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# Characterising migrations in Latin America: Analysis and media coverage proposals of the Argentine case



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# Characterising migrations in Latin America: Analysis and media coverage proposals of the Argentine case

Ezequiel Fernández Bravo

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The objective of this policy brief is to provide guidelines and tools for self-regulation of journalism in Argentina, based on pluralism and differences in reporting and media coverage of migration, as main principles.

Latin America has been and still is a continent defined by a dynamic and continuous migratory flow, both in inter-regional and intra-regional terms. In the last few years, several states from the region have been affected by setbacks in public policies, administrative practices and regulatory provisions. These dynamics have been replicated and encouraged by mass media. By stereotyping migrants in negative terms, mass media has justified human rights violations, highlighting and furthering xenophobic expressions within civil society. Mass media play an essential role in this process, as actors with the agency to shape a public agenda, enable or constrain imaginaries within society and characterise and portray vulnerable groups, in this case, the migrant population.

Even though the phenomenon has extended throughout the region, analysing the Argentinian case is of special interest due to the approach to migration from a human rights and securitisation perspective. The growing criminalisation, following regressive policies and multiple discourses by first-line government officials, has been accompanied by media discourse in tune with editorial lines about the subject from the 1990s. Although it was nuanced at the beginning of this century, it has re-emerged strongly in the last five years.

The present policy brief seeks to propose guidelines aimed at prevent xenophobia and eradicate the use of stereotypes. It also suggests more appropriate conditions to think about professional journalism and the interaction with migrant groups and audiences that actively participate in the shaping news. Among these mechanisms, the strengthening of the Public Defender's Office for Audiovisual Communication Services is central. Finally, it suggests guidelines to strengthen and increase support mechanisms for the self-regulation of independent journalism, without interference.

## INTRODUCTION

Latin America has historically been a region of origin, transit and destination for migrants, with both intra- and inter-regional movements. In the last few years, although international migration continues, migration within the continent has intensified, particularly in South America, where the absolute number of immigrants is 5 million (a 2.1% rate with regard to the region's total population) and 10 million emigrants (5.4%).<sup>1</sup> The highest increases in emigration in the intra-regional scale occurred in Haiti and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, and in countries with migratory tradition such as Honduras and Paraguay.<sup>2</sup>

Among other aspects, this evolution is related to the restrictive policies and respective economic crisis in the United States and Europe, regulatory frames for the states in the region and agreements of regional integration such as MERCOSUR – the Southern Common Market which has established residence agreements for the member countries and associated states – and the Andean Community (CAN).<sup>3</sup>

Despite these movements, the continent has been affected in the last five years by opposed trends in the matter of migratory policies, combining acknowledgement and advances in the approach of migration as a human right, and political and legal setbacks, a lack of implementation of said dispositions and a persistent xenophobia in diverse spheres of these societies, which have not substantially changed their matrix beyond the aforementioned accomplishments.<sup>4</sup>

With regard to this, it is worth asking about

representations of these mobilities in the different spheres of civil society. This policy brief will take as a starting point the centrality of media representations. In mediatised societies,<sup>5</sup> the media feature representations providing a reduced vision of 'reality', and they are fundamental when spreading diverse human experiences in the public sphere. These representations are relevant because individuals incorporate to their identity projects the meanings, images and narratives from texts introduced by mass communication media. In that process, cultural and moral values, and different categories to classify the world, are configured, transmitted, disputed, reinforced. Thus, ways of perceiving different groups with regard to their nationality, phenotype or cultural practices are produced and reproduced in that game. How are mobilities represented? Which dangers and risks exist in journalistic discourses and images posing migration as a threat? Which mechanisms allow to give an account on those representations in a plural and human rights context? How should this coverage be dealt with? How to improve journalistic work from a standpoint of self-regulation?

