

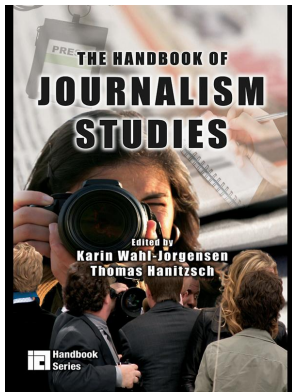
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Karin Wahl-Jorgensen, Thomas Hanitzsch

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Xu Xiaoge

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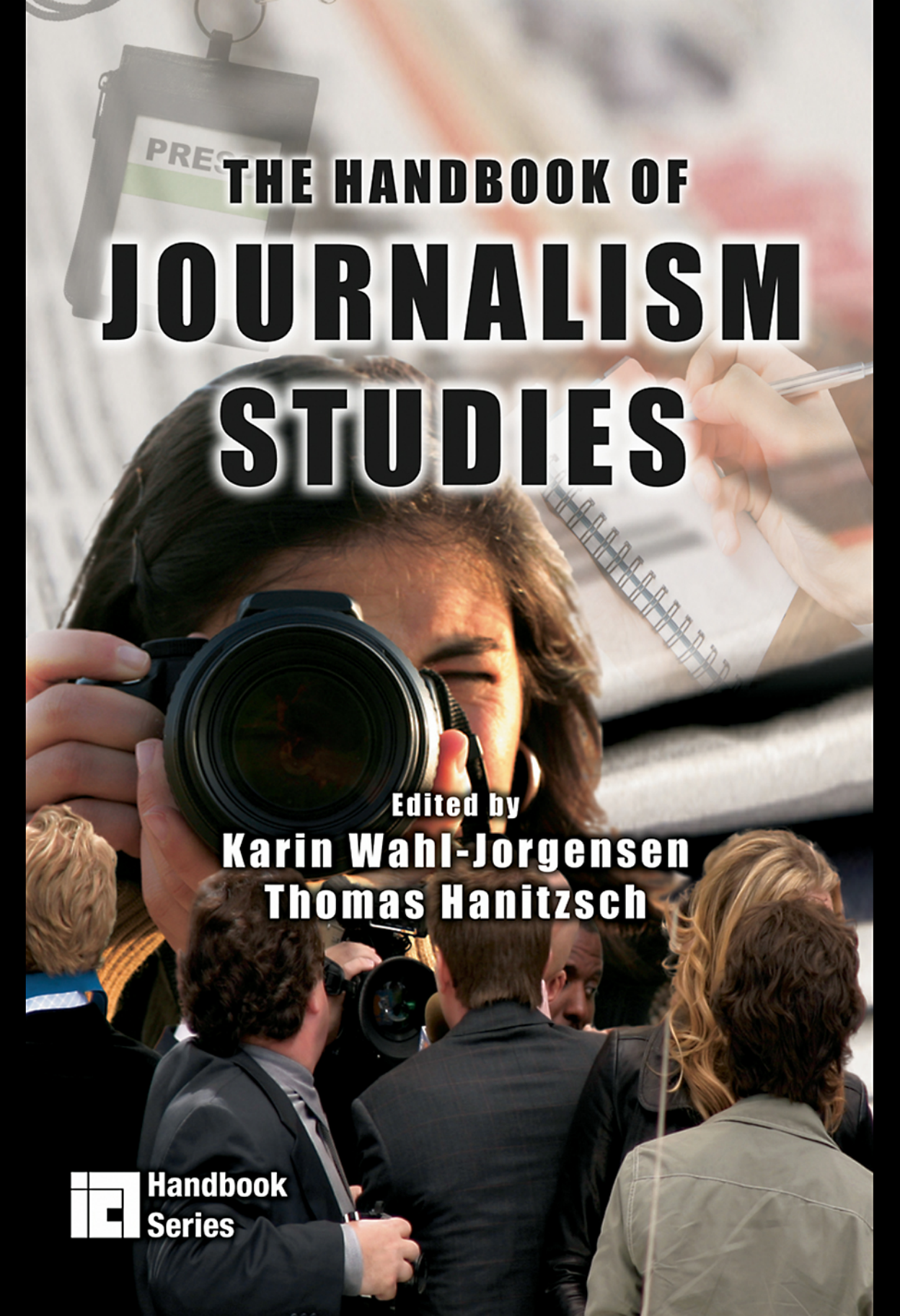
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**Karin Wahl-Jorgensen  
Thomas Hanitzsch**

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# 25

## Development Journalism

Xu Xiaoge

Development journalism debuted in Asia in the late 1960s when the idea of communication for development was garnering support academically and politically, especially among the newly independent nations. Theoretically equipped with the proliferating development communication paradigm, journalism was believed and expected to play a key role in facilitating and fostering national development. Such a belief and expectation constituted the driving forces behind the rising popularity of development journalism among developing nations in Asia, Africa and Latin America. And it remains vital and vibrant as a journalism practice despite criticisms and prejudices.

