



Case Study

**Media Professionals and Democratic Resilience in the Global South:
Navigating Information Disorder and Social Entropy**

*Gautam Gogoi**, *Bikika Laloo Tariang***, *Nikita Biswakarma****

Abstract: This paper examines how media professionals in the Global South defend democratic values amid a systemic crisis of *information disorder* and *social entropy*. It argues that this crisis is not accidental but a structured phenomenon shaped by digital disruption, colonial legacies in the political economy of news, and escalating polarization. Case studies from India, the Philippines, Brazil, Nigeria, and Kenya demonstrate how political actors exploit these vulnerabilities to undermine democratic institutions. Journalists on the front lines face a three-pronged assault: economic precarity that enables media capture, physical violence sustained by impunity, and state repression through legal and digital controls. Despite these threats, media professionals have forged innovative counter-offensives, including fact-checking coalitions, technology-driven monitoring, grassroots media literacy, and efforts to decolonize journalistic practice. The paper concludes that safeguarding democracy requires a coordinated, multi-stakeholder approach to building sustainable, independent, and context-sensitive media ecosystems across the Global South.

Keywords: Information Disorder, Social Entropy, Media Resilience, Global South, Press Freedom, Political Polarization, Media Literacy, State Repression

**Research Scholar, Dept. of Library and Information Science, North-Eastern Hill University
email: gautamgogoi7@gmail.com*

***Professor, Dept. of Library and Information Science, North-Eastern Hill University*

****Research Scholar, Dept. of Political Science and Public Administration, The Assam Royal Global University*

1. Introduction

1.1 The Architecture of Information Disorder and Social Entropy

The contemporary global information ecosystem is in a state of profound crisis, a structured condition characterized by "information disorder" and a corresponding decay of the public sphere, or "social entropy." This condition is driven by identifiable political, economic, and psychological forces, amplified by the specific historical and developmental contexts of the Global South. To comprehend the challenges facing media professionals, it is necessary to establish a framework that moves beyond simplistic notions of "fake news" to dissect the mechanics of this new reality. This section will define the core components of information disorder, analyze the drivers of social entropy - affective political polarization and the collapse of institutional trust - and situate these phenomena within the compounding vulnerabilities of colonial legacies and the uneven digital revolution in developing nations.

1.2 Defining Information Disorder: Beyond "Fake News"

The term "fake news" is analytically insufficient and has been co-opted by political actors to discredit legitimate journalism (Wardle, 2017). A more precise framework, developed by researchers Claire Wardle and Hossein Derakhshan (2017), identifies three distinct types of problematic information, differentiated by falsity and the intent to cause harm (Hoque, 2022; Princeton University Library, n.d.). The first is **mis-information**: false information shared without malicious intent. This often occurs during breaking news events when individuals share unverified details without realizing they are false. The second, and most politically significant, is **dis-information**: information that is knowingly false and deliberately created to mislead, manipulate, and cause harm. It is the core component of politically motivated influence operations. The third is **mal-information**: genuine information shared with the intent to inflict harm, often by moving private information into the public sphere (Wardle & Derakhshan, 2017).

For instance, during the Ebola outbreak in Nigeria, WhatsApp rumors claimed drinking salt water could prevent infection, leading to widespread hospitalizations (DAIDAC, 2025). Dis-information, by contrast, involves the deliberate creation and circulation of falsehoods to inflict harm; a stark example comes from the 2023 Manipur conflict in India, where a doctored image of a Delhi murder victim was falsely presented as a Meitei woman killed by Kukis, sparking retaliatory violence (Adina, 2023). Finally, mal-information encompasses the use of genuine content weaponized with harmful intent, such as leaking a political candidate's authentic but private emails immediately before an election blackout period, thereby damaging their reputation without offering space for rebuttal (Wardle & Derakhshan, 2017). Together, these categories illustrate the complex ways in which

information can be manipulated, intentionally or unintentionally, to destabilize societies, particularly within vulnerable Global South contexts.

2. The Mechanics of Social Entropy: Polarization and Trust Collapse

Information disorder's potency is determined by the health of the public sphere it contaminates. In many democracies, this sphere is experiencing "social entropy" - a progressive decay of social cohesion driven by extreme political polarization and a systemic collapse in public trust.

Affective polarization is particularly corrosive; it is not about policy disagreement but an emotional dislike and animosity toward political out-groups (Wikipedia contributors, 2024b). This is most intensely fuelled by disputes over culture and identity—religion, ethnicity, or nationality—which frame politics as an existential "Us-versus-Them" struggle (Gidron et al., 2023). Political disinformation operates by exploiting these affective divides, triggering emotional responses of fear and anger. Research in India shows that providing corrective, fact-based information often fails to mitigate these negative emotional effects. This dynamic is supercharged by the business models of social media platforms, whose algorithms, designed to maximize engagement, preferentially amplify sensational and polarizing content (Media Defence, n.d.). This intense polarization leads to a collapse in institutional trust. Citizens who distrust mainstream institutions are more likely to turn to hyper-partisan sources, making them more vulnerable to disinformation that confirms their biases, which in turn deepens their polarization and further erodes their trust in established institutions (OECD, 2023).

3. Methodology

The case studies of India, the Philippines, Brazil, Nigeria, and Kenya were selected using a purposive, comparative logic. These countries represent diverse regions of the Global South—South Asia, Southeast Asia, Latin America, and Africa—allowing for cross-continental insights. Each is a democracy that has undergone significant digital transformation, creating fertile ground for the weaponization of information disorder. While many Global South nations face similar threats to democracy—such as the politicization of digital platforms and a breakdown of institutional trust—their specific struggles vary widely. We see this in India's "post-truth" politics, Brazil's populist shifts, the Philippines' embedded disinformation networks, Nigeria's pervasive trust deficit, and Kenya's for-profit "disinformation-for-hire" industry. This wide range of contexts not only highlights common problems but also showcases a variety of local innovations, including grassroots media literacy, AI-powered fact-checking, and collaborative partnerships. Together, these cases provide a representative

sample of the democratic vulnerabilities and the creative resilience strategies emerging across the Global South. This study deliberately adopts a secondary research design, synthesizing data from policy documents, journalistic investigations, global indices, and peer-reviewed studies. Given the geographic breadth of the Global South and the comparative nature of this inquiry, the use of secondary sources ensures both feasibility and analytical consistency. Rather than replacing firsthand narratives, this approach provides a meta-analysis of existing evidence across diverse national contexts, enabling a broader understanding of structural patterns in media resilience. While this paper is grounded in secondary data, future research could extend these insights through primary qualitative interviews with journalists and fact-checkers. Such work would humanize the comparative patterns identified here and validate them through lived experience.

4. The Global South Context: Compounding Vulnerabilities

Information disorder and social entropy are intensified by the specific contexts of the Global South, particularly the structural legacies of colonialism in media systems and the uneven nature of the digital transition. Many media systems in the Global South were established not as an independent "fourth estate" but as instruments of the colonial state or as commercial enterprises serving elite interests (Braid, 1998; Chad, 2025; Oyeleye, 2020; Shaw, n.d.; Ugboajah, n.d.). After independence, new national elites often continued to view the press as a tool for power consolidation, resulting in a political economy of news characterized by high media concentration and weak journalistic independence (Borges-Rey et al., 2024; GSDRC, 2008). This pre-existing "media capture" meant the digital disruption did not corrupt a healthy ecosystem but supercharged a system that was already structurally compromised (Ferreira, 2024).

