

**From State Censorship to
Pressure of Money:
New Challenges for
Media Transparency in Ukraine**

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What does media transparency (MT) mean?

- The ideas of **motion** and **visibility** are central for transparency

in Latin "transparent" means trans - "through" and parere - "appear",

- Transparency addresses **content** of messages as well as **form** and **nature** of interactions

(Plaisance, 2008)

How do you know what you know?

Who are your **sources**?

How direct is their knowledge?

What biases might they have?

Are there **conflicting accounts**?

Kovach (2001) The Rule of Transparency.



What does media transparency (MT) mean?

Normative conceptualization

- Absence of any direct and indirect influence on media
- Process to **diminish the incidents of unethical and illegal practices** in the relationships between **public relations professionals** and the **media**
(IPRA, 2001)

Conditions for MT:

- competing **sources of information**,
- much is known about the **method** of information delivery,
- and about the **funding of media**
(Kruckeberg & Tsetsura, 2004).



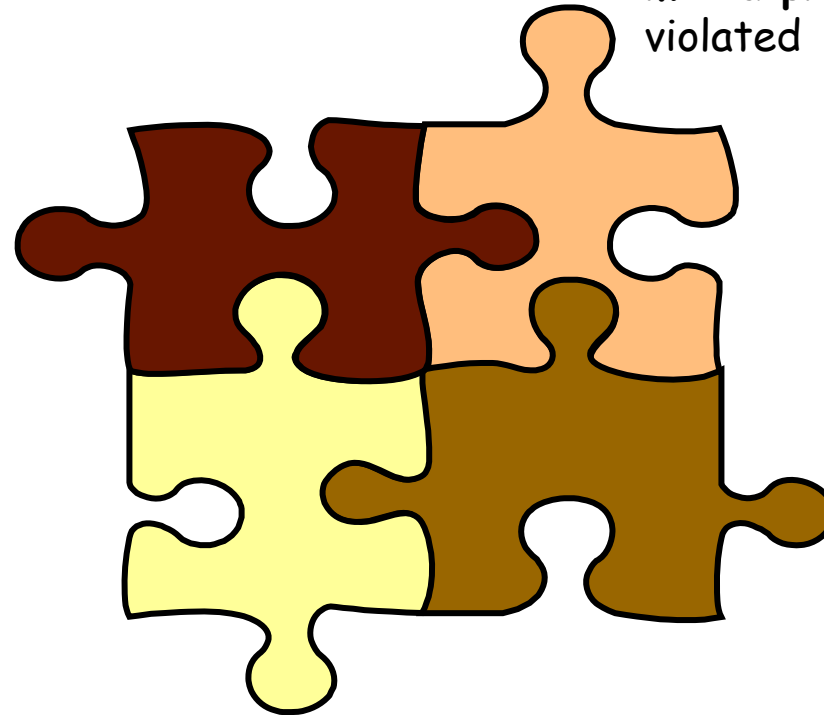
Why media transparency?

What are the results of non-transparent practices:

Citizens do not get **true and credible** information to make **personal and collective** decisions

The ethical principles and values of **both PR and media professionals** are violated

*Although Public relations and journalism organizations have different codes specific to the profession, **commitment to truth and concern about bribery** are common areas in two professions (Wilcox, 2006).*



Erode **public confidence** and **media credibility**

Media transparency is a requisite for credible media practices that are based on trust between the media representatives and their audiences (Tsetsura & Kruckeberg, 2009)

Compromise the **traditional functions of mass media** in society and undermine media's roles as **gatekeepers**



What does media transparency (MT) mean?

Normative conceptualization

Values of **truth**, **objectivity** and **transparency** do not tolerate any influences on media and are formalized in codes of ethics for journalists:

- Respect for truth and for the right of the public to truth is the first duty of the journalist (IFJ, 1986)
- Professional groups in journalism manifest journalists should be independent and condemn bribery, acceptance of expensive gifts, or other favours that would compromise the integrity and credibility of the media (*IFJ, 1986; SPJ, 1996*).

