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CHAPTER I

Introduction

Journalists operate in human societies, and consequently, how journalism is practised and the degree of freedom and autonomy that journalists exercise are affected by the existing technological, social, economic, political, cultural and legal frameworks and contexts in a globalized world. These complexities and interlocking relationships underpin not just the nature of journalism but also how it is practised, how journalists are trained, the definitions of news, those who are qualified to serve as journalists and the communication infrastructure that creates the environment that facilitates professional journalism culture.

The interdependent and interconnected nature of our world spawned by increasing globalization and technological changes underlines the importance of analysing journalism practices from a global perspective. However, quite a number of scholars have expressed dissatisfaction with the current performance of journalists and media organizations in capturing diverse issues of global concern (Cottle, 2009), including the failure to recognize and appreciate people from non-western cultures (Hafez, 2009). Thus, Wasserman and de Beer (2009, p. 428) call for ‘a definition of journalism that is more inclusive of global political differences’. Although we live in a globalized world, research evidence suggests that news agendas are dominated by domestic news events, a focus on popular personalities, soft news and entertainment-driven content, concentration on regional news or ‘Eurocentrism’, as well as diminished attention to international news in general (see, e.g., Sutcliffe et al., 2009; Altmeppen, 2010; Joye, 2010).

This book examines theoretical and practical issues that underpin journalism across cultures. It demonstrates that journalism can be taught, practised and analysed through different epistemological backgrounds and frameworks. It examines, for example, the interface between practitioners and the technologies they use (e.g. how technology impacts on journalism practices), as well as the various frameworks that inform models of journalism education and training across the world. The book is interdisciplinary in theoretical

and practical approaches because we draw on other fields such as media and cultural studies, anthropology, sociology, linguistics, as well as politics and international relations. We show – through examples taken from diverse countries – how journalism can be examined through a wide variety of socio-cultural and educational contexts, including professional and practical experiences. In an increasingly globalized world, we believe a more in-depth focus on, and global insights into, journalistic cultures are important. In this context, this book is inclusive and international in scope because in it we look at issues that cut across cultures.

The book integrates major theoretical and practical approaches, including non-western and Western contexts, in exploring international journalism perspectives from around the world. As new technologies blur the boundary between content producers and content consumers (e.g. the growing phenomenon of citizen journalism or participatory journalism), increasing globalization facilitated by new technologies has compelled journalists, media owners and managers, journalism academics as well as media consumers to critically re-think news reporting and production conventions. Technological changes have also generated new business models for survival in an increasingly competitive industry. These developments have influenced not only global journalism practices but also the frameworks and pedagogies for the teaching of journalism across the world. These issues are explored in this book.

Research in journalism studies shows that similarities and differences abound across cultures, underlying the diversity that exists around the world. Specifically, studies conducted to explore journalistic professional routines, editorial conventions and socialization mechanisms show similarities in countries such as Brazil, Germany, Indonesia, Tanzania and the United States (in Hanitzsch, 2009, p. 413). Other studies, however, show that differences exist in the way journalists in different countries perceive their roles and the way they make news judgments in their professional practice (Deuze, 2002; Hanusch, 2008a). Exploration of the similarities and differences that mark journalistic practices across the world constitutes not only a valuable contribution to the scholarship of journalism studies but also an appreciation of the value of diversity in human societies. Hanitzsch (2009, p. 413) states that comparative studies in journalistic practices are important because they enrich our understanding of different countries. Thus, comparative studies have shown that ‘news production is contingent on the cultural, political and historical contexts that shape the journalist’s work’ (p. 413), as no two countries share exactly the same culture. One value of comparative studies is that they help to draw our attention to diverse perspectives of journalism, not just

the dominant Western version. This explains our interest in the phrase ‘journalism cultures’ rather than journalism, which suggests one conceptualization of journalism. Interest in global journalism studies therefore suggests a growing fascination for knowledge of journalistic cultures and conventions around the world. While we cite examples (in this book) from specific nations and regions, our analysis goes beyond national boundaries because, as Hanitzsch (2009, p. 416) points out, ‘National borders do not necessarily correspond to cultural, linguistic and ethnic divisions, nor do they correspond to a common sense of identity.’

