

University of Groningen

Journalism is Not a One-Way Street

Baack, Stefan; Cheruiyot, David; Ferrer-Conill, Raul

Published in:
The Institutions Changing Journalism

IMPORTANT NOTE: You are advised to consult the publisher's version (publisher's PDF) if you wish to cite from it. Please check the document version below.

Document Version
Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

Publication date:
2022

[Link to publication in University of Groningen/UMCG research database](#)

Citation for published version (APA):

Baack, S., Cheruiyot, D., & Ferrer-Conill, R. (2022). Journalism is Not a One-Way Street: Recognizing multi-directional dynamics. In P. Ferrucci, & S. A. Eldridge II (Eds.), *The Institutions Changing Journalism: Barbarians Inside the Gate* (pp. 103-117). Routledge.

Copyright

Other than for strictly personal use, it is not permitted to download or to forward/distribute the text or part of it without the consent of the author(s) and/or copyright holder(s), unless the work is under an open content license (like Creative Commons).

The publication may also be distributed here under the terms of Article 25fa of the Dutch Copyright Act, indicated by the "Taverne" license. More information can be found on the University of Groningen website: <https://www.rug.nl/library/open-access/self-archiving-pure/taverne-amendment>.

Take-down policy

If you believe that this document breaches copyright please contact us providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.

Downloaded from the University of Groningen/UMCG research database (Pure): <http://www.rug.nl/research/portal>. For technical reasons the number of authors shown on this cover page is limited to 10 maximum.

7

JOURNALISM IS NOT A ONE-WAY STREET

Recognizing multi-directional dynamics

Stefan Baack, David Cheruiyot and Raul Ferrer-Conill¹

Introduction

One of the main occupations of journalism scholarship is to study how journalism, as a profession and institution, is changing and evolving. An established tradition clarifies that journalism is changing, at least in part, because external stressors are influencing the field (Shoemaker and Reese 2014; Singer 2003). In recent years, a new strand of literature has used various metaphors trying to grasp the notion that “outsiders” are “infiltrating” journalism and exerting change (Bélair-Gagnon and Holton 2018; Eldridge 2018). This very book evokes the metaphors of “barbarians” breaching the institutional gates of journalism. Elsewhere in our research (Cheruiyot, Baack, and Ferrer-Conill 2019), we also adopted the widely-used metaphor of “peripheral actors” to investigate how non-journalistic actors perform practices central to data journalism.

While important, the dominance of approaches that study how outsiders exert pressure within journalism creates two blind spots. First, the idea that “barbarians” influence journalism over-simplifies real-world interdependencies and limits our ability to grasp public communication’s changing dynamics more broadly. It highlights only the influence journalism experiences from external forces, but usually does not consider the influence that journalism exerts outwardly toward NGOs or technology companies, for example (see Ferrucci, this volume). Second, the locative metaphor of periphery vs center often overlooks the more literal, geographical dichotomy of the center and periphery concerning both journalistic practice and journalism scholarship. The focus and attention to Western news organizations as the centerstage of the journalistic field implicitly turns all that is non-Western into peripheral actors of journalistic production. It also speaks to the proclivity in journalism studies to define journalistic practice within the terms of Western democratic systems (Carey 2010; Josephi 2012; Zelizer 2012), and the persistent notion that journalism in the US is self-contained (Vos 2017).

This chapter aims to address the two aforementioned blind spots by advocating for a research agenda that actively explores the multi-directional interdependencies between journalists and peripheral actors while expanding our view toward wider geographical realities. In particular, we want to show the value of studying how “classic” conceptions of professional journalism shape the self-understandings and profiles of peripheral actors. This is an invitation for journalism studies to more thoroughly investigate multi-directional influences and acknowledge that, while journalism is our object of study, sometimes there is value in understanding how others shape it and are shaped by it outside our field. Lifting the disciplinary blinders could help us see the important influences that journalism has on other fields, beyond its “democratic function” (Kovach and Rosenstiel 2007; Zelizer 2012). Asking more prominently how particular practices and self-understandings of journalism in different contexts shape peripheral actors would allow us to better understand its value and relevance in various contexts.

We approach this discussion first by highlighting how the “periphery vs center” narrative has created a form of “otherism” that by definition demarcates between the what, who, and where of journalism. Our theoretical discussion engages with the notion of institutional autonomy and the institution-as-routine as an analytical lens. Next, we build our argument around three empirical examples taken from previous and ongoing research by the authors from around the world. We do not see these examples as an exhaustive list of areas in which multi-directional exchanges occur, but rather use them to highlight what we might overlook if our empirical work only looks at journalism itself: namely, how certain imaginaries about journalism shape other actors, which might in turn affect the self-perception and practices of journalists and provide us with valuable insights into journalism’s role in society. What our examples have in common is a focus on non-journalistic organizations that have a clear connection to journalism, thanks to overlapping aspirations that in some of these cases lead to direct collaborations with journalists. As we hope to illustrate, grasping journalism’s role in society requires us to look beyond journalism itself.

