

Reporting under Pressure

A Study of Journalism Working Conditions in Three European Countries during The Pandemic

Mercedes de Luis Andrés



Mercedes de Luis Andrés

Faculty of Science, Technology and Media

Research centre/department Media and Communication Studies / DEMICOM

Mid Sweden University

Sundsvall/Östersund,

© Author, Mercedes de Luis Andrés

Printed by Mid Sweden University, Sundsvall

ISBN: 978-91-89341-64-7

Faculty of Faculty of Media, Science and Technology

Mid Sweden University, 851 70 Sundsvall

Phone: +46 (0)10 142 80 00

Report series 50

Table of Content

Preface	ix
Providing journalism in times of crisis	11
News production under cross pressure	12
Overview of news in three countries	14
Results: Journalist interviews	19
Working conditions.....	19
Correspondents	19
Local Journalists and Generalist Newspapers.....	20
Science and Health journalists.....	21
Access to information.....	22
Correspondents	22
Local journalists and Generalist Newspapers.....	23
Science and Health Journalists.....	24
Fighting pseudo news	27
Correspondents	27
Local journalists and Generalist Newspapers.....	28
Science and Health Journalists.....	28
Social media influence	30
Correspondents	30
Local journalists and Generalist Newspapers.....	32
Science and Health Journalists.....	33
Trust.....	35
Correspondents	35
Science and Health Journalists.....	36
Local journalists and Generalist Newspapers.....	39
Conclusions and recommendations	40
Interviews	42
References	43
Web links	43

Preface

The Corona pandemic breakout in Spring 2020 has been described as the deepest crisis affecting Europe since World War II. The unexpected event had enormous consequences for all European societies. Lockdowns and restrictions were imposed all over the continent, and the dramatic rising numbers of infected people caused severe problems for health services in most countries.

The pandemic was also big news everywhere. News media were for long time completely dominated by a multitude of stories about the development of the pandemic. All types of journalism were influenced, not only news journalism but also cultural journalism, opinion journalism, business journalism, sports journalism and entertainment journalism, just to mention a few. Journalistic working conditions and editorial routines were challenged by the abundance of information and difficulties to distinguish between trustworthy facts, rumours and fake news.

The pressures of the pandemic on newsrooms and journalists have been occasionally discussed in academic workshops and public debate but so far there is a lack of empirical studies offering additional insights in journalists' daily practices and considerations during the most critical phases of the pandemic. This report, written by Mercedes de Luis Andrés, intends to fill this gap by providing an extensive overview and comparison of journalist perceptions of the crisis based on interviews with different kinds of journalists in France, Spain and Sweden.

By basing her report on the voices of journalists working in the frontline during the pandemic more knowledge is gained about the most prevalent challenges for journalism practices in very difficult and stressful societal situations. The report is definitely a valuable contribution to the research field of crisis journalism.

Lars Nord

Professor of Political Communication

DEMICOM, Mid Sweden University

Providing journalism in times of crisis

In most European countries, legacy media have traditionally been perceived as very reliable providers of accurate information about what is going on in society. However, ongoing transformations of media systems have changed legacy media conditions, and established hybrid media systems where older and newer media blend and influence power relations in society as new and more individual media usage patterns appear (Chadwick, 2017). During the outbreak of the Corona virus sars-cov-2 which exploded in Europe in Spring 2020, social media were socially accepted in many countries as sources of trustful information.

While there were partisan viewpoints and rumours that were fast spread in social media, journalists covering the news in legacy media struggled to maintain credibility among the public and found socio-economic obstacles to develop their work. This panorama raises several questions about the performance of journalism that are analysed in this report, offering qualitative data based on interviews with a selection of journalists, including respondents working from abroad and a variety of journalists from local, science and generalist media, based in Sweden, Spain and France.

The report focuses on journalism working conditions in these three countries as they represent different media markets, media and politics-relations, journalism traditions and role of the state in the media system (cf. Hallin & Mancini, 2004). The in-depth interviews with journalists were conducted between December 2020 – April 2021 and are central in this study but are also accompanied by an overview of media coverage from selected Swedish, Spanish and French newspapers, focusing on articles about trust, disinformation and rumours during the first stage of the pandemic in Spring 2020.

The objective of the study is to compare working conditions of journalists in the three countries during the Corona pandemic, and to discuss the importance of national media system distinctive features for journalistic output and performance during a severe crisis. This is done by focusing on journalist's working conditions, access to official documents and sources, strategies for dealing with unverified information, influence from social media and public trust in journalists in legacy media.

One of the most basic questions when it comes to credibility is: How did journalists handle information overload and unverified information and rumours? This aligns with how information on social media was monitored. Furthermore, how did journalists avoid spreading fear in order to maintain trust? This point affects the intercultural communication, e.g., we find that correspondents offer meticulous practises to report from abroad, in contrast with their work conditions. An additional challenge for professional journalism is how to ensure its social validity, especially as data in this study indicates that journalists strongly support ethical codes, regardless their media system and news tradition.

The report begins with a section on previous research on journalism and crisis reporting, followed by an overview of media material based a search of references to rumours in the three national daily newspapers leading *Dagens Nyheter*, *El Mundo* and *Le Monde*. Then follows an extensive section based on interviews with Spanish, Swedish and French journalists. It might be noted that they are structured type of interviews, and they rely on a set of standardised questions, except a couple of them where the unstructured interviews were hold in opened dialogue. The final section of the report summarizes the results and discusses their implications for the quality of journalism during crises.

News production under cross pressure

COVID-19 presents a new and unprecedented challenge for all societies, and in particular for key actors in public communication processes. The pandemic has been referred to as an 'invisible enemy' and access to facts and information has been limited in many countries. Journalists, scientists, politicians and citizens all seek to find answers to basic questions such as how does it infect people, how dangerous is it and what can we do to protect ourselves from getting it? In times of crisis, news media certainly play a vital role in citizens' quest to find answers to fundamental questions such as what happened (Boin et al., 2009).

To uphold editorial standards in crises is thus very difficult. The COVID-19 crisis is no exception. Misinformation has been a major worry across the globe. The World Health Organization (WHO) has worked hard to dispel misperceptions and rumours, by providing facts regarding the cause and origin of the virus and

disease, symptoms and available treatments. WHO early addressed this topic by defining the Corona pandemic as an 'infodemic' in Spring 2020.

As most citizens in modern democracies receive information through media channels during crises, it is highly relevant to analyse how media content and news production process's function and fulfil individuals' needs for accurate and trustworthy information during crises (Deuze, 2012). At the same time, it is important to keep in mind that the media is not solely a source of information provision, but that it is also a place for various power struggles and disruptions. Firstly, political actors fight over frames and influence, aiming to exploit the crisis for their political purposes. Next, the media industries fight over market positions, while individual reporters struggle as their routines and norms are disrupted by the crisis in question. Finally, digital media development has opened for citizens participation, allowing ordinary people to express their views instantly. Thus, contemporary journalistic production takes place in cross pressure between diverging interests and ambitions.