In Ukraine:

- Journalists should be independent

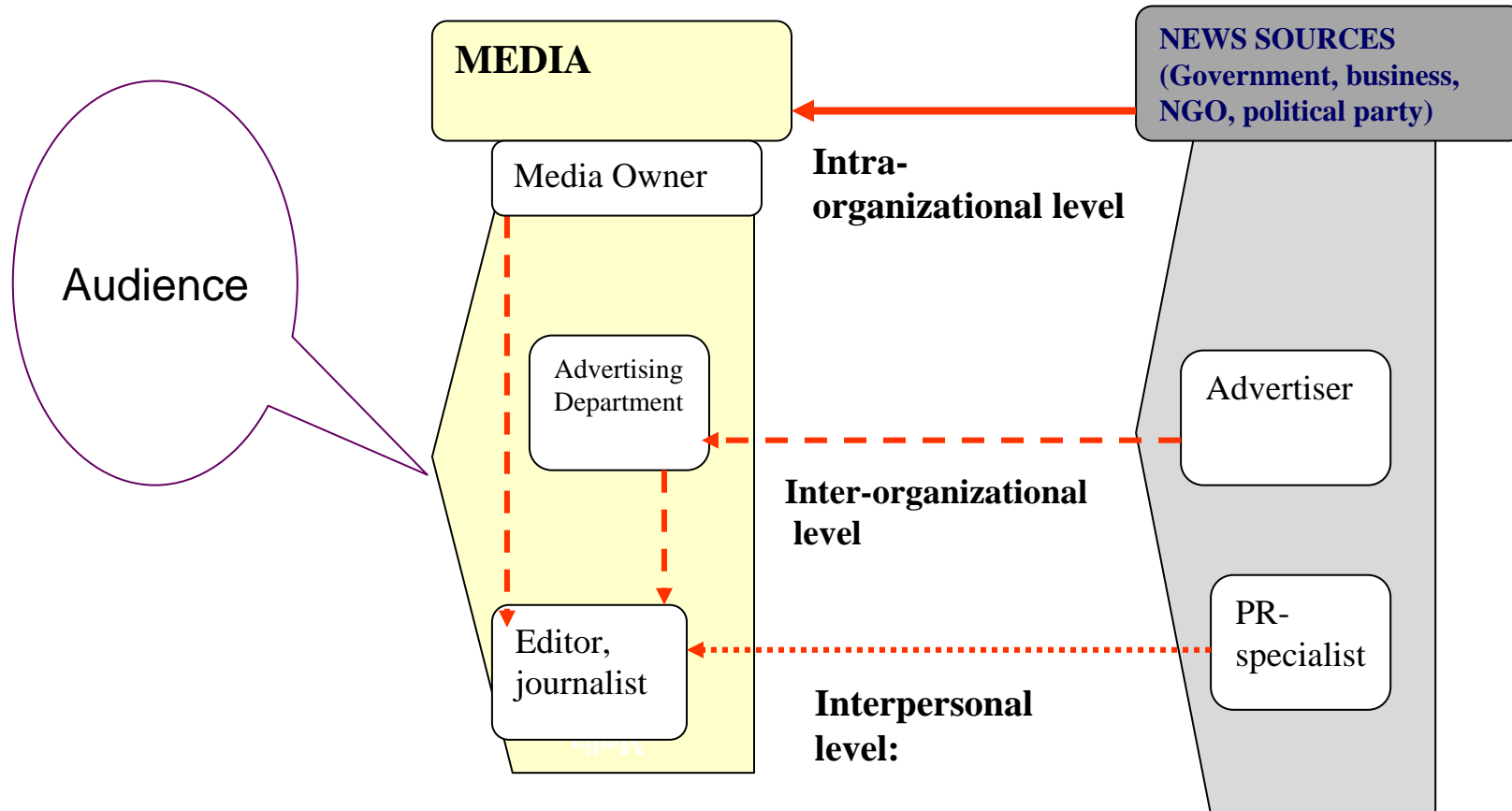
(The Code of Ukrainian Commission on Journalists Ethics, CJE, 2002)

- Journalists should be objective and should not accept any rewards that may influence their judgment ...

(The Code of Ethics of the National Union of Journalists of Ukraine, NUJU, 2005)



Media transparency normative framework: types and levels of non-transparency



(Kruckeberg and Tsetsura, 2003);
(Tsetsura, 2005);
(Lo, Chan, & Pan, 2005);
(Klyueva, 2008);
(Tsetsura, Grynko, 2009)

New challenges for media transparency in Ukraine



Non-transparent practices as they are coined in different countries

- cash for news coverage (Kruckeberg & Tsetsura, 2003);
- media bribery (Tsetsura, 2005);
- envelope journalism (Shafer, 1990);
- media opacity (Tsetsura, K., & Kruckeberg, D. (2009).

In Ukrainian, this phenomenon was initially called "***dzhynsa***", a slang word for paid publicity.