Having been practiced for more than four decades across three continents, development journalism has generated diverse principles and practices. Ironically, such diversity has not been duly captured in journalism studies. What is more disturbing is the absence of systematic and theoretical constructs and corresponding models to describe, explain and predict its different practices and performances. The situation is largely caused by the fact that development journalism has long been neglected by the journalism research community.

To serve as a stepping-stone for further research, the current chapter begins with a scan of conceptual components and empirical practices of development journalism, followed by a review of its contextual origins, including the indigenization efforts and the Asian values debate. Readers will also be introduced to its major schools of thought, scholars and publications. Further investigation is made into its pending issues. Last but not least, the chapter identifies key areas for further academic studies.

### CONCEPTUAL COMPONENTS

The concept of development journalism emerged at a workshop for economic writers in the Philippines in the late 1960s (Gunaratne, 1996; Stevenson, 1994). At the workshop, the British journalist, Asia-hand and champion of development journalism, Alan Chalkley, told the participants that journalists should alert news audiences to development problems and open their eyes to possible solutions (Chalkley, 1968). Without claiming to be “a new kind of journalism,” development journalism represented “a new attitude towards the treatment of certain subjects” in relation to development. It was designed to serve the ordinary people, not the elite (Chalkley, 1980, p. 215).

Key components of development journalism include the following five aspects:

1. to report the difference between what has been planned to do and what in reality has been achieved as well as the difference between its claimed and actual impact on people (Aggarwala, 1978);
2. to focus not “on day-to-day news but on long term development process” (Kunczik, 1988, p. 83);
3. to be independent from government and to provide constructive criticisms of government (Aggarwala, 1978; Shah, 1992; Ogan, 1982);
4. to shift “journalistic focus to news of economic and social development” while “working constructively with the government” (Richstad, 2000, p. 279) in nation building;
5. and to empower the ordinary people to improve their own lives and communities (Romano & Hippocrates, 2001).

### EMPIRICAL PRACTICES

One of the early practices of development journalism can be traced back to Depthnews (Development Economic and Population Themes News), a regional development news agency intended to provide model stories for the Asia’s press. Depthnews focused on coverage of women, science, health, rural development and environmental concerns, avoiding news of political, military and natural disasters. Addressing topics that were less covered by Western news agencies, and relying on sources and actors from the Third World, Depthnews constituted a force in advancing South-South communication and understanding (McKay, 1993).

At the national level, development journalism was practiced with variations in different countries as its practice was influenced by different social, economic, cultural and political conditions and situations (Chen, 1991; Maslog, 1985; Shah, 1989; Verghese, 1976; Vilanilam, 1975, 1984). Although development journalism was enthusiastically promoted first in the Philippines, it did not win ready acceptance from mainstream journalists largely because few of them bothered to get involved in its conceptualization or application (Shafer, 1998). After reaching its height in the mid-1980s, development journalism lost its momentum when most journalists reverted to traditional and libertarian Western approaches after the Epifanio de Los Santos Avenue (EDSA) Revolution (Shafer, 1998). Development journalism did not enhance the press’s watchdog function but resulted in the press being the tool of the authoritarian Marcos government (1965–1986). Also, economic constraints on the press have prevented an effective, independent, and critical form of journalism from emerging (Shafer, 1991). Although development journalism is not widely practiced in the Philippines, it remains a vibrant course in journalism education in the country, indicated by the active operation of the department of development journalism at the University of the Philippines, Los Banos.

Development journalism is also enthusiastically advocated and promoted in India where it has been practiced since the late 1960s. Experiments were also carried out to promote it, such as the project “Our Village, Chhatera” conducted by *Hindustan Times* (Verghese, 1976). Even though, according to some scholars, news coverage of development was neither significant nor encouraging (Murthy, 2000; Vilanilam, 1975), development journalism remains highly respected in India. The Institute of Mass Communication runs a prestigious Diploma Course in Development Journalism for mid-career journalists and information service officers from non-aligned and developing countries in Asia, Africa, Latin America, and Europe.

