



Global Journalism Research

Theories, Methods, Findings, Future

Edited by
Martin Löffelholz and David Weaver

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*Edited by Martin Löffelholz and David Weaver
with the assistance of Andreas Schwarz*

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Preface

We live in one world and, at the same time, we live in a world with 10,000 different societies that live in more than 200 states, as the World Commission for Culture and Development wrote in 1996. Thus, global journalism refers to the ongoing evolutionary homogenization of news production structures and standards (“one world”) and, at the same time, to the totality of quite distinct journalism cultures representing the different societies of the world. *Global Journalism Research* takes into account both of these understandings of global journalism by widening the perspective from specific regional research to a global view. Increasingly, universal (“global”) theoretical and methodological standards of academic inquiry, at least wide-ranging scholarly principles, are required to enable researchers to analyze the “journalisms” of the world comparatively as well as journalism as a global practice.

Consequently, *Global Journalism Research* is a compendium that, for the first time, brings together four main aspects in one book: (1) It introduces major theoretical approaches taking into consideration that journalism research can no longer operate within national or cultural borders. (2) It describes the methodology of comparative journalism research as well as the main tools for conducting empirical studies (survey, content analysis, and observation). (3) It provides a real global perspective by presenting relevant paradigms and findings of journalism research in Asia, Africa, Europe, and North and Latin America. (4) Finally, it raises questions of how globalization affects journalism research as a discipline and challenges traditional paradigms based on the concept of the nation-state and its boundaries. All in all, this book gives a comprehensive overview of journalism research worldwide and, therefore, is suitable to be used as a general introduction to global journalism research.

Global Journalism Research is based upon the conference “Journalism Research in an Era of Globalization” which was organized in 2004 at the old medieval city of Erfurt by the Institute of Media and Communication Science of Technische Universität Ilmenau (Germany) in association with the School of Journalism at Indiana University (USA) and the Journalism Studies Division of the German Communication Association (DGPK). The editors express their gratitude to the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation as well as to the German Research Association (DFG) for providing travel grants and additional support to bring together

well known scholars from around the globe to discuss the consequences of globalization on journalism research. The editors thank the speakers of the conference as well as the authors of the book who contributed such thought-provoking and useful chapters and were willing to do the revisions we requested. It has been a pleasure to work with them throughout this long process and to see such a worthwhile result from our joint efforts.

The editors also thank Andreas Schwarz of the Technische Universität Ilmenau in Germany for all his help in organizing the editing and revisions of the chapters as well as Indiana University doctoral student Yue Tan for her work in compiling the subject and name indexes for this book. Furthermore, David Weaver thanks former doctoral student Eunseong Kim for her assistance during the 2005–6 academic year, and the Roy W. Howard Research Chair for its support during the entire process of editing this book. Martin Löffelholz is grateful to his secretarial assistant Alexandra Büttner as well as to his former research assistants Dr Klaus-Dieter Altmeppen (Catholic University of Eichstätt, Germany), Dr Thomas Hanitzsch (University of Zürich, Switzerland), and Dr Thorsten Quandt (Free University of Berlin, Germany) for their excellent support in organizing the 2004 Erfurt conference.

At the beginning of the 16th century, in the period of humanism, a group of Erfurt professors and students engaged frequently in a dispute against the dogmatic concepts of Cologne theologians. To encourage public attention, the Erfurt humanists issued the famous *epistolae obscurum virorum* – fictitious satirical letters against dogmatism. Those letters can be seen as early predecessors of critical media. The rich Erfurt humanist tradition of openness, non-dogmatism, and scholarly skepticism has guided our conference in 2004 as well as the conceptualization of this book. Hopefully others will find *Global Journalism Research* useful and instructive in their own research on journalists and journalism and in teaching others to do such research.

Martin Löffelholz and David Weaver
Ilmenau/Erfurt (Germany) and Bloomington (Indiana, USA)
August 2007

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Part I

Introduction to Journalism Research

Chapter 1

Questioning National, Cultural, and Disciplinary Boundaries

A Call for Global Journalism Research

David Weaver and Martin Löffelholz

In many countries the past few decades have witnessed an upsurge in interest in studying journalism. Some of the more visible signs of the increasing relevance of journalism studies include the publication of two new journals in this first decade of the 21st century – *Journalism Studies* in February 2000 and *Journalism: Theory, Practice and Criticism* in April 2000 – as well as the many books and articles that have focused on journalism in the past decade (e.g. Ettema and Glasser, 1998; Weaver, 1998; Heinonen, 1999; Deuze, 2002; Gans, 2003; Schudson, 2003; Hanitzsch, 2004; Löffelholz, 2004; Zelizer, 2004; de Burgh, 2005; Franklin et al., 2005; Quandt, 2005; Altmeppen, 2006; Hess, 2006; Weischenberg et al., 2006; Weaver et al., 2007).

Moreover, the International Communication Association (ICA) as well as the European Communication Research and Education Association (ECREA) recently launched specific divisions in order to provide better opportunities for researchers to study journalism comparatively and beyond narrow national paradigms. The ongoing institutionalization of internationalized or even globalized journalism studies is not only indicating a growing importance, but also demonstrating that journalism research can no longer operate within national or cultural borders only: Media industries, media corporations, and public institutions in the field of communication are “going global,” computer-mediated communication spreads around the world, and cultural borderlines are becoming blurred by the hybridization of cultures (McPhail, 2006). In this increasingly global media environment, advertising, entertainment, public relations, and – last but not least – journalism are becoming global phenomena affecting media content, the process of news production and even the actual working background of journalists in many countries.

