

UNIVERSAL PRINCIPLES GOVERNING THE MASS MEDIA

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Since the beginning of the twentieth century, various attempts have been made to establish universal principles through international organisations and specialised agencies such as the League of Nations and the International United Press Associations (IUPA). Attempts, like these, have covered areas of universal interests, political, economic, cultural, scientific and information fields.

As a main source of information, mass media are of great importance regarding their potential impact on international relations. Mass media, defined in general terms, cover all forms of communication, printed and electronic, as well as the types of information transmitted (News, films, documentation, fiction...). They have been the subject of more or less binding measures taken by international, regional, or professional organisations, such as the United Nations Organisation, Unesco, European Conference on Security and Cooperation, and journalistic institutions (IUPA, IFJ, IOJ).

One of the recent works in this field is the mass Media Declaration of the Unesco (1978) and the Mexico Declaration (1980) signed by various professional organisations. These documents are seen as achievement of the dead NWICO movement. Nordensreng, for instance, has drawn a conclusion from the first initiative, saying that "One of the most significant consequence of

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the Mass Media Declaration of Unesco will be probably the development of what can be called international law of communication" ⁽¹⁾. This law expressing relationships between communication including journalism on the one hand and, the principles and rules of international law on the other, has to a large extent, been discovered and inspired by the Unesco Declaration.

Scholars have also been interested in this field and have focused their attention upon freedom of information, foreign propaganda and free flow of information across national borders. In the early 1950's, for instance, Eek was interested in "Freedom of information as a project of international legislation" ⁽²⁾, and in 1978 and 1980 Kleinwaechter dealt respectively with "International Legal aspects of direct TV transmission from Satellite", and "Journalism and Responsibility in International Relations" ⁽³⁾. Other academicians from the United States (e.g., Gross, Whitton, Larson) and the defunct Soviet Union (e.g., Georgi, Arabatov and Yuri Kolossov) have also contributed to attempts to define universal principles governing the use of the mass media.

The last academic study is the analysis of the Unesco Declaration itself made in 1984 by Nordenstreng and Hannikainen in the light of international law.

This paper will be dealing, firstly with the international documents relating to the performance of the mass media, and, secondly with the most universal legal standards. In the third section, it will be question of looking at how those universal standards are reflected at a national level in some countries by examining contents of codes of ethics and some relevant professional instruments.

1.1. International Instruments relating to the mass media

By the above title, is meant all the basic formal documents of international organisations or those subjected to multilateral or bilateral agreements relating directly or indirectly to the field of information and mass communication. This inventory of regulatory material is aimed at showing the increasing importance given

by the international community to the mass media. It is also intended to provide reference points for the universal standards of the mass media, which constitute a source of international law of communication. This perspective of international law of communication is thought to be of great importance, because, as Nordenstreng says, "It may turn out to be revolutionary in the long run because of the influence it can have on fundamental thinking on the role of journalism – a much influence than over-politised controversies can have." (4).

Naturally, there are several aspects of international law governing mass communication such as post and telecommunications, transfer of education, scientific and cultural material, freedom of information and content of communication. As the controversial debate over the NWICO turned upon the freedom of information and the content of communication, discussion here is limited to a consideration of the two latter aspects.

It is common for writers of international law to distinguish between different types of international treaties that contain some basic instruments setting up universal standards for the performance of the mass media. Sinclair, for instance, in his book, "The Vienna Convention of the law of Treaties", quotes three types of regulatory instruments :

1. Treaties which are effectively (formally) universal, such as the Charter of the United Nations and the charters of several specialised organisations of the UN,
2. Conventions and covenants which have been ratified by a majority of states. A good example of this kind of instrument is the the UN Covenants on economic, Social and Cultural, and on Civil and political Rights, both adopted by the General Assembly in 1966.
3. Regional and bilateral agreements such as the Final Act of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (1975), and agreements between two or more states.

It is clear that Sinclair, as an international jurist, is interested particularly, in instruments that are legally binding on states. These treaties are seen as the main sources of international law according to Article 38 of the International Court of justice ⁽⁵⁾.

