



Ethics Of Media Work Through Algerian Legislations Analytical Reading Of The Law 1982, The Law 1990 And The Organic Law 2012.

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Abstract:

Working in Press and journalistic sector like in any organizational field requires obeying to a certain legislation and rules set by specialists and legislators in that field in the government . In journalistic sector legislations are a set of rules , codes , and ethics that have the role of controlling , organizing and managing the journalistic practice and job in matter of dealing with how news are reported, covered and published to the audience. .

In Algeria, as in many other countries, media legislation has long addressed the importance of ethical standards in journalism.

This article explores the evolution of media legislation in Algeria, focusing on how these laws have addressed journalistic ethics. It provides analysis and critique of their content, highlighting key differences in how interest in media ethics has developed over time and how various laws have approached this critical aspect of the profession.

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Keywords:

Ethics , Algerian legislations , Media , Laws .

Introduction

Professional media work and practice encompasses a set of principles and morals that must be fulfilled in order to prevent abuse and unrestrained use of the powers and privileges of journalistic profession.

Therefore, it is important for everyone who is concerned with media and journalistic profession , in terms of both framework and practice, to stand within this important principles and morals, like trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, truth and self-restraint to be practiced by media people voluntarily, to preserve and promote the trust of people and to maintain their own credibility .

Media legislation in Algeria, like other countries of the world, has been concerned with the ethics of media work since the emergence of the first media law in Algeria in 1982, followed by many laws that came after .

In this article, we will discuss the various media legislations in Algeria and the extent and manner in which they address the field of journalistic ethics with some analysis and criticism, addressing the most important differences between the development in media ethics through these legislations, as well as the most important differences between these legislations in their interest in and approach to this field.



THE FIRST TOPIC : Media Work Ethics - Theoretical Concepts

FIRST REQUIREMENT: Definition of Media Ethics:

Media ethics are defined as a set of values and standards applied in journalistic professional work, they are fulfilled when journalists get selecting, obtaining, publishing, and commenting on news, and when expressing their opinions. Thus media ethics include ethics of journalism ethics of filmmaking, photography or advertising. (Al-Tamari Youssef: Ethical Dimensions in Journalism and Media Work).

There are several principles in journalistic ethics like the objectivity of journalists , protection and reliability of sources, harm avoidance .Also methods of obtaining information must be correct and the practice of journalism should pay attention to the boundary between the public and private spheres.

There are those who believe that ethics media work or journalistic work are not laws and do not have the power of law, but rather are merely rules of a good conduct and have only moral power.

Dr. Ezzi Abdel Rahman classifies media ethics into three categories¹:

First: Media ethics as values

Ezzi Abdel Rahman believes that media ethics are values, and that they first emerged with the Canons of Journalism issued by the American Society of Newspaper Editors in 1923. The Canon briefly included the following values: responsibility, freedom of the press, independence, sincerity, honesty, accuracy, impartiality, and fairness

Second: Media Ethics as Codes of Honor (Ethics)

1 - Ezzi Abdel Rahman: « Nadariat Alwajib Alakhlaqii - The Theory of Moral Duty In Media Practice », 1st ed., Al-Dar Al-Mutawasitah for Publishing, 2016, pp. 33, 49.



According to Ezzi Abdel Rahman, codes of honor are moral in nature and not binding. They are based on the level of ethical awareness of the practitioner or media institution. The more ethical awareness there is, the more effective these codes represent as a moral foundation.

Third: Media ethics as ethical issues. Ethical issues in media are concerned with : defamation, privacy, intellectual property, violence and sex, threats, and blackmail.

SECOND REQUIREMENT : Origin And Development Of The Concept Of Media

Ethics:

Some date the first attempts to deal with media ethics to the mid-19th century, during which the issue of ethics began to be strongly raised in France, Britain, and the United States as a necessity to preserve journalism profession's position and role.

Many historians believe that the first code of ethics was the one issued by the American Journalists Association in the US state of Kansas in 1910. Others believe that they were in both declarations defining the duties of journalists in Poland in 1896, and the French press legislation that was established by the Press Association in 1918, which stipulates the duties of the journalist, and the American Society of Newspaper Editors, which approved its charter in 1928. However, the term ethics first appeared in 1889 in an article entitled: "Ethics of the Press."

