

# Contents

<b>Acknowledgements</b>	<b>ix</b>
<b>Abbreviations</b>	<b>xi</b>
<b>List of Case Studies</b>	<b>xiii</b>
<b>List of Figures</b>	<b>xv</b>
<b>List of Tables</b>	<b>xvii</b>
<b>Preface</b>	<b>xix</b>
<b>1 Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2 Journalism – the Global North and the Global South</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>3 From the Ground Up: Theories of Global Journalism</b>	<b>73</b>
<b>4 Global Journalism Flows and Contra-Flows</b>	<b>99</b>
<b>5 The Evolution of Global Reporting</b>	<b>125</b>
<b>6 From Them to Us: Alternative and Citizen Journalism</b>	<b>147</b>
<b>7 Women and Journalism – A Global Transformation?</b>	<b>167</b>
<b>8 The Future of Global Journalism</b>	<b>185</b>
<b>9 Conclusion</b>	<b>209</b>



# 1

## Introduction

### Global Journalism in the Digital Age: Key Concepts and Issues

#### Chapter overview

This chapter introduces the key topics covered in the book and the overall aims it serves. It is also a first attempt to identify the main issues facing global journalism at present and to define the book's key terms and concepts. The chapter is structured around three main topics: (1) What is global journalism? (2) Key terms and developments in journalism (studies). (3) The future of journalism.

#### Learning outcomes

After having read this chapter you will be able to:

1. Discuss what global journalism is and recognize the importance of context
2. Identify some of the key terms used in journalism studies as well as recent developments in the field such as the proliferation of fake news
3. Outline the main questions facing the future of journalism.

More than 68.5 million people were forced to flee their homes by the end of 2017 because of war and military conflicts. The United Nations (UN) announced in June 2017 that the number of refugees in the world had reached the highest level ever recorded and by June 2018 there were 25.4 million refugees, over half of whom were under the age of 18. In their pursuit of a better future, hundreds of thousands of people attempted to seek asylum in Europe.

## 2 Global Journalism

The UN Refugee Agency (2016) reported that between January 2015 and August 2016 an estimated 6,940 people had drowned or had gone missing while ‘trying to reach safety in Europe’. ‘On average 11 men, women and children have perished across Europe every single day over the last 12 months’ (UNHCR, 2016). The refugee crisis understandably attracted heightened media attention but the most iconic image was undoubtedly of a 3-year-old boy who was found washed up on a beach in Turkey in September 2015. The family of Aylan Kurdi, a Syrian of Kurdish origin, was trying to cross the Mediterranean Sea when their inflatable boat capsized. Aylan, his mother and brother drowned while his father survived. The photos of Aylan, shot by a Turkish journalist, reached the computer ‘screens of almost 20 million people across the world in the space of 12 hours and via thirty thousand tweets’ (D’Orazio, 2015, p. 12), and were headline news for numerous media outlets. D’Orazio (2015) claimed, however, that the story was not picked up by legacy media outside Turkey until five hours after it was first published.

Did the photos have a truly global reach (the world’s total population exceeded seven billion people), and were they eventually published by journalists from all continents? This question does not have an easy answer. Vis and Goriunova’s (2015) edited report suggested that the audience of the photos became ‘truly global’ only after the *Washington Post* Beirut bureau chief shared a tweet. However, the report indicated that nearly half of the shared images on social media were from accounts in Europe; 28 per cent from the US; 11 per cent from the Middle East and North Africa; 7 per cent from Asia; 2 per cent from Latin America, and 4 per cent from other locations. Why were Asian, African and Latin American journalists and audiences not as interested in the poignant photographs as their European and American colleagues? Did they actually see them? Can we realistically expect journalists and audiences in Africa to have picked up the photos, given that the internet penetration rate in 20 countries and territories on the continent was below 10 per cent (it was 35.2 per cent for Africa as a whole on 31 December 2017 according to Internet World Stats (2018))? Or could it be that those who saw the photos were actually interested in Aylan’s story but Western researchers had not really succeeded in capturing their reactions? While answering this question in full is beyond the scope of this book, we investigate some of the key factors that explain the global flows and contra-flows of news: namely, how news stories are produced and then disseminated not just within individual nation-states but also across borders, and more broadly how news flows globally. The example of the photos of Aylan clearly demonstrates the shifting dynamics in the ways

news travels in the digital age, and the changing relationship between journalists and their audiences. More importantly, the differences in coverage and ‘shares’ illustrates the close interconnectedness between the relevant political, economic and cultural contexts and journalistic values and practices. The refugee crisis was dominating the news headlines in Europe for months, but did it feature at all in the news in other continents, and if it did, was that because people from these countries were directly affected by the refugee crisis or simply because journalists relied mainly on agency copy? We cannot fully understand what role journalists play in their societies and worldwide unless we ask these types of questions, which require us to take into account the broader context journalists work in and the range of factors that influence their work. The texts written by journalists cannot be isolated from the conditions in which they are produced.

As already indicated in the Preface, this appreciation of the importance of context is a core principle of this book, together with an attempt to avoid media- and Western-centrism. Media do not exist in a vacuum, and evaluating the factors and processes that influence the work of journalists is of crucial importance. All too often, however, when attempting to explain certain developments or how media messages are received by audiences, media and journalism scholars focus almost exclusively on the role of the media, thus often ignoring the importance of all other actors, factors and social structures that play a role in the process. Our aim is to avoid this trap of media-centrism. Similarly, while most of the theories used and the empirical contexts discussed in journalism textbooks are from the developed democracies of the West that have ‘free’ media, only 13 per cent of people in the world live in countries with media which are designated as free (Freedom House, 2017a).<sup>1</sup> Our aim, therefore, is to offer a comprehensive overview of the state of journalism around the world, not just Western countries, and of global news reporting in the digital age by also exploring the impact of a range of contributing factors – local, national, international and global.

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<sup>1</sup> Although it is important to acknowledge the sources of such judgements – Freedom House is a US government-funded NGO whose origins lay in propagating the US involvement in the Second World War and the Cold War – the findings should not be overlooked. Our evaluations of how well journalists serve the public and do their job are often based on idealistic (normative) expectations, whereas the reality on the ground can be very different and should certainly be investigated in more depth before any judgements are passed.

## What is 'Global' Journalism?

We have also been concerned particularly with what constitutes the 'global'. At its simplest, the word means nothing more than 'the whole world'. However, that implies crossing, if not ignoring, spatial and temporal boundaries, and navigating multiple cultures, established both naturally and by human activity. Thus, 'global warming' refers to overall climate change affecting the entire planet Earth, although it may manifest itself differently in different places. In journalism, one of the earliest uses of the concept of the global was in Marshall McLuhan's 'global village'. McLuhan argued that the electronic media (especially television) provided instantaneous connections across time and space, and the sharing of the same information, as if we were all living in a village with face-to-face human contact (McLuhan & Fiore, 1967, p. 63). Even prior to that, the wire services (news agencies) – Reuters, Associated Press (AP), Havas and Wolff – were 'global media organizations' trading news across the world (Boyd-Barrett & Rantanen, 1998, p. 1). Before the internet, television or radio, the telegraph (almost exclusively under British control with US support) formed a 'global media system' which linked the world with cables and later wireless radio telegraphy (Winseck & Pike, 2009, p. 34). These were building blocks in the construction of globalization in which all activities (political, economic, social and cultural) were potentially undertaken on a global scale. This implied three things: (1) the relegation of the distinctiveness of the national and the local, and, directly related to that, (2) linguistic domination and (3) the inbuilt advantage of more economically developed countries, such as the US and UK, in establishing global presences. However, notwithstanding the existence of large global news businesses, such as News Corp, or the domination of the World Wide Web by the English language, national and local media in many languages have proven to be quite resilient. In line with our desire not to see the global from a Western and Northern perspective we agree with Stevenson (1999, p. 4) who argued that globalization 'has asked us to think again about projecting our own backyard onto the rest of the world'.

