

## PROBLEMS OF PRECARIOUS JOURNALISTS IN SLOVENIAN NATIONAL NEWS MEDIA

*Jožica ČEHOVIN ZAJC*

University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Social Sciences, Centre for Organisational and Human Resources Research,  
Kardeljeva ploščad 5, 1000 Ljubljana, Slovenia  
e-mail: jozica.cehovin-zajc@fdv.uni-lj.si

*Melita POLER KOVAČIČ*

University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Social Sciences, Chair of Journalism, Kardeljeva ploščad 5, 1000 Ljubljana, Slovenia  
e-mail: melita.poler-kovacic@fdv.uni-lj.si

### ABSTRACT

*The destandardisation and precarisation of work hold several negative consequences for workers. This paper aims to identify the problems Slovenian precarious journalists face due to their precarious employment situation. The study examines their work–free time balance, involvement in collective actions for workers' rights, and freedom of expression with regard to their precarious employment. In-depth interviews with nine journalists who have worked in precarious relationships in Slovenian national news media for at least 7 years reveal their work interferes with their free time, their involvement in collective bargaining is weak, and they cannot fully exercise their freedom of expression.*

**Keywords:** Precarious journalists, work–life balance, collective bargaining, freedom of expression

### PROBLEMI DEI GIORNALISTI PRECARI NEI MEDIA NAZIONALI SLOVENI

#### SINTESI

*La destandardizzazione e la precarizzazione del lavoro comportano diverse conseguenze negative per i lavoratori. Questo articolo mira a identificare i problemi che i giornalisti sloveni precari devono affrontare a causa della loro situazione lavorativa. Lo studio esamina il loro equilibrio tra lavoro e tempo libero, il coinvolgimento in azioni collettive per i diritti dei lavoratori e la libertà di espressione relativa alla loro situazione precaria. Le interviste semi-strutturate, svolte con nove giornalisti che hanno lavorato in relazioni precarie nei mass media nazionali sloveni per 7 anni minimo, rivelano che il loro lavoro precario interferisce con il loro tempo libero, che il loro coinvolgimento nella contrattazione collettiva è debole, e che non possono esercitare pienamente la loro libertà di espressione.*

**Parole chiave:** giornalisti precari, conciliazione vita-lavoro, contrattazione collettiva, libertà di espressione

## INTRODUCTION

The economic, political and social pressures created by the rapid globalisation, technological advances and international competition since the 1970s have led to ever more flexible production processes and employment systems denoted by greater reliance on precarious work (e.g. Kalleberg, 2013). Precarity is a problem in culturally different environments (see Uršič et al., 2018) and in different sectors, not only among low-skilled workers but professionals too (see Pavlin, 2018). Employment has become less secure in news media as well (Walters et al., 2006, vi), with precarity being “a key characteristic of contemporary journalistic work” (Örnebring, 2018). Journalistic labour in the global news industry takes place within the “culture of job insecurity” (Ekdale et al., 2015) and in increasingly precarious conditions where mass layoffs, offshoring, outsourcing and the elimination of open positions have become standard managerial practices (Deuze & Marjoribanks, 2009, 555).

Among the considerable shifts in journalistic labour, one of the most worrying is the growth in the number of individual entrepreneurs, with “much of it ‘forced entrepreneurship’ as a result of redundancies and the shrinking pool of available work” (Rottwilm, 2014, 18). Even though the media industry has been hit hard by the global economic recession, the precarious employment situation is also due to structural organisational changes in the media driven by market logic aimed at cutting costs while increasing productivity and maximising profit. According to Paulussen (2012, 195), the working conditions in journalism are more likely to deteriorate than improve given the economic pressures on the media together with the digital discourse that is promoting the flexibilisation and individualisation of labour.

The Slovenian news media has not been exempted from the precarisation trend in the labour market; journalism has been affected by several factors like privatisation and commercialisation, labour cost pressures, technological changes and associated changes in ways the work is done, structural changes and processes affecting the entire economy – the economic crisis (Ignjatović & Kanjuo Mrčela, 2016, 93) and, more recently, the Covid-19 epidemic. While most prior studies looked at a specific dimension of precarity, the aim of this article is to fill a research gap by identifying the problems Slovenian precarious journalists face due to their precarious employment situation, particularly how they balance their work and free time, their involvement in collective bargaining and possibilities for exercising the right to free expression.

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: PRECARIOUS WORK IN JOURNALISM

Precarious work is “*uncertain, unpredictable, and risky from the point of view of the worker*” (Kalleberg, 2009, 2), who bears more risk and receives limited social benefits and statutory entitlements (Kalleberg, 2013, 700). The concept of “precarity” broadly designates “*existential, financial, and social insecurity exacerbated by the flexibilization of labor markets*” (De Peuter, 2011, 418–419); among indices of precarity, one finds income instability, a lack of a safety net, an erratic work schedule, uncertainty about continuing employment, the blurring of work/non-work time and the absence of collective representation. Precarious work is associated with low pay, unstable employment (short-term contracts), limited employability opportunities and constrained social protection rights (pension, health, unemployment insurance) (Keller & Seifert, 2013, 464; Rubery et al., 2018, 510). Being in a precarious situation also means “*being in a status that offers no sense of career, no sense of secure occupational identity and few, if any, entitlements to the state and enterprise benefits*” (Standing, 2014, 41).

The growth of precarious work has led to the demise of certain key elements of the *standard employment relationship* (SER), part-time work infringes on standard work hours, fixed-term and temporary agency work contravene the notion of continuous work, while self-employment disrupts the employment relationship (Vosko, 2010; Kalleberg, 2013). Although the risks of precariousness are considerably higher in atypical forms of employment, the SER is not completely free of them (Keller & Seifert, 2013, 466). Despite providing better income security during work and non-work, a career opportunity, institutional fair treatment and a division between work and non-work time (Rubery et al., 2018, 514), the SER may also be seen as precarious when low wages do not cover the cost of a (decent) life.

Escalated job insecurity has also been detected in journalistic labour, undergoing profound changes particularly due to the digitalisation and commercialisation of the media industry. The accelerating dynamic of reorganisations and reshuffling, buyouts and layoffs, new owners and managers, new work arrangements and budget cuts (Deuze & Witschge, 2018, 172) is promoting “*the rise of more flexible and often precarious forms of employment*” (Rottwilm, 2014, 21) and caused many journalists “*to experience job insecurity and worry about their long-term futures in journalism*” (Ekdale et al., 2015, 383). News work has been “*increasingly characterized by atypical, nonstand-*

ard forms of employment, an ever-growing demand for functional and temporal flexibility to keep pace with the expanding workload and time pressures, and a tendency toward desk-bound office work" (Paulussen, 2012, 203).