Consequently, media coverage of current events is always a result of complex newsroom considerations and negotiations about newsworthiness, as well as grounded in existing editorial procedures and routines for news gathering and news selection (Shoemaker & Reese, 1996; Donsbach, 2004). However, this important link between content and news production factors is rarely addressed in crisis journalism studies.

Even if there is an increasing number of academic articles paying attention to news during the pandemic, this still holds true. While varied journalistic research has been produced on how the confinement has been received with unequal reactions and consequences among the countries all over the world, including coverage of the responsibilities and irresponsibilities from political authorities and populations, not so much attention has been paid to the struggles of the journalistic work in times of pandemic.

Against this background, the report intends to fill a gap by highlighting journalists own experiences and perceptions of working conditions during the pandemic. How did they adapt to the new situation? What changed in their relations to influential sources and what remained the same? How did they handle the overload of information and managed to distinguish between verified

and unverified information? How did they relate to social media discourses in their work? And how did they perceive public views on journalistic work during the pandemic?

These crucial questions will be addressed in the interview section of the report. Next follows an overview of news articles in the national press in France, Spain and Sweden addressing diverging information challenges during the pandemic. The aim of this overview is to give a general illustration of how topics related to rumours and unverified information were covered by leading news media in the three countries.

Overview of news in three countries

This section offers an overview of newspaper articles in *El Mundo* (Spain), *Le Monde* (France) and *Dagens Nyheter* (Sweden), published in Spring 2020. The aim of the overview is not to summarize everything written on the topic, but to notify illustrative examples of news stories on rumors during the pandemic. The selection of three leading national morning papers in each country is based in the assumption that these newspapers are associated with high editorial standards and are of course not representative for the whole media sector. A selection of news from commercial broadcast companies or tabloids would probably have provided another sample. In this report, the listing of news stories in the morning press has the primary purpose to give the reader initial insights in the national contexts and illustrate how the issue of rumors and uncertain information has been covered in national media with high impact. This news contains only references to rumours, not the whole news built upon them.

EL MUNDO: Spanish Newspaper – (March 2020).

- A hoax about the admission of a prisoner with coronavirus yesterday caused a riot at a module of Fontcalent prison (Alicante),
- The first victim of all wars: the truth. PM E. Macron made a call to remain calm and not being fooled by hoaxes. Thus, the rumour that the army was going to blockade Paris has vanished.
- Academic research found that consumers compensate for perceived loss of control by purchasing products that keep their basic needs satisfied. The

psychologist Steven Taylor has considered that this behaviour is based on distrust towards official information channels.

- Dark social. This scenario brings together, under this term in English, any type of news whose origin we cannot know with certainty. WhatsApp, Telegram, and other messaging services are the great actors of the dark social, refuge of much fake news that circulate about the virus. It is best to speak with the philosopher Amelia Valcárcel: "The influx of contaminated WhatsApp has always existed. Before this noise was in the bar, and now it is on your mobile. Without the rumour, fear cannot appear. In 1980 some people dedicated themselves to killing birds because they believed that this disease was spread by these animals and later it was learned that it was an intoxication.
- The French historian Jean Delumeau made a distinction between natural fears and cultural fears. The coronavirus pandemic would be part of the first group, as would earthquakes and famines. Natural fears are key in the history of humanity. Delumeau, who died a few days before the coronavirus reached Europe, studied in his work *Fear in the West* (Taurus Ed) the medieval Black Death and the wars of religion that bled Europe. A fear of this nature not only blocks our faculties, it also leads us to make wrong decisions. This historian considered that the medieval fear of the arrival of the Antichrist resurrected anti-Semitism in society. Today it has been proven that the fear of the coronavirus has awakened in many countries, including Spain, Chinophobia. According to this thesis, natural fear (virus) develops cultural fear (China phobia).
- This xenophobic awakening is confirmed by the political communication consultant Antoni Gutiérrez Rubí, who denounces that the coronavirus has stimulated racist sentiment against the Chinese, latent for a long time, who part of society considers "pathogens" of this crisis as if they would have been viruses. a passport.
- The mayor of Campos, Francisca Porquer, has published on her Facebook account a post asking for responsibility so that false news is not reproduced.

- This highly politicized coronavirus takes on more force in these moments of tension. The first affected by this trend during the pandemic were politicians Pablo Iglesias and Irene Montero.
- The media repeatedly send us the message "do not panic" and then they spread data that necessarily leads us to panic. "The situation is reminiscent of what I lived in my youth, in a socialist country. Government representatives told us with some frequency that there was no reason to panic. In those moments, we all received the clear message that they were the ones who were panicking". Who could have written something like that? Slavoj Žižek, who else? The Slovenian philosopher has published in the second week of global confinement what is surely the first essay on the coronavirus. *Pandemic! COVID-19 shakes the world* is a 120-page text.
- Power. Secret. Seductive. The gossip, elusive and uncontrollable, not only continues to exist, says the German writer, but also regains strength in new technologies. The human being is notable to escape the temptation of the power conferred by information and rumour. Far from the idea that a developed and civilized society is safe from rumours, Neubauer warns that gossip has found shelter in new forms of communication. These tools contribute to its dissemination, understood as a voice "as relevant as it is impossible to corroborate". Internet and new technologies promote two vital aspects: reaching a large group of people and appealing to strong feelings such as fear, hatred, or uncertainty. "The Internet is very fast, and any denial is always late. We are facing a new era of rumours." (*Fame: A History of Rumour*, by Hans-Joachim Neubauer)

LE MONDE: French Newspaper – (March 2020)

- Several pseudo-scientific publications evoke a regularity in major epidemics, from the Marseille plague in 1720 to the coronavirus in 2020.
- A popular social media rumour claims that the virus "dies" if you drink tea, broth, soup, or "just hot water". Really?
- The coronavirus, a "biological weapon"? Many sites claim that SARS-CoV-2 was knowingly created by a Chinese laboratory. Their source: an ex-expert with conspiracy rhetoric.

- Coronavirus in Instant Messaging Rumours: "My wife's mother told me". For several days, many viral publications have been circulating on messengers, and in particular WhatsApp. The message always begins somewhat the same. My wife's mother's "best friend" wrote it. Or the husband of an aunt who works in a ministry, the cousin of a friend who is in the army, a colleague of a journalist sister, a close relative who knows someone in the Senate, at the prefecture, at the gendarmerie...
- Beware of these messages on behalf of UNICEF about the coronavirus: they are hoaxes
- False information about COVID-19 circulates on social networks and the alarm has been sounded from the Philippines to Spain or Venezuela. Working to deny it is important to contain the disease.
- We are not fighting just a virus. Attentive to the battle between political orders and their internal reorganization. The game has just begun.

DAGENS NYHETER: Swedish Newspaper – (March 2020)

- WHO is regularly following web sites and social media in order to reply on false information and has also initiated a collaboration with Google and big social media actors with the purpose to stop the diffusion of false information.
- During the last weeks there have been hundreds of scientific articles published about the new Corona virus but many of them have been produced very fast and not passed a peer review process so there is a risk that conclusions drawn are not correct.
- A study claiming that people can spread the virus without having symptoms has been criticized by medical experts as there were too many errors in the study.
- Efforts in other countries to stop the diffusion of the virus by disinfection of public areas are rejected by experts as 'unnecessary' and 'completely without effects', or simple measures to 'make people feel safe'.
- Reference to statement by Byelorussian president Lukashenko saying that daily vodka drinking, and sauna bath are the best way to keep the virus

away followed by editorial comment criticizing world leaders who do not take the pandemic seriously.