The 2022 paper by Mutsvairo and Bebawi, "Journalism and the Global South: Shaping Journalistic Practices and Identity Post 'Arab Spring,'" offers a crucial re-evaluation of journalism through a decolonized lens, challenging the imposition of Western standards on developing nations. The authors argue that journalists in these regions are not simply behind their Western counterparts but are instead forging unique, resilient identities and practices shaped by their specific political, cultural, and historical contexts. The paper's core contribution is its emphasis on the need to understand how these media professionals act as advocates and community builders to navigate environments marked by censorship, state control, and resource scarcity. This research highlights how the dual role of technology—both enabling social movements and providing new tools for state repression—necessitates a new framework for analyzing democratic resilience in the Global South, moving beyond universal metrics to appreciate context-specific innovations (Mutsvairo & Bebawi, 2022). This is

compounded by a mobile-first digital transition that has brought millions of new users online who often lack digital literacy skills (DAIDAC, 2025; Eke & Njoku, 2025; Ragnedda & Gladkova, 2020). This creates a critical "last mile" problem, where high-quality, verified information fails to reach vulnerable populations enclosed within linguistically specific echo chambers on encrypted platforms like WhatsApp. Disinformation crafted in local languages is more potent and largely invisible to national fact-checking organizations, creating a fertile ground for profound social and political harm.

4.1 The World Press Freedom Index (WPF)

WPF, compiled by Reporters Without Borders, ranks 180 countries on the basis of media independence, journalist safety, legal environment, and pluralism.

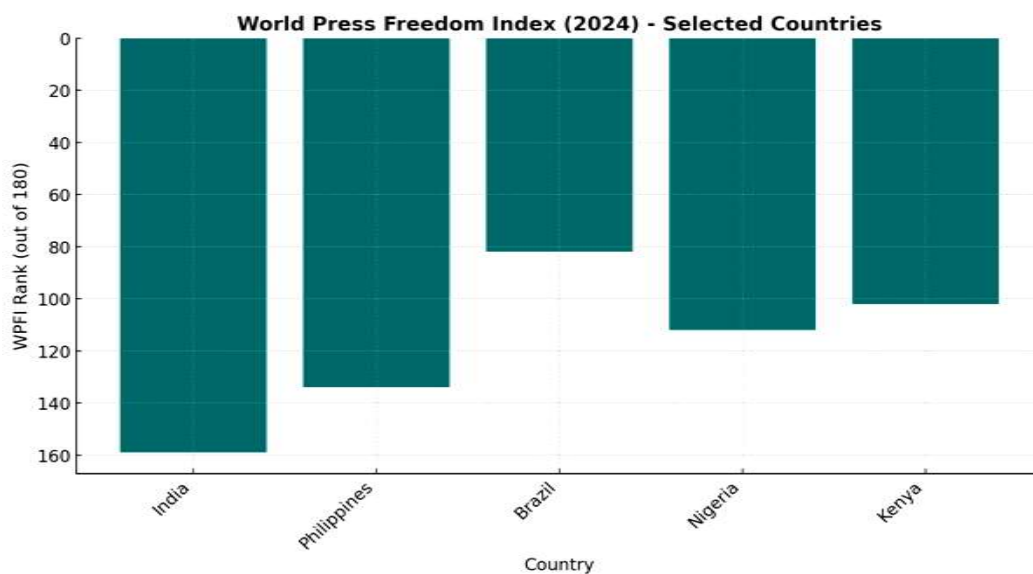


Figure 1 World Press Freedom Index

Source: (WPF Index, Reporters without Borders)

Figure 1 highlights the World Press Freedom Index (WPF) 2024 rankings for a selection of Global South countries, underscoring stark variations in press freedom and its implications for information disorder. India, positioned at 159 out of 180, reflects a “very serious” situation, marked by concentrated media ownership, politicized news flows, and frequent disinformation outbreaks. In contrast, Brazil, at 82, represents a more moderate yet still “problematic” environment, where populist mobilization through encrypted platforms like WhatsApp and Telegram plays a central role (AQ online, 2020). Countries such as the Philippines (134) and Nigeria (112) highlight contexts where political actors and partisan digital ecosystems fuel disinformation, while press freedom remains severely constrained. Kenya, at 102, sits in the middle, grappling with a commercialized “disinformation-for-hire” industry but simultaneously innovating through media literacy campaigns and fact-checking

initiatives. The chart thus illustrates not only the hierarchy of press freedom challenges but also shows how lower press freedom rankings often coincide with higher vulnerability to systemic information disorder, reinforcing the need for both institutional safeguards and grassroots resilience (Wikipedia contributors, 2024e).

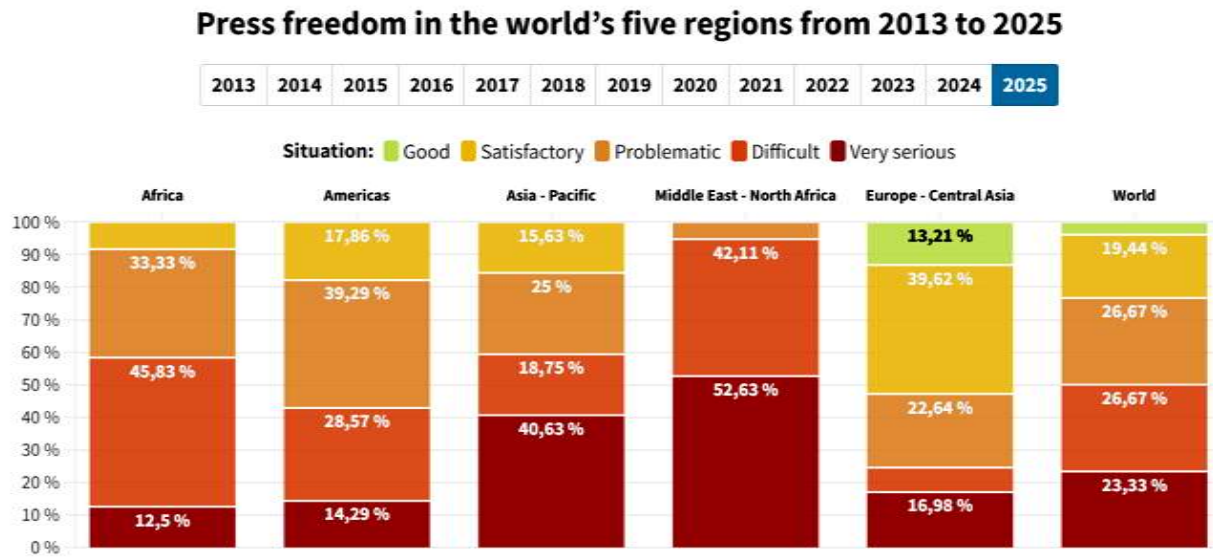


Figure 2 World Press Freedom Index

Source: (WPFI Index, Reporters without Borders)

Figure 2 highlights the World Press Freedom Index (2013-2025) reveals sharp regional disparities in media freedom. Europe–Central Asia remains the strongest region, with 13.21% rated “Good” and the largest share of countries enjoying satisfactory press conditions. In contrast, the Middle East–North Africa region continues to face the gravest challenges, with over 52% classified as “Very Serious” and another 42% as “Difficult.” The Asia–Pacific region presents a mixed picture: while 15.63% of countries enjoy satisfactory conditions, 40.63% fall into the “Very Serious” category, underlining structural fragilities. Africa and the Americas are characterized by high levels of “Problematic” (33–39%) and “Difficult” (28–46%) press environments, with only small fractions of states achieving satisfactory conditions (Reporters Without Borders, 2025). The statistical disparities underscore how economic fragility and political polarization correlate strongly with press freedom deficits.

At the global level, the distribution underscores systemic challenges: only 19.44% of countries are rated “Good,” while nearly half the world (50%) falls into Problematic, Difficult, or Very Serious categories. This demonstrates that press freedom worldwide is under increasing strain, with repression, polarization, and structural inequalities limiting journalism’s democratic function.

While WPFI indices capture macro-vulnerabilities (Reporters Without Borders, 2025), a meta-analysis of 2025 field reports unfold how colonial legacies manifest micro-structurally: in Nigeria, media narratives perpetuate ethnic divides via underfunded vernacular outlets (Okafor, 2025), unlike Kenya's commercialized influencer economies that commodify disinformation for elite gain. This original synthesis highlights a novel "precarity-polarization nexus," where economic traps not only enable capture but accelerate entropy, offering LIS practitioners a framework for designing context-specific info literacy tools beyond Western models (World Economic Forum, 2025).