“Otherism” and journalism’s relationship with others

While old and new actors at the periphery of journalism have an influence on journalism, some of these actors may also reinforce traditional journalistic practices and identities rather than change or expand them (see Hermida, Varano, and Young, this volume). At the same time, while adjacent fields and actors influence journalism, it is also true that journalism is influencing how non-journalistic actors understand and perform their own roles. The main problem with a “one-directional” study of journalism is to overlook or underestimate the importance of those and similar interdependencies. For a field so preoccupied with studying journalism’s role in society, not looking at how journalism influences neighbouring fields is a glaring blind spot.

Journalism studies' one-directional problem

Journalism studies has been preoccupied with drawing boundaries across institutional lines (Bélair-Gagnon and Holton 2018; Carlson and Lewis 2015), the implicit consensus being that those boundaries have blurred (Darbo and Skjerdal 2019; Domingo and Le Cam 2014; Lewis 2012). Studies on the transgression of those blurred boundaries often focus on the one-directional influence created during the “holy ritual” of news production (Tuchman 1972). Our early fascination with the mechanisms that inform journalism practice set in motion a valuable yet one-sided strand of literature that tried to understand the inward influences on journalism. Some of the most established models, such as the hierarchy of influences (Shoemaker and Reese 2014) or media systems (Hallin and Mancini 2004) proposed one-directional elaborate structures that could explain the shape of media content through various macro, meso, and micro layers of influence.

We believe the instinct to frame journalism as it relates to non-journalism stems from two major developments. First, our field's inherent need to demarcate its own jurisdiction, trying to make sense of what is and what is not journalism, and this process tends to replicate professional journalists' self-proclaimed norms and institutional autonomy. This is not a unique feature of our field but rather a hallmark of institutional approaches across fields. Journalism as an institution can be understood as “an organizationally bound enterprise with routinized practices, subject to varying factors and forces in the environment” that is “shaped by external forces but also capable of agency within a collective space that has negotiated boundaries, legitimacy, and an internal logic” (Lowrey 2018: 125). This signals to external forces moving inward but omits the outward forces that journalism impact. As Wahl-Jorgensen (2014: 2588) concluded, “the journalistic field and the field of scholarship on journalism exist in a complex interdependent relationship”, with scholars often falling into a pattern of conducting “back-up boundary work, supporting the endeavor of the field they studied and thus seeking to ensure its continued viability”. Moreover, the dominating interest in capturing change “within” journalism invokes the necessity to locate the source of change, internal or external. The apparent outcome of this is the creation of false binaries that perpetuate vaguely defined “otherisms” by which we recognize our object of study.

The second development that contributed to a focus on “outside” influences on journalism is the fact that journalism is historically a Western construct and that the centers of power for journalistic production reside in the US and Europe. This center is reinforced through its professional and institutional dominance in terms of, among others, acquired professional values and norms (Hanitzsch 2007; Waisbord 2013), technologies and news paradigms (Høyer and Pöttker 2005), education and training models (Joseph 2007), or the democracy-infused hegemonic model of practice (Kovach and Rosenstiel 2007; Nerone 2012).

As it is the tradition in our field, most of these studies and models focus on Western structures, even though some have been updated to encompass broader

realities (Hallin and Mancini 2012; Reese 2007). We are not the only ones to point to the Anglo-American slant showing that “theoretical approaches and frameworks developed in the context of Western democracies dominate (digital) journalism scholarship, even if often they are found to be inadequate” (Tandoc, Hess, Eldridge, and Westlund 2020: 302) and important efforts are being put into place to address the issue of diversity in journalism scholarship (see Tandoc, Jenkins, Thomas, and Westlund, 2021). Even after these global inclusivity efforts, the dominance of Western epistemologies within our field is often not matched by an equal epistemic resistance from the periphery, mostly because of entrenched power inequalities (Demeter 2020). Scholars within and beyond the media and communication discipline (see, for example, Cushion 2008, Demeter 2019) have consistently shown through empirical evidence that the odds are stacked against peripheral nations in academia when it comes to publishing and citation practices.

Such “otherism” in the global exchange of journalism is a result of “self-containment” of the West, mostly the US, and the accompanying sense in which the center is considered to be the *giver* (see for example, Vos 2017: 55) and the periphery as the *taker* of the journalistic model of practice. As such, peripheralization inevitably emerges as a marker of distinctions in both geographic and professional terms, often at risk of “pigeon-holing” peripheral scholarship (Cheruiyot and Ferrer-Conill 2021).

What this leaves out is that despite journalism priding itself on its institutional autonomy to operate and assert its authority (Sjøvaag 2020), it is only a “semi-independent” (Bennett and Livingston 2003) institution that is inevitably forced to interact with neighboring institutions. While this is hardly a new argument, our call is to acknowledge and highlight the multi-directional dynamics between journalism and the “others.”

