



Is It Us or Them? The Challenge of Getting Journalists to Participate in Academic Research

Nicole Blanchett, Claudia Mellado, Colette Brin, Sama Nemat Allah & Cheryl Vallender

To cite this article: Nicole Blanchett, Claudia Mellado, Colette Brin, Sama Nemat Allah & Cheryl Vallender (2023): Is It Us or Them? The Challenge of Getting Journalists to Participate in Academic Research, *Journalism Studies*, DOI: [10.1080/1461670X.2023.2216796](https://doi.org/10.1080/1461670X.2023.2216796)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/1461670X.2023.2216796>



Published online: 26 May 2023.



Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)




View related articles [↗](#)



View Crossmark data [↗](#)



Is It Us or Them? The Challenge of Getting Journalists to Participate in Academic Research

Nicole Blanchett ^a, Claudia Mellado^b, Colette Brin^c, Sama Nemat Allah^a and Cheryl Vallender^d

^aSchool of Journalism, The Creative School, Toronto Metropolitan University, Toronto, Canada; ^bSchool of Journalism, Pontificia Universidad Católica de Valparaíso, Valparaíso, Chile; ^cDépartement d'information et de communication, Université Laval, Quebec City, Canada; ^dJournalism, Faculty of Animation, Art and Design, Sheridan College, Oakville, Canada

ABSTRACT

For journalism research rooted in a sociological framework, gaining access to journalists is crucial for data collection. However, journalists are documentably difficult to recruit as participants, frequently due to limited time and resources in shrinking newsrooms, sometimes because of roadblocks put up by leery newsroom management. As part of the data collection process for the Canadian branch of the international Journalistic Role Performance project, researchers tracked issues raised by journalists that may have impacted survey recruitment and completion. These issues were frequently grounded in the context of survey questions designed to be operationalizable in vastly different cultures, and were also documented by other researchers in both the Global North and South who were cooperating in this comparative study. Despite first refusing or completely refusing survey participation, though, some Canadian journalists were willing to be interviewed, giving researchers the opportunity to explore how to best engage journalists in the research process, and design research tools to be shared in different media systems. Using a lens of social exchange, this paper provides unique insight, from the perspective of researchers and participants, on the importance of relationship-building as a focal point in order to adequately contextualize findings within a sociology of news framework.

ARTICLE HISTORY

Received 8 May 2022
Accepted 15 May 2023

KEYWORDS

Journalism; journalists; sociological frameworks; role performance; surveys; comparative research

Introduction

As shown with a rich corpus of sociological news studies, better access to journalists leads to better analysis and more impactful and transferable findings for researchers; however, there is frequent hesitation for participation from journalists, which can be further complicated by newsroom managers who have little interest, and sometimes even apathy, for academic research. As noted by Schudson, "Social scientists who study the news speak a language that journalists mistrust and misunderstand" (1989, 263). During data collection in 2020 and 2021, researchers from the Canadian branch of the Journalistic Role

Performance (JRP) study documented difficulties recruiting survey participants and having participants complete surveys once recruited. Issues were sometimes rooted in challenges related to cross-national research, where shared methodological tools such as surveys have to be operationalizable in vastly diverse cultures, but were amplified by the pandemic and a destabilized industry facing severe resource-shortages worldwide. Many issues experienced by the Canadian team were mirrored in the experience of other JRP researchers in the Global North and South, spanning outlets in different media systems being studied on all platforms of delivery with different revenue sources and organizational models. Through analysis of interviews with Canadian journalists, contextualized by research notes from 29 of the 37 teams working on the JRP project, this paper explores how researchers around the globe might use lessons learned in Canada to improve chances of journalists' participation in research studies, enhance methodological tools and response rates, ascertain a better understanding of news practice, and better contextualize newswork by building better relationships with journalists. It builds on existing literature of journalism and comparative studies' methodology by exploring the following research questions:

RQ1: What types of issues impede journalists' participation in surveys and other research mechanisms crucial to sociological studies?

RQ2: What strategies could improve journalists' participation in comparative, sociological studies?

Sociological Framing

Although White's (1950) work on the gatekeeping of an individual journalist may seem anachronistic when considering the multiple modes of gatekeeping in digitized networks (Hermida 2020), there are aspects of the journalistic process observed by White that are comparable to practice in modern newsrooms (Blanchett 2021). Scholars are also developing gatekeeping theory for utilization in digital environments (Wallace 2018; Olsen, Solvoll, and Futsæter 2022; Singer 2023). Thus, in a field with rapidly changing technology (Wu, Tandoc, and Salmon 2019), sociologically-rooted methods continue to provide critical understanding of newsroom realities worldwide (Tandoc 2019; Moyo, Mare, and Matsilele 2019; Petre 2021) and critical examination of both journalism and the study of journalism on a continuum (Carlson and Lewis 2018). This includes the complex factors that shape editorial decision-making (Shoemaker and Vos 2009; Reese and Shoemaker 2016; Mellado et al. 2020) in newsrooms where "gatekeeping is the result of the socialization of the journalist" (Le Cam and Domingo 2015, 127). This is critical because even with new mechanisms of delivery and consumption and the increased agency of individuals to surface content, mainstream news organizations still have significant impact on public discourse and the amplification of (mis)information (Broockman and Kalla 2022; Benkler et al. 2020).

There is also evidence that scholars are widening the frame of sociological study from, as described in the call for papers for this special issue, "*deep-rooted Western-centrism*" and the historical lens of white men with the development of international comparative studies. These studies can bring researchers from the Global North and South together (Mellado 2020; Hanitzsch et al. 2019; Weaver and Willnat 2012) while acknowledging

the unique circumstances in specific media systems (Hallin and Mancini 2012). However, challenges remain in terms of ensuring methodological consistency with such research and “... there is a need to reflect more openly and systematically on collaborative experiences” involving “large (international) research projects so that others embarking on similar endeavors could learn from the experiences” (Volk 2021, 266).

A Review of Methodological Literature

The second wave of the Journalistic Role Performance (JRP) project offers a case study in such research practice. The manifestation of professional roles in the news that reaches the public has grown increasingly complex with the development of digital jobs in every type of newsroom (Westlund and Ekström 2019; Weber and Kosterich 2018)—jobs that may not meet traditional definitions of journalism (Shapiro 2014). Building on the first wave of the study (Mellado et al. 2020; Wang et al. 2017; Márquez-Ramírez et al. 2020; Humanes et al. 2021), JRP research teams in 37 countries used survey data for the purpose of measuring the gap between ideals and performance, comparing content produced to journalists’ perceptions of what is produced and conceptions of journalistic ideals (Mellado 2015, 2020), as opposed to using survey data alone to analyze standards of practice or professional doxa (eg., Hanitzsch et al. 2019). The JRP methodology is unique in terms of large, comparative journalism studies. Only 2.9% of published comparative research analyzed by Hanusch and Vos (2020) used mixed methods between 2000 and 2015. However, as with any study with a sociologically driven methodology, there has to be cooperation from the people inhabiting the cultural context being examined in order to successfully implement research tools, and, particular to journalism research, this can be a challenge.

