

1. The Leveson Inquiry was valuable in illuminating the practices of the (mainly) tabloid press,

and in providing a background to the state of the UK press.

2. Leveson suggested that the regulatory backstop be Ofcom - a regulator with large powers, including to fine and to ban channels.

In post-Leveson discussions, the form of the link to the state was diluted to a Press Recognition Panel created under Royal Charter,

and charged with recognising a regulator according to a list of criteria, and monitoring its activities thereafter.

3. Much of the press reaction to this has been overblown, bordering on the absurd,

claiming to see in the Charter a dictatorial system of censorship and suppression of comment.

No such system is possible in the UK, short of an authoritarian regime.

4. But the recommendation to make a regulatory system accountable to the state, however mildly, however well-intentioned, is wrong.

5. Harassment, blackmail and phone hacking, all of which went on in tabloid newsrooms, can and should be dealt with by the law.

Investigation, comment and ridicule should not be amenable to correction in a free society.

An organisation which is part of the state will sooner or later be under pressure from parliament and the government to moderate the coverage, and may find it hard to resist.

Even were that not to be a pressure, or one that would be resisted, the fact of a state overseer is an unhealthy innovation.

Now, as journalism moves onto the web and takes new forms, regulation in a democracy becomes impossible.

6. Good journalism can't be created through regulation. It can be shaped by education, both of journalists and in schools' curricula which include,

in civics lessons, strands on media literacy and understanding.

Bad journalism can be challenged by NGOs and academic institutions.

It can be corrected by fact checking sites. It can be criticised by other journalism -

The Guardian's investigation into phone hacking set a trend.

The practice of monitoring journalism by journalists in the US is another example;

still another are the high standards encouraged by journalists' unions in Scandinavian countries.

7. Britain 's tabloid press has been the most powerful (in its influence on politics) in the world.

It is now weakening, as are all newspaper cultures.

Online organisations as Buzzfeed, Vice and Vox are taking their place.

Social media are now determining political and social debates, and setting up direct exchanges and challenge.

The law can and should intervene on issues such as libel and hate speech.

Otherwise, these flows of information and opinion are un-regulatable, short of authoritarian imposition (as in China, Russia and elsewhere).

8. A regulator approved by the PRP will not attract a membership. The national newspapers most likely to be sympathetic to such a project -

the FT, The Independent, The Guardian - have taken the view that their conduct, and the journalistic culture they have created, are the responsibility of the editor.

9. The PRP, through no fault of its own, has failed to become the overseer of press standards. It should make this clear in its report to parliament

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