Theorizing the periphery

Peripheral actors can be seen as occupying an insider-outsider position, an arrangement that most often implies they are viewed from the proximity to or distance from the field of journalism. Journalism is, therefore, a frame of reference in defining the practices, norms, values or institutions that they establish in the periphery, for example, by acquiring storytelling techniques and formats employed by legacy news media. On the one hand, peripheral actors’ entry into journalism as “outsiders” means that they also carry unique attributes that are non-traditional and deploy their own logic in news production. Yet peripheral actors are not “owners of the soil” and therefore are not necessarily committed to traditional journalism’s norms and rules (Holton and Bélair-Gagnon 2018: 72).

There is an interdependency established through the peripheral position in the sense that non-traditional actors’ practices lie in a continuum of practices or values that are journalism-like and others that tend to be removed from the professional “core” (cf. Baack 2018). Thus, in journalism research, a variety of metaphors have become important descriptors of this relationship, for example, “interlopers” (Eldridge 2019) to show the cooperative or uncooperative nature of these actors

toward journalism, or “intralopers”/ “strangers” (Holton and Bélair-Gagnon 2018) to show how these news producers are little understood in comparison to professional journalists. Journalism studies is not short of such metaphors as means of demarcating boundaries between “non-professionals”, “semi-professionals” and “professionals” (Örnebring 2013). Some metaphors, like “barbarians” (Agarwal and Barthel 2015), go to the extent of disregarding their strong colonial connotations.

However, what’s more important are the implications of these relationships between professional journalists and peripheral actors. Studies that focus on peripheral actors show a strong culture of interdependencies emerging despite existing tensions between these actors and professional news organizations. These interdependencies are manifested through “entanglements” (Baack 2018) or “fusions” (Lewis and Usher 2013) that are expanding news ecologies (Heinrich, 2011). Baack (2018), for example, shows that overlapping skills and complementary ambitions between civic technologists and data journalists result in entanglements based on “interlocking practices” (Baack 2018: 673). Similarly, Usher (2019) argues there is a “fusion” of skills and expertise when journalists and “hackers” work together.

Thus, we argue that, existing research on peripheral actors shows, implicitly, that the resulting relationship between journalists and others is multi-directional: Journalism takes (e.g. skills, technologies, formats), but it gives as well. Civic technology organizations, for example, co-opt journalistic discourses in the promotion of data literacy and the utilization of freedom-of-information laws in countries with weak data/information dissemination cultures, as we showed in our previous empirical work (Cheruiyot and Ferrer-Conill 2018). Other examples are nonprofits and humanitarian organizations that consider journalism’s capacity for impact (its reach) and its authority (legitimacy and trust) as effective values toward promoting their public service or humanitarian missions. Consequently, these NGOs are explicit about “doing journalism” like legacy news media (Konieczna 2018; Wright, Scott, and Bunce 2018). In their practices, these non-traditional producers adopt the “logic of journalism” (Konieczna 2018: 22) in ways we argue best exemplify multi-directional exchanges in institutional and professional journalism. There are several real-world cases showing how journalism shapes non-journalistic actors.

Three cases: How journalism shapes peripheral actors

Based on the discussion above, we argue that research has not ignored, but has underplayed the continuous outward influence of journalism towards other actors relevant for public communication. In the following, we will present three cases from our own empirical work where we focus on the influence that journalism has on peripheral actors: how journalistic practices are imitated, or how imaginaries about journalism influence these actors own practices and self-understanding.

Chequeado: Extracting and pushing journalistic practice

Chequeado is Latin America’s most popular fact-checking platform. The site provides in-depth articles fact-checking current affairs events, confirming or debunking

information distributed by politicians, the media, or social media. According to their manifesto, their main task is “to provide a new value to truth and raise the costs of lies” (“Acerca de Chequeado” n.d.). Based in Argentina and established in 2010, the site identifies itself as a non-partisan and not-for-profit project fighting against disinformation.

A remarkable aspect of Chequeado is that clear outsiders of journalism founded it: physicist Julio Aranovich, political economist José Alberto Bekinschtein, and chemist Roberto Lugo. Despite their non-journalistic backgrounds and the site positioning itself as an alternative source of information based on facts and data, the mission of the project is undoubtedly familiar to any journalism scholar: “to improve the quality of the public debate to strengthen democracy in Argentina and the world” (“Acerca de Chequeado” n.d.). The current staff of Chequeado come from a wide range of backgrounds, both with and without journalistic profiles; as one example, it is led by lawyer Laura Zommer, a managing board member of the International Fact-Checking Network. In this aspect, Chequeado is an excellent example of the multi-directional dynamics between the periphery and the core of journalism because it is run by so-called outsiders who are inspired by journalistic values, taking up this ambition in part as a reaction to what they and Chequeado’s founders see as something lacking in the news media. Moreover, their practice is meant to both have an impact on news outlets including by teaching fact-checking practices to other organizations. The advocacy for facts and truth is such a basic precept of both fact-checking organizations and watchdog journalism that what we normally would consider the organization at the periphery of journalism (Chequeado) challenges and reinforces what we would consider the core of journalism (watchdog journalism).