A research report on atypical work in the media industry prepared by the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) showed that journalists are increasingly employed in atypical and contingent employment relationships (Walters et al., 2006, v). A survey by the European Federation of Journalists (EFJ) sheds light on the precarious working conditions of journalists working for digital media in Europe; over 60% of respondents say they work overtime and over 50% do not have a full-time employment contract (EFJ, 2015). While working as freelance or self-employed journalists was once a choice made by those seeking autonomy and control over their work, this employment form is now rapidly becoming the only option available, according to Cohen's (2011, 120) research of the media labour force in Canada. The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe has also expressed concerns, observing "a gradual slide into the precarity of the profession of the journalist" (Drobinski-Weiss, 2017). Journalists who still enjoy permanent employment are generally senior staffers, who "work side by side with a host of colleagues in part-time, contract, freelance, temporary, casual, and at times underpaid or unpaid roles" (Deuze & Witschge, 2018, 171).

The general secretary of the Slovenian Union of Journalists Iztok Jurančič (2017) concluded that the trend of journalistic precarisation is obvious: today, approximately 32% of journalists in Slovenia are working in non-standard employment relationships, while in 2008 their share was around 20%. The rising share of freelancers may be seen as "a sign of growing number of 'forcedlancers' that cannot choose voluntarily their type of employment, but were forced into it" (Ignjatović & Kanjuro Mrčela, 2016, 93). While investigating labour relations and processes at the Slovenian public radio broadcaster, Vobič and Slaček Brlek (2014) discovered that "maintaining various kinds of freelance, informal, and otherwise contingent temporary work arrangements are normal managerial practices in Slovenian public radio, where younger newswriters and newcomers comply with precarious labour relations and diminishing labour rights" (Vobič & Slaček Brlek, 2014, 32).

Freelance and independent journalists are in a difficult situation mainly because the payments are too low and often late; it is hard for them to pay contributions for pension, disability and health insurance; they do not have opportunities to improve their skills through additional education; they have a small chance of obtaining a bank loan (Ignjatović

& Kanjuro Mrčela, 2016, 96–97). Still, they are not the most vulnerable group since one can also find journalists working without a contract and any social security whatsoever (Ignjatović & Kanjuro Mrčela, 2016, 96–97). Since 2002, Slovenian journalistic professional organisations have regularly called for improved regulation of the precarious working conditions of journalists. Although the state authorities have been acquainted with the issues of precarious work and the proposals to amend legislation, they have thus far failed to address the issue properly and not satisfactorily regulated the problem of precarity (Čeferin et al., 2017).

### Research questions

The boundary between work and free time has lately become increasingly permeable in all areas due to technology that enables spatial and temporal work flexibility (Allen et al., 2014). Precarious conditions and flexibility in journalism have made news work more uncertain, and many journalists have experienced unsteady flows of work and income. Due to the unpredictable nature of their work, journalists tend to accept assignments, even though they have enough work already and feel they need to work even when sick (Edstrom & Ladendorf, 2012, 718). Many scholars (see Allen et al., 2014) recognise that the work and free time of individuals are intertwined, interdependent and consistently influence one another. Yet, journalists' free time has remained understudied (see Gollmitzer, 2014, 828) and, therefore, our first research question is: *How do precarious journalists balance between their work and free time?*

One of the central pillars of the SER is the right to free association and collective bargaining (Kalleberg, 2013, 702). Unlike those in a SER, precarious workers are more difficult to organise and represent (Chun & Agarwala, 2015, 636–637). They are also less often members of a trade union (Heery & Abbott, 2000, 155). Thus, "[p]recarious work poses a serious challenge to improving workers' jobs and livelihoods" (Chun & Agarwala, 2015, 636). According to Lee-Wright (2012, 39), journalists have "lost the economic power of well-paid job security [and] the bargaining power of collective solidarity." When journalism has been faced with savage staff cuts and the rise of precarity, journalists "have not as a rule attempted to organize collectively to resist these changes" (Örnebring, 2018). Moreover, journalism is a profession that attracts individual-minded people (Cohen, 2011, 124) and the collective organising of individualists is even more difficult. Our second research question is: *What is precarious journalists' involvement with collective bargaining for workers' rights like?*

Journalists around the world have increasingly been employed atypically and contingently, raising concerns due to the key role news media play in a democracy (Walters et al., 2006, v). Namely, according to the IFJ research report (Walters et al., 2006, 4), insecurity of employment leads to timid reporting and a decline in critical and investigative reporting, while low wages bring a decline in ethical reporting: journalists employed on short-term rolling contracts feel pressured to stick to softer, more commercial stories as they do not wish to jeopardise their chances of contract renewal. Therefore, *“the nature of the employment relationship has had a deleterious effect on the quality of editorial content”* (Walters et al., 2006, 4). Journalists’ precarious employment situation has or can hold negative consequences for the quality of journalistic contents, it imperils the watch-dog role of news media and thus represents a threat to freedom of expression (Čeferin et al., 2017). Since freedom of expression is one of the most important human rights, constituting an essential foundation of a democratic society (ECTHR, 1976), our third research question is: *How do precarious journalists see their possibilities of exercising freedom of expression with regard to their precarious employment situation?*

#### METHODOLOGY

To gain an insight into experiences of journalists who are still working or have worked in a precarious employment relationship, we conducted content analysis of in-depth semi-structured interviews with nine journalists from different national news media in Slovenia.

Respondents were selected using the key criteria of precarious employment as recognised in previous literature (e.g. Vosko, 2010; Kalleberg, 2013; Keller & Seifert, 2013; Standing, 2014). Journalists at an early stage of their career or who were still students were excluded because precarious work may be considered to be more damaging in a long-term atypical employment relationship (Keller & Seifert, 2013, 466). While selecting the respondents, we used a combination of the nonprobability method of snowball and expert sampling, hence we made several consultations with academic media/journalism experts and journalists from different media platforms. In some cases, it was not until already performing the interview that we could establish with certainty whether an interviewee was truly a precarious journalist.

The interviewees were 29 to 35 years old, two male and seven female, all with a university education or higher and all working in journalism for more than 7 years (most of them 10, maximum 17 years), all but two without any children. The interviews were carried

out between March and September 2017 by one or both authors of this article. They were taped and then transcribed by Dr Ana Hafner, each lasting between 55 minutes to 2 hours.

Given the topic’s sensitivity, particularly the fear that their statements might bring negative consequences for them and make the situation at work even worse, journalists agreed to be interviewed only after promising complete confidentiality. At the time of the interview, some interviewees were also in the process of suing their employer. Therefore, in the results section we protect the interviewees by covering their identity and deleting any data that could lead to their identity being disclosed. Names and surnames of the interviewees and all other persons mentioned in the interviews (e.g. other journalists, editors etc.) are already omitted from the transcripts, all answers are written in masculine form regardless of an interviewee’s gender and the news media organisations the interviewees work for are unspecified.

