NAME :ABU MARYANN OSEBHAHIEMEN

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COURSE TITLE: FOREIGN CORRESPONDENCE

Questions

1. How is the portrayal of the Global South by the Global North news Organisations/Media? (You can get news stories online to support your claim)

2. What are the challenges a foreign correspondent is likely to face in these times, especially with Corona Virus, Racism and all other Fears in view? Proffer the solutions you think will overcome the challenges you raise.

Submission via your portal is on or before 5th of June, 2020

1. The Global South as a critical concept has three primary definitions. First, it has traditionally been used within intergovernmental development organizations –– primarily those that originated in the Non-Aligned Movement­ ­–– to refer to economically disadvantaged nation-states and as a post-cold war alternative to “Third World.” However, in recent years and within a variety of fields, the Global South is employed in a post-national sense to address spaces and peoples negatively impacted by contemporary capitalist globalization.

In this second definition, the Global South captures a deterritorialized geography of capitalism’s externalities and means to account for subjugated peoples within the borders of wealthier countries, such that there are economic Souths in the geographic North and Norths in the geographic South. While this usage relies on a longer tradition of analysis of the North’s geographic Souths­ ­–– wherein the South represents an internal periphery and subaltern relational position –– the epithet “global” is used to unhinge the South from a one-to-one relation to geography. It is through this deterritorial conceptualization that a third meaning is attributed to the Global South in which it refers to the resistant imaginary of a transnational political subject that results from a shared experience of subjugation under contemporary global capitalism. This subject is forged when the world’s "Souths" recognize one another and view their conditions as shared (López 2007; Prashad 2012). The use of the Global South to refer to a political subjectivity draws from the rhetoric of the so-called Third World Project, or the non-aligned and radical internationalist discourses of the cold war. In this sense, the Global South may productively be considered a direct response to the category of postcoloniality in that it captures both a political collectivity and ideological formulation that arises from lateral solidarities among the world’s multiple Souths and moves beyond the analysis of the operation of power through colonial difference towards networked theories of power within contemporary global capitalism. The Global South is generally understood to refer to less economically developed countries. It is a broad term that comprises a variety of states with diverse levels of economic, cultural, and political influence in the international order. Although International Relations is an interdisciplinary field of study, it has historically been studied from a very Eurocentric perspective that does not always help us to understand developments occurring in  the  Global  South. Understanding Global South perspectives starts with a discussion of the Western-centric focus of mainstream IR theories. It also recognises the challenges facing scholars from the Global South that might help to explain why Global South perspectives are largely absent from mainstream debates. The ultimate goal is to broaden the field of view within IR theory to incorporate a more just and representative understanding of international relations.

While one unifying goal might be to challenge the domination of the Global North, then a further risk of fragmentation lies in the power asymmetries between Global South states themselves. Inequalities are not exclusive to North/South relations but also permeate relations between states of the South. The emergence of strong economies and regional powers within the Global South such as China, Brazil and India has raised new issues of marginalisation and dominance among states already marginalised by the North.

Colombia: being an environmental activist in some countries is much more dangerous than in others

November 29, 2019 3.42pm SAST

 Fatima Garcia Elena, Nottingham Trent University

An indigenous leader from Brazil protests against the destruction of their lands and people. EPA-EFE/FACUNDO ARRIZABAL

Climate change, plastic pollution, rising sea levels – environmentalists in developed countries are calling for action on the planetary emergency. But when environmentalists are brave enough to speak out in places like Barrancabermeja, Colombia, they’re often protesting against very local problems. Lack of sanitation, contaminated water, deforestation for palm oil – degradation of the local environment and the direct threat to human health are closely linked and clear to people here.

Barrancabermeja hosts Colombia’s largest petroleum refinery, which has been operating for just over 100 years. Over that time, local industries have contaminated natural water courses with heavy metals, which has been absorbed by the soil and the surrounding vegetation that local cattle eat, which have also showed high levels of heavy metals. The plumbing that is supposed to supply the city with fresh water doesn’t reach all areas, meaning that some places lack running water and sewage treatment. This situation has motivated passionate environmental protests.

2 .Following the WHO lead, Brazil's Ministry of Health published guidelines for all businesses in the country, including the media. The guidelines recommend virtual meetings and cancelling non-essential trips, and encourage employees to work from home if possible. Managers are advised to adopt alternative schedules so that workers could avoid peak commuting hours. For journalists who remain in the newsrooms, Dr. Jamal Suleiman , an infectious disease specialist at the Emílio Ribas Institute in São Paulo, recommends maintaining several feet of distance between you and other people.