Beginning in the 1970s, there was an attempt to establish a "New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO)" prompted by concerns that Western media and its values were threatening the cultural values in non-Western, developing nations.²

Today's era of technological revolution In the 21st century, the spread of digital technologies and the Internet throughout the world has led to the emergence of new models of information exchange and ethical dilemmas. Therefore, the widespread spread of true or false

2 - Stephen J. A. Ward : Global Media Ethics, <https://ethics.journalism.wisc.edu/>, seen on 24-05-2025.



news in the transmission of information, i.e. fake news, problems in identifying information sources, and the spread of information on social networks have led to a further dynamic and increasing demands .³

According to Lord Stephen, the history of media ethics has gone through five revolution :⁴

- 1- The seventeenth century: the focus was on the concept of truth and issues of reality
- 2- The eighteenth century: journalism for general enlightenment.
- 3- The nineteenth century: journalism for a liberal society.
- 4- The twentieth century: ethics focused on responding to the limits of liberal theory, and finally.
- 5- The twenty-first century: where media ethics were discussed in the era of globalization.

Third Requirement :the organizational framework of media ethisc

The foundations and general principles of media ethics:

The most important principles and foundations governing media ethics in general can be examined within two basic frameworks

Firstly : The Theoretical Framework for Media Ethics:

Several academics in the fields of politics, Sharia, law, and media have recognized the need to establish media ethics as a professional and societal necessity. We mention some of these below, but they are not limited to:

The law has established values, ethics, and principles that govern the profession of journalism in the performance of its duties. Among the most prominent principles established by the law are the following:

3- Turayev Kamoliddin Samadovich : **History of the development of the concept of Media Ethics and its Impact on the development of Society**, Volume 3, Issue 2, February – 2025.

4- Jaafar Muhammad: **Media Ethics: An Epistemological Reading**, Journal of Social and Human Sciences, Volume 13, Issue 1, 2023, p. 853.



- Preserving professional secrets and ethics.
- Journalists' independence in performing their work.
- Commitment to honesty and vigilance:.

Commitment not to use commercial methods in journalistic work.

- Commitment to preserving the journalist's safety and right to a fair trial.

The most important ethical values, according to Finnish researcher Tiinalitila, are summarized as follows: (Bakdouri Ezzedine, 2016-2017, p. 90)

- Accuracy in gathering and disseminating information, freedom of opinion and expression, respect for equality, rejection of racial, ethnic, religious, sexual, social, and professional discrimination, frankness through the use of direct and transparent means in gathering and presenting information, respect for sources, and respect for copyright and publishing rules.

Secondly : Media Ethics via proffessional legislations

Despite the hige amount of efforts in elaborated concernind media ethics in a theoretical framework , it was professionally and practically necessary to enact specific legal legislation specifically for media and journalistic ethics, both globally and locally.

The legislations dealing with media ethics in general are both codes of honors and laws , we differentiate them as follows :

1- Codes of Honor:

The Code of Ethics is a self-regulating instrument which aims to guide, strengthen and improve the quality of journalism and the sense of responsibility of journalists in a certain country , a region , or a territory .

Codes of ethics are generally an agreement or ethical contract between journalists that are agreed upon to govern their scope of practice ethically. They are not binding or deterrent laws, as are



laws. Some consider the "Great Code of Honor," established by Britain in 1215 as the first building block for the birth of codes of honor.

Azi Abdel Rahman notes that the first established media code of honor appeared in the American experience in 1923, and this code has continued to be renewed in accordance with the requirements of media practice ⁵.

In general, most of the charters in force are those that are specific to each country individually. There are also unified codes of honor between several countries or regions, which primarily seek to achieve the national or neighborhood dimension between several countries, or in an effort to achieve common goals that arise primarily from the specificity of sharing certain characteristics such as language, religion, or cultural components in general.

2-Laws:

Media Law refers to a set of legal regulations that govern the conduct of media organizations and journalists, including provisions related to libel actions, official secrets, and permissible parameters for media coverage.⁶

It refers too to the regulations of mass media production and use, and can cover censorship , intellectual property , defamation , broadcast , and antitrust law among others. Compared to codes of honors , laws have the Mandatory force ,ie not obeying to these laws requires punishment .

Media laws vary among countries according to different factors , such as political and economic systems , social and anthropological enviroment ect.

The french media law of 1881 was the first media law in the world, it was a law that did not prevent journalists from expressing any of their ideas, and abolished all forms of censorship that had been imposed on them.⁷

4- Azi Abdel Rahman, op cit , p. 34

6- <https://www.sciencedirect.com/topics/social-sciences/press-law>, seen on 14-05-2025.