#### RESULTS: JOURNALISTS’ EXPERIENCES WITH PRECARIOUS WORK

In the following sections, we present our study results with respect to three main topics: precarious journalists’ balancing of their work and free time, their collective actions for workers’ rights, and their freedom of expression.

##### **Difficult Balancing between Work and Free Time: “Your work is your free time”**

Precarious journalists find it difficult to balance their work obligations and their free time. Our interviewees’ responses range from *“if you know how to organise well, it can be done”* (Journalist A), through *“I have big problems with this”* (Journalist B), to *“your work is your free time”* (Journalist I). However, even the interviewees who assert that they somehow can manage to reconcile both, later in the interview they indirectly admit they have issues with this since their work interferes with their free time. For example:

*I don’t miss birthday celebrations, I know who and what is important, and I don’t miss life events because of this [work]. Maybe I take my laptop with me, it has already happened that at some celebration I have been writing something, so I have pulled away for an hour or two, or that I have had to watch some event on TV or call somebody, make a phone interview. But it can all be done.* (Journalist A)

In the day of a precarious journalist, there is typically no clear dividing line between work and free time. As one journalist says:

*The problem is that when you're on vacation, you're not really on vacation. You take a day off, but in your head you have 'I must finish this [...]': There's constantly this pressure how to catch up with your obligations, to be there if they need you. (Journalist B)*

Precarious journalists feel the need to be constantly available to their employer and work generally holds priority over free time. For example: *"Free time has been totally subject to work. If I had to finish something or if they called me at some impossible hour, my free time had to wait"* (Journalist F).

Subordinating free time to work results in a precarious journalist's overwork. All of the interviewees note they have an excessive amount of work. For instance:

*I work at least six days a week, most of the time, the sixth day at least for half day, but this is never fixed. Sometimes I work until ten in the evening, sometimes I write until two at night, sometimes I get up at five in the morning and work until five in the afternoon, as deadlines and editors demand. (Journalist H)*

One interviewee interprets the need to work excessively:

*In this system, when you're a precarious worker, you're somehow handicapped. You have no rights, if you get sick, you don't get paid, or if you get injured or go on a holiday. You're really just dependent on how much work you do. And the system drives you on to push yourself even more and work all the time. (Journalist D)*

This life of a precarious worker can negatively impact their health and personal relationships. As Journalist H illustrates: *"Sometimes you already feel the consequences [...] you're totally tired sometimes. In the evening you cannot keep your eyes open anymore, you're like a zombie"*. Or, according to Journalist I: *"Free time and relations suffer a lot [...]. After four or five years, this starts to show in some way on your health and how you feel"*. The interviewees also express concern about how they would keep such a life up if they were to have children. For example: *"I can't imagine how it is if you have a kid, how you combine this with a family"* (Journalist H).

When the interviewees talk about their work-free time situation, they tend to present it as normal. An interviewee who has worked at a birthday celebration explicates: *"You must take this as a part of life"* (Journalist A). Another argues: *"I don't know how it is to go on vacation and not work. But it seems to me that this is a part of me, that it is how a person lives"* (Journalist E).

### **Weak Involvement in Collective Bargaining: "Anyone who resists will be punished"**

Precarious journalists' involvement in collective bargaining over their rights is quite weak, according to our interviewees. They are either not members of a professional organisation or, if they are, they mostly hold back and keep a low profile. The reasons for such a passive stance are their distrust of trade unions, bad experiences with organised action, scarce linking up with each other arising from the individualism of journalists generally and particularly the fear of consequences like losing one's job.

The interviewed journalists do not have much trust in trade unions as they believe the unions have not tried to make enough effort for precarious workers:

*Here we are always forgotten, we are [treated as] just freelancers; I can understand that you don't have to fight for freelancers, but [...] we are not real freelancers. We are being exploited. From freelancers we became regular workers, with the same duties as standard employees. (Journalist A)*

And even when a collective struggle did place, it was unsuccessful: *"We tried [...], but it ended very poorly"* (Journalist B).

Fear of the consequences is noted as a main reason that precarious workers do not wish to raise their profile by going on strike or put themselves forward in some other way in an organised collective struggle. Namely, some of the more active fighters had already faced consequences:

*Journalist C: Today, I know that this courage [to go on strike] will not happen as the situation in [media organisation] is too serious, there's too much fear and anyone who resists will be punished.*

*Interviewer: In what way?*

*Journalist C: They will cancel his contract or reduce his fee, or make him go away by himself.*

According to the interviewees, precarious journalists who resist by fighting individually (filing a lawsuit) or collectively (within a trade union) are either directly dismissed or indirectly pressured to leave the job: *"those who were on the barricades lost their job, they instantly became unwanted, they didn't get assignments anymore. [...] And if they didn't leave by themselves, they were told: we cancel your contract on day X"* (Journalist D).

Still, not all precarious journalists share the same fear of losing their job. As Journalist F points out,

everyone has a very specific and individual situation, and it's hard to make wisecracks at someone who has a child at home, then there are people who make a living for themselves and their partner ... a hundred and one situations!

On the other hand, Journalist E claims he is unafraid of being dismissed from work: *"It would not be awful for me even if my contract doesn't get extended. Because if you are a precarious worker for a long time, this also means that probably you don't have any loans"*.

The interviewees also attribute their weak involvement in collective action to their own passivity, rare cooperation and particularly individualism as a general characteristic of journalists: *"Even within our group we could not reach an agreement. We could not do it within our newsroom, within our media organisation, let alone outside of it. Journalists are too big individualists ..."* (Journalist A). Precarious journalists themselves are to be blamed for not putting enough pressure on the trade union:

*They don't demand from it to do something, they don't stand up for themselves, and they [trade unions] also don't do it on their own initiative. They fight for issues other than the rights of contractual workers, so they deal with problems which attract the most interest, the most pressure.* (Journalist B)

Precarious journalists do not ally themselves (enough) with each other, and also not with other journalists, partly due to their different interests:

*The owners and politics have managed to divide journalists into castes. You have a caste of standardly employed, then a caste of some privileged journalists who are politically privileged, and then you have a very low caste of some contractual workers, and even a lower caste of people working as students. [...] You have a caste system inside a media organisation. Because this has not been dealt with before, now it's very difficult to find common interests and on this basis some common fight. And there's no strong personality who would lead a trade union fight to some level.* (Journalist H)

Some interviewees' answers reveal they feel hopeless and even resignation, for example: *"At some point, I knew that it made no sense to run your head against the wall. If it's meant to be, it will happen to me by itself"* (Journalist D). Based on previous experiences (their own or from their fellow journalists), they believe they will gain nothing positive by

exposing themselves, as *"you get nowhere, you just get yourself into some more trouble"* (Journalist F). They thus prefer a passive stance over active struggle.