These developments impacted on journalism in four main ways:

1. Journalists were part of an increasingly globalized labour force characterized by more flexible working, greater precarity of employment and off-shoring (Bromley et al., 2015, pp. 289–90; Bunce, 2010).
2. Journalists' work was more consciously directed at global users (for example, UK national newspapers the *Daily Mail* and the *Mail on Sunday* had print circulations largely confined to Britain of 1.5m and 1.375m respectively, whereas the MailOnline website with its global reach attracted close to 14m browsers).

3. At the same time, journalists interpreted global events and issues for local users (their retreat from this led to anxieties over how ill-informed Americans were about the world, especially after the 9/11 attacks (Rash, 2011)).
4. There was a residual corps of foreign correspondents reporting from one or more countries to another (home) country (see Chapter 5).

There has been a resurgence of interest in global/international journalism in recent years even as the numbers of foreign correspondents appeared to decline (Keller, 2013). A growing number of universities around the world offer postgraduate programmes and undergraduate courses/modules in both global and international journalism – from universities in the West which wish to expose students to diverse experiences to those in the global South which are looking to test Western models and evaluate their own indigenous practices. However, despite the increasing number of courses, there is no single overview that provides a comprehensive understanding of journalism within the context of media globalization in the digital era. A few texts on related topics have appeared in recent years but most tended to focus narrowly on specific topics and themes. On the one hand, some authors focused on the exceptional – the reporting of global crises and the role of foreign correspondents. Berglez (2013) structured his analysis around the notion of ‘global journalism’, defined as ‘a new form of journalism that is increasingly needed in global times’ (back cover), concentrating on the exceptional – the coverage of global crises. Cottle (2008) similarly offered insights into international journalism which skirted its mundane existence. Williams (2011) and Owen and Purdey (2009) focused almost exclusively on the role of foreign correspondents. A few studies published (mainly) in the US concentrated predominantly on the mundane – the contexts in which journalists around the world work, organized by regions and/or countries (de Beer, 2008; Weaver & Willnat, 2012).

Global journalism concerns the routine as much as the exceptional – the comprehensive coverage of its mundane as well as exceptional aspects, features and processes. We broadly define *the exceptional* as the coverage of global crises and conflicts, and *the mundane* as comprising the challenges, pressures and conditions journalists face and work in across contexts and platforms. We explore three key topics:

1. *Contexts*: The different journalistic cultures – ‘worlds of journalism’ (Hanitzsch et al., 2011) – across the world; the importance of context and the interactions between the global, national and local levels across a range of media.

## 6 Global Journalism

2. *Theories*: Key trends and theories in the field, including globalization of professional practices, transnational/global news flows and contra-flows.
3. *Journalistic practices*: The history and current state of international/foreign news reporting.

We start by discussing the importance of context, then move on to relevant theories that attempt to conceptualize the relationship between context and journalistic practices, and finally explore in detail some of these practices – on both a transnational/international and a national/local level, including the role of the big news organizations, foreign correspondents and citizen journalists.

A key aim is to investigate the state of global journalism by being truly global in our scope and coverage. As already indicated, the conditions in which journalists around the world work and the challenges and pressures they face as well as the conventions they follow are likely to differ significantly. Journalism studies as an academic field is dominated by Western scholars and as a result the majority of books, textbooks and journal articles focus on the Western world. The hysteria provoked by Donald Trump's election as the 45th US President allegedly facilitated by the unprecedented spread of 'fake news' is a case in point. If we define fake news as the opposite of 'true' news, namely completely made-up stories, then how new is this phenomenon, especially for the 87 per cent of the world's population who live in countries where the media are not free? Have these people ever lived in an age of truth?

Examples of fake news proliferate in most of these countries; for example, the Ukrainian website stopfake.org began exposing fake news about Ukraine in 2014. It even had a section with tips on 'How to identify a fake' and an 'Are you easily fooled?' test. The most notorious fake news story exposed was a report about the alleged crucifixion of a 3-year-old boy by Ukrainian soldiers. The report was included in the prime-time news bulletin of the most popular Russian TV channel, Первый канал (Channel One – the report was still available on YouTube in 2017). The co-founder of the website, Yevhen Fedchenko, argued that this story and numerous other 'fake news' items were 'an integral part of information warfare' orchestrated by the Russian propaganda machine. Its increased efforts in that respect during the conflict in Ukraine clearly paid off because Russian President Vladimir Putin's popularity soared from a 63 per cent approval rating in June 2013 to a record 89 per cent in June 2015 (Levada-Center, 2015). Similarly, 87 per cent of Russians supported the annexation of Crimea.

In an attempt to avoid Western-centrism, we offer a comprehensive and up-to-date account of the current state of media freedom and journalistic



practices across national contexts and cultures – from traditional democracies in Western Europe and North America to repressive dictatorial regimes in Asia and Africa. It is important to do this prior to introducing the key theories in the field, because it helps us better interpret and question these key theories. We draw a distinction between journalistic practices and challenges that media professionals experience in the traditional and emerging democracies and industrialized economies of the global North (Europe, Northern America and Oceania) in contrast to the situation in the largely non-democratic countries or young democracies and industrializing countries of the global South (Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean). Another commonly used distinction is between the East and the West; however, the global North/South distinction has become more pertinent following the fall of the Berlin Wall, presaging a shrinking gap in journalistic practices and contributing factors between the East and the West, while the gap between the North and the South appears to be widening (the digital age and post 9/11 political developments have to an extent contributed to this development).

Prior to the fall of the Berlin Wall, there was a clear distinction between the East and the West. The ideological battle between the US and the Soviet Union (USSR) was fought on every single front – political, social, cultural and economic. While in the West there was a clear commitment to democracy, liberalization of media markets and free media, in the East the mass media were used as propaganda tools in the hands of the communist regimes and dictators. The fall of the Berlin Wall and the subsequent rapid democratization of some Central and Eastern European countries and former Soviet republics led to a very quick transformation of these societies and their media systems. Eleven of the 30 countries became members of the European Union (EU) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) (a twelfth, Albania, joined NATO only), and embraced democratic values. Others had aspirations to join the EU. However, a number of former Soviet republics have eschewed democratization, and the commitment to press freedom in some Eastern and Central European countries has been questioned (Garcia, 2015). Some of the distinctions among European countries are explored in Chapter 2. Moreover, journalism and the media play significantly different roles in emerging and transitional democracies than in established liberal democracies (Jebri et al., 2012, p. 7). Therefore, occasionally we have found it useful to refer to Western countries which are ideologically liberal democratic but not necessarily industrialized, and to industrialized nations which are not liberal.