Being strategically linked to the government, the press in Singapore has played a major role



in nation-building and economic construction. As a small, young, developed, and multiracial country, Singapore is highly concerned about social stability, racial harmony, and relations with neighboring countries. Such concerns have constituted the major rationale for its press to adopt elements of development journalism (Latif, 1998; Xu, 2005). This is also true for the press in Malaysia (Ali, 1980, 1990). In these two countries, the constructive partnership between the press and government is highly expected in theory and respected in practice.

Development journalism has also been incorporated in journalism training, education and practice in China, where development has become a national priority, especially since China started its economic reform and opened to the outside world in the late 1970s. Development journalism has played an increasingly important role in boosting economic, cultural and political development in China (Chen, 1991; Fang, 1983; Wu, 1987; Zhou, 1992;).

Just like in Asia, the socio-economic conditions, the desperate needs for economic development, and nation building in Africa and Latin America created a favorable environment for the adoption and growth of development journalism (Domatob & Hall, 1983; Edeani, 1993; Isiaka, 2006; Mwaffisi, 1991). Poverty-stricken and underdeveloped, many countries in those parts of the world have become experimental venues for development journalism since the late 1960s. Governments in these areas continue to use development journalism to maintain their powers and influences, and to aid national political, economic, and cultural development. The ready adoption of development journalism was originally legitimized by the neo-colonial reality in Africa, which remained in the grip of colonial domination, inequality and dependence (Domatob & Hall, 1983).

The African press is expected to play a major part in informing, educating, motivating, mobilizing, and entertaining the people. In practice, although the press has contributed to health, nutrition, family planning, and agriculture education programs in countries like Nigeria, Ghana, Cameroun, Zaire, and Kenya, it has largely been used by “most African ruling groups to consolidate and perpetuate power in the name of development journalism” (Domatob & Hall, 1983, p. 18). Consequently, it is the elite, not the ordinary people who have benefited most from the practice of development journalism.

## CONTEXTUAL ORIGINS

Historically, development journalism emerged out of the urgent need for social, economic and political development in Asia in the “chaotic aftermath of the Pacific War and colonialism in many Asian countries” (Richstad, 2000, p. 279). It was situated in “the growing number of independent economies in the world, the sharp rise in sophistication and modernization among them—and, most of all, the soaring aspirations of the people” in the post 1945 years (Chalkley, 1980, p. 215). Its mission lied “in furthering the emancipation of such deprived groups as the urban poor, the rural people, women and so on and helping them actively to participate in the political process, that is actively influence their destinies” (Quebral, 1975; as cited in Kunczik, 1988, p. 85).

Development journalism also grew out of the special role of journalism played by “former journalists who became leaders of newly independent states” in Africa, including “Ghana’s Kwame Nkrumah, founder and publisher of the ‘Accra Evening News,’ Nigeria’s Nnandi Azikiwe, ‘West Africa Pilot,’ Kenya’s Jomo Kenyata, founder and publisher of a Kikuyu newspaper influential in the independence struggle and Tanzania’s Julius Nyerere, publisher of ‘Uhuru,’ the TANU party newspaper” (Kunczik, 1988, p. 85). These journalists-turned politicians emphasized the importance of journalism in shaping national identities and promoting national cohesion (Kunczik, 1988).

Theoretically, development journalism was strongly supported by modernization and development communication theories. In the logic of these approaches, for the developing or underdeveloped countries to modernize themselves, they should learn from the West, importing communication technologies along with ways of doing things from the West including concepts like press freedom and the watchdog function of the media. These approaches also emphasized the effectiveness of the mass media in developing and modernizing a nation (Lerner & Schramm, 1967; Pye, 1963; Rogers, 1962, 1976; Schramm, 1964).

Development journalism was also inspired by dependency theory, which has two variants: structural imperialism (Galtung, 1971) and cultural imperialism (Schiller, 1976). Both were deeply rooted in the theoretical foundations of development journalism, in that they provided strong theoretical support and guidelines for the battle against Western cultural invasion and the promotion of national cultural values and identities through development journalism (Kunczik, 1988).

