

## Preface

When working with our first-year students on a journalistic online project about press freedom around the world, we observed that the Norwegian students and their sources in other countries – mostly journalists – seem to share the same core values, although conditions on the ground made their daily work and routines different. So, working in Oslo on our training website led to discussions about journalism's values and ideals and the degree to which they are transnational.

From debating journalism's core values grew a transnational project that was named *Shared Horizons*. It is a development and research project between the three largest and oldest journalism educations in Norway, Bangladesh and Tunisia.

The main reason for this collaboration is that Bangladesh, Norway and Tunisia are three very different countries, with distinctly dissimilar histories, political cultures and traditions.

While Norway is a relatively secular society, with a separation of religion and state but still based on Christianity, both Tunisia and Bangladesh are Islamic majority countries. In all three countries, religion intertwines with media and society in a local as well as global context.

Regarding conditions of press freedom, Reporters sans frontières (Reporters without Borders) rank Norway at number 1, Tunisia at 97 and Bangladesh at 146 in a table of 180 countries (Reporters sans frontières 2017). In addition to this, Freedom House describes Norway and Tunisia as free, whereas Bangladesh is considered to be partly free (Freedom House 2017).

Can journalists and journalism students in these contrasting contexts still share the same journalistic values? Do journalism peers across nations think alike or differently, and what are the similarities and differences?

As diversity can be a source of enrichment, comparison may be a fruitful way of helping to clarify ideals and values, of understanding the role of journalism and not taking for granted achievements in the field. Moreover, *if* Tunisia, Bangladesh and Norway share the same notions about journalistic core values, the case for transnational core values in journalism would, we argue, be strengthened.

Since the initiative was Norwegian and the Department of Journalism and Media Studies at Oslo and Akershus University College of Applied Sciences (HiOA) had collaborated before with the Department of Mass Communication and Journalism at the University of Dhaka in Bangladesh (DU), it was a natural choice for both parts to work with one another. At the time, Tunisia was in the early stages of its transition

period after the uprising against a repressive dictatorship. Media outlets were popping up, and journalists, suddenly free from censorship of the regime of Ben Ali, almost had to reinvent journalism. It seemed as if all Tunisians were engaged in debates about politics, religion, human rights, journalism and media. So, working with two peers from the journalism education at the Institut de Presse et des Sciences de l'Information (IPSI) at the University of Manouba was interesting for both us and them.

From the start, the *Shared Horizons* project included journalism students. We met students when we visited each other, and we used our joint experiences when teaching in our institutions. Some students were directly included in our work, while others got scholarships in order to do their very first research. As a matter of fact, some of these research efforts form part of this anthology. For instance, Margrethe Håland Solheim, as a journalism student with a scholarship from *Shared Horizons*, undertook a small-scale study interviewing Colombian journalists about journalistic values and press freedom. Her results dovetail nicely with the research in the *Shared Horizons* project. In this book, her chapter adds another country and a new perspective.

*Shared Horizons* is more than a research collaboration between scholars and journalism teachers. Its intensions were first to build a network of journalism educators in Bangladesh, Tunisia and Norway and act as a forum for debates and exchanges of opinions and experiences in teaching journalism.

In 2013, we conducted a survey sampling our bachelor students in journalism, and 439 of them answered. The next two years we also did qualitative interviews, because we wanted to delve deeper into concepts and views as well as to examine if journalism students and working journalists have diverse understandings of journalism's core values. In 2016, we started planning an anthology, and since then, *Shared Horizons* has been primarily about making this book, *Negotiating Journalism. Core Values and Cultural Diversities*. Some of the chapters build on *Shared Horizons'* quantitative and qualitative research, more of which you can read in Appendices I and II. Others rely on document analysis, content analysis of newspapers and visual rhetoric analysis, to mention a few research methods.

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