Brownlie, an other international law writer, states that treaties as a formal source of international law "Create rules of general application which are legally binding on the addressees" ⁽⁶⁾. A state usually becomes a party of a treaty by ratifying it, and the state must observe treaties to which it is a party in good faith.

The result of being a party of a treaty is clearly expressed as the consequence of a transgression that brings about the responsibility for the breach and the obligation for reparation. In general, as Nordensteng quotes, "A state cannot withdraw from its obligations except with the consent of the other parties to the treaty" ⁽⁷⁾.

Besides these binding instruments, there are others that can be considered as sources of universal standards, but are not binding on states. These are declarations and resolutions adopted by international organisations. The statute of the International Court of Justice does not include them as a source of international law. These instruments which are merely recommendations can, however be of a particular juridical significance, under special considerations.

Theorists such as Asamoah and Castaneda ⁽⁸⁾, who have addressed themselves to questions of international law, sum up those considerations in the following points :

- If a declaration or a resolution has been unanimously adopted, and

- If the text deals with rules of international law or with the basic principles in certain domain and has been worded in a legally obligatory form (words like "States shall refrain from" are used), or,

- If a declaration or a resolution is intended to interpret or clarify a stipulation of the UN Charter or other multilateral

convention, one can speak of a unanimously adopted clarification of an existing rule, and

— If states subsequently refer to a declaration as an important and binding instrument and generally observe it.

A good example of this process, is the 1970 UN General Assembly Declaration on Principles of International Law Concerning Friendly Relations and Cooperation among states in accordance with the Charter of the UN. Indeed, This declaration was :

— “Firstly, adopted without opposition, and

— “Secondly, it gives a more explicit definition of the basic principles of the United Nations charter (Cooperation and friendly relations between states, and

— “Thirdly, its text has been written in binding form, and

— “Fourthly, it declares that the defined principles of the UN Charter are basic principles in international law” ⁽⁹⁾.

Other examples of similar instruments, would include the 1960 Decolonisation Declaration, the 1974 Definition of Aggression and the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights which is clearly reflected in the two extensive UN human rights covenants adopted in 1966 concerning respectively, economic, social and cultural, and civil and political rights.

In addition to treaties, there are also two other sources of international law. These are the international customary law and the general principles of law recognised by “civilized nations”.

The 1969 Vienna Convention of the law of treaties incorporates in Article 26 the customary rule of international law “*pacta sunt servanda*”. “Every treaty in force is binding upon parties to it and must be performed by them in good faith” ⁽¹⁰⁾.

Customary law emerged from the practice of states and their acceptance of such practices as binding... while it may be a matter

of controversy whether certain principles or rules are or are not part of customary law, there is no doubt that a body of customary international law exists.

As far as the "principles of law recognized by civilized nations", most of the important rules of what is known as modern international law come to be formulated and developed in the second half of the 19th century and later according to the needs of European business.

Nevertheless, some writers such as Nordenstreng, conform that this principles has remained in a secondary position. "In the present context it is understood as principles which are applied in all of the most important types of domestic legal systems and which can be applied in international law as well" ⁽¹¹⁾. The International Court of Justice has been cautious in applying it and has not used it as a basic for decision.

The shift from "principle recognized by civilized nations" to a universal principle may be due to the attempts of the new states of Asia and Africa who, after having achieved their political independence, have wanted to improve their lot and increase their political influence. "The criteria of 'civilized nations' as a basis for participation in the community of nations has been abandoned", stresses Aananda, an international law writer ⁽¹²⁾.

After leaving the era of "European and civilized nations", as professor rolling acutely remarks, "We have entred the era of peaceloring nations. The family of nations in the form of the United Nations has become practically universal, open to every peace-loving state, able and willing to carry out the Charter of obligations" ⁽¹³⁾.

After this brief general review of the legal nature of the various international standards, we now turn to the specific field of information and mass communication. The first step is to draw up an inventory of available documents that aim to establish a set of principles relating to the performance of the mass media.