In comparative journalism studies, the work of Hallin and Mancini (2004) is widely cited not only for its comparative value but also for its scope and analytic rigour. For example, Hallin and Mancini’s book is considered significant because it provides an important framework that enables us to explore the relationship between Western media models and media systems in non-western cultures, although the major focus of the book is on media systems in Western Europe and North America. For example, in terms of historical relationships, major European powers such as Britain, France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Italy and Germany played a key role in shaping the pre-independence and post-independence philosophies that underpinned media systems in their former colonies in Africa in the twentieth century.

In their book – *Comparing Media Systems* – Hallin and Mancini categorized Western Europe and North America into three media models, namely the Liberal Model (seen mostly in Britain, Ireland and North America), the Democratic Corporatist Model (observable in northern continental Europe) and the Polarized Pluralist Model (applicable to the Mediterranean countries of southern Europe). The authors state that one of the distinguishing elements among media systems across the world is that ‘media in some countries have distinct political orientations, while media in other countries do not’ (Hallin and Mancini, 2004, p. 27). In this context, Hallin and Mancini argue that journalism, as practised in every part of the world, is never neutral. As they put it, ‘even where journalists may be sincerely committed to a professional ideology of “objectivity”, news incorporates political values, which arise from a range of influences, from routines of information gathering to recruitment patterns of journalists and shared ideological assumptions of the wider society’ (2004, p. 26). This argument reinforces the widely held view that media in every country are tied to various political and economic interests at any one time in history. Notwithstanding this point, Hallin and Mancini’s book has been criticized for its excessive emphasis on Western media systems and for overlooking other perspectives that exist in other parts of the world. This is not surprising as journalism is often regarded as ‘an Anglo-American

invention' (Chalaby, 1996, p. 303). Wasserman and de Beer (2009) argue that the marginalization of some parts of the world (e.g. Africa) has undermined past and current scholarly attempts to construct media models and press systems. 'The end-result is too often that the Western democratic model of liberal democracy remains the implicit or explicit normative ideal against which journalism in non-western societies is measured, with media-state relations as a primary determinant of journalistic standards' (2009, p. 431).

In his analysis of the growth of French and American journalism from the 1830s to the 1920s, Chalaby (1996) argued that there were political, legal, economic, educational and language factors that encouraged the development, sustenance and dominance of Anglo-American genre of journalism. This historical dominance means that other journalistic conventions and practices in non-western societies are regarded as mere derivatives of the Anglo-American system. Although the Anglo-American model of journalism may have influenced the origins of other forms of journalism, Wasserman and de Beer (2009, p. 428) argue that 'the dominant Anglo-American view of journalism is being challenged by studies showing up the gap between theory and practice'. This again suggests that, rather than talk about one type of journalism, it is appropriate to speak of journalisms or different types of journalism. In this context, Hanitzsch (2009) has suggested that comparative journalism studies should go beyond excessive focus on Western models of journalism to explore other models of journalism. The significance of comparative analyses of journalistic practices conducted by Chalaby (1996) and by Hallin and Mancini (2004) is that they helped to draw out the major differences between Anglo-American journalism and the types of journalism that exist in other parts of the world. This is the key reason why, in this book, we constantly cite examples or draw on journalistic systems and practices that exist in other cultures.

We argue that an examination of journalism practices across cultures will enrich rather than dilute public knowledge and understanding of the similarities and differences in journalism. Previous comparative studies provide compelling evidence that similarities and differences exist in journalistic practices at the national, regional and international levels. We have therefore set out in this book to analyse systematically: the different media models and press systems that exist in various parts of the globe; how journalism is practised and taught around the world; how gender is reflected, recognized and overlooked in newsroom cultures; how new technologies have transformed the landscape of foreign news reporting; the growing debate about the role of journalists in peace and conflict reporting; the increasing commercialization of journalism and the factors that are aiding the practice; and the impact that new technologies are having on journalism practices around the world. Therefore, global

