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Journalism and the Global South: Shaping Journalistic Practices and Identity Post “Arab Spring”

Special Issue: Remembering the Arab Spring: Pursuing Possibilities and Impediments in Journalistic Professional Practice across the Global South

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ABSTRACT


It has since been eleven years since the rise of the “Arab Spring”: a series of anti-government uprisings that spread across the Arab world, ultimately leading to regime changes in several countries including Tunisia, Egypt and Libya. Using social media and other digital platforms to communicate and strategize, pro-democracy activists demanded increased transparency and freedom from their long-serving leaders. This special issue has sought to probe ways through which journalism is evolving in non-Western societies over a decade since the protests began. Articles accepted in this issue adopted several methodological and theoretical approaches to appraise the current state of journalism in the “developing” world questioning what influences, if any, the protests had. We sought to contribute to knowledge on ways through which the “Arab Spring” was impacting journalism practices in the Arab world and beyond. It’s our hope that findings presented in this issue will enlighten new insights and inspire new research endeavors on the transformation of journalism in the Arab World and indeed other “Southern” nations particularly as it relates to digital realms.

KEYWORDS

Arab Spring; journalism;
professional practice;
Global South

Introduction

The “Arab Spring” protests, as they came to be known, started in December 2010 and were initiated by a Tunisian street vendor, Mohamed Bouazizi, who ended his life through self-immolation. On 17 December 2010, Bouazizi poured gasoline and set himself on fire in front of the governor’s office, just after his wares were confiscated by a female municipal inspector. The Tunisian revolution, or the “Basta” uprising, as it later became to be known in reference to the fruit cart that Bouazizi used, marked the

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start of protests, which spread through Tunisia and led to the ousting of then President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali. From then on, the protests on the Tunisian streets poured over to other Arab countries and ultimately led to the cessation of other leaderships including Egypt's Hosni Mubarak, Libya's Muammar Ghaddafi and Yemen's Ali Abdullah Saleh.

In the Arab region, which this special issue refers to as the member states of the Arab league that is made up of 22 Arab nations including the suspended Syria, and indeed across the Global South, government control of the media has historically been rampant. In several low and middle-income countries, many of which experience authoritarian tendencies towards press freedom, commercial media enterprises have sought to steer away from social and political issues and focus more on entertainment. Yet those countries that have undergone structural regime change as a result of the "Arab Spring" protests (such as Egypt and Tunisia), or where constitutional amendments have been made (such as Jordan), media institutions have supposedly been freed from state control. From a Western viewpoint, this would suffice for the promotion of a deliberative public sphere, however there is a complex interplay of political, social and economic factors in Arab states that confute this presumption (Bebawi 2016a). Freedom from state control may be a necessary condition for the development of independent media in non-Western societies, but as argued in some of the articles included in this issue, it is not sufficient.

The "Arab Spring" protests brought about an opportunity for Arab and other journalists living in non-democratic environments to presumably free themselves from decades of state control, yet the story has not unfolded as most journalists expected given the ongoing restrictions and other challenges that remain firmly in place for them. Reporters not only find themselves opposed and challenged by the state but also by societies who do not want journalists to rock the boat, especially when people witness the price of freedom that they would eventually have to pay for. While Arab journalists would have expected the opening up of their sphere of operation given their hopes that these popular movements would increase political participation and end journalistic restrictions, a series of limitations have emerged in the aftermath of these protests (Khamis 2017). Still, the Arab Spring's major contribution was perhaps in allowing alternative digital voices in form of citizen journalists to thrive as dependence on dominant state media sources of information was challenged (Al-Rawi 2020b). However, negotiating the overriding power shift between mainstream and citizen journalism went beyond the Arab states with social media platforms offering professional and non-professional reporters across the world an opportunity to provide first-hand reporting experience from the ground.