Surveys offer advantages for research in comparison to ethnography and in-depth interviews: notably, their potential for generalizability, statistical inferences, and representation of national populations (Molyneux and Zamith 2020). These advantages are not without risks or costs. Constituting a probability sample for journalists in particular, in the absence of a complete, current, and accessible national list of names, affiliations, and email addresses, would prove an extremely time-consuming and challenging task (Molyneux and Zamith 2020). Even determining the size of the reference population is a challenge (Örnebring and Mellado 2018). Classifications of occupations can be quite broad. For example, Statistics Canada (2021) includes “web critic” as an example of a job falling in the “journalist” category, as well as freelancers who may earn most of their revenue from non-journalistic activities, but, on the other hand, has separate categories for broadcasters, editors, and photojournalists. As a result, this source is considered problematic by journalism scholars (Shapiro 2015).

Online surveys generally tend to produce low response rates and high, or undetermined, levels of nonresponse bias (Fricker 2008). In today’s digital communication environment, a request to participate in a survey is one of numerous e-mail, text, or social media messages a person can receive in a given day. Dillman, Smyth, and Christian (2014) note that social interaction in general has become more spontaneous and based on spur-of-the-moment decisions: “We often decide whether to ignore, delete, postpone, or respond to these requests based on quick assessments of only a few written words” (26). A survey invitation can easily get lost in the flooded inboxes of journalists, among

the copious press releases, tips, comments, and increasing amounts of harassing messages (Eschner 2022).

Qualitative methods, especially semi-structured interviews, may be more efficient to access elite actors (senior editors and managers) who will not take the time to fill out questionnaires (Thurman 2018), and also to reconstruct the meaning of those practices through the lens of journalistic discourse. However, there is also the issue of journalists answering questions based on idealized norms as opposed to their actual practice (Mellado and Van Dalen 2014; Hanitzsch and Vos 2017). And even though more than three times the amount of content analysis is being done compared to survey studies in comparative research—39% versus 10.9% from 2000 to 2015—survey studies are cited in almost equal proportion to content analysis (Hanusch and Vos 2020). Therefore, survey studies form a disproportionate level of citations compared to other types of published comparative research, even though there is an acknowledged issue with survey response rates.

Rapid change and turmoil within industry (Nelson 2018; Public Policy Forum 2022), including massive reductions in journalistic jobs and professional precarity (Deuze and Witschge 2018; Winseck 2021), are making it increasingly difficult to access newswriters the world over. As noted by Hare (2022), “For an industry that prizes transparency” journalists are “experts at asking for it and rotten at actually offering it.” Lack of access to journalists can lead to misinterpretation of practice (Blanchett Neheli 2018). Lack of access also might help explain why content analysis is “by far the most popular method” (Hanusch and Vos 2020, 322) of quantitative analysis to study journalism in both comparative and other studies: researchers may not be able to access journalists, but the content they create is ubiquitous. However, “news stories cannot be neatly excised from the larger media contexts in which they appear” (Carlson 2015, 176); views of journalists in addition to content analysis can provide richer perspectives on why or how gatekeeping decisions are made. For the study of the sociology of news to maintain its relevance, researchers need to make participation more attractive to historically reluctant newsroom managers and journalists.

In terms of survey participation, to overcome the reluctance of journalists, as with any other potential survey respondents, recruitment methods and questionnaires need to be less “researcher-centric” and more focused on participants’ benefits and costs of participation; building trust between the participant and surveyor is also critical (Dillman, Smyth, and Christian 2014). One way to maximize benefits is to frame participation as a form of expert assistance in solving problems relevant to their experience. Limiting the length and complexity of the questionnaire, as well as paying special attention to visual design and user experience, can reduce costs significantly. Partnering with organizations that have a positive relationship with the population being surveyed, such as a professional association or journalism school (ideally several to cover regional diversity), can help to establish trust. Dillman, Smyth, and Christian (2014) also recommend using multiple modes of communication for initial contact and response with potential respondents (e.g., email, phone) and “utiliz[ing] knowledge from past research and feedback from early contacts to adapt implementation procedures in order to reduce nonresponse error” (47–48). This paper advances such methodological practice by exploring how researchers might build better relationships with potential participants through social exchange, or helping them “find reasons for responding” (Dillman, Smyth, and Christian

2014, 21). This is essential in journalism studies because when “the dynamics of gatekeeping are in transition” (Vos 2015, 9), the best way to properly contextualize journalistic practice is to gain access to journalists.

Methodology

This paper focuses on the Canadian JRP team’s process of gathering data. Therefore, as opposed to situating the analysis of the data itself, its methodology is rooted in documenting the experience of researchers and journalists, while providing enough information to more broadly position the JRP study. This cross-national effort is based on data from news media outlets in 37 countries representing full democracies, transitional democracies, and authoritarian countries.¹ The experience of Canadian researchers during the data gathering process is contextualized by comparisons with the experience of researchers in other countries.

Drawing on the previous version of the study, which was conducted between 2013 and 2017 and analyzes professional roles in print media and national-desk news (Canada was not part of that phase), the new wave of the JRP project is meant to arrive at a better understanding of the factors that explain different models of journalism across the globe, as well as the gap between norms, professional ideals, and news practices. In order to address the link between the evaluative level and performative level of journalistic cultures, we conducted a survey on role conception and perceived role enactment with journalists working at the news outlets included in our sample. Analysis of data was based on standardized operationalization of the watchdog, civic, interventionist, loyal-facilitator, infotainment, and service roles in journalism. This allowed us to compare journalists’ evaluations with the average performance of their news media organization across countries, measured through content analysis. The timeframe for the overall study was 2020 and the fieldwork was carried out between 2020 and 2021.

The Canadian branch of the JRP study was unique, however, as it included Research Ethics Board² approval for both participant observation and semi-structured interview components, with the hope of providing even greater insight to findings (Blanchett et al. 2022). Researchers did not expect that this insight would include frank conversations with Canadian journalists critiquing the study itself: of the eight journalists who were formally interviewed³, six contacted the researchers with questions or concerns about the nature of the survey.

Sampling of Journalists for the JRP Study

To capture journalistic role conceptions and perceived role enactment, we surveyed journalists who worked at the media outlets included in our study at the time of the data collection (2020). Quota samples of journalists were used to match their responses with the average content of their news media organizations, depending on the size of each newsroom. The goal was not to provide statistical inferences to the wider population of journalists regarding role conception, but to use results as a resource to analyze the gap between ideals and practice. As have done other international studies of journalists (Lauerer and Hanitzsch 2019), the team in Canada used a non-probability sample with harvested e-mail lists compiled from the websites and social media feeds of those

organizations selected for content analysis, and included journalists whose work was part of the data in the content analysis. Although the JRP study primarily includes national media outlets, they differ in terms of size. Some are small (less than 50 journalists in the newsroom), some are medium (50 to 200 journalists in the newsroom), and some are large (more than 200 journalists in the newsroom).