The UN has now classified the majority of countries in the global North as ‘developed’, while the majority of countries in the global South are ‘developing’ or ‘least developed’. This distinction between the global

## 8 Global Journalism

North and the globalSouth, while geographic on the surface, is based on a range of factors – economic, political and developmental, including ‘levels of industrialization, economic progress, science and technology, standards of living and political-economic power in the global arena’ (Guttal, 2016). There are noticeable differences between and within countries, and we further acknowledge these differences in the next chapters, but as a whole, as Guttal (2016) points out, ‘structural differences in living conditions, human and societal capabilities and economic and political power, are still prevalent between the North and South’. Needless to say, these distinctions are indeed social ‘constructs’ and as such are useful only to an extent – as a means of drawing out key differences and similarities, and common challenges. We provide examples from different contexts to more clearly illustrate some of the general points that we make. Similarly, categories such as democratic/undemocratic and free/not free have their limitations but they are widely adopted by global audits so it is worth considering them in a critical way.

### Key Terms and Developments in Journalism (Studies)

While fascinating in their own right, the case studies we use throughout the book also tell a wider story about journalism as a profession and the role journalists play in their societies and globally. Hence, we explore a range of key theories and concepts of global journalism that help us make sense of past and recent intriguing developments. The conceptualization of journalism as a profession is just as much a moving target as is the practice of journalism itself. In their review of theories used in journalism studies in the digital age, Steensen and Ahva (2015, p. 2) claimed that the field was ‘not marked by a specific and shared academic culture’, namely ‘a shared set of theories and methodologies’. They counted more than a hundred different theories in use – mainly from political science, sociology, and language and critical studies. Steensen and Ahva (2015, p. 13) disagreed with Zelizer’s (2009, p. 34) claim that ‘journalism studies still has not been able to “produce a coherent picture of what journalism is”’, because they argued that ‘such coherence’ was not necessarily desirable or possible ‘in the digital era, where multiple journalisms coexist and the practice of journalism is dispersing’.

Various terms and theories have been used to explain how flows and contra-flows take place – among them, ‘globalization’, ‘glocalism’ and ‘glocalization’. These terms were coined with the aim of explaining the interrelation between the global and the local. Put simply, globalization has inevitably brought about a range of changes but the process is not linear and

global flows impact local societies and communities differently depending on the relevant context. These global events and developments can in turn be affected by local products, events and developments. This is a constant process with a range of implications for journalism that we consider in this book. Wasserman's (2006) study on the glocalization of journalism ethics in African countries is an interesting case in point. Although when apartheid ended South African journalists initially adopted Western ethical codes, they later came up with an African code of ethics after facing societal pressure to report 'as Africans' and to be loyal to their 'African values'. While we do indeed review a range of theories, we should make it clear from the onset that we do not endorse one specific theoretical framework or indeed an overarching theory of journalism, not only because such a theory does not exist but also because the conceptualization of journalism is an ongoing process we should all get involved in. Critically reflecting upon our practice is an essential skill for all journalists, journalism scholars and students.

A key ideological debate in the field is what direction journalism is moving in – is it an instrument in the hands of dominant corporate media, or is it ushering in an expansion of the public sphere? The process of aligning journalism with democracy, the norm in the theorization of journalism for decades, is becoming problematic. As journalism, as a modern concept, became more global it necessarily interacted with multiple contexts and their social, cultural, economic and historical, as well as political, specificities. On the one hand this allowed the flow of the same journalistic content globally, but on the other hand, with the advent of the internet we have also witnessed a proliferation of national, local and hyperlocal news and increased fragmentation of the news. Recent studies even suggest that the digital era has made Habermas's (1989) public sphere concept redundant, because most academic attempts to find evidence of online democratic deliberation have proved futile (for a summary, see Slavtcheva-Petkova, 2016a, 2016b). Put simply, the cyberoptimistic expectation that the advent of the internet would lead to an opening up of the public sphere or even potentially the emergence of a virtual public sphere has not really materialized. The flow of news is not a linear process and we investigate both the key milestones in this process and the various terms and theories used to explain how flows and contra-flows of news take place.

The term 'international journalism' is often associated with the work of a particular group of journalists – foreign correspondents. Being a foreign correspondent is a very prestigious profession because, as Hamilton and Jenner (2004b) argued, 'correspondents talk to heads of state and dine on the Via Veneto, while colleagues back home toil under the watchful eye of editors' (p. 98).

The stereotypical image of foreign correspondents created during the so-called ‘golden age’ of the 1930s was captured by Alfred Hitchcock in his 1940 movie *Foreign Correspondent*, based loosely on the biography of Vincent Sheean of the *Chicago Tribune* and part-scripted by another former US foreign correspondent of the period, Ben Hecht. The main protagonist was portrayed as a ‘reflective, interpretive’ journalist, a heroic figure upholding the public’s right to know (Cozma & Hamilton, 2009, pp. 499–500; Ehrlich, 2010, pp. 80, 176). Cozma and Hamilton (2009, p. 500) argued that such films ‘often verged on popular propaganda’ as American journalists were represented as solving the world’s problems. In post-colonial times such characterizations were unrealistic and less acceptable. Foreign correspondence in the later twentieth and early twenty-first centuries comprised less ‘fun and glamour’, reporting revolutions, war and espionage (the exceptional), and more routine politics, economics, entertainment, travel (the mundane) (Cottle, 2009, p. 347; Terzis, 2015, p. 305). Nevertheless, in the spirit of the trailer for *Foreign Correspondent* which focuses on the assassination of a high-profile European leader, ‘a camera with gun attachment, trick windmills and a mid-ocean plane crash’ (Turner Classic Movies at [www.tcm.com](http://www.tcm.com)), foreign correspondents remained popularly associated with reporting from war and conflict zones with bombs and gunshots exploding in the background (Simpson, 2016).

However, when the first foreign stories appeared in European newspapers they were not necessarily all about wars and conflicts nor were they written by ‘professional’ journalists. ‘Seafarers’ often sent letters back home with ‘phantasmagoria’ such as ‘tales of monsters’, serpents and other scary creatures born out of ‘fear of the unknown, of lands unexplored and peoples undiscovered’ (Williams, 2011, p. 47). We provide a brief history of foreign correspondents by focusing on the main periods and the lives and careers of a few of them, because their experience also shows how the profession has evolved – from reporting hearsay and phantasmagoria to interpreting complex cultural issues for cosmopolitan audiences (Turnbull, 2014).

As the majority of countries with foreign correspondents have not been formally at war for most of the period since the 1940s – the bulk of the world’s foreign correspondents in 2017–18 came from and were based in the US, the UK and the rest of the EU – for some the distinction between foreign and war correspondents has eroded. In contemporary times war reporting from dangerous zones in third-party locations has been assigned chiefly to foreign correspondents who have borne the associated risks. Although at the beginning of the 2003 invasion of Iraq the casualty rate among journalists was greater than that among US soldiers (Seib, 2004, p. 58), deaths among journalists continued after the invading forces left. Between 2012 and 2016 Iraq and

Syria were the two deadliest countries for journalists with up to 75 per cent of those who died covering war. In 14 months more journalists were killed in the civil war in the former Yugoslavia than in 14 years of the Vietnam War or the whole of the Second World War (Santora & Carter, 2006; Simpson, 1995). However, the numbers of journalists killed since 1992 in crossfire or combat (296) and ‘on dangerous assignment’ (165) was only a fraction of the number simply murdered (844) (Committee to Protect Journalists, 2018a). (We note here that deaths among journalists while doing their job seemed to continue to rise almost monthly.)