perspectives and representation constitute the overarching schema of this book. Where similarities and differences exist, we have tried to identify them. Where contradictions blur arguments, we point them out. By analysing global differences and similarities in journalism, our objective is to explore the world from as diverse perspectives as are possible. This means we have deliberately refrained from presenting a framework that analyses journalism cultures in terms of the narrow and polarizing binary division of North versus South or the Manichean duality of 'light versus darkness', 'good versus evil' or 'right versus wrong'. Examining journalism in different societies in a globalized world enables us to understand what is happening in other cultural contexts. For example, as Wasserman and de Beer (2009, p. 429) point out, 'While the political-economic context of journalism studies in Africa might differ considerably from some non-western contexts like Asia, it might correspond with, for instance, Latin America, for both historical (such as the history of colonialism) and economic (as developing regions in the global economy) reasons.'

Blumler et al. (1992) have identified three ways through which comparative research in communication has contributed to knowledge. First, comparative research exposes us to communication trends and dilemmas that are not easily observable in our world. Second, comparative research has the capacity to surmount or prevail over 'space- and time-bound limitations on the generalizability of our theories, assumptions and propositions' (1992, p. 3). Comparative research can also enable us to examine and expose the implications of the disparities that exist in the way communication is structured in our larger world (pp. 3–4). Similarly, Livingstone (2003, p. 479) has identified the various values attached to comparative research, namely: to improve our knowledge of our own country and others; to examine scholarly postulation in different environments; to analyse how local audiences receive imported cultural products; and to enhance cross-cultural understanding. Nevertheless, Chang et al. (2001) examined 151 comparative international communication studies published in six leading communication journals between 1970 and 1997 and found: clear evidence of the lack of theoretical progress in comparative international communication research; few efforts to examine theoretical postulations cross-nationally; the requirement for better articulation of knowledge and assumptions that would offer productive ideas cross-nationally; and failure to observe systematic sampling methods that would yield data that are representative of the larger population (pp. 430–1).

Despite the advantages of comparative communication research, there are certain drawbacks. Comparative research is not without its difficulties, such as the complexities associated with examining different systems or time periods which may constrain 'meaningful comparison' (Blumler et al., 1992, p. 13).

Livingstone (2003, p. 491) argues that ‘comparative research is challenging because one must balance and interpret similarities and differences while avoiding banalities and stereotypes’. Among the difficulties that impede comparative research are: the enormity of the differences being studied and their various components or elements, both of which would complicate the kind of meanings to be derived; and studying the differences in social systems could lead to the devaluation of the differences within the system. As Blumler et al. (1992, p. 13) point out, ‘Nations and cultures are not typically homogeneous; they often encompass different language and ethnic groups, regions, and social classes that are in symbolic and pragmatic competition’. There are also methodological and theoretical dilemmas involved in comparative research, such as the danger of universalizing research approaches and theoretical frameworks that often ignore cultural distinctions or details (Livingstone, 2003; Hanitzsch, 2009). For example, research in the field of development communication which dominated intellectual discourse in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s adopted Western-oriented approaches prescribed by communication scholars such as Daniel Lerner, Everett Rogers and Wilbur Schramm, and pushed the notion that ‘development in the Third World should be measured in terms of the adoption and assimilation of Western technology and culture. The main emphasis of the work was on increasing efficiency within an accepted and unquestioned value framework’ (Halloran, 1998, p. 44). As a reflection of the mood of that era, most of the research conducted at the time affirmed and emphasized the validity of Western approaches and ideologies. In the developing countries, these viewpoints underlined existing economic and cultural reliance on the West rather than the socio-cultural, political and economic sovereignty of those emerging nations (Halloran, 1998, p. 44).