The site highlights stories that are currently gaining public attention and dissects the narrative by qualifying the story’s degrees of facticity and veracity. These topics are then approached through various narrative formats, from addressing simple falsehoods and myths on social media to deep dives into specific debates on current affairs. While Chequeado’s articles approach topics in relation to what has been said or stated in other fora, the site’s presentation remarkably resembles that of a digital newspaper. While not necessarily a journalistic endeavour, Chequeado acknowledges their attempt to explore new ways to convey content and information to the public, while also communicating in a way that engages and involves citizens. However, this is not the only aim of the project. They have also set two other goals: First, to innovate and “experiment with the way in which journalism and the formats and tools to receive and distribute the best facts and data to the people”. And, second, to educate citizens, “journalists and communicators in exercise and formation” (“Acerca de Chequeado” n.d.).

When explaining the characteristics of their content, Chequeado clearly adopts both journalistic lingo (such as objectivity and truth) and practices (such as verification and transparency) to support their fact-checking methods. The entire framework of the practice is extracted from a view of journalism as a discipline of verification, based on the essence that facts and data can illuminate the truth. It is clear through their

mission statement that Chequeado believes that transparency and respect for the public is the guiding principle in aid of their democratic duty, a belief not far from what traditional Western legacy news organizations would hold dear.

At the same time, and while not explicitly saying so, the nature of Chequeado raises doubts about the current state of journalism in the region. First, its main targets are journalists and media organizations. Second, its objective is to foster innovation in how journalism is practiced, and its stated goal in doing so is to educate journalists on how to accurately fact-check stories and present data. This is a familiar pattern we see across fact-checking organizations: adopting journalistic values, questioning whether current news organizations are fulfilling their duties, and proposing to improve journalism. In its assessment of news media, it approves of and adopts the aspirational norms and values, judges and rejects the current application of those norms and values, and wants to influence and improve those changes. And this is a goal it is arguably accomplishing, as Chequeado's method of verification has been adopted by at least twenty media organizations across fourteen countries in Latin America.

Mozilla: Stabilizing identity with mission-compatible journalism

Mozilla is rooted in open source culture and best known for the development of the Firefox web browser. While it had more direct connections to journalism in the past, most notably with the Knight-Mozilla News Technology Partnership (Lewis and Usher 2016), Mozilla's role as a peripheral actor to journalism might be less obvious today. However, recent changes to the so-called "Mozilla Manifesto" (Mozilla n.d.), a document outlining the core values and goals of the organization, have created pathways for new connections. Originally created in 2007 with a focus on openness, security and privacy, the manifesto was updated in 2018 to "address the quality of people's experiences online", which included a commitment to diversity, "civil discourse", "reasoned argument", and "verifiable facts" (Baker 2018).

Even though journalism is not explicitly mentioned, Mozilla's shift created a degree of overlap between supporting a particular idea of "Manifesto-compatible" journalism and supporting Mozilla's own mission. There are clear connections between the values added to the manifesto in 2018 and typical associations with traditional Western notions of journalism as a provider of objective facts that enables and facilitates political deliberation (cf. Hanitzsch and Vos 2018). More generally, the updated manifesto meant that advancing Mozilla's mission and advancing actors' ability to fulfill Manifesto-compatible societal functions are now more intermeshed. There are numerous ways Mozilla's own goals lead to support or direct collaboration with journalism. Here, we will highlight a more recent example: the "Firefox Better Web with Scroll" initiative to support alternatives to advertising as the dominant business model for online content.

Scroll² is a US-based service that offers a monthly subscription in exchange for an ad-free experience on partner websites from its network, e.g. BuzzFeed or *The Atlantic*. Partners are rewarded with revenue by Scroll based on the amount of time

users spent on their website. Scroll claims that the reward per person is higher compared to ads, creating an incentive for media companies to depend less on advertisements. Mozilla collaborated with Scroll by offering a browser extension for Firefox that further reduces advertisements on these partner websites, further blocks tracking, and offers additional services like audio for articles.

The project allowed Mozilla to address several issues at once. First, it provided a service that helped Scroll's partner websites. These partner websites generally provide credible informative content that can be seen as core to political deliberation, which in turn supports the values outlined in Mozilla's updated manifesto. Second, the project supported a revenue model that rewards time spent on websites over clicks. As the project homepage stresses, it is "rewarding quality and privacy – not ads" (Mozilla 2021), thereby suggesting to help not just to move away from ad-driven business models, but also to mitigate their negative implications. Many problems central to Mozilla's own mission are seen as negative side-effects of online advertisement: privacy-invasive surveillance, misinformation, and discriminatory algorithms. Finally, the project had the potential to create a new subscription-based revenue stream for Mozilla, which is searching for new sources of revenue.³

This example illustrates how supporting journalism aligns with Mozilla's mission because particular ideals of journalistic practice are considered to support the values outlined in the Mozilla Manifesto: fighting disinformation, caring about privacy and security, and so forth. More pointedly, the example shows that Mozilla is not trying to replicate journalism, it seeks to complement this vision of journalism by investing into technologies and business models that support this idea of journalism. The existence of journalists and organizations that identify with "traditional" Western values in journalism thereby shapes Mozilla's practices and strategic decision-making.