Meaning: "***jean cloth***":

- its two sides do not look the same;
- jeans` pockets to hide cash.





Journalism and media transparency in Ukraine

1991 - Ukraine gained independency, transformation from ideology-governed media to new market conditions;

1996 - Ukrainian slang word “*dzhynsa*” appeared to name the written-to-order articles;

1999 - pseudo-journalism developed during Leonid Kuchma’s presidency, many publications served the government;

“*temnyky*” appeared: authorities started to use administrative instruments to influence media through formalized instructions about state



New challenges for media transparency in Ukraine



Journalism and media transparency in Ukraine (cont)

2000-2001 - “**professional renaissance**” of media, journalists` solidarity in the intention to freedom and independence;

2001 - media activists initiated the self-regulation democratic system not to let the state intrude into the journalism, the first version of the Ukrainian Journalists Ethics Code was adapted.

October 2004 - **journalists' revolution**
- journalists who refused to accept “*temnyky*” and work under political censorship, the liquidation of centralized government censorship





Journalism and media transparency in Ukraine (cont)

Global index of media bribery ranked Ukraine 19 (out of 33 countries), together with Argentina, Mexico, and Taiwan

(Kruckeberg & Tsetsura, 2003)

Editorial interests are often managed solely by **the advertising department** and **not by the editorial department**

(Ligachova & Ganzha, 2005)

Non-transparent paid-for copy, also known as “**dzhynsa**”, “**overwhelmed the media for commercial as well as political reasons**”

(The IREX study “Media Sustainability Index” , 2006/2007).

Ukrainian media remains a primary platform for **political elites and business interests.**

(Gromadzki G., Movchan V., Riabchuk M., Solonenko I., Steward S., Sushko O., Wolczuk K. (2010). Beyond the colors: Assets and liabilities of `Post-Soviet Ukraine)



"Censorship of money" and "whole-sale" journalism

"**censorship of money**.....when oligarchs or just advertisers manipulated media following the goal to get profit.
(*Belyakov,2009*)

"....there used to be censorship by government; now it is censorship by money... Before, the censorship of the powerful was performed by the stick. Then those in power came to realize that the stick is too crude, and the journalists were starting to resist. So **they started to exercise it with the carrot, as money is much more pleasant, and it is hard to refuse.** But we should not forget: this is the same censorship." (*Sumar, 2008*)

"Ukrainian oligarchs who own media manipulate editorial policy according to their **private interests** and also allow manipulation by **third parties if paid**" (*Belyakov, 2009*).





Inter-organizational level influences

Exploratory study in Ukraine: **indirect pressures that happen on intra-organizational** are the most frequent types of influences. These influences mainly occur in the form of pressures of the **owner** and **marketing/advertising departments that control editorial policy.** (*Tsetsura & Grynko, 2009*)

All agreements and payments between media and headquarters take place **at the level of owners** or, more rarely, **of top managers**. Journalists, having accepted payments, protest little and service the needs of politicians. Most principled journalists are squeezed out of the profession". (*Otar Dovzhenko in MSI, 2010*)



Media experts about freedom of press

Although there is no formal censorship in the media it does exist “informally”
(recent research by the Democratic Initiative Foundation named after Ilko Kucheriva
<http://dif.org.ua/ua/press/ggniniji>)

**Media experts about the determinants of freedom of speed in Ukraine
(1 – completely unsatisfactory, 2 – completely satisfactory)**

Legislation that regulates press freedom and independency	3
Audience demand free independent media	3
Journalists follow professional standards	2.6
There is no physical pressures on journalists	2.5
Criminal methods (murders, disappearances) to control media	2.5
No barriers for journalists` work	2.4
No censorship	2.3
Effective media NGOs	2.3
Media are profitable, economically independent	2.3
Media are free from state interventions and pressures	2.2
Journalists have access to information from state sources	2.2
Media are free from political pressure	2.1
State authorities and political parties understand the importance of media for society	2.1
Media and journalists can defend their right in courts	2.0
Transparency of media ownership	2.0
Journalists are free from the owners` pressure	1.8
Media are free from economic pressures	1.4

New challenges for media transparency in Ukraine



"Either praise or in no way": NGOs monitoring

There are signs of biases in TV news. Censorship policy is mostly aimed at forming the positive image of the government. Ukrainian TV Channels are follow the two main lines - produce positive coverage about authority and criticize opposition.