First of all, it should be noted that the international community, earlier in this century, turned its attention to the mass media. In 1923, a convention for the control of the dissemination and traffic in pornography was adopted in Geneva, and in 1936, the League of Nations adopted the International Convention concerning the Use of Broadcasting in the Cause of Peace, an instrument which is still in force under the Charter of the United Nations

However, the post-war period has witnessed more intensive efforts in the field of information regulation, following the rapide development in the new technology of communication.

Eek (1979) and MacBride (1980) detailed 44 instruments directly or indirectly related to the performance of the mass media. In 1984, Nordenstreng made a list of 49 instruments that were adopted between 1936 and 1978, from the International Convention Concerning the Use of Broadcasting in the Cause of Peace to the Mass Media Declaration of Unesco. This open list includes formal documents that make direct or indirect reference to the mass media related instruments, even though they do not refer directly to the information field.

But this list does not include documents such as the Draft Convention on Direct Television Broadcasting by means of Satellites which was under preparation in the UN Outer-Space Committee, at the beginning of the 1980's. Instruments such as International Telecommunication Convention, the Copyright Convention and Unesco's agreements concerning the movement of education, scientific and cultural material have also been omitted because of their technical and administrative nature.

Compared with Eek and MacBride's work, Nordenstreng's list (Table 1) is more comprehensive with regard to the contribution of the mass media to international relations, since it includes other conventions such as the Huremberg Tribunal of 1945, the UN Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries, the principles of International Law concerning Freindly Relations and Cooperation among States, the Strenthening of

International Security and the Preparation of Societies for Life in Peace, as well as two documents on Disarmament.

Nordenstreng also included regional instruments of particular significance on human rights in America and Europe, and the Final Act of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe.

Two other documents are also included in the Nordenstrang's list, the Draft Convention (1959-61) and the Draft Declaration (1960) on Freedom of Information which have not yet adopted by the United Nations member states.

The analysis of this body of documents shows the legal nature of these instruments according to the types of the source of international law as mentioned below :

1. Treaties of a binding nature upon states

A dozen out of the whole inventory of the instruments are relevant treaties (in addition to the Draft Convention), including the UN Charter which does not contain any reference to the mass media but is seen occupying a central position among "proper" information instruments. Its importance derives from its nature as a basic source of international law as a whole.

Only two of these treaties are exclusively devoted to the mass media, the International Convention Concerning the Use of Broadcasting in the Cause of Peace adopted by the League of Nations in 1936, and the Convention on the International Right of Correction adopted by the United Nations in 1952. The remaining treaties contain more general references to 'information', 'Propaganda', 'Public opinion', etc..., and thus constitute a set of instruments that indirectly refer to the mass media.

2. Declarations of lesser or non-binding nature

There are seventeen such declarations and one draft declaration. Four of them do not refer directly or indirectly to the mass

media, but are considered as the basis of other subsequent instruments.

Here again, two declarations only are entirely devoted to the mass media adopted by the Unesco, the Declaration on Direct Satellite Broadcasting of 1972 and the Mass media Declaration of 1978. Six contain some parts which make direct and explicit reference to the mass media. A good example of the latter type of instruments are the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and the Declaration on the Preparation of Societies for Life in Peace (1978).

3. Resolutions of non-binding nature

The list of resolutions, which are merely recommendations without any binding power, comprises 18 instruments adopted by the UN General Assembly or by the General Conference of Unesco. These documents have no binding force on states, but they can be considered significant regarding the principles of the mass media involved. Eleven of them are wholly devoted to questions of information and to the standards of the mass media. As Nordenstreng points out, the list of resolutions "is not intended to be completed", since there are many other resolutions on the development of the mass media facilities which are not included in the list under study.

It might be worth noting that these instruments, explicitly or implicitly involved in the field of the mass media content, treat a series of broad topics that are seen as universal principles the mass media can strengthen or weaken depending to the users willing.

Seven themes are wholly contained in these instruments. They turn around :

1. Peace and Security.
2. War Propaganda.
3. Friendly, Understanding and Cooperation.

4. Objectivity, and Honesty of information.
5. Racial, Equality and Discrimination.
6. Free Flow, Freedom of Information and Neighbouring rights.
7. Other duties and responsibilities concerning media content. How are those instruments related to these themes? The following table (n. 1) discussed by both MacBride and Eek shows clearly the direct or indirect connection between instruments and the dominant themes which are seen to be basic universal standards of the mass media.

