

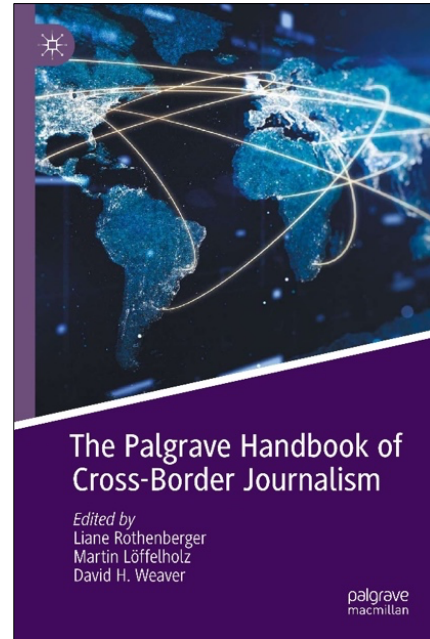
Liane Rothenberger, Martin Löffelholz, David H. Weaver (Eds.), **The Palgrave Handbook of Cross-Border Journalism**, Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2023, 618 pp., \$249.99 (hardcover).

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Is competition always the dominant force in this hyperconnected world, or has the nature of journalism evolved beyond the lone pursuit of exclusive stories? While journalism has long been associated with fierce competition, collaboration has historically played a crucial role in major news coverage. In 1846, six American newspapers, recognizing the limitations of working independently, pooled their resources to report on the Mexican border conflict—an initiative that ultimately led to the formation of the Associated Press (Sambrook, 2018; Stonbely, 2017). In today's media landscape, the rapid advancement of digital technologies has not only facilitated but also necessitated new forms of cross-border journalism (CBJ), reshaping how news organizations operate and engage with global audiences.

The 2016 Panama Papers investigation is a pioneer in demonstrating the power of collaborative journalism in exposing complex global issues. Beyond the high-profile success of the Panama Papers, CBJ has gained traction as a necessary approach to tackling transnational issues, from environmental crises and corruption to human right violations and corporate misconduct. Traditional investigative journalism often struggles with resource limitations, political pressures, and jurisdictional constraints, making cross-border collaboration an effective solution. By sharing expertise, data, and investigative leads, journalists can overcome barriers that would be insurmountable for a single newsroom. However, CBJ is not without its challenges of trust, editorial independence, data security, and legal difference. Trust is crucial, as collaboration relies on safety and established relationships, which can take years to build (Alfter, 2018; Sambrook, 2016). Despite these hurdles, the increasing prevalence of CBJ signals a shift in journalism's structural dynamics, where collective action is increasingly seen as a means to enhance public accountability and produce impactful reporting.

These challenges, among others, are widely discussed in CBJ literature, including in the edited volume under review, **The Palgrave Handbook of Cross-Border Journalism**, edited by Liane Rothenberger, Martin Löffelholz, and David H. Weaver. This book presents diverse perspectives from multiple authors, highlighting both practical and theoretical debates on cross-border collaboration. One of the key contributions, for example, explores the Western-dominated framework of collaborative journalism, arguing that existing institutions and technologies reinforce dependency and limit participation from marginalized journalists and researchers. Drawing from postcolonial theory, this chapter proposes alternative models of collaboration that move beyond the control of major Western institutions. Other chapters in the book engage with more conventional CBJ concerns, such as trust, editorial independence,



and digital security, offering a well-rounded examination of the field. By bringing together these varied viewpoints, the book not only reflects the evolving landscape of CBJ but also challenges existing power structures in the global media ecosystem.

The edited volume offers valuable insights into the study of CBJ: collaborative practices among journalists, news organizations, and, in some cases, nonjournalist partners in covering public issues that transcend national boundaries. Reflecting the spirit of CBJ, the book is compiled by 66 contributors from 22 countries across all continents, including media practitioners, independent researchers, PhD candidates, and university professors. They produced a total of 38 chapters organized into 6 parts.