The number of materials with suspected as censored

Channel	August	July
The National 1st	113	83
ICTV	104	99
Inter	103	96
« 1+ 1 »	100	60
The 5 th Channel	73	41
New Channel (Novyy)	35	29
« Ukraine »	33	26
STB	16	17

(Ukrainian NGOs analyze daily TV news, Telekritika, IMI. Internews, <http://www.telekritika.ua/medialiteracy/2010-09-13/55746>)



"Artists against censorship" demonstrates in support of Ukraine's Channel 5 and TVi television stations in Kyiv on August 16.



Ukrainian citizens

41% of Ukrainians recognize the decrease of freedom of speech after President elections comparing to results in April 2010 when just 18% of citizens believed that there was a problem with freedom of press in the country

*(Sociological Group "Rating", "Citizens' feelings as to freedom of speech curtailing in Ukraine",
http://ratinggroup.com.ua/upload/files/RG_svoboda_slova_092010.pdf)*



More than 55% Ukrainians agree that political censorship exists in the country.

*(Razumkov Centre, Survey: Democracy and freedom of speech have decreased in Ukraine, that
http://razumkov.org.ua/ukr/news.php?news_id=351)*



International community concerns

“Temptation to Control”, Reporters without Borders:

“acts of censorship that favour the new government have been growing steadily in the strategic broadcasting sector. In most cases, it has been the management itself that told staff not to broadcast certain stories or to eliminate passages critical of the government.”



Dunja Mijatovic, The OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media: marked media “self-censorship” as one of the topical problems of free media in Ukraine and mentioned that Ukrainian media tend to publish less critical materials about government.

