


Chapter 9


Teaching Media Law in the Era of Disinformation and Hybrid Threats: Navigating the Infodemic

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ABSTRACT

This chapter explores the evolving role of media law pedagogy in equipping future media professionals and citizens with the necessary tools to navigate this complex information ecosystem. It argues that traditional approaches to teaching media law, often focused on established legal frameworks, must be adapted to address the novel legal and ethical dilemmas presented by disinformation and hybrid tactics, through application of the fundamental principles on freedom of expression in different contexts and understanding of the strategic environment. By adopting comprehensive approach, media law education can empower future professionals and citizens to become informed and responsible, resilient actors in the fight against disinformation and the protection of democratic values. This chapter concludes by suggesting concrete strategies for curriculum development, pedagogical innovation, and interdisciplinary collaboration to effectively address these pressing challenges.

DOI: 10.4018/979-8-3693-9601-8.ch009

INTRODUCTION

Teaching media law in today's world involves addressing the complexities of disinformation and other forms of hybrid threats. As an evolving and rapidly growing legal discipline where several different legal branches already met, adding the challenges of self-regulation and balance of specific human rights in sensitive constellations, media law enforcement is an outstanding challenge, as crucial part of increased awareness for the need of media literacy trainings on every level of education. That requires understanding hybrid threats as a wider phenomenon that combines conventional and unconventional methods, including disinformation campaigns, cyber-attacks, and political subversion.

The globalization of threats is a growing trend. Attempting to suppress one threat creates others through a domino effect. The different emerging forms and specific morphological characteristics of new security threats contribute to the continuous need to change the approach and response. The crisis of values negatively affects the balance between the imperative of freedom and the need for security, narrowing the liberal space of contemporary conceived societies. The crisis of legitimacy in leadership is a transnational problem and generates the creation of new elites. Contemporary security threats, such as hybrid threats and the fight against disinformation, contribute to reducing the democratic capacity of liberal societies and narrowing the scope of civil rights and liberties. Security crises generate new legal norms and narrow the liberal perimeter. This establishes potential threats to media freedom and human rights and liberties. The global changing environment is harshly changing the media landscape. In times of global deception, the liberal perimeter is narrowing. War in Ukraine, disinformation and hybrid threats, pandemic, and energy crises escalated with the crisis of the values upon which our society has been built. In such times, it is of extreme importance to protect media freedom and freedom of expression in general. Legal frameworks are being developed to address disinformation, but these must be balanced with ethical considerations to ensure they do not become tools for political repression. Navigating these issues requires a nuanced approach that protects both the public from the harms of disinformation and the fundamental right to free expression. Social media platforms have a responsibility to prevent the spread of harmful disinformation, but this must be balanced with the protection of free speech. Over-regulation could lead to censorship and stifle legitimate discourse. Platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube have implemented various content moderation policies to tackle disinformation. However, these measures are often criticized for being either too lenient or too strict, and for lacking transparency. Different countries have different approaches to regulating social media. For example, the European Union's Digital Services Act aims to create a safer digital space by holding platforms accountable for illegal and harmful

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