By identifying the drawbacks of comparative communication research, we also acknowledge the limitations of our own work. In general, many intellectual efforts are never perfect because they serve as a reflection of the political, economic, social and cultural climate in which they are produced. Although we did not set out to accommodate inadequacies, there is, however, value in limitations that may emerge owing to changes in global geopolitical and economic systems, as well as developments generated by technological transformations. These changes, whenever they occur, will offer us an opportunity to engage in future revisions of the approaches we adopted and the arguments we made in this book in order to reflect the realities of a globalized world in the twenty-first century. Cultures are dynamic and so too are journalistic practices. The changing nature of journalism strengthens the need for scholars to revisit their work regularly. In this book, we have made conscious efforts to draw on Western and non-Western journalistic systems and practices. We

have also drawn on different cultures that inform journalism practices across the world. At the heart of these differences and similarities is the need to recognize diversity. The following section provides a synopsis of the chapters that follow. This serves as a foretaste of the contents of the book.

Chapter outline

The history of media systems and press theories and the extent to which media systems influence journalistic practices and philosophies are explored in Chapter 2. The chapter analyses contemporary and past media models and theories of the press, as conceptualized by different scholars. The chapter delves beyond dominant media models to explore other global perspectives, including media systems in Africa, Latin America, the Arab world and the Middle East, media transformations in China, as well as North American and Western European media models, not forgetting the classical but controversial *Four Theories of the Press*, which is widely regarded as the vehicle that sparked scholarly interest in the construction of press systems across the world. The strengths and drawbacks of these media models and press systems are examined and critiqued in-depth. In this chapter we also draw attention to the political, social, cultural and economic factors that distinguish journalistic practices in different societies. For example, many of the past approaches to classifying media systems were examined through political economy frameworks that tended to overlook larger cultural issues (Mowlana, 1997). This chapter recognizes the impact that technological changes have had on the conceptualizations of press systems and media models, including the meanings traditionally attached to concepts such as the press. We therefore pose the question: Do existing media models still constitute an accurate representation of global media systems in the twenty-first century and are such classifications still valid?

With emphasis on journalistic practices and how journalists perceive their roles in different societies, Chapter 3 explores the various types of journalism that exist in different parts of the world. It examines the differences and similarities in journalists' professional views about their role in society. The analysis includes scholarly insights into the factors that influence journalistic practices across individual, organizational, media system and cultural levels. For example, a comparative study of national news cultures conducted in the Netherlands, Germany, Britain, Australia and the United States noted how journalists' approach to work distinguished Dutch and German practices of journalism from the Anglo-American conventions (Deuze, 2002). In terms

of role perceptions, we see across different regions the various ways that journalists perceive their role. The first large-scale comparative study in this regard was conducted by Weaver (1998a) who reported results of journalists surveyed in 21 countries and territories around the world. One role perception that appeared to receive support from journalists generally was ‘getting information to the public’. However, Weaver (1998b, p. 478) notes that, ‘beyond these roles, there is much disagreement over how important it is to provide entertainment, to report accurately and objectively, to provide analysis of complex issues and problems, and to be a watchdog on government’. In the Arab world, Pintak and Ginges’ (2008) survey showed that many Arab journalists subscribed to an active role in trying to bring change. Similarly, a study of Brazilian journalists identified three types of role perceptions – the interpretive, adversary and disseminator functions (Herscovitz, 2004). Chapter 3 also examines the debate over adoption of culturally appropriate values in journalism practices in various regions. In that context we analyse arguments for regional approaches that originated from a belief that journalism works best if it is practised in accordance with local cultural values. Many of the regional models emerged from a resistance to imported Western models which local journalists did not see as applicable to or useful in their cultural circumstances. For example, there is the contested view that Asian news media should reflect Asian values. Massey and Chang (2002, p. 992) clarify that the argument is based on the notion that ‘the modern, economically strong Asian society is best built on a foundation of traditional Eastern beliefs, not transplanted Western values’. Similar debates have dominated discussion on the scholarship of African journalism. Thus, Chapter 3 offers a kaleidoscopic analysis of discussions about how culture is embedded in journalism practices and how it defines the way journalists approach their job in different social and cultural milieu.