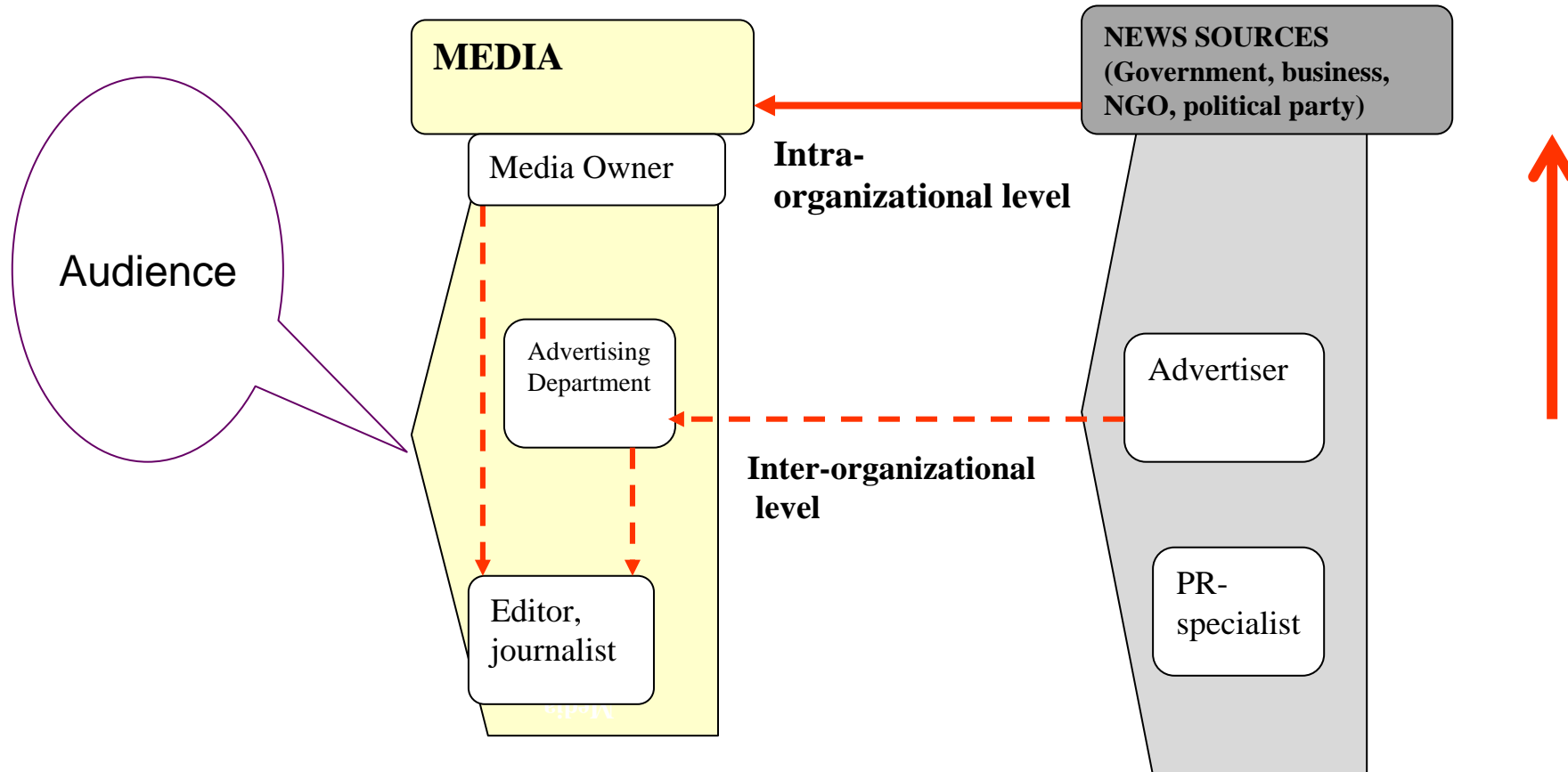


EU Commissioner for Enlargement and European Neighbourhood Policy Stefan Fuele: the European Union looks to Ukraine improving on the situation with the freedom of expression in the country.





Non-transparent practices: in Ukraine



The decision about coverage is often made on “higher” level of owners or is a result of inter-organizational-level- negotiations, when news manipulate media organization as a whole.

New challenges for media transparency in Ukraine



How do journalists **perceive, understand and interpret** the practices in which they are involved?

What and **How** they the speak about practices?

The key to effective codes in journalism lies a “**bottom-up approach**” built on individual, experience based, codes of ethics of journalists (*Bruno, 2008*).





Qualitative study in Ukraine: journalists` responses

There is a difference between the practices that are not transparent by their nature and the ways they are interpreted by practitioners:

Direct influences occurring **on interpersonal** are mainly evaluated as unacceptable and non-transparent by media practitioners.

Journalists feel less responsible for the practices of **indirect influences on intra – and inter-organizational levels**. They tend to evaluate the non-transparent practices that happen on “higher” than inter-personal level (and beyond their decisions) as more acceptable and ethical.



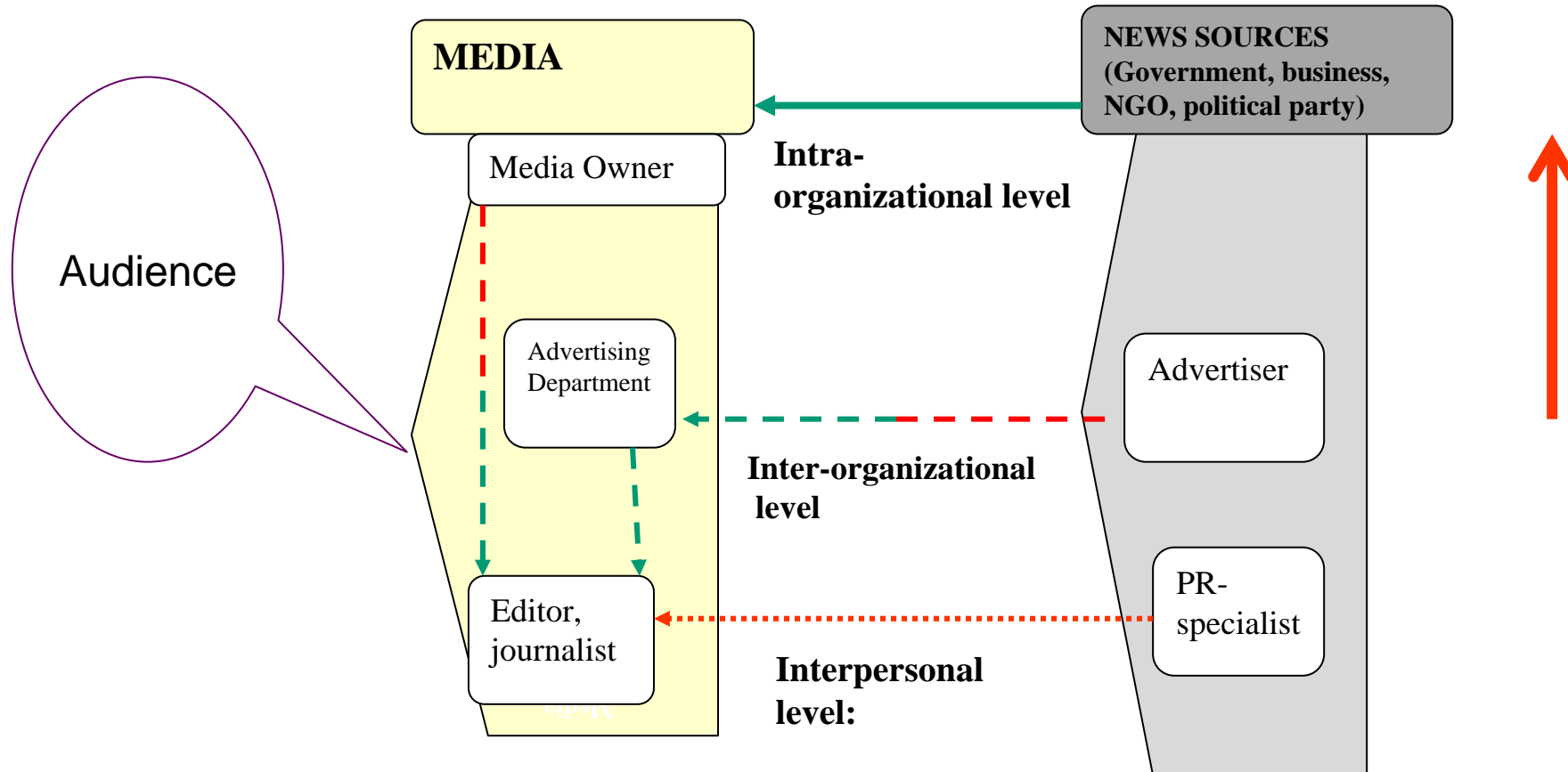
Qualitative research: media practitioners have meaningful experiences that can be interpreted for in-depth understanding of media transparency phenomenon.