- Overview of the relation between societal crises and how they seem to trigger alternative facts and conspiracy theories.

The overview of the news coverage in the three dailies in the beginning of the pandemic indicates that topics about trustful information, rumours and conspiracy theories seem to have been addressed and highlighted relatively often in the morning press. In many cases, editorial remarks have also been made about false information and incorrect statements not based on convincing scientific evidence. It is reasonable to claim that the three leading dailies have paid attention to the massive overload of information during the crisis and tried to guide their readers in a very complex and chaotic situation.

The next section goes beyond media content and approaches journalists from different news outlets, investigating how they perceived working conditions during the initial stages of the pandemic.

Results: Journalist interviews

The interviews with journalists from France, Spain and Sweden were conducted online during 2020 and 2021. The interviews covered five basic topics: journalist's working conditions during the pandemic, their access to official documents and sources, their strategies for dealing with unverified information, their perceived influence from social media and public trust in journalists in legacy media. Journalists in the study belongs to one of the categories correspondents, local journalists and general newspapers, science and health journalists.

Working conditions

This section investigates the difficulties that the interviewed journalists have experienced, for instance: the isolation at work, the impediment to go to the field and verify the information, or the urgent choices made on the content.

Correspondents

Anxo Lamela (Spanish Agencia EFE from Copenhagen):

I have not received any special guidelines from the agency, beyond the usual criteria, they asked to be attentive to specific pieces of information on a subject that was suddenly new in Europe or Spain (for example, problems with the vaccine distribution).

Felix Damian, (Aleph News), after many years, observing the professional derive of professional journalism in Europe, shared his concerns:

We have had to professionalize quickly; we are not health experts. For example, reading articles to understand and only quoting the official sources. And I have not made any personal comment on it. One must take the essence and give it to the reader or spectator. We have just to give the fact so that the public understands it.

When we specialize in one sector, it hardly changes. It's nice to vary. It consumes energy but it helps you understand globally the reality of the world and everything that happens.

Through La Vanguardia, Ismael Arana, a correspondent established in Asia, perceived first-hand the magnitude of the crisis. Especially at the beginning of the pandemic, it became an overwhelming task:

As the head of coverage in Asia, I had to deal with the information about the virus from the beginning, when it emerged in China and everything about it was still unknown. In my case - and I think that of many other colleagues - I had to start writing about issues (medical, scientific, or public health, for example) that I had rarely tried before. Even so, after the initial avalanche, the way of approaching the work has been similar to that of other occasions. In the first place, resorting to official sources of information, in particular for the numbers of infected, deceased, measures taken to contain the expansion, and so on.

Also trying to contact people who were on the ground to know first-hand what was happening or following the information of reliable journalists who covered it from there (in my particular case, it has been very difficult to travel to the places to report first hand, since Hong Kong - where I reside - and the rest of the countries in the area - China, South Korea, Japan, Thailand, Singapore, Vietnam, the Philippines ... - soon sealed their borders). I consulted with journalists from the newspaper in Barcelona who are more used to writing about this type of topic to answer questions or complete information, as well as specialists in the field (doctors, biologists, and virologists)

Local Journalists and Generalist Newspapers

Marie Guibal (La République du Centre), detected a need of writing specifically to prevent social changes.

In the spring, given the unprecedented nature of this crisis, many practical questions arose (closure of schools, teleworking, closure of businesses, the transmission of the virus...), new rules (barrier gestures, certificate during confinement, curfew...) have been introduced. We had to take them one by one, prioritize them, sometimes check them with experts, and explain them to our readers, while trying to answer their concerns in a concrete and daily way.

She was worried about the elderly readers, how to give them the correct pieces of information and also to offer precise indications on how to take care of their health, useful information, so to say. Marie Guibal remembers:

Very quickly, the group to which my newspaper La République du Center belongs (the Centre France group) decided to publish a full-page every day including two "attestations" for all those who could not print at home, especially our elderly readers. Sometimes it took fact-checking to get to clarify certain rumors. This section is rather worked at the group, centralized in Clermont- Ferrand, therefore, at the headquarters of La Montagne: it is called Antiviral.

A journalist working for a generalist newspaper in Madrid, who prefers to remain anonymous, observed how "a new reality emerged after the storm", as a consequence of the need to acquire the correct knowledge:

Social inequalities were already there, although since the 2008 crisis they were more evident. And, in parallel to this visibility of the most vulnerable groups, other new precarious ones emerged, a product of the economic debacle that began then and that, years later, has increased with the pandemic.

Journalistically, wide coverage has been given to those affected (not only because they have been infected, but also because they are economically unassisted) because the human face sells and helps to put a face to the problem. The viewer, listener, and reader may become immune to ciphers, but humanizing or embodying those ciphers captures their attention.

Mattias Lindell, editorial manager at Expressen, confirms that the pandemic has influenced news of all kinds and that all reporters with special tasks (sports, entertainment, lifestyle) had to learn more about the pandemic and how it affected their areas of work.

Normally, we have a specialized and experienced medical reporter who deals with health issues and medical research. It is a complicated area to cover. Now suddenly, everyone in the newsroom had to gain basic knowledge and even specialize a bit. Of course, this has been a challenge.

Science and Health journalists

Beatriz Asuar, Health Section journalist at Publico Newspaper, was especially concerned about how to write with responsibility, also for the elderly population.

During confinement, it was even more difficult, due to the fact of not being able to be in contact with the co-workers or to go outside to check certain aspects. I put a lot of effort into trying

to do a job that, beyond giving news about what was happening in the hospitals, was socially responsible with the elderly.

Redactor in Chief at Quo Magazine, Lorena Sánchez, found an increasing search in the website of precedent articles related to pandemics - understanding the past, one might feel to have control of the present.

A month before the lockdown, we found in QUO and all the written media, a growing interest in the coronavirus, even before the lockdown began. We noticed it in the clicks, by the links that were shared. We started giving little informational pills about the covid-19 and they were hugely successful. For instance, what are a virus and historical news? Historical pandemics were unknown. We started with the basics because people did not know about it. Something positive is that we have learned a lot with this pandemic, the difference between a bacterium and a virus was unknown, or how to treat viral disease. Old information that we had archived in QUO about SARS, for example, had a high demand as information. We found was a growing demand for information

Access to information

This section focuses on the obtention of information from official sources. It concerns the opacity and contradictions and barriers in the field for journalists.

Correspondents

Félix Damian (Aleph News) refers to "the opacity or contradictions from official sources. Many authorities had taken advantage of this pandemic to close even more behind their press dispatches".

There was an overload of information that did not necessarily contribute, and there was a lot of noise, too many voices, not always the accredited ones. Even the official voices have made mistakes and recklessness. None of the governments nor WHO knew how to deal with the coronavirus in an informative way. The overload consisted practically in correcting the information of the previous day with that of the present day. It was consistently lacking. We have had little access to hospitals.