Part 1 of this book focuses on the contributors' efforts to conceptualize and analyze CBJ practices. It begins with a discussion of the history of CBJ, viewed through the lens of international movements that have spurred the emergence of transnational media spaces and public spheres in the European context. This historical overview is followed by an attempt to conceptualize CBJ, which entails at least four elements in cross-border reporting, including the involvement of journalists from different countries collaborating to research a shared theme or story (Alfter, 2016). The collaboration, which requires high technological advancement, raises the question: Is the phenomenon of cross-border journalism universal, or is it emerging primarily in highly developed countries, especially in Europe and North America?

The question is addressed in accordance with the wave of studies on de-Westernization across various social and humanistic fields, including journalism studies. Pauline Gidget Estella, in chapter 5, argues that there are differing perspectives on global journalism between academics and journalists from the Western and Global North regions compared to those from outside these areas. There are challenges to enhancing capacity so that those from beyond the Western mainstream can work on an equal footing. Other challenges are discussed in the final chapter of this section, including organizational, conceptual, and methodological challenges, as explored by Thomas Hanitzsch, Corinna Lauerer, and Nina Steindl in chapter 6.

Part 2 of this book delves into the actors and processes involved in CBJ to grasp its global variations and the resulting adaptability challenges. It is crucial to further explore organizational dynamics and technological adaptations across diverse global contexts, which will highlight the necessary journalistic skills enhancements for higher-quality reporting. Additionally, this section underscores the need to question conventional norms like balance and objectivity in CBJ research, advocating for alternative approaches to broaden perspectives, particularly in addressing complex global issues such as freedom of expression and surveillance technology.

Part 3 explores the content of news produced through CBJ methods, recognizing its significance in the face of internationally minded challenges shaped by globalization and digitalization. The framing of topics and narratives in CBJ is crucial to examine, as they influence news values in both national and international contexts. This section critically examines how CBJ content is affected by dependencies on data leaks, technological platforms, and funding, potentially leading to repetitive themes and media blind spots, exacerbated by the ease of spreading fake news in the posttruth era.

Part 4 addresses the complexity of audiences in CBJ, acknowledging their diverse nature, ranging from local to transnational groups with varying information needs. While transnational journalism does not aim for a uniform global audience, CBJ reporting can offer alternative perspectives and knowledge to local audiences, helping them understand issues that may seem distant but impact on their daily lives, such as conflicts in oil-producing countries affecting household consumption levels.

Parts 5 and 6 explore CBJ practices across regions and potential opportunities for the journalism community in the future. Discussing the use of AI trends in CBJ practices, contributors suggest that increased AI use will lead to better journalism quality, enhanced collaboration, improved investigative capacity, and expanded cross-border reporting reach. Furthermore, considering the economic and educational structures of CBJ's future involves examining content production costs, extensive travel, research needs, and correspondent network maintenance. To nurture collaborative CBJ skills among students, journalism education institutions must draw insights from existing experiences, and sustainable funding schemes and curriculum enhancements will be necessary.

In conclusion, this book serves as a comprehensive exploration of the complexities, challenges, and opportunities within the realm of CBJ. Through its six parts, the book meticulously examines various facets of CBJ, from its historical roots and conceptual frameworks to its contemporary practices and future prospects. By delving into the actors, processes, content, and audience dynamics of CBJ, this handbook offers a nuanced understanding of its global variations and adaptability challenges, highlighting the necessity of questioning conventional norms and embracing alternative approaches to address complex global issues effectively.

Therefore, this book is essential reading for journalists, media scholars, policy makers, and practitioners in the field of collaborative and investigative journalism. It provides valuable insights for academics and students studying journalism, media studies, and communication, offering theoretical and empirical perspectives on CBJ's evolving role in the digital era. Additionally, newsroom leaders and media professionals will find this book instrumental in understanding how CBJ can be integrated into modern journalistic practices to enhance cross-border collaboration, audience engagement, and impactful storytelling.

## References

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