In order to delve into the connection between mobility, media representations and the journalistic self-regulation practice, this policy brief will approach the Argentine case, which is emblematic for several reasons. In the last few years, the sustained use of self-regulation mechanisms in journalism and communication ethics, and an increase in the creation of defenders for the media sector, were observed in most countries from the region.<sup>6</sup> On the one hand, Argentina is the country with the highest

1 M McAuliffe and M Ruhs (eds), *World Migration Report 2018* (International Organization for Migration 2017).

2 J Martínez Pizarro and C Orrego Rivera, *Nuevas Tendencias Y Dinámicas Migratorias En América Latina Y El Caribe* (United Nations 2016).

3 C Stefoni, 'Panorama de la migración internacional en América del Sur. Documento elaborado en el marco de la Reunión Regional Latinoamericana y Caribeña de Expertas y expertos en Migración Internacional preparatoria del Pacto Mundial para una Migración Segura, Ordenada y Regular' (2018) Population and Development Series (123).

4 P Ceriani Cernadas, 'Migration policies and human rights in Latin America: progressive practices, old challenges, worrying setbacks and new threats' (2018) EIUC <<https://repository.gchumanrights.org/handle/20.500.11825/629>> accessed 10 March 2019.

5 E Verón, *Construir el acontecimiento* (Gedisa 1987).

6 UNESCO, *Tendencias mundiales en libertad de expresión y desarrollo de los medios: Informe regional para América Latina y el Caribe* (UNESCO 2018).

absolute number of migrants in the continent: 2,086,302.<sup>7</sup> Besides being a historical destination of overseas migration, and a historical and contemporary destination of intra-regional migration, between 2001 and 2015, Argentina has received migrants from Paraguay and Bolivia (280,030 and 161,262, respectively). In the last five years, it has also received migrants from Venezuela (the IOM estimates that by 2018 approximately 95,000 Venezuelans resided in the country<sup>8</sup>) and Colombia. On the other hand, since 2016, alongside a series of government reforms eroding migrants' rights, Argentina is witnessing the beginning of a cycle where anti-immigration discourses are at a centre stage both in the press and in broadcast media<sup>9</sup>, in a new agenda setting exercise.

In this context, it becomes crucial to think and develop self-regulatory policies for journalists in Argentina and professionalise the practice in a way that they can report avoiding stigmatisation and providing adequate and sufficient information, with respect for human rights.

Migration coverage is not only positive or negative. It also confronts us with a variety of issues, narratives and points of view. In Argentina, recent narratives about migration has put back on the agenda – with precedent and continuity of migrants' representations in the 1990s – a demographic idea of invasion from a perspective of 'order' and 'security'. In addition to this, representations strengthening the ideas of cultural identity, nationality and homogeneity tend to reinforce a separation between a national 'us' and a foreign 'them'. Thus, the use of terms such as 'illegal' or 'clandestine', or the association of criminal activity to a specific nationality, such as 'Chinese mafia' or 'Colombian narco-terrorism', is very frequent.<sup>10</sup>

In light of the above, the present policy brief proposes guidelines for the prevention of xenophobia and the eradication of stereotypes.

It also refers to the appropriate conditions for the journalistic practice based on professionalisation and interaction with groups and audiences actively participating in the production of news. Among these mechanisms, the strengthening of the Public Defender's Office for Audiovisual Communication Services is presented as central.

## PROBLEM DESCRIPTION

The issue under study stems from the lack or weakness of mechanisms for the reporting, monitoring, identifying and dealing with xenophobic and discriminatory journalistic practices that promote negative stereotypes against migrants. These negative narratives socially contribute to justify the curtailing of these groups' rights by state authorities. Since 2016, a number of regressive government measures have downgraded the standards of the rights approach of migration Law 25871. Among them, the suspension of the Territorial Approach Programme of the National Migration Office (2016), the increase in control operations of the permanence and expulsion regulations, the raise in migration fees and the sanction of Presidential Decree (DNU) 70/2017.<sup>11</sup> These measures were accompanied of an aggressive narrative by government officials and leaders of the opposition; an attack that has gained in strength since 2016, as it was reproduced and promoted through graphic and audio visual media.