The administrations have kept the information to protect themselves against possible errors. For example, about the mask. That mess about the mask contradicted common sense. Governments preferred to cover themselves and to show

mistakes. That seems to me to be a huge lack of common sense and it has hurt people a lot. Some people may confuse the terms "public", with "press". Public institutions have taken advantage of the popularity of social networks to eliminate journalists and get them out of the way. They take advantage of it to get their propaganda to the "public", but then you can't question them. If you want to question them, you have to go to a press conference that is no longer held or you have to wait a long time for them to give you an interview, but they always put-up nice things in front of the audience, that "we are working", "we have signed something". There is a lot of evilness, I would say, on social media, and propaganda. I think they are doing damage to democracy by existing.

Local journalists and Generalist Newspapers

Marie Guibal, (La République du Centre) found that the speech was very harsh, negative, and suspicious, sometimes conspiratorial limit, against vaccines. And at a local level too, in the Loiret, she made her best to be on guard against the rumours.

Here again, we cannot bounce back from everything that is said, nor verify it and relay on it every time, unless the info is very local. But we had to check certain information: shortage or no vaccines (supporting figures), difficulties to register for a vaccination, or investigation underway on illegal restaurants while all have been closed for months.

In Viva Palencia Viva, popular local media, Juan Pablo Ausín commented that they had difficulties finding direct information from the local authorities:

We tried to interview a senior official in the health service of Castilla y León and we encountered certain reluctance that in the end confirmed to us that the coronavirus was already worrying. In the absence of official sources, we have talked with actors and characters directly affected or not by that other variant of the pandemic.

"The communication from the Government was broadly unfortunate", comments our journalist from a generalist newspaper in Madrid, who prefers to remain anonymous, although he considers that the election as spokesman of Fernando Simón (director of the Centre for the Coordination of Health Alerts and Emergencies) was adequate, since "he brought calm, closeness and good sense, despite his mistakes".

At the image level, his simple and casual clothing, as well as his colloquial language, brought him closer to the citizen, although precisely that attitude also played against him. However, his figure embodied the professional with a proven career, but at the same time the human being, with his successes and failures. We should not focus our attention on Simón himself, since he has acted as a shield (thus, criticism could be directed at him and not at political and institutional positions). However, both in the official speech of the Government and in the way of communicating its measures, inaccuracies and even falsehoods were incurred. Something a priori objectionable, but that should be understood in context: for example, at the beginning of the pandemic the use of masks was not recommended, but the problem is that (depending on foreign markets) there were no stocks, so the logic it imposed that they are destined to the health workers who worked in the front line. Otherwise, a situation of panic or social alarm could be generated, which is not desirable, although not forcing the use of masks from the beginning had its obvious damages. But where were they? And what was its price? One detail, that of its economic cost, which once again showed social inequalities. This example is enough to illustrate the errors of the Government, although the work of Fernando Simón was priceless because, in addition to his affable character, clothed with familiarity, he provided tranquility and calm in the face of uncertainty and fear. But, I insist, he also made mistakes, typical of improvisation and sometimes perhaps caused by his spontaneity, such as when the Government allowed children to go accompanied to supermarkets, a measure that had to be rectified immediately.

Returning to the intrigues and the mistrust spread in official messages, he comments:

Did Simón, his team of experts, and the government react late to the pandemic and did they react late? It is very possible, but who doesn't? Did the United States or Brazil, knowing what was happening in Europe, stop the pandemic when they had more time to prevent infections? The answer is obvious: no. And, although it may seem anecdotal, let's not forget that Simón himself was infected, which could be used negatively by the political opposition or by critics.

Science and Health Journalists

Beatriz Asuar (Health Section journalist at Público Newspaper):

Unfortunately, it was (and it is) very difficult to verify information both with the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Health and this was (and it is) a big problem to contrast information.

Official information has always been taken into account and we have not understood changes on aspects such as masks as incongruities because the decisions we have understood have been made based on scientific evidence. In this case, the scientific evidence has been changing.

At the same time she clears that only official information could be followed as source:

At the beginning we reported a lot about how important it was to disinfect. Now we know that this is not the case and that masks are much more important (and more indoors than outdoors). That does not mean that we did not get something like: "Health rectifies..." or "Health says now...", but I think that also the only official information that could be followed was the one that came from the Government and other international organizations like WHO.

Lorena Sánchez (Redactor in Chief at Quo magazine) refers to the management made by the Spanish Government during the buying of the vaccines.

That fact was announced from a tabloid medium. There was no other place to find out, that could reach all audiences. I miss scientific content in a public sense.

We have experienced many things that should have remained, for instance, the work of the nurses, of hospitals, a lot of scientific knowledge that has been developed from the coronavirus, which should be still present in our memory.

For Lorena Sánchez, the TV Government's message transmitted during March and April was the only "serious" information. When the great pillars of information are missing, then reliable sources are not considered.

The lack of information makes people trust a Tweet, a WhatsApp. I have had great discussions with my friends. When Ibuprofen was said to be dangerous, it was information that came from France. It occurred to a French minister to put it on Twitter. It was a hypothesis that Ibuprofen could be dangerous, but there was a lot of data behind not being published. But that

tweet overflowed all over the world. Don't spread things that you don't know where they come from.

Lorena Sánchez (QUO) suggested that information has entered into decadence and the public broadcasting should invest efforts in better content:

As a species we are many things, we feel fear too - and indeed now we are in a situation of alarm, but also as a species we are creative, we are cooperative, we generate knowledge. Rather, I think that this has surprised us in a social moment in which the bases of information had to do with cheap content. There is an idea that seems horrible to me, that science is boring, so we have to make silly content and give spiced information about a certain circus so that people can get the information and it is not true. Why do we have to do a circus? People like science. The point is that there was no place from where to generate information about the news from science and knowledge. I miss scientific content displayed in public channels.

Michael Kucera, Sveriges Television (SVT), thinks that public authorities were more accessible in the beginning of the pandemic, but have become less accessible in later stages as the Swedish strategy to fight the virus has been questioned.

On one hand, public officials have been very open and accessible, and cannot be criticized as they often visited our studios. On the other hand, as the Swedish strategy has become more questioned, they do not appear as often as previously, but prefer to focus on the official press briefings.

Fighting pseudo news

This section mirrors ethical and scientific worries among journalists. May the fight against pseudo-science news enter into a conflict of interest? The basic question addressed is: "How have you handled information overload and unverified information, rumours, etc.?"

Correspondents

Regarding the publishing policies applied in Agency EFE website during the first phases of the pandemic, Anxo Lamela, from Copenhagen, shared that the Agency launched a new technology applied to this purpose:

EFE has a department that they created a couple of years ago called EFE Verifica, similar to that of other media/agencies, to verify the veracity of certain controversial information, and with the issue of the pandemic, I know they have had a lot of work.

However, a couple of months ago, an editor from that department contacted me to ask me about the veracity of some information that pointed out that massive citizen protests had stopped a bill to force the population to be vaccinated.

