



## OPEN ACCESS

EDITED AND REVIEWED BY  
Tobias Eberwein,  
Austrian Academy of Sciences (OeAW), Austria

\*CORRESPONDENCE  
José Sixto-García  
✉ jose.sixto@usc.es

RECEIVED 15 November 2024  
ACCEPTED 22 November 2024  
PUBLISHED 06 December 2024

CITATION  
Sixto-García J, Palomo B and Peñafiel C  
(2024) Editorial: Self-regulation and  
co-regulation as governance solution.  
*Front. Commun.* 9:1529021.  
doi: 10.3389/fcomm.2024.1529021

COPYRIGHT  
© 2024 Sixto-García, Palomo and Peñafiel.  
This is an open-access article distributed  
under the terms of the [Creative Commons  
Attribution License \(CC BY\)](#). The use,  
distribution or reproduction in other forums is  
permitted, provided the original author(s) and  
the copyright owner(s) are credited and that  
the original publication in this journal is cited,  
in accordance with accepted academic  
practice. No use, distribution or reproduction  
is permitted which does not comply with  
these terms.

# Editorial: Self-regulation and co-regulation as governance solution

José Sixto-García<sup>1\*</sup>, Bella Palomo<sup>2</sup> and Carmen Peñafiel<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>University of Santiago de Compostela, Santiago de Compostela, Spain, <sup>2</sup>University of Malaga, Málaga, Spain, <sup>3</sup>University of the Basque Country, Bilbao, Spain

## KEYWORDS

governance, media ethics, social media, influencers, deontology

## Editorial on the Research Topic

### Self-regulation and co-regulation as governance solution

The concept of governance originated in Greece, with Plato's definition of how to govern citizens. Nowadays the governance of media infrastructures has always been a particularly complex affair. A notable factor contributing to this complexity is a framework that features a dual-funding model, where public and private media exist side by side. Increasing concerns about the politicization of the media, as well as the lack of transparency concerning their ownership, have made things even more complex. For example, the European Union's Media Pluralism Monitor has highlighted the weaknesses of information pluralism in a context where researchers are compelled to study the role that artificial intelligence and automation are playing in both the creation of content and the development of spyware technologies for the surveillance of journalists.

How is the coexistence of legal norms and media deontology? What role do audiences play in the context of governance? What are the ethical and deontological conditions for the practice of journalism? How do e-commerce and user trust match? What requirements are required for the influencers on social networks? Why is it so important that journalism and national and supranational institutions continue to search for an antidote to disinformation? These are just some questions that are answered in this Research Topic.

Journalistic deontology is in a second generation. During the twentieth century, media outlets and journalistic organizations developed their first models of ethics codes. However, in this second generation, the field of action of deontology was expanded to other scopes such as suicide, gender violence, or disability. A total of 53 Spanish documents were analyzed, and it pointed to the need to improve the recognition of citizen contributions or co-creation (Aznar et al.). However, it is also confirmed that there is no type of relationship between the most consumed media and those that offer more options for audiences to participate (Sixto-García et al.).

A literature review for examining all the legal documents related to the regulation of the media in Spain published between the Spanish transition 1977 and 2024 is also incorporated in this monograph (Seijas Costa et al.). The influence of the European Union and the preservation of the narrative established during the transition to democracy are decisive in this evolution while finding a balance between protection, flexibility, and non-intervention should characterize the new policies of communication.

Precisely, the EU's policy for digital internet intermediaries is the object of study of the research that [Simpson](#) contributes to this Research Topic. By comparing the 2022 Digital Services Act with the 2000 Directive on E-Commerce, it is diagnosed that the new EU platform regulation system is closer to the neoliberal model of telecommunications governance than the private interest proposals that emerged at the beginning of this third millennium ([Simpson](#)).

In the digital context, one of the figures under the magnifying glass is an influencer. The analysis of legislation and self-regulation in 24 EU countries reveals a lack of consensus among states, with only France and Spain legislated on these particularly relevant users ([González-Díaz et al.](#)).

Disinformation also constitutes a threat to democracies in the sense that it undermines citizens' right to receive truthful information. Another study evaluates the incidence of this scourge in Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru ([Suíng](#)). Regulation, self-regulation, and media literacy are necessary to face this great current challenge that worries the EU itself as well as supranational organizations such as UNESCO.

The seriousness of disinformation is accentuated if it refers to health issues, such as the disinformation during COVID-19. According to 1,800 surveys, it was discovered that a majority of society demands the implementation of some type of control to guarantee ethical adequacy and quality in the information coverage of health issues. Journalistic co-regulation could solve this ([Maciá-Barber](#)).

In short, this Research Topic offers a global vision of journalistic self-regulation and co-regulation as governance systems. With contributions from researchers from three continents (Europe, America, and Asia), it provides an international vision of ethics and deontology in the current communication context, as well as the main challenges that the media, legislators, and society will have to face in the coming years.

In response to these concerns, in the specific case of the European Union, the European Commission has proposed the adoption of a new set of rules, known as the European Regulation on Freedom of the Media, the chief purpose of which is to protect media pluralism and independence within the bloc. These rules came into effect on 7 May 2024, and will be completely effective from 8 August 2025.

## Author contributions

JS-G: Conceptualization, Data curation, Formal analysis, Funding acquisition, Investigation, Methodology, Project administration, Resources, Software, Supervision, Validation, Visualization, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing. BP: Writing – review & editing. CP: Writing – review & editing.

## Funding

The author(s) declare financial support was received for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article. This activity is part of the R&D project Digital-Native Media in Spain: strategies, competencies, social involvement and (re)definition of practices in journalistic production and diffusion (PID2021-122534OB-C21), funded by MICIU/AEI/10.13039/501100011033 and by ERDF/EU.

## Conflict of interest

The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

The author(s) declared that they were an editorial board member of *Frontiers*, at the time of submission. This had no impact on the peer review process and the final decision.

## Publisher's note

All claims expressed in this article are solely those of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of their affiliated organizations, or those of the publisher, the editors and the reviewers. Any product that may be evaluated in this article, or claim that may be made by its manufacturer, is not guaranteed or endorsed by the publisher.