

ESSAY:

Journalism teachers building a global community.

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(http://rjr.ru.ac.za/rjrpdf/rjr_no30/JTeachers_get_int_act_together.pdf).

In an era of ever-escalating global connections, a degree of momentum has been building towards the international networking of journalism educators. This slow development has gained some impetus recently through the prominence of issues such as the worldwide-impact of the US financial crisis, the disruption of the Eyjafjallajokull volcano, trans-border threats to health, and climate change. Then of course there is the growing “mediatization” of many societies through the spread of the internet and its concurrent effects on traditional mass media. The staging of the second World Journalism Education Congress (WJEC) at Rhodes University, South Africa, July 5-7 2010, is one reflection of how globalization is affecting the journalism education sector, and this event in turn served to intensify a matrix of relationships amongst participating individuals and institutions. What then is the prognosis for further globalization of the journalism education sector?

To explore this issue, the terminology needs to be clarified. There are many views on defining “journalism”, and by extension the object of “*journalism* education”. Likewise there are debates about defining “education” and therefore the meaning of “*journalism education*”. This essay operates with a broad concept of “journalism” as meaning public-interest communications, and of “education” as designating the purposeful enhancing of knowledge and skill (and therefore a term that encompasses the narrower activity that is pointed to by the concept of “training”). The focus in what follows is particularly on *journalism educators* – meaning that category of people who teach with the aim of generating capacity to produce public-interest communications. Although many journalism educators are also journalism scholars, the two activities are not coterminous. Journalism scholarship can have a mission wider than the educator’s one of empowering journalistic practice. Scholarship may serve, for example, the purposes of policy formulation by politicians and media literacy development amongst audiences. Accordingly, not all journalism scholars see themselves as

journalism educators, even though the outcomes of scholarship are an essential part of journalism education. What this essay concerns itself is journalism education as a practice which brings scholarly output, along other knowledge and skill, to the task of directly increasing the intellectual and practical competencies of potential and existing journalistic practitioners.

On the basis of this scoping, it can be readily observed that global integration and impact has long been present in the institutions and practices of journalism education, although this has not generally been in a conscious or orchestrated fashion. Instead, there has primarily been an informal spread of norms in relation to what journalism is and to what is entailed in how the practice is best taught and learnt. There are some instances where this evolution has been pro-actively driven by what Ekatarina Ognianova calls “parachute professors” travelling from “centers” of journalism education to other parts of the world as part of what Ellen Hume dubs the “media missionaries”.¹ In many other cases, the process has been more recipient-driven – for example, by way of educators having learnt the ropes in the “centers”, acquiring textbooks from there, and/or working off role models from such localities. Either way, the point is that certain conceptions of journalism education have diffused (although not always being adopted) around the globe. For example, at least in the Western-influenced world, probably every journalism teacher in 2010 knows of the inverted pyramid style of writing. The same applies to ethics that favor journalistic source confidentiality. Such conventions are not “just there” as an automatically intrinsic element of journalism education. They have emerged from particular societies and histories, from whence they came to be disseminated across the world. To take another example, consider the general outlook codified already in 1956 in the “Four Theories of the Press” – libertarian, authoritarian, social responsibility and totalitarian.² This is a narrowly normative-centric way to teach journalism practice, and yet it still powerfully shadows journalism education across countless countries. Notwithstanding that political, economic and cultural realities underpin and constrain the normative realm of life, the ideal of the journalist as semi-autonomous agent motivated by truth-telling and the watchdog role, and working in a purely informational capacity, influences both teachers and students worldwide.