Table n. 1

Content analysis of instruments

Content categories	12 Treaties			14 Declarations			18 Resolutions			44 AI instruments		
	D	I	N	D	I	N	D	I	N	D	I	N
1. peace and Security	3	1	8	7	4	3	9	4	5	19	9	16
2. War Propaganda	3	5	4	1	6	7	1	2	15	5	13	16
3. Friendship	5	1	6	6	4	4	10	5	3	21	10	13
4. Objectivity	5	0	7	6	2	6	6	0	15	17	2	25
5. Racial	1	7	4	5	1	8	3	0	18	9	8	27
6. Free Flow	5	3	4	7	2	5	8	0	18	20	5	19
7. Other Duties	5	3	4	9	2	5	12	2	4	26	5	13

D = Direct reference to the mass media.

I = Indirect reference to the mass media.

N = Non reference to the mass media

Source: K. Nordenstreng, The Mass Media Declaration of Unesco, Ablex Publishers, Newood, New Jersey, 1984, p. 158.

1.2. International Legal Standards relating to the Mass Media

The previous part of this paper has served to look, in the light of the international law principles, at the nature of the main instruments that contain what could be called universal standards governing the use of the mass media. The purpose of the present part is an attempt to give a general outline of some fundamental elements which could be found in works by the UN and its specialized agencies, particularly Unesco.

Other source of universal standards of the mass media might be found in academic works as well as in provisions common to the majority of existing national and regional legislative and professional documents.

The MacBride Report on mass communication problems "Many Voices—One World" (1980) expresses the importance of universal standards and the necessity to readapt some instruments to the realities of the modern world. The report makes it clear declaring that "The texts of international instruments... should be reviewed in order to promote further international legislation in this area, since only by extending its scope will it be possible to overcome certain difficulties and to regulate certain aspect of the new world communication order"⁽¹⁵⁾. Furthermore, studies should be undertaken to identify, if possible, principles generally recognized by the profession of journalism and which take into account the public interests. This could also encompass further considerations, by journalists, organisations themselves, of concept of international code of ethics.

It is understood that universal principles of the mass media, as principles of moral conduct rather than binding rules of law have several sources, including those of professional codes of ethics, at national, regional and international levels. It is, however, not so easy to evaluate the problems involved because of many occasions, the controversial issues have not been clearly defined and distinguished. Eek, for instance, says in this context that "Discussion both within the United Nations and Unesco and outside these organisations, have been marked by controversies and differences in opinions".

The main difficulties, as Eek explains, seemingly relate to the fact that freedom of opinion and expression as a human right is supposed to be protected against interference by national public authorities.

Freedom of information in its widest meaning constitutes the central axis around which controversies turn. But, such divergence in viewpoint does not necessarily exclude the fact that international standards of the mass media do exist even though sometimes violated.

Referring to the basic principles of information law and to the international instruments relating to the mass media (Table 1), the universal principles which could be implicitly or explicitly applicable to the mass media, generally turn around:

1. Sovereignty and equality between states and self determination of peoples.
2. Maintenance of international peace and security.
3. Freedom and use of common benefit of international maritime areas and space.
4. Development of cooperation between states.
5. Protection of environment and national use of nature resources.
6. Respect of human rights.
7. Basic feature of the structure of international law.

The common characteristic of these principles is the fact they constitute the fundamental foundation for conduct of states, they must be observed in all domain of interstate relations including international communication. That is to say that their general character establishes obligations upon and rights for all states, as members of international community.

Eek, on the other hand, centres his work ⁽¹⁵⁾ on the freedom of information as project of international legislation in the field of

mass communication. One of the most important of his referencing texts is 'The Principles Governing the Use of the Mass Media', in 'sovereignty and international communication' (1979).

Gross has, also been interested in 'Some international aspects of the freedom of information and the right to communication' (16). He provides an overview of the legal framework, that is the principles and rules of international law, which may be applicable to the freedom of information, the free flow and its postulated evolution from 'one way flow' to 'a balanced flow' or 'two-way flow' in the name of the right to communication.