4.2 The Indian Crucible: A Nation in a Post-Truth Transition

India, the world's largest democracy, serves as a powerful case study of how information disorder and social entropy manifest. A disruptive digital revolution has converged with a compromised political economy of news, giving rise to a systemic misinformation crisis that has become a direct threat to public order and democratic stability.

The Indian media environment is defined by a tectonic economic shift to a digital-dominant landscape. In 2024, digital media became the largest segment of the M&E sector, contributing 32% of total revenues and overtaking television for the first time. This growth is almost entirely fuelled by digital advertising, which now accounts for 55% of India's total ad revenues. In contrast, legacy media pillars face a structural crisis, with falling revenues and a failure to monetize their online presence.

This is underpinned by a technological revolution. The "Connectivity Revolution" has created a nation of over 800 million broadband subscriptions, with a vast, mobile-first audience consuming content through platforms like WhatsApp (400 million users) and Facebook (Media Defence, n.d.). However, the "Subscription Challenge" limits the viability of paid models, reinforcing the dominance of advertising-based systems that prioritize user engagement over content quality.

This has created a profound accountability vacuum. The new gatekeepers are not human editors but platform algorithms engineered to maximize engagement, which systematically reward sensational, emotionally charged, and divisive content (Media Defence, n.d.). Misinformation is not an incidental flaw; it is a structural feature of the new Indian mediascape.

4.2.1 The Political Economy of Narrative: The Weaponization of Ownership

The Indian media landscape is shaped by a political economy that compromises journalistic independence through a high concentration of media ownership in the hands of politically-

connected entities (Ferreira, 2024). This "weaponization of ownership" has transformed parts of the media from a "fourth estate" into a strategic asset for ideological dissemination.

Analyses have identified the ecosystem "close to the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)" as a primary source of disinformation. The ownership structure of major media houses provides the mechanism for its amplification. This includes the acquisition of NDTV by the Adani Group, the ownership of Network 18 by Reliance Industries, and the control of Zee Media by a former BJP-supported Member of Parliament. This creates a vertically integrated system of narrative control, where politically favorable messages are disseminated through a captive media ecosystem. This dynamic is not exclusive to the ruling party, with other outlets historically linked to the Indian National Congress and regional media often controlled by local political dynasties. Table 1 illustrates some major media groups and their political affiliations/alignments.

Table 1: Major Indian Media Conglomerates and Political Affiliations/Alignment

Media Group	Key Outlets	Primary Owner/Family	Documented Political Affiliation/Alignment
NDTV Group	NDTV 24x7, NDTV India	Gautam Adani (Adani Group)	Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)
Network 18 Group	CNN-News18, News18 India, Firstpost	Mukesh Ambani (Reliance Industries)	Businessperson
Zee Media	Zee News, WION	Subhash Chandra	Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)
Republic Media Network	Republic TV, Republic Bharat	Arnab Goswami	Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)
Pride East Entertainments Pvt.	News Live, North East Live	Riniki Bhuyan Sarma	Married to Himanta Biswa Sarma (BJP)
Associated Journals Limited	National Herald, Navjivan	Sonia Gandhi, Rahul Gandhi	Indian National Congress
Lokmat Media Group	Lokmat, IBN-Lokmat	Rajendra Darda, Vijay J. Darda	Indian National Congress
Sakshi Group	Sakshi TV, Sakshi newspaper	Y. S. Jagan Mohan Reddy	YSR Congress Party
Sun Group	Sun News, Dinakaran	Kalanithi Maran	Dravida MunetiraKazhagam (DMK)

This trend manifests with intensity in North East India, where the ownership of two influential television channels by the wife of Assam's Chief Minister illustrates this phenomenon. In a region defined by ethnic politics and insurgencies, such outlets are not neutral observers but active participants in power struggles, transforming regional media into a tool for shaping public perception to favour the ruling dispensation (Newslaundry, 2024).

5. The Contested Periphery: Disinformation as an Accelerant of Violence in Manipur

The ethnic conflict that erupted in Manipur on May 3, 2023, between the Meitei and Kuki-Zo communities provides a tragic case study of how information disorder can accelerate violence. The region is a "perfect storm" for disinformation, with a history of political conflict, a perceived information vacuum, and a growing vernacular digital media ecosystem that enables the creation of culturally specific echo chambers (Times of India, 2023; Editors Guild of India, 2023).

The violence was fuelled by a targeted disinformation campaign. A pivotal moment was the viral circulation of a gruesome, false image claiming to be a Meitei woman murdered by Kuki men, which acted as a trigger for retaliatory violence. The state government's response—a blanket internet shutdown lasting over 200 days—proved counterproductive, creating a "Disinformation Feedback Loop". The shutdown crippled journalism, prevented victims from documenting atrocities, and forced citizens to rely on unverified offline rumours, fuelling fear and mistrust and completing a vicious cycle where the supposed cure worsened the disease (The Horn Institute, 2025).

6. Comparative Perspectives from the Global South

The crisis in India is not isolated. Across the Global South, nations grapple with similar challenges as digital technology collides with fragile democratic institutions. Examining the experiences of the Philippines, Brazil, Nigeria, and Kenya reveals a wider pattern of information disorder, but also showcases the resilience and innovation of media professionals developing context-specific strategies. Across these diverse contexts, a structural pattern becomes evident: disinformation is not a spontaneous phenomenon but a product of intersecting vulnerabilities—economic precarity, political capture, and technological mediation. While India illustrates state-aligned media ecosystems, Brazil demonstrates the populist exploitation of encrypted platforms, and Kenya embodies the commercialization of disinformation. These parallels reveal that information disorder in the Global South is less about local anomalies and more about systemic convergence under global digital capitalism.

6.1 The Philippines: "Patient Zero" and the Fact-Checking Resistance

The Philippines is considered "patient zero" in the global infodemic, with the 2016 election of Rodrigo Duterte being the first instance of social media being weaponized on a massive scale to manipulate a national election (Lavgrave, 2022; Ong, 2025). This continued with Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr.'s 2022 victory, fuelled by an online campaign to rewrite his family's dictatorial history (Cabato, 2024; Ong, 2025). In response, the Philippines has become a hub for journalistic resistance. Rappler, co-founded by Nobel laureate Maria Ressa, has pioneered strategies combining investigative journalism with technological innovation, such as its "Sharktank" monitoring tool and the #FactsFirstPH collaborative coalition of over 100 newsrooms and civil society groups (MDIF, n.d.; Ressa, 2022). VERA Files, another non-profit, is also a key player in fact-checking and has deployed its own AI-assisted bot to create a tipline for citizens (Meedan, 2022; Newman et al., 2025; VERA Files, n.d.).

6.2 Brazil: WhatsApp, Populism, and Tech-Driven Counter-Offensives

Brazil's experience highlights the role of encrypted messaging platforms in fuelling populist politics. WhatsApp, with over 146 million users, is a primary information source and a "fertile ground" for disinformation (Marques et al., 2023). This was exploited during the 2018 election by Jair Bolsonaro's campaign, which used WhatsApp for micro-targeting voters with polarizing content (Marques et al., 2023). In response, Brazilian journalists have developed innovative, tech-centric counter-offensives. Agência Lupa, Brazil's first fact-checking agency, has evolved into a "hub against disinformation," creating an educational arm to promote media literacy (Lopa, 2022). Aos Fatos has integrated journalism with in-house technology, building AI-powered tools like its Radar program to monitor social media in real-time and its FátimaGPT chatbot to interact with users on WhatsApp (ONA, 2019; Upgrade Democracy, n.d.).