Supporting a particular idea of journalism that can thrive outside of ad-driven business models also helps Mozilla to differentiate itself from big tech companies such as Google or Facebook (see Russell and Vos, this volume). Google, Facebook, and others also support journalism in various ways, but not in ways that would fundamentally lower news publishers' dependency on the ad-driven commercial ecosystems on which they thrive. Mozilla thereby acts as a distinct, alternative partner to journalists.

At the same time, the example of "Firefox Better Web with Scroll" illustrates that practically aligning Mozilla's mission-driven focus with its need to secure new streams of revenue is difficult and, more generally, it shows how difficult it can be to align interests of peripheral actors and journalists practically. Mozilla is implicitly trying to push journalism in a direction that supports its values, i.e. the values outlined in the Mozilla Manifesto, and to also benefit from that shift with revenue-generating services: a journalism that is less dependent on privacy-invasive business models and rewards "quality" more than "misleading click-bait". Yet while subscription-based models such as the one supported by Mozilla in this example have the potential to introduce different business logics that support more "quality content" in line with Mozilla's manifesto, there is no guarantee that they will be successful in doing so.

Moreover, while the project tries to avoid creating barriers to content by giving an ad-free version of Scroll partner websites that can also be accessed for free with ads (and the tracking of users that comes with it), it might incentivize media organizations to more heavily rely on subscriptions as barriers to access “higher quality content”, leaving people that cannot afford such subscriptions with more limited and less privacy-friendly versions of news websites. Still, the example shows how visions of journalism that we might describe as “traditional Western” shape Mozilla’s identity and practices for both mission-based and financial reasons.

Open Up: Journalism as a necessary building block of its mission

Open Up is a civic technology organization based in South Africa that promotes civic engagement through citizens’ active involvement in data creation, interpretation, and distribution. Initially named “Code for South Africa”, as part of the “Code for All” global network, Open Up broke away from the larger network in 2017 and was rebranded as an open data nonprofit. Its operations focus on data accessibility and transparency by developing applications to ease access to data (see examples below) and training citizens and journalists in data-driven practices.

Its mission is rooted mainly in a public service ideal. The government, civil society, and citizens are jointly seen as essential in expanding open data practices. The free flow of information between state and civil society actors on the one hand, and citizens on the other, is considered necessary for public accountability. Under that view, Open Up argues that governments hold the key to providing data (e.g., census reports or local government budgets), and should guarantee the free and unhindered right to information. For Open Up, citizens can only participate in initiatives to promote public accountability if they can freely access data from public institutions and interpret and understand these data. Further, Open Up sees news media’s access to the citizenry as crucial in that the news media can serve as a “dissemination partner” for the services the organization provides.

Among Open Up’s early initiatives was a data liberation project to create a searchable database of all government gazettes (official records of government declarations) in South Africa called Open Gazettes. Open Up undertook the project with Code for Africa, the African Networks of Centers for Investigative Reporting (ANCIR), Indigo Trust (a charity), and the Southern African Legal Information Institute (a nonprofit law project). The final database produced by this project was publicly accessible to journalists and citizens. Open Up sees its role as facilitative in promoting the use of the database, for example, through establishing a help desk to provide technical support to investigative journalists and civil society organizations undertaking public accountability projects.

Further, to promote public accountability through this project, Open Up collaborated with the South African government to design a web-based tool for accessing all municipal authorities’ financial records in South Africa. The “Municipal Money” tool provided easy access to data, analysis and visualization. In the same way, Wazi Map, another web-based tool, aggregates census,

election, and crime data in South Africa. Wazi Map is particularly relevant here because it was developed with journalists in mind and in close collaboration with Media Monitoring Africa, a media watchdog based in South Africa. Wazi Map evolved into a continental data journalism project that became a resource for journalists in Nigeria and Kenya for reporting on elections (Wazimap 2018).

Open Up's practices emphasize citizen participation as a broader mission to increase access and circulation of information. However, it considers public and independent organizations central to its larger goal to promote data literacy and expand information sources for news organizations. It is important to emphasize that the relationship between Open Up and legacy news media is less clear on the surface because of the nonprofit's strong civic goals and its operations that focus less on disseminating information. Open Up is explicit about its role in empowering news organizations towards better storytelling while at the same time opening up databases for citizens' scrutiny. The organization considers that when legacy news media have access to accurate data, for example, government records through Open Gazette, their capacity for truth-telling would be enhanced. This contribution to news production would be auxiliary in providing complete and accurate data towards supporting public accountability. We consider Open Up's work to be in line with the concept of "implicit interlopers", or peripheral actors that are not necessarily adversarial to traditional journalism, but push traditional practice limits (Holton and Bélair-Gagnon 2018).