These discriminatory and xenophobic expressions were not the exclusive outcome of actions by the political forces currently in power. They summarised and reinforced discourses and stereotypes latent in different sectors of society. Although in some cases communicators have questioned the government's attitude,<sup>12</sup> in

7 McAuliffe and Ruhs (n 1).

8 Ibid.

9 E Meccia, 'No me discuta: Migración reciente en Argentina y medios de comunicación desde el análisis sociológico-lingüístico del discurso' [2017] *Revista Latinoamericana de Metodología de las Ciencias Sociales* 7(1).

10 CELS, *Situación de los derechos humanos de las personas migrantes en la Argentina* (CELS 2016).

11 Which modified the National Migration Law 25871, among others (Ceriani Cernadas (n 4), Canelo, Gavazzo and Nejamkis 2018, CELS, 2017).

12 B Canelo, N Gavazzo and L Nejamkis, 'Nuevas (viejas) políticas migratorias en la Argentina del cambio' [2018] *Si Somos*

general, media coverage of the anti-migration and xenophobic governmental rhetoric has emphasised a stigmatising portrait of migrants as criminals.<sup>13</sup> Media coverage of migrant related issues in Argentina is usually impregnated with prejudice and it may border the limit of political correctness or even openly cross it.<sup>14</sup> The recent breakdown in migration policies resulted in the reinforcement of these negative representations.

According to a number of studies, migrants are the least covered group in the media, together with indigenous peoples. The Public Defender's Office of Audiovisual Communication Services reported that out of 78,289 news items released between 2013 and 2017, only 339 referred to issues relating to migrants, that is 0.4% of the total.<sup>15</sup> In 199 news items relating to migrants in Argentina 'the building of criminal stereotypes associated to nationality, specially in case of events relating to drug trafficking, was continuously observed'. In total, 129 (64.8% of the national total) were associated to criminal cases, and only nine (4.5% of the total) had migrants as a source of information. In another study on the media coverage of the national press during three months in 2018, the Argentine Commission for Refugees and Migrants (CAREF)<sup>16</sup> pointed out that 62% of news involving migrants covered criminal events, and only 5% incorporated migrants as a source of information.

There is a notorious difference in the media characterisation of migrants residing in other continents vis-à-vis migrants residing in Argentina. According to the Argentine Public Defender's Office of Audiovisual Communication Services' Report<sup>17</sup>, 42.6% of news about migrants related to international migrations between Asia,

Africa and Europe, and to the so-called *latinos* to the United States, while 16% were local news related to drug trafficking and crime. The portraits of these migrants tend to show them as victims thus building a very different stereotype than in the case of local migrants that tend to be associated with crime.

In a context where bad journalistic practices are used at the expense of migrants' rights and their protection, official securitisation discourses on human mobility are reinforced and the idea of human rights progressiveness is weakened. Self-regulation, the elimination of negative tags and the strengthening of freedom of speech thus become key challenges.

## REGULATORY FRAMEWORKS AND GUIDELINES FROM CIVIL SOCIETY

In terms of legislation – aside from Law 23592 Against Discrimination – Law 25871 acknowledges migrants' rights at an equal status with nationals, encourages social practices against xenophobia and recognises the value of cultural diversity. At the state level agencies, firstly the Public Defenders' Office for Audiovisual Communication Services (established by Law 26522) provide a channel for proposals and complaints, although they lack the power to impose sanctions. The role of defender as established in this law is a novelty in global terms, insofar as it seeks to promote communication related rights; deal with complaints and enquiries on media content; educate a variety of audiences; foster pluralism and level inequalities within the communication field, among other matters.<sup>18</sup> Secondly, the National Institute Against Discrimination, Xenophobia and Racism (INA-

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Americanos 18(1) PL 150.

13 Meccia (n 9).

14 M Becerra, S Marino and G Mastrini, *Los medios digitales: Argentina* (Open Society Foundations 2016).

15 Public Defender's Office of Audiovisual Communication Services, "5 años de monitoreo de noticias (2013-2017)" (2018) <<https://defensadelpublico.gob.ar/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/5-a%C3%B1os-de-Monitoreos-DPSCA.pdf>> accessed 13 March 2019.

16 CAREF, "Monitoreo de medios gráficos sobre el tratamiento de las noticias vinculadas a personas migrantes y refugiadas en Argentina" <<https://www.caref.org.ar/publicaciones>> accessed 7 March 2019.