Over the years, studies looking into journalism practices in the aftermath of the "Arab Spring" protests have continued to grow, inspiring several research projects, which include this special issue. Interestingly, recent studies haven't only been confined to the Arab world given the ubiquitous protests have impacted journalistic and political practices in other regions of the Global South (Mutsvairo, Bebawi, and Borges-Rey 2020). While some journalists in Africa used the "Arab Spring" to demand more press rights, they did so in the face of renewed repressive measures as totalitarian regimes dug in to protect their political power by pervasively blocking dissent (Karam

and Mutsvairo 2021). Worse still, about 189 journalists covering the initial protests or the conflict that persisted for over 10 years, have been killed in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Syria and Yemen (Kajjo, Sahinkaya, and Abdulla 2021). Consequently, studies exploring safety and journalistic practices post-“Arab Spring” have also grown. For example, El Issawi (2020) explored the post-protest experiences of Egyptian journalists while Jayasekera (2016) has examined the dangers of practicing journalism in an environment, where reporters have faced death sentences and newspapers have been forced to shut down, in a harsh reminder that despite the uprisings, it remains a dream for many journalists to produce and share information without facing physical or moral threats. More recently, under-researched topics such as the use of statistics and numbers in articulating business and financial news in the Arab world (Alaqil and Lugo-Ocando 2021), changing narratives for journalistic and pedagogic discourses (Elbousty 2022) or journalistic coverage of organized crime in Mexico (Díaz-Cerveró and Daniel 2020) have also gained ground.

So what has been happening to journalism practice in the Global South since the renowned protests took off? How have Arab and other non-Western journalists’ professional identity transformed post-protests—if indeed it has? Using empirically driven methods and diverse theoretical mechanisms, this special issue has sought to uncover how the “Arab Spring” has changed journalistic practices in non-Western societies. We had hoped to include articles focusing on other regions beyond the Arab world and Africa, yet unfortunately, only articles focusing on these two aforementioned regions, along with the United Kingdom were accepted. However, in this introduction, we have also sought to capture some of the developments in continents such as Latin America and Asia, referencing recent studies from these regions. We sought to initiate conversations focusing on the legacy issues that the uprisings have potentially had on non-Western journalism. It goes without saying that the situation remains complex with, on one hand, opportunities for “pushing the boundaries” have been emerging, whilst on the other, some regions of the Global South are facing further restrictions especially with the spread of conflict including the Sahel region of Africa with Syrian and Libran civil wars taking centre stage. Other challenges include increasing security fears in Algeria, Mauritania and Morocco (Hill and Cavatorta 2019), repression of press rights in China and in some counties in the Arab region (Sakr 2013), Africa (Wasserman 2012) Latin America (Sallie and Márquez Ramírez 2018) and Asia (Sharma 2018).

What do we mean by “Journalism and the Global South?”

The “Arab Spring” offers an excellent opportunity to study comparative journalistic practices in less affluent nations, an amalgamated region of multifaceted cultural dimensions that has become known as the Global South, home to diverse journalistic systems and traditions. Here, social media and other digital media technologies have influenced traditional journalistic practice even though the credibility of work produced by online-based journalists has been questioned as studies in Kenya (Muindi 2018); Egypt (Al Ashry and Alkhudari 2019) and Mexico (McPherson 2012) have shown. Journalism and the Global South is seen as providing an opportunity to challenge “hegemonic epistemologies and ontologies of Western-centric journalism studies”

(Mutsvaïro et al. 2021). Others consider it a way of showcasing diverse forms of journalism emerging in previously underrepresented regions of the world (Gladkova and Jamil 2020; Salaverría and de-Lima-Santos 2021; Iqani and Resende 2019). Journalism and the Global South is currently gaining plenty of interest among scholars with our sister publication *Journalism Studies* dedicating two forthcoming special issues—one edited by Moyo (2022) and the other by Nguyen (2022)—to journalistic developments in or in relation with the region.

Lugo-Ocando (2020) argues that the origins of the field cannot be confined to or associated only with Western civilization as journalism existed in different forms in the colonies even before European arrival. Justifying the chosen focus of their *Journalism in the Global South* special issue, which dedicated research-based interrogations on journalism practice in Brazil and South Africa, Wasserman and de Beer (2010, 143) suggested that the two countries shared “characteristics that make them obvious points of focus for a comparative study of the political, economic and social conditions within which journalism is practiced and studied in two emerging democracies in the global South.” This meant that to understand the real purpose and function of journalists in these two countries, it was important to at least secure a greater understanding of journalistic challenges and opportunities both in Brazil and South Africa

