Thomas Hanitzsch, Folker Hanusch, Jyotika Ramaprasad, A. S. De Beer, eds. *Worlds of Journalism: Journalistic Cultures around the Globe.* New York: 2019. 448 pp. $35.00, paper, ISBN 978-0-231-54663-8.

Reviewed by Mark Oromaner (Independent Scholar)

Published on Jhistory (October, 2020)

Commissioned by Robert A. Rabe

Worlds of Journalism: Journalistic Cultures around the Globe is an exemplar of large-scale, long-term, comparative survey research. More specifically, the book's editors and contributors successfully detail "how journalists in countries around the globe experience their profession in different ways, even as they retain a shared commitment to some basic, common, professional norms and practices" (p. 1). It therefore should be required reading for all scholars, practitioners, and graduate students of journalism. Readers will gain a better understanding of the diversity among journalists throughout the world, and will find enough data to explore their own hypotheses.

Any study of journalists must first define who qualifies as a journalist. Is the title limited to hard-news reporters? Are bloggers journalists? Are producers at media corporations and TV programs journalists? The editors take an operational approach and state that "journalists are individuals who contribute journalistic content to outlets as either employees or freelancers and who earn at least half their income from their work for news organizations" (pp. 9-10). In terms of the use of the nation-state as the case unit, they argue that "the forces of globalization notwithstanding, journalistic culture is still articulated and enacted within national spaces" (pp. 10–11). This is probably truer today than it was a few years ago when the survey was conducted and the forces of globalization were stronger.

Data collection and a description of the journalists who responded to the survey are presented in chapters 3 and 4. Although journalists were identified by field workers covering seven worldwide regions, the sampling prioritized regions that had been neglected in prior research—that is, the global South—in an attempt to balance the overrepresentation of European and North American nations. However, in general, the imbalance remained. Chapter 2 is highly recommended for readers who wish to understand the immense challenges and limitations of conducting cross-cultural studies. For example, think of the problem of ensuring that the questions have the same meaning in different cultures, or the posing of political or religious questions in a number of cultures. The survey instrument was administered through one or more of the following methods: face-to-face, phone, e-mail, online. In over half of the nations a response rate of 50 percent was achieved, while in approximately one-fifth of the nations the response rate was lower than 30 percent (table 3.1, pp. 55-57).

There is no room here to analyze the regional or national variations among journalists. However, the following statistics describe the sample: 57 percent male; mean age of 38; mean years of expe-

rience, 13; college degree, 56 percent; graduate degree, 29 percent; 61 percent specialized in journalism/communications at college; 62 percent identified as generalists and 23 percent as hard-news beat journalists; 47 percent were members of a professional association; 57 percent were rank and file; 80 percent worked full-time; and 50 percent worked in print, 23 percent in television, 17 percent in radio, and 16 percent online (table 4.1, pp. 73–74). Finally, although just under half of the journalists were union members, "it appears that union membership is declining around the world" (p. 74). I would suggest that this phenomenon is not unique to journalism and is related to technological changes and to the influence of neoliberal politics such as deregulation.

A comprehensive presentation of a large-scale (more than 27,500 journalists), multinational (67 countries), collaborative project such of this requires more than a traditional book structure. The editors prefer the term "edited research monograph." Although this monograph is composed of 434 pages, the text comprises only 307 pages. There are almost 50 pages of additional tables. The text can be thought of as comprising two sections: the first (chapters 1-3) provides the conceptual roadmap and methodological framework for the data, and the second (chapters 4-11) provides the results and interpretations. Given the wealth of data and the nuanced discussion of methodology and theory, it would be valuable for interested readers who are not research-oriented if a less technical version of this monograph were available.

The word "worlds" in the title is meant to challenge the assumption of a universal understanding of how journalism is practiced. The cultures of journalism must be understood within the context of the nation-state. For too long Western scholars, especially Americans, have taken an ethnocentric position and assumed that journalism as practiced in the West is the norm and the standard by which journalism as practiced in other societies is deemed defective or incomplete in some ways. Related to this is the fact that English-language scholarship, particularly American, occupies a commanding position in communications and media research, and in associated institutions. "Consequently," the editors write, "journalistic cultures in some, mostly developing and transitional, countries are sometimes portrayed as needing to 'catch up' with the norms and practices celebrated by the West" (p. 6). In addition, the political and economic conditions in the United States and the cultural history and mythology of American journalism "make the American media system very different, if not exceptional, when compared with media systems in other Western nations" (pp. 6–7). The book makes clear that one form of journalism is not better than another; they are merely different from one another.