This insight provides a central starting point for our book of global journalism research. It aims to give a comprehensive overview on journalism research and its different approaches, methods, and paradigms around the world. Thus, the book brings together, for the first time, four main aspects in one volume. The first part introduces major theories of journalism research while the second part focuses on traditional research methods in the context of globalization. Aspects of

comparative research are especially emphasized. In order to provide a real global perspective, for the third part we selected six contributions describing paradigmatically the state of journalism research in Asia, Africa, Europe, and North and Latin America, while the fourth part discusses important aspects of future journalism research in an era of globalization. In order to acknowledge the current trends of journalism research, it is, however, useful to briefly look back at the beginnings of a scholarly understanding of news production.

Early Steps in Journalism Research

In a sense, we have come full circle from the 1930s, when the emphasis was on broadening what was considered narrowly focused journalism research into the more general study of mass communication processes and effects. One of the early influential books of this movement, *Mass communications*, edited by Wilbur Schramm and published in 1960 by the University of Illinois Press, includes the following tribute: “This volume is dedicated to three pioneers in the study of mass communications through the social sciences: Paul F. Lazarsfeld, Harold D. Lasswell, and Carl I. Hovland” (Schramm, 1960, p. v). These three pioneers of mass communication research were known mainly for their studies of media effects, of course, not for studying the producers of media content, although Harold Lasswell (1948) did put more emphasis on analyzing actual content than did the other two. But none of these early pioneers were much concerned with studying media organizations or journalists. They tended to accept media messages as given, and they were not very interested in studying how and why these messages came to be what they were. In addition, many of the studies of journalists and journalism before the 1930s were mostly descriptive, often anecdotal and uncritical histories of printing, newspapers, and periodicals that focused on the lives of major editors and publishers.

From the 1930s to the 1950s, in the United States as well as in other countries, there were more interpretive histories of journalism that examined the relationships between societal forces and journalistic institutions, and there were also a few more systematic studies of journalists, including Leo Rosten’s 1937 book on Washington correspondents (Rosten, 1937). Among those early research projects were David Manning White’s study of the “gatekeeper” selecting the news (White, 1950), and Warren Breed’s study of social control in the newsroom (Breed, 1955). Other studies of journalists during this period included one of the editorial staff of the *Milwaukee Journal*, of Oregon editorial writers, of Kansas weekly publishers, of American correspondents abroad, and of foreign correspondents in the United States (Schramm, 1957). This shows that there were studies of journalists and journalism before the 1970s, but they were few compared to the dozens of studies of media uses and effects. It was not until 1971 that, as far as we know, the first and truly large-scale national survey of journalists working for a variety of media was carried out by the sociologist John Johnstone and his colleagues at the University of Illinois Chicago Circle campus (Johnstone, Slawski, and Bowman, 1976).

Another important step of empirical journalism research is connected with the work of the German scholar Manfred Rühl. Based on a societal approach to journalism, Rühl conducted in the 1960s the first empirical study that focused on an organized social system instead of journalistic individuals. His case study of a German newspaper marked a radical change in perspective because he did not describe journalism by identifying characteristics and attitudes of journalists as individuals but by analyzing it as a rationalized production process taking place in an editorial setting that was defined as an organized social system (Rühl, 1969). It took, however, decades before the relevance of theoretically driven empirical journalism research was adequately recognized.

The Indistinct Relevance of Journalism Research in the 1970s and the 1980s

Some years after John Johnstone and Manfred Rühl conducted their influential studies, David Weaver and Richard Gray argued in a paper reviewing trends in mass communication research presented at the 1979 AEJ convention in Houston that many mass communication researchers had become more concerned with media audiences and the effects of media messages upon them than with journalism, journalists, and the actual production of messages (Weaver and Gray, 1979). They also argued that even though the programs of research on media uses and effects had some relevance to journalism education and journalism, it was limited. Weaver and Gray concluded that continued concern over media effects had resulted in little systematic research on the effects of society on the media, even though journalists are greatly influenced by societal and organizational constraints, and even though their training and values and news organizations are shaped by political and economic forces.

A dozen years later, in the first edition of their important book, *Mediating the message*, first published in 1991, Pamela Shoemaker and Stephen Reese made essentially this same point when they wrote that “Most books on mass media research mainly cover studies dealing with the process through which the audience receives mass media content or with the effects of content on people and society. We believe that it is equally important to understand the influences that shape content” (Shoemaker and Reese, 1996, p. 3).

Why was not there more systematic research on journalists and journalism compared to the outpouring of studies of media messages, audiences, uses, and effects? Shoemaker and Reese (1996) suggest that it was due to several factors, including the uncritical nature of mass communication research that rarely questioned media institutions themselves, dependence on media industry funding for large-scale surveys and the interest of large media organizations in their audiences (the so-called “dominant paradigm” exemplified by Paul Lazarsfeld and his Bureau of Applied Social Research at Columbia University), as well as the interest of governments worldwide (quite often significant funders of research) in media effects, especially the effects of propaganda in wartime and the possible harmful effects