17 Public Defender's Office of Audiovisual Communication Services, "5 años de monitoreo de noticias (2013-2017)" (2018) <<https://defensadelpublico.gob.ar/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/5-a%C3%B1os-de-Monitoreos-DPSCA.pdf>> accessed 13 March 2019.

18 UNESCO (n 6).

DI) has an Observatory Against Discrimination in Radio and TV which has dealt with some discrimination cases in broadcasting media and has made recommendations to avoid the repetition of these practices<sup>19</sup> without the power to impose disciplinary sanctions.

In terms of self-regulation, Argentine media lacks the mechanisms of the United Kingdom's Independent Press Standards Organisation or the professional journalists' associations in other countries. On the other hand, codes of ethics for the journalistic profession have been adopted by the Argentine Forum of Journalism (FOPEA) in 2006 and the Argentine Association of Journalistic Bodies (ADEPA) in 2012. These are two media professional and journalism groups that do not pronounce on professional activities of their partners or members. Aside from this, there are style manuals issued in 1997 by *Clarín* and *La Nación* –the two major newspapers in the country.<sup>20</sup> With regard to social and cultural diversity, there are no established quotas or complaint procedures. Therefore, self-regulation mechanisms are practically non-existent.

This absence of self-regulation in general, and of guidelines for coverage of news related to cultural diversity and human mobility and migration in particular, as well as the inadequacy of journalistic practices in this field, has led to a pronouncement by the UN Committee on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families. In 2011 this Committee recommended Argentina to adopt:

forceful measures to eliminate discriminatory stereotypes against migrant workers and their families in political statements and mass media, strictly applying criminal law dispositions and educating agents of order, politicians, journalists

and population in general on the discriminatory character of such acts.

It also recommended the adoption of measures to:

publicly condemn discriminatory acts against migrant workers and their families, remind mass media of their responsibility to firmly denounce these acts, and promote the sanction of voluntary codes of conduct for media and other interested parties.<sup>21</sup>

In 2017 Mutuma Ruteere, UN Special Rapporteur on the Contemporary Forms of Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, acknowledged the role of the Public Defenders' Office for Audiovisual Communication Services as 'good practice' and encouraged mass media 'to collaborate with the Office and develop, together with civil society, codes of ethical behaviour in a voluntary manner, as well as to create self-regulation measures, policies and practices to fight racism'.<sup>22</sup>

Despite these recommendations by the international community, there have been no measures adopted in order to establish self-regulation or other measures. What is more, the executive power has issued a so-called Necessity and Urgency Decree limiting the application of the Law on Audiovisual Communication Services (SCA) 26522 in a manner that discourages the diversification of media outlets. In above described scenario, states must not only abstain from interference; they must promote and ensure pluralism and diversity in order to confront the impact of monopolistic tendencies by large media groups and the reduction of content and editorial lines.

19 Defensoría del público, 'Recomendaciones para el tratamiento periodístico responsable de las migraciones y los derechos de las personas migrantes' (November 2018) <<https://defensadelpublico.gob.ar/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Recomendaciones-casos-migrantes.pdf>> accessed 8 March 2019.

20 A Amado Suárez, 'La autorregulación en el periodismo argentino' (2008) 21 *Oficios Terrestres* <<http://sedici.unlp.edu.ar/handle/10915/45632>> accessed 10 March 2019.

21 Committee on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, 'Concluding observations of the Committee on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families Argentina' (2011) CMW/C/ARG/CO/1 <<https://undocs.org/es/CMW/C/ARG/CO/1>> accessed 10 March 2019.

22 Human Rights Council, 'Report of the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance on his mission to Argentina' (2017) A/HRC/35/41/Add.1 <<https://undocs.org/es/A/HRC/35/41/Add.1>> accessed 10 March 2019.

## POLICY OPTIONS

An improvement in coverage of cultural diversity and migration related news in Argentina is needed in order to overcome xenophobic and discriminatory coverage.

