



Statistics and the Quest for Quality Journalism

A Study in Quantitative Reporting

By Alessandro Martinisi and Jairo Alfonso Lugo-Ocando

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Challenges common assumptions about how journalists engage and use statistics for quality news and improves our understanding about the usage of data and statistics

Martinisi and Lugo-Ocando's detailed empirical study of data-driven crime and health news coverage in mainstream British papers confirms that "Big Data" is no panacea for achieving "Quality Journalism". As their book's wide-ranging literature review shows, this neoliberal fallacy about methods of math enlightenment in the "Infosphere" reaches back to Condorcet's "Social Mathematics" as a hallmark of the liberal faith during the French Revolution. — Michael Hofmann, Professor of Communication and Multimedia Studies, Florida Atlantic University, US.

Mortality rates, indicators of happiness, drug efficacy, relative risk...Journalists need to tell stories to make the news attractive, and they use quantitative data to make the stories more credible. But where do they get those data, do they really understand their limitations and explain them to the reader? How can they avoid the risk of misinformation? This timely book analyzes the role of data reporting in the information cycle and will be an essential reading in any school of journalism. — Pietro Ghezzi, Professor RM Phillips Chair in Experimental Medicine, Brighton and Sussex Medical School, UK.

This book looks at how numbers and statistics have been used to underpin quality in news reporting. In doing so, the aim is to challenge some common assumptions about how journalists engage and use statistics in their quest for quality news. It seeks to improve our understanding about the usage of data and statistics as a primary means for the construction of social reality.

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List of Illustrations; Chapter 1: Introduction; Chapter 2: Numbers as information in the Information Society; Chapter 3: The never-ending debate on quality in journalism; Chapter 4: Statistics in journalism practice and principle; Chapter 5: The normative importance of 'quality' in Journalism; Chapter 6: Journalism meets statistics in real life; Chapter 7: The ideology of Statistics in the News; Epilogue; References; Index.

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