

ANDERSON, B. 2024. *What non-mainstream journalism can(not) do: the "affect economy" of four journalism startups in Malaysia, Pakistan, Romania and the UK*. Presented at the 2024 Auckland University of Technology Research Centre for Journalism, Media and Democracy conference (JMAD Conference 2024): political economy of journalism, an International Association for Media and Communication Research pre-conference, 27 June 2024, Auckland, New Zealand.

# What non-mainstream journalism can(not) do: the "affect economy" of four journalism startups in Malaysia, Pakistan, Romania and the UK.

ANDERSON, B.

2024

## What non-mainstream journalism *can(not) do*: The ‘affect economy’ of four journalism startups in Malaysia, Pakistan, Romania, and the UK

Recognising that journalism operates within various constraints, scholars have theorised the relationship between journalism and its environment through a hierarchical model of influences (Shoemaker & Reese, 1996). Recently, there has been a reconsidering of this hierarchical conceptualisation towards a more relational positioning of journalism within hybrid and networked media systems (Chadwick, 2011; Örnebring & Karlsson, 2022; Reese & Shoemaker, 2016).

It is interesting to explore how the various influences on journalistic practice play out in the context of journalism startups around the world. Perched on the periphery of the field, these non-mainstream organisations often have highly ambitious and pioneering visions of the future of journalism (Anderson, 2023; Schapals, 2022), but they are hampered by precarity and unsustainable business models (Deuze & Witschge, 2020).

This paper presents a comparative case study of the ‘affect economy’ in four journalism startups in different locales characterised by various degrees of economic development and press freedom – *New Naratif* (Malaysia), *The Current* (Pakistan), *DoR* (Romania), and *Bureau Local* (UK). Operationalising each case as an *assemblage*, this study explicates the capacities that are generated in the “affect economy” (Clough, 2008) of each startup (editorial, financial, political, sociocultural ‘affects’), determining “what a body can do” (Deleuze, 1990).

### References

- Anderson, B. (2023). “Join the coalition”: How pioneer journalism communities reimagine journalistic epistemology from the periphery. *Digital Journalism*. Online First.
- Chadwick, A. (2013). *The Hybrid Media System: Politics and Power*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Clough, P. T. (2008). The affective turn: political economy, biomedicine and bodies. *Theory, Culture and Society*, 25(1), 1-22.
- Deleuze, G. (1990). *Expressionism in Philosophy: Spinoza*. New York: Zone Books.
- Deuze, M., & Witschge, T. (2020). *Beyond Journalism*. Cambridge, UK and Medford, MA: Polity Press.
- Örnebring, H., & Karlsson, M. (2022). *Journalistic Autonomy: The Genealogy of a Concept*. Columbia: University of Missouri Press.
- Reese, S. D., & Shoemaker, P. J. (2016). A media sociology for the networked public sphere: The Hierarchy of Influences Model. *Mass Communication and Society*, 19(4), 389-410.
- Schapals, A. (2022). *Peripheral Actors in Journalism*. London, New York: Routledge.
- Shoemaker, P. J., & Reese, S. D. (1996). *Mediating the Message: Theories of Influences on Mass Media Content* (2nd ed). White Plains, NY: Longman.