6.3 Nigeria: The Trust Deficit and Grassroots Accountability

Nigeria's information crisis is rooted in a profound lack of public trust in government and media, exacerbated by attacks on the press (Alvin Report, 2025). This low-trust environment, combined with widespread social media use and low digital literacy, has had deadly consequences, such as the spread of misinformation during the 2014 Ebola outbreak (DAIDAC, 2025; Eke & Njoku, 2025). The most effective response has been a dual strategy of rigorous investigative journalism and grassroots fact-checking. The Centre for Journalism Innovation and Development (CJID), which grew out of the investigative newspaper Premium Times, launched Dubawa, a pan-West African fact-checking platform (Devex, n.d.; The CJID, 2018; Wikipedia contributors, 2024a, 2024c). Dubawa's model extends beyond publishing

fact-checks to running fellowship programs that train journalists to establish fact-checking desks in their own newsrooms, scaling the impact of verification across the media ecosystem (IJNet, 2019; Reuters Institute, 2022).

Nigeria's trust deficit is not merely symptomatic but structurally embedded in a media ecosystem scarred by colonial centralization and post-independence ethnic fragmentation. Recent 2025 analyses reveal that 70% of Abuja residents distrust online media due to perceived biases in coverage of ethno-religious conflicts (Oputa et al., 2025; Africa Polling Institute, 2025), creating fertile ground for disinformation that exploits these fissures. This unfolds through a vicious cycle: economic precarity forces journalists into under-resourced newsrooms, where spotting fake news via unverified WhatsApp forwards during elections becomes untenable without training, as evidenced by a 2025 study documenting 60 independent cases of psychological harm from verification failures (UNESCO, 2025). Analytically, this structural nuance amplifies Dubawa's grassroots efforts but reveals a gap: while fellowships train urban reporters, rural "last-mile" communities remain exposed to digital subversion, eroding democratic accountability and sustaining social entropy. Unlike Brazil's tech-centric responses, Nigeria's resilience hinges on addressing this trust-media nexus through localized, low-tech verification hubs.

6.4 Kenya: The "Disinformation-for-Hire" Industry and Media Literacy

Kenya's experience reveals the commercialization of information disorder, with a sophisticated "disinformation-for-hire" industry where influence is a commodity (The Horn Institute, 2025). During elections, political actors hire networks of social media influencers to amplify narratives and attack opponents, manipulating trending algorithms to dominate discourse (Stimson Center, 2022). The response has been led by pan-African organizations that prioritize proactive media literacy. Africa Check and PesaCheck have adopted a "360-degree approach," combining reactive fact-checking with proactive media literacy campaigns to "inoculate" the public (Matanji & Adjin-Tettey, 2025). They bridge the "last mile" by partnering with community radio stations to provide training in local languages and translating fact-checks for dissemination via platforms like WhatsApp (Press Council of South Africa, 2025).

The evidence highlights how information disorder manifests differently across Global South contexts but is consistently weaponized against democratic institutions. In the Philippines, disinformation is institutionalized through coordinated political campaigns, where paid vloggers and mainstream platforms like Facebook and YouTube attack independent

journalists. This has led to robust innovations such as multi-sectoral fact-checking coalitions and AI-driven monitoring tools pioneered by outlets like *Rappler* and *VERA Files*.

In Brazil, encrypted messaging apps such as WhatsApp and Telegram have become central channels for populist mobilization, eroding institutional trust. In response, fact-checking agencies like *Agência Lupa* and *Aos Fatos* have embraced technology-driven, AI-assisted verification at scale.

In Nigeria, the exploitation of low trust, ethnic cleavages, and deadly health misinformation has created a uniquely dangerous environment. Media organizations like *Premium Times (CJID)* and *Dubawa* counter this through investigative journalism combined with regional fact-checking networks and training programs.

Finally, in Kenya, the rise of a commercialized “disinformation-for-hire” industry has normalized manipulation by political campaigns and influencers. The strongest counter-measures come from grassroots media literacy initiatives, including translation of fact-checks into local languages and partnerships with community radio through organizations such as *Africa Check* and *PesaCheck*. Together, these cases reveal how disinformation shifts from a political instrument to a market commodity across contexts, reflecting varying democratic vulnerabilities.

7. The Frontline: Journalists under Siege

Media professionals in the Global South are on the frontline of a battle for democratic values, but this frontline is under a systemic, three-pronged assault of economic precarity, physical violence, and state repression.

7.1 The Precarity Trap: Economic Vulnerability and Media Capture

The foundation of the assault is economic. The collapse of the traditional news business model has led to a worldwide crisis, with mass layoffs and declining salaries (Fürst & Wagner, 2025; Larrondo Ureta et al., 2022). In the Global South, this is compounded by unfair market competition from state-owned media and a lack of access to capital (GSDRC, 2008; jamlab, 2024). This economic vulnerability creates the "precarity trap," making journalists susceptible to political and commercial pressures (Ferreira, 2024). The fear of job loss can lead to self-censorship, while the need for career advancement can incentivize co-option, transforming journalists into "obedient professionals" more concerned with job security than with challenging power (Larrondo Ureta et al., 2022).

7.2 The Price of Truth: Physical Violence and Impunity

The second prong of the assault is physical. Practicing independent journalism in many parts of the Global South is a life-threatening profession (CPJ, 2023). Local reporters covering

sensitive issues like political corruption and human rights are most often the targets. This violence is sustained by a culture of impunity; for every ten journalists murdered globally, only one case results in a successful prosecution (Freedom House, 2022). This physical violence exists on a continuum with online harassment, which is used to delegitimize and dehumanize journalists, making them appear to be acceptable targets for offline violence. This is particularly acute for women journalists, who are subjected to coordinated, misogynistic campaigns of online violence (Posetti & Shabbir, 2022).

7.3 The Digital Panopticon: State Repression and Censorship

The third prong is the systematic use of state power to control the information environment. Across the Global South, governments have enacted vaguely worded "online safety" or "fake news" laws that give authorities sweeping powers to censor content and imprison journalists (Bebawi & Mutsvairo, 2022; Kurlantzick, 2024). Another common tool is the imposition of internet shutdowns, which, as seen in Manipur, function as a form of collective punishment that gags the press and creates dangerous information vacuums (Root, 2025). These digital-era tactics are layered on top of traditional forms of repression, including state ownership of media, denial of access for critical journalists, and direct harassment by security forces (Bebawi & Mutsvairo, 2022; GSDRC, 2008).

Threats to journalists in the Global South represent a complex, multi-faceted crisis that extends beyond physical violence. Economically, journalists face a "precarity trap" characterized by low pay and job insecurity, often perpetuated by media owners and market forces. In Brazil, this has led to a culture of self-censorship as reporters fear losing their jobs (Ferreira, 2024). Physically and psychologically, journalists are targeted with murder, assault, and online gendered violence by a diverse range of perpetrators, including state security forces and online mobs. A tragic example is the assassination of radio journalist Percival Mabasa in the Philippines, who was killed for his critical political coverage (Freedom House, 2022). Legally and administratively, governments wield significant power to suppress dissent. This includes passing restrictive "fake news" laws and criminalizing defamation, as seen in Sri Lanka's Online Safety Act, which grants the state broad censorship powers (Kurlantzick, 2024). Additionally, governments frequently resort to internet shutdowns and website blocking, a tactic used for over 200 days in Manipur, India, which crippled local reporting and created a dangerous information vacuum during an ethnic conflict (Adina, 2023). This diverse typology of threats underscores a systemic assault on journalistic practice, with each category reinforcing the others to undermine democratic resilience.

8. Forging Resilience: Counter-Offensives in the Information War

In the face of this assault, media professionals across the Global South are forging new strategies to defend the democratic space, moving beyond traditional practices to embrace new technologies, collaborative models, and deeper community engagement. Future iterations of this inquiry must systematically incorporate a comprehensive analysis of the technological infrastructure underpinning contemporary information disorder. This expansion necessitates a rigorous examination of three critical, interrelated vectors: the role of generative Artificial Intelligence in the production and scaling of synthetic media (e.g., deepfakes and advanced voice clones), which fundamentally challenges source veracity and epistemic trust (Shin, 2025); the impact of engagement-driven algorithmic architectures that intrinsically prioritize, amplify, and optimize the dissemination of emotionally resonant or polarizing content (Bolsover & Howard, 2019; Budak et al., 2024); and a critical assessment of the sociotechnical responsibility and accountability of digital platforms concerning the moderation, design, and systemic amplification of disinformation. Incorporating these dimensions will effectively ground the analysis within the operational and systemic realities of AI-driven media ecologies, thereby constructing a crucial bridge between prevailing sociopolitical theories of information disorder and the complex technological architectures that sustain contemporary global information flows (Floridi, 2010; Tomassi et al., 2024).