The frame of reference for such improvement should be composed of four items:

1. Professionalization and training;
2. Staffing and recruitment;
3. Networking; and
4. Code of ethics.

### Professionalization and training

*Striving for excellence in training and education of journalists and communication professionals either at journalism schools, media outlets, national and international agencies or civil society organisations, reinforcing professional standards in the conceptual and legal understanding of non-discrimination and cultural diversity.*

Training should be aimed at reducing gaps and shortcomings in the understanding and prevention of racism and xenophobia, the rights and duties in international treaties and standards protecting the rights for migrants, refugees and asylum seekers. These efforts should reach editors, journalists and communication professionals in general. In Argentina, such initiatives are scarce, not visible and reduced in scope. Training initiatives such as those by the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the Open Society Forum and the MERCOSUR Institute of Public Policies on Human Rights (IPPDH)<sup>23</sup> and national human rights institutions<sup>24</sup> should be supported, strengthened and amplified.

Moreover, new media schools and initiatives should aspire to train specialist reporters with

concentrated knowledge on migrant and refugee issues. These initiatives should not only be taken by journalists but also be supported by unions and media chief executive officers. In this regard, government agencies such as the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Modernization and the National Migration Office should establish strategic alliances with media and journalists' organisations to ensure continuous training for their professionals.

Media professionals should also promote internal discussion and debate on how to develop and improve their focus when covering migration. In this regard, Open Society's Regional Forum and the Knight Center for Journalism in the Americas are positive examples.<sup>25</sup> Finally, media professionals should also promote best practices in coverage on migration channelled into journalistic guidelines, including fact checking; analysis during coverage involving migrants, refugees and asylum seekers; plurality of sources; plurality of perspectives in coverage (legal, economic, social, political, religious, etc.); transparency and commitment in rectification of inaccurate information.

### Staffing and recruitment

*Participation in key roles in the media of reporters and editors from minorities should be ensured in order to promote diversity of views and analysis.*

In states such as the United Kingdom or Holland, with explicit equality and diversity policies, diverse journalistic projects have introduced outreach schemes in an effort to increase recruitment of migrant workers.<sup>26</sup>

Taking it as good practice for the Argentine case, this type of plural and formal anti-discrimination measures in recruitment would al-

23 IPPDH, 'Migración con enfoque en derechos humanos' <[www.ippdh.mercosur.int/cursos/migracion-con-enfoque-en-derechos-humanos/](http://www.ippdh.mercosur.int/cursos/migracion-con-enfoque-en-derechos-humanos/)> accessed 10 March 2019, and <<https://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/voices/topics/migration-and-asylum/>> accessed 9 March 2019.

24 See Defensoría del público (n 8); INADI, 'Comunicación inclusiva para periodistas' (INADI June 2018) <[www.inadi.gob.ar/2018/06/07/comunicacion-inclusiva-para-periodistas/](http://www.inadi.gob.ar/2018/06/07/comunicacion-inclusiva-para-periodistas/)> accessed 5 March 2019.

25 Knight Center for Journalism in the Americas, 'Cobertura periodística de la migración en las Américas' (Knight Center for Journalism in the Americas/Open Society Foundation 2011) <[https://knightcenter.utexas.edu/Cobertura\\_sobre\\_migracion\\_booklet.pdf](https://knightcenter.utexas.edu/Cobertura_sobre_migracion_booklet.pdf)> accessed 8 March 2019.

26 Council of Europe, '4th European Ministerial Conference on Mass Media Policy: The media in a democratic society. Declaration, resolutions and statement(MCM (94) 20 Prague)' <<https://rm.coe.int/16806461fb>> accessed 14 March 2019

low not only to ensure a variety of sources when producing news information, but also a variety in producers of meaning. The European Council, in its fourth European Ministerial Conference about Mass Media Policy in a Democratic Society, has emphasised that ‘pluralism can be internal, through a wide range of values, opinions, information and interests being expressed within a specific actor in the media sector’.<sup>27</sup> A culturally diverse composition of the journalistic staff in mass communication media would imply a diversity of standpoints and approaches not only in migratory issues, but also in other public agenda topics.