Systems theory demonstrated the relationships between interrelated and interdependent subsystems, i.e., between journalism and its social, economic, cultural and political environments. In the perspective of the systems theory, different and interdependent relationships between the press and its various environments would produce different perceptions of the press and different types of press models in developing countries (Akahenda, 1983; Edelstein, 1982; Kunczik, 1988; Ogan, 1982).

Ideologically, development journalism was closely connected to the movements of the New International Economic Order (a 1974 UN declaration), and the New World Information Order (called for in 1980 by MacBride Commission). UNESCO-sponsored projects like Radio Rural Forums in India, Ghana and Costa Rica (Hornik, 1988) provided further ideological support to the growth of development journalism.

### INDIGENIZATION EFFORTS AND THE ASIAN VALUES DEBATE

Another major component of its contextual origin was a widely shared concern in Asia that the traditional Western model of news reporting, which emphasized events rather than processes that produced the events (Ali, 1980), was inadequate for developing countries in Asia. Such a concern led to efforts to reform the reporting and editing practices of the Asian press (Abundo, 1986) to replace the Western practice of emphasizing sensationalism and commercialism, which produced little coverage of socially important news about the ordinary people, community projects, rural developments, and efforts to address poverty (Wong, 2004).

Development journalism was also boosted by the de-Westernization efforts in the region. At the 1985 Bangkok Symposium, media scholars and practitioners gathered to explore Asian perspectives on communication and to assess the relevance and applicability of Western communication theory in the Asian context. At the seminar, proposals were put forth to explore Asian perspectives on communication theory from Chinese, Islamic, Japanese, and Indian perspectives. More efforts were also made to indigenize Western communication theories to suit Asian cultures and adapt their operationalization to the constraints of multi-ethnic, pluralistic Asian societies (Asian Media Information and Communication Centre, 1985).

The indigenization efforts continued when media practitioners and scholars gathered at the 1988 Jakarta Consultation to re-examine the role and responsibility of the press in ASEAN countries (Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia, Philippines, and Brunei Darussalam). At the meeting, ASEAN government officials sent out a clear message in their respective remarks tAnwar Ibrahim described the cultural domination of alien values and standards as “the biggest obstacle

to the media development of Asian countries” (as cited in Menon, 1988, p. 2). It was agreed at the meeting that the main priority of the ASEAN press was to promote and preserve political stability, rapid economic growth, social justice, and greater regional cohesion (Mehra, 1989).

Government officials’ call for Asian models of journalism also echoed among journalists in Asia. For instance, at the 1987 Asian-Pacific Conference of the International Federation of Journalists held in Hong Kong, journalists proposed to build an Asian model of journalism in which the press worked with the government to build a national consensus. Under the assumption that Western-style press freedom and confrontation with authorities would conflict with traditional Asian cultural values, the press in developing countries should promote consensus and teamwork necessary for economic, cultural and political development of a nation (Asian Media Information and Communication Centre, 1988).

One of the most powerful and influential movements in de-Westernization efforts is the Asian Values debate, which was initiated in the 1970s. Being more widely shared and emphasized in Asia (Xu, 1998), values were believed to have contributed to the economic miracle achieved first in Japan, and then in Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan, and Hong Kong in the 1970s (Berger & Hsiao, 1988; Seah, 1977; Xu, 1998, 2005). Some Asian leaders like Lee Kuan Yew in Singapore and Mahathir Mohamad in Malaysia used Asian values to defend their own principles and practices in modernization, development, human rights, and democracy to safeguard against perceived threats to Asian cultural identities and diversities from the domination of Western cultures and values (Xu, 2005).

By the 1990s, Asian values were also used in journalism to advocate national stability, racial harmony, nation building, and national development as major national considerations to guide journalism practices in Asia (Xu, 2005). This has strongly supported the practice of development journalism in the region.

Although media practitioners and scholars were widely divided over Asian values and their existence in journalism, a consensus was reached regarding the need to identify certain universal values deeply rooted in the Asian context and to promote them in the professional sphere (Masterton, 1996). These values are truth, objectivity, social equity, and nonviolence. Although universal, these values have been prioritized in Asia when Asian countries confront the following issues: (a) market practices in conflict with journalistic integrity and professional standards, (b) interference by the boardroom in the newsroom, (c) lack of adequate dialogue and network mechanisms to allow journalist in Asian countries to exchange news and information independent of existing Western or government agencies, and (d) government interference in editorial functioning through various forms of censorship in the name of nation-building and national security (Masterton, 1996, p. 172).