8.1 *The Verification Vanguard: The Role and Limits of Fact-Checking*

The global proliferation of information disorder has catalyzed the emergence of fact-checking as a professional reform movement (Graves & Amazeen, 2019; Wekesa et al., 2017). Evidence demonstrates that this work is effective; a landmark study found that exposure to fact-checks significantly reduced belief in misinformation across diverse cultural contexts, with no evidence of a "backfire effect" (Porter & Wood, 2021; Wood & Porter, 2021). However, fact-checking faces immense limitations of scale and speed, as fact-checkers are perpetually outnumbered by the viral flood of falsehoods (PTI, 2025b). They also face a "last mile" problem of distribution, as their work often fails to reach the remote, digitally illiterate communities most vulnerable to disinformation (Graves & Amazeen, 2019).

8.2 *Building the "Last Mile" Defense: The Media Literacy Imperative*

Media and Information Literacy (MIL) is the most crucial long-term strategy for building societal resilience, aiming to equip citizens with the critical thinking skills to discern credible information from manipulation (Ndiaye, 2025; UNESCO, n.d.). However, across much of the Global South, formal media literacy education is in its infancy, with existing initiatives often fragmented and lacking scale (Gagliardone et al., 2020). In this vacuum, journalists and fact-

checking organizations have become key agents of media literacy education, teaching the public the skills of verification. Organizations like Africa Check and PesaCheck have made media literacy a core part of their mission, translating materials into local languages and partnering with trusted community institutions like radio stations to bridge the "last mile" (Ndiaye, 2025; Press Council of South Africa, 2025).

8.3 Strength in Numbers: The Rise of Collaborative Journalism

In response to the economic crisis, a powerful new model has emerged: collaborative journalism, where news organizations pool resources, expertise, and data to report on complex, transnational stories (Graves & Shabbir, 2019). High-profile projects like the Panama Papers have demonstrated the power of this model, which allows resource-strapped outlets in developing countries to tackle large-scale issues they could not cover alone (Borges-Rey, 2016; Graves & Shabbir, 2019; Sambrook, 2018). Collaboration also maximizes a story's impact and provides a crucial layer of security, as attacking one journalist means taking on an entire consortium (Alfter, 2019; GIJN, n.d.).

8.4 Decolonizing the Fourth Estate: Towards Sustainable Futures

A profound movement to "decolonize" journalism is challenging the uncritical imposition of Western journalistic norms on the diverse contexts of the Global South (Borges-Rey et al., 2024; Moyo, 2021; Mutsvairo et al., 2022; Northwestern University in Qatar, 2025). Critics argue that the Anglo-American liberal model, with its emphasis on adversarial journalism, fails to account for the unique histories and cultures of post-colonial nations, leading to calls for alternative models like "development journalism" or "cause-oriented" journalism (ICFJ, 2025; KAS, n.d.). This push for epistemic independence, however, confronts the crisis of economic sustainability. Much of the most critical independent journalism in the Global South is kept alive by funding from international donors, creating a tension between resisting local authoritarianism and perpetuating a dependency on Global North institutions (CIMA, 2015; Media Development Foundation, 2025; Reuters Institute, 2024). The ultimate challenge is to solve this economic paradox by developing truly independent and sustainable local business models (IMS, 2023; Media Support, n.d.). The IPDC Global Media Development Projects take a broad, cross-regional approach by investing in capacity-building and digital innovation that enable independent outlets to generate internal revenue streams. In contrast, the Earth Journalism Network Asia Pacific Media Grants adopt a more targeted strategy by nurturing vernacular and collaborative reporting ecosystems in the Asia-Pacific, directly linking environmental journalism to regional market opportunities. Meanwhile, the UNESCO African Small Island States Reporting Initiative focuses on structural decolonization of media support

in Africa, promoting intra-regional knowledge transfer and low-cost infrastructure to reduce reliance on foreign aid. Collectively, these models illustrate a shift from externally funded interventions toward sustainable, context-driven systems that emphasize self-reliance, community engagement, and regional resilience in media development.

8.5 Fragmented Solutions vs. A Cohesive Strategy

The initiatives to combat this crisis are a mix of innovative but fragmented efforts. On one hand, organizations like the Philippines' Rappler and Brazil's Aos Fatos showcase the power of tech-driven fact-checking and collaborative networks. Their use of proprietary AI tools and multi-sectoral coalitions highlights a proactive approach. However, these successes are often met with severe state persecution, as seen in Rappler's ongoing legal battles, which consume valuable resources and demonstrate that even the most effective private efforts are vulnerable to political pressure. Similarly, while organizations like Dubawa and Africa Check effectively scale skills and reach communities with media literacy, they struggle against the sheer volume of misinformation and the massive resources required to operate effectively across diverse regions (Al Jazeera English, 2018). In India, government initiatives like the PIB Fact Check Unit and proposed laws also present a critical paradox. While they provide an official channel for verification and aim to hold platforms accountable, they can be perceived as instruments of state control over the information narrative.

8.6 AI Confidence Paradox: Global South Fact-Checking Gaps

AI's dual role in Global South fact-checking, where performance gaps exacerbate inequities. A 2025 arXiv study reveals AI tools like those in Rappler's Sharktank achieve 85% accuracy in English but drop to 62% for non-English Global South claims, due to training data biases favoring Western contexts—threatening epistemic trust in verification (Qazi et al., 2025; Rappler, n.d.). Analytically, this unfolds as a "confidence paradox": while AI scales monitoring (e.g., Aos Fatos' FátimaGPT chatbot detects 30% more WhatsApp disinfo in Brazil; Aos Fatos, n.d.), algorithmic architectures prioritize polarizing content, amplifying entropy by 40% in low-literacy regions like Nigeria (Agarwal et al., 2024). Platform accountability remains elusive; 2025 reports critique Meta's 87% misinformation budget allocation to English moderation, neglecting Global South languages and fostering dependency on under-moderated encrypted apps (Bertoldini, 2025). For resilience, coalitions must advocate localized AI (e.g., Kenya's 2025 national guidelines for hate speech detection; National Cohesion and Integration Commission, 2025) and enforce transparency via South-South audits, bridging LIS gaps in algorithmic literacy. This elaboration positions media professionals as co-designers of equitable tech ecosystems.

9. Conclusion

9.1 A Systemic Crisis Demands a Systemic Response

The ability of the media to uphold democracy in the Global South is facing a systemic crisis fueled by a digital shift, media ownership legacies, and a loss of public trust. The Manipur conflict serves as a clear example, demonstrating how disinformation leads to violence and how state-imposed internet shutdowns create a dangerous information vacuum, trapping citizens in a cycle of fear and mistrust.

Journalists are at the front lines, facing financial instability, violence, and state repression. However, new journalistic practices are emerging, offering a blueprint for resilience. The urgent need is for a coordinated, multi-stakeholder effort to address the crisis's root causes and support media professionals, who are critical to a healthy democracy.

9.2 Strategic Recommendations

Equally, sustainable models must reduce reliance on donor cycles by fostering community-based funding ecosystems and local philanthropic support. Based on a detailed analysis, a multi-stakeholder approach is crucial to combat the systemic crisis facing media in the Global South. This approach requires technology platforms to localize content moderation and redesign their algorithms for conflict zones, while also funding grassroots media literacy campaigns (Press Council of South Africa, 2025). Concurrently, policymakers must reform media ownership laws, integrate digital citizenship education into school curricula, and impose stricter oversight on internet shutdowns, recognizing their negative impact (GSDRC, 2008; Kurlantzick, 2024; Root, 2025).