#### **(Self-)Restraining Freedom of Expression: "At your editor's mercy"**

When asked about their possibilities of free expression, the interviewed journalists explicitly state that their freedom is (essentially) not under threat. Yet, it can be noticed that they understand threats to free expression merely in the sense of censorship. For example: *"You mean censorship? I have never been censored [...]. I think I'm quite autonomous. No, there has been no censorship"* (Journalist A). Or: *"No article of mine has been censored, so I have been still relatively free in my work"* (Journalist C). And: *"I have never encountered direct censorship, only guidance and harmonising with editors"* (Journalist H).

Still, the interviewees' further explanations reveal a different image: even though they say their freedom of expression is not threatened by direct censorship, it is (self-)restricted in other ways, particularly when it comes to selecting topics to be covered. If precarious journalists have an opportunity to select a topic by themselves, they choose one that will be published at once and with certainty:

*If you have standard employment, you can afford that something is not published, or that it takes a month or two for some issue to resolve and then you can get a full picture and present it. Now, when you're financially dependent, you must struggle from month to month to get some 800 or 900 euros so that you can survive, and you can't wait for something to be published. If you get 150 euros less in a month, you can't pay expenses. It's financial pressure.* (Journalist H)

Further, precarious journalists select topics which can be covered quickly and easily: *"We are expected to write as much as possible in the shortest time period. You self-censor and don't take big, complex topics because you don't have enough time. [...] There's self-censorship, absolutely"* (Journalist I). When asked whether he would report somehow differently if he was not in a precarious situation, one interviewee responds:

*Here a whole new story begins about how you work because you're paid by the article. Quantity is more important than quality. [...] This is the message that we get. Definitely, if I had more time, I would cover some topics more in-depth. [...] Now I get a better fee because I produce more.* (Journalist B)

Journalism quality is thus often sacrificed for the sake of producing more articles in less time.

*You don't choose some exacting investigative issue because you can't afford it [...] I have had some offers, where I could potentially uncover some story, which has involved many people or had a major negative impact on them, but as a contractual worker you simply can't tackle this. You would have to bury yourself in documents, for a month, two or three, to find more sources [...], but if you live from month to month, you can't do it.* (Journalist H)

Giving priority to quantity over quality leads to less in-depth and investigative journalism among precarious journalists:

*The biggest problem with investigative journalism is that you can't afford it [...] Because if you work for too long on one story, in the end you will not have money to pay expenses. Because your payment is not guaranteed. Actually, you must produce enough articles so that in the end you get a decent payment.* (Journalist F)

Choosing “easy-to-do” and “non-problematic” issues to cover and thereby self-restricting their free expression is not only connected to the financial pressure on precarious journalists, but also their fear of being sued. Legal protection has never been self-evident for precarious journalists. As one of the interviewees explains:

*Every year they gave us a worse contract, one year they even wanted to abolish our legal protection, meaning that as a contractual worker you can practically work no longer, as then you really don't have freedom of expression anymore. If someone sues you for what you have written, you can stop writing, then you are bankrupt. You have to cover all the expenses by yourself, all the expenses of hiring a lawyer, all the expenses of a potentially lost lawsuit. This could mean the end of your career and a heavy financial burden.* (Journalist H)

One interviewee describes a situation when a lawsuit was filed against him personally and the plaintiff demanded damages of over 20 average monthly wage payments:

*At that time, I was very frightened and it made me realise for the first time that as a contractual worker I don't have automatic assurance in legislation that my employer will cover the*

*costs of a potential lawsuit related to my work, in contrast to standard employees. Then I told my editor that I can't do this job anymore because the section for which I was working was involved in more investigative and in-depth journalism. I told him that I want to do this job very much, but I can't take that risk.* (Journalist C)

Even though some news organisations have formally assured legal protection for precarious journalists in their contracts, the fear among journalists remains. Namely, it is not only about the possibility of being sued, but also of losing a job due to informal pressures created by someone who has good connections with the journalist's superiors: “*this person could call somebody above me who they know and, since we have loose contracts, we can be put out on the street easily, while a standard employee ... what can they do to him?*” (Journalist A). This explains why precarious journalists prefer to deal with “easy” topics while leaving the “problematic” ones to the standard employees: “*if it's a burning topic, I don't go into it, but someone else takes it over*” (Journalist A).

On the other hand, refusing an assignment is not always an option. Similarly, if precarious journalists get into conflict with their editor they might not get (enough) assignments in the future: “*if you don't listen to him [...] he can punish you by not giving you stories to write, which means less money for you*” (Journalist D). The interviewees talk about situations when they felt they were not in a position to refuse an assignment. For example:

*The editor wanted me to write a commentary which was not based on my opinion, but his own. [...] I wrote the commentary as he wanted it. You're simply not in a position to say 'no, I won't write it' [...] You can turn it down, but then you can be almost sure to expect some punishment, a reduced fee or fewer assignments ...* (Journalist I)

The interviewees believe it is easier for a journalist in a SER to refuse an assignment: “*If I was employed [...], I wouldn't have to cover some PR stuff [...] yes, you present yourself very badly if you reject an assignment. Most of the time we, workers under contract, grab every assignment*” (Journalist B). According to Journalist I, as a precarious journalist “*you are actually in some way at your editor's mercy [...]* Too often, your well-being depends on personal caprice, agreeableness and likableness, on whether we are ‘on the same page’ with each other, whether we think and see problems alike”.

## DISCUSSION

Regarding the first research question, content analysis of the in-depth interviews with Slovenian precarious journalists confirmed that the boundary between the work and free time of precarious journalists is blurred. As Hardt & Negri (2009) stressed, precarity imposes a new regime of time with respect to one's working day and working career; precarity is *"a mechanism of control that determines the temporality of workers, destroying the division between work time and nonwork time, requiring workers not to work all the time but to be constantly available for work"* (Hardt & Negri, 2009, 146). Our interviewees described being constantly available to their employer, not only at different hours of the day, but even while on vacation, because every assignment that a precarious journalist takes *"becomes the means to a new end: getting another job"* (Örnebring, 2018).

According to the interviewees, precarious journalists prefer to overload themselves with assignments than refuse them, even though this means that work interferes with their free time, in some cases even causing damage to their health and personal relationships. Examining the impact of precarious employment on working hours, work-life conflict and health, Bohlea and colleagues (2004, 19) found that long working hours, combined with low predictability and control, produce greater disruption to family and social lives and a poorer work-life balance for casuals than for permanent employees. Several studies (see Deuze & Witschge, 2018, 171) report that stress and burnout are on the rise among journalists working in a precarious situation, with many considering leaving the profession.

Accordingly, precarity might thus be conceived as *"a special kind of poverty, a temporal poverty, in which workers are deprived of control over their time"* (Hardt & Negri, 2009, 147). Precarity imposes control such that when journalists are working in a precarious situation none of their time is their own: *"You can, of course, think and produce affects on demand, but only in a rote, mechanical way, limiting creativity and potential productivity"* (Hardt & Negri, 2009, 147). The reality of journalists doing their job mechanically is clearly far removed from the ideal of journalists as alert, curious, critical and determined watchdogs who reveal abuses of power and otherwise act in the public interest.

