

Media Capture and the Register of Subjugated Knowledges: A Practitioner-Centred Analysis of Ravish Kumar's The Free Voice

Yasir Ahmed

Vivekananda Global University

Deepak Prasad

Vivekananda Global University

Amit Verma

`amit.verma@jaipur.manipal.edu`

Manipal University Jaipur

Article

Keywords: media capture, authoritarian populism, democratic backsliding, emotional capture, semiotic capture, discursive capture, robo public

Posted Date: August 20th, 2026

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.21203/rs.3.rs-10110513/v1>

License:   This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License.

[Read Full License](#)

Additional Declarations: No competing interests reported.

Abstract

Since 2014, India has experienced democratic backsliding, with press autonomy among the most consequential casualties. Existing media capture theories emphasise structural factors but inadequately account for subjective, affective, and discursive dimensions of capture as experienced from within the journalistic field. This study addresses that gap through a practitioner-centred analysis of Ravish Kumar's *The Free Voice* (2018). Integrating Reflexive Thematic Analysis with Critical Discourse Analysis, the study synthesises existing conceptual strands into a tripartite heuristic: Emotional Capture (systematic socialisation of fear), Semiotic Capture (displacement of constitutional secularism), and Discursive Capture (metajournalistic redefinition of professional norms). A fourth theme—Fake News and the Robo Public—describes the production of an alternative citizenry beyond factual argument. The RSK heuristic complements political economy accounts by integrating affective and discursive dimensions. Limitations of single source, translation, and temporality are acknowledged.

1. Introduction

Since 2014, India has experienced a marked erosion of its democratic architecture. What was once celebrated as the world's largest democracy has, under the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), witnessed institutional instrumentalisation, suppression of dissent, and constriction of civil liberties (Muneer & Aryal, 2024). Among the most consequential casualties has been the institutional autonomy of the press. India's ranking in the World Press Freedom Index stood at 140th out of 180 countries in 2014 (Reporters Without Borders, 2014), improving marginally to 136th in 2015 (Reporters Without Borders, 2015). In 2025, India ranked 151st (Reporters Without Borders, 2025). However, the 2026 index saw India fall to 157th (Reporters Without Borders, 2026)— *a decline reflecting persistent challenges to press freedom — not merely incremental erosion* but a qualitative transformation in media–power relations. This raises the first question that guides the present inquiry: how does a journalist's practitioner account, as articulated in Ravish Kumar's *The Free Voice*, illuminate the dimensions of media capture in contemporary India?

The concept of media capture has gained renewed analytical salience. Dragomir and Aslama Horowitz (2021, p. 17) define media capture as “a situation in which the media can no longer function independently but is controlled by vested interests”. Bajomi-Lázár (2024) argues that digital platforms enable political elites to assert their agendas more efficiently than through capture of legacy media. Traditional media capture theory, focused predominantly on ownership concentration and structural filters (Herman & Chomsky, 1988), no longer fully accounts for contemporary media–politics interactions. This study responds by shifting analytical attention from structural determinants to the lived, felt, and discursively articulated experience of capture from within the journalistic field. In doing so, it poses a second, more granular question: what emotional, semiotic, and discursive dimensions of capture does Kumar's practitioner account articulate, and how do these dimensions cohere within a single experiential field to synthesise and extend existing theoretical frameworks of media control?

To answer these questions, I analyse a singular but information-rich primary source: *The Free Voice: On Democracy, Culture and the Nation* (Kumar, 2018). Ravish Kumar, former Executive Editor of NDTV India and Ramon Magsaysay Award recipient (2019), is one of the few Indian journalists to have offered a sustained, first-person, public critique of the BJP's transformation of the Indian mediascape. He originated the term “*godhi media*” (lapdog media), a pejorative label for news outlets perceived as sycophantically aligned with ruling power. The book—originally a series of Hindi prime-time monologues, subsequently translated into English—constitutes a rare practitioner narrative of media transformation undergoing accelerated capture. Examining this text leads naturally to a third, more methodological question: what theoretical and methodological resources does a practitioner-centred, discourse-centred analysis of media capture offer for understanding journalistic autonomy under authoritarian populist conditions?

While prior studies have examined affect, discourse, and metajournalistic boundary work separately (Goldberg, 2012; Pedersen et al., 2024), fewer studies have integrated these dimensions into a unified analytical framework grounded in practitioner discourse. This study addresses that integrative gap by developing a Register of Subjugated Knowledges (RSK) analytical framework that synthesises these strands, drawing on Foucault's concept of subjugated knowledges (Foucault, 1980). The paper makes three contributions, best understood as synthetic and integrative extensions of existing scholarship. First, it synthesises existing conceptual strands affect theory in journalism studies, semiotic approaches to populist discourse, and metajournalistic boundary work—into a coherent RSK analytical framework. This framework does not claim to discover entirely new mechanisms *de novo*; rather, it integrates previously disparate literatures into a novel analytical configuration tailored to authoritarian populist conditions. Second, the paper contributes to scholarship on democratic backsliding in India by foregrounding the internal, affective, and narrative dimensions of media capture how journalists experience, articulate, and resist capture from within. Third, methodologically, the study demonstrates that a single practitioner text, treated as an exemplary case, can generate analytically generative insights that contribute to theory elaboration. This study does not claim that a single case can establish generalisable theory, but rather that it can generate theoretically suggestive insights that warrant further comparative investigation.

Literature Review

1.1 India's Democratic Backsliding and Press Freedom

Since the BJP came to power in 2014, India has experienced democratic decline through government control of media and censorship, use of agencies to manage opposition parties, and increased atrocities against religious minorities (Muneer & Aryal, 2024). The government has disciplined dissent through tax raids on critical outlets including BBC, Newsland, and NewsClick (CPJ, 2023); withdrawal of state advertising from newspapers such as Munsif Daily (The Statesman, 2025); criminal defamation proceedings against journalists and opposition leaders (Latest Laws, 2025; AP, 2023); and blocking of independent platforms like The Wire and Maktoob Media (Kashmir Reader, 2025; Yahoo News, 2025).

The term "godii media", coined by Kumar, captures a widespread perception that a significant segment of Indian television news has ceased to function as a watchdog and instead performs as a cheerleader for the ruling party.

Structural accounts of media capture, however, leave significant dimensions unexplained. They describe captured media systems ownership concentration, contingent advertising revenues, ideologically aligned editors but do not explain how capture is felt by journalists, how it is legitimated in everyday discourse, or how it is resisted from within. These are questions of meaning, emotion, and narrative requiring a qualitative, discourse-centred, practitioner-centred methodology.