A persistent theme is whether foreign correspondents are an ‘endangered’ (Willnat & Martin, 2012, p. 495) or ‘vanishing’ (Lewis, 2010, p. 121) species. Reports on the state of foreign correspondence (Enda, 2011; Hamilton & Jenner, 2004b; Moore, 2010; Sambrook, 2010) suggested that foreign correspondents might indeed be becoming redundant because of the impact of new technologies, the global economic downturn and the diminishing interest in foreign news. The number of countries, regions and continents with no permanent correspondents based in them was growing – ironically at a time when there appeared to be an increase in disturbing developments with global repercussions, including public health threats (the 2014–16 Ebola outbreak in West Africa), humanitarian emergencies (famine in Nigeria, South Sudan, Somalia and Yemen in 2017), and military conflicts (in Syria, Iraq, Libya, Yemen). Mainly stringers and parachute journalists covered Africa, Latin America and parts of Asia. By contrast, the European beat was growing – there were more than 1,000 accredited journalists in Brussels, mainly from countries outside Europe – Asia and North America.

Foreign correspondents were not the only ones who contributed to the transnational flow of news, and we also explore the role of ‘big global media’ – news agencies such as Reuters, AP and Agence France-Presse (AFP), and hegemonic and counter-hegemonic TV stations such as Cable News Network (CNN), Al Jazeera and RT (formerly Russia Today). While there was evidence of a transformation of business models and a drop in advertising revenues in a lot of European and North American countries, Asia was one of the fastest growing media markets in the world. We explore the extent to which we are likely to experience global journalism flows from this market – in particular from China and India as ‘the economic giants of the future’.

The vacuum left by legacy media has been filled in some contexts by non-professional/citizen journalists. We delve deeper into the role citizen and alternative journalists, activists, NGOs and social media have played not only in relation to foreign correspondence but also more broadly. Social media played an unprecedented role during the Arab Spring but what role, if any,

**12 Global Journalism**

has alternative/citizen journalism played in both ‘hard’ and ‘soft’ authoritarian regimes? We use a number of case studies – from Occupy New York City bloggers and Brazilian ninja citizen journalists to activists posting YouTube videos of the atrocities in Syria and North Koreans sharing their videos about the regime in the country by smuggling them into South Korea. Legacy media have also successfully launched some projects exclusively dedicated to promoting citizen journalism projects (CNN iReport is a case in point), and we investigate the role they have played. Convergence has become the buzzword in the industry and some big companies such as the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) show how journalists and news media have adapted or changed their practices in response to these recent developments.

**The Future of Journalism?**

What does the increased blurring of the boundaries between citizen and professional journalists mean for the future of global journalism and global journalists? Will there be one, universal journalism – and if so, will it be based on any particular existing model? Or will many journalisms flourish, each responsive to and serving its particular wider context – and will this constitute an end to any shared global concept of journalism? Or will something in-between emerge? Accounts of journalism differ: on the one hand, some argue that journalism around the world is fundamentally similar but glossed by different cultural and social situatednesses; on the other hand, it is suggested that journalism shares no more than a veneer of sameness underpinned by cultural and social specificities. These positions have manifested themselves in pragmatic projects. A liberal (North Atlantic, or Anglo-Saxon) model of journalism has been strongly promoted globally through both liberal economics and education (epitomized by UNESCO curricula). This has appeared to overwhelm alternatives, such as the established (European) democratic corporatist and polarized pluralist models, let alone other variants evident elsewhere. However, other practices have arisen both spontaneously (out of existing cultural traditions) and with state support. Examples include development, participatory and Asian values journalisms.

Whether the view of journalism’s future is of a homogenized (converged), heterogenized (diverged) or hybridized (mixed) practice is in large part determined by the configurations of units of analysis – political and economic systems, history, culture, geography and social structures. A key dimension of this is whether the larger context is taken to be the nation-state or a globalized world. Digitization has tended to foster more globalized, transnational and



intranational practices, and as such has been associated with ‘the end of journalism’ insofar as, in this context, privileging professionalized practice based on national cultures has been more difficult, as access to the means of mass creation and dissemination has allowed the development outside of spatial boundaries of novel practices such as citizen journalism. Thus the structured education of journalists has become a marker of ‘professionalism’, as well as a vehicle for fostering varieties of journalisms. It now plays a key, if somewhat hidden, role in shaping expectations of journalism. As such, journalism education is a contested area in the development of practice in which assumptions about the identity and role of journalism in the global future are shaped, reproduced and transmitted.

The wider, global challenge for journalism is not as much its continued relevance to the 13 per cent of the world’s population living in cultures with a ‘free’ press (although as the consumption of mainstream journalism in these domains continues to decline, this is an issue) as its status elsewhere and in the interstices between ‘the West and the rest’. At the same time, media development is uneven across the world in terms of both decline and growth and the popularity of platforms. While it is evident that Web 2.0 has stimulated a global expansion of the use of the internet and in particular social media, newspaper reading has increased significantly in China and Japan; television usage has grown in India, and both commercial and community radio stations have proliferated in Africa. Furthermore, the internet has facilitated access to the journalisms of legacy media through mechanisms such as pod- and vod-casts, apps, branded websites and aggregation sites, alongside and sometimes in conjunction with the likes of Facebook and Twitter. The future of global journalism is by no means clear – will it be a US-led, a Chinese- or BRICS-led or a hybrid future?

Another question we pose is: will journalism (and journalism studies) benefit if freed from platform determinism? Despite some common changes journalists experience in the global news environment, they also face context-dependent challenges – the work of BBC’s Europe editor who has huge resources and a support network at her disposal is very different from the work of an Eritrean journalist who is not allowed to travel abroad, does not even have access to the internet (only 1.4 per cent of the population in Eritrea have internet access) and faces the threat of spending the rest of his/her life in a prison camp. We also discuss the role that activists and NGOs such as Freedom House, the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), Reporters Without Borders (RWB), Article 19 et al. play in their efforts to promote press freedom and to end impunity. The UN adopted in 2012 a plan of action on the safety of journalists with the aim of ending impunity. What difference

**14 Global Journalism**

have these activists made? Have we witnessed any short-term and long-term changes? We conclude by making suggestions for a more effective approach to tackling some of these issues, while also recognizing the importance of relevant societal, political and economic developments.

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# Index

- 7/7 attacks, 152  
 9/11, 5, 7, 17  
 24/7 news, 142, 145  
     24/7 news channels, 135
- A**
- ABC(US), 120, 139  
 advertising, 30, 42, 62–3, 142  
*AdWeek*, 120  
 Afghanistan, 31, 36, 37, 39, 42, 179  
 Africa, 2, 5, 7, 9, 11, 13, 16, 17,  
     22–31, 36, 37, 40, 70, 87, 93,  
     103, 105, 127, 134, 140–1, 142,  
     145, 175, 177, 180, 183, 193,  
     201, 204, 220  
 African Commission on Human and  
     Peoples' Rights, 25–6  
 African Freedom of Expression  
     Exchange, 28  
 African Union, 78  
     *See also individual countries*  
 African News Agency, 105  
 Agence France Presse (AFP), 11, 102,  
     103, 104, 131, 141  
 Al Arabiya, 121  
 Albania, 50, 55, 56–7, 63, 178, 181,  
     182
- Algeria, 25, 27, 29, 30, 74, 179  
 Al Jazeera, 11, 92, 103, 115–16, 118,  
     141  
 Alliance for Women in Media, The,  
     172  
 al-Qaeda, 18, 37  
 al-Shebaab, 18  
 alternative journalism, 11–12, 108,  
     148, 149–50, 153–5, 156, 164–5  
 America *See* North America, United  
     States  
*American Journalism Review*, 77, 138–9  
 American Press Institute, 122, 197  
 American Society of News Editors  
     (ASNE), 169  
 Andorra, 49  
 Angola, 179  
 Anguilla, 178  
 Antigua and Barbuda, 48  
 Arab Region, 85, 86, 91, 92, 115, 118,  
     156, 164, 175, 187, 203  
     Arab Spring, 11, 148, 155–6  
     *See also individual countries*  
 Argentina, 43, 44–6, 47, 48, 110, 179  
 Armenia, 37, 38, 39, 41, 42, 58, 178  
 Article 9, 13, 28, 71, 187  
 Article 19 of Universal Declaration of  
     Human Rights, 18, 100, 160, 205

