

# The Cutting and the Work of the Journalist in DRC (Look at the City of Likasi)

KAZADI Nkulu Kamuyele<sup>1</sup>, NTUMBA Mbombo Celestin<sup>2</sup>

Researchers in Communication Sciences at the University of Likasi (DRC)

**Abstract:** *This article focused on cutting and its implications for journalism in the DRC, with the aim of raising the profile of cutting, a phenomenon that is increasingly tarnishing the image of journalism. The purpose of this article has been to circumscribe the field of study here in Likasi and to give the origin of this evil that spreads terror in the world of journalism. We have shown that if this phenomenon succeeds in gaining ground, it is because journalists practice their profession in difficult conditions; the latter being of a political, social and structural nature. The salary treatments to which feather and micro professionals are subject leaves much to be desired and does not allow them to work properly, that is, to process the information objectively and impartially; instead of collecting the information on the ground, they are engaged in the money collection. From where they lose their credibility and especially their legitimacy.*

**Keywords:** Cutting, ethics and ethics, corruption, editorial line

## 1. Introduction

Journalism in the Democratic Republic of Congo is dominated in its operation by a practice that is gaining momentum. This practice is "cutting". This is for media professionals, to receive from their sources of information or organizers of events they cover, gifts in cash or in kind.

The journalists and the sources of information who have set up this practice and who maintain it consider it as a kind of motivation given to the media professionals.

If at the beginning, the actors of this practice evoked the precarious conditions in which the journalists work, more and more, this practice is rooted in the exercise of the profession of journalism, even if the common understanding of the Congolese considers it like a case of disguised corruption.

Thus, some information is killed, others processed without objectivity, all in favor of the bribers. One of the unfortunate consequences of this phenomenon lies in the difficulty of establishing a policy of self-regulation in the Congolese press.

This article is intended as a contribution to the reflection on the phenomenon of "cutting" in the practice of journalism.

## 2. Overview of the Audiovisual Universe of the City of Likasi

The city of Likasi currently has five television broadcasting stations. All these stations belong to the private sector, which, in this way, seeks to open up the city in terms of access to information internally and externally. Thus, we can first count a religious television channel "BETHESDA", belonging to the Protestant Church in Shituru commune. This channel specializes in announcing the "gospel" through broadcasts, religious songs, and Bible teachings. It is therefore a thematic chain.

The Alfajiri television channel started with a Congolese national deputy politician, as owner. Currently, it is a

member of his family who manages this television channel. Given its commercial nature, it lives from advertising revenues and paid items including reports that supply its fund. Alfajiri wants to be a chain of general information. It is located in downtown Likasi.

The RCK (Community Radio Katanga) TV is also located in downtown Likasi. This community channel, which specializes in supporting the development of rural communities, is also located elsewhere, notably in Kamina and Lubumbashi. She advocates development through educational, entertaining and informative programs. It lives on subsidies, especially from a Canadian NGO committed to the development of rural Katanga.

In addition to these three channels, the city of Likasi has radio stations that operate on the FM band. They are also responsible for informing, educating and entertaining the population of Likasi and its surroundings. We can mention: Flavie Lumière Katanga (FLK), a recently created radio located in downtown Likasi, CANAL 7, Jado FM which, due to technical problems, no longer issues. None of these radio stations and television channels receives subsidies from the Congolese state for its operation.

### 2.1 Notions on Cutting

Concept derived from the verb *cut*, which means to amputate, cutting refers to the corruption of the journalist in the exercise of his profession. In journalistic jargon, it simply means "corruption". The latter is defined as the act by which a person engaged in a particular function, public or private, solicits or accepts a gift, offer or promise to accomplish, delay or omit to perform an act directly or indirectly in the performance of his duties. It therefore implies the violation by the guilty party of the duties of his office.