1.2 Media Capture Theory: Contributions, Gaps, and the Need for Synthesis

Dragomir and Aslama Horowitz (2021) have proposed a comparative framework for assessing media capture, emphasising media systems and public discourses. Bajomi Lázár (2024) has argued that digital platforms enable political elites to assert their agendas more efficiently than through capture of legacy media. These theoretical moves remain predominantly structural and institution-focused.

The present study draws implicitly on Stuart Hall's work on authoritarian populism. Hall's analysis of Thatcherism demonstrated how right-wing political projects consolidate power through the transformation of "common sense" and cultural normalisation of exclusionary political discourse (Hall, 1988). Hall argued that Thatcherism aimed "to become the 'common sense of the age'" and that its success rested on "winning a strategic measure of popular consent" as well as on the "directive and disciplinary exercise of state power" (Hall, 1988). While Hall wrote in a different historical context, his attention to the articulation of media, nationalism, and populist political identity provides an important intellectual antecedent for analysing contemporary authoritarian populist media formations in India (Hall, 1988). India's case is distinct from Western authoritarian populism in three ways: (a) the postcolonial fragility of constitutional symbols, (b) the role of religious majoritarianism as the primary cleavage, and (c) the scale of WhatsApp-mediated propaganda.

Concurrently, a literature has emerged on discursive normalisation of far right and authoritarian populism. Krzyżanowski and Ekström (2017) introduced "borderline discourses" to capture linguistic strategies through which previously taboo nativist claims become routinised. This literature has demonstrated that authoritarian populism is normalised through everyday discursive practices in journalism. The present study extends this line of inquiry by asking: what does the practitioner's own critical discourse reveal about the mechanisms of normalisation that he himself is resisting?

What remains under theorised is how affective discipline, symbolic displacement, and professional boundary work interact within the same experiential field. The growing literature on media and populism has examined how emotions circulate through political communication (Wahl-Jorgensen, 2019), how far-right discourse becomes normalised in journalism (Krzyżanowski & Ekström, 2022), and how journalists perform boundary work to define professional identity (Carlson, 2016). However, fewer studies have

systematically examined how journalists themselves experience, internalise, or resist capture from within—how the journalistic subject is produced under authoritarian populist conditions. The present study addresses this gap through a practitioner-centred analysis of Ravish Kumar's *The Free Voice*.

The study also intersects with Pierre Bourdieu's concept of the journalistic field. Bourdieu argued that journalism operates as a semi-autonomous field structured by struggles over legitimacy, symbolic capital, and proximity to political and economic power (Bourdieu, 1998). Under conditions of intensified political and market pressure, the autonomy of the journalistic field becomes vulnerable to external domination (Bourdieu, 1998). This perspective complements Carlson's metajournalistic framework by situating professional norm redefinition within broader struggles over field autonomy.

Dragomir and Aslama Horowitz (2021) explicitly include "discursive capture" as one of five types in their government capture framework for public service media, defining it as "the ability of dominant actors to shape the terms of debate about the media and its role, often through control over key rhetorical frames and the metadiscourse about what constitutes legitimate media practice" (p. 17). Their framework is comparative and institutional, applied across multiple countries to assess government capture of public service broadcasters. The present study extends this concept to a different level of analysis: experiential and field-specific, grounded in a practitioner's lived account and focusing on how journalists internalise capture through everyday professional discourse. This difference in epistemological orientation allows the RSK framework to complement rather than duplicate earlier work.

Rather than introducing entirely new conceptual categories, this study brings together these strands into a single analytical configuration. The Register of Subjugated Knowledges (RSK) framework is therefore presented as a synthetic heuristic—a tool for organising and relating existing concepts in a way that illuminates the lived experience of media capture from a practitioner's perspective.

A related strand of research has examined media capture through analysis of journalistic content. Most directly comparable is Kumara and Bhat's (2025) study of Indian investigative journalism, which found that investigative reporting has been deployed "to serve the political, ideological, and cultural interests of those in power" (p. 14). Analysing investigative stories from India Today, Republic TV, and Times Now, they demonstrate capture at the level of broadcast output—how journalistic forms are repurposed as instruments of political legitimisation. While their study documents captured narratives, the present study addresses the complementary question: how do journalists experience, articulate, and resist capture from within? Where Kumara and Bhat provide evidence of captured content, this study provides evidence of captured subjectivities. The two approaches are complementary, addressing different levels of analysis within the same broader phenomenon.

1.3 Ravish Kumar and The Free Voice: An Exemplary Case

The Free Voice comprises ten essays addressing the "national project for instilling fear", the rise of the "robo public", the transformation of mainstream media into "godia media", and the murders of journalists including Gauri Lankesh. Kumar writes from an explicitly first-person, confessional stance, interweaving

autobiographical narrative with political critique. This generic hybridity—part memoir, part polemic, part sociological analysis—makes the text a uniquely rich site for examining how a journalist constructs, articulates, and resists the conditions of capture.

Single case designs are particularly suited to exploratory and theory-generating research where the aim is not statistical generalisation but analytical elaboration (Gerring, 2007). Kumar's text is treated as an exemplary case—an information-rich instance that provides maximum analytical leverage for theory elaboration (see also Flyvbjerg, 2006, reinterpreted; Gerring, 2007). Exemplary cases are selected not for representativeness but for their capacity to illuminate under-theorised phenomena through dense, first-person, practitioner-generated data.

Following Stake's (1995) typology, this study adopts an instrumental case study approach. Kumar is not treated as "representative" of all Indian journalists—indeed, his sustained public critique makes him atypical—but rather as theoretically informative. His text is selected because it affords analytical access to the lived experience of media capture that more "typical" cases, constrained by the very silence this study analyses, cannot provide. The goal is not empirical generalisation but what Stake calls "naturalistic generalisation"—understanding derived from vicarious experience—and the theoretical transferability of the emergent RSK heuristic. Published in 2018, the text captures the moment when the BJP's first term had consolidated, when "WhatsApp University" was at its zenith, and before the COVID-19 pandemic reshaped Indian politics.