In defining journalism and the Global South, (Mutsvaïro and Orgeret, forthcoming) suggest “it’s perhaps best to start by defining what it’s not. It’s not just about providing a journalistic perspective emerging from the Global South,” before conceptualising it as a way of stimulating South–South and North–South dialogues and commitments to collaborate and cooperate in holistically conceptualizing the journalism field of study. The call feeds into discussions on diversity and inclusivity in the field (Porto 2005; Tandoc et al. 2020). *Journalism and the Global South* advocates a robust, comprehensive understanding to journalism norms and standards and questions whether professional ethics can be universally applied. It also seeks to highlight some “success stories” and offer a counter-narrative to the usual habit of only highlighting challenges when analysing professional practice particularly in non-Western environments. The focus on challenges, while certainly important, leads to a missed opportunity to try and emphasize existing potential and relevant positives including, for example, active networks of journalists which facilitate successful, award-winning, cross-border investigations, recognizable pathways and approaches to media reform, locally led initiatives to tame disinformation and “fake news”, as well as journalistic exposes that have led to the resignation of powerful politicians across the region. Although several countries in the Global South are challenging environments to practice journalism in, the media do often provide space for alternative discourses as confirmed by Radcliffe’s (2021) report, which identifies some of the innovative ways journalists in the Global South are adopting to tell their stories in spite of widespread challenges.

Journalistic practice in the Global South, a term which mostly brings together countries with a shared history of colonization, should not be seen to provide uniform ways in which journalism is practiced. Neither should the Global South be seen only from a geographical and colonial perspective because other countries located in the West such as Ireland have also experienced colonialization. Due to different cultures, beliefs and political systems, it is not uncommon for journalists living in two separate

countries located on the same continent to experience marked differences in their professional practice beyond de-westernizing (Waisbord and Mellado 2014) or decolonizing journalism studies as a field (Aujla-Sidhu 2022). It is therefore important to see journalism and the Global South as a platform for fostering conversations about journalism especially in an era dominated by a myriad of problems including pandemics, increased political polarization and the safety of journalists.

Technological Impact on non-Western Journalism

The prevalence and advancement of technologies is influencing journalism practice in the Global South. For example, research has shown the infusion of artificial intelligence in newsroom activities in several African countries (Kothari and Cruikshank 2022; Munoriyarwa, Sarah, and Gilbert 2021). At the same time, some countries such as Eritrea have remained closed with working conditions for journalists remaining dire. Correspondingly, resurgent authoritarianism has long impinged upon the rights of Arab journalists (Norman 2020) leading to a longstanding adversarial relationship between Arab governments and journalists. In fact, the Middle East remains one of the regions with “the least press freedom” (Eko 2012, 360) and overt censorship is remarkably commonplace Pintak (2009). Some countries like Egypt and Tunisia, which emerged with new governments following the 2010–2011 uprisings have adopted a “neo-authoritarian” approach towards journalists, which Allam (2019, 1274) argues permits media firms to act as the “vehicle that transports state messages and plans to the common people.” Furthermore, research by Badr (2015, 2019, 2) has shown that as politics moves into a riotous online environment in many regions of the world, despotic regimes in the Middle East and North Africa have also been scaling up surveillance mechanisms on social media arguing “that politics, not media, come first.”

Using grassroots mass appeal and tactical digital prowess, “Arab Spring” protesters sought overwhelmingly transformative and radical political change. But as Timm and York (2012) posit, totalitarian regimes have proven to be resilient to political change by purchasing North American and European technologies, which they have used to arm-twist and deter democratic movements, intercepting their communications and identifying their location to preserve their power. Despite these and various other quagmires, other studies (e.g., Bebawi 2016b, 2021) have suggested investigative journalism could play an important role towards revolutionising discursive arenas and communicative spaces in the region. Better still, with soft authoritarian systems like Morocco allowing certain forms of media openness and even dissent (Hafez 2008), it is important to note that the gloominess that is often associated with Arab journalism is not always precise.

Several studies have demonstrated journalism’s multiple roles in society combining both audience and journalists’ perceptions on the deep-seated relationship between journalism and the community it serves (Deuze 2005; Hallin and Mancini 2004; Dahlgren 2009; Christians et al. 2009; Hanitzsch and Vos 2017). But defining what constitutes journalism and drawing the line between journalists and non-journalists has also become a difficult task particularly under the auspices of the digital age, which gives everyone an opportunity to potentially participate in the newsgathering and

dissemination processes. Hafez (2008) argues that over the years, a new emerging public sphere that is tolerant to debate and discussions on entrenched taboos of Middle Eastern and North African societies has been emerging, creating new opportunities for Arab journalism. Furthermore, research has shown Arab journalists censuring the post-9/11 U.S. for failing to respect its values, which they more or less share (Pintak and Ginges 2008). Mellor (2014) uses Zelizer's (1997) interpretive community to position Arab journalism as a community of professionals. Hamdy (2016) blames colonial powers for limiting and discouraging freedom of expression, a practice she argues forced Arab journalists to develop unique approaches to dealing with censorship and authoritarianism. Technological innovations, she further argues, have played a central role in influencing the current and future directions on journalism in the Arab world, whose history, she states, began in 19th century with the evolution of newspapers and presses in Iraq, Egypt, and Syria.