Lastly, efforts to guarantee labour rights and provide social protection for all journalists in general and migrant journalists in particular, should be redoubled. In Argentina – as well as in other countries from the region and the world – deregulation of the sector and technological changes led to more precarious and informal hiring practices which, indirectly, is an obstacle in the implementation of these kind of policies. Thus, the implementation of measures to promote diversity hirings is at odds with nepotism, precariousness of the profession and lack of regulations for companies with regard to hiring policies.

## Networking

According to the two referred reports<sup>28</sup>, but also going further, in news stories, migrants, refugees and asylum seekers tend to be portrayed as passive subjects, subordinates who cannot speak or are not heard; despite being in the news, they are still voiceless. With regard to this, in journalism it becomes essential as a daily practice to listen to their reasons for migration, their expectations and meanings, to allow a narrative of their own life. On another note,

refugee groups, activists and non-governmental organisations, key actors when presenting information for the media, may be trained on the best way to communicate with journalists and media. With regard to this, the spreading of campaigns in which the media explain their policies and editorial perspective, or high-quality journalism committed to a human rights approach, in general, and to migrant persons in particular, is important, in order to generate trust in audiences and establish more fluid bonds. Also, the implementation of discussion forums in organisations such as the Public Defenders’ Office of Audiovisual Communication Services, where the different actors, the media, journalists, civil society organizations (including migrant associations), can debate the treatment of topics related to migration, a greater approach, interaction and knowledge.

It is worth mentioning the almost complete absence of mediators, audience defenders or ombudsmen in Argentine media to encourage readers’ participation, care for media precision, receive and transmit complaints from the audience, recommend restorative actions and spread the editorial positions. Models such as the ombudsman in *The Guardian*, *El País* or *Folha* serve as an example. In particular, when broadcasting news and in communication with audiences, it is important to establish transparent and accessible mechanisms, to deal with complaints in the coverage of issues involving migrants and refugees.

In the state sphere, the important work by the Public Defenders’ Office of Audiovisual Communication Services<sup>29</sup> results in good practice that should be encouraged and amplified. In relation with monitoring coverage of stereotypical, negative expressions referring to the ethnic origin of suspects, for instance, in crime reports or emphasising the legal stay status of a person,

27 Council of Europe, ‘4th European Ministerial Conference on Mass Media Policy: The media in a democratic society. Declaration, resolutions and statement (MCM (94) 20 Prague) p.3 <<https://rm.coe.int/16806461fb>> accessed 14 March 2019.

28 CAREF, ‘Monitoreo de medios gráficos sobre el tratamiento de las noticias vinculadas a personas migrantes y refugiadas en Argentina <<https://www.caref.org.ar/publicaciones>> accessed 7 March 2019, and Public Defender’s Office of Audiovisual Communication Services, ‘5 años de monitoreo de noticias (2013-2017)’ (2018) <<https://defensadelpublico.gob.ar/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/5-a%C3%B1os-de-Monitoreos-DPSCA.pdf>> accessed 13 March 2019.

29 Missions and functions of the Public Defender’s Office are stated in art 19 of the Law on Audiovisual Communication Services (LSCA). The office has national scope and acts in relation with public, non-profit and private commercial media.

the INADI Observatory Against Discrimination in Radio and TV, should also be mentioned. In both cases, mechanisms should be established to cooperate with media corporations in order to create reasonable responses from the media, such as issuing or spreading retractions and corrections in case of infringement against these groups. In any case, the basic functioning involves an agreement between media, journalists and civil society members to improve the process of circulation for public information.

### Code of ethics

In the international level, it is worth mentioning the existence of codes or declarations of journalists' duties by the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ), the International Organization of Journalists (IOJ), the Inter American Press Association (IAPA), and the Latin American Federation of Journalists (FELAP) or the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

In Argentina, the Broadcasting Law 22285 contains regulations on professional ethical conduct. Following the freedom of speech standards of the Inter-American human rights system, it does not demand veracity or opportunity in the information and defends journalistic self-regulation and the application of subsequent responsibilities. Ethical content regulations can also be found in editorial statutes or style manuals (as in *El País* from Spain, *Associated Press* in North America, *Clarín* or *La Nación* in Argentina); ethical rules imposed by the state through laws or other regulations (Article 10 in the Statute for the Journalistic Profession in Spain); or self-imposed by journalists' organisations (as in the United Kingdom, Brazil or Chile). Despite the above, in Argentina there is an evident absence of instruments and practices for self-regulation in the media with negative impact in the daily activity of journalists.