All this is about what Barbie Zelizer describes as the USA model constituting the “honorific gold standard for much journalism around the world”, and what Peter Golding long ago discerned as “the transfer of an ideology” in regard to media professionalism in the

¹ Ekatarina Ognianova “Farewell to Parachute Professors in East-Central Europe,” *Journalism and Mass Communication Educator*, (Spring 1995) 35-47. Ellen Hume, *The Media Missionaries: American Support for Journalism Excellence and Press Freedom Around the Globe*. (Miami: Knight Foundation. 2004)

<http://www.knightfdn.org/publications/mediamissionaries/MediaMissionaries.pdf>

² Fred Siebert, Theodore Peterson, and Wilbur Schramm, W, *Four Theories of the Press. The Authoritarian, Libertarian, Social Responsibility and Soviet Communist Concepts of What the Press Should Be and Do*. (Urbana IL: University of Illinois Press. 1956)

“Third World”.³ Nowadays, probably every journalism educator on the planet has made use of email and encountered some English-language teaching resources and traditions. All who have used the web have also probably drawn from specifically American practice (albeit that this is not homogenous). These observations are not a complaint about “Western imperialism”. Indeed, without dispersal from “centers” to “peripheries”, the world would not have a lot of benefits like current media technology. The ethic of source confidentiality is not such a bad export/import either, and likewise the normative ideal that journalism should aspire to public interest and democratic service despite the many pressures to the contrary. In addition, it is readily apparent that no one forces journalism teachers, for example, to visit the Poynter Institute website for a tip sheet on coaching. Worldwide, educators glean what information exists, and Poynter is a resource which can be easily adapted as needs be.

What all this amounts to is the observation that to the extent that globalization in journalism education entails predominant perspectives, these have largely acquired this status by historical default rather than by deliberate design. The response to this situation should not be for teachers on the “periphery” to resort to isolationism and/or the erection of barriers, nor for the “center” to arrogantly push for assimilation into its traditions. Rather, the challenge is to make manifest, and shared, the numerous unrecorded or little-known experiences which have value to contribute to the cause of better journalism education globally. This means that those educators who currently consume knowledge resources that are generated elsewhere should step forward to also generate materials that can enrich the whole. To illustrate this, everyone can acknowledge that outside of English-speaking circles, it is frustrating for many that numerous journalism education resources are presented in English only, with “First World” examples, and/or they cost too much for journalism teachers in developing countries. However, that reality has not stopped alternatives from being set up online, and in other languages. The Global Media Journal with its regional editions is one such instance.

Although there is a trend unfolding in scholarly work around “de-westernizing” media studies and journalism studies, there seems to be less progress however in regard to widening the understanding and practice of specifically journalism education. Instead we have what Bromley notes as the phenomenon of “the idea of professionalization through

³ Barbie Zelizer, Going Beyond Disciplinary Boundaries in the Future of Journalism Research “Journalism and the Academy,” in *Global Journalism Research: theories, methods, findings, future*. eds. Martin Loffelholz and David Weaver (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing 2008). 253-266. Peter Golding, “Media Professionalism in the Third World: The Transfer of an Ideology,” in *Mass Communication and Society*, (eds.) James Curran, Michael Gurevich, and Janet Woollacott (London: Arnold, 1977). 291-309. Barbie Zelizer, Going Beyond Disciplinary Boundaries in the Future of Journalism Research “Journalism and the Academy,” in *Global Journalism Research: theories, methods, findings, future*. eds. Martin Loffelholz and David Weaver (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing 2008). 253-266.

education – the global diffusion of the USA model”.⁴ For his part, Deuze observes an “amazing similarity of problems in journalism education in most areas around the world” and a professionalization of journalism education “on a worldwide scale” with regard to principles and standards as well as cross-national and global programs.⁵ Reference to these statements is not to suggest that journalism education is wholly homogenous in character or effect worldwide. Even in Europe, for example, there are significant national differences despite overarching trends such as the Bologna process, an increasing supply of education and the growing feminization of the student cohort.⁶ Instead the point being made here is about the complexity of an internationalized character of journalism education in terms of its very particular convergences even while there are divergences. It is within this whole, this essay argues, that everyone loses from a globalization that is uneven, and from knowledge flows that are mainly one-directional.