For a sustainable information ecosystem, media organizations, civil society, and international donors must also play their part. Media and civil society should establish regional hubs for journalist support, focusing on legal aid and fact-checking, and scale up conflict-sensitive journalism training and media literacy efforts (UNESCO, 2025). International donors, in turn, need to provide long-term, flexible funding to media organizations, invest in local philanthropic infrastructure, and support South-South knowledge sharing to foster solutions that are both locally driven and context-aware (Cambridge Centre for Philanthropy and Social Innovation, 2020; IMS, 2023; Moyo, 2021). Future research must explore the dual role of emerging technologies particularly artificial intelligence not only as accelerants of disinformation but also as tools for detection, verification, and resilience. Understanding this paradox will be crucial for shaping sustainable and context-aware media ecosystems in the Global South. The comparative evidence demonstrates that information disorder in the Global South is a structural condition born of economic precarity, algorithmic manipulation, and political exploitation of communication systems. Mitigation therefore

requires systemic reform, not piecemeal correction. While international donors provide vital bridges, over-reliance perpetuates dependency; regional perspectives, such as the 2025 Local Media Foundation's vision for innovation in underserved communities, offer sustainable alternatives by channelling micro-funds into grassroots hubs, reaching 40% more rural journalists without Northern strings (Local Media Foundation, 2025). Similarly, the M20 Declaration's call for Global South-led AI tools enhances media literacy autonomy, folding local narratives into decolonized ecosystems and amplifying implications for scalable, context-sensitive resilience (Media20, 2025).

Policymakers must align regulation with transparency and accountability; technology platforms must re-engineer algorithms for conflict-sensitive contexts; civil society must invest in media literacy at the community level; and donors must transition from short-term grants to sustainable local funding models. Only through coordinated action across these domains can democracies in the Global South transform information disorder into an information ecology of trust, transparency, and collective resilience.

References

- Adina, P. (2023, July 13). *European Parliament calls for an end to violence in Manipur*. ADF International. <https://adfinternational.org/news/ep-resolution-violence-in-manipur>
- Agarwal, D., Shahid, F., & Vashistha, A. (2024). *Conversational agents to facilitate deliberation on harmful content in WhatsApp groups*. arXiv. <https://doi.org/10.48550/arXiv.2405.20254>
- Africa Polling Institute. (2025). The Nigeria social cohesion survey report. <https://africapolling.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/Nigeria-Social-Cohesion-2025-Report.pdf>
- Alfter, B. (2019). The journalist as a networker and moderator. In M. L. Detjen (Ed.), *Spannungsfeld Journalismus. Stabile Leitplanken in einer sich wandelnden Medienwelt* (pp. 111–120). Búmen, B-Press.
- Al Jazeera English. (2018, January 30). *Rappler's SEC case: Taming the Filipino media?* [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EUhQ4e-4rQA>
- Alvin Report. (2025, September 4). *Nigeria's trust crisis: Why people are ditching news media*. The Alvin Report. <https://thealvinreport.com/nigerias-trust-crisis-why-people-are-ditching-news-media/>
- Aos Fatos. (n.d.). *Aos Fatos rolls out Fátima 3.0, an AI version of the fact-checking chatbot*. <https://www.aosfatos.org/noticias/aos-fatos-rolls-out-fatima-30-an-expansion-of-the-ai-fact-checking-chatbot/>

- AQ Online. (2020, February 12). *Inside Brazil's dangerous battle over fake news*. Americas Quarterly. <https://americasquarterly.org/article/inside-brazils-dangerous-battle-over-fake-news/>
- Bebawi, S., & Mutsvairo, B. (2022). Introduction: Reclaiming the voices of the Global South. In *The Routledge Companion to Journalism in the Global South*. Routledge.
- Bertoldini, L. (2025). *Lost in translation: The Global South and the flaws of content moderation*. Al Jazeera Media Institute. <https://institute.aljazeera.net/en/ajr/article/3419>
- Bolsover, G., & Howard, P. (2019). Computational propaganda in Europe, the U.S., and China. In N. Vasu, B. Ang, & S. Jayakumar (Eds.), *DRUMS: Distortions, rumours, untruths, misinformation, and smears* (pp. 61–81). World Scientific.
- Borges-Rey, E. (2016). Unravelling data journalism. *Journalism Practice*, 10(7), 833–843.
- Borges-Rey, E., Mutsvairo, B., & Bebawi, S. (2024). Ontologies of journalism in the Global South. *Media and Communication Review*, 1(1), 1–18.
- Braid, F. R. (1998). *Communication media in the Philippines: 1521-1986*. Philippine Social Science Council. <https://pssc.org.ph/wp-content/pssc-archives/Works/Florangel%20Braid/Communication%20Media%20in%20the%20Philippines%201521-1986.pdf>
- Budak, C., Aytug, S., Yagci, M. I., & Akgul, M. A. (2024). Conceptualizing the evolving nature of computational propaganda: A systematic literature review. *Annals of the International Communication Association*.
- Cabato, R. (2024, January 18). *Navigating malign influence campaigns in the Philippines: A guide for journalists and newsrooms*. Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism. <https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/navigating-malign-influence-campaigns-philippines-guide-journalists-and-newsrooms>
- Cambridge Centre for Philanthropy and Social Innovation. (2020). *COVID-19 and the Global South: Philanthropic funding, promising partnerships and potential pitfalls*. <https://www.jbs.cam.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/2020-csp-report-covid.pdf>
- Carlson, M., Darr, J. P., & Dilliplane, S. (2018). Political competition, partisanship, and interpersonal trust in electoral democracies. *British Journal of Political Science*, 48(1), 239–255.
- Chad, F. (2025, March 10). *The impact of colonial legacies on Nigerian media narratives*. ResearchGate. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/389706896_The_Impact_of_Colonial_Legacies_on_Nigerian_Media_Narratives
- CIMA. (2015). *Supporting media at a time of crisis: Donors explore new strategies*. Center for International Media Assistance. <https://www.cima.ned.org/publication/supporting-media-at-a-time-of-crisis-donors-explore-new-strategies/>
- CPJ. (2023, January 24). *Deadly year for journalists as killings rose sharply in 2022*. Committee to Protect Journalists. <https://cpj.org/reports/2023/01/deadly-year-for-journalists-as-killings-rose-sharply-in-2022/>

- DAIDAC. (2025, February 19). *The information disorder trap: How to avoid falling victim in Nigeria*. <https://daidac.thecjid.org/the-information-disorder-trap-how-to-avoid-falling-victim-in-nigeria/>
- Devex. (n.d.). *Centre for Journalism Innovation and Development (CJID)*. <https://www.devex.com/organizations/premium-times-centre-for-investigative-journalism-ptcij-69759>
- DFID. (2008, November 26). *DFID research: Media in Kenya after the elections*. Gov.uk. <https://www.gov.uk/government/case-studies/dfid-research-media-in-kenya-after-the-elections>
- Editors Guild of India. (2023). *Report of the Fact-Finding Mission on Media's Reportage of the Ethnic Violence in Manipur*. <https://editorsguild.in/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/EGI-report-on-Manipur.pdf>
- Eke, C., & Njoku, C. C. (2025). Disinformation, toxicity, and harms in online social networks and media in Nigeria. *Advance Journal of Linguistics and Mass Communication*, 9(1), 67–78.
- Ekwenchi, O., Oji, M., & Alum, A. (2024). Navigating Nigeria's nationhood crisis in a hate-driven digital media space. *Sapientia Global Journal of Arts, Humanities and Development Studies*, 7(3), 185–193.
- European Parliament. (2023, July 17). *European parliament calls for an end to Manipur violence*. Modern Diplomacy. <https://moderndiplomacy.eu/2023/07/17/european-parliament-calls-for-an-end-to-manipur-violence/>
- Ferreira, R. (2024). The precarity trap: How labour conditions shape non-democratic journalistic practices in Brazil. *Journalism Studies*. <https://www.research.ed.ac.uk/files/420143870/FerreiraR2024JSThePrecarityTrap.pdf>
- Floridi, L. (2010). *Information: A very short introduction*. Oxford University Press.
- Freedom House. (2022, November 3). *Crimes against journalists are on the rise and are seldom punished*. <https://freedomhouse.org/article/crimes-against-journalists-are-rise-and-are-seldom-punished>
- Free Speech Collective. (2023). *Media's Role in the Violence in Manipur—Counter Narratives and Dissemination of Fake News*. <https://freespeechcollective.in/reports/resources/medias-role-in-the-violence-in-manipur-counter-narratives-and-dissemination-of-fake-news/>
- Fürst, S., & Wagner, A. (2025). How journalists cope with precarious working conditions: A typology of coping strategies. *Journalism*. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/21670811.2025.2475179>
- Gagliardone, I., Diepeveen, S., & Mutsvairo, B. (2020). *The state of media literacy in Sub-Saharan Africa 2020 and a theory of misinformation literacy*. University of Westminster Press.