But the increasing influence of technological changes has also been felt across various newsrooms in non-Western societies beyond the Arab region. Empirical studies by Norman and Al Nashmi (2019) have corroborated viewpoints that data journalism is gaining traction in the region while Middle Eastern and African universities and colleges are also adopting various technologies to beef up journalism training (Mutsvauro and Bebawi 2019). Also, Borges-Rey (2019) or Mitchelstein and Boczkowski (2021, 130) highlight some of the main challenges facing data and digital journalism in Latin America including the exclusion of scholarship from this region in mainstream academic sources in the West along with "lack of representativeness, lack of reflexivity, lack of decentering, and lack of cosmopolitanism." A report by Dennis and Wood (2017) showed that citizens of Arab nations were more likely than Americans to consume news from social media, with the younger generation more than willing to trust social media as a source of news than older people. The report further showed the importance of mobile technologies in the process of dispatching and sharing news with 67% of the 7000 people who participated in the study getting their news from social media.

Female Middle Eastern and North African journalists and activists have been actively demanding change in the wake of the "Arab Spring," propounds Al-Rawi (2020a). At the heart of their demands is the momentum gained and aided by digital activism, which allows them to protest silently and loudly while rejecting their long-held inferior status (Khamis and Mili 2018). Gender divide features prominently in Hankir's (2020)'s book featuring personal reporting accounts by 19 female journalists of Arab origin. The book documents painstaking yet compelling stories of horror and anguish including sexual assaults experienced by some of the female journalists in the line of duty across the Arab world. Also, Miladi (2010) notes that spirited and momentous actions, often led by prominent Arab women, have also left female Arab journalists empowered. These include Jordan's Queen Rania whose "Arab women's media campaign" was helping dismantling stereotypes about the participation of Arab women in the journalism profession. Moreover, argues Miladi, the dominance of Arab women on the frontlines of war reporting is also helping change the image and perceptions of female journalists across the Arab world.

The problems faced by Arab journalists are however not unique to the region. Studies elsewhere in the Global South have shown state interference in the work of

journalists was a common practice preferred particularly by authoritarian governments. For example, Frère (2015) has highlighted an upsurge of pluralist authoritarianism within Francophone African media systems while Ogola (2015) postulates that despite visible gains, African journalism was fraught with consistent government interference and harsh laws. In Latin America, Waisbord (2012, 507) argues the resurgence of populism makes it practically impossible to reunite the relationship between journalism and democracy on one hand and journalism and populism on the other, given its “historically conflictive relationship with democracy.” Several factors including long-running authoritarian legislation and oligarchic ownership of media outlets were also identified in a study by Hughes and Lawson (2007) as the main impediments to media opening in Latin America.

Rethinking Journalism Practice and Identity

Consequently, scholarly work about journalistic practice in non-Western societies has largely focused on state restrictions to media freedom (Sakr 2007; Rugh 2004), especially with regards to satellite television (Powers and El-Nawawy 2009; Rinnawi 2006; Barkho 2007; Zayani 2008; Seib 2008; Bebawi 2016a) and the recent rise of online platforms and social media usage during the “Arab Spring” uprisings (Hudson, Iskandar, and Kirk 2014; Bossio and Bebawi 2012). Arab media studies have yet to adequately interrogate trends in journalistic training, newsroom practices, and the culture of Arab journalism. The notion of “culture of journalism” has been defined by Zelizer as follows: “[u]nlike the institution, which focuses on journalism’s role in the large-scale rendering of power in society, the culture of journalism targets how journalistic practices, routines and conventions take on meaning internally for and among journalists” (Zelizer 2005, 200). Globally, different cultures of journalism become distinctly visible; the practices, routines and conventions of journalism have different meanings for Arab journalists than for Western, for example. In a similar vein, Deuze (2002) investigated news cultures in different national contexts, and accordingly defines national news culture “as an intervening variable between people (cf. journalists, sources, or publics) and a given “objective” situation (cf. media events, organizations, infrastructures, and systems) through which citizens inform or are informed, [and] can be seen as partly carried by the broadly defined and operationalized profile of media professionals within a given national context” (Deuze 2002, 134).