Perhaps the key reason why knowledge within, and about, global journalism education is less richly reflective than it could be, is the feeble coherence and standing of the sector internationally. By contrast, the newspaper industry has had a representative organ since 1948 in the shape of the World Association of Newspapers (WAN). Print technology and publisher interests created IFRA in 1961, merging with WAN last year to form an even more impactful association. Newspaper editors formed the World Editors Forum back in 1994, while the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) dates back to 1926, and was paralleled until the 1990s by the International Organization of Journalists. One year before the IFJ’s formation, the Fédération Internationale de la Presse Périodique (FIPP) was launched as an international association of magazine publishers. There is also the influential World Association of Community Radio (AMARC) with roots in 1983, and the World Broadcasting Unions (WBU) which commenced operations in 1992.

It can be readily granted that the media industry is not the only, nor even the ultimate, point of reference for journalism educators, and that instead the journalism-consuming (and, in part, producing) public needs to be the guiding beacon for journalism education. However, few educators would contest that the media is nevertheless an institution of central relevance to their practice both nationally and internationally. Ergo, the media industry ought to be matched by journalism education operating on a similar scale. One can note that the International Communications Association (ICA) has a Journalism Studies section, and that the International Association for Media and Communication

⁴ Michael Bromley, “Introduction,” in *European Journalism Education*, ed. Georgios Terzis (Bristol and Chicago: intellect, 2009). 25-34

⁵ Mark Deuze, “Journalism Education in an Era of Globalization” in *Global Journalism Research: theories, methods, findings, future*. eds. Martin Loffelholz and David Weaver (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing 2008). 267-281.

⁶ See Kaarle Nordenstreng, “Soul-searching at the Crossroads of European Journalism Education,” in *European Journalism Education*, ed. Georgios Terzis (Bristol and Chicago: intellect, 2009). 511-518

Research (IAMCR) has a Journalism Research and Education section that has its roots in the 1960s. Yet these are divisions within much broader formations, and even then each of them still spans a wide range of concerns rather than concentrating its energies especially on journalism education. Such forums are, in their nature, far from providing a dedicated representative of the world's journalism educators.

However, a strong case can be made that the distinctive contribution of journalism to international humanity needs to be singled out, and that there should also be recognition of the importance of educational value being added to this public communications practice. This is especially so within the contemporary environment of exponentially increasing information and entertainment. It follows then that the educational empowerment of journalists is a critical part of the wider media value-chain. Accordingly, even though (as Josephi reminds us)⁷, journalism education is not the only route to journalistic practice, those who provide this service merit being active as a vital sector in their own right. While journalism educators have much to gain from intersecting with development communications, political communications, advertising, etc. at international conferences, there is at least equivalent value to be grown through cultivating relationships amongst immediate peers.

There have been some efforts to build a mechanism for this kind of networking on a global scale. Back in 1999, several institutions of journalism education worked with UNESCO to set up JourNet as a global network of journalism schools drawing on prominent educators like Kaarle Nordenstreng and Frank Morgan. They still exist but with capacity constraints, and their last major event was in 2003. In 2007, a separate initiative brought together journalism teachers from around the world to deliberate specifically about the activities that define them. This was the first WJEC, held in Singapore in July 2007.⁸ This unique gathering also saw the development of a Statement of Principles deemed to apply to journalism education worldwide⁹, and the launch by UNESCO of a model curriculum for journalism courses that was intended to be an adaptable resource for educators in any context¹⁰. The follow-up WJEC in South Africa 2010, took inspiration from all this, but also from concern over the fact that only a handful of African educators were able to attend the Singapore gathering. Hence, the volunteering by Rhodes University to host a follow-up in South Africa was to provide a destination that would facilitate African participation.

This 2nd WJEC, however, struggled with a weak institutional appetite for global networking, as exhibited by the stance of the USA's Association for Education in Journalism

⁷ Beate Josephi, "Journalism Education," in *The Handbook of Journalism Studies*, eds. Karin Wahl-Jorgensen & Thomas Hanitzsch (New York and London: Routledge, 2009) 42-56.

