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Barbie Zelizer, Pablo J. Boczkowski, & C. W. Anderson, *The Journalism Manifesto*, Polity: Cambridge, UK, 2022, pp 122, ISBN: 1509542639 (hardcover), 1509542647 (paperback), Hardcover: $45.00 USD, Paperback: $12.49.00 USD.

Reviewed by: Patrick R. Johnson, University of Iowa School of Journalism and Mass Communication, Iowa, USA

Barbie Zelizer, Pablo Boczkowski, and C. W. Anderson, three well-respected and notable journalism studies scholars, offer both a critique and solution for a transformative future for journalism in *The Journalism Manifesto*. The book enters the lengthy conversation about journalism's elite-driven past and crisis-ridden present. They, like many others releasing journalism studies books in 2021 (i.e., Stephen Reese, Nikki Usher, Martha Minnow, and Matt Carlson, Sue Robinson, and Seth Lewis), seek to respond to a contemptuous present following authoritarian shift globally and the United States' dance with a democratic backslide in conjunction with the election and subsequent insurrection of the twice-impeached former U.S. President and reality television host Donald Trump. In response to the historical and cultural moments journalism finds itself within, Zelizer, Boczkowski, and Anderson seek reform and to revolution.

The Journalism Manifesto is a short, yet powerful journey. In only five chapters and 122 pages, Zelizer, Boczkowski, and Anderson provide a tour de force that should give journalism studies scholars and audiences the grace to pause. And in this time of pause is an opportunity for reflection. Have we been doing our best to seek equitable and inclusive futures? Have we responded to the elites, norms, and audiences of journalism with a keen eye and attention toward social justice? What role should those marginalized for decades (and centuries) play in a new journalism? Can we burn the institutional box journalism resides within and from its ashes, like a phoenix, establish something new? The authors tackle these questions with such tremendous intellect and accessibility. And because of that, and so much more, this book belongs on bookshelves and to be taught in classrooms.

Zelizer et al. (2022) develop the framework of the text by acknowledging and critiquing what they call the four illusions of the journalism institution: autonomy,

centrality, cohesion, and permanence. They presume autonomy of journalism is related to a question of democracy. It is also rooted in a belief that journalism's moral and cultural authority, conveyed through ethics codes and mission statements, is separate of other institutions. Zelizer et al. (2022) describe autonomy as merely an aspiration rather than a given. The illusion of centrality relates to journalism's societal necessity. The authors describe the need for institutions being a product of Global Northern democratic philosophy. As a result, the institutional centrality of journalism is more about performing and enacting imagined purposes. The authors claim that it is "not as an end in itself" (p. 8) and argue future work must decentralize journalism. The illusions are clearly interconnected. The third, cohesion, favors consensus and privileges normativity. It shares its roots in western democracy with the other illusions, thus clearly demarcating a criticism of journalism and the academe's subscription to purely Global North and Western traditions and norms. Zelizer et al. (2022) see cohesion also as aspirational and suggest we turn to the Global South to "privilege the kind of cohesion necessary for realizing shared identity but not for accomplishing the aims consonant with the received institutional imaginary" (p. 11). The illusion of cohesion is bolstered by journalism's inability to deal with chaos. And chaos, according to Zelizer et al. (2022), is customary of the time: populism, pandemic, climate, and the reckoning with longstanding racism and marginalization of voices being just four of the described moments. The fourth illusion is permanence. We believe institutions to be stable and an enduring part of social life. In participating in this belief, we fail to recognize and prepare for change. We also lack the ability to address unpredictability. Zelizer et al. (2022) argue that change is inherent, and that if journalism is to survive it must embrace it.

The illusions provide the base of *The Journalism Manifesto*, which provides a thoughtful, critical, and contextual argument about journalism's institutional interfaces. Zelizer et al. (2022) present these as elites, norms, and audiences. Each serve as its own chapter (2: elites, 3: norms, and 4: audiences). Each critique builds on the next and toward the conclusion (chapter 5: reform or revolution?).

The authors focus their criticism of elites (chapter 2) on journalism's historical attachment to covering and sourcing elites. It also emphasizes how journalism institutions are also elite (i.e., *The New York Times*). The decoupling from communities and from the foundational mission of journalism as a public service are why Zelizer et al. believe audiences distrust journalism. They also argue the attachment to elites is why the populist argument against journalism exists. Journalism is an "elite activity, produced by elites and ultimately for elites" (p. 36).

