within the transformation of socio-historical and geopolitical background. World changes, journalism should change, too. It does not come burdened with predefined morals or assumptions: it simply highlights neglected or disregarded aspects of global politics, emphasises previously unseen relations over the planet, and at the same time puts globally-minded ethics in front of national or parochial ones. It is built on understanding that global challenges we face generate the need to view the world as one single whole. Especially in issues such as migration or climate change it is essential to redefine the concept of community in a way we could reflect as holistic and accurate picture of the reality as possible. It is not in itself corrective, aiming to achieve a particular agenda – it just seeks to accurately reflect the new global reality. As such it is not presented as a substitute for either domestic or foreign journalism, but aims to build on the best aspects of both to promote more responsive and far-reaching coverage of the same issues.

Even though there is a global village, it is still somewhere in the corner of news coverage. But global journalists, with their global outlook and globally-minded ethics, could bring the change, add new perspectives of the information with an epistemic shift in the narratives they create. They could make globalization process more concrete, making the interconnections created by globalization more visible and tangible.

Journalists could, by adopting this viewpoint, support the development of more diverse and accurate content that reflects the complex realities of today. They should become transnational communicators bringing coverage for global audience, media professionals who have not their social contract concluded just with a particular public or society they, for instance, live in. Instead, they should have concluded something much more diffuse a multi-society contract with the entire global community.

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