Canadian journalists were contacted through publicly accessible email addresses and telephone numbers and invited to participate in the study. The surveys were largely conducted as web-based questionnaires, with some completed by telephone. Journalists were informed of the purpose of the study and all participants expressly consented to participate and were given information about data use, sharing, and publishing. While the global valid sample consisted of 2,615 survey responses from 252 news outlets, in Canada, we were able to achieve 113 valid responses from ten news organizations.

Measurements

Considering that a single news story is the outcome of several decision-making processes involving multiple individuals, our study compared journalists' perceptions to the average performance of their news organizations. The survey questionnaire measured journalists' conception of their professional roles and their perceived enactment of those roles. The survey also measured the journalists' perceived levels of professional autonomy, their use of different social media tools, and work and personal characteristics.

Based on the assumption that journalists provide more reliable and valid responses regarding practical issues than abstract normative statements that can have dissimilar meanings across cultures and even within newsrooms (Reich and Barnoy 2016; Shapiro et al. 2013), the members of this project collaboratively designed 40 statements to measure professional roles at the evaluative level, drawing on the questionnaire designed for the first wave of the project, refining and adding several measures to improve internal validity, and translating the indicators included in the content analysis (see Mellado 2020) into reporting practices that journalists were asked to rate in terms of their importance.

The questionnaire was translated and back-translated from English to Spanish, German, Italian, French, Arabic, Korean, Japanese, Polish, Hungarian, Russian, Portuguese, Serbian, Estonian, Hebrew, Chinese, Dutch, and Kinyarwanda. In Canada, the survey was distributed in both English and French. There were important differences in the achievement of the minimum required number of responses per outlet across countries. Responses were received from 89% of outlets being studied. Although all of the quotas were achieved in more than 69% of the participating outlets, 31% were excluded from the gap analysis as they did not meet the minimum required number of survey responses.

Twenty-nine of 37 research teams of the JRP study provided specific information with regard to factors that might have impeded success with collecting survey data in each of their countries as part of the process of merging the dataset. For this paper, problems identified by these researchers, including the Canadian team, were aggregated and visualized to determine overlapping areas of concern, and then compared and contrasted with issues raised by journalists in the Canadian interviews. Thematic analysis was performed on these interviews to identify commonalities with regards to questions/concerns about the survey tool and recruitment process that might have impeded journalists' participation. Findings from this analysis provide insight that could contribute to larger

conversations about methodological approaches to the sociology of news even outside of Canada.

Findings

Analysis and discussion of findings will be organized around the research questions.

RQ1: What types of issues impede journalists' participation in surveys and other research mechanisms crucial to sociological studies?

Recruitment

Based on data gathered through the JRP study, it is difficult to determine if there was one variable in terms of platform (online, newspaper, radio, or television), ownership source (publicly funded or traded or privately owned), or perceived political orientation of an outlet in terms of identifying the type of news organization at which it would be less likely to attain the participation of journalists in Canada. For example, due to its unique impact on the media landscape, three sites of study (or different platforms: online, radio, and television) were included for CBC, Canada's national public broadcaster. However, as identifying exact numbers of journalists working for each of the platforms was difficult to distinguish, each CBC platform/unit of study was considered to be part of a "large" organization in the framework of the methodology. Therefore, only the survey responses for journalists at CBC who selected the online platform as their primary mechanism of delivery were included in the international dataset because only that platform met the minimum number of survey respondents for a large organization (minimum 12); two CBC sites of study, radio and television, and 14 completed surveys from those sites, were excluded. Additionally, although CBC is one organization, as each platform was considered a separate outlet, this counted as two "outlets" excluded⁴ in survey responses at the international level. The complexity of both the organization and study methodology meant some surveys and outlets were excluded, even though there was participation.

Although researchers could not readily distinguish common variables of non-participation using survey data at an organizational level, there were documented challenges experienced by Canadian researchers recruiting journalists to participate in the survey. These challenges spanned organizations from all platforms and across all revenue models. There were also common issues identified with regard to getting journalists to complete the survey once participants had been recruited, and many of these were also documented at the international level.

Organizational-Level Impediments

Difficulties in securing permission from Canadian newsrooms to perform ethnography for the JRP project supports evidence of access issues related to journalism research. Only one of seven English-speaking organizations contacted in Canada would allow participant observation⁵ (no requests for participant observation were made to French-speaking outlets). Some sites of study did not respond, others refused to allow access to their newsrooms. Reasons included concern over how the audience might perceive editorial

decisions in a more polarized political climate and concern that researchers might share confidential or privileged information about processes. One organization that refused ethnographic participation also told employees they were not allowed to participate in the survey. After a meeting with senior management to explain the focus and scope of the study, the organization agreed it would not interfere with employees' participation, but would not encourage or promote the survey. As noted by Molyneux and Zamith (2020), when it comes to participating in research journalists are often "constrained by restrictive company policies, and remain adherent to an occupational ideology that hampers survey participation" (160).

Individual-Level Impediments

After struggling to recruit enough participants through email invitations, the Canadian team received additional ethics approval to recruit participants by phone. However, because of the pandemic, many journalists were working from home—there was no one in newsrooms to take the calls of Canadian research assistants trying to recruit participants. The pandemic also exacerbated issues of instability/resource shortages in newsrooms. One research assistant said that of the potential participants they spoke to, many did not want to spend scarce time on research they couldn't see the immediate value of (personal communication, January 11, 2022).

Another issue was that potential participants might have been interested but did not think they met the requirements to answer the survey. This was reflected in emails received from one Canadian journalist (Reporter 1, personal communication, October 15, 2020) who contacted researchers because he wasn't sure his sports reporting qualified as news, and another, (Reporter 3, personal communication, October 23, 2020), who wasn't sure if she should fill out the survey because she wrote lifestyle stories. Both of these reporters were freelancers, and represented ongoing deliberations within the industry about whose work counts as "journalism." The way data were collected helped mitigate one issue with regard to sampling of journalists noted by Molyneux and Zamith (2020): freelancers, who contribute significantly to journalistic output, are frequently left out of surveys targeted to, for example, lists of newsroom employees. As part of the JRP study included a content analysis, although no survey responses were matched to a story a particular journalist might have written, in Canada, content was used to identify journalists that could be part of the sample group. Every identifiable reporter with a publicly accessible email address whose content was captured in data collection was included in the sample group, including the two aforementioned journalists. Once JRP participants were recruited, however, there were additional issues getting them to complete the survey.