2. Methodology

2.1 Research Design and Epistemological Orientation

The study adopts a qualitative, interpretive research design grounded in social constructivism (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). This orientation proceeds from the premise that social phenomena—including media capture—are actively produced, negotiated, and contested through language, narrative, and discursive practice (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). Accordingly, the research questions are oriented toward understanding meaning and lived experience rather than testing causal propositions or producing statistically generalisable findings (Creswell, 2013). Kumar's text is approached not as a transparent report of empirical facts but as a discursive artefact that reflects and constitutes the conditions of journalistic practice under political pressure, treating texts as sites where subjectivities, power relations, and social norms are produced and reproduced (Hall, 1997; van Dijk, 2015).

2.2 Primary Data and Corpus Constitution

The corpus comprises a single primary text: Ravish Kumar's *The Free Voice: On Democracy, Culture and the Nation* (Speaking Tiger, 2018; English translation). The complete 109-page PDF edition was analysed. Selection was governed by three criteria: (1) practitioner interiority—Kumar's account affords analytical access to insider experiential knowledge that survey methods cannot replicate; (2) discursive density—the text comprises more than 50,000 words of sustained socio-political critique; and (3) historical

political salience—published during intensifying democratic backsliding, the text documents a conjuncture where media capture was unusually visible.

The reliance on a single practitioner text limits empirical scope but prioritises depth of interpretation over breadth. Single case designs are suited to exploratory research where the aim is analytical elaboration rather than statistical generalisation (Gerring, 2007). The mono corpus design is justified through exemplary case logic: a single strategically selected case can generate theoretically transferable propositions when the case is information-rich and the research aims at theory elaboration. This study pursues theoretical transferability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) of the emergent RSK heuristic.

2.3 Analytical Framework: RTA and CDA

The study employs a hybrid analytical strategy integrating Reflexive Thematic Analysis (RTA) (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2019) with Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) derived from Fairclough (1995, 2013). RTA provides a systematic procedure for identifying recurrent patterns of meaning across the corpus, while CDA supplies the theoretical orientation to analyse how those patterns are linguistically constructed and articulate with broader power relations (Wodak & Meyer, 2016). RTA excels at identifying *what* thematic content is present; CDA adds depth to analyse *how* those themes are produced through lexical choice, metaphorical structure, and pronominal positioning. Together, the frameworks allow movement from descriptive identification to critical explanation.

The analytical process was iterative rather than strictly inductive; initial coding was data-driven, but the emerging thematic structure was progressively refined in dialogue with existing theoretical concepts (Fereday & Muir Cochrane, 2006). Themes identified through RTA were subsequently interrogated through Fairclough's three-dimensional CDA framework, enabling movement from patterned meaning to ideological explanation.

2.4 Data Analysis Procedure: Six-Phase RTA

Phase 1: Familiarisation. *The Free Voice* was read in full on four occasions. The first two readings were without annotation for immersive engagement. Subsequent readings included marginal annotation of salient phrases and rhetorical turns.

Phase 2: Generating initial codes. Line-by-line open coding generated 187 initial codes, including: fear as blanket, socialisation of fear, media as lapdog, WhatsApp University as epistemological laboratory, speaking as liberation, and mob as constitutional authority.

Phase 3: Constructing candidate themes. The 187 codes were sorted into thematic clusters, producing twelve candidate themes.

Phase 4: Reviewing and refining themes. Each candidate theme was reviewed against internal coherence and external distinctness. Two themes were collapsed (fear of the mob and fear of the state unified under Emotional Capture). Two were discarded. The review yielded five final themes: (1)

Emotional Capture; (2) Semiotic Capture; (3) Discursive Capture; (4) Fake News and the Robo Public; (5) Resistance and the Ethics of Speaking.

Phase 5: Defining and naming themes. For each theme, a detailed definition was composed specifying the core organising concept, analytical boundaries, and key sub-themes.

Phase 6: Producing the report. Each theme is presented through extended extracts subjected to three-level CDA.

2.5 Fairclough's Three-Dimensional CDA Framework

Textual analysis (micro level) examined linguistic properties: lexical choice, grammatical structure, pronominal positioning, metaphorical structure, and rhetorical devices. Discursive practice analysis (meso level) examined how Kumar's text was produced, circulated, and consumed—from broadcast monologue to printed polemic. Social practice analysis (macro level) situated each extract within broader structural formations: the rise of Hindu nationalism (Jaffrelot, 2021), the political economy of Indian media (Jeffrey, 2010; Rao, 2010), and scholarship on democratic backsliding (Levitsky & Ziblatt, 2018; Norris & Inglehart, 2019). Because the study analyses an English translation, micro-level claims are limited to rhetorical strategies that survive translation—metaphor, irony, intertextuality, and pronominal positioning.

2.6 Engagement with Alternative Explanations

The RSK heuristic assumes capture is significantly top-down. However, alternative explanations exist: audience demand for nationalist content (Tripathi, 2024); platform economics making news organisations dependent on government advertising (Bajomi Lázár, 2024); and journalistic complicity through careerist self-selection. The RSK heuristic does not reject these alternatives but adds a layer they neglect: the affective and discursive legitimization of capture from within the journalistic field. The framework is complementary to, not competitive with, political economy accounts.

2.7 Trustworthiness

Following Lincoln and Guba (1985) and Tracy (2010), strategies included: prolonged engagement (six weeks, four complete readings); peer debriefing with two media studies scholars; member reflection with an Indian journalist; detailed contextualisation of India's political media environment for transferability; a full audit trail for dependability; and a reflexive journal for confirmability.

2.8 Limitations

Four limitations warrant acknowledgement. First, reliance on a single practitioner's account precludes empirical generalisation; findings require triangulation with interview data or newsroom ethnography (Cottle, 2003). Second, the analysis operates on an English translation; translation transparency is addressed in Section 2.5. Third, researcher positionality as a scholar outside India may limit legibility of culturally embedded references; mitigation included consultation with Indian colleagues. Fourth, the corpus was published in 2018, documenting conditions specific to the BJP's first term; subsequent

political developments may have altered the mediascape. Fifth, while the analysis focuses on Kumar's written account, Vinay Shukla's documentary *While We Watched* (2022) provides visual corroboration of the conditions Kumar describes, though the documentary is beyond the scope of the present textual analysis.

3. Findings

This section presents four themes from the reflexive thematic analysis. A fifth theme—Resistance and the Ethics of Speaking—is presented in the Discussion as the dialectical counter narrative.