- Gidron, N., Adams, J., & Horne, W. (2023). Beyond observational relationships: Evidence from a ten-country experiment that policy disputes cause affective polarization. *British Journal of Political Science*, 53(2), 1–8.
- GIJN. (n.d.). *Introduction to investigative journalism collaborations*. Global Investigative Journalism Network. <https://gijn.org/resource/introduction-investigative-journalism-collaborations/>
- Graves, L., & Amazeen, M. A. (2019). Fact-checking as idea and practice in journalism. In *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Communication*.
- Graves, L., & Shabbir, N. (2019). *The rise of collaboration in investigative journalism*. Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism.
- GSDRC. (2008). *Ideological, legal, economic and professional obstacles to media development in Africa*. <https://gsdrc.org/document-library/ideological-legal-economic-and-professional-obstacles-to-media-development-in-africa/>
- Hoque, M. M. (2022). Making a video documentary on fake news and disinformation in Bangladesh: Critical reflections and learning. *Advances in Journalism and Communication*, 10(2), 123–138.
- Human Rights Watch. (2025, March 27). *India: Ethnic clashes restart in Manipur*. <https://www.hrw.org/news/2025/03/27/india-ethnic-clashes-restart-manipur>
- ICFJ. (2025, March 18). *Disarming disinformation: How two Brazilian news outlets are fighting back*. International Center for Journalists. <https://www.icfj.org/sites/default/files/2025-03/ICFJ%20Disarming%20Disinformation%20Brazil%20Case%20Study.pdf>
- IJNet. (2019, July 3). *Fact-checking around the world: Inside Nigeria's Dubawa*. <https://ijnet.org/en/story/fact-checking-around-world-inside-nigerias-dubawa>
- IMS. (2023). *Where is the money? A global perspective on forms of funding, financing and investment for public interest media*. International Media Support. <https://www.mediasupport.org/publication/where-is-the-money-a-global-perspective-on-forms-of-funding-financing-and-investment-for-public-interest-media/>
- jamlab. (2024, January 16). *The challenging landscape faced by media entrepreneurs in Africa*. <https://jamlab.africa/challenging-landscape-faced-by-media-entrepreneurs-in-africa/>
- KAS. (n.d.). *Development journalism*. Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung. https://www.kas.de/c/document_library/get_file?uuid=03a0338f-9a27-0b51-56d5-4a313882080b&groupId=269323
- Kurlantzick, J. (2024, March 11). *Southeast and South Asia step up controls on online discourse*. Council on Foreign Relations. <https://www.cfr.org/blog/southeast-and-south-asia-step-controls-online-discourse>
- Larrondo Ureta, A., Peña-Fernández, S., & Oller Alonso, M. (2022). Precariousness and professional identity: How Spanish freelance journalists perceive their work and professional roles. *Doxa Comunicación*, 34, 111–131.

- Lavgrave, S. (2022, May 6). *In the Philippines, journalists are fighting a losing battle against disinformation*. The Lowy Institute. <https://www.loyyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/philippines-diagnosing-infodemic>
- Local Media Foundation. (2025, January 27). *LMF board 2025 vision: Driving impact, innovation and sustainability in local journalism*. <https://localmedia.org/2025/01/lmf-board-2025-vision-driving-impact-innovation-and-sustainability-in-local-journalism/>
- Lopa, A. (2022, May 23). *Brazil: Fact-checking, a core skill of news media, emerges as a business strategy*. WAN-IFRA. <https://wan-ifra.org/2022/05/brazil-fact-checking-a-core-skill-of-news-media-emerges-as-a-business-strategy/>
- Marques, A. F., de Almeida, C. A. F., de Oliveira, D. C., & de Oliveira, W. K. (2023). Fake news, social media, and the right to health in Brazil. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 20(7), 5299.
- Matanji, F., & Adjin-Tettey, T. D. (2025). Fighting fake news: How media in Kenya and Senegal check facts. *The Conversation*.
- MDIF. (n.d.). *Rappler: Holding the line against disinformation*. Media Development Investment Fund. <https://www.mdif.org/news/rappler-social-impact/>
- Media20. (2025). *M20 Johannesburg Declaration*. <https://media20.org/2025/09/02/m20-johannesburg-declaration/>
- Media Defence. (n.d.). *Misinformation, disinformation and mal-information*. <https://www.mediadefence.org/ereader/publications/modules-on-litigating-freedom-of-expression-and-digital-rights-in-south-and-southeast-asia/module-8-false-news-misinformation-and-propaganda/misinformation-disinformation-and-mal-information/>
- Media Development Foundation. (2025, March 10). *The black swan of donor support: How local journalism is surviving the suspension of USAID program funding*. <https://www.mediadevelopmentfoundation.org/en/research/black-swan-of-donor-support-how-local-journalism-is-surviving-the-suspension-of-usaid-program-funding/>
- Media Support. (n.d.). *Where is the money? A global perspective on forms of funding, financing and investment for public interest media*. <https://www.mediasupport.org/publication/where-is-the-money-a-global-perspective-on-forms-of-funding-financing-and-investment-for-public-interest-media/>
- Meedan. (2021, July 21). *Multi-language tiplines and media literacy: PesaCheck's fact-check strategy in Africa*. <https://meedan.com/post/multi-language-tiplines-and-media-literacy-pesachecks-fact-check-strategy-in>
- Meedan. (2022, May 18). *Meet VERA, the truth bot*. <https://meedan.com/post/meet-vera-the-truth-bot>
- Moyo, L. (2021). *The decolonial turn in media studies in Africa and the Global South*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Mutsvairo, B., Bebawi, S., & Borges-Rey, E. (Eds.). (2022). *The Routledge companion to journalism in the Global South*. Routledge.
- National Cohesion and Integration Commission. (2025). Kenya develops national code of practice to address disinformation and hate speech on digital platforms.