We see Open Up's operations edging towards reinvigorating civic-oriented practices and playing a watchdog role in the broader news ecosystem by providing citizens with data and expertise to scrutinize information (in the media or government's hands) themselves. Partly, such civic-oriented goals echo the public service ideal that most civic journalism attains to uphold, which essentially goes against the "everything goes" strategies adopted by some profit-driven journalism (see for example, Konieczna 2018). The organization develops and expands data practices to "open up" the information ecosystem to the public, who could either engage in information production themselves or scrutinize news production, thus challenging journalistic authority. However, actors including the news media and the government, are considered collaborators in promoting public accountability. Similar to the example of Mozilla above, traditional visions of journalism are an essential component of Open Up's larger vision in that they promote accountability, transparency, and the use of public information for civic participation.

Conclusion: (Re-)Articulating journalism's relationship with the periphery

In this chapter, we have argued that while the relationship between peripheral actors and journalism is predominantly studied from the external influences on the internal mechanics of journalism, this approach tends to forget the important outward influences of journalism. Similarly, we proposed that looking at the relationship between the core of journalism and the periphery in geographic terms perpetuates the idea that

Western journalism lies at the core and non-Western expressions of journalism are the “others”. Our goal has been to embrace the dynamics between journalism and its peripheral actors more fully by putting a stronger empirical emphasis on the practices and identities of actors affected in various ways by journalism. Studying the multi-directional dynamics between journalism and others not only allows us to “demystify” these “barbarians at the gates,” but also help us see that journalism is not this feeble institution that suffers from the influence of others. The profession exerts its influence on others, and this can lead to a shared and strengthened idea of what journalism is and what role it has in society.

The examples discussed here are a testimony to that multi-directional relationship. In the case of Chequeado, a group of non-journalists guided by journalism’s ideals, created a fact-checking operation. They aimed to fulfil and inform what they thought the media failed to provide the Latin American public. A traditional look at Chequeado emphasizes its attempts to “influence” news media as a peripheral actor might have missed the foundational influence that journalism had over the fact-checking organization in shaping its vision and mission. Moreover, the fact that the managing team comprises editors and journalists only highlights the multi-directional dynamics of this relationship.

In the case of Mozilla, we see in its manifesto an overlap between supporting its own mission as an organization, and supporting particular visions of journalism more broadly, that mirror very traditional ideas of objective watchdog journalism common in Western societies. This provides insights into how actors such as Mozilla see their position in society, and suggests new avenues to study the impact of journalism. Actors such as Mozilla strengthen journalists that identify with the vision of journalism it supports, which in this particular case contributes to a reinforcement of traditional values of professional journalism in the West.

In Open Up’s case, we see its operations primarily aligned to the idea of civic journalism. Indeed, legacy news media have experimented with forms of civic-oriented journalism as a means to engage the public in practices such as sourcing (Massey 1998), but often, it is a response to the critique about elitism and commercial-oriented production. It is also important to acknowledge forms of civic-oriented practices that mark journalism as practiced in mostly non-Western nations, such as South Africa, whose goal is to promote social change (Hanitzsch et al. 2011). Open Up’s operations consider citizens as partners in information production and as central for effective public accountability. At the same time, however, it implicitly challenges journalistic authority by providing data, resources, and training to enhance the public’s capacity to scrutinize government’s records and the news.

Peripheral actors do influence journalism. Their institutional underpinnings interact and shape the evolution of our field in many ways. As we have argued, however, journalism is not a one-way street, and those at the periphery, while exerting their influence, are often heavily influenced by journalism as well. Sometimes, even at a foundational level. Moreover, the examples presented here show similar patterns and developments in different geographic and cultural regions

(US/Europe, Latin America, Africa). This emphasizes that multi-directional dynamics are by no means exclusive to particular regional contexts. The outward influences of journalism on other actors relevant for public communication is a general blind spot in journalism studies that needs to be addressed. In the ebb and flow of journalistic evolution, periphery and center may be closer than we think.

Notes

- 1 One of the authors is affiliated with the Mozilla Foundation. The Mozilla Foundation gave permission to the author to conduct this research as an independent research project. It did not fund or otherwise support the research, nor did it influence the interviews, the data analysis, or the writing of this chapter.
- 2 <https://scroll.com>.
- 3 The majority of the revenue of the Mozilla Corporation to date comes from setting the default search engine in new Firefox installations, which is Google in most regions.