All de-Westernization efforts pointed to upholding the journalistic values suitable for the Asian contexts and searching for Asian normative theories of the press. Such efforts have contextualized the emergence and growth of the development-oriented practice of journalism, i.e., development journalism.

## SCHOOLS OF THOUGHT

In the early 1980s, there were largely only two major approaches within development journalism: investigative and authoritarian-benevolent (Kunczik, 1988). The investigative type focused on “critical questioning and evaluation of the usefulness of development projects” (Kunczik, 1988, p. 86). In covering the development newsbeat, journalists were expected to critically examine, evaluate and report (a) the relevance of a development project to national, and most importantly,



to local needs; (b) the difference between a planned scheme and its actual implementation; and (c) the difference between its impact on people as claimed by government officials and as it was actually experienced by the people (Aggarwala, 1978, p. 200). The authoritarian-benevolent style of development journalism was strongly advocated by authoritarian governments who believed that journalism should cooperate with governments in nation-building and overall social, economic and political development.

Since the early 1980s, however, great social, economic and political changes have taken place in the world. Consequently, further changes also occurred in development journalism principles and practices. Reflecting these changes, Romano (2005) divided development journalism perspectives into the following five categories: (a) journalists as nation builders, (b) journalists as government partners, (c) journalists as agents of empowerment, (d) journalists as watchdogs, and (e) journalists as the guardians of transparency.

*Journalists as Nation Builders:* Strongly influenced by modernization theory, the nation-building approach advocates that news reporting should be aimed at maintaining social stability, building social harmony and strengthening national economy. It also holds that news reporting should be solution-oriented instead of sensational (see Ali, 1994).

*Journalists as Government Partners:* This perspective is closely related to the nation-building approach but differs from the former insofar as it holds that press freedom should be subjected to the overriding national interests of social, economic and political development priorities (Hatchten, 1999; Lent, 1979; McQuail, 1987; Romano, 2005). The two closely interrelated approaches are widely shared in much of Asia.

*Journalists as Agents of Empowerment:* This approach holds that journalism should empower the ordinary people, not the elite, to participate in public life and human development (Dagron, 2001; Shah, 1996, as cited in Romano, 2005).

*Journalists as Watchdogs and Guardians of Transparency:* The last two perspectives are also interrelated and difficult to separate from one another. They both advocate that journalism should monitor the performance of the government and make it as transparent as possible to the public. Without free press and other civil liberties, good governance and economic development will be undermined (Romano, 2005, p. 11).

As products of different perspectives and expectations in different environments and different periods of time, different approaches are actually interlinked vertically and horizontally by three major schools of thought: (1) Pro-Process, (2) Pro-Participation, and (3) Pro-Government.

According to Pro-Process thinking, journalism should support and contribute to the process of development, which is the name of the game in development journalism (Chalkley, 1980). And the process of economic development and nation building, whether it comes in the form of progress or problem, has to be told in simple language and in a humanizing fashion. Since development journalism is not meant for the elite but for the ordinary people, pictures and charts should be used in news stories (Chalkley, 1980). And what matters in development journalism is to facilitate and foster social, economic and cultural developments.

When scholars and journalists enthusiastically advocate development journalism, they focus on the ordinary people, not the elite. By and large, the term “ordinary people” refers to farmers, women, children, the elderly, the less fortunate, etc. It is these people who development journalists care most about. Moreover, these people determine the development journalists’ choice of subjects, style of storytelling, and even diction. The whole point of development journalism is to engage and empower the people and to involve them actively in the process of economic, cultural and political development. The fundamental principles of the pro-process approach were actually adopted by Depthnews (McKay, 1993) as well as community or rural newspapers in Asia, Africa and Latin America (Edeani, 1993; Maslog, 1985; Verghese, 1976).

Pro-participation scholars or journalists would place more emphasis on participation of the ordinary people instead of stressing the number of people who actually receive assistance. They advocate that ordinary people should be empowered to participate in the process of development instead of being the passive recipients of development news.