There was a video circulating that became viral, it may sound like that, a friend even wrote to me from Argentina to ask if it was true. I answered that it was true, that this was considered in the discussion phase of the new Danish epidemic law, but that despite there were protests, they were not massive in any case, but rather they were criticisms of various parties and organizations that led the government to back down and banish the idea. It was still not a hoax at all, but a half-truth or an exaggeration: the people who mounted these manifests (which did not exceed 200-300 people) wanted to score merit that was not theirs. Scandinavia is not the area of Europe that generates the most news and the one of most interest to Spain, so it is not that it has had topics of great attention, beyond that of mink in Denmark and the lax Swedish strategy, of which I have written quite a bit. I have read in some media in English and Spanish, authentic atrocities about Sweden, that there was an open bar, that they had not taken any action, etc, which is a lie. They did take them, although more in the form of recommendations (especially in the first wave, since autumn they have introduced more restrictions). Another thing is whether their strategy was successful, that is another debate.

Local journalists and Generalist Newspapers

Marie Guibal and her team from La République du Centre, imagined making a newspaper entirely without Covid, just to clear their heads, to talk about something else (but they didn't):

Unfortunately, we have been criticized a lot, in the media in general and sometimes also us, for doing too much. It's difficult to find the right measure, especially in the face of an event of such magnitude, which trumps everything else. But the risk of talking about it too much or too often is to become anxious. Hence the interest to think carefully about the titles in particular, not too "sellers" or "clickbait" (on the web). We often have these debates in an editorial conference of the treatment of information, the chosen angle. On the other hand, a section, again common to all the group's titles, was launched at the end of the year and is working very well so that it is perpetuated La Belle Histoire. As its name suggests, it is about speaking, on two pages, about a story of solidarity, unusual, funny, or a personal portrait.

Science and Health Journalists

Lorena Sánchez (QUO) as Editor in Chief of the magazine, took a decision together with her team, on what type of content they would give. They reached a consensus on the responsibility they had as a media of communication:

This responsibility has always existed, as you know since you start studying journalism you have an ethical code, just like medical doctors have. I think today it is not exposed. In other words, we accuse robots of generating bad information, go scaremongering, of hoaxes, so it seems that the media is not guilty of spreading a hoax. What we are sure about is that we are not health specialists, we are journalists, we could not fall into clickbait, even if that meant fewer visits. The wonderful thing was that the contents endorsed by scientists and people who knew have been discussed and shared, as great value. I am not only talking about the famous clickbait, which has condemned us to the press, but also about the scandal. Another thing we discussed is that this is not the time for communication to fall into the scandal.

QUO magazine followed a very reflected strategy of the publication since the coronavirus started. They decided not to give a voice to those who should not have it. When they talked about how vaccines are distributed, they have had

experts who have been their guides. Javier Flores Murillo, Director of Digital National Geographic Spain, explains that they were also very careful with sources. They applied certain control mechanisms when preparing their daily news:

The fact that an investigation is published in scientific journals of indisputable prestige thanks to peer review invites us to believe in that source as true. Likewise, we always try to contact researchers to give us a point of view, an image, or something that makes us stand out from the rest of the media that are probably faster than us simply because of the number of people working in the office.

Esther Sánchez, Editor at RETEMA, Technical Magazine of the Environment, collaborator in Carne Cruda radio and co-organizer of Ciencia en Redes, works in an environment where they have tried to only have expert voices:

Undoubtedly the information overload has been something quite hard to bear because every minute was changing and the public's avidity for information was extreme, but being very aware of the situation, and above all, serving as a filter for all that rumour and flashy headlines. I think we have managed not to give fuel to the news without a scientific basis.

During the pandemic news departments have been forced to evaluate massive floods of information before deciding about publication. Some media organizations have had written policies on how to handle rumours and unverified information, while others have relied on normal working routines and practices. Michael Kucera from Sveriges Television says that his company has faced unverified information as always.

Of course, there are moments, not at least during 2020, when for example the American president suggested disputable treatment methods. But in such case, journalism needs to function as always. You take the statement and compare with scientific knowledge. But as you are dealing with an enormous amount of information you sometimes rely on the wrong sources. In such cases, I think it is important that you are transparent and make corrections as soon as the mistake is discovered.

In some situations where interviewed persons express controversial statement, it is not necessary to explain this to the readers, says Joanna Drevinger from Svenska Dagbladet.

We covered the demonstrations in Stockholm against new restrictions. We referred to what was happening as always when telling news. The participants in the demonstration claimed that the pandemic was fake, and in this case, we did not step in telling our audience that this was not true. We believe our readers know the facts.

Social media influence

This section concerns how journalism narratives are nurtured from social media. The basic question was: "How was the information on social networks about the pandemic monitored and how was it evaluated whether it was correct or not?" The interviewed group considered that social media could also serve as a reference, not as the information itself when it was carefully chosen. The situation was worrying, as there was no barrier against the disinformation on social networks.

Correspondents

Ismael Arana, Spanish correspondent in Asia for La Vanguardia, considers patience to examine the rumours, "the prudent thing to do is to wait for a while to see what may or may not be true".

I would like to say that for me social networks are just one more tool through which to look at what is happening, never a reliable and unequivocal source of what has happened. Once something that goes viral or seems important comes out, official confirmation is sought of what the video reflects or the version of its protagonists or the person who recorded the images is sought. As I was saying about rumours or unverified information, it is important to allow time and try not to rush too much. Currently, many people are dedicated to investigating and determining if a video or a document, is true or, on the contrary, is a montage or are images recorded long ago and under another context. I also find interesting the task of accounts, both personal and credible media (for example, those of the AFP Fact Check or AP Fact Check agencies), which usually investigate such content and comment on its validity.

This study also had access to a freelance journalist from France working from Baltic and Nordic zones, who prefers to remain anonymous. He told us how he included social media in his sources. He explains how and to which extent:

I have an eye on Twitter to get an idea of what's going on, including those who throw in or relay any info even unverified (sometimes I also follow discussions on FB). But since there is such a profusion of news and comments on social media, I often don't have the time or the inclination to dive into it. I know they exist, but I don't need them, since I don't want to write about rumours or unverified news. So, I often focus on the media I talked about above.

I don't have the impression that there is a particular information overload. There are many, it's true, but I stick to the Nordic media in which I trust, in particular the sites of public television and radio stations (SR, SVT, DR, YLE, NRK) and traditional dailies, which now have "live" feeds which are very useful, to sources that I contact locally by phone or via Skype, Zoom, etc.

For Félix Damian (Aleph media) the role of social media is confused. Social media is amplifying the rumours, they feed a human tendency for gossip - a function that could be accepted with indulgence, according to him.

Really on Twitter you do not inform yourself, you find out. You do not believe it. You don't stay there. As a journalist, I want to go to the sources, whatever the language they are. I watch foreign channels, a variety of sources, that gives the power to understand it easier. I don't see social media as information. Then you have to verify. The comments do not seem like information. If the PM says something, yes. But more than that, no. Nor do I see them as means of expression, I think they are tools, channels through which unfiltered information comes from other sources.