Completion

There were three areas identified by researchers with regard to completion of the survey/high dropout rates: the length of the survey, the lack of ability to give context to answers and perceived issues with the context of questions, and other issues related to survey design. These issues correlated with or sometimes crossed over into areas identified as challenges in terms of recruitment including an industry in flux with fewer journalists who had less time, and pandemic working conditions.

Too Busy, Too Long

Ensuring sufficient answers for complex analysis of a variety of journalistic roles required that the JRP survey cover a lot of ground, and would, as a result, take longer than the 10-minute ideal identified in previous research (eg., Molyneux and Zamith 2020). In Canada, only 44% of journalists who started the online survey finished it. A few French journalists completing the survey over the phone raised the issue of the length of the survey. Although these journalists went on to complete the survey with a research assistant recording their answers, the lack of French journalists who completed the survey online suggests length may have been an issue. Interviews with other Canadian participants provided some insight with regard to the high dropout rate, with English journalists who were formally interviewed not specifically referencing the length of the survey as an issue, but sharing other concerns.

Reporter 5 (personal communication, October 26, 2021) mentioned that they felt the more “practical” questions near the end of the survey had more worth. Reporter 4, before getting through the whole survey, contacted researchers and was critical of the questionnaire, particularly that he was not asked to share his role in the organization (personal communication, September 28, 2020); however, that question was asked at the end of the survey. This supports previous findings that ensuring surveys start with questions of higher value to respondents, particularly those that are practice-based versus abstract, may ensure higher response/better completion rates (Dillman, Smyth, and Christian 2014). However, determining what the most common priorities might be given the wide range of journalists and journalistic roles is no simple task, particularly with surveys designed for distribution in widely ranging media systems.

Issues of Context

Canadian journalists who had covered international news noted concerns with the survey related to cultural context, revealing how a journalist’s own experience might impact their perception of questions. Reporter 4 (personal communication, September 28, 2020) felt different types of questions might have better identified differences in journalistic practice in different media systems. He suggested questions might have included, for example, whether a journalist thought it was acceptable to have travel costs paid to cover stories or political campaigns; what might be acceptable practice for agreeing to on and off the record; and whether journalists paid sources for interviews. He said, “The standard in Canada, no, we do not pay sources. You definitely will find a different answer in many European countries.” He also noted his experience covering international stories such as G20 meetings and, as an example, how Angela Merkel regularly met with the German press corps but information shared was considered off the record. He reported on what was said as he felt he had no obligation to follow an informal agreement that was “understood” by the German reporters but he had not agreed to. For him, these were issues of trust that were not targeted in the survey tool; although, after a discussion with the principal investigator from Canada, the reporter did agree to complete the survey. Reporter 2 (personal communication, June 17, 2020) felt that in some places where journalists were dealing with overt corruption, directly criticizing or judging the actions of powerful individuals or speaking out directly against the government might be wholly appropriate, whereas in an environment such as Canada, his job

was more related to holding power to account. He refused to do the survey, but was more than willing to do a lengthy interview.

Although examples were added to survey questions in an effort to ensure they were answered more consistently within different media systems, in some cases, these examples appear to have caused confusion or controversy. One Canadian reporter took particular issue with the use of the term “racist” as a measure of whether a journalist might be revealing their “own way of seeing things.” This was in reaction to a survey question that used the example of “*personally describing the presidential administration of a government as chaotic, or a public figure as a racist.*” In an email she wrote:

It sets up a narrow scenario in which evidence of racism is disregarded by virtue of labeling it an opinion, rather than a well-analyzed term. It leans into the false sense of objectivity that permeates this industry and ignores media’s long history of supporting people in power rather than genuinely holding them to account. I also think this feeds into the generational reporting divide and puts added pressure on young, underpaid, precariously employed reporters to have to constantly fight the label of being activists just by virtue of them being willing to entertain more complicated ideas about objectivity (Reporter 6, personal communication, May 21, 2021).

She refused to do the survey because of her concerns with the framing of questions. However, she was willing to do an interview to discuss changing journalistic roles where, expanding on her previously voiced concerns, she said, “We have ways to evaluate whether something is racist. And if you actually go through and do that work, then you can say racist, and it’s reported, it’s not opinion” (Reporter 6, personal communication, November 17, 2021). This interview highlighted challenges creating surveys not only for different media systems, but within an industry where acceptable practice is in contestation.

A Canadian research assistant said one of the most consistent reasons journalists gave for not completing the survey was that they were only able to answer questions through multiple choice (personal communication, January 11, 2022). Several Canadian journalists noted that survey answers, both the options offered and the fact there was no room to provide a comment for context, resulted in simplification of complex processes and differing ideologies. Reporter 2 (personal communication, June 17, 2020) said:

The options that you were given were extraordinarily narrow and without context ... This came across in a number of questions. Basically, do you tell both sides of the story and it’s this sort of binary way of approaching news that I think is fundamentally false. Sometimes a story has only one side, sometimes it has 10 sides; it just entirely depends on the story itself. So, I felt that the questions were so context-free ...

Survey Mechanisms

Answering survey questions from multiple perspectives (the importance participants personally placed on certain journalistic roles, or their conception of journalistic ideals, and how they thought those goals were enacted at an organizational level) was also identified as an issue. One Canadian journalist said, “I think I found it difficult to always sort of imagine what the institution would do” (Reporter 5, personal communication, October 26, 2020). Another said he worked at a large organization and didn’t “participate in any way in the daily editorial decisions” (Reporter 4, personal communication, September

28, 2020) of much of the news outlet and also didn't think he could accurately reflect perceived role enactment outside of his own experience. Although this multi-lens framework was integral to the particular methodology of the JRP study, this comment from the reporter reflects the difficulty of designing questions answerable by all "journalists" (Molyneux and Zamith 2020) when even within the same organization there could be differing understanding of roles.

International Context

Although not providing the same depth of data concerning issues with participant recruitment and survey completion as seen in Canada, researchers from 28 of the other 36 countries in the JRP project did provide insight into challenges on an international level through notes submitted when data were merged. Interference/concern with journalists' participation at the organizational-level was recorded from the United States to Japan to Mexico. From Australia to Qatar to Lebanon, lack of time for journalists to participate was noted by researchers. Not only did journalists have little time to participate in research, there were simply fewer journalists to *ask* to participate. Having a small pool to recruit from was noted in media systems from Belgium to Ethiopia. And from Brazil to Ecuador to Ireland, lockdowns caused by the pandemic impacted researchers' ability to contact potential participants and limited options for modes of communication led to a heavy reliance on email invitations that were easier for journalists to ignore. Lack of trust in the academic community was identified in Hungary and in the U.S. researchers noted possible suspicions the survey had a "hidden agenda." In countries experiencing conflict where the state monitored and persecuted journalists, including Rwanda and Venezuela, there was fear data would be compromised putting journalists at risk.