## 274 Index

- Asahi Shimbun*, 169
- Asia, 2, 5, 7, 11, 16, 17, 31–42, 70, 85, 87–8, 103, 115, 127, 134, 140–1, 143, 145–6, 148, 177, 180, 182, 183, 193, 200
- Asian values, 12, 32–3, 36
- Far East, 132
- South Asian tsunami, 149, 150
- See also individual countries*
- Asia Press International, 157
- Asiavision, 102
- Associated Press (AP), 4, 11, 102, 103, 104, 131, 141, 192
- Atlantic, The* 104
- Australia, 66, 67–9, 83, 84, 141, 169, 178, 187, 188, 193, 199, 20
- Australian, The*, 91
- Austria, 22, 54, 58, 84, 132, 174, 178, 188, 205, 216
- Axel Springer, 103
- Azerbaijan, 31, 37, 40, 41, 42, 178, 220
- B**
- Bahrain, 38, 39, 41, 109, 179, 187
- Bangladesh, 34, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 42, 175, 179, 189
- Belarus, 49, 58, 59, 60, 109, 178
- Belgium, 22, 49, 50, 54, 58, 92, 109, 143, 178, 196, 216
- Benin, 29, 179
- Berlin Wall, 7, 11, 134, 139
- Berlusconi, Silvio, 60–1, 83
- Bermuda, 63, 65, 104, 178
- Bhutan, 31, 34, 39, 178
- Big Picture, *The*, 104
- Bloomberg, 102, 103, 104, 120, 141
- Boko Haram, 18
- Bolivia, 48, 178
- Bosnia and Herzegovina, 29, 56–7, 58, 178, 220
- Botswana, 24, 27, 29, 30, 178
- Brazil, 12, 22, 43, 44–6, 48, 104, 156–7, 178, 196, 202, 220
- Breaking News, 120
- BRICS, 13, 183
- Britain/British *See* United Kingdom
- brown/red/white envelope journalism, 30–31, 42
- Brunei Darussalam, 42
- Bulgaria, 51, 52, 56, 61, 173, 178, 181, 182, 205
- Burkina Faso, 28, 29
- Burundi, 22, 29, 179
- Buzzfeed, 120, 122–3
- C**
- Cable News Network (CNN), 11, 67, 92, 93, 102, 103, 104, 115, 118, 120, 140, 162, 204
- CNN effect, 135
- Cabo Verde, 22, 178
- CBS, 103, 139, 217
- Cambodia, 31, 37, 40, 41, 42, 138, 179, 220
- Cambodia Daily*, 41
- camera operators, 169–70
- Cameroon, 27, 28, 29, 179
- Canada, 22, 63, 64–7, 83, 84, 90, 92, 110, 169, 172, 177, 178, 181, 182, 188, 193, 204, 216
- Caribbean, 7, 17, 42–9, 86, 180, 187, 220
- See also individual countries*
- Caribbean News Agency, 105
- Cayman Islands, 178
- Central African Republic, 26, 27, 28, 29, 31
- Central China Television, 196
- Central and Eastern Europe, 7, 17, 56–7, 60–1, 62, 70, 102, 181, 182, 183, 220
- See also individual countries*

- Chad, 27, 29, 31, 179  
 Channel One, 6  
 Chechnya, 178  
*Chicago Daily News*, 132  
*Chicago Tribune*, 10  
 Chile, 43, 44, 178  
 China, 11, 13, 17, 22, 31, 32, 33, 35, 38, 40, 41–2, 81, 86, 90, 91, 109, 121, 143–4, 158, 173, 175, 178, 188, 194, 201, 202, 220  
*China Daily*, 103, 121  
 China Global Television Network (CGTN), 115, 143  
 China Radio International, 103  
 citizen journalism, 120–1, 122, 147–53, 155–6, 156–65, 202–3, 214, 219  
   projects: Citizen Journalists  
     Malaysia, 110; *Daily NK*, 158, 147–53, 155–6, 156–65;  
     Mídia NINJA, 148, 156–7;  
     OhmyNews, 101, 158–60;  
     RIMJIN-gang, 158; Sahara Reporters, 160  
 CNBC, 102, 103  
 Colombia, 43, 44–6, 48, 74, 179, 202  
*Columbia Journalism Review*, 77, 203  
 Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), 13, 18, 35, 71, 135, 170  
 Congo, 27, 179  
 Cook Islands, 69–70  
 Costa Rica, 47, 48, 109, 178, 196  
 Côte d'Ivoire, 27, 28  
 Council of Europe, 58, 84, 204, 210  
 Crimea, 6, 62  
 Croatia, 50, 55, 56, 59, 178  
 Cuba, 43, 46, 47–8, 49, 109, 114, 132, 134, 178, 180, 181, 220  
 Curaçao, 49  
 Cyprus, 31, 35, 38, 39, 174, 178, 180  
 Czech Republic, 57, 58, 178, 188
- D**  
*Daily Mail*, 4, 103, 120  
   MailOnline, 4, 120  
   *Mail on Sunday*, 4  
*Daily Mash, The*, 186  
*Daily Telegraph*, 103  
*Dainik Jagran*, 121  
 Declaration of Table Mountain, 28  
 democracy, 3, 7–9, 12, 16, 17–18, 20, 23, 29, 32, 43, 49, 50–1, 59, 60, 61, 62, 67, 70, 74, 77–8, 80–5, 86, 95, 100–2, 111, 112, 114, 117, 119–20, 123, 137, 149, 155, 162–5, 175, 186, 162–5, 175, 186, 189, 193–4, 197, 201, 204–6, 210–12, 215–15, 220  
 Democratic Republic of Congo, 29, 179, 220  
 Denmark, 22, 49, 50–1, 53, 58, 109, 169, 178, 182, 193, 216  
 development journalism, 23, 25, 33, 36, 90  
 Deutsche-Welle, 103  
 digitization, 93–5, 100–1, 108–10, 120–3, 139, 201, 206  
 Djibouti, 22, 28, 29, 109, 179  
 Dominican Republic, 46, 47, 48, 178
- E**  
 Ebola, 23, 145  
*Economic Daily*, 121  
*Economic Times*, 121  
 Ecuador, 44, 47, 48, 178, 204, 219  
 Egypt, 24, 27, 29, 92, 109, 114, 119, 132, 178, 196, 199, 203, 210, 220  
*El Norte*, 45  
 El Salvador, 45, 178  
 embedded journalism, 136–7  
 Equatorial Guinea, 22, 26, 29, 109