Both of these latter writers base their points of view concerning the principles of the mass media on the international instruments dealing explicitly with the field of information, such as the Universal Declaration of human Rights (1948), the International Covenants on Civil and Political rights (1966), the International Conventions of the Elimination of all forms of racial Discrimination (1965) and the International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of crime of Apartheid (1978).

But, the 1978 Unesco Declaration on the principles of the Mass Media, although of a non-binding nature, constitutes one of the most important international sources of fundamental standards for the use of the mass media. It deals with the contribution of the mass media to :

1. Strengthening peace and international understanding.
2. The promotion of human rights.
3. Countering racism, apartheid and incitement to war.

This set of principles and ideals represents a summary of all those principles that the international community has attempted to set up in order to build an international environment of peace, security and mutual understanding between peoples of the world. It is also a reminder of the fact that journalism mass communication, have common basic principles from which an international code of ethics can be inspired and constructed.

As a stage in the evolution of the debate over a new world information and communication order, this declaration has, also caused a more intensive hostile reaction than the call for a NWICO itself. In this respect, a USA group of prominent international affairs experts (including former secretaries of state, Dean Ruak, Gyas Vance and Edmund Muskie), in 1982, issued a study of United States Policy towards the United Nations, warning against 'dangers at the UN, where both the press freedom and economic freedom are under attacks' (17).

The former Secretary General of the UN, Javier Perez De Cuellar, illustrates those hostile reaction and expressed the legal nature of the declaration. "Critics of the declaration, who express concern that national public authorities have been given an instrument to limit freedom of the press, are mistaken. Such a concept was not and could never be the intention of any United Nations deliberative body 'in which free and open debate always prevails' (18).

This is an overview of the main principles that the international community has, through United nations agencies, attempted to devote to the mass media as a main source of general information and as a potential instrument of rapprochement and better understanding between peoples.

How are such universal standars reflected in a national or in a regional level? And what is the position of professionals themselves? An attempt to answer such questions will be made in the following part of this paper.

1.3. Professional Codes and Universal Standards of the Mass Media

As has previously been shown in the preceding parts, the 'international values' relating to the use of the mass media derive from several sources among them are the international relevant instruments, codes of ethics and national legislation governing the field of information and mass communication. The latter source

can be seen, from the view of international law, as a 'universal principle' which has come to replace the old 'principle recognized by civilized nations'.

Since professional codes of conduct in journalism are mainly of national character, this part will, therefore, be considering some common principles contained in a number of well-known codes of ethics adopted by professional organisations or by states.

First of all, it should be noted that international standards are not usually aimed directly at the mass media, but rather at states which are the subject of international law, and this is one of the major obstacle before the application of an international law of communication. However, there is one document of international law that may be seen as addressed directly to journalists, the Convention on the International Right of Correction (1952). In this respect, Nordenstreng states that 'in recognising the professional responsibility of correspondents and information agencies, for the factual reporting in the interest of universal values, this convention clearly states that journalists may be understood to be subject to international law' ⁽¹⁹⁾.

However, Eek considered such a document as a convention that does not impose any obligation on news media or news people directly. This instrument stipulates in Article One that 'in case in which a contracting state alleges that news reports are likely to injure its relations with other states transmitted from one country to another by a correspondent or by news agencies and disseminated abroad – are false or distorted, it may submit its version of the facts (called *communiqué*) to the contracting state within whose territories such reports has been published. Any government of contracting state receiving such a *communiqué* shall make available the news enterprises functioning within its territory.

Whether this convention is addressed to journalists directly or through their states, it has not won wide acceptance in the international community as during 20 years, between 1952 and 72, only 10 states had ratified it. But nonetheless, the document

still has a role to play in international mass communication relations and in the formulation of new codes of professional conduct. A good example of the influence of this document in the development of professional codes is provided by the 1982 and the 1990 Algerian codes of information. Article 77 of the first code stipulates that 'the right of correction is an international right recognized in conformity with the Article 5 of the Declaration on the fundamental principle concerning the contribution of the mass media to strengthening peace and international understanding and the countering propaganda, racism and apartheid' (20).