⁸ For background on this, see Joe Foote, "World Journalism Education Congress", *Journalism Studies* (9: 1 2008), 132 –138

⁹ <http://wjec.ou.edu/principles.html>, (Accessed January 26, 2010)

¹⁰ <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0015/001512/151209e.pdf> (Accessed January 26, 2010)

and Mass Communication (AEJMC). Significantly, that body marks its centenary in 2012 – most likely as the world’s oldest and largest association of journalism educators. According to AEJMC’s website, in 2010 it had 3,700 members.¹¹ Yet, the organization’s 2009 leadership, notwithstanding a formal commitment to internationalization, decided that they could not support the convening of the WJEC in South Africa in 2010 because of financial pressures in the USA.¹² In contrast, a number of other organizations such as the USA-based Association of Schools of Journalism and Mass Communication (ASJMC), the European Journalism Trainers Association (EJTA) and the Journalism Education Association of Australia (JEAA), were also constrained in terms of the number of representatives they could send, but nevertheless still gave their backing to the convening of the WJEC. Several previous leaders of AEJMC did find private ways to attend the WJEC, and one of them formally represented the organization there, but the significance of the official position of a major organization helps explain why journalism educators today are still lagging in terms of having a significant presence on the global stage. The vision of journalism educators around the world directly impacts on the injunction by Jan Servaes that “journalism education has to break out of its national carcass and ‘internationalize’”.¹³

Despite the challenges, 293 educators from 54 countries did get to the second WJEC in South Africa, a number that is well up on the Singapore conference. The Congress theme was “Journalism education in an age of radical change,” and the delegates deliberated on the significance for journalism education of changes in media business models, technologies, the wider information environment, and current global issues. A total of 90 research papers and six expert panel discussions were presented. In addition, 16 syndicate groups pooled international wisdom on topics like teaching entrepreneurship, social media and mobile journalism amongst others. There was simultaneous translation between French and English, and a short trial with Mandarin translation. Courtesy of the Knight Foundation, records of these exchanges were all put online at <http://wjec.ru.ac.za>

The 2010 WJEC entailed substantial diversity amongst the delegates. Among those taking part were journalism educators whose bent is teaching theory, others who concentrate on media production, and some who provide hybrid courses. The participants also ranged from those whose teaching is mainly to would-be journalists in higher-education settings, through to those who cater to already working employees and those who deal in distance learning. The extent of education providers present spanned universities, NGOs, commercial providers and media companies’ in-house “academies”. National and regional demographics

¹¹ http://www.aejmc.com/?page_id=1172 (Accessed January 26, 2010)

¹² This position overlooked the fact that over decades, many journalism educators from the South have mobilised scarce resources to attend dollar-denominated AEJMC annual conferences in the USA.

¹³ Jan Servaes, “Epilogue. Back into the Future? Re-inventing Journalism Education in the Age of Globalization,” in *European Journalism Education*, ed. Georgios Terzis (Bristol and Chicago: intellect, 2009). 519-539

also varied widely. Yet the conference worked on the basis of all participants sharing an identity as journalism educators, and this in turn allowed each individual to explore the richness of the diversity.

A further factor worth noting was that the location of the conference meant that coloring many of the proceedings were the experiences of African journalism educators. The event had been preceded by a colloquium of African journalism educators in September 2009, where 80 attendees discussed 38 papers in preparation for the WJEC. At the congress itself, African journalism teachers numbered 170 – making up more than half the delegates. A total of 23 of 54 countries represented were from Africa. Of the 139 papers originally accepted for inclusion on the program, 57 African abstracts were accepted, and 44 were finally presented. In addition, the WJEC saw several pre- and post-activities specifically serving African journalism educators: a course in teaching new media and another in economics journalism, a workshop on writing academic research papers, and a meeting with UNESCO (which agency recognizes 21 African journalism schools as potential centers of excellence or reference). What all this signified was that a region of the world which is often invisible in terms of journalism education was mainstreamed into international networking. On the one hand, African journalism teachers came together as a particular constituency and could explore their own identity, knowledge and practices by interacting with each other and with colleagues from outside the continent. This gain constitutes a valuable lesson about how a WJEC can benefit the journalism educators within region where it occurs. On the other hand, the African presence also enabled educators from elsewhere to learn from African colleagues about issues like teaching journalism in repressive environments, and about developing students' abilities to report on poverty and development. Particularly relevant were points about culture and race in regard to how journalism education could help counter media stereotypes which represent Africa as a singular object that is to be feared, pitied or romanticized.