Pro-participation recommendations have been made, too. For instance, Wilkins (2000) proposed that we need to situate the discourse and practice of development communication within contexts of power as the political, economic and cultural power of the lower-status segments of the population is severely lacking. Servaes (1999) suggested that power should be given to the ordinary people to allow them to participate in collective decisions at all levels of society. Melkote and Steves (2001) highlighted empowerment as a process in which individuals and organizations can control social, political, economic and cultural conditions and outcomes. Viewing development as the cultural and political acceptance of human rights, White (2004) argued that power should be viewed as a source of social responsibility and service, and that the rights of all in society should be respected. As mass media have not played an effective role in development journalism, Isiaka (2006) proposed a group media approach to development journalism practice by decentralizing and localizing broadcast media, narrow casting, and setting up radio groups, information centers, video/TV viewing centers, and cyber cafés to engage and empower rural populations.

The Pro-Government camp is dominant in terms of geographical spread as well as political and professional impact. Driven by de-Westernization efforts, the Pro-Government school emphasizes the constructive cooperation between the press and the government, the education role of the press in nation building and economic construction, and the responsible exercise of press freedom (Xu, 2005).

The press is expected to support government if governance is clean, good and effective in enhancing the well-being of citizens (Cheong, 1995; Latif, 1996). Further, the press ought to operate within the parameters of government policies, regulations and expectations for the sake of nation-building and economic development. When social stability, racial harmony, economic growth, and political stability are at stake, the relationship between the press and the government is expected to be co-operative rather than adversary (Xu, 2005), and the press is expected to operate “in close conformity with government regulations and expectations” (Kuo, 1999, p. 232).

Within the parameters of the government-press partnership, the role of the press is to promote and preserve political stability, rapid economic growth, social justice, and greater regional cohesion in ASEAN countries (Mehra, 1989). The press is also expected to facilitate nation building, partnership in national development, social harmony amid diversity, and cooperation among member states of South Asia Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC).

The press in Asia is expected to play the role of “a catalyst of social and political change” rather than act as an adversarial institution (Shim, 1995). It should also avoid excessive criticism and defend cultural identity, preserve national unity, and enhance economic growth (Katoppo, 1995). Asian journalists are educators, rather than mere entertainers (Datta-Ray, 1995). In Asia, nation building is still “a critical process,” which “unfortunately, not many Western journalists fully understand or appreciate.” The role of the press in promoting nation building remains a priority in many Asian countries, which “colours Asian priorities and perceptions of journalistic values” (Menon, 1996, vii).

The catalytic role of the press in Asia does not necessarily mean that it becomes less critical of government. Criticism of government remains part of development journalism practice, although it tends to be more mild than wild. The fundamental role of the press is to “get involved in the process of interaction between farmers, workers, scientists, teachers, planners and decision-makers on the one hand and the government on the other, among various sections of society” (Bandyopadhyay, 1988, p. 40).

The role of the press in society advanced by the pro-government camp can be summarized as follows: (a) the advocacy of a co-operative role for the press in nation building and national development, (b) the role of the press as a catalyst for social and political change; and (c) the duty of the press to (i) educate instead of merely entertaining, (ii) maintain social stability and racial harmony, and (iii) aid in economic development and nation building. These roles are prioritized in Asia largely in line with (a) social structures, (b) political systems, (c) cultural sensitivity and traditions, (d) economic conditions, and (e) historical experiences in Asia (Xu, 2005, p. 53).

Another principle is the pro-government camp's notion of press freedom as relative and contingent. Press freedom should be promoted in light of different social structures, political systems, cultural values, historical backgrounds, and national conditions (Kuo, 1997; Latif, 1998; Menon, 1998; Mahathir, 1989; Mahubani, 2002). The press should be more socially responsible when it exercises its freedom and more mindful of causes of events and consequences of news coverage (Xu, 2005).

### KEY SCHOLARS AND STUDIES

Although limited in its literature, development journalism has its own key scholars and studies. Some provided their observations and insights of what development journalism was expected to be and do in various societies while others investigated what development journalism was and did.

As a passionate champion of development journalism, Alan Chalkley elaborated his notion and expectations of development journalism in *A Manual of Development Journalism* (1968) and "Development Journalism—A New Dimension in the Information Process" (1980). His publications are valuable in understanding the original concepts and expectations of development journalism.

Floyd J. McKay (1993) investigated the practice of development journalism in Depthnews through a content analysis of its news coverage. The results showed that "the original idea of development news survived" (p. 237) as indicated by its sustained focus on news about rural development, health, population, science and women; its reliance on non-institutional sources and subjects and its avoidance of direct government ties. However, in his examination of media and development issues in Asia, Guy de Fontgalland (1980, p. 156) concluded that "the overall record of Asian newspapers is dismal in its treatment of the very developmental issues surrounding it."