On the other hand, it is well known that a state, entering into such convention will introduce the necessary regulations within its own jurisdiction. Consequently, journalists and mass media are thereby subordinated to an array of international instruments through the domestic jurisdiction which provides the legal and political framework within it work the mass media, including journalists.

In addition to national legislation, journalists and 'gate-keepers' of the mass media content are also subordinated to a number of values and rules adopted by their professional organisation though out the world, especially in Western societies where 'liberalitarian' systems of state-media relationship lays great emphasis on the professional competence and responsibility of the mass media, in particular journalists, as a substitute for legal or other types of official control of communication. Thus, codes of conduct in journalism or the 'Deontology of information' which has recently been developed to formulate professional standards, constitute an important source of universal values that impose a moral responsibility or often a legal responsibility on media workers.

The nature of the professional responsibility depends on the origin of the code regulating the profession : Sometimes the media themselves seek self-regulation through applying self-discipline, on other occasions, the authority decides to exercise control over the media. But all codes of conduct, whatever their genesis when formulated have a number of common elements which can be easily recognized.

However, codes of ethics as applied to the mass media at a national level are of recent creation. Clement confirms, in this respect that 'Codes of ethics are so recent that there are many countries in the world without accepted or formulized media discipline' ⁽²¹⁾. In factor, contemporary surveys carried out by international organisations of journalists (IOJ) in 1979 and by unesed in 1980 showed that ait of 183 countries wich have developed systems of mass communication, less than a quater, that is fewer than 50, have codes of ethics which can effectively influence on the communicators or protect the free flow of information ⁽²²⁾.

Before dealing with the content of the well-known codes of professional conduct, it should be noted that even though these documents are chiefly of a national, if not sectorial character, worldwide and regional professional organisations and the United Nations have made efforts to develop professional standards that can generate the universal principles of the use of mass media and rapproach the opposing viewpoints over certain values.

Worldwide examples of these efforts are the principles adopted in 1936 by the International Union of press associations (IUPA), the 'Bordeau Declaration' adopted in 1954 by the International Organisation of journalists (IFJ) and the resolution on professional ethics adopted in 1962 by the 5th Congress of the International Organisation of journalists ⁽²³⁾. In 1973, the IOJ proposed a draft concerning codes of ethics. A first draft had been prepared in 1950 and had been sent to 500 professional organisations and mass media enterprises for their comments and suggestion, and in 1952 a further draft has also been prepared and sent to national and international professional associations and information enterprises, but they never became operative.

As a regional example, there is the 'Declaration of Principles' adopted in 1979 by the Federation of Latin-American Press (FELAP), and approved by its 12 national organisation members, and the 'Declaration of Duties and Rights' adopted in 1971 by six journalists trade unions of the European community at Munich ⁽²⁴⁾.

From academic studies ⁽²⁵⁾, it appears that codes of

From academic studies ⁽²⁵⁾, it appears that codes of conduct do consider the international level. The best represented is the obligation to promote peace and security, typically combined with the standards of friendship and cooperation.

Referring to work by J. Clement on codes of ethics around the world Nordenstreng analysed the content of the 50 documents known to Unesco by comparing manifestations of professional ethics in journalism with the standards set by the international community.

The following table (No 2) shows clearly how many codes on the one hand, and international standards, on the other, deal with each of the seven themes in question.

Table No 2

Comparison between codes of ethics and instruments

Themes	Codes of ethics (50)	Instruments (44)
1. Peace and security	14	28
2. War propaganda	5 (3 int)	18
3. Friendship and cooperation	12	31
4. Objectivity,...	49 (4 int)	19
5. Racism,...	18	17
6. Free flow	34 (4 int)	25
7. Other duties	47 (9 int)	31

These themes, both as general standards and as specifically international obligations are differently reflected in the professional regulations. Fourteen out of the 50 codes of conduct cover in one way or another, professional responsibility related to peace and security while, 5 codes only deal with war propaganda and

even that number is high, because two of them speak about domestic or unspecified violence and security.

The same distinction between local and international obligations is made for the topics of objectivity, other duties and free flow of information.

