The Future of Quality News Journalism

A Cross-Continental Analysis

Edited by
Peter J. Anderson, George Ogola,
and Michael Williams

The Future of Quality News Journalism

"This impressive work of scholarship and analysis spotlights the essential role that quality journalism and news organizations plays in civil society and focuses urgently needed attention on the challenges of sustaining such enterprises."—Eric Freedman, Michigan State University

In the face of the continuously changing challenges of the digital age, it is difficult for quality news journalism to survive on any significant scale if a means for adequately funding it is not available. This new study, a follow-up to 2007's *The Future of Journalism in the Advanced Democracies*, includes a comparative analysis of possible alternative business models that may save the future of the quality news business across the developed, intermediate, and developing worlds. Its detailed evaluation encompasses also the different ways in which wider key issues are affecting the prospects for quality news as a core ingredient of effectively working democracies. It focuses on the United States, the United Kingdom, South Africa, India, Kenya, and selected parts of the Arab World, providing a detailed cross-cultural survey of different approaches to addressing these various issues. To keep the study firmly rooted in the "real world" the contributors include distinguished practitioners as well as experienced academics.

Peter J. Anderson is Reader in News Media and Research Coordinator for the School of Journalism and Digital Communication at the University of Central Lancashire, UK.

George Ogola is a Senior Lecturer in Journalism at the University of Central Lancashire, UK.

Michael Williams is a Senior Lecturer in Journalism at the University of Central Lancashire, UK, and continues to practise as a national newspaper journalist.

Routledge Research in Journalism

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Journalism

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In Memoriam, Robert Stephens Beers

Robert S. Beers enjoyed the sort of journalistic career that many imagine but few experience. Robert began as a newspaper reporter and never lost his love for the printed word, but he will be remembered for his work as an award-winning television correspondent, documentary producer and, latterly, a respected and much-loved teacher.

During a career that spanned decades, the job—Robert always regarded journalism as a "job"—took him from reporting conflict in Central and South America to shining a light on the darkness of the former Soviet Union. He covered four American presidential elections and interviewed a raft of world leaders, from Fidel Castro and Yasser Arafat to Indira Gandhi and the former Shah of Iran. His documentaries and special reports from virtually all over the globe gave viewers fascinating insights on the world's hot spots as well as demonstrating his rare clarity and understanding of the events.

Like many journalists, Bob had a mistrust of authority and 'spin', a dislike of bureaucracy and paperwork. He adored travel, films and writers such as Steinbeck, Hemingway and Le Carré. Like any reporter, Robert loved gossip, but he was also a wonderful raconteur, regaling colleagues and students with affectionate stories about the Hollywood greats: Burt Lancaster, Sophia Loren and Orson Welles. Everything and everyone fascinated him whether he was in New York, Delhi or Edinburgh. This gentle and self-effacing man also adored his family.

Robert joined the University of Central Lancashire in 2004 and helped develop the first postgraduate International Journalism course in the United Kingdom. Students from around the world appreciated his wisdom and kindliness, and through them Robert's commitment to rigorous journalism lives on.

He finished his contribution to this book shortly before his death in February 2013, and we dedicate it to him. We hope it is a fitting tribute to a cherished colleague and inspiring teacher.

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Introduction

Peter J. Anderson

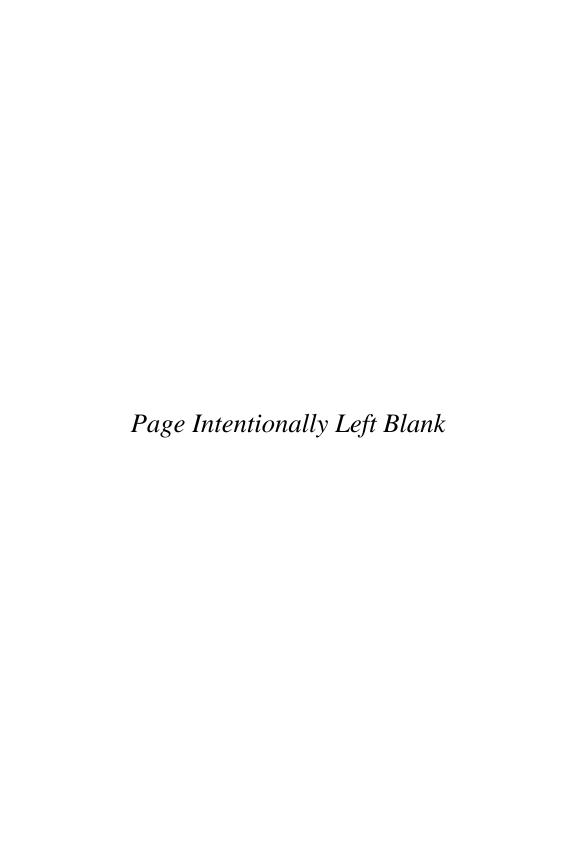The key purposes of this project are to evaluate critically the current state of quality hard news journalism within the core case study societies, together with the chances of preserving, enhancing and spreading some of the best practices within it that currently are visible to the various contributing authors. Given the fundamental importance of economics in underpinning quality news operations of any size and range, one of the key questions that will be addressed asks to what extent sustainable business models can be found for this type of journalism in the various forms in which it exists.