Angelo Romano (1999) offered observations and insights on development journalism in "Normative theories of development journalism: State versus practitioner perspectives in Indonesia," which contained the results of a survey of Indonesian journalists regarding their views on Indonesia's New Order Government (1966–1998). The results showed that "although the New Order attempted to establish a coherent press model, suited to local cultures and economic prerogatives, respondents conceived their role in markedly different terms" (p. 183).

In his pioneering study on the legitimacy of Asian-based development journalism, Kokkeong Wong (2004) opened up a new domain for research on development journalism. Looking into three major newspapers' coverage of the 1999 general elections in Malaysia, Wong found that the newspaper coverage of the election "could hardly be described fair and independent", thus "calling into question the legitimacy of Malaysia's Asian-based development journalism" (p. 37). Lacking in legitimacy, Wong argued, "development journalism could be dismissed as no more than a modern version of the traditional authoritarian approach of the feudal past" (pp. 37–38).

For African perspectives on development journalism, the article "Development Journalism in Black Africa" by Jerry Komia Domatob and Stephen William Hall (1983) is another must-

read piece. These scholars observed that African notions of development journalism were largely grounded in the neo-colonial realities of modern Africa, that is, colonial domination, inequality and dependence. They also found that development journalism was “a relatively vague concept charged with political rhetoric” (p. 15) and that the press in Africa was largely elite-oriented with little relevance to the interests of the masses.

As one of the breakthroughs in development journalism studies, Hemant Shah’s (1996) article “Modernization, Marginalization, and Emancipation: Toward a Normative Model of Journalism and National Development” represented one of the few torches that attempted to lead development journalism research out of the tunnel. In his article, Shah argued that efforts at reforming journalism practice ought to avoid being structured around Western notions of press freedom, which diverted attention from how journalism could contribute to participatory democracy, security, peace and other humanistic values. Therefore, the concept of “emancipation” and its related concept of “emancipatory journalism” should be used to replace that of development journalism. As “a localizing power,” emancipatory journalism should be able to “help people establish local control over their immediate social conditions,” “providing people immediately with resources to mount a challenge to the equations of power” (p. 160).

In another attempt, B. T. Isiaka (2006) proposed a paradigm shift in development journalism practices; from mass media to group media approaches. Group media approaches tend to be more effective than mass media approaches since they involve a more extensive use of audio-visual aids at meetings, seminars, workshops, demonstrations, exhibitions, discussions, visits etc. to harness groups for reception of vital information for development. Specifically, seven strategies were identified in highlighting the group media practices of development journalism: (a) decentralization and localization of broadcast media, (b) rural radio, (c) radio groups, (d) video/TV viewing centre, (e) cyber café, (f) information center, and (g) narrow casting.

## PENDING ISSUES

Development journalism faces several pending issues that have hindered its further development, acceptance or recognition as a journalism practice and a branch of journalism studies. These issues have been neglected for quite a long time. The first pending issue lies in the prejudice against development journalism and its studies. Despite its four-decade-long practice across three continents, development journalism is not even listed in the volume *Key Concepts in Journalism Studies* (Franklin, Hamer, Hanna, Kinsey, & Richardson, 2005). As a matter of fact, development journalism and scholarship around it have long been belittled or neglected by the journalism research community. One indication can be found in the limited output of academic studies in the literature of journalism studies. In the past four decades, only 34 articles have been published in academic journals (see Table 25.1), which is totally out of proportion when compared to its four-decade-long practice on three continents.

Among the 34 research articles, one article was published in the 1960s, five in the 1970s, 11 in the 1980s, 14 in the 1990s, but only three since 2000. Some articles were devoted to the examination of what constitutes development news (e.g., McKay, 1993; Ogan, Fair, & Shah, 1984), while others focused on the quantity rather than quality of development news (e.g., Mustapha, 1979; Sutopo, 1983). Several papers examined conceptual issues, principles or functions of development journalism (e.g., Chalkley, 1980; Gunaratne, 1996; Isiaka, 2006; Romano, 1998, 1999; Romano & Hippocrates, 2001; Shah, 1996).