3.1 Emotional Capture: The Chilling Atmosphere

Definition

Emotional Capture refers to the systematic cultivation of fear, anxiety, and intimidation as a pre-emptive disciplinary mechanism within the journalistic field. It operates not through overt censorship but through an ambient, generalised atmosphere of suspicion that makes self-censorship automatic and, over time, unconscious. This concept adapts Hochschild's (2016) "emotional capture" from citizens' affective alignment to journalists' internalised fear, drawing on Foucault's (1977) disciplinary power. Crucially, emotional capture is distinct from emotional labour (Hochschild, 1983): emotional labour is the managed performance of emotion as a job requirement; emotional capture is the internalised disciplining of emotion—fear becomes a normal professional orientation toward power.

Extract A1 (Kumar, 2018, p. 15):

"The socialization of fear is complete. To be afraid is to be civilized in this new, enfeebled democracy. But I find it uncivilized and impolitic. It is an impoliticness that is inflicted upon democracy."

Micro level analysis: Kumar's lexical choice—"socialization"—indicates a learned, collective process. The paradox "to be afraid is to be civilized" inverts ordinary meanings, exposing a dystopian reversal: compliance born of terror becomes the mark of the 'good citizen'.

Meso level analysis

This passage appears early as a thematic thesis statement. The declarative, diagnostic voice adopts the tone of a clinical report on democracy itself.

Macro level analysis

The role of fear in democratic erosion resonates with comparative democratisation literature (Levitsky & Ziblatt, 2018). As Waiter and Marková (2004) argue, totalitarian regimes "promote a socialization that displays itself in psychosocial feelings of fear and suspicion." In India, this socialisation has been achieved through state-backed online harassment (the BJP's "IT Cell"), selective prosecution of critics,

and transformation of mainstream media into supportive alignment (Muneer & Aryal, 2024). Udupa's (2018) ethnographic research on 'gaali cultures' demonstrates that online harassment is not merely a by-product of digital anonymity but a structured practice of majoritarian assertion, producing 'intimate publics' bonded through shared contempt for liberal-secular positions. Kumar's observation that women retreat to private inboxes (Extract A3, not reproduced here) demonstrates how gendered intimidation functions as a tool of political silencing (Yadav & Dutta, 2025; Global Voices Advox, 2023).

3.2 Semiotic Capture: Hegemonic Displacement

Definition

Semiotic Capture refers to the systematic colonisation of the symbolic landscape by majoritarian political discourse. In the Indian context, this involves displacement of constitutional secularism by Hindu nationalist identity, routine equation of dissent with anti-national treachery, and elevation of the mob to quasi-constitutional authority. This concept synthesises Krzyżanowski and Ledin's (2017) "borderline discourses" with Dasgupta's (2024) postcolonial analysis of India's fragile constitutional symbols.

Extract B3 (Kumar, 2018, p. 19):

"The mob is greater even than the Constitution."

Micro level analysis: The declarative conclusion is deliberately stark. The comparative "greater" suggests not physical size but juridical authority: the mob's will supersedes constitutional protections.

Meso level analysis

The passage refers to an incident where school children were stoned during a protest. No political party condemned the violence. The majority population, sharing the religion of the attackers, remained silent.

Macro level analysis

From the 2015 Dadri lynching to the 2017 Alwar lynching (Shrivastava, 2024; Jogdand, Khan & Reicher, 2020), public debates around mob violence increasingly raised concerns about impunity. The normalization of such violence reflects a potent combination of power, opportunism and bias that deepens existing social hierarchies (Jha & Sengupta, 2026). The conflation of communalism with nationalism has been central to the BJP's electoral strategy since the 1990s (Krejčík, 2016), with content analysis studies showing Indian television news frames Muslim citizens as "anti-national" at disproportionately high rates (Aldamen & Thasleem, 2025).

3.3 Discursive Capture: Metajournalistic Boundary Work

Definition

Discursive Capture refers to the process by which the journalistic field redefines its professional norms through metajournalistic discourse. Captured journalism is not merely coerced; it is actively legitimated as professional, responsible practice. This concept extends Carlson's (2016) "metajournalistic discourse" to authoritarian populist contexts and shifts Dragomir and Aslama Horowitz's (2021) institutional "discursive capture" to the experiential level.

Extract C1 (Kumar, 2018, p. 11):

"The IT Cell rapidly transformed media into 'godī media'—lapdog media. Many anchors and journalists crept into the laps of power and began chanting the Modi Chalisa."

Micro level analysis

"Godī media" is Kumar's neologism (godī = lap). The verb "crept" suggests slow, shameful, stealthy movement. "Modi Chalisa" parodies the Hanuman Chalisa, a 40-verse devotional hymn—Kumar accuses journalists of transferring devotion from the divine to the Prime Minister.

Meso level analysis: The term originated on social media and was popularised by Kumar on his NDTV show. By naming and theorising it, he performs a metajournalistic act: drawing a boundary between legitimate journalism and its captured simulacrum.

Macro level analysis

During the 2014 and 2019 elections, several news anchors adopted uncritical adulation of Modi as "vikas purush" (development man) and "chowkidar" (watchman). Kumar's parody exposes the religious register of this political devotion. The isolation of dissenting journalists is well documented in authoritarian populist contexts; Kumar's statement that he has "no friends in this profession" (Extract C2) is not a personal lament but a structural diagnosis of professional atomisation. Violence against journalists has become an increasingly prominent concern (Murthy, 2018), and comparative research suggests attacks on journalists function as indicators of future repression (Gohdes & Carey, 2017).

3.4 Fake News and the Robo Public: Producing an Alternative Citizenry

Definition and structural clarification: Unlike the preceding themes, which describe mechanisms within the journalistic field, the "robo public" represents an outcome at the level of the audience. This theme—articulated by Kumar himself—describes the systematic manufacture of falsehoods as a technique for creating an alternative citizenry: a public that inhabits a constructed reality, incapable of critical reasoning, and responsive only to emotional and partisan appeals. This advances beyond some post-truth scholarship (e.g., Waisbord, 2018) by positing the replacement of truth by partisan affect as the primary criterion of political cognition.

Extract D1 (Kumar, 2018, p. 28):

"Fake news, fake debate is not only an alternative to news, it is also the means by which an alternative citizenry is being created—a gathering of people who are fed false information and polarizing impressions that amplify and legitimize their prejudices. These people are freed from the burden of thinking for themselves; they become like a mob and their political behaviour like that of a robot. I call this the 'robo public'."

Micro level analysis: The term "robo public" combines the mechanical (robot: programmed, unthinking) with the political (public: citizenry). The phrase "freed from the burden of thinking" creates an ironic contrast: freedom becomes liberation from cognition itself.

