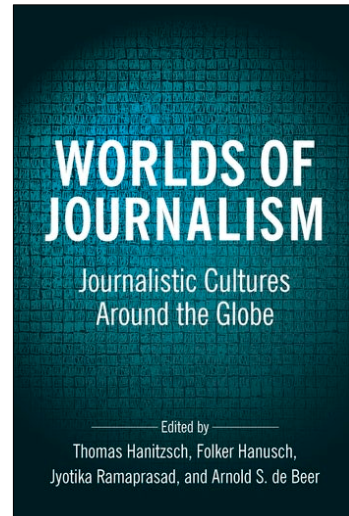


Thomas Hanitzsch, Folker Hanusch, Jyotika Ramaprasad, and Arnold S. de Beer (Eds.), **Worlds of Journalism: Journalism Cultures Around the Globe**, New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2019, 448 pp., \$105.00 (hardcover), \$35.00 (paperback).

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Cross-country comparison in journalism studies is not a new endeavor. Rather, scholarly interest in comparing press systems and models of practice across contexts is nearly as old as the study of journalism itself, dating back to early normative theories and taking shape with seminal works like the *Four Theories of the Press* (Siebert, Siebert, Peterson, Peterson, and Schramm, 1956). Building on more recent conversations facilitated by Hallin and Mancini (2004, 2011) and Clifford Christians and colleagues (2009), which center on institutional-level cross-national difference, the Worlds of Journalism Study (WJS) stands out for its attention paid to the professional characteristics and perceptions of individual journalists. The study's eponymous publication, **Worlds of Journalism: Journalistic Cultures Around the Globe**, provides a tactfully coherent discussion of its findings, drawing on an extensive amount of data to question normative expectations of journalism culture and highlight rich differences in perspectives from around the world.



The structure of the book reflects the authors' careful concentration on clear presentation of what could otherwise be an unwieldy amount of information. Resulting from survey data of more than 27,500 journalists from 67 countries, the findings are broadly organized into extrinsic and intrinsic aspects of journalism culture. Following an overview of the project's theoretical orientation and methodology in chapters 1–4, chapters 5 and 6 adopt a hierarchy-of-influences approach to examine the extrinsic aspects, discussing perceived influences on news work and editorial autonomy. Chapters 7–10 then turn to intrinsic aspects of journalism culture, drawing firmly on the central theoretical argument that journalism is a social institution which is discursively (re)created, to examine how journalists perceive their role in society, ethical considerations, trust in public institutions, and changes in news work over time. Based on these findings, the book closes by proposing a new typology of four kinds of journalism cultures around the world, which Thomas Hanitzsch and associates label as monitorial, advocative, developmental, and collaborative.

Central to the development of this typology, the theoretical underpinnings of the book are part of its novelty. Acknowledging the importance of conceptual clarity and history of Western hegemony in comparative journalism work, Hanitzsch and colleagues largely avoid the trap of normativity by casting journalism as a discursive social institution. By characterizing journalism as an institution in which individuals are socialized, the inquiry allows for identity formation with relation to specific cultural and sociopolitical contexts. Taking a discursive perspective further de-essentializes the institution of journalism and instead frames journalism as space that is continually negotiated, allowing for a multiplicity of responses and perspectives that may otherwise go unacknowledged for appearing outside Western normative bounds. As

such, this theoretical approach serves as a model lens for those intending to do cross-national comparative research which embraces diversity and promotes a pluralist perspective.

In addition to its unique conceptual contributions, the book also serves as a methodological landmark in journalism studies. Not a challenge to be envied, the book coordinates a collaboration of scholars from 67 countries with principle investigators from each of the nations represented by the findings. The book's authors use a theoretically-driven approach to justify cross-national examination of journalism as a discursive social institution and the use of the nation state as a unit of analysis. In an effort to address equivalency while maintaining methodological rigor, the project relies on a collaboratively-designed survey with questionnaires translated into local languages, as needed, and priority given to achieving functional equivalence over literal translation. This decision, along with the decision to allow context-specific sampling strategies, highlights the methodological concessions that often must be made in cross-national research if one wishes to conduct comparative inquiries that include and are representative of truly diverse cultural contexts. It is a decision that, given the magnitude and posited goals of the project, is both bold and necessary.

It is true that a project's groundbreaking methodological and theoretical contributions can at times be paled in the absence of interesting findings. Fortunately, Hanitzsch and colleagues do not contend with this issue. Using empirical data gleaned from the study, the authors propose four types of journalism cultures which they summarize based on their respective key features and situate vis-à-vis enabling and constraining opportunity structures. The four models—monitorial, advocative, developmental, and collaborative—provide several interesting takeaways. First, though the findings do suggest the diffusion of Western journalism ideals across the globe, they confirm other studies which demonstrate that countries develop particular journalism cultures in response to their unique sociopolitical contexts. Second, the United States emerges as an outlier by many measures of journalism culture in Western democracies, calling into question the U.S.-centric nature of many journalism studies research endeavors. These findings together highlight perils of the problematic tendency to hold non-Western nations to Western normative ideals of journalism, generally, and to American journalism, in particular.

Like any research production, several notable limitations constrain these findings. In particular, this study illuminates information about perceived influence, but cannot lay claim to actual influences on news work or journalism culture. The project necessarily surrenders this authority by way of its theoretical and methodological approach. Further, this inquiry has much to say about influences, as journalists are able to conceive of and articulate them, but does not approach meaning or explanation of influences in the way a more qualitative study may be better suited to address. These are questions that the authors acknowledge but, understandably, do not pursue.

In this work, the authors confront the challenging task of synthesizing and comparing many thousands of responses and years of data collection across very diverse places. As such, it makes a seemingly impossible task possible. Where limitations exist, the authors justify their decisions out of methodological necessity or in an effort to respond to real cross-cultural difference, and these decisions create space for valuable follow-up research. As the WJS enters its third phase, this book represents an

exciting intellectual turn in comparative journalism studies as a field that is increasingly collaborative and on the forefront of de-essentializing a Western normative understanding of news production.

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