Going in the same direction, the Little Robert informs that corruption is an alteration of judgment, of morality (Dictionary Le Petit Rober 2013, p.94)

## 2.2 Origin of the concept "cutting"

According to Jean-Christien Ekambo, (2016) a Congolese researcher, the practice of "cutting" goes back to 1963, in the political context of the first years of independence. Then Congolese Secretary of State for Finance, François Kupa, makes several decisions for the cleansing of the currency. To do this, he uses the media to get his message across to the public and the journalists make him understand that they needed him because they worked in difficult conditions. At the end of his briefing, he will give the journalists present a snack for transport. It is therefore from the name of the Secretary of State for Finance that came the expression "cutting", with a "C" instead of "K". Then, the practice was reinforced by the fact that journalists continued to work in precarious conditions, so they were easy prey for corruption. This practice has gradually gained ground in all Congolese media and taken several names depending on whether one is in this or that other city of the DRC.

## 2.3 The concept of "cutting" according to the Congolese context

If the word "cutting" has several names depending on whether we find ourselves in this or that other city of the DRC, it is particularly appropriate to refer to the city of Kinshasa province where is concentrated the largest number of journalists and houses of press, but also to interest us in the city of Lubumbashi, the second after Kinshasa in the press and finally in the city of Likasi to which we devoted most of our study.

### 1) The Kinshasian context

Practice that pleases some and displeases to others, the cut has well-defined appellations among the journalists Kinshasa. We can mention some of them: "zombo at night", "madesu ya bana" which can be translated as "last whistle", "beans for children". These equivalences in *Lingala*, one of the national languages, are no longer in fashion. They were often used in the context where after carrying out a report, an interview, the journalist was waiting for a snack, even if it was not planned by the interviewee. It should be noted that the word "transport", which, carefully observed, shows that the press professionals are forcing, a bit as if it was a debt that the interviewee must pay. It is this concept of "transport" that is fashionable among Kinshasa journalists.

### 2) The Lush and Likasi contexts

In Lubumbashi as in Likasi, the concept of cutting is known as "Kawama" or "transport". Kawama, in reference to a village of the same name located 15 km from the city of Lubumbashi on the Likasi road. This town known for its mining deposits and for its famous hills that attract pilgrims of different religious denominations for fasting and prayer.

After doing his job, the journalist expects an envelope from the organizer of the event, sometimes from the victim or culprit who has the financial power and / or who does not want the images or the information is disseminated. Instead of doing his job properly, the journalist prefers to pocket money and keeps the information to the detriment of the public for whom he works.

## 2.4 Some examples of Kawama Phenomenon in Kinshasa, Lubumbashi and Likasi

"During a press dinner organized on the occasion of the 55th anniversary of DRC's independence in Likasi by Governor Jean Claude Kazembe, several Likasi media were invited, including FLK. I represented the latter at this ceremony. At the end of the demonstration, the governor gave \$ 500 to the channels. I had \$ 45. But since the chain had not paid me for 5 months, I kept this money for myself and I did not treat or put this news on the FLK antennas. (Interview with Ruffin MPOYO WA MPOYO, 2016)

"In connection with the company's pollution of the river x on the Lubumbashi road, in 2014, we went to cover the element with a colleague from my RCK chain on call from the local population. Arrived on the spot, we noticed the damage caused by the waste containing the acid: the fish had died; the river was contaminated by these rejections. And the communication officer of the company had asked us not to broadcast the images and we had for this purpose donated 800 dollars. The information had never been broadcast on our RCK antennas. (Interview with Fifi BANZA, 2016)

"I went to a" Reward "school in the Hewa Bora cell. The students had risen up against rising school fees on February 16, 2016. And they had called us to speak in front of our camera. After taking the pictures and collecting the words of the demonstrators (students), the prefect of the school asked us if we had already filmed. We told him yes we have the pictures. He begged us not to broadcast them and in return, gave us \$ 50 and we shared my cameraman and me. And we have the information so far." (Interview with Guelord BADIBANGA KANKU, 2016)

## 3. Ethics and Deontology of the Journalist

The right to information, as well as free expression and criticism, is one of the fundamental freedoms of every human being. The right of the public to know the facts and opinions derives all the duties and rights of journalists. Also the responsibility of the latter to the public must it take precedence over those they take towards third parties, public authorities and employers in particular. Journalists spontaneously impose the rules necessary to fulfill their mission of information. Ethics is the expression of the sense of responsibility. It can be defined as "the set of duties that professionals impose on the performance of their duties". (BERNIER, M-F,(2003 p.50).