In terms of completion, there was feedback from journalists that the survey was too long in countries ranging from Chile to Egypt to Germany. Other research teams, such as those in the United Arab Emirates, Israel, and Austria, also attributed a high dropout rate to the survey's length. Speculation that strategies such as a better invitation letter to mobile optimization of survey delivery was shared by researchers from diverse countries.⁶ Potential issues with context/relevance of the questions were noted from Estonia to Italy to Taiwan. However, as noted by Volk (2021), "The larger the scope of comparative analysis, the greater the need for abstraction, simplification (e.g., sampling methods), and standardization of research design (e.g., questionnaire items) at the expense of context-specific differentiation ..." (258). Surveys designed for use in comparative studies will always be developed within a framework of compromises where language that is least problematic for a variety of cultures takes priority over language that might best serve a specific culture.

Using the Canadian data contextualized with that of documented issues raised by members of the international team, congruent issues within two loci of the study were identified, recruitment and completion. There were specific factors related to each: recruitment (trust issues; political uncertainty; organizational interference); completion (survey too long; issues of context); and those that spanned both (industry restructuring/lack of resources; pandemic working-conditions; tangential issues, including historic lack of participation in academic research or inconsistent understanding of definitions

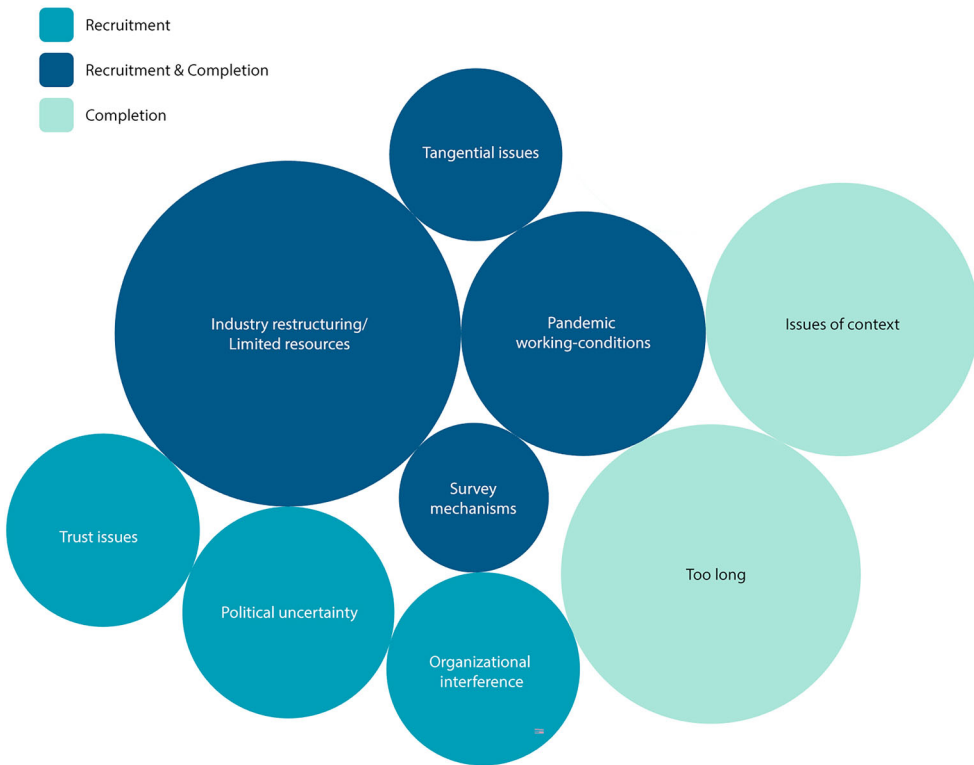


Figure 1. Survey issues.

of journalism; and survey mechanisms). These issues are visualized in [Figure 1](#). The prevalence of the concern is reflected in the size of the bubble representing the issue.

RQ2: What strategies could improve journalists' participation in comparative, sociological studies?

Recruitment

Reflecting on the survey mechanism used for the JRP study and the recruitment of journalists, both researchers and participants had ideas on how it might be improved. In terms of recruitment, a more personalized approach was frequently cited as a benefit, as also noted by Molyneux and Zamith (2020). A Canadian research assistant said speaking with potential participants made a difference because “there was a person behind the survey as opposed to it being ‘Is this spam? Is this an actual survey?’” (personal communication, January 11, 2022). However, our experience in Canada shows different cultures within the same country could require a different approach. The importance of speaking directly with participants was most notable within the sample group of French journalists in Canada. After little success with emailed invitations, a research assistant recruited participants and then recorded their answers over the phone in order to meet the required number of responses for each French outlet being studied. Despite the success of this

strategy, phone calls, and personalized emails used to recruit English participants, were much more time consuming.

Molyneux and Zamith (2020) suggest that for email outreach, “an effective invitation for a journalist should take no longer than a minute to skim and contain highly visible survey links” (164). However, for some researchers, ethics boards’ requirements have to take precedence over simple messaging and can result in unwieldy participation forms that span multiple pages. Providing a separate email invitation that condensed information and attaching the participant information sheet as a separate document proved somewhat effective in Canada (and was also a strategy used in Chile). Whether that also equated to the best method to get participants to understand what is being asked of them is worthy of further analysis. It seemed many journalists did not read the participant information form, and reached out to Canadian researchers with questions that were addressed therein. Future research could explore if complicated participant forms required by review boards actually get in the way of informed consent when it comes to recruiting journalists who have little time and are used to dealing with information delivered quickly and concisely.

Reporter 2 suggested more nuance with regard to questions around political reporting would give “a much clearer picture of what a lot of journalists actually think” (personal communication, June 17, 2020). Another said the survey focus was too narrow for the wide scope of journalists being targeted: “I think these kinds of surveys should be so broad, like impossibly broad, because you want to be getting the most information possible. And that means not reducing reporting to narrow political definitions” (Reporter 6, November 17, 2021). However, if making a survey “broader” includes increasing its length, implementing this suggestion seems problematic.

After hearing feedback from journalists, the Canadian team considered pushing more practice-based questions to the front of the survey, but, as this was not at a piloting stage and there were already a significant number of responses, did not do so out of concern for a consistent experience for participants. Changing the order of questions can “introduce contrast and assimilation effects” (Molyneux and Zamith 2020, 159). Such effects could impact a respondent’s “evaluative judgment” or, in other words, how they answer the questions, and raises “questions about even widely used measures and scales” (159). This is particularly significant in terms of international comparative studies, where developing mechanisms that ensure consistency across cultures is already a challenge. How might the removal of one question or a change in the order of questions impact the answer to the next and, as a result, feasibility of making transnational comparisons? This is an area with much potential for future study.