Some interviewees' responses reveal they interpret this situation as normal. However, accepting a situation in which the dividing line between one's free time and work is blurred somehow also means the internalisation of precarity itself is normal. This may be linked to Örnebring's (2018) study which in a sample across 14 European countries showed that

journalists are "primed" for precarity, that is, they largely accept precarity as a natural part of journalism: *"Job insecurity is viewed as an inescapable feature of the industry and furthermore a key part of how you as an individual organize and manage your career"*. This pattern of thinking is strong among journalists also because of the strong historical heritage of labour oversupply in journalism, given the mythology associated with the profession that journalism is *"mobile, bohemian, insecure, highly competitive – but ultimately meritocratic"* (Örnebring, 2018).

Precarious journalists in their mid-twenties to mid-thirties are more likely to *"work long hours and irregular shifts"* (Gollmitzer, 2014, 834). One reason for this is that *"they do not have children (yet)"* (Gollmitzer, 2014, 836). Similarly, most of our respondents do not have any children and they raised concerns about their unsustainable conditions in the long term – working like that (without job security, a steady income and a balance of work and free time) while having a family was seen as problematic.

With regard to the second research question, this study demonstrated that precarious journalists' involvement in the collective struggle for their rights is weak. They mostly stick to passively observing a (potential) collective action as they do not have confidence that it will be successful and are also afraid of the consequences should the struggle fail. This holding-back attitude, when journalists persist in their uneasy situation of insecure employment relations rather than joining an organised collective action within a trade union, raises the question of their professional identity.

Even though the literature disagrees on whether journalism is a profession or not (e.g. Glasser & Marken, 2005; Tumber & Prentoulis, 2005), many aspects of journalism are conducted within the norms of professions (Rottwilm, 2014, 8). It is characteristic for a member of a profession that they are bound by some sense of identity. However, the changes to the nature of journalistic work and labour are transforming the nature of journalistic identity that was previously based on shared experiences and shared values: *"In terms of common experience, the growth in self-employment is arguably opening up a wider divide between journalists employed in institutions and those who work for themselves"* (Rottwilm, 2014, 19). The question is whether journalists can maintain an identity outside of their institutional setting at all.

According to Standing (2014), the precariat lacks an occupational identity and does not feel part of any solidaristic labour community. Precarious journalists are *"in career-less jobs, without traditions of social memory, a feeling they belong*



to an occupational community steeped in stable practices, codes of ethics and norms of behavior, reciprocity and fraternity" (Standing, 2014, 20). Their long-term planning has been replaced by job-hopping and portfolio work life, as they "increasingly have contracts, not careers in journalism" (Deuze & Witschge, 2018, 170–171). Further, since there is "no 'shadow of the future' hanging over their actions" (Standing, 2014, 20), they are lacking the sense that what they say or do today may very well have a strong or binding effect on their longer-term relationships. Precarious journalists simply endure in the present moment, from one day to the next; they do not look too far into the future, but carry out their job routinely, opportunistically and passively.

And, if for some reason, such as starting a family, precarious journalists cannot bear this situation anymore, they either leave the profession or file a lawsuit against their employer, which are both individualistic acts. As Örnebring (2018) emphasised, it is almost physically impossible for precarious journalists to frame their problems as collective problems, while their "habit of thought" to see precarity as a matter of individual responsibility prevents collective solutions" (Örnebring, 2018). Among reasons explaining why their determination for collective action is so limited, the interviewees mentioned individualism as a general attribute of journalists. The journalism tradition indeed has individualistic tendencies "that lionize individual uniqueness, creativity, and non-conformity" (Borden, 2007, 116), which discourages collective action. Therefore, collective associating and organising is less likely to happen.

Regarding the third research question, our interviewees explicitly asserted that since they had not experienced any censorship, their freedom of expression had not been threatened. Yet, the absence of censorship still does not guarantee the possibility of free expression. The concept of freedom as "the condition of being able to select and to carry out purposes" (Merrill, 1989, 19) should not be understood as linked merely to negative freedom, which involves the absence of external constraints, such as obstructions, interference, coercion and control, but as embracing positive freedom as well, which refers to the effective capacity to do or achieve what one wishes, to choose and act on one's own initiative (Merrill, 1989, 22–24).

A journalist certainly needs freedom from restraints, such as censorship, but personal journalistic freedom actually revolves around positive freedom, that is, "the freedom to act, to choose, to make one's self through choices and actions" (Merrill, 1989, 23). Precarious journalists' freedom in this positive sense is undeniably threatened, as our

interviewees indicated. A lack of positive freedom is particularly seen in the selection of topics to be covered. When precarious journalists have the opportunity to select topics by themselves, they do not decide based on what they believe is important for the public, but choose topics which can be covered quickly and easily and will be published at once and with certainty. Their apparent freedom to choose is not genuine since they act in this way out of fear, reflecting their precarious situation. If they do not select easy-to-do and non-problematic issues, they risk having fewer articles published, meaning less money at the end of the month, not to mention the fear of uncertainty in the event a lawsuit also emerges.

Our study supports the findings of the IFJ research report (Walters et al., 2006, 4) that insecure employment leads to a decline in critical/investigative reporting and to covering softer stories. Giving priority to the quantity over the quality of news content means less in-depth and investigative journalism, which is damaging for the journalistic mission of serving the public, considering the role that investigative journalism performs in a democracy "by drawing attention to failures within society's systems of regulation and to the ways in which those systems can be circumvented by the rich, the powerful, and the corrupt" (De Burgh, 2000, 11). Precarious workers generally do not feel part of any solidaristic labour community, which intensifies their sense of alienation and instrumentality in what they do: "Actions and attitudes, derived from precariousness, drift towards opportunism" (Standing, 2014, 20). Opportunism, however, is in contradiction with the principles of free expression.

Further, despite claiming that they enjoy considerable freedom of expression, the interviewees also admit they are usually not in a position to refuse an assignment since objecting to an editor may lead to not being given (enough) work in the future or being laid off. This is a constraint in the sense of limited negative freedom. Journalists are thus denied the right to which they are entitled under their ethics code (DNS & SNS, 2019, Article 28), granting them the right to refuse an assignment, which is against this code or professional journalistic standards (Article 28). Again, the appearance that they possess the freedom to choose whether they will oppose the editor or go along is illusory; due to their precarious status, resisting a superior can make their situation even worse.