Zelizer et al. (2022) see norms (chapter 3) as a stand in for collective behavior and are often celebrated in journalism studies scholarship and journalism practice. Since "norms gives individuals reasons to come together" (p. 47), they also have the capability of driving those not a part of the traditional boundaries of journalism away. *The Journalism Manifesto* entangles issues of marginalization and deviance within the concept of norms. Since norms are aspirational, journalism pushes away any representative that isn't contributing to the value-building associated with traditional constructions of objectivity, balance, fairness, and freedom of expression. For this reason,

Zelizer and colleagues write that "norms have not been as effective as we might think … norms act as if they represent true conditions rather than admit the true strategic nature of their construction" (p. 51). Norms are aided by institutions, and therefore institutions entrench them as centralizing principles. Journalism doesn't choose to reinvent itself, and, even in times of crisis when journalism needs to examine and reform its practice, it certainly chooses not to address the normative assumptions rooted within institutional knowledge. This leads to journalism lacking social responsibility, especially as it relates to marginalized voices and perceived deviant actors within the profession.

Audiences (chapter 4) are the third area of criticism in *The Journalism Manifesto*. Zelizer, Boczkowski, and Anderson join the resounding echo of voices believing journalism imagines an audience that just isn't there. Instead, as Zelizer and colleagues note, journalism must recouple with the world it is a part of—covering communities and people in ways the communities and people want and need. They share the lack of awareness of audience is detrimental to the "future sustainability of the institution" (p. 79). Zelizer et al. believe journalism is "ignorant" (p. 84) and has "strayed markedly out of sync with the realities on the ground" (p. 85). This, possibly more than any other point, shows journalism's crisis of relevance. The authors note that audiences do not want news or the reporting that moves the political needle; audiences want the type of content elite forms of journalism find less important: sports, lifestyles, crime, weather, pop culture, and celebrities. The emphasis of this chapter is on restoring trust by returning to community need. This will help journalism from further "compromis[ing] its sustainability" (p. 91).

Reform or revolution (chapter 5)? Which is the more likely or relevant solution to journalism's crisis of relevance? Both offer interesting points. To reform means to revise. To revolution means to transform. Reform involves "moving from an implicit democratic liberalism to an inclusive and equitable democratic liberalism" (p. 93). Reforming journalism will not be easy. The authors believe that reforming will provide "respect for alternative points of view and for the other side of the political argument, rather than the processes of electoral democracy only" (p. 94–95). This moves journalism to embrace those traditionally marginalized and left out of the conversation, thus making democracy a more inclusive and equitable experience. Doing this will make normative structures more visible than they previously have been, and it will also position "inclusiveness, social justice, and cosmopolitanism" (p. 96) as essential norms moving forward. If the reform is about restoring trust, then Zelizer et al. believe social justice will be the central way of doing such. The path toward revolution is more extreme. It asks us to consider a possibly drastically different institution with "emancipatory" (p. 102) qualities. The authors share that to be revolutionary, "journalists must develop a keener understanding of their own practices and how they can be used for radical transformation" (p. 104). Revolution is an "erasure of elites" (p. 105), including journalists themselves. It also means alternative ways of assessing practice and behaviors, absent of norms. Essentially, we ask what is doable versus what is imaginable. Revolution also situates the newspaper as a

community artifact with opportunities of engagement we have yet to see (although I argue that claim by the authors is absent of the great publications servicing their communities; I think of the local, community publications in Jake Nelson's *Imagined Audiences* or the power of the smartphones and citizen practices in Allissa V. Richardson's *Bearing Witness While Black*, for example). Regardless of choice, a change must happen for journalism to be "unstuck," and possibly return to relevance once again—just not the center of relevance as it once assumed it was.

Zelizer, Boczkowski, and Anderson's writing and argumentation, coupled with a rich emphasis on decentering from Global North and United States-centered approaches, make this text appropriate and necessary additions to journalism and media studies scholars' collections. The book could also be used in undergraduate survey courses about journalism or journalism and democracy, as well as graduate-level courses in journalism studies or journalism ethics.

ORCID iD

Patrick R. Johnson https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1246-3080