Anxo Lamela, (Agency EFE from Copenhagen) has been following closely the latest news on the pandemic in social media, especially as a journalist working from abroad, he practices the rule of prudence:

I have followed the daily / weekly appearances (depending) on the health authorities of each country (Sweden, Norway, Denmark) and the official data, in addition to following the news of each country through the local media. Not so much

social media (well, yes, social media from trusted or expert media). But concrete guidelines have not been given.

Local journalists and Generalist Newspapers

French Marie Guibal, (La République du Centre), considers that "we were fortunate to have a community manager, although at the newspaper each journalist also had their Facebook, Twitter and/or Instagram accounts".

What made the biggest social media reaction, was the issue of vaccines, there were many anti- vaccine people which manifested against it. The speech was very harsh, negative, and suspicious, sometimes conspiratorial limit, in France. And locally too, in the Loiret. Here again, we cannot bounce back from everything that is said, nor verify it and relay it every time, unless the info is very local. But we had to check certain information: shortage or no vaccines (supporting figures), difficulties to register for a vaccination, investigation underway on illegal restaurants while all have been closed for months.

Our journalist working for a generalist newspaper in Madrid, who prefers to remain anonymous, considers that social media are as dangerous as weapons, their speed creates the hurt. And in this sense, let's include the idea "images contaminates as viruses", contained in the work written by essayist Paul Virilio, "Speed and Politics"

Social media amplify denialism and conspiracy messages from famous people which (beyond being personal opinions) can influence their fans and the recipients of their messages. Donald Trump also recommended treating the coronavirus with bleach, with known consequences. And Bolsonaro did not contribute much to the fight against the coronavirus either (by the way, let's not forget an important detail: the use of the language of war to talk about the pandemic, which we elude, citizens and health workers, even journalists). I believe that, in front of public opinion, there is only room for the opinions of scientists or politicians who act as spokespersons for these scientists, that is why I insist that the election of Pedro Simón seemed right to me, although perhaps too much weight fell on him, the target of all the criticism. What citizens think or interpret does not have to correspond to good management, but it has become clear that the image of that management has not been as bad as some have stated (either because of partisan interests or because they believed it).

Javier Hernández, Spanish journalist at Antena 3 Group believes that the problem of over information and hoaxes was prior to the pandemic (Currently Antena3 Group has been renamed as Atresmedia Corporación de Medios de Comunicación, S.A). Javier Hernández:

Social networks above all are a very fruitful breeding ground for lies and inventions. The way to counteract them is to contrast the information even more than before and, above all, to distrust non-professional sources. That is where most falsehoods creep in. As for whether there has been an attempt not to spread panic, of course, yes. It's not about self-censorship, but it's about common sense. We live in a time when the news, in general, is not good for the most part. It is necessary to inform without fear and without plunging the public into an environment even sadder than reality.

Science and Health Journalists

Beatriz Asuar (Público Newspaper) commented that she tried to check each issue even more than usual, not to enter into rumours and to be extremely careful with everything that was published:

The information that moved through the social networks in our case reaches more to the "Última Hora" team. When something caught their attention, they consult the specialized people before reporting on it and this happens in all sections. More during the confinement, extreme care has been taken. The way to evaluate is to get the sources and talk to them. We do not publish directly without first talking to affected people and then contacting the responsible Administrations. Although, indeed, Administrations usually do not answer.

Esther Sánchez, (RETEMA, Carne Cruda radio, Ciencia en Redes), considers that right now it is useless to make differences between digital media and classic headers:

Going to the sources, reflecting, and always thinking that if it is too good to be true, that is key at this time. The work of analyzing each information is extremely important, bearing in mind that even sometimes sources may have their interests (see pharmaceutical companies releasing press releases before publishing scientific results), therefore, caution and reflection is the most important thing to do, in my opinion.

Lorena Sánchez, (QUO magazine) about the lack of credibility of professional journalism, shared several of her concerns:

More than once, I have realized that not all scientific articles that are mentioned, exist. Or is it an old article, which makes mention of not up-dated information?

In the end, this is a story that has to do with how the Internet works, how to write for a Google robot, and finally what you need to survive, are clicks and visits. I think it's a mistake, I think you need reliability and trust. Interesting, however, is that the Google algorithm is penalizing people who do not have an endorsement to report on Health. Sometimes we blame Google, but this is not always the case. Do you remember that in Spain we have soccer papers like As or decoration media like El Mueble, they have been giving information about the coronavirus because it is what people are looking for. This has been heavily penalized by Google. Google values that the contents are not copied. So it says, be careful about publishing everything. It goes against a trust. I think trust should be the word of the year and the year to come. We are built to hear stories and tell ourselves legends. But information is beautiful, informing is precious, we are lucky in this profession, the opportunity to speak with someone who knows how to make a vaccine, it is very good, it is useful for society. It is also creative, it has to do with research and creative work, but let us not forget the content.

Javier Flores Murillo (Digital National Geographic Spain), commented on how they found their utility as a channel for disseminating news:

In our networks we try to report truthfully, fleeing in many cases from clickbait and trying to listen to people who ask us their questions. Many times, they asked us questions that ended up being an article in itself. Anyway, returning to your question, every time we saw a piece of news that had certain signs of being false, we searched official entities to see if a reputable scientist had said something about it. Likewise, we always looked for the source of the video or photo in question, beyond the one that went viral. So, we discover multiple scams or images that were simply taken at another time, not during the pandemic.

Some media organizations claim that they always are very careful when evaluating social media and so also during the pandemic. Anna Åberg, Dagens Nyheter:

We have perceived and used social media in the same way as always. They offer platforms where we can communicate directly with our readers, but we can also discover topics trending on social media, but of course you always have to be very careful with verification and evaluation of information. And remember that you as a journalist may be in your own bubble. What you see in your own flows does not necessarily be representative for society as a whole.

Mattias Lundell, Expressen, warns that some people are driving false opinions in social media which can give the wrong impression about current public opinion. Thus, it is a challenge to collect information from social media and it is important to check facts thoroughly. One problem has been to monitor the newspaper's own social media accounts.

It is an extra challenge when we have our own accounts and try to moderate the discussion. Sometimes people spread false information, either because they do not know better or are just afraid and express themselves incorrectly. In such cases, our moderation is extremely important.

Trust

This section deals with trust in contrast to social alarm and intercultural distance. An emerging zone of observation appeared in this study concerning the international narrative. Cultural distance and mistrust can be repaired through mutual understanding, and correspondent journalism can help.

Correspondents

Félix Damian (Aleph News), defines the information as "medicine for the brain, but its social consideration is being underestimated":

We don't take the medicines as we want, we make it like it says the doctor. We live from the decisions we make, and we make them based on the information we receive. If someone misinforms you, you become ill or something inconvenient happens to you.

Israel Arana, correspondent in Asia for La Vanguardia:

There has not been the intention to sow panic, social alarm, or anything like that, but to report in the best possible way what was happening and the evolution of the situation in Asian countries with official data, verified facts and the declarations of authorities, people involved/affected or the opinion of experts on the subject.