Historically, journalists in the Global South have taken many professional and societal roles and these have been dependent on the political landscape of their particular nations. Nonetheless, in a highly politically active region, they have seen themselves as playing a strong role despite state restrictions. To better understand these roles, Mellor (2007) explored the journalistic identity of Arab journalists through a textual study of news stories printed during the Iraq War—before the rise of the “Arab Spring” protests. The roles that were identified ranged from: (1) The onlooker where Arab journalists were reporting on events and statements made by those in power. They also took on the role of the (2) auditor or watchdog, as Mellor puts it, whereby Arab journalists were questioning the reliability of these events and statements. And finally, the role of the Arab journalist as a (3) truth martyr where journalists refer to

themselves as being actors in the event itself, especially when journalists themselves were victims in the event (Mellor 2007, 142–154). From these three roles that Mellor identifies, we see an active role whereby—especially in roles (2) and (3)—journalists see themselves as influencing the message. A similar role was seen in a study conducted by Bebawi (2016a) on a comparison between reporters from a Western background to those from an Arab background who worked for the same newsroom in Al Jazeera English (AJE). It was found that the Arab reporters were more involved in the coverage by providing an interpretation of the events. Arab reporters tended to provide more insight into the historical, political and ideological contexts to the events, which in turn offered an Arab discourse and narrative. For an English news organisation, like Al Jazeera English, which catered for a global audience, this was clearly an important role that these particular Arab journalists saw themselves as taking—that is telling the Arab perspective.

There are numerous studies that discuss restrictions placed on the practice of Arab journalism (e.g., Amin 2002) or Latin American journalism (Cole 1996). These restrictions have the capacity to encumber the journalistic roles described above. Yet, as stated at the start of this article, the “Arab Spring” protests brought along a transformative dynamic to the cutbacks placed on journalists in the Global South, especially as social media platforms have provided them with a platform for a more independent journalistic practice. They have therefore witnessed an opening up of the mediated public sphere. Yet as the protests unfolded and the aftermath of the “Arab Spring” became more apparent, the possibilities have slowly diminished. Arab journalists for example, have been finding that they are not only being constrained by those in power but are also increasingly becoming isolated and losing the support of the society. Due to ongoing turmoil and influx of refugees into neighbouring countries, people from Arab countries are further pessimistic of democratic possibilities and that includes journalists who want to report the truth. In turn, Arab societies have become critical of journalists “who are attempting to uncover government corruption and state negligence, and hold those in power accountable” (Bebawi 2016b, 131).

The region can be divided into two separate categories: conflict and non-conflict countries, and accordingly the pressures and restrictions. For instance, many studies have found connections between investigative reporting with watchdog journalism, whose aim for the large part is to ensure that those in position of power and authority do not abuse the trust bestowed upon them (de Burgh 2000, 2008; Hahn and Stalph 2018; Márquez-Ramírez et al. 2020). Horrie (2008, 114) defines investigative journalism as “a generic form in which the journalist or newspaper initiates the story based on a suspicion of wrongdoing.” As corroborated in Al Noufal’s accounts, many Arab journalists have discovered that employing investigative techniques can be a daunting task especially in restrictive political environments that are not tolerant to dissent or questioning authority. However, even in the West, the watchdog role has been rejected by Mills (1956, 315) who sees journalism as “lapdogs” of several interests including political control (Herman and Chomsky 1988), social control (Watson 2003) business interest (Waisbord 2002) or (Chambers 2000).

Access to information still remains a huge considerable problem. Before the “Arab Spring”, there were many Freedom of Information (Fol) laws that were drafted and