These are "rules of professional conduct". *The "code of ethics is described as a set of professional rules of conduct voluntarily adopted or imposed by an outside authority".* (Ibidem, p.51)

It is a matter of both "safeguarding credibility" and "protecting the image of journalism"; "value the professional character", defining "the mission, objectives and values of a profession" and establishing "the resulting rules of professional conduct"; to "protect the public against irresponsible, antisocial use" or "against possible harmful practices"; to "protect the profession" against threats of legislative intervention; to "protect journalists from the

pressures and sanctions of employers who would force them to adopt irresponsible practices". (Ibidem, pp.1001-103)

Compliance with the rules of practice arising from the ethics and deontology of journalism can contribute to the legitimacy of this social function. This gives journalists and media companies relative immunity in the courts, "immunity that escapes other communicators who cannot use this argument and claim such legitimacy because all cannot claim to serve above all the public interest as do or pretend to do the journalists" (Bernier, M-F., 2003, p15)

Given the tendency to legalize disputes between the media and citizens, it is urgent and necessary for news organizations to devote more resources to sensitize their journalists to the ethical and deontological aspects of their work. It can also be used to improve the credibility of the media and to protect the exercise of press freedom.

## 4. Type of Corruption or Cutting

Corruption can have many forms depending on whether one is in a particular area. It is a phenomenon that gangrenes areas such as politics, economics, medicine, religion, law. And journalism is not left behind. It is an evil that has taken root in all areas of life and in many countries of the world, especially the sub-Saharan countries where the journalist works in extremely precarious conditions. We can distinguish two types of corruption: passive and active.

### 4.1 Passive corruption

Passive bribery occurs when a person in a public office takes advantage of this function by soliciting or accepting gifts, promises or benefits in order to perform or refrain from performing an act related to their function. This person receives the name of corrupted.

Example: Many Congolese youth who are unemployed are often the victims of fraud by some people who are in contact with a member of the provincial or national government. To get a job, these young people are asked for an amount of \$ 100 or more, and often these are promises that cannot be fulfilled.

### 4.2 Active corruption

Corruption is said to be active when a natural or legal person obtains or attempts to obtain, by way of gifts, promises or benefits, from a person exercising a public function, to perform, delay or refrain from performing an act of his function or an act facilitated by it; the third party receives the name of briber.

With regard to these two types of corruption, the sub-Saharan journalist belongs to the first type. Because, it is he who receives, it is he who accepts donations in order to deliberately silence the information for the benefit of his executioner. The latter buys by this act directly or indirectly the professional conscience of the journalist.

Many factors are at the root of this situation, which devalues journalism in many Black African countries in general and

the DRC in particular. Among these factors, we can mention wage insecurity; the presence of journalists trained on the job, poor recruitment conditions and so on.

## 5. The Precarity of Salary Conditions

Journalism in Black Africa is a high-risk occupation because of the political and economic context of many of these countries. Although the media field flourishes with the birth of several public spaces, conditions or salary treatment does not match the work of the journalist. The latter does not know holidays or truce in the exercise of his profession is dependent on the pecuniary treatment on the part of his employer. The latter decides on the journalist's salary without his consent and this in the absence of a contract of employment for many journalists.