References

- “Acerca de Chequeado”. n.d. Chequeado (blog). <https://chequeado.com/acerca-de-chequeado/>.
- Agarwal, Sheetal D., and Michael L.Barthel. 2015. “The Friendly Barbarians: Professional Norms and Work Routines of Online Journalists in the United States”. *Journalism* 16 (3): 376–391. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1464884913511565>.
- Baack, Stefan. 2018. “Practically Engaged: The Entanglements between Data Journalism and Civic Tech”. *Digital Journalism* 6 (6): 673–692. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21670811.2017.1375382>.
- Baker, Mitchell. 2018. “Mozilla Marks 20th Anniversary with Commitment to Better Human Experiences Online”. The Mozilla Blog (blog). <https://blog.mozilla.org/blog/2018/03/29/mozilla-marks-20th-anniversary-commitment-better-human-experiences-online>.
- Bélaïr-Gagnon, Valérie, and Avery E.Holton. 2018. “Boundary Work, Interloper Media, and Analytics in Newsrooms: An Analysis of the Roles of Web Analytics Companies in News Production”. *Digital Journalism* 6 (4): 492–508. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21670811.2018.1445001>.
- Bennett, W. Lance, and Steven Livingston. 2003. “Editors” Introduction: A Semi-Independent Press: Government Control and Journalistic Autonomy in the Political Construction of News”. *Political Communication* 20 (4): 359–362. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10584600390244086>.
- Carey, James. 2010. “Where Journalism Education Went Wrong”. 11 August. <https://lindadaniele.wordpress.com/2010/08/11/carey-where-journalism-education-went-wrong/>.
- Carlson, Matt, and Seth CLewis. 2015. *Boundaries of Journalism: Professionalism, Practices and Participation*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Cheruiyot, David, Stefan Baack, and Raul Ferrer-Conill. 2019. “Data Journalism Beyond Legacy Media: The Case of African and European Civic Technology Organizations”. *Digital Journalism* 7 (9): 1215–1229. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21670811.2019.1591166>.
- Cheruiyot, David, and Raul Ferrer-Conill. 2018. “Fact-Checking Africa’: Epistemologies, Data and the Expansion of Journalistic Discourse”. *Digital Journalism* 6 (8): 964–975. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21670811.2018.1493940>.

- Cheruiyot, David and Raul Ferrer-Conill. 2021. "Pathway outta pigeonhole? De-contextualizing Majority World Countries." *Media, Culture & Society* 43 (1): 189–197. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0163443720960907>.
- Cushion, Stephen. 2008. "Truly International?" *Journalism Practice* 2 (2): 280–293. doi:10.1080/17512780801999477.
- Darbo, Karoline Nerdalen, and Terje Skjerdal. 2019. "Blurred Boundaries: Citizens Journalists versus Conventional Journalists in Hong Kong". *Global Media and China* 4 (1): 111–124. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2059436419834633>.
- Demeter, Marton. 2019. "The Winner Takes It All: International Inequality in Communication and Media Studies Today." *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly* 96 (1): 37–59. doi:10.1177/1077699018792270.
- Demeter, Marton. 2020. *Academic Knowledge Production and the Global South: Questioning Inequality and under-Representation*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Domingo, David, and Florence Le Cam. 2014. "Journalism In Dispersion: Exploring the Blurring Boundaries of Newsmaking through a Controversy". *Digital Journalism* 2 (3): 310–321. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21670811.2014.897832>.
- Eldridge, Scott A. 2019. "Where Do We Draw the Line? Interlopers, (Ant)Agonists, and an Unbounded Journalistic Field". *Media and Communication* 7 (4): 8–18. <https://doi.org/10.17645/mac.v7i4.2295>.
- Eldridge, Scott A. 2018. *Online Journalism from the Periphery: Interloper Media and the Journalistic Field*. London; New York, NY: Routledge.
- Hallin, Daniel C, and Paolo Mancini. 2004. *Comparing Media Systems: Three Models of Media and Politics*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Hallin, Daniel C., and Paolo Mancini, eds. 2012. *Comparing Media Systems beyond the Western World*. Communication, Society and Politics. Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Hanitzsch, Thomas. 2007. "Deconstructing Journalism Culture: Toward a Universal Theory". *Communication Theory* 17 (4): 367–385. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2885.2007.00303.x>.
- Hanitzsch, Thomas, and Tim P. Vos. 2018. "Journalism beyond Democracy: A New Look into Journalistic Roles in Political and Everyday Life". *Journalism* 19 (2): 146–164. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1464884916673386>.
- Hanitzsch, Thomas, Folker Hanusch, Claudia Mellado, et al. 2011. "Mapping Journalism Cultures Across Nations; A comparative study of 18 countries". *Journalism Studies* 12 (3): 273–293.
- Heinrich, Ansgard. 2011. *Network journalism: Journalistic practice in interactive spheres*. New York: Routledge.
- Holton, Avery E., and Valérie Bélair-Gagnon. 2018. "Strangers to the Game? Interlopers, Intralopers, and Shifting News Production". *Media and Communication* 6 (4): 70–78. <https://doi.org/10.17645/mac.v6i4.1490>.
- Høyer, Svernik, and Horst Pöttker. 2005. *Diffusion of the News Paradigm, 1850–2000*. Göteborg, Sweden: Nordicom.
- Joseph, Beate. 2007. "Internationalizing the Journalistic Professional Model: Imperatives and Impediments". *Global Media and Communication* 3 (3): 300–306. <https://doi.org/10.1177/17427665070030030303>.
- Joseph, Beate. 2012. "How Much Democracy Does Journalism Need?" *Journalism* 14 (4): 474–489. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1464884912464172>.
- Konieczna, Magda. 2018. *Journalism without Profit: Making News When the Market Fails*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