## 276 Index

- Eritrea, 13, 16, 22, 26, 29, 30, 31, 109, 188  
 ESPN, 104  
 Estonia, 50, 53, 56, 58, 60, 63, 173, 178, 182  
 Ethiopia, 22, 23, 24, 26, 27, 288, 29, 109, 179  
 Europe, 1, 3, 7, 10, 11, 12, 16, 17, 22, 49–63, 70, 80, 84, 92, 103, 110, 115, 127, 128, 129, 131, 133, 134, 140–1, 154, 177, 180, 181, 193, 206  
*See also individual countries*  
 European Union (EU), 7, 10, 49–50, 60, 84, 143, 169  
 Eurovision, 102
- F**  
 fact-checking, 200, 215  
 fake news, 5, 67, 185–9, 200, 202, 214  
 Falkland Islands, 49  
 fifth estate, 202  
 Fiji, 68, 69, 86, 178, 181  
*Financial Times Deutschland*, 92  
 Finland, 16, 22, 49, 50–1, 53, 84, 100, 108, 109, 169, 173, 174, 178, 182, 187, 188, 216  
*Forbes*, 82, 120  
 foreign correspondent/correspondence, 9–11, 80, 110, 122, 125–8, 138–46, 151, 167, 206  
 fourth estate, 74, 77, 86  
 Fox News, 65, 102, 103, 118, 120, 137, 173  
 foxification, 137  
 France, 22, 50, 54, 57, 58, 60, 128, 132, 172, 174, 178, 187, 188, 193, 202, 204, 216  
 freedom of information (FoI), 28, 40, 47, 59, 68, 100, 122  
 Freedom House, 3, 13, 16, 18, 19, 20, 22, 43, 71, 204
- G**  
 G-7, 110  
 Gabon, 29  
 Gambia, 22, 23, 27, 28, 30  
 Gannett, 103  
 Georgia, 39, 40, 41, 178  
 Germany, 22, 50, 54, 58, 83, 92, 110, 128, 132, 133, 174, 178, 187, 189, 193, 202, 205, 216  
 Ghana, 23, 28, 29, 114, 119, 178  
 Global Alliance on Media and Gender, 176  
*Global Times*, 213  
 globalization, 93–5, 139–40, 189  
 Google, 103–4, 121, 151, 186, 200, 204, 205, 206  
 Google+, 104  
 Google News, 120, 121–2  
 Greece, 22, 50, 55, 58, 59, 62, 121, 178  
 Greenland, 63, 65  
 Grenada, 88–9  
 Grupo Globo, 103  
*Guardian, The*, 103, 120, 203  
 Guatamala, 46, 47, 48  
 Guinea, 27, 28 29  
 Guinea-Bissau, 29  
 Guyana, 47, 48
- H**  
 Haiti, 42, 47, 48  
*Harvard Business Review*, 104  
 Havas, 4, 131–2  
 Hearst, 103  
*Hidri*, 26  
*Hindu, The*, 121  
*Hindustan Times*, 121  
 Honduras, 46, 47, 48, 49  
 Hong Kong, 32, 35, 37, 92, 178, 189, 202, 219  
 Huffington Post, 120  
 Human Rights Watch (HRW), 46

Hungary, 52, 56, 58, 61, 109, 119,  
178, 183, 187, 204, 210  
*Hürriyet*, 121

## I

i24news, 115  
Iceland, 53, 58, 63, 109, 178, 182  
*Independent, The*, 103, 158  
Independent Media Center, 153–4  
  Indymedia, 154–5, 164  
India, 11, 13, 17, 32, 34, 36, 37, 38,  
  41–2, 92, 109, 121, 132, 179,  
  189, 201, 202, 204, 220  
*India Times*, 120, 121  
*Indian Express*, 121  
*Indo-Canadian Times*, 64  
Indonesia, 32, 34, 37, 38, 41, 42, 104,  
  114, 179, 183, 189, 202  
Inter-American Commission on  
  Human Rights (IACHR), 47  
International Federation of Journalists  
  (IFJ), 33, 169  
International Women's Media  
  Foundation (IWMF), 177, 179  
internet, 31, 42, 48–9, 62–3, 65, 69,  
  95, 104, 108, 109–10, 139, 214  
Inter Press Service (IPS), 106, 118–19  
investigative journalism, 62, 204,  
  219–20  
Iran, 31, 32, 39, 40, 41, 109, 101, 119,  
  173, 179  
Iraq, 10–11, 32, 36, 37, 38, 39, 41, 74,  
  114, 115, 135, 179, 215  
Ireland, 22, 53, 58, 59, 60, 84, 169,  
  179 182, 216  
IREX Media Barometers, 177  
Islamic State (IS), 16, 18, 32, 37  
Israel, 32, 35, 36, 37, 38, 121, 141,  
  178, 182, 210  
Italy, 22, 55, 58, 83, 84, 110, 129, 132,  
  179 182, 187, 189, 196, 202,  
  205, 216

## J

Jamaica, 46, 47, 109, 178  
Japan, 13, 17, 31, 32, 35, 41, 42, 110,  
  179, 187, 201, 204  
  kisha clubs, 41  
Jordan, 38, 39, 40, 41, 179  
journalism education, 189–99  
  journalism students, 174  
  World Journalism Education  
    Conference, 193, 194–5  
journalism ethics, 9, 21, 31, 36, 41, 62,  
  74, 93, 117, 137, 138, 139, 153,  
  159, 163–5, 195, 199, 204, 212,  
  216, 217–18  
journalism reviews 77  
  *See also American Journalism Review,*  
  *Columbia Journalism Review*  
journalists' identity, 122, 167–71  
JPost (*Jerusalem Post*), 121

## K

Kazakhstan, 38, 40, 41, 42  
Kenya, 24, 27, 29, 31, 109–10, 179,  
  189, 198  
Knight International Journalism  
  Award, 220  
Kosovo, 55, 179, 182  
Kurdistan, 179  
Kuwait, 39, 42, 109, 179  
Kyrgyzstan, 38, 39, 41, 42, 178

## L

Laos, 31, 41, 179  
Latin America, 2, 7, 17, 42–9, 87, 103,  
  118, 132, 141, 142, 145, 154,  
  180, 183, 193, 204, 220  
  *See also individual countries*  
Latvia, 53, 56, 62, 173, 178, 181, 182  
Lebanon, 22, 37, 38, 40, 41, 92, 174,  
  178  
*Le Monde*, 110

## 278 Index

Lesotho, 27, 29  
 Leveson Inquiry (UK), 61–2, 199  
 liberal model of media, 12, 22, 56, 60,  
 65, 69, 84, 204  
 Liberia, 28, 29, 109, 179  
*Liberty Times*, 121  
 Libya, 11, 22, 26, 27, 29  
 Liechtenstein, 49, 63, 178, 181  
*Life*, 169  
 Lithuania, 56, 58, 62, 174, 178, 182  
 Livestream, 155  
 London, 59, 92, 110, 120, 127, 130,  
 131, 163  
 Luxembourg, 49, 84, 178