approved in countries such as Yemen. Yet as a result of the civil war there, these Fols laws were scraped. Hence access to data and information remain an obstacle. If journalists are “mediating agencies that allow for the relay of information to take place within society” Zelizer (2004, 26) then they must have access to information so that they can accomplish their mandate. But when efforts to seek information are hindered, it therefore makes it difficult for Arab journalists to do their job. However, such normative expectations of journalism have practical implications in regions and countries prone to authoritarianism. McQuail (2010) has argued that journalism’s main function in society is to gather and furnish citizens with information that help support and sustain democracy. This approach is not always applicable to some countries in the Global South, who are opposed to or are unwilling to recognise the norms of Western democracy, itself a complex and contested concept. Another major concern is the widespread proliferation of disinformation in the region, as is the case, arguably, with the rest of the world (Jamil and Appiah-Adjei 2020). In Syria, for example, stories that are fabricated means that it is a challenge for Syrian investigative reporters to operate within an environment of truth-telling. Reporters in the Global South aim to facilitate change and achieve impact, and in some cases, investigative journalism has the capacity to address war-related issues and set a base for building possibilities for political reform post-conflict. Whether this has been achieved over a decade after the “Arab Spring” protests is a major question that remains unanswered.

Special Issue Advancements

This introductory paper is followed by Ahmed Al Rawi and Adel Iskandar’s (2021) attempt to accentuate Arab governmental position towards the “Arab Spring.” They study language expressions from 10 Arab state news agencies to assess official state attitudes towards the uprisings. Using a discursive propagators theoretical approach, they conclude that state-run news agencies not only help us gain a deeper understanding on official governmental views on the protests but also provide a window of opportunity to study mostly under-researched areas of journalistic practice, including Arab language media and embrace the role they play in setting the tone for what journalists in authoritarian establishments can cover or not. Their findings underscore the need to embrace the transformational effect the pro-democracy uprisings had while also understanding that in some states government repression, marked by rampant arrest of journalists and continuous censorship, hasn’t entirely ended. Hanan Badr (2021) follows next with her analysis of the struggles Egyptian journalists face, many years after the “Arab Spring” originally commenced. She conducts a qualitative media analysis of three newspapers and interviews 14 journalists with her findings showing a deep-seated development of hierarchies which often lead to profound rivalries among journalists, something which she argues threatens journalism practice. Her findings show that non-traditional journalists identified in her research as digital and freelance journalists work under unfavorable conditions and face spontaneous acts of resistance in a society that openly accepts print journalists due to longstanding legal loopholes. Badr’s research shows that despite the noted gains, journalists across the

region work under difficult sometimes deadly conditions, where they are easily exposed to impunity, imprisonment or surveillance.

Allen Munoriyarwa and Albert Chibuwe's Munoriyarwa and Chibuwe (2021) piece identifies the evolving nature of digital journalism in a post-coup era in Zimbabwe. Their research reflects on the reemergence of guerrilla journalism and open sourcing of news in an increasingly digitalized southern African nation, which has seen both activists and journalists adopting "Arab Spring" tactics in an effort to fight off rising authoritarianism. Similarly, their study cautions on the dangers journalists, who routinely have to pay a heavy price for confronting authorities, increasingly face while pursuing their professional activities. Schapals and Harb (2021) then use the "Arab Spring" coupled with interviews with 10 British-based journalists and a content analysis of six main news providers in the United Kingdom as points of departure in their investigation on non-traditional journalistic sourcing and verification. In-depth interviews with journalists revealed that social media platforms played a complementary rather than exclusive role to long-held professional sourcing and verification practices. Rather than using social media platforms as reliable sources of information, journalists attested to preferring to use individuals, particularly those known to them, as trusted sources. Ending the empirical section is an article by Rasha El-Ibiary and Sahar Khamis, who trace the challenges of working as a female journalist in Egypt post-Arab Spring and find that issues such as restricted journalistic autonomy, limited access to information and technology and sexual harassment make it difficult for female journalists to work in patriarchal-driven newsrooms, showing little progress has been recorded insofar as advancing feminist justice issues in Arab journalism is concerned. The issue concludes with two separate commentary pieces by Sadia Jamil and Lawrence Pintak.

Conclusion

The state of journalism in the Arab world today remains in a transformative stage, as its evolution throughout history has never been linear. As outlined in this introductory article, journalists from the Global South are going through similar patterns. Plenty of shared experiences exist between journalists working and living in non-Western societies. However, it is important to keep in mind, that despite the challenges that journalists from the Global South face, there are at the same time some inspiring attempts that deserve attention. The purpose of this introduction was to draw attention to challenges currently inhibiting journalism practice in the Global South while also sharing some of the opportunities that are currently emerging in the region, post-"Arab Spring." These are not confined only to digital realms given the inaccessibility of such platforms among journalists working and living in poorer nations of the world. With this, we hope to encourage and inspire new research into the increasingly changing professional practices for journalists working in less affluent nations.

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