Meso level analysis

The diagnostic tone—clinical, almost sociological—positions Kumar as an observer standing outside the phenomenon he describes.

Macro level analysis: Waisbord (2018) argues that post-truth signals 'the collapse of the modern project of disciplining knowledge' (p. 1869) and that 'truth is what happens to news'—a collective process of sense-making. The robo public represents a more radical condition: not the fragmentation of truth across competing epistemologies, but the replacement of truth-seeking by partisan affect as the primary criterion of political cognition. Where Waisbord's post-truth citizen still inhabits an epistemic universe where truth claims matter, Kumar's robo public has exited that universe entirely. The question is not 'Is this true?' but 'Does this feel right for my community?'

The robo public can be theorised further through two frameworks. First, Couldry's (2010) concept of 'voice' provides a counterpoint: the robo public represents the systematic denial of voice, producing a 'voice substitution'—affective partisan expression replaces reasoned democratic voice. Second, Habermas's (1989) structural transformation of the public sphere offers a diagnostic lens: the robo public represents not the deformation of rational-critical debate but its wholesale replacement by affective-partisan alignment, mediated through WhatsApp's encrypted architecture. It is a collection of counter-publics (Fraser, 1990) that have abandoned consensus-oriented deliberation.

For analytical operationalisation, the 'robo public' can be distinguished along three axes: (a) epistemic closure (rejection of fact-seeking as a practice), (b) affective primacy (partisan feeling overrides countervailing evidence), and (c) mediated habitation (WhatsApp's encrypted group architecture as the primary site of political socialisation). Unlike 'low-information voters' who lack facts, the robo public actively rejects fact-seeking. Unlike 'echo chambers' which filter information, the robo public inhabits a parallel epistemology where truth claims are irrelevant.

In the Indian context, this alternative reality includes beliefs that Nehru was a Muslim, that the Taj Mahal was a Hindu temple, and that opposition politicians are traitors. WhatsApp forwarded messages have been associated with several incidents of mob violence in India, including attacks triggered by cow vigilantism (Mukherjee, 2020).

4. Discussion

The analysis yields three principal findings corresponding to each research question.

First, Kumar's practitioner account reconceptualises media capture not as a discrete institutional event but as a layered, affectively saturated process operating through four interrelated mechanisms: systematic socialisation of fear (Emotional Capture), symbolic displacement of secularism (Semiotic Capture), metajournalistic redefinition of professional norms (Discursive Capture), and technologically mediated production of an epistemically disoriented citizenry (Robo Public).

Second, the Register of Subjugated Knowledges (RSK) heuristic synthesises and extends existing frameworks by: (a) adapting Hochschild's "emotional capture" from citizens to journalists, specifying fear as the disciplinary affect (rather than love or emotional bonding), while distinguishing it from emotional labour; (b) applying Krzyżanowski and Ekström's "borderline discourses" to the media field and adding a postcolonial dimension; and (c) extending Carlson's "metajournalistic discourse" to authoritarian populist contexts where boundary work concerns loyalty versus critique, while engaging with Dragomir and Aslama Horowitz's (2021) institutional concept of discursive capture.

Third, the study offers both theoretical and methodological contributions. Theoretically, the RSK heuristic furnishes a portable analytical lens for diagnosing media capture across authoritarian populist contexts by specifying orders of mechanism rather than local details. Methodologically, the hybrid Reflexive Thematic Analysis and Critical Discourse Analysis procedure demonstrates that a single exemplary practitioner text can generate analytically generative insights that contribute to theory elaboration—insights complementary to large-scale institutional analyses.

4.1 The Register of Subjugated Knowledges (RSK) Analytical Framework: Formal Presentation

The RSK framework proposes a tripartite register—a coherent configuration of linguistic, affective, and discursive resources that recurrently cohere under conditions of authoritarian populist media capture (appropriating Halliday, 1978). The term "register" is used heuristically, not in the strict systemic functional linguistic sense.

Drawing on Foucault (1980), who defined subjugated knowledges as "low-ranking, unqualified... naïve knowledges" (p. 82), Kumar's practitioner account qualifies as subjugated knowledge in three senses. First, it is a disqualified critique: the dominant discourse of "national interest" systematically delegitimises dissent as "anti-national." When Kumar speaks of having "no friends in this profession" (Extract C2), he names the mechanism of disqualification. Second, it is local and particular: Kumar writes from an embodied, first-person perspective, not from the abstracted vantage of institutional analysis. Third, it functions as an "insurrection of subjugated knowledges"—a voice from the margins that contests hegemonic professional norms. When he coins "godī media," he performs the kind of "historical knowledge of struggles" (Foucault, 1980, p. 83) that genealogy aims to recover.

The framework comprises three interlocking analytical orders:

Order	Mechanism	Primary Manifestation	Extension via RSK
First Order	Emotional Capture	Systemic socialisation of fear; pre-emptive self-censorship	Re-specified for journalists; focus on fear (not love/bond); distinguished from emotional labour
Second Order	Semiotic Capture	Hegemonic displacement: communalism as nationalism; mob as constitutional authority	Application to media field; postcolonial attention to fragile constitutional symbols
Third Order	Discursive Capture	Metajournalistic boundary work: <i>godhi media</i> ; professional isolation	Extension to authoritarian populist contexts; shift from institutional to experiential level

First Order—Emotional Capture designates the systematic cultivation of fear as a pre-emptive disciplinary mechanism. This study extends Hochschild's (2016) concept in two ways: (a) shifting the subject from citizens to journalists, and (b) shifting the dominant affect from love/bond to fear. Emotional capture operates through an ambient, generalised atmosphere of suspicion that renders self-censorship automatic and, over time, unconscious. It is distinct from emotional labour (Hochschild, 1983), which is a conscious performance; emotional capture is an unconscious, internalised orientation that becomes part of the journalist's professional habitus.

Second Order—Semiotic Capture designates the systematic colonisation of the symbolic landscape by majoritarian political discourse. In the Indian conjuncture, this involves displacement of constitutional secularism by Hindu nationalist iconography and elevation of the mob to quasi-constitutional authority. The RSK framework adds a postcolonial dimension that is analytically generative. Drawing on Chatterjee's (2004) distinction between 'civil society' (constitutional norms) and 'political society' (exception, patronage, extra-legal negotiation), semiotic capture can be understood as the colonisation of civil society's symbolic apparatus by political society's logic of exception. The Constitution, secularism, and 'unity in diversity' are fragile achievements of India's postcolonial state—elite compromises imposed on a fractured social formation (Guha, 1997). Semiotic capture exploits this fragility, offering majoritarian nationalist symbols as more 'authentic' substitutes. The mob's elevation to quasi-constitutional authority (Extract B3) is not a deviation from postcolonial governance but its intensification: the mob performs the sovereign exception the state increasingly cannot claim for itself. This lens explains why semiotic capture in India differs from Western contexts: the symbols being captured were never fully sedimented.