Molyneux and Zamith (2020) also suggest, “In order to optimize survey flow and reduce duration, researchers should first ensure all questions include an option for ‘not applicable’ so that respondents can feel comfortable skipping questions” (163). Although this advice holds merit, our analysis shows providing journalists with the opportunity to provide comments/context to answers might be an even better strategy. This does add a qualitative component to analysis that could be too unwieldy for large survey studies, but along with improving completion rates could provide critical context to journalistic practice.

Additionally, more study into the benefits of, for example, creating responsive surveys that adjust to mobile platforms, or surveys designed specifically for mobile use would be

prudent given the ubiquity of cell phone use for everyday activities, including news consumption—with 73% of people accessing news with their smartphones (Newman et al. 2021)—this holds true for participant information forms as well. Where can there be flexibility and where should there not be flexibility in shared surveys and how might different delivery mechanisms be received in different media systems or by journalists of different genders, with different educational backgrounds or roles in the newsroom? These questions are also worthy topics of future inquiry, and could benefit from and build on findings from researchers outside of journalism studies examining “mixed-device online surveys” (Maslovskaya et al. 2019).

Countering Resistance

It is difficult to manage recruitment when news organizations discourage or try to impede participation—and from newsroom management refusing to allow distribution of or discouraging participation in the survey; an industry in flux experiencing critical shortages of people and resources; pandemic working conditions; and issues of trust in how data would be used/interpreted, data gathering was a difficult process during the time of our research. From a Canadian perspective, though, one benefit of a stringent ethical review process was knowing what recruitment practice was acceptable within a specific environment. When a Canadian newsroom mentioned previously claimed researchers could not send survey invitations to its journalists without management consent, researchers knew that was not the case. As a result, part of the conversation with hesitant newsroom management included an assertion that the survey would be distributed, but was there a way it could be done that would make newsroom management more open to the idea? This was discussed in a cordial meeting with a negotiated end result: management would not get in the way of participation but would not promote or encourage it.

Being open to criticism and critique is another essential aspect of positive social exchange when it comes to interacting with participants. There were multiple incidents where Canadian researchers were contacted by journalists who wanted to detail or discuss why the survey was ineffective. When journalists were given the opportunity to ask questions and share concerns, without the researcher getting offended at the nature of the questions, it often led to better understanding of the value of the research and a willing participant. Researchers in Canada also found that discussions with one journalist and/or convincing one or two journalists to participate at one organization seemed to create a snowball effect, where survey participation increased significantly at a given outlet.

In terms of ensuring freelancers, who make up a significant portion of content published at news organizations around the world—for example, in Canada, the number of freelancers has tripled since the 1980s (Gollmitzer 2021)—the JRP study shows content analysis can be a conduit for sampling. If content analysis is not being performed, reporters can still be identified through bylines, television keys, and sign-offs, and added to survey distribution lists, as opposed to only gleaning potential participants from lists of newsroom employees, union membership lists, or those identified on newsroom websites. Of course, with a study such as JRP where the sample group of journalists is

controlled by specific outlets, as opposed to, for example, all journalists in a country, this is a more practical strategy.

Conclusion

Referring to a lack of historical context related to sociological studies of news, Schudson (1989) said, “comparative research is cumbersome” (280) and it’s often disregarded as an option, which can strengthen “the immediate political relevance” of research but weaken “its longer-term value as social science.” The same could be said of news studies that only consider a Western lens. The development of more efficacious methodologies rooted in partnerships that facilitate the understanding of the sociology of news from a global perspective are essential for the advancement and relevance of this theoretical framework, and to provide accurate and broader representations of news practices such as gatekeeping. Particularly with regard to research rooted in the examination of journalistic practice, methods must grow to accurately document and interpret rapid changes in an industry that is becoming more intertwined across media systems. If methodological strategies related to sociological studies of journalists are not challenged and further developed, such studies will have limited value.

Interviews with Canadian journalists and research notes from the international team of the second wave of the JRP study show a need for flexible survey design to optimize journalistic participation and pliable methodological design that allows researchers to explore best practice with reluctant participants. This answers Volk’s (2021) call for more methods research “to further develop ground rules of comparison and establish good practices on which users of comparative research can build ...” (263). Exploring mixed methodologies where fewer survey responses might be needed as a result of context being attained through other mechanisms, such as interviews, observation, or content analysis, and developing rigorous methods to use fewer responses in different ways, such as the JRP gap analysis, could help maintain scientific rigor in the face of survey-participation barriers for sociologically driven news studies. And when it comes to such studies, ensuring a methodological approach that allows for flexibility of data gathering could be key, particularly if methodological inquiry can establish where flexibility in mechanisms like surveys can be integrated, in terms of both language and eliminating/reordering questions and platform of delivery, without impacting the validity and transferability of results. This is something particularly important for ensuring the success of comparative studies including countries from the Global North and South.

Lack of time and resources in newsrooms significantly impacted both the recruitment and completion rates of the JRP survey. However, busy journalists did reach out to Canadian researchers with questions and concerns and were willing to listen to why the research was important, and often chose to participate after such discussions, despite impacts of the pandemic on their working environments. So, is the issue that journalists do not want to participate in research or that journalists want more agency in the mechanisms being used and the research being performed in an area where they have expertise? Reporter 2 (personal communication, June 17, 2020) said:

I’m glad you’re doing this. I think that one of the things that makes me nuts about our business is we spend way too little time figuring out the hows and whys of our own business

... I'm glad you're doing what you're doing because it just needs to be done, [despite] you know, my own bugaboos about the survey.

In the social exchange of survey participation, researchers “need to consider potential benefits and costs that accrue as a result of responding (or not responding), and work to create trust that these benefits will be realized by the respondent during the response process and afterward” (Dillman, Smyth, and Christian 2014, 21)—and in order to create trust you need to build relationships. Leaving as many windows open as possible for interaction with journalists and giving more agency to journalists in terms of how they choose to participate, even simply by allowing added context for survey answers, might be the best mechanism to increase participation.

Perhaps with more cooperation with journalists in the creation of research tools—something that runs parallel with current journalistic efforts to better understand an audience before developing content—researchers could improve engagement. The issue, of course, is that the suggestions offered in this paper likely involve more time and resources, and limitations of resources in newsrooms are mirrored in the practice of many news media sociologists—time and money are often scarce. Both in the practice of academic research and journalism, there is always a negotiation between what would be ideal and what is practical/feasible.

Notes

1. Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Cuba, Ecuador, Egypt, United Kingdom, Estonia, Ethiopia, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Mexico, Paraguay, Poland, Qatar, Russia, Rwanda, Serbia, Spain, Switzerland, Taiwan, United Arab Emirates, the United States, and Venezuela.
2. Toronto Metropolitan University (formerly Ryerson) Research Ethics Board approval number REB 2019-479.
3. There were informal interviews with additional newswriters as part of participant observation.
4. These surveys, however, will be incorporated into some national-level analysis within Canada in future publications.
5. Requests were made before the pandemic, when observation would have been possible. In March 2020 observation was halted at the one cooperating site due to pandemic lockdowns.
6. Although all countries in the JRP study used the same survey, each nation was in charge of formatting the survey on the platform of their convenience and designing their own recruitment materials.