Analysing the list of codes of ethics in reference to their content as regards the international standards, it is concluded that standards concerning war propaganda and the nature of information dissemination (truthfulness, objectivity, honesty,...) as a factor in international relations are practically absent from the professional codes of journalists, with some notable exceptions.

It is shown that among the codes of which pay no or little attention to international obligations are those from most western countries and from a number of developing countries.

Taking the Unique Super Power as example, Nordenstreng stresses that 'none of the three USA codes of ethics include in this inventory contain any reference to international obligations. Even the American writers, Whitton and Larson state that the absence of a precise treatment of the type on news and editorial writing bearing on international tension, particularly when defamation, subversion and war mongering dangerous to international peace are involved, is greatly to be regretted.

On the other hand, codes with a strong emphasis on international relation can be found in the Germany, Austria, Belgium, Cuba, Egypt as well as in the Algerians codes of information. For example, the Algerian codes of 'information' stipulate that "information from abroad is diffusable in Algeria when it responds to international exchange, to the promotion of great ideals of liberation of human being, to the principles of peace and cooperation and of justice and equality between peoples'. Moreover, these documents consider that '... information and mass media constitute an unreplaceable means of diffusion of knowledge, comprehension and cooperation between peoples, and of promotion of their respective cultures.'

But this tendency towards the 'internationalisation' of professional standards in conformity with the international instruments would be found explicitly treated in documents of regional and international character: The UN draft of international code, the Mexico Declaration which is seen as a manifestation of the same line of universal values emerged in the debate on the NWICO, as well as the FELAP code and the 'Principles of IUPA.

It is perhaps worth quoting some examples from these documents considered more 'universal' than national codes of ethics. The UN Draft International Code includes international responsibility of the mass media of information.

Article 1 stipulates that "The personnel of the press and other media of information should do all in their power to ensure that the information the public receive is factually accurate. They should check all items of information to the best of their ability. No fact should be wilfully distorted and no essential fact should be deliberately suppressed." Article IV amplifies this overriding call for objectivity. It states that: "It is the duty of those who describe and comment upon events relating to a foreign country to acquire the necessary knowledge of such a country which will enable them to report and comment accurately and fairly thereon."

Evaluating the significance of this international document, Nordenstreng points out that: "Although the UN text was never formally adopted, it has exercised considerable influence in the preparation of various national codes. Contributing to a neglected rather than an abeyance of journalists' international obligation."

Whitton and Larson also stated that: "Even such a modest instrument, if adopted and respected, would make the task of the propagandist or the purveyor of false news extremely difficult." (26).

The 'principles' of IUPA extended the international aspects of the mass media to obligations to rectify and to respect diversity in the world. In terms of those 'principles' the journalist has:

1. "To check conscientiously the truthfulness and authenticity of every news item, particularly such as may be likely to provoke prejudice, mistrust, hatred, or contempt for other nations, or may convey a false impression of their internal values and their strength.
2. "To rectify willingly any news of this nature which may subsequently be found not to be authentic or accurate.
3. "To insist on his own right and acknowledge the right of others to report objectively on all internal events and on all questions of interest to other states, to compare their internal situation with that of other countries and to criticise it freely.
4. "To bear in mind, however, that the great diversity of historical, physical and moral conditions naturally implies a similar diversity in the political and social development of the various nations and states, and an equally great diversity in political regimes (27).

Another example of international character is explicitly represented in the so-called "Mexico Declaration" as it is seen as a decisive step in the development of codes in the same line as the NWICO, let us consider the following quotation from an example of regional character: Article 2 of the FELAP code prescribes that : "journalists must contribute to the strengthening of peaceful coexistence, self-determination of people, disarmament, international detente and mutual understanding between peoples of the world, fight for the equality of human beings without distinction of race, opinion, origin, language, religion or nationality. It is the lofty duty of Latin-American journalists to contribute to the economic, political and cultural independence of our nations and people, to the establishment of a New International Economic Order and to decolonisation of information" (28).