Third Order—Discursive Capture designates the metajournalistic redefinition of professional norms. Discursive capture rewrites the constitutive rules of the journalistic field such that loyalty to political power comes to be experienced not as coercion but as professionalism. The term *godhi media* functions as a boundary-drawing device distinguishing legitimate critical journalism from its captured simulacrum.

This operationalisation differs from Dragomir and Aslama Horowitz's (2021) institutional focus by attending to everyday professional discourse and internalised normativity.

Alternative explanations revisited. The RSK framework does not claim that these dimensions operate in a vacuum. Audience demand for nationalist content (Rao, 2010) and platform-driven revenue collapse (Bajomi Lázár, 2024) create structural conditions within which emotional capture becomes effective. The RSK framework's contribution is to specify the subjective, internal, and discursive dimensions that structural accounts leave black-boxed. The framework is therefore complementary to, not competitive with, political economy approaches.

4.2 The Counter Narrative: Resistance and the Ethics of Speaking

The fifth theme—Resistance and the Ethics of Speaking—does not constitute a fourth order of the RSK framework but its dialectical counterpart: the mechanism by which subjugated knowledge periodically ruptures dominant discourse. Where emotional capture produces fear, resistance produces speech as existential liberation. Where semiotic capture reduces citizens to religious categories, resistance insists on constitutional personhood. Where discursive capture redefines professionalism as loyalty, resistance articulates the ethical conditions under which courageous journalism becomes possible.

The RSK framework does not romanticise resistance. Kumar is explicit about its costs: professional isolation and the psychological burden of bearing the projected fears of those who cannot yet speak. Resistance is characterised as tragic rather than heroic—necessary but never sufficient, morally compelling but institutionally precarious.

The RSK framework theorises resistance as emerging at the intersection of three conditions

(a) residual institutional autonomy (NDTV retained independence longer than competitors), (b) external validation (Kumar's Ramon Magsaysay Award provided symbolic protection), and (c) biographical disposition (a personal ethical commitment not reducible to structural factors). This implies that resistance under authoritarian populism is possible but not generalisable; the framework does not prescribe resistance as a universal duty but analyses its conditions of possibility and documented costs.

Three normative principles emerge from Kumar's account:

1. **Factual integrity as the ground of courageous speech:** "Check your facts. Don't allow hatred towards the person to seep into your questions." Speech acquires its capacity to resist through the discipline of accuracy.
2. **Solidarity as the constitutive condition of democratic subjectivity:** "You become the people only when you speak out and express solidarity." This emphasis on speaking resonates with Couldry's (2010) conception of 'voice' as a fundamental democratic value. Kumar's insistence on speaking despite isolation is not simply professional dissent but an ethical defence of democratic voice itself.

3. **The intergenerational pedagogy of voice:** "Begin teaching our children to speak up and to speak out right from a young age." This principle locates resistance within a temporal horizon beyond the immediate conjuncture.

These principles are hard-won, costly commitments whose observance leads, in Kumar's case, to professional marginalisation and sustained personal risk. This non-triumphalist character lends them their ethical weight.

4.3 Theoretical Contributions (Qualified as Synthesis and Extension)

The RSK framework makes three analytically distinct contributions to scholarship on media capture and authoritarian populism. None are claimed as wholly original discoveries; each is a synthesis or extension of existing lines of inquiry.

First, affective depth to political economy. Herman and Chomsky's (1988) propaganda model identifies five structural filters but does not theorise how compliance is subjectively felt. Emotional Capture addresses this gap by synthesising insights from affect theory (Hochschild, 2016) and Foucauldian discipline (Foucault, 1977), showing how fear aligns journalistic behaviour with the imperatives of power without requiring overt coercion.

Second, specification of media field mechanisms for discursive normalisation. Krzyżanowski and Ekström (2022) demonstrate how far-right discourses achieve mainstream legitimacy through borderline linguistic strategies. The RSK framework specifies the media field mechanisms of such normalisation: semiotic displacement of constitutional values, metajournalistic redefinition of professionalism as loyalty, and production of the robo public—a citizenry that has ceased to operate within the epistemic framework where truth claims bind.

Third, a portable analytical heuristic for comparative inquiry. The three orders are not historically specific to India. In Turkey under Erdoğan and Hungary under Orbán, journalists confront analogous conditions: cultivated institutional fear, displacement of constitutional pluralism by majoritarian identity, and transformation of professionalism into an index of political loyalty. The RSK framework offers diagnostic questions that can guide comparative inquiry across different media systems.

Conclusion

This study has analysed Ravish Kumar's *The Free Voice* as a practitioner-centred exemplary case of media capture in authoritarian populist India. Through a hybrid RTA-CDA methodology, the study synthesised existing conceptual strands into the Register of Subjugated Knowledges (RSK) analytical framework—a tripartite heuristic comprising Emotional Capture (systematic socialisation of fear), Semiotic Capture (displacement of constitutional secularism by majoritarian Hindu nationalism), and Discursive Capture (metajournalistic redefinition of professional norms to legitimise loyalty over

critique). A fourth theme—Fake News and the Robo Public—describes the production of an alternative citizenry beyond factual argument. The framework's dialectical counter-narrative—Resistance and the Ethics of Speaking—reveals how subjugated knowledge persists at significant personal cost.

The RSK framework does not claim to have discovered entirely new mechanisms. Emotional capture, semiotic displacement, and metajournalistic boundary work have been theorised elsewhere. The contribution lies in: (a) synthesising these concepts into a coherent heuristic tailored to authoritarian populist media capture; (b) extending them to the Indian context through a practitioner-centred methodology; (c) specifying the affective and subjective dimensions that structural accounts leave underexplored; and (d) offering diagnostic questions for comparative research. For researchers applying the RSK framework comparatively, three diagnostic questions emerge: (1) Is there systematic evidence of an atmosphere of fear that pre-emptively silences dissent? (2) Has dominant political discourse displaced constitutional pluralism with majoritarian identity? (3) Have journalistic norms been redefined to naturalise deference to political authority?