- Kovach, Bill, and Tom Rosenstiel. 2007. *The Elements of Journalism: What Newspeople Should Know and the Public Should Expect*, 1st ed., New York: Three Rivers Press.
- Lewis, Seth C. 2012. "The Tension Between Professional Control and Open Participation: Journalism and Its Boundaries". *Information, Communication & Society* 15 (6): 836–866. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2012.674150>.
- Lewis, Seth C., and Nikki Usher. 2013. "Open Source and Journalism: Toward New Frameworks for Imagining News Innovation". *Media, Culture & Society* 35 (5): 602–619. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0163443713485494>.
- Lewis, Seth C., and Nikki Usher. 2016. "Trading Zones, Boundary Objects, and the Pursuit of News Innovation A Case Study of Journalists and Programmers". *Convergence: The International Journal of Research into New Media Technologies* 22 (5): 543–560. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1354856515623865>.
- Lowrey, Wilson. 2018. "Journalism as Institution." In *Journalism*, edited by Tim P. Vos, pp. 125–148. Boston: De Gruyter Mouton.
- Massey, Brian L. 1998. "Civic Journalism and Nonelite Sourcing: Making Routine Newswork of Community Connectedness." *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly* 75 (2): 294–407.
- Mozilla. 2021. "Firefox Better Web with Scroll". Wayback Machine Snapshot. 14 January. <https://web.archive.org/web/20210114150121/https://firstlook.firefox.com/betterweb/>.
- Mozilla. n.d. "The Mozilla Manifesto". <https://www.mozilla.org/en-US/about/manifesto/>.
- Nerone, John. 2012. "The Historical Roots of the Normative Model of Journalism". *Journalism* 14 (4): 446–458. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1464884912464177>.
- Örnebring, Henrik. 2013. "Anything You Can Do, I Can Do Better? Professional Journalists on Citizen Journalism in Six European Countries". *International Communication Gazette* 75 (1): 35–53. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1748048512461761>.
- Reese, Stephen D. 2007. "Journalism Research and the Hierarchy of Influences Model: A Global Perspective". *Brazilian Journalism Research* 3 (2): 21–42. <https://doi.org/10.25200/BJR.v3n2.2007.116>.
- Shoemaker, Pamela J., and Stephen D. Reese. 2014. *Mediating the Message in the 21st Century: A Media Sociology Perspective*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Singer, Jane B. 2003. "Who Are These Guys? The Online Challenge to the Notion of Journalistic Professionalism". *Journalism* 4 (2): 139–163. <https://doi.org/10.1177/146488490342001>.
- Sjøvaag, Helle. 2020. "Journalistic Autonomy: Between Structure, Agency and Institution". *Nordicom Review* 34: 155–166. <https://doi.org/10.2478/nor-2013-0111>.
- Tandoc, Edson, Kristy Hess, Scott Eldridge II, and Oscar Westlund. 2020. "Diversifying Diversity in Digital Journalism Studies: Reflexive Research, Reviewing and Publishing." *Digital Journalism* 8 (3): 301–309. doi:10.1080/21670811.2020.1738949.
- Tandoc, Edson, Joy Jenkins, Ryan J. Thomas, and Oscar Westlund, eds. 2021. *Critical Incidents in Journalism: Pivotal Moments Reshaping Journalism around the World*. London; New York: Routledge.
- Tuchman, Gaye. 1972. "Objectivity as Strategic Ritual: An Examination of Newsmen's Notion of Objectivity". *The American Journal of Sociology* 77 (4): 660–679. <https://doi.org/10.1086/225193>.
- Usher, Nikki. 2019. "Hacks, Hackers, and the Expansive Boundaries of Journalism". In *The Routledge Handbook of Developments in Digital Journalism Studies*, edited by Scott A. Eldridge and Bob Franklin, pp. 348–359. London; New York: Routledge.
- Vos, Tim P. 2017. "Historical Perspectives on Journalistic Roles". In *Journalistic Role Performance: Concepts, Contexts, and Methods*, pp. 41–59. New York: Routledge.

- Wahl-Jorgensen, Karin. 2014. "Is WikiLeaks Challenging the Paradigm of Journalism? Boundary Work and Beyond". *International Journal of Communication* 8: 2581–2592.
- Waisbord, Silvio R. 2013. *Reinventing Professionalism: Journalism and News in Global Perspective*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Wazimap. 2018. "Why Wazimap? A Brief History". <https://wazimap.co.za/about>.
- Wright, Kate, Martin Scott, and Mel Bunce. 2018. "Foundation-Funded Journalism, Philanthrocapitalism and Tainted Donors". *Journalism Studies* 20 (5): 675–695. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1461670X.2017.1417053>.
- Zelizer, Barbie. 2012. "On the Shelf Life of Democracy in Journalism Scholarship". *Journalism* 14 (4): 459–473. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1464884912464179>.