## M

Macao, 179  
 Macedonia (FYR), 49, 56–7, 58, 186  
 Madagascar, 29, 178  
 magazines, 16, 26, 81, 88, 120, 133,  
 157–8, 169–70, 179  
*See also individual titles*  
 Malaysia, 32, 34, 38, 41, 92, 104, 110,  
 114, 178, 189  
 Malaysiakini, 110  
 Maldives, 37, 39, 41  
 Malawi, 24, 27, 179  
 Mali, 26, 27, 31, 109, 179  
 Malta, 59, 178  
 Marshall Isles, 179  
 Mashable, 104, 120  
 Mauritania, 27, 86  
 Mauritius, 22, 29, 31, 178  
 McLuhan, Marshall, 4, 81  
 Media Insight Project, 106  
 Mediterranean model of media, 22, 56,  
 60–1, 84, 205  
 Mexico, 44–6, 47, 48, 178, 183, 220  
 Middle East [and North Africa] (MENA),  
 2, 17, 103, 115, 141, 155, 177,  
 180, 182, 183, 193, 204, 220  
*See also individual countries*

Middle East News Agency, 105  
*Milliyet Gazetesi*, 121  
 Moldova, 49, 52, 56–7, 58, 178, 220  
 Monaco, 178  
 Mongolia, 37, 41, 42  
 Montenegro, 56–7, 58, 178, 220  
 MONTSAME, 105  
 Morocco, 27, 29, 30, 31, 109, 114,  
 178  
 Mozambique, 28, 29, 179  
 MSNBC, 137  
 Murdoch, Rupert 61, 83, 103  
 Myanmar, 31, 32, 37, 38–9, 42, 109,  
 178, 189, 202, 210, 220

## N

Namibia, 29, 179  
 National Public Radio, 104  
*National Report*, 186  
 NBC, 139  
   NBCNews, 104  
 NDTV, 115  
 Nepal, 31, 37, 41, 91, 179  
 Netherlands, 16, 22, 49, 50, 54, 58–9,  
 84, 92, 109, 127, 132, 174, 178,  
 216  
   Journalism Fund, 205–6  
*Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 129  
 New World Information and  
   Communication Order (NWICO),  
 82, 111, 112–18, 189  
 New York, 131, 151, 155  
*New York Daily Tribune*, 129  
*New York Herald*, 80, 129  
*New York Post*, 91  
*New York Times, The*, 67, 104, 110,  
 120, 168, 215  
 New Zealand, 66, 67–9, 84, 178  
 news, 75–6, 90, 91, 96, 100–2, 106–8,  
 139, 151, 161  
   flows and contra-flows, 102, 106–11,  
 113, 118–19

online, 108–11, 139  
 values, 96, 112–13  
 news agencies, 4, 80, 102, 104–5, 110,  
 131–2, 140–1  
*See also individual agencies*  
 News Corp, 4, 91–2, 103  
*News of the World*, 83  
 newspapers, 30, 35, 56, 61–2, 65, 80,  
 84, 103, 104, 120, 127, 131,  
 138–9, 143, 169, 172, 186, 189,  
 201  
*See also individual titles*  
*Newsweek*, 173  
 Nicaragua, 47, 48–9  
 Niue, 179  
 Niger, 28, 31  
 Nigeria, 11, 25, 27, 28, 29, 30, 104,  
 114, 160, 178, 183, 189, 220  
 Non-Aligned News Agency Pool, 105  
 North America, 7, 11, 17, 22, 56, 58,  
 63–7, 70, 80, 103, 127, 128, 131,  
 140–1, 177, 180, 183, 193, 206  
 North Korea, 12, 16, 17, 31, 32, 38,  
 40–1, 42, 86, 109, 148, 157–8,  
 164  
 northern European model of media,  
 22, 56, 84, 204–5  
 Norway, 16, 22, 49, 50–1, 53, 58, 63,  
 84, 109, 169, 172, 178, 182, 216  
*Noticias Voz e Imagen de Oaxaca*, 45

## O

Obama, Barrack, 148, 188  
 Oceania, 7, 17, 67–70, 154, 180  
*see also individual countries*  
 Occupy movement. 154–5  
 Occupy New York City, 12, 148  
 Occupy Wall Street, 155  
 Oman, 35, 38, 39, 41, 179  
*Onion, The*, 104, 186  
 Organization of American States, 47  
 Osama bin Laden, 120, 147–8

## P

Pacific, 39, 69–70, 87, 90, 141, 180,  
 192, 196  
 Pacific journalism, 69–70  
 Pacific Way, 69–70  
 Pakistan, 36, 37, 39, 42, 86, 109, 114,  
 175, 179, 189, 220  
 Palau, 178  
 Palestine, 36, 37, 38, 41, 174, 179  
 Panama, 47, 48  
 Pan African News Agency, 105  
 Papua New Guinea, 67–8, 178  
 parachute journalism, 142–3, 145  
 Paraguay, 49, 100  
 Paris, 57, 127, 131, 132  
*Paris Herald*, 80  
*Paris-Match*, 169  
*People's Daily*, 121  
 Peru 47, 48, 179  
 Philippines, 34, 36, 37, 38, 39, 42,  
 74, 104, 122, 178, 189, 202,  
 204  
 Philippines News Agency, 105  
*Phnom Pen Post*, 41  
 photographers *See* camera operators  
*Picture Post*, 169  
 Poland, 22, 50, 56, 59, 61, 174, 178,  
 189, 204, 210  
 Portugal, 22, 50, 55, 59, 174, 178,  
 196, 216  
 post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD),  
 135–6  
 press freedom, 109–10  
 public service broadcasting (PSB), 65,  
 82, 84, 118  
 organizations: ABC(Aus), 84, 196;  
 British Broadcasting Corporation  
 (BBC), 12, 13, 79, 82, 84, 102,  
 103, 104, 110, 118, 120, 133,  
 140, 148, 152, 163, 189, 196,  
 219; RAI, 83  
 public sphere, 76, 162  
 Puerto Rico, 178

## 280 Index

- Pulitzer, Joseph, 16, 190, 196  
 Pulitzer Prizes, 16, 219  
 Putin, Vladimir, 6, 59
- Q**  
 Qatar, 35, 38, 41, 42, 81, 92, 104, 179
- R**  
 radio, 13, 30, 79, 103, 104, 153, 200, 201  
*See also individual stations*  
 Radio France International, 103  
 Radio Free Europe, 59  
 Reporters without Borders (RWB), 13, 18, 20, 22, 71, 109, 204  
 Reuters, 4, 11, 102, 103, 104, 131, 132, 140, 141, 150  
 RIA Novosti (Sputnik International), 103, 187  
 Romania, 52, 56, 174, 178, 205  
 RT, 11, 59, 115, 187, 196  
 Russia, 6, 22, 49, 50, 52, 57, 58, 59, 60, 62, 109, 119, 132, 134, 178, 187, 189, 204, 205, 210  
 Rwanda, 2, 22, 25, 27, 28, 29, 134, 138, 179
- S**  
 St Lucia, 178  
 Saint Pierre and Miquelon, 63, 65  
 St Vincent, 178  
 Salam Pax, 151–2  
 São Tomé and Príncipe, 22  
 San Marino, 63  
 Saudi Arabia, 22, 31, 37–8, 39, 41, 42, 92, 114, 121, 172  
 Sen, Amartya, 81–2  
 Senegal, 29, 109, 179  
 Serbia, 50, 56, 58, 173, 178, 210  
 Seychelles, 27, 31  
 Sierra Leone, 24, 25, 28, 29, 179, 202  
 Singapore, 32, 34, 40, 41, 42, 81, 110, 119, 178, 193, 204  
 Sky/Star, 102  
 Slovakia, 56, 58, 173, 174, 178  
 Slovenia, 50, 178  
 social media, 2, 11–12, 13, 93, 99, 100–1, 104, 108, 110, 120, 122–3, 150–1, 155, 157, 163, 168, 170 185–6, 187, 200, 201, 203, 204  
 sites: Boing Boing 120; Facebook, 13, 108, 120, 122, 157, 200, 205; Gizmo 104; Instagram 1 57; Reddit, 122; Storify, 155; Twitter, 13, 67, 104, 120, 122, 155, 157, 158; WeChat 200; Weibo, 200; YouTube, 93  
 Society of Professional Journalists, 218  
 Somalia, 11, 22, 25, 26, 29, 74, 179  
 South Africa, 9, 19, 23, 24, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 75, 105, 174, 178, 189, 204, 220  
 South Korea, 12, 32, 35, 41, 42, 101, 109, 148, 158–60, 179, 189, 204  
 South Sudan, 11, 25, 26, 28, 29, 179  
 Soviet Union (USSR), 7, 58, 75, 113, 114, 184  
 Spain, 22, 50, 55, 58, 62, 84, 174, 178, 202, 205, 216  
 Sri Lanka, 36, 37, 38, 39, 41, 42, 178, 220  
*Stern*, 169  
*Straits Times*, 119  
*Storm Lake Times*, 21  
 Sudan, 22, 24, 27, 29, 109, 132, 179  
*Sun, The*, 61, 215  
 Suriname, 47, 48, 178  
 Swaziland, 22, 24, 27, 29, 30, 179  
 Sweden, 22, 49, 50–1, 53, 56, 83, 84, 109, 169, 174, 178, 183, 187, 189, 193, 216