Of course, all journalists, precarious or not, encounter certain difficulties with freedom on the personal level; they must follow directions and conform to editorial policies (Merrill, 1989, 24). The very nature of journalism demands socialisation, "a sacrifice of considerable individual autonomy"

(Merrill, 1989, 242). But precarious workers, with their loose contracts or even without one at all, thus lacking the legal rights of the SER, are undoubtedly in a more vulnerable position if they resist their superiors. Our findings confirm Rottwilm's (2014, 10) explication that self-employed workers are often less independent than expected when compared to the SER. Since the self-employed need to produce a decent income to make a living, they are driven by market demands, with self-employment often being their last chance, so they "*are limited by constraints through income and financial needs (due to the lack of an assured regular income), the overall economy and demand, taxation, and state regulation*" (Rottwilm, 2014, 10). Self-employment thereby removes employment rights and the employer's obligation to workers, transferring the risk and social costs of employment (sick pay, holiday pay and pensions) to the worker (Moore & Newsome, 2018).

### CONCLUSION

Our study dealt with the problems precarious journalists in selected Slovenian national news media face due to their precarious employment in three areas.

First, with increased flexibilisation and precarisation, the work of precarious journalists often interferes with their free time. In a recent study by Woodruff (2020), increasing demands in journalism (including long or unconventional work hours, a tenuous work-life balance and doing more with fewer resources) and a feeling of being inadequately compensated were found to be key reasons why journalists decided to leave journalism and pursue a new profession. Dawson et al. (2020, 11) concluded that "*[a]t a time of great uncertainty, with employment prospects deteriorating, it is no wonder that journalists look beyond traditional journalism for their future.*"

Work-life balance has become even more complex during the Covid-19 pandemic when the dividing line between life and work in all sectors has become unremittingly blurred and permeable (see Craig & Churchill, 2020; Gigauri, 2020; Magni et al., 2020). Access to policies that support work-life balance has been found to be unequal (and even exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic) among workers in different sectors, types of employment relationships and demographic groups (see Craig & Churchill, 2020; Kossek & Lee, 2020). According to a recent report on the contemporary trends in Slovenian digital journalism (Kaluža & Slaček Brlek, 2020), favouring work from home may be indirectly linked to the precarisation of journalism, while also contributing to the already problematic blurring of the boundary between free and work time.

Second, precarious journalists have many difficulties in organising and bargaining over their workers' rights. Recent longitudinal studies (Massey, 2020 for the USA and Dawson et al., 2020 for Australia) reveal the continual budget cuts and extreme volatility in journalism, denoted by large and erratic fluctuations despite an increasing number of news media organisations and the stronger demand for journalism skills. This has "*drained the reservoir of psychological resources that 'layoff survivors' draw on to cope with the turmoil*" (Massey, 2020, 13).

As the Covid-19 crisis has unfolded, these unfavourable employment conditions in journalism are even being exacerbated (Dawson et al., 2020; Massey, 2020) and thus the lack of a safety net for workers in atypical forms of work makes opportunities for collective bargaining even more difficult, especially as they are not included in the social dialogue, not organised and hence not represented (enough). In policy recommendations to ease the employment and social effects of the Covid-19 pandemic, European and international stakeholders (ILO, OECD, Eurofound, EU-OSHA etc.) have recognised the need to pay special attention to precarious workers (Szpejna & Kennedy, 2020). They dominate in non-standard types of work (but are found with SERs as well) and are specific to each sector (see Breznik & Čehovin Zajc, 2020). In accordance with the ILO *Convention on Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise*, in most EU states trade unions have the right to recruit and represent non-standard workers. However, despite some previous efforts made across the world (see ILO, 2015) this is easier said than done, because "*[t]hey [still] may simply not be able to join a union (by law), may fear reprisals for joining a union, or may not be able to afford union membership because of their volatile income*" (ILO, 2015, 2).

In 2020, Slovenian trade unions and policymakers have made some effort towards representing and mitigating the negative effects of the Covid-19 epidemic not only for SER workers, but for some vulnerable groups as well. Yet, the latter has received less/been omitted from governmental support. For example, self-employed journalists whose income was reduced due to the Covid-19 crisis could receive a basic monthly income for the period of the epidemic, while certain government measures to maintain employment were available for SER workers even after the epidemic (see Čehovin Zajc & Bembič, 2021).

Finally, our study shows that the conditions for precarious journalists to fully exercise their freedom of expression are not guaranteed. Considering recent government-proposed amendments to a set of media laws in Slovenia, the situation

could become even worse in the future. One proposed change is to defund the Slovenian public broadcaster. According to its Director General (in Wiseman, 2020), this would leave the broadcaster in a precarious fiscal position and, so as to offset the losses, it would be forced to cut the budgets for staff and production costs, which trade unions believe could lead to up to 400 job losses. Journalists who fear losing their job are more likely to behave self-protectively as the struggle for professional survival might force them to adopt an opportunistic stance, namely, one contrary to the principles of freedom of expression and critical reporting on issues of public interest (Poler Kovačič & Milosavljević, 2020, 26). Further, journalists who find themselves in lawsuits with politicians because of their critical disagreement, and those who are being humiliated, insulted and intimidated by political authorities, are unable to fully exercise their constitutionally guaranteed right to free expression. The threat of staff cutbacks as well as various interferences in journalists' autonomy and personal dignity (see Wiseman, 2020) might considerably influence precarious journalists who are already in a very vulnerable position.

Another source of concern is the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on news media (see Nielsen, 2020), which has brought health-related and

other risks for journalists. Despite the increased audience interest in news media contents during the pandemic, their advertising and sales revenues have declined (e.g. Nielsen, 2020; Noorlander, 2020; Kaluža & Slaček Brlek, 2020) and are predicted to fall further in the next years (e.g. Mayhew, 2020). Media companies have been forced to reduce costs and journalists have been laid off across Europe (Noorlander, 2020). For example, a survey carried out by the International Federation of Journalists in April 2020 shows that two-thirds of staff and freelance journalists had suffered a pay cut, lost revenue, job losses, cancelled commissions or worse working conditions, while nearly every freelance journalist has lost revenue or work opportunities (IFJ, 2020b).

The European Federation of Journalists' Freelance Expert Group emphasises that the coronavirus crisis "*shows the lack of reliable social security schemes for freelancers and atypical workers in Europe*" (IFJ, 2020a), making it today more obvious than ever that a long-term sustainable strategy for protecting freelancers and atypical workers in the media and cultural sector is necessary. The circumstances described above render it very difficult for journalists generally, and precarious journalists in particular, to fulfil their essential role in a democratic society.