Each journalistic culture contains flexible resources that journalists use as they make their work meaningful to themselves and to external stakeholders. An example would be the conception of their role as neutral disseminator, watchdog, or change agent. It is this ongoing process of fashioning a self-identity that makes for the existence of "worlds of journalism." These cultures may exist as subcultures, organizational cultures, or, as in this study, national cultures (see p. 34). On their understanding of the nature of journalistic cultures, the authors of chapter 2 identified five dimensions through which each culture is articulated and enacted. Two of these dimensions are perceived influences and editorial autonomy (extrinsic), and the remaining three are roles, ethics, and trust (intrinsic) (fig. 2.1, pp. 36-39). Relevant data concerning these dimensions form the core of the analysis and are presented in chapters 5–9. Ultimately, the journalistic cultures function within the broader political, socioeconomic, and value systems of the societies in which they exist.

The first extrinsic dimension, perceived influences, refers to subjective perceptions about external forces that shape the news production process.

Five major areas of influence were identified: economic, political, organizational, procedural, and personal networks (chapter 5). While perceived influences differed across cultures, procedural and organizational influences are seen as the most significant. However, the editors are cautious about any suggestion that the economic and political forces are not significant. For instance, these may be mediated through management and transformed into organizational and procedural influences. The second extrinsic dimension, perceived editorial autonomy, needs little discussion here (see chapter 6). Journalists throughout the world express support "for editorial autonomy as a protection against state and other forms of outside intrusion or interference in the editorial news-making process" (p. 133). The major exceptions come from journalists in a small number of closed, authoritarian political systems, for example, China, Qatar, Tanzania. The two Koreas are interesting cases. North Korea is not represented in the survey, and South Korea is the fifth-lowest in terms of perceived autonomy. I wonder if, in a current survey, South Korea would move up in this ranking. Also, what impact have populists and authoritarian leaders in the United States and Europe had on perceptions about autonomy in those countries? It is good to read that the next wave of the study is in the planning stages.

The first intrinsic dimension, roles, is concerned with the ways in which journalists think about their societal roles. Although the monitorial role, reporting things as they are, is the most highly regarded by journalists worldwide, "even when confronted with similar challenges, journalists might think about their roles in ways that are situated within local, historical contexts" (p. 162). While the monitorial role has strong support in Western societies, the collaborative role, to help authorities bring about harmony and stability, is the least likely to be supported. This role is most likely to be valued in less developed and changing non-Western societies (chapter 7). The second intrinsic dimension, ethics, refers to a situation in which the actions could have potential harmful effects, for example, the public's right to know versus privacy, payment for confidential information, the public's right to know versus national security (chapter 8). Absolutism, adherence to ethical codes at all times, receives the greatest support, and subjectivism, the setting aside of ethics if extraordinary circumstances require it, the least support. In terms of cultural differences, in general, the United States, western Europe, and Australia showed the greatest support for absolutism, and countries of the Middle East and North Africa demonstrated the greatest support for subjectivism. The final intrinsic dimension is trust and concerns the expectations that institutions such as the government, the legislature, and the judiciary will meet expectations held by journalists (chapter 9). The erosion of trust in the US is a familiar topic; however, "the United States is a notable exception to the pattern of high levels of trust among developed nations" (p. 241). In terms of institutional trust, on a global basis more confidence is given to the judiciary, military, and police than to parliaments, governments, political parties, and politicians.

The authors of the penultimate chapter are concerned with the perceived impact of digitalization and the lack of a profitable business model on the work situation of journalists. These include cutbacks in editorial resources, increases in workloads, and greater emphasis on profit. This has often led to a "crisis in journalism" framework. While the perceived crisis is particularly prominent in the West and developed countries, at present, it is less prominent in other parts of the world. Another finding that reinforces the importance of "worlds" rather than "world" of journalism is that although globally the greatest perceived changes of influence on journalism were social media and user-generated content such as blogs (table 10.1, p. 265), "journalists in many African countries and in South Asia ... did not indicate as large an increase in the influence of these technologies as their Western counterparts" (p. 268). In the final chapter, "Modeling Journalistic Cultures,"

Folker Hanusch and Thomas Hanitzsch review broad similarities and differences found among journalistic cultures and propose four models of such cultures: monitorial, advocative, development, and collaborative (table 11.1, p. 296). These are ideal types; "in reality, a country may fit a given model more or less perfectly" (p. 304). Still, these and other typologies will aid in the systematic mapping of comparative data about journalistic cultures.

Worlds of Journalism presents a sophisticated report on journalistic cultures. The contributors have done an excellent job of analyzing a massive amount of survey data and have stayed quite close to the data in these analyses. Whether they were involved with data collection, presentation, or interpretation, they always presented limitations of their work, and frequently presented ideas for future work. My only regret is that the authors have not written a less data-packed and less technical book for undergraduate students and for nontechnical readers interested in learning about the diverse "worlds of journalism."

If there is additional discussion of this review, you may access it through the network, at
https://networks.h-net.org/jhistory

Citation: Mark Oromaner. Review of Hanitzsch, Thomas; Hanusch, Folker; Ramaprasad, Jyotika; De Beer, A. S., eds. *Worlds of Journalism: Journalistic Cultures around the Globe.* Jhistory, H-Net Reviews. October, 2020.

URL: https://www.h-net.org/reviews/showrev.php?id=55340