FORTH REQUIREMENT : Media Work Ethics in Algerian Legislation - A Critical Analytical Reading

Firstly :Algerian Codes of Honor⁸:

- Code of Ethics and Professional Rules for Algerian Journalists, April 13, 2000:

This charter was issued on April 13, 2000, by the General Association of Algerian Journalists (Bakdouri Ezzedine, op. cit., p. 119). The charter includes a set of duties and rights, as well as the text of appeal procedures and the powers of the Supreme Council for Professional Ethics.

The main principles included of this charter are :

- Freedom of press and expression.
- The public's right to information.
- Respect for private life.
- Accuracy and neutrality in dealing with news and separation between news types.
- Refraining from distortion, slander, and plagiarism.
- Independence from advertisers.
- Having professional conscience.
- Refraining from promoting racism and crime .
- Not accepting any interference from the government or others.
- Refraining from exploiting the status of journalist for personal purposes and respecting innocence.

Secondly : Algerian Laws:

A – 1982 Law :

7 - <https://cte.univ-setif2.dz/moodle/mod/book/view.php?id=20359&chapterid=5327>

8 -Hanan Bin Yahya Alal: « Akhlaqiaat Almihnat Fi Asr Al'iielam Aljadid - Dirasa Qanounia Fi Aljazayir Professional Ethics in the Age of New Media - A Legal Study in Algeria » -, Al-Risala Journal for Human Studies and Research, Issue 5, January 2018.



The 1982 law can be considered the first framework law for journalistic ethics in Algeria.

There are some articles that directly refer to professional ethics, and they are included in some of the law's chapters. Therefore, we will discuss them according to these chapters:

- Chapter Two: "Practice of the Journalistic Profession," which consists of two chapters. The first chapter is titled "Professional Journalists," and contains the following articles regarding media ethics:

Article 35:

States that a professional journalist must work responsibly and with commitment to achieving the goals of the revolution, the party, and the union.

Article 42:

Professional newspapers must be careful not to include, publish, or allow the publication of false news, as well as to use the privileges associated with the profession for personal purposes⁹.

Article 43:

In addition to respecting the principles of professional ethics and social responsibility, journalists must engage in their work within the framework of the lofty ideals of human liberation, peace, and cooperation within the spirit of justice and equality among peoples.

Article 48:

Professional secrecy is a right and a duty

-Article 71 :

9 - Salami Aseidani And laylaa Faqiri : « Akhlaqiaat Almihniat Fi Dil Altashriat Alqanounia Al'iilamiia Fi Aljazayir - Mouqaraba Naqdia Alaa Daw Anadaria Almasoulia Alaijtimacia , Professional Ethics in the Light of Media Legal Legislation in Algeria - A Critical Approach in Light of Social Responsibility Theory » , Journal of Legal Studies and Research, Volume 3, Issue 4, 2018, p. 125.



Also holds the director and author of the text or news item legally responsible for every text written in the publication or every news item published by audiovisual media.

-Article 73 :

Includes the head of the printing press as a third party in this responsibility¹⁰.

The law devotes an entire chapter to "Correction and the Right of Reply," containing 11 articles from 74 to 84¹¹.

Chapter Four of the law, entitled "Criminal Provisions," consists of three chapters. Two chapters address media ethics and the penalties for violating these ethics. These chapters include the following:

Article 2 of Chapter Four, entitled "Violations by the Press," consists of 17 articles. It stipulates imprisonment for anyone who deliberately publishes false or biased news that undermines state security and its laws. Any editor or editor of a publication is also subject to criminal prosecution for any incitement to commit felonies or misdemeanors through the media. Chapter Three, entitled "Protection of Public Authority and Citizens," consists of 11 articles. It states that anyone who deliberately insults the head of state, or who defames members of the political leadership, the government, or political parties, shall be punished by imprisonment and a fine¹².

It can be said in general that the 1982 law's interest in media ethics was not clear and sufficient, as it did not devote a chapter or section to this, but rather came in the form of scattered articles.

10 – Hanan Ben Yahya Allal: **op cit**.