## PROBLEMI PREKARNIH NOVINARJEV V SLOVENSkih NACIONALNIH NOVIČARSKIH MEDIJAH

*Jožica ČEHOVIN ZAJC*

Univerza v Ljubljani, Fakulteta za družbene vede, Center za proučevanje organizacij in človeških virov,  
Kardeljeva ploščad 5, 1000 Ljubljana, Slovenia  
e-mail: jozica.cehovin-zajc@fdv.uni-lj.si

*Melita POLER KOVAČIČ*

Univerza v Ljubljani, Fakulteta za družbene vede, Katedra za novinarstvo, Kardeljeva ploščad 5, 1000 Ljubljana, Slovenia  
e-mail: melita.poler-kovacic@fdv.uni-lj.si

### POVZETEK

*Ekonomski, politični in družbeni pritiski, ki so jih po letu 1970 povzročili hitra globalizacija, tehnološki napredek in mednarodna konkurenca, so privedli do vedno bolj prožnih proizvodnih procesov in destandardiziranih sistemov zaposlovanja, ki jih zaznamuje čedalje večja odvisnost od prekarne delo, kjer so delavci prikrajšani zaradi nižje plače, nestabilnosti zaposlitve, omejenih možnosti za redno zaposlitev in omejenega dostopa do socialne varnosti (pokojninsko, zdravstveno, zavarovanje za primer brezposelnosti). Zaposlitev je postala manj varna tudi v množičnih medijih. Ta članek proučuje težave, s katerimi se zaradi prekarne oblike dela srečujejo slovenski novinarji. Proučuje ravnovesje med njihovim delom in prostim časom, sodelovanje v kolektivnih pogajanjih in svobodo izražanja. Da bi dobili vpogled v njihove izkušnje, sva opravili poglobljene intervjuje z novinarji, ki so v slovenskih nacionalnih medijih prekarno delali več kot sedem let. Rezultati kažejo, da delo prekarne novinarjev pogosto posega v njihov prosti čas, težko se organizirajo in pogajajo o svojih delavskih pravicah, pogoji za popolno uveljavljanje svobode izražanja pa niso zagotovljeni.*

**Ključne besede:** prekarne novinarji, usklajevanje dela in zasebnega življenja, kolektivna pogajanja, svoboda izražanja

## SOURCES AND BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Allen, T. D., Cho, E. & L. L. Meier (2014):** Work-Family Boundary Dynamics. *The Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior*, 1, 1, 99–121.
- Bohle, P., Quinlana, M., Kennedy, D. & A. Williamson (2004):** Working Hours, Work-Life Conflict and Health in Precarious and Permanent Employment. *Revista de Saúde Pública*, 38, Supl., 19–25.
- Borden, S. L. (2007):** *Journalism as Practice*. Aldershot and Burlington, Ashgate.
- Breznik, M. & J. Čehovin Zajc (2020):** Prekarizacija standardnega in nestandardnega zaposlovanja v Sloveniji (2005–2019). *Teorija in praksa*, 58, 1, 21–48.
- Čeferin, R., Poler Kovačič, M. & M. Milosavljević (2017):** Prekarno delo novinarjev kot grožnja svobodi izražanja. *Javnost/The Public*, 24, Supl., S47–S63.
- Čehovin Zajc, J. & B. Bembič (2021):** Pogled na epidemijo covid-19 z vidika medpanožnih razlik v destandardizaciji in nestabilnosti zaposlovanja v Sloveniji. *Družboslovne razprave/Social Science Forum*, 37, 96-97, 21–50.
- Chun, J. J. & R. Agarwala (2015):** Global Labour Politics in Informal and Precarious Jobs. In: Edgell, S., Gottfried, H. & E. Granter (eds.): *The SAGE Handbook of the Sociology of Work and Employment*. Los Angeles, Sage Publications Ltd., 634–650.
- Cohen, N. S. (2011):** Negotiating Writers' Rights: Freelance Cultural Labour and the Challenge of Organizing. *Just Labour*, 17 & 18, 119–138.
- Craig, L. & B. Churchill (2020):** Dual-earner Parent Couples' Work and Care during COVID-19. *Gender, Work & Organization*, 1–14.
- Dawson, N., Molitorisz, S., Rizoio, M. A. & P. Fray (2020):** Layoffs, Inequity and COVID-19. Available at: <https://arxiv.org/pdf/2008.12459.pdf> (last access: 25. 11. 2020).
- De Burgh, H. (2000):** Introduction. In: De Burgh, H. (ed.): *Investigative Journalism*. London, New York, Routledge, 11–31.
- De Peuter, G. (2011):** Creative Economy and Labor Precarity. *Journal of Communication Inquiry*, 35, 4, 417–425.
- Deuze, M. & T. Marjoribanks (2009):** Newswork. *Journalism*, 10, 5, 555–561.
- Deuze, M. & T. Witschge (2018):** Beyond Journalism. *Journalism*, 19, 2, 165–181.
- DNS & SNS (2019):** Kodeks novinarjev Slovenije. Available at: <https://razsodisce.org/o-ncr/na-podlagi-cesa-ncr-deluje/novinarski-kodeks/> (last access: 14. 11. 2020).
- Drobinski-Weiss, E. (2017):** The Status of Journalists in Europe. Available at: <http://website-pace.net/documents/19871/3306947/20171204-StatusJournalistsInEurope-EN.pdf/80000471-7f19-49b5-8186-0ca1b185fa8f> (last access: 4. 8. 2019).
- ECtHR. (1976):** Case of Handyside v. the United Kingdom. Judgement, application no. 5493/72, 7 December 1976.
- Edstrom, M. & M. Ladendorf (2012):** Freelance Journalists as a Flexible Workforce in Media Industries. *Journalism Practice*, 6, 5–6, 711–721.
- EFJ (2015):** EFJ Survey Reveals Precarious Working Conditions of Journalists Working for Digital Media in Europe. Available at: <http://europeanjournalists.org/blog/2015/11/03/efj-survey-reveals-precarious-working-conditions-of-online-journalists-in-europe> (last access: 24. 8. 2019).
- Ekdale, B., Tully, M., Harmsen, S. & J. B. Singer (2015):** Newswork within a Culture of Job Insecurity. *Journalism Practice*, 9, 3, 383–398.
- Gigauri, I. (2020):** Effects of Covid-19 on Human Resource Management from the Perspective of Digitalization and Work-life-balance. *International Journal of Innovative Technologies in Economy*, 4, 31, 1–11.
- Glasser, T. L. & L. Marken (2005):** Can We Make Journalists Better? In: De Burgh, H. (ed.): *Making Journalists*. London, New York, Routledge, 264–276.
- Gollmitzer, M. (2014):** Precariously Employed Watchdogs? *Journalism Practice*, 8, 6, 826–841.
- Hardt, M. & A. Negri (2009):** *Commonwealth*. Cambridge, The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.
- Heery, E. & B. Abbott (2000):** Trade Unions and the Insecure Workforce. In: Heery, E. & J. Salmon (eds.): *The Insecure Workforce*. London, New York, Routledge, 155–179.
- IFJ (2020a):** Covid-19. Available at: <https://europeanjournalists.org/blog/2020/03/23/covid-19-it-is-time-to-guarantee-social-security-for-all/> (last access: 14. 11. 2020).
- IFJ (2020b):** Exposed. Available at: <https://www.ifj.org/media-centre/news/detail/category/press-releases/article/exposed-the-crisis-facing-journalism-in-the-face-of-covid-19.html> (last access: 13. 11. 2020).
- Ignjatović, M. & A. Kanjuo Mrčela (2016):** Reducing Precarious Work in Europe through Social Dialogue. Available at: <http://www.research.mbs.ac.uk/ewerc/Portals/0/Documents/Slovenia-final-report.pdf> (last access: 24. 8. 2019).
- ILO (2015):** Collective Bargaining and Non-standard Forms of Employment. Available at: [https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed\\_protect/---protrav/---travail/documents/publication/wcms\\_436125.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_protect/---protrav/---travail/documents/publication/wcms_436125.pdf) (last access: 25. 11. 2020).
- Jurančič, I. (2017):** Če so pogoji boljši, je novinarstvo boljše, če so slabši, je slabše. Interview. Available at: <http://www.spehnakruhu.com/delo/iztok-jurancic> (last access: 24. 8. 2019).
- Kalleberg, A. L. (2009):** Precarious Work, Insecure Workers. *American sociological review*, 74, 1, 1–22.
- Kalleberg, A. L. (2013):** Globalization and Precarious Work. *Contemporary Sociology*, 42, 5, 700–706.