The RSK framework implies a normative position: journalism should maintain institutional autonomy from political power, resist the conflation of loyalty with professionalism, and defend constitutional pluralism against majoritarian displacement. Methodologically, the study demonstrates that a single exemplary practitioner text can generate analytically generative insights—insights not accessible through structural or survey methods alone. The methodological contribution lies in integrating RTA for pattern identification and CDA for explanation, applied to a corpus whose practitioner interiority affords access to the felt, affective, lived experience of capture from within.

Limitations of single source, translation, and temporality have been acknowledged. The framework should be understood as a starting point for further empirical and comparative investigation rather than a definitive model. Future research should pursue cross-national application, quantitative operationalisation, and longitudinal analysis. While Kumar's account provides valuable insider perspective, it is itself a performative act of boundary work—a defence of his own professional identity and authority. The RSK framework does not assume Kumar's critique is objective or exhaustive; rather, it analyses his discourse as one articulation of subjugated knowledge within a contested field.

Declarations

Funding Statement: The author received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Conflict of Interest Statement: The author declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Ethical Approval Statement: Ethical approval was not required for this study as it involved no human subjects. The research is based entirely on textual analysis of published materials.

Data Availability Statement: This study is based on the published book *The Free Voice: On Democracy, Culture and the Nation* by Ravish Kumar (Speaking Tiger, 2018), which is publicly available. The analysis and coding materials are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

Ai Use Disclosure

During the preparation of this work, the author(s) used DeepSeek, DeepSeek-V3 to improve the language and readability. After using this tool, the author(s) reviewed and edited the content as needed and take(s) full responsibility for the content of the publication.

Author Contribution

Yasir Ahmed: Conceptualization, Literature Review, Data Collection, Formal Analysis, Writing – Original Draft. Amit Verma: Methodology, Supervision, Validation, Theoretical Framework Development, Writing – Review & Editing, Project Administration. Deepak Prasad: Data Curation, Literature Review, Investigation, Visualization, Writing – Review & Editing. All authors contributed to the study design, interpretation of findings, manuscript revision, and approval of the final version of the manuscript. All authors agree to be accountable for all aspects of the work and have read and approved the final manuscript.

References

1. Aldamen Y, Thasleem D (2025) Conspiracy propaganda or media agenda-setting? The representation of Muslims in Indian media as anti-national during the COVID-19. *J Media Relig Stud* 8(1):33–62. <https://doi.org/10.47951/mediad.1574301>
2. Bajomi-Lázár P (2024) Media capture theory: A paradigm shift? *Cent Eur J Communication* 17(2):238–246. [https://doi.org/10.51480/1899-5101.17.2\(36\).567](https://doi.org/10.51480/1899-5101.17.2(36).567)
3. Bar and Bench (2025), September 22 *Time to decriminalize defamation: Supreme Court in defamation case against The Wire*. <https://www.barandbench.com/news/litigation/time-to-decriminalize-defamation-supreme-court-in-defamation-case-against-the-wire>
4. Berezin M (2026), March 10 The authoritarian feelings machine. Jacobin. <https://jacobin.com/2026/03/authoritarianism-populism-emotion-neoliberalism-trump/>
5. Berger PL, Luckmann T (1966) *The social construction of reality: A treatise in the sociology of knowledge*. Penguin Books
6. Bourdieu P (1998) In: Ferguson P (ed) *On television*. Trans.). New. (Original work published 1996)
7. Braun V, Clarke V (2006) Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Res Psychol* 3(2):77–101
8. Braun V, Clarke V (2019) Reflecting on reflexive thematic analysis. *Qualitative Res Sport Exerc Health* 11(4):589–597

9. Carlson M (2016) Metajournalistic discourse and the meanings of journalism: Definitional control, boundary work, and legitimation. *Communication Theory* 26(4):349–368.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/comt.12088>
10. Chatterjee P (2004) *The politics of the governed: Reflections on popular politics in most of the world*. Columbia University
11. Committee to Protect Journalists (2023), February 14 *Indian tax authority raids BBC after critical documentary*. <https://cpj.org/2023/02/indian-tax-authority-raids-bbc-after-critical-documentary/>
12. Complete Reference List (Alphabetical Order)
13. Couldry N (2010) *Why voice matters: Culture and politics after neoliberalism*. Sage
14. Creswell JW (2013) *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches*, 3rd edn. Sage
15. Dasgupta S (2024) *Legalizing the revolution: India and the constitution of the postcolony*. Cambridge University Press
16. Denzin NK, Lincoln YS (2011) Introduction: The discipline and practice of qualitative research. In: Denzin NK, Lincoln YS (eds) *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research*, 4th edn. SAGE, pp 1–20
17. Dragomir M, Aslama Horowitz M (2021) Media Capture and Its Contexts: Developing a Comparative Framework for Public Service Media. In: Túnéz-López M, Campos-Freire F, Rodríguez-Castro M (eds) *The Values of Public Service Media in the Internet Society*. Palgrave Global Media Policy and Business. Palgrave Macmillan, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-56466-7_12
18. Fairclough N (1995) *Critical discourse analysis: The critical study of language*. Longman
19. Fairclough N (2013) *Critical discourse analysis: The critical study of language*, 2nd edn. Routledge
20. Fereday J, Muir-Cochrane E (2006) Demonstrating rigor using thematic analysis: A hybrid approach of inductive and deductive coding and theme development. *Int J Qualitative Methods* 5(1):80–92
21. Flyvbjerg B (2006) Five misunderstandings about case-study research. *Qualitative Inq* 12(2):219–245. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800405284363>
22. Foucault M (1980) In: Gordon C (ed) *Power/knowledge: Selected interviews and other writings, 1972–1977*. Harvester
23. Fraser N (1990) Rethinking the public sphere: A contribution to the critique of actually existing democracy. *Social Text* 25/26:56–80. <https://doi.org/10.2307/466240>
24. Gerring J (2007) *Case study research: Principles and practices*. Cambridge University Press
25. Global Voices Advox (2023), March 16 Online gender-based violence: A tool of digital authoritarianism in India. *Global Voices*. <https://advox.globalvoices.org/2023/03/16/online-gender-based-violence-a-tool-of-digital-authoritarianism-in-india/>
26. Gohdes AR, Carey SC (2017) Canaries in a coal-mine? What the killings of journalists tell us about future repression. *J Peace Res* 54(2):157–174. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022343316680859>
27. Goldberg G (2012) Negotiating affect in media/cultural studies. *WSQ: Women's Stud Q* 40(1–2):242–250