The quality of journalism around the world is often attributed to the nature of the education and training that journalists receive. At the centre of this discussion is the question of whether journalism education should be tailored towards more vocational aspects or whether it should reflect a mix of theory and practice. These issues are explored in detail in Chapter 4. The literature on journalism education suggests that models of journalism education tend to be designed to suit the specific objectives of each country (Nordenstreng, 2009). Analysis of models of journalism education is important because, according to Gaunt (1992, p. 1), ‘journalism training perpetuates or modifies professional practices and moulds the perceptions journalists have of the role and function of the media’. This chapter also reviews the current state of journalism education around the world, taking into consideration the diverse

cultural, political and economic environments. To understand how and why journalists in different countries and regions are educated in various ways, we examine the history of journalism education around the world. We also provide an overview of the tensions that exist in journalism education globally, in particular the arguments for and against on-the-job and university-only models. By doing so, we hope to shed light on the benefit of journalism education models that are specific to individual cultures rather than importation of the dominant Western models that may not necessarily apply in other contexts.

One noticeable feature of journalism education around the world is the growing number of female students. Research suggests that, in some countries, women are in the majority not only in the classrooms but also in newsrooms. Chapter 5 therefore examines a range of issues relating to gender in journalism such as the institutional discrimination against women. On this point, Fröhlich (2007, p. 163) notes, on the basis of research evidence, that ‘an overwhelming majority of women journalists worldwide agreed that women journalists face professional barriers that their male colleagues do not and that the top obstacle for women in management is continually proving their abilities to colleagues and supervisors’. One of the contentious issues in this area is the notion that there is a ‘glass ceiling’ that prevents women journalists from attaining senior editorial and management positions. Some studies have examined not just how many women are in journalism but also the way in which they carry out their job. Do women engage in journalism practice in significantly different ways from men, or are they compelled to adopt news values developed by men over several centuries? It has been argued that women journalists are assigned to report stories about fashion, entertainment and culture, while men usually report political, economic, financial and sport stories (Robinson, 2005). It has also been suggested that when women make the news, they are typecast as celebrities, victims of crime, or in clearly ‘woman-centred’ stories that are usually marginal to the main news agenda (Gallagher, 2010). As we highlight in this chapter, there is some evidence to suggest that some women, in an attempt to become ‘one of the boys’ in the profession and to be accepted as serious news reporters, adopt mainstream news values. Nevertheless, research evidence shows also a general softening of news values in recognition of the increasing participation of women in journalism.

Foreign news reporting is an important field of journalism and it has attracted intense scrutiny by professional journalists and journalism academics. Foreign news reporting is important because the way it is reported shapes the way we view people and events in other cultures, how we relate to them, and how we communicate with them (Wolter, 2006). In the decades of the

1970s and 1980s, there were widespread criticisms particularly from the developing countries about how Western news media portray people and cultures from the non-west in typically stereotyped fashion. Concerns were also raised about the disproportionate flow of overseas news from the West to the non-west and vice versa, including the quality (nature) of news about developing societies. These and other issues culminated in sustained agitations for a New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO) which dominated intellectual discussions at the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) in the late 1970s up to the early 1980s. Against this background, Chapter 6 analyses the changing landscape of foreign news reporting with special emphasis on how technological changes have transformed foreign reporting. The chapter argues that new technologies have significantly affected the way foreign news is reported, including the quantity, frequency, speed of coverage, global coverage of news events, and the growing participation of news consumers – citizen journalists – in the collection, production and distribution of foreign news. Despite technological influences, research suggests that media attention to foreign news is declining in much of North America and Western Europe (e.g. Franks, 2005; Wolter, 2006; Altmeppen, 2010). The chapter draws on research conducted across the world to map how new technologies are transforming foreign coverage and some of the key factors that are contributing to declining attention to foreign news.