It is exactly this kind of international activity amongst focused practitioners in journalism education that elevates the level of globalization within the sector more broadly. It makes for a purposeful and equalizing networking that valorizes diverse knowledges beyond the limits of that which is otherwise formally published or available online. It also has another spin-off. Although no hard research was conducted at the WJEC, some remarks can be proffered on the extent to which the event contributed to building a social community amongst its participants. Theories of social capital point to three kinds of connections that enable relationships to go deeper than atomized and purely intellectual engagements around journalism education.

* “Bonding”: This kind of relationship designations how journalism educators with very similar profiles (national, linguistic, area of specialization) have smooth scope to initiate

or deepen relations with each other. This was very evident at the WJEC, where delegates gravitated spontaneously into national or language-based groupings and could often be seen strengthening their ties during the Congress' social occasions. Trust and friendships in such "bonding" relationships do not happen automatically, but they are relatively easy to develop and maintain, and many WJEC delegates spoke about this as an outcome of the event.

* "Bridging": This kind of relationship involves getting journalism teachers to leave their comfort zones and relate to strangers who are slightly different. An example would be a French-speaking educator from Senegal using English to converse with a colleague from China. Another example is crossing the theory-practice divide. The illustration here is a journalism teacher who is more of a scholar than a skills trainer, and whose passion is how identity theories can help would-be journalists better understand themselves and the world, and which person befriends a teacher hailing from a media background whose job is teaching multi-media journalism. These kinds of connections began to be made at the WJEC, especially through delegates' engagements around the research papers and syndicate groups.

* "Linking": These are relationships that are most challenging to make and retain. They include, for example, getting dialogue going between recalcitrant journalism teachers and more academically-focused journal publishers. The WJEC provided several formal opportunities to this effect, and a number of publication opportunities were generated accordingly. The WJEC also paralleled another gathering convened at Rhodes University, namely the 14th Highway Africa conference (see www.highwayafrica.com). This event involved 260 African journalists and bloggers, and scheduled joint sessions and social occasions enabled the WJEC's journalism educators to network with this constituency. In traversing these boundaries, many educators at WJEC experienced deep value in meeting with individuals within a stakeholder constituency who had very different experiences and views.

Read in another way, the WJEC was able to operate as a vehicle to partly overcome what Zelizer describes as an inability for three distinctive interpretive communities to hear each other: journalism scholars, journalism educators and journalists.¹⁴ More than this, though, the success of the WJEC helped to constitute a social category (of educators) into a proto-social movement, an "interpretive community" that is not just in-itself but also for-itself. Evaluation of the WJEC by delegates shows a huge sense of excitement about journalism education as a practice to be taken seriously universally – including by university administrators, professional journalists, the media industry, citizens... and especially by journalism educators first and foremost. This outcome was reinforced by the Congress concluding with Nobel prizewinner Archbishop Desmond Tutu becoming the first signatory of an international campaign to scrap media-repressive laws in Africa. Through making this

¹⁴ Zelizer, *Going Beyond Disciplinary Boundaries*

happen, journalism educators as a group increased their credibility as actors with a strong stake in press freedom. The campaign's initiators, the World Association of Newspapers and the World Editors Forum, welcomed this development and expressed enthusiasm for further collaborations.