This is contrary to Article 20 of the Code of Ethics and Ethics of the Congolese journalist who states that, *in consideration of his function and his responsibilities, the journalist is entitled not only to the benefit of collective agreements, but also a personal contract ensuring the material and moral security of his work as well as a remuneration corresponding to his social role and sufficient to guarantee his economic independence.* (Code of ethics and ethics of the Congolese journalist)

Surveys conducted in three stations in the city of Likasi reveal that out of 100% of journalists working in these bodies, only 20% have a work contract. And the monthly salary, ranging between 50 and 100 US dollars, does not make it possible to make both ends of the month.

In this regard, Tharcisse Kasongo-Mwema Y'Ambayamba (2013, p.49) emphasizes that *the working conditions of the vast majority of journalists, such as the absence of a contract, an insignificant and irregular salary, in great contrast with the stardom status conferred by the young screen or microphone, push these journalists to beg, to claim the cut or Kawama, practices not honorable for the profession.*

The President of the Supreme Council of the Congolese Audiovisual (CSAC), Tito NDOMBI, (2016) in a press briefing in Kinshasa, recognized the precariousness in which the professionals of the pen and the micro work. The number one of this organ has blasted the poor treatment of journalists by press owners, a situation that has implications for the daily practice of their profession.

### 5.1 Reduced editorial freedom

Blending seriously taints the editorial freedom of the journalist. From the moment a money relationship is established between a journalist and his sponsor, the former is no longer free to express him. He will bow to the desire of his interlocutor and flatter him. Cutting also sets up an informal mode of payment in a system: it is the maintenance of a survival mechanism rather than the granting of a real salary. The fact that the journalist accepts such gifts is contrary to the rules governing his profession.



Tharcisse Kasongo-Mwema Y'Ambayamba (*Op. Cit., P.43*) writes that journalists are struggling on a daily basis to maintain their editorial autonomy, in the face of pressure from salespeople, both internally and externally, in the face of pressure from advertisers. . The risks of self-censorship (an advertiser threatens to withdraw its advertising following an article deemed unfavorable) or advertorial it (editorial advertising) are not negligible. Moreover, the logic of the market and the money often ends up having repercussions on the journalistic writing, pouring more and more in the entertainment, the spectacle or infotainment.

For his part, Marc-François BERNIER, (*Op. Cit.*) in Ethics and deontology of journalism rejects the metaphor of the free market of ideas, according to which the truth will emerge from a free flow of ideas. He goes on to note that *the constraints and restrictions weigh about journalists are not only legal or come not only from the intervention of political authorities. They are also economic. Journalists participate in an information system characterized by interdependence – which is not a free market of ideas. Everyone can see that, with regard to the media, the free economic market has prevailed over the free market of ideas.*

## 5.2 A job invaded by black sheep

There is also a dark picture behind the chains of Likasi and even the DRC, a reality that seriously undermines the profession: the presence of people without qualifications.

Nowadays, the job of journalist has become an asylum for people who have missed careers in this or that field and who are called "black sheep". This phenomenon is recurrent in most channels that the DRC in general and the city of Likasi in particular. The absence or insufficiency of professionals who have studied journalism is a serious handicap for the profession. Knowing little or nothing of the rules that govern journalism, these black sheep are ready for anything as long as they keep their work. The work is no longer done in order to inform objectively but to satisfy some people.

The table below gives us the profile of journalists who work in some chains of the city of Likasi.

N°	Radio and television stations	Having studied journalism	Not having studied journalism	Total
1.	Alfajiri TV	10/10	0/10	10/10
2.	RCK TV	2/10	6/10	6/10
3.	CANAL 7 TV	10/28	18/28	28/28
4.	FLK	1/10	9/10	10/10

In the light of this table, we can deduce that the absence or insufficiency of professional journalists compromises the work or the profession in the channels, because they do not have theoretical notions that are crucial for the treatment of information. . We must also add respect for ethics and journalistic ethics, commitment that black sheep have never taken. This situation aggravates the situation and leads the journalist to always have his hand extended to the detriment of his profession. He thus exposes himself to gifts, to gifts, to the mercy of the powerful. From where he transforms into passive corrupt.