The role that journalists play in reporting war and conflict is the focus of Chapter 7. Over several centuries, wars and conflicts have dominated not only the geopolitics of international relations but have also engaged the attention of journalists and the news media. There is a growing body of research on media coverage of conflict, including perspectives on how the media can contribute to the peaceful resolution of such conflicts (e.g. Löffelholz, 2004; Wolfsfeld, 2004; Lynch & McGoldrick, 2005). Thus, peace journalism has been advanced as a new form of journalistic reporting that encourages and promotes a culture of peace. Indeed, Wolfsfeld (1997, p. 54) states that the press ‘can either reinforce or deflate images of the enemy, spread optimism or pessimism about the chances for peace, strengthen or weaken the public’s willingness to make compromises, and increase or decrease the legitimacy of the ruling government’. It is in this context that attention has been devoted to the performance of journalists, including the relationship between the media and governments during war, as well as the potential for the news media to make a difference through the ‘peace journalism alternative’ (Lynch & McGoldrick, 2005). This chapter explores these perspectives with respect to their global application. First, we examine the ways in which wars and conflicts

have been reported by journalists in different cultural contexts. These include intra-national conflicts (examples include wars fought in Rwanda, Sri Lanka, Indonesia and in the Balkans), as well as regional wars and global conflicts. Wars within nations and regions have also taken on an ethnic dimension. We explore in this chapter the relationship between the media and governments in terms of influence, as the debate over the so-called CNN effect – especially in wartime – persists. Finally, we examine critically the theory of peace and conflict reporting and analyse its potential for success. This discussion is set against a background of numerous examples from across the globe.

In Chapter 8, we look at how contemporary journalism across the world is being challenged by commercial pressures spawned by technological changes that threaten to disrupt more traditional forms of journalism practice. McManus (2009, p. 219) defines commercialization of news as ‘any action intended to boost profit that interferes with a journalist’s or news organization’s best effort to maximize public understanding of those issues and events that shape the community they claim to serve’. When media organizations place greater emphasis on their business interests rather than on the public interests, quality journalism suffers (Picard, 2004, p. 55). The crucial term in these conceptualizations which should help us to engage critically with the analysis of commercialization of journalism is the media’s preference for profit over public service or good. Increasing commercialization of media raises questions about the role of media in democratic societies. Closely connected to this is the role of journalism as one of the elements of the public sphere. The chapter conceptualizes notions of the public sphere and citizenship, and focuses on the role that the mass media play against the background of threats posed to journalistic independence by market forces. The public sphere is one of the most important aspects of contemporary discourse on democracy and journalism. The media is seen in this context as reinforcing a public sphere and public discourse as being reinvented as media discourse. The public sphere is important for journalism across the world because it is within this sphere that citizens are furnished with information concerning public issues (Habermas, 1989). Unfortunately, the role of the media as a vehicle for dissemination of public issues is under assault by the forces of commercialization.

Research suggests that new technologies (e.g. the Internet, interactive multimedia systems, digital telecommunications and e-mail) have transformed journalism practices in various ways, such as faster access to news, more frequent news updates, live coverage of breaking news events, citizen involvement in news reporting, as well as greater quantity and diversity of news available to media audiences. Thus, the emergence of new technologies in

journalism practice has challenged core assumptions about traditional news reporting and production, such as the notion that professional journalists have the exclusive right to set the public agenda and to define social reality (Deuze, 2005, p. 451). These issues are analysed in Chapter 9. Although new technologies have expanded the terrain of journalism and the global audience for news has increased in the same way that news consumers have multiple sources of news, these developments have not eliminated certain blemishes associated with online commentary and news reporting. In this chapter, we examine the strengths and weaknesses of technological changes in journalism, including how online report published in the form of commentary, analysis or news tends to blur the distinction between straight news and commentary. Rather than enhance journalism, this practice is seen to promote rumour and therefore undermines journalism because of lack of accountability, because of anonymity of contributors to online content and because of the inability to verify the accuracy of online reports in some circumstances (Fenton, 2010b, p. 10).

The general overview we present in this chapter shows that there is something for everyone in this book. Professional journalists, journalism academics and researchers, media organizations and news consumers, as well as students who have an interest in the role of the media and journalists in different societies will find this book a useful resource to enhance their knowledge about issues that underpin journalistic practices across the world. The arguments we advance throughout the book serve as our response to the gaps we identified in the literature on journalism training and practices in different cultures. We have focused on the past and contemporary issues in journalism that straddle the discipline. The major plank of our arguments is the central role that culture plays in the construction of journalistic practices across the globe. Thus, we see a global world in which existing media systems and journalistic practices are influenced by cultural differences.

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