From the above quotations of national, regional, and international texts of professional ethics in journalism, it could be concluded that the universal values of international community

as expressed by the international instruments are poorly reflected in professional ethics as expressed by the codes of ethics concerned. This may be due, as Nordenstreng confirms to the predominance of the Western value transplanted to the rest of the world together with the transfer of mass communication and models. "It is one manifestation of fundamental tendency in the dominant Western tradition of journalism to understand professionalism in narrow technocratic terms, without notable reference to socio-political realities – national anymore than international.

However, the movement towards a NWICO had exposed the nature of this situation and has led to a "research for another orientation", 'international responsibility' of journalists and media of information.

Suggestions have been made to foster international responsibility of communicators within a legal framework that takes into account the present realities in the world and the aspirations of international community.

Footnotes-references

1. K. Nordenstreng: *The Mass Media Declaration of Unesco*, Ablex Publishers, Newood, New Jersey, 1984, p. 139.
2. H. Eek, Emeritus professor of international law at the University of Stockholm, he served the UN as an expert on freedom of information (1950's) and Unesco as prime consultant to the preparation of the Mass Media Declaration (1976-1978).
3. Wolfgan Kleinwaether, a German (ex. GDR) expert on mass communication.
4. K. Nordenstreng, op. cit.
5. According to Article 38 of the statute of the International Court of Justice, there are three formal sources of international: treaties, customary law and general principles recognized by civilised nations.
6. I. Brownlie: *Principles of Public International Law*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1979, p. 1.
7. Ibid, p. 148.
8. D.Y. Asamoah: *The Legal Significance of the Declaration of the Assembly of the UN*, The Hague, M. Alijhof, 1966.
9. Nordenstreng, K., op. cit., p. 150.
10. Quotation cited in P.C. Harten: *The Third World and Press Freedom*, Praeger Publishers, New York, London, Sydney, 1979.
11. Nordenstreng, K., op. cit., p. 149.
12. Amanda, R.P.: *International Law and Developing Countries*, Maritime Nijhoff Publishers, Boston, Lancaster, 1987.
13. Roling B.V.A.: *International Law in an Extended World*, Amsterdam, 1960.
14. MacBride, S.: *Many voices-One World*, Unesco, Paris, 1980, p. 273.
15. Eek, H.: *Freedom of Information as a Project of International Legislation*, Uppsala University Press, Sweden, 1953.
16. Article by Gross published in H.I.Schiller: *National Sovereignty and International Communication*, Ablex, Newood, N. Jersey, 1979.
17. In Nordenstreng, K., op. cit., p. XII.
18. From his first speech on communication addressing UN Committee on information in New York, 1982.
19. Nordenstreng, K., op. cit., p. 211.
20. Author's translation of the French version: "... Il est reconnu un droit international de rectification, en application de l'article 5 de la Déclaration sur les principes fondamentaux concernant la contribution des organes d'information au renforcement de la paix et de la compréhension internationale, à la lutte contre la propagande belliciste, le racisme et l'Apartheid.

21. Clement, J., *Mass media Codes of Ethics on Councils*, Unesco, Paris 1980.
22. Ibid, p. 14.
23. These worldwide professional organisations were founded respectively in: IUPA-1982, IFJ-1952, and IOJ-1946.
24. The FELAP, Federation of Latin-American Pressmen, was founded in Mexico City in 1976 and it has now 60.000 membres belonging to 12 national professional organisations.
25. Some recent studies are works by Nordenstreng, 1984 op. cit., Clement, 1980, op. cit., and W. Schramm : *Responsibility in Mass Communication*, Harperd, 1980.
26. Whitton, J.B. and Larson, A. : *Propaganda, Towards Disarmament in the War of Words*, Dobbs Ferry, New York, 1964.
27. W.V. O'Brian : *International Propaganda and Minimum World Public Order*, cited in Nordenstreng, op. cit.
28. K. Nordenstreng, op. cit., p. 245.

Abbreviations used

- FELAP : Federation of Latin-American Pressmen (Journalists).
- IFJ : International Federation of Journalists.
- IOJ : International Organisation of Journalists.
- IUPA : International United Press Association.
- NWICO : New World Information and Communication Order.
- TV : Television Broadcasting Systems.
- UN : United Nations (Organisation).
- Unesco : United Nations Education, Science and Culture Organisation.