Disclosure Statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

Funding

This study was supported by funding from Mitacs, Centre d'études sur les médias, The Journalism Research Centre at Toronto Metropolitan University, The Creative School at Toronto Metropolitan University, Toronto Metropolitan University, and the School of Journalism at the Pontificia Universidad Católica de Valparaíso.

ORCID

Nicole Blanchett  <http://orcid.org/0000-0001-9444-2018>

References

- Benkler, Y., C. Tilton, B. Etling, H. Roberts, J. Clark, R. Faris, J. Kaiser, and C. Schmitt. 2020. "Mail-In Voter Fraud: Anatomy of a Disinformation Campaign." Berkman Center Research Publication 2020-6. doi:10.2139/ssrn.3703701.
- Blanchett, N. 2021. "Participative Gatekeeping: The Intersection of News, Audience Data." *Newsworkers, and Economics. Digital Journalism* 9 (6): 773–791. doi:10.1080/21670811.2020.1869053.
- Blanchett, N. 2018. "News by Numbers." *Digital Journalism* 6 (8): 1041–1051. doi:10.1080/21670811.2018.1504626.
- Blanchett, N., C. Brin, C. Vallender, H. Rollwagen, K. Owen, L. Taylor, C. Mellado, S. Nemat Allah, and K. McGloin. 2022. "Epic Snowmen, Expert Takes, and Audience Orientation: How Journalistic Roles are Performed in Canadian Media." *Facts & Frictions: Emerging Debates, Pedagogies and Practices in Contemporary Journalism* 2 (1): 1–29. doi:10.22215/ff/v2.i1.01.
- Broockman, D., and J. Kalla. 2022. *The Manifold Effects of Partisan Media on Viewers' Beliefs and Attitudes: A Field Experiment with Fox News Viewers*. doi:10.31219/osf.io/jrw26
- Carlson, M. 2015. "Keeping Watch on the Gates: Media Criticism as Advocatory Pressure." In *Gatekeeping in Transition*, edited by T. Vos, and F. Heinderyckx, 163–179. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Carlson, M., and S. C. Lewis. 2018. "Temporal Reflexivity in Journalism Studies: Making Sense of Change in a More Timely Fashion." *Journalism* 20 (5): 642–650. doi:10.1177/1464884918760675.
- Deuze, M., and T. Witschge. 2018. "Beyond Journalism: Theorizing the Transformation of Journalism." *Journalism: Theory, Practice & Criticism* 19 (2): 165–181. doi:10.1177/1464884916688550.
- Dillman, D. A., J. D. Smyth, and L. M. Christian. 2014. *Internet, Phone, Mail, and Mixed-Mode Surveys: The Tailored Design Method*. 4th ed. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.
- Eschner, K. 2022. *Poisoned Well: Industry Roundtable on Journalists and Online Hate*. Toronto, ON: Canadian Association of Journalists & Canadian Journalism Foundation.
- Fricker, R. D. 2008. "Sampling Methods for Web and e-Mail Surveys." In *The SAGE Handbook of Online Research Methods*, edited by W. Nina and K. Cohen, 195–217. London: SAGE.
- Gollmitzer, M. 2021. "How Freelancers in Germany and Canada Experience Policies Regulating Insecure Journalistic Labor." In *Newswork and Precarity*, edited by K. Chadha and L. Steiner, 170–185. London: Routledge.
- Hallin, D. C., and P. Mancini. 2012. *Comparing Media Systems Beyond the Western World*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.
- Hanitzsch, T., Folker Hanusch, Jyotika Ramaprasad, and A. S. De Beer. 2019. *Worlds of Journalism: Journalistic Cultures Around the Globe*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press.
- Hanitzsch, T., and T. P. Vos. 2017. "Journalistic Roles and the Struggle Over Institutional Identity: The Discursive Constitution of Journalism." *Communication Theory* 27 (2): 115–135. doi:10.1111/comt.12112.
- Hanusch, F., and T. P. Vos. 2020. "Charting the Development of a Field: A Systematic Review of Comparative Studies of Journalism." *International Communication Gazette* 82 (4): 319–341. doi:10.1177/1748048518822606.
- Hare, K. 2022. "What Did the Pandemic Do to the Careers of Journalists of Color?" *Poynter*, February 9. <https://www.poynter.org/business-work/2022/what-did-the-pandemic-do-to-the-careers-of-journalists-of-color/>.
- Hermida, A. 2020. "Post-Publication Gatekeeping: The Interplay of Publics, Platforms, Paraphernalia, and Practices in the Circulation of News." *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly* 97 (2): 469–491. doi:10.1177/1077699020911882.