## 5.3 Complicity editor-reporter

In some of these channels, the editor and the journalist are at times accomplices in the processing and dissemination of certain elements known as "paying". Complies to the extent that the two agree on a shooting of a paying item not deliberately proposed to the council by the journalist to discuss and determine the angle of filming and which will be shot without the knowledge of the sales department and the general management. And the money spent by the company, the NGO, the political party or the church for this element will be shared between the two. And so often it is the editor who defends the journalist who covered the event. This is not just for reporters but for any journalist, editor, photographer, cameraman, and so on.

The job does not pay enough for the journalist to take charge. He wants to live from begging. Even if it is in front of an element that is paying, some journalists prefer to pocket everything without paying anything in the cashier of the chain for which they work. In addition, many already have targets that are likely to give money instead of building up the public. This diminishes the credibility not only of the journalist but also of the channel itself.

Instead of the reporter being an agent who will collect the information, he becomes the one who goes down to collect money.

Indeed, the image of the externally perceived channel is that which the journalist conveys as ambassador of the latter. But the message that the latter sometimes conveys is that we do not pay well. Many of these professionals are so dishonest in the exercise of their profession and this is accentuated by their salary conditions. This behavior affects the quality of the information it delivers. A complicity that tarnishes not only the image of the channel but also that of the journalist himself in the eyes of his partners.

This journalist will no longer have credit in the eyes of the latter. To overcome all these ills that plague the profession of journalism, it is important to improve the working conditions of journalists and recruit journalists based on their skills. Recruit journalists trained in journalism schools.

Ultimately, the pen and microphone professional must consider the balance between the public interest and privacy; the duty of truth, leading to the questioning of the very notions of "truth and objectivity" rigor and accuracy; equity in the collection, processing and monitoring of information, the distinguished impartiality of objectivity, integrity, denouncing the amalgam reporter-communicator-promoter who blurs the reading contract between journalists and their and ultimately risk seriously undermining their social legitimacy.

## 6. Conclusion

This article focused on cutting and its implications for journalism in the DRC, with the aim of raising the profile of cutting, a phenomenon that is increasingly tarnishing the image of journalism. The purpose of this article has been to circumscribe the field of study here in Likasi and to give the

origin of this evil that spreads terror in the world of journalism.

We have shown that if this phenomenon succeeds in gaining ground, it is because journalists practice their profession in difficult conditions; the latter being of a political, social and structural nature. The salary treatments to which feather and micro professionals are subject leaves much to be desired and does not allow them to work properly, that is, to process the information objectively and impartially; instead of collecting the information on the ground, they are engaged in the money collection. From where they lose their credibility and especially their legitimacy.

## References

- [1] BARRELET, D., and WERLY, S., Right of the communication, ed. Stampfli, in Communication, Bern, 2011.
- [2] KASONGO-MWEMA Y'ambayamba, Th., Audiovisual Lushois: train journalists for which media ", in Information and Communication Sciences in the DRC, ed. The Harmattan, Paris, 2013.
- [3] BERNIER, M.-F., Ethics and Deontology as Elements of the Legitimacy of Journalism, In Proceedings of the Franco-Romanian Bilateral Colloquium, CIFSIC, University of Bucharest, 2003.
- [4] Kayembe, A., and the Institutional Media Rights and Reinforcements Program (DRIM) team, Media Situation in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Panos Institute Paris, April 2004.
- [5] Guyot, J. C., and Tiao, L.A., Media Regulation: Principles, Foundations, Objectives and Methods, Panos Institute Paris, 2007.
- [6] <http://www.grioo.com/blogs/Hobbysnews/index.php/2007/01/09/1656-la-presse-en-rd-congo-le-tableau-de-la-honte>.  
<http://www.radiookapi.net>.