Obviously, it is impossible to cover all of the world's continents in a book of this size, while simultaneously retaining depth as well as breadth of analysis, and to cover anything other than key states from within those continents that are actually analysed. A selection has to be made, therefore, from among the large number of potential case studies that is clearly supportable by a clear logic.

The inclusion of the USA is not only due to the fact that it is the most long-standing democracy in the Americas, and now one of the oldest in the modern world, but also because of its status as the most powerful single political, military and economic actor on the global stage, despite the rise of new challengers aspiring to its status. It is argued that it is vital that such a powerful entity has within it adequate means to keep its electorate informed about what is done in their name abroad as well as domestically, and that quality hard news journalism has a vital role to play in this regard.

Amongst the reasons for the UK's inclusion as Europe's representative— something that might seem ironic, given British attitudes towards the European Union—is the fact that it is home to the most powerful, respected and influential of the news providers within the democratic world, the BBC, together with two global quality newspaper brands in the form of the print/ online Guardian and Financial Times. No other European country is in a position to match these claims for inclusion.

South Africa chooses itself almost from within Africa, given its position as a democracy with one foot in the developed world and one very firmly still in the developing part of the global economy and its status as an

emerging, if troubled, regional superpower. It is also a new democracy in comparison to the much older examples of the UK and the USA, and this in itself makes for a useful point of contrast.

Kenya, on the other hand, provides a fascinating example of a democracy that is still very much in the developing world, and this provides a useful comparison with, and contrast to, its more economically advanced South African colleague. It is attempting to manage a complex tapestry of political, ethnic, cultural, historical and economic forces and influences that together create a very distinctive context for its news media and the role that they play within Kenyan society. As such, it forms a study that introduces readers outside Africa to some of the subtle nuances and details of the relationship between democracy and journalism that so distinguish this continent from the others within the book, and it is for this reason that Africa is represented by two states within the study.

India's position as an emerging economic and media superpower with the potential to rival non-democratic China justifies its position as the selected Asian case study, together with the fact that some of the key trends in media development within it appear to be running counter to those in other crucial parts of the world. As such, it will provide a useful contrast to some of the other case studies.

Finally, the 'Arab Spring' and its consequences, both promising and otherwise, have highlighted the changes, innovations and continuities in the role and potential of the news media within one of the most crucial regions on the planet. The timeliness of these, together with the significance of the growing demands for democracy within key countries within the region, justifies its inclusion as an additional case study.

The most attention, in terms of chapter numbers, will be given to the United States and the United Kingdom, given their continuing status as the leading democratic global news media players. Two chapters are devoted to Africa as a result of the need to accommodate a detailed study of two countries in one chapter for the reasons stated previously *and* the complexity of some of the new media developments that are occurring in parts of the continent, something that the editors felt required a chapter in itself for adequate analysis. The vastness of India and its media networks make it impractical to try and fit detailed coverage of all of its diverse media structures and themes into a book of this size, so the focus instead is on identifying the key trends within Indian quality news journalism and investigating the extent to which they appear to be mirroring or running counter to the journalism of the other case study countries. While India is given only one chapter, that chapter not only provides useful insights into the key developments and the potential of the country's news media, but also throws valuable light on their implications for wider trends in the news media internationally.

The space limitations of the book leave only one chapter for the Arab World, also. However, as with India, that chapter is a substantial one

and will focus on the key trends within the region and the problems and opportunities that they offer for quality news journalism and its political and economic sustainability.

It should be emphasised that the exclusion of the democracies of Australia, New Zealand and Japan, for example, does not mean that they are regarded as insignificant in a global news media context, particularly given Japan's continuing leading role within the global economy. They are not included simply because of the limitations of space and the necessity to make difficult choices within that context.

In terms of its structure, the book begins with a detailed examination of how quality hard news journalism can be defined, conceptualised in its various forms and measured. This provides a theoretical underpinning that all of the other chapters draw upon as necessary. This is followed by an exploration of the current and likely future state of what is often regarded as the pinnacle of hard news journalism: investigative journalism. For those readers who would like some additional discussion of the continuing importance of the quality news media, which is impossible to include in a book of this size, an extra chapter by the lead editor has been provided via a web link (http://clok.uclan.ac.uk/7824).

The next section of the book looks at one of the key enabling factors that determines the extent to which quality hard news journalism can survive and grow: the business models that fund it. Three chapters explore the core economic questions currently facing the different sectors of the news industry within the developed, intermediate and developing worlds. In line with the overall philosophy behind the book, the authors within this section include a leading practitioner from within the news business, and, as in the next section, the chapter formatting is deliberately flexible to include this mix. This mixture of academics and practitioners enables the book to keep its proverbial feet firmly within the 'real world'. The detailed country-by-country studies then follow in the manner outlined previously, with each relevant section analysing the current quality levels in the hard news journalism of the various case study states and what needs to be done to maintain or improve them in the future. Overall conclusions are drawn at the end of the book, which also includes an appropriate contribution to the debate concerning the future of quality news journalism within democratic societies.

In addition, it should be mentioned that, wherever relevant, the role and value of external news providers (that are additional to the BBC and are alleged to provide a quality news product) within case study countries and continents will be critically assessed. These include such well-known names as Internews, CNN, Radio Free Asia, Reuters, Associated Press, Agence France-Presse, Bloomberg and Al Jazeera.

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