- Humanes, M., C. Mellado, C. Mothes, H. Silke, P. Raemy, and N. Panagiotou. 2021. "Assessing the Co-Occurrence of Professional Roles in the News: A Comparative Study in Six Advanced Democracies." *International Journal of Communication* 15: 3558–3579.
- Lauerer, C., and T. Hanitzsch. 2019. "3. Surveying Journalists Around the World: A Methodological Framework." In *Worlds of Journalism: Journalistic Cultures Around the Globe*, edited by H. Thomas, F. Hanusch, J. Ramaprasad, and A. S. De Beer, 47–66. New York, NY: Columbia University Press. doi:10.7312/hani18642-004
- Le Cam, F., and D. Domingo. 2015. "The Tyranny of Immediacy: Gatekeeping Practices in French and Spanish Online Newsrooms." In *Gatekeeping in Transition*, edited by T. P. Vos and F. Heinderyckx, 123–140. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Maslovskaya, O., G. B. Durrant, P. W. F. Smith, T. Hanson, and A. Villar. 2019. "What are the Characteristics of Respondents Using Different Devices in Mixed-Device Online Surveys? Evidence from Six UK Surveys." *International Statistical Review* 87 (2): 326–346. doi:10.1111/insr.12311.
- Márquez-Ramírez, M., C. Mellado, M. L. Humanes, A. Amado, D. Beck, S. Davydov, J. Mick, et al. 2020. "Detached or Interventionist? Comparing the Performance of Watchdog Journalism in Transitional, Advanced and Non-Democratic Countries." *The International Journal of Press/Politics* 25 (1): 53–75. doi:10.1177/1940161219872155.
- Mellado, C. 2015. "Professional Roles in News Content." *Journalism Studies* 16 (4): 596–614. doi:10.1080/1461670x.2014.922276.
- Mellado, C. 2020. *Beyond Journalistic Norms: Role Performance and News in Comparative Perspective*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Mellado, C., C. Mothes, D. C. Hallin, M. L. Humanes, M. Lauber, J. Mick, H. Silke, et al. 2020. "Investigating the Gap Between Newspaper Journalists' Role Conceptions and Role Performance in Nine European, Asian, and Latin American Countries." *The International Journal of Press/Politics* 25 (4): 552–575. doi:10.1177/1940161220910106.
- Mellado, C., and A. Van Dalen. 2014. "Between Rhetoric and Practice." *Journalism Studies* 15 (6): 859–878. doi:10.1080/1461670x.2013.838046.
- Molyneux, L., and R. Zamith. 2020. "Surveying Journalists in the 'New Normal': Considerations and Recommendations." *Journalism* 23 (1): 153–170. doi:10.1177/1464884920935277.
- Moyo, D., A. Mare, and T. Matsilele. 2019. "Analytics-Driven Journalism? Editorial Metrics and the Reconfiguration of Online News Production Practices in African Newsrooms." *Digital Journalism* 7 (4): 1–17. doi:10.1080/21670811.2018.1533788.
- Nelson, J. L. 2018. "The Elusive Engagement Metric." *Digital Journalism* 6 (4): 528–544. doi:10.1080/21670811.2018.1445000.
- Newman, N., R. Fletcher, A. Schulz, S. Andi, C. T. Robertson, and R. K. Nielsen. 2021. "Reuters Institute Digital News Report 2021." Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism. <https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/digital-news-report/2021>.
- Olsen, R. K., M. K. Solvoll, and K. A. Futsæter. 2022. "Gatekeepers as Safekeepers—Mapping Audiences' Attitudes Towards News Media's Editorial Oversight Functions During the COVID-19 Crisis." *Journalism and Media* 3 (1): 182–197. doi:10.3390/journalmedia3010014.
- Örnebring, H., and C. Mellado. 2018. "Valued Skills among Journalists: An Exploratory Comparison of six European Nations." *Journalism* 19 (4): 445–463. doi:10.1177/1464884916657514.
- Petre, C. 2021. *All the News That's fit to Click: How Metrics are Transforming the Work of Journalists*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Public Policy Forum. 2022. "The Shattered Mirror: 5 Years On." Public Policy Forum. <https://ppforum.ca/publications/shattered-mirror-5-years-on/>.
- Reese, S. D., and P. J. Shoemaker. 2016. "A Media Sociology for the Networked Public Sphere: The Hierarchy of Influences Model." *Mass Communication and Society* 19 (4): 389–410. doi:10.1080/15205436.2016.1174268.
- Reich, Z., and A. Barnoy. 2016. "Reconstructing Production Practices Through Interviewing." In *The SAGE Handbook of Digital Journalism*, edited by T. Witschge, C. W. Anderson, D. Domingo, and A. Hermida, 477–493. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications Ltd.
- Schudson, M. 1989. "The Sociology of News Production." *Media, Culture & Society* 11 (3): 263–282. doi:10.1177/016344389011003002.

- Shapiro, I. 2014. "Why Democracies Need a Functional Definition of Journalism Now More Than Ever." *Journalism Studies* 15 (5): 555–565. doi:10.1080/1461670x.2014.882483.
- Shapiro, I. 2015. "To Turn or to Burn: Shifting the Paradigm for Journalism Education." In *Toward 2020: New Directions in Journalism Education*, edited by G. Allen, S. Craft, C. Waddell, and M.-L. Young, 11–27. Toronto: Ryerson Journalism Research Centre.
- Shapiro, I., C. Brin, I. Bédard-Brûlé, and K. Mychajlowycz. 2013. "Verification as a Strategic Ritual." *Journalism Practice* 7 (6): 657–673. doi:10.1080/17512786.2013.765638.
- Shoemaker, P. J., and T. P. Vos. 2009. *Gatekeeping Theory*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Singer, J. B. 2023. "Closing the Barn Door? Fact-Checkers as Retroactive Gatekeepers of the Covid-19 "Infodemic"." *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*. doi:10.1177/10776990231168599.
- Statistics Canada. 2021. "National Occupational Classification (NOC) 2021 Version 1.0." [www23.statcan.gc.ca](http://www23.statcan.gc.ca/imdb/p3VD.pl?Function=getVD&TVD=1322554&CVD=1322870&CPV=51113&CST=01052021&CLV=5&MLV=5). <https://www23.statcan.gc.ca/imdb/p3VD.pl?Function=getVD&TVD=1322554&CVD=1322870&CPV=51113&CST=01052021&CLV=5&MLV=5>.
- Tandoc, E. C. 2019. *Analyzing Analytics: Disrupting Journalism One Click at a Time*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Thurman, N. 2018. "Mixed-Methods Communication Research: Combining Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches in the Study of Online Journalism." *SAGE Research Methods Cases*. doi:10.4135/9781526428431.
- Volk, S. C. 2021. *Comparative Communication Research: Studies in International, Transnational and Global Communications*. Weisbaden: Springer. doi:10.1007/978-3-658-36228-7
- Vos, T. P. 2015. "Revisiting Gatekeeping Theory During a Time of Transition." In *Gatekeeping in Transition*, edited by T. Vos and F. Heinderyckx, 3–24. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Wallace, J. 2018. "Modelling Contemporary Gatekeeping: The Rise of Individuals, Algorithms and Platforms in Digital News Dissemination." *Digital Journalism* 6 (3): 274–293. doi:10.1080/21670811.2017.1343648.
- Wang, H., C. Sparks, N. Lü, and Y. Huang. 2017. "Differences Within the Mainland Chinese Press: A Quantitative Analysis." *Asian Journal of Communication* 27 (2): 154–171. doi:10.1080/01292986.2016.1240818.
- Weaver, David Hugh, and Lars Willnat, eds. 2012. *The Global Journalist in the 21st Century*. New York: Routledge.
- Weber, M. S., and A. Kosterich. 2018. "Managing a 21st-Century Newsroom Workforce: A Case Study of NYC News Media." Tow Center for Digital Journalism. https://www.cjr.org/tow_center_reports/managing-a-newsroom-workforce-nyc-case-study.php.
- Westlund, O., and M. Ekström. 2019. "News Organizations." In *Handbook of Journalism Studies, Second Edition*, edited by Karin Wahl-Jorgensen, and Thomas Hanitzsch, 135–166. London: Routledge.
- White, D. M. 1950. "The "Gate Keeper": A Case Study in the Selection of News." *Journalism Quarterly* 27 (4): 383–390. doi:10.1177/107769905002700403.
- Winseck, D. 2021. *Growth and Upheaval in the Network Media Economy, 1984-2020*. Ottawa: Global Media and Internet Concentration Project, Carleton University. doi:10.22215/gmicp/2021.1.
- Wu, S., E. C. Tandoc, and C. T. Salmon. 2019. "A Field Analysis of Journalism in the Automation Age: Understanding Journalistic Transformations and Struggles Through Structure and Agency." *Digital Journalism* 7 (4): 428–446. doi:10.1080/21670811.2019.1620112.