11 - Amal Merad: « **Altashrieat Al'ielamiat lilsahafat Al'ilikturuniat Fi Aljazayir - Dirasa wasfiat Tahliliat lilmawathiq w Alnus Alqanounia Almonadima lilsahafa Al'ilikturonia - Media Legislation for Electronic Journalism in Algeria, a Descriptive and Analytical Study of the Charters and Legal Texts Governing Electronic Journalism**, PhD Thesis in Media and Communication Sciences, University of Algiers, 2017/2018, p. 146.□

12 - Saeed Sellami: **Op. cit.**, p. 125.

**b- 1990:Law**

The Media Law of 1990 represents a significant legislative achievement gained due to the events of October 1988, particularly in the context of the democratic reforms , intellectual pluralism, and freedom of expression and opinion.

This Law is considered to be the first Algerian law to emphasis on journalistic ethics, setting a foundational framework for ethical media conduct in Algeria.. This is evident primarily through the creation of the Supreme Council for Media, whose mandates were defined primarily to promote and regulate media activities , particularly through the committee formed within it, which is dedicated to professional ethics.¹³

There are several articles in the law that refer ethics concern , we refer to some of them as below:

Article 3:

Recognizes the right of journalists to exercise journalism freely, respecting human dignity , national defense, imperatives, and foreign policy interests.

Article 26 : prohibits specialized national and international publications from disseminating content that contravenes Islamic ethics, national values, or human rights , or that calls for racism, fanaticism, or treason, regardless the form used ... , picture, story, news, or statement. It must

13 - Abd aljalil hasanawi : "Akhlaqiaat Almihnat Fi Daw' Qawanin Al'ielam Aljazayiria – Dirasa wasfia wa Tahlilia liayina Min Qawanin Al'ielam - Professional Ethics in the Light of Algerian Media Laws: A Descriptive and Analytical Study of a Sample of Media Laws ", Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences , Vol 27 , December 2016, P. 20.



also not include any advertising or announcement that would encourage violence and delinquency¹⁴.

Article 40 : also states that “a professional journalist must strictly respect the ethics and morals of the profession while exercising his profession, with respect of the following principles :

- Respecting citizens' constitutional and individual rights.
- Upholding objectivity in reporting .
- Prompt rectification of errors.
- Demonstrating integrity, objectivity, and honesty in commenting on events .
- Refraining from incitement to racism and violence.
- Refraining from slander, insults, and backbiting.
- Avoid exploiting the professional status for personal or material gain.

- Organic Media Law 2012:

The law's concern with professional ethics is evident in the fact that Chapter Six is devoted to the profession of journalist and professional ethics.

Article 85 of the law explicitly affirms the obligation of professional secrecy, stipulating that “professional secrecy is considered a duty for the journalist and the director responsible for each media outlet, in accordance with applicable legislation and regulations.” Furthermore, Article 92, in Chapter Two entitled “Professional Ethics and Morals,” reinforces this stance by asserting that journalists are required to uphold professional ethics and moral standards throughout the exercise of their duties.

In addition to the provisions of Article 2 of this Organic Law, journalists must adhere to a set of specific ethical guidelines as follows¹⁵:

14 - Mustafaa Thabit : Akhlaqiaat Alsahafat wa Alamal Al'ielami Fi Aljazayir – Dirasa Tahlilia litashriat Al'ielamia , Journalism and Media Ethics in Algeria - An Analytical Study of Media Legislation, International Journal of Social Communication ,Issue 09, Vol 02, 2022, Abd Alhamid Bin badis University, P644. □



Ethics Of Media Work Through Algerian Legislations Analytical Reading Of The Law 1982, The Law 1990 And The Organic Law 2012.

- Respecting national emblems and symbols .
- Ensuring the delivery of comprehensive and objective information .
- Reporting facts with integrity, impartiality, and transparency .
- Correcting any inaccurate or misleading news .
- Refraining from presenting content or actions that could place individuals at risk .
- Abstaining from glorifying colonialism.
- Refraining from any form of direct or indirect incitement to racism, intolerance, or violence .
- Avoiding defamatory speech, gossip, or slanderous content .
- Refraining from disseminating images or statements that offend public morals or provoke public sentiment.
- Refraining from using professional conduct for personal or material gain and benefit.

The law further dedicates Chapter Seven (Articles 100 to 114) to the rights of reply and correction, and defined the mechanisms, methods and ways of exercising them.

Before the issuance of the law, the Minister of Communication, Nacer Mehal, emphasized that the legislation was designed to establish clear ethical standards for the journalistic profession in Algeria. According to the Minister, the law not only guarantees better protection for journalists—both socially and professionally—but also abolishes imprisonment as a penalty for press-related offenses.

