

**WJEC Syndicate:
Journalism Research and Journalism Education: Setting an
international agenda**

**Syndicate leader: Herman Wasserman
Syndicate moderator: Arnold S. de Beer**

The topic of this syndicate follows directly on one of the recommendations (http://www.aejmc.org/_wjec/articles/eight_approaches.pdf) made by the journalism research syndicate at previous WJEC in Singapore. It was suggested that journalism educators can improve the state of journalism research by :

Identifying common journalism methodologies. For example, journalism research consists of more than content analyses and surveys. More research should focus on international collaborations to both explore additional research methods and to help join journalism researchers worldwide into a truly unified field.

To develop this recommendation further, and in particular to elaborate on its international dimension, this year's syndicate will focus on three central questions:

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

These questions derive not only from the recommendations arrived at by the members of the previous research syndicate in Singapore, but also the specific setting of this year's WJEC, in Africa. For journalism educators in Africa, or for those wishing to incorporate African perspectives in their teaching (for instance in courses on foreign reporting, global journalism or development journalism), achieving the balance between theory and practice is often even more complicated than for their counterparts in other parts of the journalism academy. Not only is the literature on journalism education dominated by perspectives from the Global North which do not always fit the conditions under which journalism is practiced in Africa, but African journalism as a research area is also marginal to the scholarly debates in the field. Consequently, journalism educators wanting to incorporate a focus on Africa in their teaching are at a double disadvantage – in teaching journalism skills suited to journalism in and about Africa as well as their own research into African journalism, they find themselves on the margins of the field. The same is true for other parts of the developing world that fall outside of the ambit of the dominant Anglo-American research centres.

How can international journalism research help to ameliorate this situation?

The syndicate will complement the planned meeting of journal editors to be chaired by Arnold S. de Beer. While the latter meeting will focus in general on issues around refereeing, electronic and open access to journals, databases etc., this syndicate will deal more specifically with the challenges and opportunities of international journalism research pose for the field of journalism education in and about Africa. The editors' meeting would ideally, if programme scheduling allows, follow directly after the panel in the same venue.

Suggested readings:

Loeffelholz, M. & Weaver, D. (eds.) 2007. *Global Journalism Research. Theories, methods, findings, future*. Oxford: Blackwell.
Thussu, D.K. (ed.) 2010. *Internationalizing Media Studies*. London: Routledge
Wasserman, H. 2009. Extending the theoretical cloth to make room for African experience: An interview with Francis Nyamnjoh. *Journalism Studies* 10(2):281-293

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