Focus group discussions with editors and leading journalists.

Grynko A. (2009, November). Media Transparency in Ukraine: Evidence from Editors and Journalists. Paper presented at a competitively chosen panel, Public Relations Division, NCA conference, Chicago, IL



Non-transparent practices: in Ukraine



Grynko A. (2009). Media Transparency in Ukraine: Evidence from Editors and Journalists

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The responses journalists provided..... (Focus-group results)

Owner

“The advertiser pays good money for placing advertising. And the owner realizes that if we give “wrong” information about this company we will loose the money, media profit and our salaries”.

(journalist)

Media advertising
department.

“Our marketing specialists ask to give editorial page as a “bonus” for advertiser. Then we write article which is not signed as advertising. Or they may ask not to cover special topic.”
(journalist)

“...it is not a direct influence ...as I experience it. It is happening everywhere, it is a usual practice. Marketing department may delay publication, and I have to rewrite the material having overtime in office” *(journalist)*

“I do not like when journalists start striking or refuse do their job, they must realize that this can not change anything. If you do not like your work, just choose another one. Anyway the same happens in every media whichever you choose” *(editor)*.

Grynko A. (2009). Media Transparency in Ukraine:
Evidence from Editors and Journalists



The responses journalists provided..... (Focus-group results)

Although non-transparent practices are problematized and defined as a wide-spread in Ukraine, **they are not usually connected with media practitioners “personal” professional experience and is given as “other’s” experience.**

Hence, there is a conflict in the general problem identification and reflection it in the practical experience which constructs the complex situation where participants articulate **multiple, shifting and often contradictory** nature and reasons of non-transparency:

Shifted responsibility: *“I do not do that while they do”*

“It is not because of me, it is because of them” and “our hard life”: shifting of responsibility”

Victimization: *“What can we really do..., the whole system should change before...”*

Legitimization of the problem by broader (social, economic, professional) conditions



Conclusions

Money pressure, journalists` apathy and lack of professional autonomy are the major challenges for freedom and transparency of press today

(Democratic Initiative Foundation named after Ilko Kucheriva, 2010, <http://dif.org.ua/ua/press/ggniniji>)

Working under the pressures that are usually **beyond the practitioners` decisions**, Ukrainian journalists are often lacking autonomy, intention and power to initiate reforms in the country.

The non-transparency mainly **occurs on “higher” level (intra- and inter-organizational)**, therefore, journalists become less and less involved into decision-making process. Moreover **find arguments to justify** some of the practices that happen beyond their decisions and participation perceiving them **as normal and acceptable**. It makes new challenges for counteraction against media transparency in the country.

In this situation the way journalists perceive, understand and interpret the practices in which they are involved and their roles in this practices become especially important as well as their ability to recognize the pressure and take active position in counteraction against the cases of non-transparency.



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