It also came to expand the application of the rights of reply and correction to digital media, while simultaneously safeguarding citizens' right to information and regulating the

15 – Radwan Salaman And Ali Mahni Sami: « **Akhlaqiaat Almumarasa Assohofia Fi Aljazayir Fi Dil Altashriat Al'ielamiat Aljadida - Ethics of Journalistic Practice In Algeria In Light Of New Media Legislation** », Academic Journal of Legal and Political Research, Issue 03, Volume 01, Faculty of Law and Political Science, Amar Telidji University, Laghouat, p. 86.□



Ethics Of Media Work Through Algerian Legislations Analytical Reading Of The Law 1982, The Law 1990 And The Organic Law 2012.

criteria for practicing journalism. The law thus aligns with broader national and international transformations affecting the media landscape.¹⁶

Additionally, The law also prohibits violations of privacy rights, as stipulated in Article 93. we can notice a particularly notable ethical provision is the establishment of the Supreme Council for Professional Ethics and Morals, mandated by Article 94. Furthermore Article 95 defines the structure and composition of this council, while Article 97 specifies the penalties for any violation of the rules and ethics of the journalistic profession. Article 98 further elaborates on the nature and scope of these sanctions.¹⁷

Finally, the law also emphasizes the need to establish a regulatory authority for print and audiovisual media as stipulated in Articles 40 and 60. This comprehensive legal framework reflects a concerted effort to institutionalize ethical practices and accountability within Algerian journalism.¹⁸

Conclusion.:

Algerian media laws address the field of media ethics and professional practice both in relation to the state—by affirming the principles of respect for national sovereignty—and in relation to the media audience and sources of information, by outlining the ethical obligations that govern journalistic conduct and the dissemination of information.

16- Salami Aseidani And laylaa Faqiri : op cit , p. 130.



17- Hanan Hilal : « Akhlaqiaat Almihnat Fi Zaman Al'ielam Aljadid - Dirasa Qanounia Fi Aljazayar-Majalat Alrisala lildirasat Al'ielamia », Professional Ethics In The Light Of Media Legal Legislation In Algeria - A Critical Approach In Light Of Social Responsibility Theory », Journal of Legal Studies and Research, Volume 3, Issue 4, 2018, p. 130.

18 - Jamila Boukadoum : « Akhlaqiaat Al'l'ielamii Fi Altashrie Aljazayirii- Dirasat Tahliliat w Naqdiat lilqawanin Al'ielamiat Fi Dil Altaadudiat Al'ielamia- Qanoun Al'ielam 1990, Alqanoun Aleudwiu 2012- Media Work Ethics in Algerian Legislation - An Analytical and Critical Study of Media Laws in Light of Media Pluralism - Media Law 1990, Organic Law 2012, Al-Ustadh Al-Baheth, Journal of Legal and Political Sciences, Volume 6, Issue 02, December 2021.



Professional ethics and moral principles have received increasing attention across various Algerian media laws. This is evident in the inclusion of entire chapters dedicated to these themes, such as those found in the 1982 Law and the 2012 Organic Law. Additionally, specific legal articles within these texts address ethical issues independently. Moreover, some legislative instruments have established regulatory bodies entrusted with overseeing professional ethics and standards. For instance, the 1990 Law created the Supreme Council for Media, while the 2012 Organic Law established the Regulatory Authority for Print and Audiovisual Press.

The 1982 Law, formulated within the context of a one-party political system, particularly emphasized adherence to the principles of the ruling party—a reflection of the political reality of that era. Nevertheless, the 1982, 1990, and 2012 laws share a set of overarching ethical principles, including a commitment to social responsibility, respect for human dignity and national values, and the preservation of national sovereignty and stability. These texts also converge on key professional standards, such as the protection of individual privacy, the obligation to uphold professional secrecy, the prevention of the dissemination of false or misleading information, and the adherence to principles of integrity, objectivity, and truthfulness.

Overall, the progression from the 1982 Law to the 2012 Organic Law illustrates a clear developmental trajectory in the legal codification of media ethics in Algeria. While the 1982 Law emphasized broad national and humanitarian principles, subsequent legislation—particularly the 1990 and 2012 laws—moved toward more specific, structured, and institutionalized ethical standards. This evolution reflects a growing legislative awareness of the need to regulate media practices within a clearly defined ethical framework, aligned with professional norms and democratic values.



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