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Stakeholder Workshops as a Method for Developing a Grounded Media Ethics

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Abstract

This paper outlines the processes and preliminary findings of three stakeholder workshops (Nielsen, Bryndum & Bedsted, 2017) that have been conducted as part of a larger AHRC-funded interdisciplinary project on press ethics and regulation in Europe and the UK (project reference AH-R00644X-1). These stakeholder workshops, conducted in phase three of our project, were designed to stimulate deliberative responses to emergent issues and themes that were raised in phase two of the project, which were generated from 48 interviews with journalists, regulators, third-sector NGOs and digital innovators from Denmark, Finland, the Netherlands, Norway, Switzerland and the UK. Stakeholder workshops are a response to the requirement for more active deliberative contributions (Sheppard & Meitner, 2005) from beyond the hitherto relatively narrow range of voices from the journalism industry, on journalism ethics. Stakeholders involved in these workshops range from third sector advocacy organisations related to those working in often marginalised communities - migrant rights, LGBTQ+ advocacy, the Traveller movement and anti-discrimination advocates, to digital news innovators and the 'traditional' journalism sector. The paper outlines the conceptual framework of the stakeholder process as a means of developing new participatory and collective normative foundations for ethical news work, as well as the process of conducting these relatively new modes of inquiry within the realm of journalism studies and media and communication research. The paper signals a preliminary framing of the research process as it moves towards the project's overall findings and conclusions envisioning a more participatory ethics of communication and news work.