- <https://cohesion.go.ke/index.php/media-center/latest-news/557-kenya-develops-national-code-of-practice-to-address-disinformation-and-hate-speech-on-digital-platforms>
- Ndiaye, M. (2025). Media literacy education in Senegal: Perceptions of media professionals. *Journal of African Media Studies*.
- Newman, N., Fletcher, R., Eddy, K., Robertson, C. T., & Nielsen, R. K. (2025). *Reuters Institute digital news report 2025*. Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism.
- Newslandry. (2024). *Inside Northeast India's biggest media empire: Himanta Biswa Sarma's journey with Pride East*. <https://www.newslandry.com/2024/03/05/inside-northeast-indias-biggest-media-empire-himanta-biswa-sarmas-journey-with-pride-east>
- Northwestern University in Qatar. (2025). *Rawabet: Critical debates in media and communication studies*. <https://www.qatar.northwestern.edu/special-events/rawabet/2025/journalism-in-the-global-south.html>
- OECD. (2023). *Lack of trust in institutions and political engagement*. OECD Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.1787/83351a47-en>
- Okafor, C. (2025). The impact of colonial legacies on Nigerian media narratives. ResearchGate. <https://doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.2.12345.67890>
- ONA. (2019). *Aos Fatos*. Online News Association. <https://awards.journalists.org/entries/aos-fatos/>
- Ong, J. C. (2025, June 28). *The disinformation paradox gripping the Philippines*. East Asia Forum. <https://eastasiaforum.org/2025/06/28/the-disinformation-paradox-gripping-the-philippines/>
- Oputa, T., Tsegnyu, S., & Igyuve, A. (2025). Fake news and public trust in online media: A study of Abuja, Nigeria (SSRN Scholarly Paper ID 5365743). Social Science Research Network. <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.5365743>
- Oyeleye, A. (2020). The nation as corporation: British colonialism and the pitfalls of postcolonial nationhood in Nigeria. *Peace and Conflict Studies*, 27(1).
- Poetranto, I., & Varon, J. (2024, March 18). *How disinformation is undermining trust in Brazil's most used digital public infrastructure*. Tech Policy Press. <https://www.techpolicy.press/how-disinformation-is-undermining-trust-in-brazils-most-used-digital-public-infrastructure/>
- Porter, E., & Wood, T. (2021). *The global effectiveness of fact-checking: Evidence from simultaneous experiments in Argentina, Nigeria, South Africa, and the United Kingdom*. ResearchGate. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/354583870_The_global_effectiveness_of_fact-checking_Evidence_from_simultaneous_experiments_in_Argentina_Nigeria_South_Africa_and_the_United_Kingdom
- Posetti, J., & Shabbir, N. (2022). *The chilling: A global study of online violence against women journalists*. UNESCO. https://www.icfj.org/sites/default/files/2022-11/ICFJ_UNESCO_The%20Chilling_2022_1.pdf

- Press Council of South Africa. (2025, March 29). *Fighting fake news: How media in Kenya and Senegal check facts*. <https://presscouncil.org.za/2025/03/29/fighting-fake-news-how-media-in-kenya-and-senegal-check-facts/>
- Princeton University Library. (n.d.). *Misinformation, disinformation, malinformation: A guide*. <https://princetonlibrary.org/guides/misinformation-disinformation-malinformation-a-guide/>
- PTI. (2025, September 10). *Par panel recommends amending penal provision, mandatory fact-checking system to crack down on fake news*. PTI News. <https://www.ptinews.com/story/national/par-panel-recommends-amending-penal-provision-mandatory-fact-checking-system-to-crack-down-on-fake-news/2901722>
- Qazi, I. A., Khan, Z., Ghani, A., Raza, A. A., & Qazi, Z. A. (2025). Scaling truth: The confidence paradox in AI fact-checking. arXiv. <https://doi.org/10.48550/arXiv.2509.08803>
- Ragnedda, M., & Gladkova, A. (Eds.). (2020). *Digital inequalities in the Global South*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Rappler. (n.d.). #FactsMatterPH. <https://awards.journalists.org/entries/factsmatterph/>
- Ressa, M. (2022, December 10). *Brave Filipina fighting for the factual truth*. D+C Development and Cooperation. <https://www.dandc.eu/en/article/independent-website-rappler-has-become-indispensable-source-information-philippines>
- Reuters Institute. (2022, February 15). *How a Nigerian nonprofit is teaching fact-checking to journalists from West Africa*. <https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/news/how-nigerian-nonprofit-teaching-fact-checking-journalists-west-africa>
- Reuters Institute. (2024, May 23). *The looming threat and possible solutions to Latin America's foreign donor-funded journalism*. <https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/looming-threat-and-possible-solutions-latin-america>
- Reporters Without Borders (RSF). (2025). *RSF's World Press Freedom Index 2025: economic fragility a leading threat to press freedom*. <https://rsf.org/en/rsf-world-press-freedom-index-2025-economic-fragility-leading-threat-press-freedom>
- Root, R. (2025, September 10). *What the US closure of global media means for freedom of speech in Asia*. Index on Censorship. <https://www.indexoncensorship.org/2025/09/what-the-us-closure-of-global-media-means-for-freedom-of-speech-in-asia/>
- Sambrook, R. (2018). *Global teamwork: The rise of collaboration in investigative journalism*. Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism.
- Shaw, I. S. (n.d.). *Historical development of media in Sierra Leone*. University of Sierra Leone.
- Shin, D. (2025). Misinformation and algorithmic bias. In D. Shin (Ed.), *Artificial misinformation* (pp. 11-25). Springer Nature Switzerland.
- Stimson Center. (2022, June 22). *Disinformation and democratic transition: A Kenyan case study*. <https://www.stimson.org/2022/disinformation-and-democratic-transition-a-kenyan-case-study/>

- The CJID. (2018, December 10). *DUBAWA and UDEME: The new faces of accountability media in Nigeria*. <https://thecjid.org/dubawa-and-udeme-the-new-faces-of-accountability-media-in-nigeria/>
- The Horn Institute. (2025, June 16). *The impact of information disorder on national security: Lessons Kenya can draw from other states*. <https://horninstitute.org/the-impact-of-information-disorder-on-national-security-lessons-kenya-can-draw-from-other-states/>
- Times of India. (2023). *Manipur violence: How fake news and rumours are adding fuel to the fire*. Retrieved from <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/manipur-violence-how-fake-news-and-rumours-are-adding-fuel-to-the-fire/articleshow/102055661.cms>
- Tomassi, A., Falegnami, A., & Romano, E. (2024). Mapping automatic social media information disorder. The role of bots and AI in spreading misleading information in society. *PLOS ONE*, 19(5), Article e0303183. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0303183>
- Ugboajah, F. O. (n.d.). *Communication as technology in African rural development*. Africa Media Review.
- UNESCO. (n.d.). *Media & information literacy*. <https://www.unesco.org/en/media-information-literacy>
- UNESCO. (2025, February 11). *Resilient journalism: A response to the challenges faced by displaced journalists*. <https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/resilient-journalism-response-challenges-faced-displaced-journalists>
- Upgrade Democracy. (n.d.). *Aos Fatos*. <https://upgradedemocracy.de/en/perspective/highlights/the-technology-behind-the-truth-aos-fatos-and-the-fight-against-disinformation-in-brazil/>
- VERA Files. (n.d.). *About VERA Files*. <https://verafiles.org/about>
- Wardle, C. (2017, February 16). *Fake news. It's complicated*. Medium. <https://medium.com/1st-draft/fake-news-its-complicated-d0f773766c79>
- Wardle, C., & Derakhshan, H. (2017). *Information disorder: Toward an interdisciplinary framework for research and policy making*. Council of Europe.
- Wekesa, E., Vava, N., & Mtshali, H. (2017). *Fact-checking in a global south context: The case of Africa Check*. Witwatersrand University.
- Wikipedia contributors. (2024a, May 29). *Dubawa*. In *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*. <https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Dubawa&oldid=122620888>
- Wikipedia contributors. (2024b, September 10). *Political polarization*. In *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*. https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Political_polarization&oldid=1245053888
- Wikipedia contributors. (2024c, July 29). *Premium Times*. In *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*. https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Premium_Times&oldid=1237188888

- Wikipedia contributors. (2024d, August 28). *Vera Files*. In *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*.
https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Vera_Files&oldid=1242888888
- Wikipedia contributors. (2024e, September 11). *World Press Freedom Index*. In *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*.https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=World_Press_Freedom_Index&oldid=1245208888
- Wood, T., & Porter, E. (2021). The global effectiveness of fact-checking: Evidence from simultaneous experiments in Argentina, Nigeria, South Africa, and the United Kingdom. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 118(37), e2104235118.
- World Economic Forum. (2025). Rethinking media literacy: A new ecosystem model for information integrity.
https://reports.weforum.org/docs/WEF_Rethinking_Media_Literacy_2025.pdf