- Switzerland, 22, 49, 50, 54, 109, 132, 178, 205, 216
- Syria, 11, 12, 16, 31, 32, 36, 37, 85, 109, 114, 135, 156, 219
- Syrian Arab Television and Radio Broadcasting, 196
- T**
- Taiwan, 31, 32, 42, 104, 121, 178, 189, 193, 213
- Tajikistan, 36, 39, 40, 41, 178, 181
- Tanzania, 24, 27, 29, 91, 174, 178
- TASS, 79, 103
- TechCrunch, 104
- telegraphic cable, 80, 128, 131, 132
- telephone, 152  
mobile, 104, 122, 157, 158, 161
- TeleSUR, 117–18
- television, 13, 30, 62, 65, 92, 95, 103, 104, 107–8, 110, 115–16, 117–18, 120, 200, 201  
*See also individual broadcasters*
- Thailand 19, 22, 34, 37, 39, 104, 178, 189
- theory, 9, 73–96  
and practice, 74–7  
types: liberal 77–83, 84; normative 77–83, 85–90; non-normative 90–1; pluralist 84–5; social network 93–4
- Time*, 104, 120  
Time Inc., 103
- Times*, *The*, 91, 110, 128–9
- Times of India*, 103, 121
- Timor-Leste, 31, 39, 42
- TMZ, 104
- Tonga, 109
- Togo, 28, 29, 179
- transnational journalism, 91–2
- Trinidad and Tobago, 47, 178
- Trump, Donald, 6, 65, 67, 186, 218
- Tunisia, 28, 29, 31, 109, 178
- Turkey, 2, 16, 35, 36, 37, 38, 40, 41, 121, 132, 140–1, 169, 179, 183, 187, 210, 219
- Turkmenistan, 16, 31, 32, 37, 38, 41, 42, 109
- Tuvalu, 90
- U**
- Uganda, 27, 28, 29, 172, 178
- Ukraine, 178, 189, 219, 220
- United Arab Emirates (UAE), 32, 35, 38, 39, 41, 42, 92, 104, 179  
*United Daily News*, 121
- United Kingdom (UK), 4, 5, 10, 16, 22, 53, 56, 58, 59, 60, 61–2, 80, 82–3, 84, 109, 110, 114, 122, 127, 132, 139, 144, 154, 162, 169, 172, 178, 187, 190, 193, 194, 201, 202, 204, 216, 219
- United Nations (UN), 1, 7, 13–14, 17, 18, 22, 31, 49, 57, 71, 205  
Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), 12, 20, 26–7, 30, 35, 41, 46, 71, 104–6, 111, 113, 114, 115, 176, 177, 182, 192–4  
Refugee agency, 2
- United States, 2, 4, 5, 7, 10, 13, 16, 22, 26, 63, 64–7, 80, 82–3, 84, 92, 100, 102, 107–8, 109, 110, 114, 115, 127, 129, 132, 133, 135, 139, 140, 142, 151, 152–3, 154, 169, 172, 174, 178, 185–6, 187, 189, 192, 193, 196–7, 199, 200, 203, 204, 206, 212–13, 214, 216  
Department of Labor, 169, 177, 181, 182  
First Amendment, 64, 80–1, 100  
universities, 5, 194–99, 204  
Columbia, 190–1, 196  
Oxford, 78

## 282 Index

- UPI, 103, 132  
 Uruguay, 49  
*USA Today*, 103  
 user-generated content, 120, 148, 149,  
 151, 162–4  
   projects: BBC UGC Hub, 163;  
   CNN iReport, 12, 148, 161–2;  
   Guardian Witness, 162  
 Uzbekistan, 31, 37, 38, 40, 41, 42
- V**
- Vatican City State, 63  
 Venezuela, 46, 47, 48, 178, 204, 219  
 Vietnam, 31, 37, 38, 39, 41, 42, 108,  
 109, 179  
 Voice of America, 59, 103  
 Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran,  
 103  
 Voice of Russia, 103
- W**
- Wall Street Journal*, 103, 104, 141  
*Wall Street Journal Asia*, 92  
 war 128–38, 145  
   wars: Afghanistan 136; American  
   civil 130; Balkan, 134; Cold,  
   133–4, 139–40, 145–6; Crimean,  
   130; First World War, 136, 187;  
   French and Indian, 128; Gulf,  
   134, 213; Iraq, 136, 137, 151–2;  
   Kosovo, 151; Mexican, 131; San  
   Salvador civil, 135; Second World  
   War. 11, 102, 133; Seven Years,  
   128; Spanish American, 132;  
   Vietnam, 11, 134  
 war reporting, 128–38, 145  
   war blogs, 151–3  
 Washington, DC, 92, 96, 125  
*Washington Post, The*, 2, 67, 103,  
 104–6, 110, 120  
 Western Sahara, 31  
 wire services *See* news agencies  
 Wolff, 4, 131–2  
 women in journalism, 129–30, 170,  
 171–84, 189  
 Women Journalists Without Chains,  
 175  
 World Association of Newspapers and  
 News Publishers (WAN-IFRA),  
 27, 28, 169  
 World Bank, 114  
 World Trade Organization (WTO), 78,  
 114, 154, 211  
 World Wide Web 4, 13. 100–1, 151,  
 161, 201  
 Worlds of Journalism (WOJ), 19, 21,  
 23, 32, 43, 50, 63, 67–8, 91, 173,  
 177, 182
- X**
- Xinua, 79, 103, 141, 143–4
- Y**
- Yahoo!, 121  
 Yahoo! News, 120  
 Yemen, 11, 31, 37, 39–40, 42, 175,  
 179  
*Yomiuru Shimbun*, 103  
 Yugoslavia, 11, 114, 138
- Z**
- Zambia, 27, 29, 30, 174, 179, 196  
 Zimbabwe, 27, 28, 29, 86, 143, 179,  
 198  
 Zougla, 121