* Work from home if you can
* In the newsroom, clean your work station every day with at least 70% alcohol
* Wash your hands regularly for at least 20 seconds
* Conduct in-person interviews only if necessary
* Keep a distance of at least three to six feet from interviewees
* Use two microphones and sanitize them with alcohol and disposable towels
* Clean all equipment with alcohol
* Wear a surgical mask when interviewing random people on the streets and discard it immediately after.
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· The foreign correspondent is also faced with cultural challenges. The foreign correspondent if not conversant with the culture of his place of assignment will have problems. The culture of the place of assignment of the foreign correspondent is usually different from that of his/her country. The correspondent has to learn the culture of the people; the dress sense, what they eat, different seasons in the country, courtesy among the people, their way of live, the laws of the land (dos and don’ts) and the language and it’s usage. To know all these, the correspondence must read extensively. Foreign correspondents at times find it difficult to eat some types of food in their place of assignment; at times they break some rules not knowing they are breaking them. The correspondence also has to take note of the seasons so as to bring the appropriate clothing. For example if a reporter is sent from Nigeria and assumes the weather of Nigeria is similar to that of New York’s, he will probably have to freeze and develop cold. Some things that are accepted one country may not be accepted in other countries, things might be much more different in the place of assignment of the correspondent. This is why it is important to study the culture of the host country. A foreign correspondent must have a knowledge and appreciation of the history of the region concerned. So much news today evolves from events, decisions or incidents from years back and which puts things in context. You must be conversant with history to be able to analyze events with real authority and thus boost your credibility as someone who knows what he/she is talking about. It is certainly the case for print reporters, who are expected also to write lengthy analytical pieces and features about developments and what they all mean.

· Political instability is another problem faced by a foreign correspondent. When there is political instability in a country, a correspondent will not be able to carry out his assignment effectively. He might even be sent back to his country. A foreign correspondent might not be able to carry out in his country of assignment when there is political upheaval.

Many western countries have “freedom of the press” but not all the countries give this right to their media professionals. In many countries media does not have freedom to speech and journalists (foreign correspondent) have to adhere with the set norms before writing or publishing a story, else they have to face dire consequences. This is called self-censorship. The foreign correspondent is often oppressed by the governments of his place of assignment. The foreign correspondent in some countries is not supposed to show any videos which could malign the government for violating human rights and taking innocent lives and creating havoc. The foreign correspondent also has some roles to play. He has to have a thorough knowledge of various political philosophy operation in his place of assignment i.e. should know the difference between capitalism which is operated in U.S and western Europe and communism a variance of socialism still practiced in China, Cuba of North Korea. He should have the knowledge of authoritarianism, fascism and totalitarianism, which are almost stale. The knowledge of these philosophies will help the correspondent know what step to take in case of any situation. He should have a wide knowledge of the constitution of his country of assignment. The constitution is the primary law upon which a country is governed. This will also save him the trouble of asking too many questions about the political parties because the constitution gives the reporter access to the conduct of political parties in his country of assignment

Crimes against journalists are the biggest threat to press freedom and access to information at this moment. Every killed journalist results in many others exerting self-censorship or even leaving the profession. In the past ten years more than 800 journalists lost their lives for reporting the news - an average of one every five days. Out of all the journalists that have been killed, 95% were local and 5% foreign correspondents. Almost 20% of them were freelance journalists. This is especially worrying considering the fact that news organizations rely more and more on freelance journalists. Unfortunately they are particularly exposed to risks. They usually work alone in dangerous environments and rarely get the same level of protection and assistance that staff reporters have.

Resolutions on safety of journalists

In the past five years the international community passed numerous resolutions and declarations regarding safety of journalists. Free Press Unlimited welcomes them. However, these resolutions and declarations did not change the situation on the ground for journalists and media workers. Journalists are still being murdered, harassed and repressed and often flee the country in fear of prison sentences or heavy fines.

End impunity

How do we create this environment where journalists can do their work safely? There is no silver bullet solution, as the source of the violence varies per context, but it is a fact that all stakeholders are needed to take action applies in all contexts.

Governments need to do more

Lawmakers need to provide an enabling environment for journalists to perform their work independently and without undue interference. Violence, threats and attacks against journalists and media workers should be prevented as much as possible by creating legal guarantees and practical implementation of those laws.

Government representatives and security services can provide protection by demonstrating their support for the work of media and journalists structurally.