If future WJEC conferences can replicate these kinds of concatenations, there is a real chance of sustained movement in about building an international network where people know and trust each other, and actively interact around their common interest in journalism education. The two WJEC events to date have now put a stake in the ground, and a third WJEC in 2013 appears certain – with three possible venues to host it. In the interim, several activities are being developed under WJEC auspices. One is to extend the existing WJEC global census of journalism schools to include providers beyond than higher educational institutions (see <http://wjec.ou.edu/census.php>). Another activity is to encourage journalism schools to use the same census to identify a foreign partner institution and link up the different students on World Press Freedom Day, 3 May (a date that is recognized and commemorated annually by UNESCO, WAN and WEF). From such activities as well as the three-yearly congresses, a more effective international community of journalism educators may yet emerge. After all, according to the WJEC census, the sector worldwide in August 2010 embraced at least 2363 institutions – an impressive figure whose whole certainly has the potential to be greater than sum of the parts.

To date the WJEC has been convened by Joe Foote of Oklahoma University under the auspices of the World Journalism Education Council, a very loose grouping of organizations such as AEJMC, ASJMC, JEAA, IAMCR, etc.¹⁵ It is a long-term prospect, but the Council is a platform that could possibly evolve into a more established forum or even perhaps a properly constituted association with a program of action.

Two factors affect the prospects of this scenario unfolding – resources and the nature of the constituency. Thus, one reason why journalism educators have lagged behind other media groupings on a global organizational scale has been the limited finances available to the sector. Yet many journalism teachers are based in institutions that can help them attend conferences or pay membership dues. There is also donor funding that can be tapped. If AMARC can represent – and enrich – community radio stations with foundation support, there is no intrinsic resource constraint on journalism educators getting a worldwide organization together. Building these kinds of “linking” relationships was what partially underpinned the WJEC in that Rhodes University was able to rally 30 sponsors in fundraising for the event (including underwriting the attendance of many delegates from Africa and the developing world). This was done by means of strong connections with companies, media houses and donor foundations like the Open Society. The success of WJEC

¹⁵ See <http://wjec.ou.edu/organizations.html> for a full list of council members.

served to enhance donor-interest and thereby deepened prospects for further investment in the sector.

A second factor affecting future prospects is that the constituency itself is hard to organize. There are huge pressures under which many journalism teachers and journalism schools work. One is the pull between the academy on the one hand and the media industry on the other. Another is the phenomenon of being under-valued by each of these two sides. A third is the invisibility of journalism education groups even in national media.¹⁶ Another pressure – especially in developing countries – is being short of technology and support, and yet being overrun with the intensive demands of mass teaching. Multiply this by the challenges of organizing on an international scale, and add differences in language as well, and the obstacles seem overwhelming. Yet it is possible to surmount such hurdles, as shown by the international journalist community which has managed to overcome many analogous problems. Further insight into the challenges and prospects could be gained from research into the extent to which other educational constituencies (law lecturers for example) have been able to organize themselves internationally.

At least the WJEC momentum to date suggests that there is some potential in further work toward organizing of journalism educators as a global sector. It is possible that the very existence of an international organization could help overcome local resource limits and job stresses by helping to “link” journalism educators on a national or regional basis to those agencies who have resources that can help strengthen the practice. In the end, journalism teachers do not have to be passive participants in globalization, nor Cinderella characters at international balls. Instead, an organized global presence of journalism teachers could make a difference to, and through, the existing globalization of the sector. The result of this would enhance the stature of the practice and increase the contribution that it can make. As this globalization continues apace, there should be no dispute that, more than ever, journalism educators can benefit enormously by getting their international act together. It is not a short-term prospect, but as a goal it needs to be identified, and energies put into building the trajectory in that direction.

¹⁶ See Dane S Claussen “Strategic Plan Takes Action on Long-Term Problems and Opportunities” Editor’s Note, *Journalism and Mass Communication Educator*, (64/1 Spring 2009). 3-6; Elliot King, “The Role of Journalism History, and the Academy, in the Development of Core Knowledge in Journalism Education,” *Journalism and Mass Communication Educator*, (Summer, 2008). 166-178