The existence of codes of ethics with national reach, such as the honour code by the French Federation of Journalists' Associations or the Munich Declaration should be valued and could be taken as an example for the Argentine case, since the FOPEA Code of Ethics, the most-extended locally, is representative of a reduced sector of journalism. Moreover, FOPEA has been highly questioned by an important number of professionals in the journalistic field and it has notoriously awarded formal recognition to journalists whose conduct were at odds with human rights standards<sup>30</sup>.

Although they may not be binding, this kind of initiative constitutes a more general and comprehensive reflection on the professional standards journalists must hold as reference when developing their work. An additional challenge is the unhealthy commercial environment guiding large media editorial decisions that professional journalists must abide by.

Both the code of ethics and the declarations on pluralism and reporting on differences related to human mobility should involve the national institutes of human rights and consider, among other points: correct use of language and information; avoiding stereotypes; promoting the use of inclusive language and images and showing integral perspectives with a human rights approach.<sup>31</sup> These tools should be actively spread among journalists and continuously debated and regulated.

Regarding the application of a code of ethics with these characteristics, there are questions related to the possibility and type of sanctions, and the definition of which authority may be in charge. There are examples from many countries in which this is sanctioned in ethics boards. In Argentina, there is no professional council or association of journalists such as the ones in Peru, Chile and Costa Rica, or the Swedish Press Council and the United Kingdom's Independent Press Standards Organisation. If a tri-

30 APDH, "La APDH repudia enérgicamente el premio otorgado por FOPEA a Claudio Andrade" <<http://www.apdh.org.ar/repudio-premio-fopea-andrade>> accessed 14 March 2019

31 A White, 'Moving stories: International review of how media cover migration' (Ethical Journalism Network 2015); INADI, 'Migrantes y discriminación' (Instituto Nacional contra la Discriminación, la Xenofobia y el Racismo 2016); Respect Words, 'Informar sobre procesos migratorios y minorías' (Enfoque y directrices 2017); S Turpin, 'Media coverage on migration. A Practical Guide for Journalists' (International Organization for Migration 2018).

bunal should be determined, it would be complex to create; it could be similar to the National Council for the Training of Journalists, formed by journalists, editors and citizens, or it may be formed by renowned specialized journalists, as an example. Usually, they carry out moral sanctions, without legal effect. However, they have been criticised due to the possibility of double convictions in cases receiving a sanction from any judicial authority, the matter of equity in its implementation and the lack of consideration that most part of journalists receive from media corporations.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The question for self-regulation in journalistic coverage related to pluralism and reporting on differences with regard to migrations acquires singular importance in Argentina in the present. In a context of an advance against migrant persons' rights, media representations play an important role in providing other imaginary and discourses in the public debate, different from the idea of threat.

Recommendations for political decision-makers in this subject, in this case mainly the Ministry of Education, Culture, Science and Technology and the Ministry of Modernization, aim at 1) strengthening and increasing support mechanisms for the self-regulation of independent journalism, without interference; and 2) supporting the professionalisation of independent journalism, discussing with different sectors in civil society to guarantee an adequate treatment with regard to pluralism and migrations.

Migrant persons represent positive contributions in multiple aspects (in economic, social, cultural, democratisation and pluralism processes) for the destination countries and, in that sense, it is also important to portray their participation in the country's everyday life, religion, employment or with examples of successful artists, professionals and entrepreneurs.

These political alternatives are not exclusive. Before being considered separately, they should be combined and consider as supplementary, having as a premise that all kinds of self-regula-

tion should be open to society. Likewise, as this policy brief tried to account for in each one of these options, all self-regulation mechanisms with regard to migration should be worked on continuously in the long term, looking to exceed the sphere of communication media, hosting ideas and viewpoints from other sectors, in this case, mainly, migrant groups.

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