I would like to add that many of us living in Asia believe that enough attention was not paid to the news that we published for weeks from here (my first note about the coronavirus, then an "atypical pneumonia", was from 7 January, and from the middle of that month I published on the subject almost daily for several months). At first, maybe due because of physical and cultural distance (or, making self-criticism, because perhaps we journalists did not know how to convey the urgency of the situation), in the West this was perceived as a distant and minor problem that was not going to touch them. From here, it was exasperating to see that, while the countries in the area closed borders, governments took drastic measures and people shut themselves up in their homes, in Spain it was debated the need (or not) to wear a mask or to cancel concerts and football games. In addition, as the months go by, a more in-depth look at Asia as a more or less successful management model is missed (they range from the most authoritarian models of China, Vietnam, or Singapore to the democracies of South Korea, Taiwan or New Zealand), and it is annoying that the West often justifies the good work of here with a simple "they are more organized than us" or "their values are Confucian", phrases that mask very irregular management in Europe and the US.

From the point of view of our freelance French correspondent working from Baltic and Nordic zones, meanwhile, he doesn't want to "cause panic" with his articles, he considers that if he has to relate a proven or verified situation that is likely to create anxiety, he will not give it up because some readers may be in panic:

The reactions of the readership to all kinds of information cannot be controlled. I don't work to reassure people. But I am very careful not to contribute to the ambient anxiety by checking the "sensitive" information as best as possible.

Science and Health Journalists

Beatriz Asuar (Público) gives her opinion on the most complicated moment for her, "when the hospitals in the Community of Madrid stopped treating elderly

people in nursing homes, because there were orders not to accept people over 75 years of age":

Doctors were very sorry to let people die. It was very hard because the doctors were overloaded and could not take it anymore, the elderly were very afraid. I remember we had a debate about whether to publish the information or not. In the end, it came out at the same time as other media (I had been saving it for two days) in the smoothest way we could because at that time we didn't see much margin: the reality is that there was a lack of huge respirators and that this information was going to scare a lot of older people who were already having a hard time. Instead, we seek to try to report otherwise by focusing on unused resources. For example, thousands of private health respirators. That was not so scary, but it highlighted the malpractice of governments and that there were options for improvement.

Esther Sánchez, (RETEMA, Carne Cruda radio and Ciencia en Redes) values the social vocation of Journalism. She explains that this ethical focus is an advantage:

Given the organization of my science program (monthly) I have the possibility of exercising all that reflection that I described as necessary, as well as confirming the sources and taking into account all people, including vulnerable groups for any variable. Sowing panic gives clicks, but it is not information, just as those forwarded by WhatsApp are not. Transforming panic into the news is not an option for us.

Lorena Sanchez, (Editor in Chief at QUO), suggested that Journalism is not made upon good news, "the basis is to alarm the population, especially in political information. A trial to the press would not hurt".

It seems to me that the follow-up that La Vanguardia has done is very worthy. Also, El País. The problem is the sections of society. To the extent of what is being done in Covid, they do scientific dissemination related to the pandemic that is being done reasonably well, then there are other media which names I prefer not to mention that is completely lost.

The TV government's message during March and April is all we've had, "serious." We lack a constant structure of scientific

information. When we talk about masks, what is useful, what is not, how is that possible? We did not have a clear message; each one would say what they wanted.

I belong to an association of science communicators, and I asked for a code of ethics on how to tell information. For example, a person dies from a vaccine trial. Do we have to give that information? It is very delicate; we are generating an enormous social alarm.

I care about this topic, personally. Apart from the social function that a media of communication has, it is not good for us. I believe that the lack of credibility, in the media, is winning. There are no media that has credibility, and if those who had to do with politics had already lost it, now we have the opportunity, those who do science. It seems that we still retain credibility, people still trust that we are giving valid information, but we have two minutes left if we fool around.

Lorena Sánchez observes that many media fall into scandal when it comes to scientific information:

You cannot give voice to a woman who says the virus was generated in Wuhan. This news from the Wuhan girl was published in many media. You cannot do it, no matter how much a woman is telling it, you are generating a huge scandal and you are generating instability, fear, and paranoia. It is not worth reporting everything, giving everyone a voice. Why a serious information program has not been made? We criticize sensationalism but there is no serious program on Covid-19, on public television, or in public media. Why is it not done, something serious, with researchers?

Javier Flores Murillo (Digital National Geographic Spain), considers that their job is "neither to avoid nor to create panic, it is to inform":

Obviously, we can have certain ideas about something in particular, but we did not decide to publish or stop publishing certain information based on the social fear that they would generate. It is true that because of our editorial line, away from sensationalism, we discarded many very powerful images that went out of our way to publish. But it is something that we carry in the DNA of the magazine, of National Geographic itself. It's hard not to be tempted to post certain topics in a much cruder way.

Local journalists and Generalist Newspapers

Juan Pablo Ausín (Viva Palencia Viva), explains how they have tried to involve interviews to cope with the confinement, rather than provoking stress during the isolation for the listeners.

To give a few examples: We have spoken with entrepreneurs who have opted to open businesses when the economy has not yet recovered from the first shock, with specialists in new technologies to help focus traditional businesses, with sociologists to analyze how this situation may affect and what in this way we can take advantage of the moment, with trainers, nutritionists, teachers...who helped us to cope with the confinement.

Our journalist from a generalist newspaper in Madrid, who prefers to remain anonymous, refers to the constant bombardment of news on the television news during the confinement:

There is no doubt that the coronavirus pandemic has not only been a newsworthy event but also a historical one: the never seen before. Said this, I believe that there has been over information (the fault of the media, not of "other social agents") and I believe that this negative information has helped to undermine the emotional state of society.

As the pandemic has been going on for such a long time, it contrasts previous crises and normal phases of journalistic coverage. Anna Åberg, Dagens Nyheter, points out that it is important to reflect over the balance between informing and scrutinizing.

Both are important journalistic functions but are not always easy to fulfill at the same time. Normal news goes on for a couple of days, and first you report what has happened and later on you move to a more critical approach, asking about why this happened and if previous statements from official sources were correct. During the pandemic the acute phase continues, and it is not easy to fulfill both media functions. This is something I would like to be discussed more.

Conclusions and recommendations

This report provides a study of the current work conditions, professional challenges, and personal views of a group of interviewed journalists from media landscapes situated in Europe. It includes interviews with professional journalists: correspondents, local, generalist newspapers, and scientific media sections or platforms.

A comparative view finds similarities in their answers in the areas of difficulties to access to official sources, worries to offer useful information to the readers and in a minor degree, disillusion for the value given from public broadcast to scientific journalism and society-oriented journalism, as well as scepticism to the role of social media as informative tool managed from the states. The report finds that the work conditions and efforts of journalists during the first stages of the pandemic have been titanic and not always economically valued. It would require further investigation and remedial action.