Early studies were based primarily on print media in Asia and Africa. Few studies were published on development journalism in Latin America. Electronic media and new media were

**TABLE 25.1**  
**Development Journalism Research Articles**

<i>Name of Journal (year of creation)</i>	<i>60s</i>	<i>70s</i>	<i>80s</i>	<i>90s</i>	<i>Since 2000</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>Journal of Communication</i> (1951)		1				1
<i>(International Communication) Gazette</i> (1955)		2	3	2	1	8
<i>Journal of Development Communication</i> (1990)				3	2	5
<i>Asian Journal of Communication</i> (1990)				1		1
<i>Media Asia</i> (1974)		2	5	1		8
<i>AsiaPacific MediaEducator</i> (1996)				1		1
<i>Communication Theory</i> (1991)				1		1
<i>Journalism (and Mass Communication) Quarterly</i> (1928)	1		3			4
<i>World Communication</i> (1971-2001)				1		1
<i>Africa Media Review</i> (1986)				2		2
<i>Australian Journalism Review</i> (1978)				2		2
<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>34</b>

*Note:* Articles were generated (using development journalism as key word) on June 1, 2007, from “Communication & Mass Media Complete” database (covering all academic journals in the field) at Nanyang Technological University library in Singapore.

examined only in a small number of papers. Many studies have been conducted on the digital divide, but few of them have examined the impact of new media on development journalism. New media technologies can greatly facilitate the functions of development journalism in encouraging more participation from the ordinary people in the process of development and also in empowering them to have their voices and views heard and felt in an enlarging public sphere. Unfortunately, these areas have not been adequately examined.

Further neglected areas include cultural and political aspects of development, such as freedom from foreign cultural and political control and influence. Few studies have examined how, and to what extent, the press can support the process of developing a nation culturally and politically.

Another missing area examines how effective development journalism is in disseminating development news to ordinary people, empowering them to participate in the process of economic, cultural and political development. Also needed are studies that assess the different factors that shape how development journalism operates in different countries.

Furthermore, the gap between what is advocated and what is actually practiced in development journalism has not been adequately addressed. Little research has been done to locate different factors that work to narrow or widen this gap in different countries, as well as to explain how and why influential factors are differently prioritized in different situations.

### MAJOR AREAS FOR FURTHER STUDIES

The first important area is to standardize conceptualization of fundamental components of development journalism and to build a set of theoretical constructs explaining different relationships and interactions among its components on the basis of its different practices in different cultures and countries.



Another major area to examine involves two sets of principles that influence the way development journalism operates in the case of most developing countries. The first set of principles are those that journalists uphold: (a) to focus on the ordinary rather than the elite, (b) to stay independent and free from government control, (c) to emphasize the process of local development, and (d) to engage and empower local people. The second set of principles are those that governments in developing or newly developed countries would use in regulating the press: (a) social stability and racial harmony, (b) regional/cultural/religious sensibilities, (c) nation building, and (d) national identity. How do these two sets of principles interact and interplay with each other? How can they be reconciled when compromises need to be made for the benefit of overall national development? What is the impact of that interaction or reconciliation between the two different sets of principles on society?

There is always a gap between what the press is expected to be and do in society, and what it actually is and does. This gap is vulnerable to changes in social, economic, cultural, and political conditions and situations. How do social, economic, cultural and political factors influence and shape the way development journalism is expected to operate and the way it actually operates? How should the narrowing or widening of the normative-empirical gap in practicing development journalism be measured and explained? And what models can be developed to describe, explain and predict the changing gap?

Another major area for further studies lies in the use of new media in development journalism to cater to the interests and needs of farmers, women, children, the elderly, the minorities, and other sectors of the population that have been marginalized by the traditional mass media. How can we take advantage of the new media to bridge the information divides between the haves and the have-nots?

As different priorities are assigned to different dimensions of development, and as countries develop at different levels in different contexts, further studies should take note of these different priorities. How effectively do different prioritizations guide development journalism practices, and what is their impact on the people?

As development has its economic, cultural and political dimensions, further research should cover these different dimensions instead of focusing on the economic aspects only. Development journalism is practiced differently in different countries. Journalism studies needs to explain the different practices and develop models to describe, explain and predict the way development journalism operates.

For further studies on development journalism, combinations of research methods instead of one single method should be employed to generate more comprehensive and reliable data for comparative examinations. While further country studies are urgently required to capture the latest developments and new phenomena, cross-medium and cross-country comparative studies are equally imperative.

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