28. Guha R (1997) *Dominance without hegemony: History and power in colonial India*. Harvard University Press
29. Habermas J (1989) *The structural transformation of the public sphere: An inquiry into a category of bourgeois society*. Trans.). MIT Press. (Original work published 1962)T. Burger
30. Hall S (1988) *The hard road to renewal: Thatcherism and the crisis of the left*. Verso
31. Hochschild AR (1983) *The managed heart: Commercialization of human feeling*. University of California Press
32. Hochschild AR (2016) *Strangers in their own land: Anger and mourning on the American right*. New
33. Jaffrelot C (2021) *Modi's India: Hindu nationalism and the rise of ethnic democracy*. Princeton University Press
34. Jha MK, Sengupta S (2026) Power, Prejudice and Opportunism: Tracing Vigilante Crimes and Social Harm in India. *Br J Criminol* azaf116. <https://doi.org/10.1093/bjc/azaf116>
35. Jogdand Y, Khan S, Reicher S (2020) The Context, Content, and Claims of Humiliation in Response to Collective Victimhood. In: Vollhardt JR (ed) *The Social Psychology of Collective Victimhood*. Oxford University Press, pp 77–99. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780190875190.003.0004>
36. Krejčík J (2016) Hidden revolutionary processes in 1990s India? In: Arnason JP (ed) *Social transformations and revolutions: Reflections and analyses*. Edinburgh University, pp 168–183
37. Krzyżanowski M, Ledin P (2017) Uncivility on the web: Populism in/and the borderline discourses of exclusion. *J Lang Politics* 16(4):566–581. <https://doi.org/10.1075/jlp.17028.krz>
38. Levitsky S, Ziblatt D (2018) *How democracies die*. Crown
39. Lincoln YS, Guba EG (1985) *Naturalistic inquiry*. Sage, Beverly Hills, CA
40. Maktoob Media (2025), July 9 *Government directs security agencies to monitor anti-national contents online, platforms obligated to track, report*. <https://maktoobmedia.com/public/post?id=104588>
41. Muneer DS, Aryal SK (2024) Institutional Instrumentalization and Democratic Backsliding in India under the Rule of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). *Romanian J Political Sci* 24(1):29–43. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.16271949>
42. Murthy CSHN (2018) Safety and security of journalists: Yet awaiting intervention from Indian academy and industry. *Asia Pac Media Educ* 28(1):1–19. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1326365X18772359>
43. Neyazi TA, Kalogeropoulos A, Nielsen RK (2021) Misinformation concerns and online news participation among internet users in India. *Social Media + Soc* 7(2):1–10. <https://doi.org/10.1177/20563051211009013>
44. Norris P, Inglehart R (2019) *Cultural Backlash: Trump, Brexit, and Authoritarian Populism*. Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108595841>
45. Pathi K (2023), April 3 *Rahul Gandhi avoids prison as he appeals defamation verdict*. The Associated Press via Canadian Press News. https://www.thecanadianpressnews.ca/world/rahul-gandhi-avoids-prison-as-he-appeals-defamation-verdict/article_ce8c6729-0736-5a44-8b9f-5c8e75a3e336.html

46. Pedersen L, Ihlebæk KA, Figenschou TU, Mayerhöffer E (2024) Boundary work in the Nordic media model: Metajournalistic discourse on alternative media in Denmark, Norway, and Sweden. *Journalism Stud* 25(14):1757–1775. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1461670X.2024.2385925>
47. Rao U (2010) *News as culture: Journalistic practices and the remaking of Indian leadership traditions*. Berghahn Books, New York, NY
48. Reporters Sans Frontières (2025), September 5 *Répression médiatique en Inde: RSF dénonce une censure alarmante en pleine escalade militaire avec le Pakistan*. <https://rsf.org/pt-br/node/95126>
49. Reporters Without Borders (2014) *World Press Freedom Index 2014*. <https://rsf.org/en/index?year=2014>
50. Reporters Without Borders (2015) *World Press Freedom Index 2015*. <https://rsf.org/en/index?year=2015>
51. Reporters Without Borders (2025) *World Press Freedom Index 2025*. <https://rsf.org/en/index?year=2025>
52. Reporters Without Borders (2026) *World Press Freedom Index 2026*. <https://rsf.org/en/index?year=2026>
53. Shrivastava R, INDIA: DESPERATE NEED OF LAW AGAINST UNNECESSARY VIGILANTISM (2024) MOB LYNCHING IN. *NUJS J Regul Stud* 8(1). <https://doi.org/10.69953/nurs.v8i1.280>
54. Shukla (2022) Vinay, director. *While We Watched*. BRITDOC Films, LONO Studio
55. Stake RE (1995) *The art of case study research*. Sage
56. The Statesman (2025), March 13 *Urdu daily in Telangana publishes blank editorial after ad cuts*. <https://www.thestatesman.com/india/urdu-daily-in-telangana-publishes-blank-editorial-after-ad-cuts-1503407798.html>
57. Tracy SJ (2010) Qualitative quality: Eight big-tent criteria for excellent qualitative research. *Qualitative Inq* 16(10):837–851. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800410383121>
58. Tripathi S (2024) Corporate cupidity impacting news framing and media discourse: A threat to media credibility in India. *J Communication Manage* 3(4):328–340. <https://doi.org/10.58966/JCM2024346>
59. Udupa S (2018) Gaali cultures: The politics of abusive exchange on social media. *New Media Soc* 20(4):1506–1522. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444817698776>
60. van Dijk TA (2015) Critical discourse analysis. In: Tannen D, Hamilton HE, Schiffrin D (eds) *The handbook of discourse analysis*, 2nd edn. Wiley, pp 466–485
61. Wahl-Jorgensen K (2019) *Emotions, media and politics*. Polity
62. Waisbord S (2018) Truth is what happens to news: On journalism, fake news, and post-truth. *Journalism Stud* 19(13):1866–1878. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1461670X.2018.1492881>
63. Waiter P, Marková I (2004) Trust as a psychosocial feeling: Socialization and totalitarianism. In: Marková I (ed) *Trust and democratic transition in post-communist Europe*. Oxford University Press/British Academy, pp 24–46

64. Yadav M, Dutta P (2025) Navigating online hostility: Online gendered harassment of Indian women journalists and the need for media literacy. *Media Educ (Mediaobrazovanie)* 21(1):138–152.
<https://me.cherkasgu.press>