Based on the interviews with the journalists in the study, the following recommendations regarding crisis communication during the pandemic can be addressed:

- Increase the social attention to scientific-health journalism instead of simplifying it on purpose.
- Increase the attention to intercultural journalism, specially oriented to Asia, for avoiding stereotypes that spread mistrust.
- Pay attention to the precarious work conditions of journalists, who without security or economic protection, are immersed within a system that neglects their academic and professional capacity.
- Increasing freedom of speech without increasing the hate climate in cases when a journalist may be critical to a politician, institution, or social group.
- Consider offering specifically scientific information at a public TV channel.
- Pay attention to the mental health of the reader/spectator, avoiding an excess of information.

- Pay attention to the use of clickbait and the abuse of sensationalist content.
- Increase trust in society and among the readers to give credibility back to journalism.
- Pay attention to the elderly population who need clear information on self-protection.

The report also observes how the power takes advantage of the press, according to Hallin and Mancini: “One of the greatest characteristics of the Mediterranean region is the use of the media by various actors such as tools to intervene in the political world” (Hallin and Mancini, 2004, p. 117).

“The polarised pluralism model would also be characterized by low press circulation and, therefore, by a clear dominance of the audiovisual media. As a result of these dynamics, the media in Spain are not neutral (Castromil, 2008), but are inserted within the partisan struggle. It seems that more than informing, it is about getting followers to a cause rather than promoting public debate, there is an intention to offer a partial and interesting view of the facts” (“Políticos, ciudadanos y medios de comunicación”, Rodríguez- Castemil, Rodríguez Díaz [https:// telos.fundaciontelefonica.com/archivo/numero087/politicos-ciudadanos-y-medios-de-comunicacion/](https://telos.fundaciontelefonica.com/archivo/numero087/politicos-ciudadanos-y-medios-de-comunicacion/))

Extraordinary circumstances required a truly humanistic perception behind the scenario. The eye persists to find light even in darkness, as watercolour finds its way on paper. But to live immersed in the waves of the day, as journalist, makes a difference in this perception, one sees the world following what they carry inside, and the project confirms that journalists from Nordic countries, France and Spain differed in the work conditions also during the pandemic, it is necessary to keep examining the narratives for each of these media cultures, but also the work conditions around the work practises. Those are the next challenges for this North-South comparisons.

Interviews

Correspondents:

Anxo Lamela, Spanish journalist, Agencia EFE
from Copenhagen Ismael Arana, Spanish
journalist, La Vanguardia Newspaper, from Asia
Felix Damian, Rumanian journalist, Aleph News,
from Spain

Anonymous French journalist, freelance from Nordic and Baltic countries, from
France

Journalists at generalist news media:

Javier Hernández, International Information,
Antena 3 TV Group, Madrid Anonymous Spanish
journalist, a newspaper in Madrid

Anna Åberg, Swedish journalist, Dagens Nyheter

Mattias Lundell, Swedish journalist, Expressen

Michael Kucera, Swedish journalist, Sveriges
Television

Joanna Drevinger, Swedish journalist, Svenska
Dagbladet

Local Journalists:

Juan Pablo Ausín, Spanish journalist,

Viva Palencia Viva from Palencia, Spain

Marie Guibal, French journalist, La République du Centre,
Orleans, France

Health/Science Journalists:

Beatriz Asuar, Health Journalist, Público
Newspaper, Spain Lorena Sánchez, Editor in
Chief at QUO Magazine, Spain

Javier Flores Murillo, Director of Digital National Geographic, Spain

Esther Sánchez, Editor at RETEMA, Technical Magazine of the Environment;
collaborator in Carne Cruda radio and co-organizer of Ciencia en Redes, Spain

References

- Boin, A., 't Hart, P., & McConnell, A. (2009). Crisis exploitation: political and policy impacts of framing contests. *Journal of European public policy*, 16(1), 81-106.
- Chadwick, A. (2017). *The Hybrid Media System*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Deuze; M. (2012). *Media Life*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Donsbach, W. (2004). Psychology of news decisions: Factors behind journalists' professional behavior. *Journalism* 5(2): 131–157.
- Hallin; D. C. & Mancini, P. (2004). *Comparing Media Systems: Three Models of Media and Politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Shoemaker, P. & Reese, S. (1996). *Mediating the Message: Theories of Influences on Mass Media Content*. New York: Longman.

Web links

Desmentimos 5 bulos sobre el Corona Virus

https://www.nationalgeographic.com.es/ciencia/desmentimos-5-bulos-sobre-coronavirus-sars-cov-2_15451

El Corona Virus hace estragos en las residencias de mayores: más de 8.000 muertos <https://www.publico.es/politica/coronavirus-estragos-residencias-mayores.html>

Contratos temporales de la Comunidad de Madrid permiten que se prescinda de sanitarios antes de su vencimiento

<https://www.publico.es/sociedad/contratos-temporales-comunidad-madrid-permiten-prescinda-sanitarios-vencimiento.html>

Todo lo que necesitas saber del nuevo Corona Virus y su contagio <https://www.quo.es/salud/q2001723622/todo-necesitas-saber-coronavirus-contagio/>

Con esta proteína del Corona Virus se podrá fabricar la vacuna

<https://www.quo.es/salud/q2002709762/proteina-coronavirus-vacuna/>

"Les pauvres ont été les plus touchés par la crise du Covid", analyse Louis Schweitzer lors de la Matinale santé, à Orléans

https://www.larep.fr/orleans-45000/actualites/les-pauvres-ont-ete-les-plus-touchees-par-la-crise-du-covid-analyse-louis-schweitzer-lors-de-la-matinee-sante-a-orleans_13881115/

Antiviral

<https://www.larep.fr/t-heme/antiviral/>

Viva Palencia Viva

<https://acupradio.es/shows/viva-palencia-viva/?fbclid=IwAR1-di8KwERnaJSkXOhPGAD2yIJ6YUA3n3Zz54f60pK95bgepK4-FaZvzu4>

Los gráficos que resumen este año 2020 marcado por el Corona Virus

https://www.antena3.com/noticias/economia/graficos-que-resumen-este-ano-2020-marcado-coronavirus_202012315fedb42d3005ce0001fc3f6e.html

ECDC: la mutación de la covid es más transmisible, pero no más infecciosa

<https://www.efe.com/efe/espana/sociedad/ecdc-la-mutacion-de-covid-es-mas-transmisible-pero-no-infecciosa/10004-4424386>

España, el país europeo con más casos de COVID por población en catorce días <https://www.efe.com/efe/espana/portada/espana-el-pais-europeo-con-mas-casos-de-covid-por-poblacion-en-catorce-dias/10010-4322047>

Campaña china para convencer de que el virus llegó de fuera

<https://www.lavanguardia.com/internacional/20201202/49844801145/china-origen-coronavirus-informe-wuhan-pais.html>

China renuncia a fijar un objetivo de crecimiento económico para este año por el coronavirus

<https://www.lavanguardia.com/economia/20200522/481318756077/china-renuncia-fijar-objetivo-crecimiento-economico-coronavirus.html>

Spania a ieșit de pe lista roșie a țărilor cu risc epidemiologic ridicat. Care sunt noile reguli <https://alephnews.ro/guvern/spania-a-iesit-de-pe-lista-rosie-a-tarilor-cu-risc-epidemiologic-ridicat-care-sunt-noile-reguli>