

## **Journalism Research and Journalism Education: Setting an International Agenda**

**World Journalism Education Congress  
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**By Nicola Jones, Report Writer  
University of KwaZulu-Natal, Zimbabwe**

**With Herman Wasserman, Syndicate Expert  
Rhodes University, South Africa**

**With Arnold S. de Beer, Syndicate Chair/Moderator  
University of Stellenbosch, South Africa**

**And \*Syndicate Participants (below)**

This syndicate focused on three central questions, formulated after initial discussion:

1. What topics, especially those of importance to countries outside the Anglo-American axis, are still under-researched in international journalism education scholarship?
2. What can be done to make journalism education research more global in its reach – or, should and can journalism education research be de-Westernized?
3. What research methods are best suited to broaden the field of journalism education research internationally?

### **Day 1 discussion:**

Dane S. Claussen, Point Park University, USA, pointed out that there are also under-researched topics in the Anglo-American axis – for example, little on law, much on ethics.

Robert “Bob” White, St. Augustine University, Tanzania, asked how one internationalizes journalism research. He pointed out that the context in Africa is very different from America and European countries, and that there is comparatively very little research. Each region has a different stage of socio-economic development. Journalism in Africa is far more important than in the U.S. – it’s the “conscience” of Africa more than any other organization.

Herman Wasserman said that internationalization is not standardization and asked how one gets to hear the voices of Africa.

Bob raised the issue of it being problematic that little discussion is on-going in Africa.

Marko Milosavljevic, University of Ljubljana, commented that there is a lack of journalism education research on the national, regional and international level.

Dane's journal, AEJMC's *Journalism & Mass Communication Educator*, is working toward making journalism education research more international. For example, he has been actively seeking conference papers, as the problem is that he doesn't receive enough manuscripts from outside North America. One needs to be proactive as an editor. Previously not much attention was paid to internationalizing *Educator*.

Lynette Steenveld, Rhodes University, asked whether there is a sense that the periphery's experience is seen just as a periphery experience, and how one relates that to what is seen as a norm. In addition, what are the norms in those kinds of spheres? She concluded that when you are outside, you write "into" that space, and in some way you have to talk "into" that space.

Lee Becker, University of Georgia, USA, said Beate Josephi's book *Journalism Education in Countries with Limited Media Freedom* is an example that there is some openness to non-Western perspectives.

Jyotika Ramprasad, University of Miami, USA, stated journalism education research is also informed by journalism itself in respective countries. The question is, what is happening in journalism education, and how can it be internationalized? We need to try to identify the levels at which we conduct journalism education research and how they connect or overlap between countries. What kinds of journalism education research are being done, and which are in need of internationalizing?

Levi Obijiofor, University of Queensland, Australia, raised the question of collaborative research, and pointed out that the Australian Research Council places a great deal of emphasis on collaborative work.

Bob questioned what this research was about. He said research in an African context is neither cumulative nor collaborative – it goes off in all kinds of directions. It's also neither coherent nor couched in theoretical frameworks.

Lynette said the diffuseness of research coming out of Africa is a problem. We are still predominantly on the level of teaching institutions rather than research institutions. How do we move an institution from a teaching institution to a research institution, and what does that mean?

## **Day 2 discussion:**

### **It was agreed that there are three aspects to internationalization:**

1. Research itself – and the resultant topics
2. Publication issues – how to “internationalize” in order to get published in academic journals
3. Implications for journalism education

### **Research topics/questions worth pursuing:**

- The idea of a profession in crisis – with regard to social responsibility; print media vs. online; and a crisis in the profession were raised, together with mention of the internalization of issues such as literacy and training journalists to speak to a minority elite. Should researchers be helping to find the way?
- Journalism itself: Should it be taught as a profession or an academic subject?
- Defining journalism today is difficult. How do we follow industry changes in our education – and how does that trajectory of change differ in various regions of the world? (It was suggested that self-reflection would help journalism teachers to understand their own motives.)
- How do we sustain journalism education against the allure of public relations and marketing?
- Journalism as effecting democratic social change (or just commercialization?)
- How do we introduce diversity into journalism education in the developing world? How do we make journalism education indigenous and not import the liberal model from the U.S.?
- How do we train our students to use the power of their words to affect social change?
- Political function and role of journalism – how journalism education can contribute to democratic deepening, issues of cultural diversity and particular relations with civil society. How do we get civil society/ordinary people involved in the practice of democracy? How do we educate journalists to practice a type of journalism that enable that kind of social engagement? How do we engage with cultural diversity and enable students to practice a type of journalism that engages with that diversity?

- Afro-centricity: How are Africans represented in the media? The whole issue of post-colonial identity in journalism education.
- Publication: Peer reviewers impose paradigms on articles from Africa. There is a greater need for an awareness of conditions in the developing world, and a concurrent emphasis on under-researched topics from the developing world.
- Digital divide: Often indigenous people don't have access to the information others have. Added to this, access to publications/literature is difficult, as it can take up to an hour to download a journal page! How do these challenges prevent educators from African countries competing for research grants internationally?
- There is enormous variability between journalism education and the labor market in different parts of the world, raising the issue of adaptation and survival of journalism education institutions in response to changes in the labor market. Questions to be explored comparatively: how institutions have either linked to or separated from the labor market.
- Journalism programs need to be made more relevant to the media landscape – how should we be structuring our j-schools for the evolution that is taking place?
- A need for comparative studies to discern trends in regions with similarities.
- The selection and admission of students to journalism courses, and the criteria for their entry, was raised. How are such criteria influenced by changes in the industry and also by the socio-economic context in various countries? Who are our journalism students in terms of age, race and gender, and why are they studying journalism? Are they interested in democracy, sports, entertainment?
- We also need basic data on students' educational experiences and their impact on their careers, if any.
- And finally, how can journalism educators assist postgraduate students or returning “mature” students from the profession?

### **Issues that Journals and Journal Editors should address:**

- Educators should deal with the crisis – as a research topic find out how people are dealing with the crisis. Concentrate on under-researched topics.
- There is a lot of research to be conducted about what is going on right now, in the present – perhaps before trying to predict the future.
- Every issue should contain a section on journalism education.

**Possible suggestions for the next WJEC – to enable research into these topics:**

- Work session with journal editors.
- Create a reading list of international sources – the WJEC could establish a website or try to write a grant to establish a site for journalism education similar to the Communication Initiative’s website.

\*Syndicate participants: Levi Obijiofor; Francis Chikunkhuzeni, University of Malawi; Nicola Jones; Mark Hanna, Sheffield University; JanVirak, Charles University; Dane S. Claussen; Robert “Bob” White; Simphiwe Sesanti, University of Stellenbosch; Lynette Steenveld; Lee Becker; Gabriel Botma, University of Stellenbosch; Marko Milosavljevic; Monica Chibita, Makerere University; Aleyandra Wake, RMIT Melbourne; Jyotika Ramprasad; Bhekempile Sibanda, University of Fort Hare; Enoch Tanjong, University of Buea; Ben Huijskens, Windesheim University; Abiodun Salawu, University of Fort Hare.