- Kaluža, J. & S. Slaček Brlek (2020):** Poročilo o sodobnih trendih v slovenskem novinarstvu. In: Kaluža, J. & S. Slaček Brlek (eds.): *V senci digitalnih velikanov: Sodobni trendi v slovenskem digitalnem novinarstvu*. Ljubljana, Založba FDV, 17–130. Available at: [https://www.fdv.uni-lj.si/docs/default-source/zalozba/v-senci-digitalnih-velikanov\\_final2\\_i.pdf?sfvrsn=2](https://www.fdv.uni-lj.si/docs/default-source/zalozba/v-senci-digitalnih-velikanov_final2_i.pdf?sfvrsn=2) (last access: 2. 6. 2021).
- Keller, B. & H. Seifert (2013):** Atypical Employment in Germany. *Transfer*, 19, 4, 457–474.
- Kossek, E. & K. H. Lee (2020):** The Coronavirus & Work–Life Inequality. *Behavioral Science & Policy*, 1–9.
- Lee-Wright, P. (2012):** The Return of Hephaestus. In: Lee-Wright, P., Phillips, A. & T. Witschge (eds.): *Changing Journalism*. London, New York, Routledge, 21–41.
- Magni, F., Tang, G., Manzoni, B. & L. Caporarello (2020):** Can Family-to-work Enrichment Decrease Anxiety and Benefit Daily Effectiveness in Remote Workers? Available at: <http://obcovid19files.s3.amazonaws.com/tang.pdf> (last access: 23. 11. 2020).
- Massey, B. L. (2020):** Testing for Human Capital Value of Daily Newspaper Journalists in the Era of Newsroom Downsizing. *Newspaper Research Journal*, 1–18.
- Mayhew, F. (2020):** Report Predicts Five Years of Steep Global Decline for Newspaper Industry Revenue (print and online). Available at: <https://www.pressgazette.co.uk/report-predicts-five-years-of-steep-global-decline-for-newspaper-industry-revenue-print-and-online/> (last access: 13. 11. 2020).
- Merrill, J. C. (1989):** *The Dialectic in Journalism*. Baton Rouge, London, Louisiana State University Press.
- Moore, S. & K. Newsome (2018):** Paying for Free Delivery. *Work, Employment and Society*, 32, 3, 475–492.
- Nielsen, R. K. (2020):** What will the Coronavirus Pandemic Mean for the Business of News? Available at: <https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/risj-review/what-will-coronavirus-pandemic-mean-business-news> (last access: 13. 11. 2020).
- Noorlander, P. (2020):** Covid and Free Speech. Available at: <https://rm.coe.int/covid-and-free-speech-en/1680a03f3a> (last access: 13. 11. 2020).
- Örnebring, H. (2018):** Journalists Thinking about Precarity. Available at: <http://isoj.org/research/journalists-thinking-about-precarity-making-sense-of-the-new-normal/> (last access: 14. 11. 2020).
- Paulussen, S. (2012):** Technology and the Transformation of News Work. In: Siaper, E. & A. Veglis (eds.): *The Handbook of Global Online Journalism*. Malden, Wiley-Blackwell, 192–208.
- Pavlin, S. (2018):** Should Higher Education Institutions Worry about the Precarisation of Professional Work? *Annales, Series Historia et Sociologia*, 28, 4, 841–852.
- Poler Kovačič, M. & M. Milosavljević (2020):** V karanteno, ponovno: krhanje, krčenje, klientelizem in korupcijska tveganja štirih medijskih zakonov. In: Splichal, S. (ed.): *Premisleki o prihodnosti javnih medijev*. Knjižna zbirka Javnost. Ljubljana, Založba FDV, 22–29.
- Rottwilm, P. (2014):** *The Future of Journalistic Work: Its Changing Nature and Implications*. Oxford, Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism.
- Rubery, J., Grimshaw, D., Keizer, A. & M. Johnson (2018):** Challenges and Contradictions in the “Normalising” of Precarious Work. *Work, Employment and Society*, 32, 3, 509–527.
- Standing, G. (2014):** *The Precariat*. London etc., Bloomsbury.
- Szpejna, M. & A. Kennedy (2020):** Mitigating the Employment and Social Effects of the Covid-19 Pandemic. Available at: [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2020/652719/IPOL\\_BRI\(2020\)652719\\_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2020/652719/IPOL_BRI(2020)652719_EN.pdf) (last access: 19. 11. 2020).
- Tumber, H. & M. Prentoulis (2005):** Journalism and the Making of a Profession. In: De Burgh, H. (ed.): *Making Journalists*. London, New York, Routledge, 58–74.
- Uršič, M., Wonho, J. & N. Kee-Bom (2018):** Creative Precarity. *Annales, Series Historia et Sociologia*, 28, 4, 841–852.
- Vobič, I. & A. S. Slaček Brlek (2014):** Manufacturing Consent among Newswriters at Slovenian Public Radio. *Javnost/The Public*, 21, 1, 19–36.
- Vosko, L. F. (2010):** *Managing the Margins*. Oxford, Oxford University Press.
- Walters, E., Warren, C. & M. Dobbie (2006):** The Changing Nature of Work. Available at: [http://www.ilo.org/sector/Resources/publications/WCMS\\_161547/lang-en/index.htm](http://www.ilo.org/sector/Resources/publications/WCMS_161547/lang-en/index.htm) (last access: 24. 8. 2019).
- Woodruff, D. M. (2020):** Jumping from Journalism – Why Broadcast Journalists Leave the Field. Available at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/etd/8439/> (last access: 21. 11. 2020).