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Deconstructing Journalism Culture:

Towards a universal theory

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Background

- The notions of “journalism culture”, “journalistic culture”, “professional culture”, “news culture”, “newspaper culture” or the “culture of news production” are **widely used but rarely discussed concepts**.
- The lack of consensus on the concept of culture and the way it should be applied to journalism research has produced a **scattered body of literature**.
- There is clearly a **need for an elaborated theoretical foundation** on which the concept of journalism culture can be conceptualized and operationalized.
- Journalism culture as a key concept in the cross-cultural and comparative analysis of journalism must be established in a way that ensures a maximum of **conceptual stability and validity in diverse cultural contexts**.



Journalism culture: deconstruction

super level: COSMOPOLITAN JOURNALISM CULTURE
(journalism's shared professional ideology and cultural identity)



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Empirical manifestation

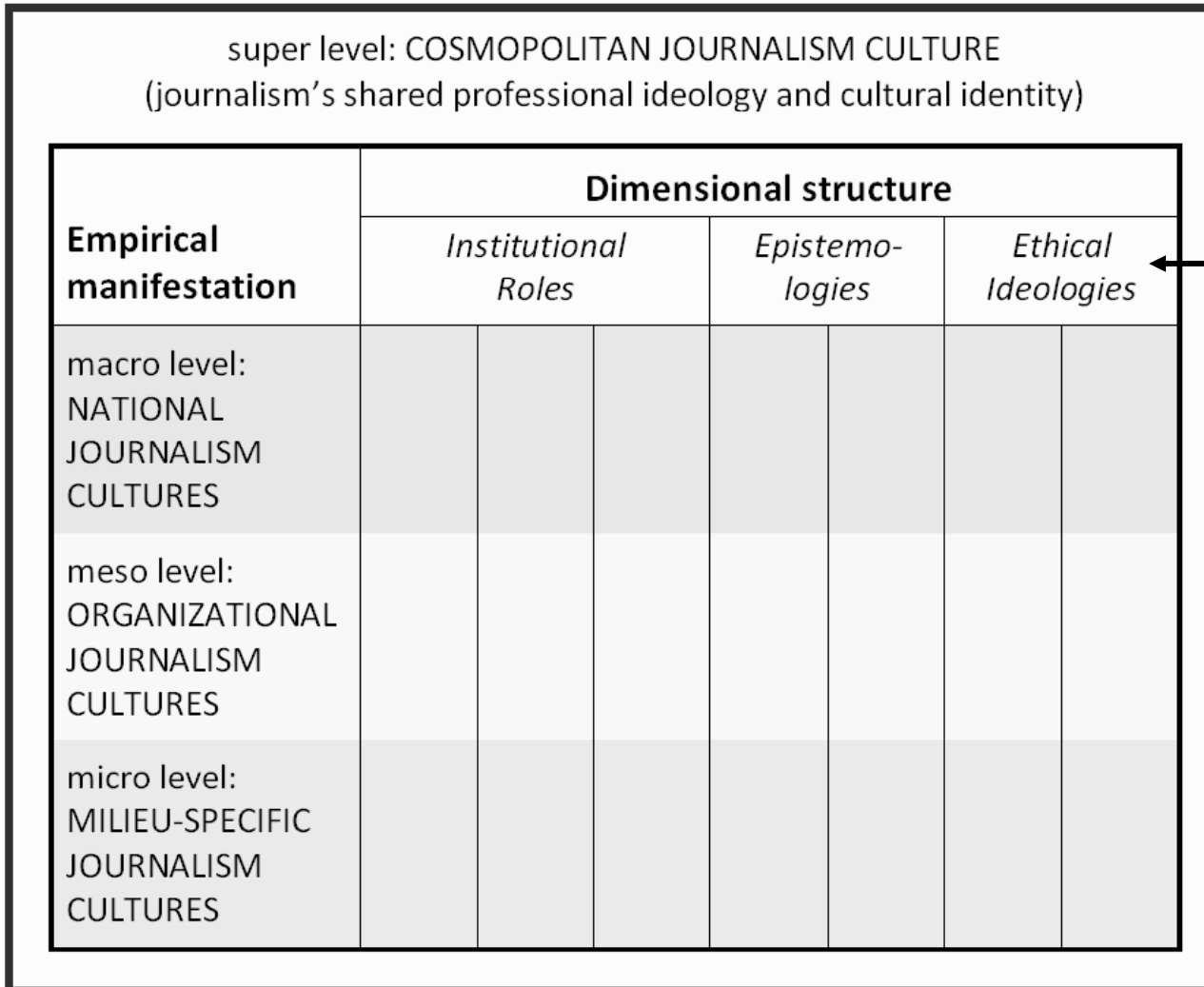
macro level:
NATIONAL
JOURNALISM
CULTURES

meso level:
ORGANIZATIONAL
JOURNALISM
CULTURES

micro level:
MILIEU-SPECIFIC
JOURNALISM
CULTURES



Journalism culture: deconstruction



← 3 constituents



Journalism culture: deconstruction

super level: COSMOPOLITAN JOURNALISM CULTURE
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Empirical manifestation	Dimensional structure						
	<i>Institutional Roles</i>			<i>Epistemologies</i>		<i>Ethical Ideologies</i>	
macro level: NATIONAL JOURNALISM CULTURES	Interventionism	Power Distance	Market Orientation	Objectivism	Empiricism	Relativism	Idealism
meso level: ORGANIZATIONAL JOURNALISM CULTURES							
micro level: MILIEU-SPECIFIC JOURNALISM CULTURES							

← 7 dimensions



Journalism culture: deconstruction

Constituent	Dimension	Poles	Description
Institutional Roles	Interventionism	Intervention (+) Passive (-)	The extent to which journalists pursue a particular mission and promote certain values
	Power Distance	Adversarial (+) Loyal (-)	The journalist's position toward loci of power in society
	Market Orientation	Consumers (+) Citizens (-)	The primary orientation to the commercial logic of the market or to public service
Epistemologies	Objectivism	Correspondence (+) Subjectivity (-)	The question of how can truth be established?
	Empiricism	Empirical (+) Analytical (-)	The means by which a truth claim is ultimately justified; the relative importance of facts vs. analysis
Ethical Ideologies	Relativism	Contextual (+) Universal (-)	The extent to which individuals base their personal moral philosophies on universal ethical rules
	Idealism	Means (+) Outcome (-)	The consequences in the responses to ethical dilemmas



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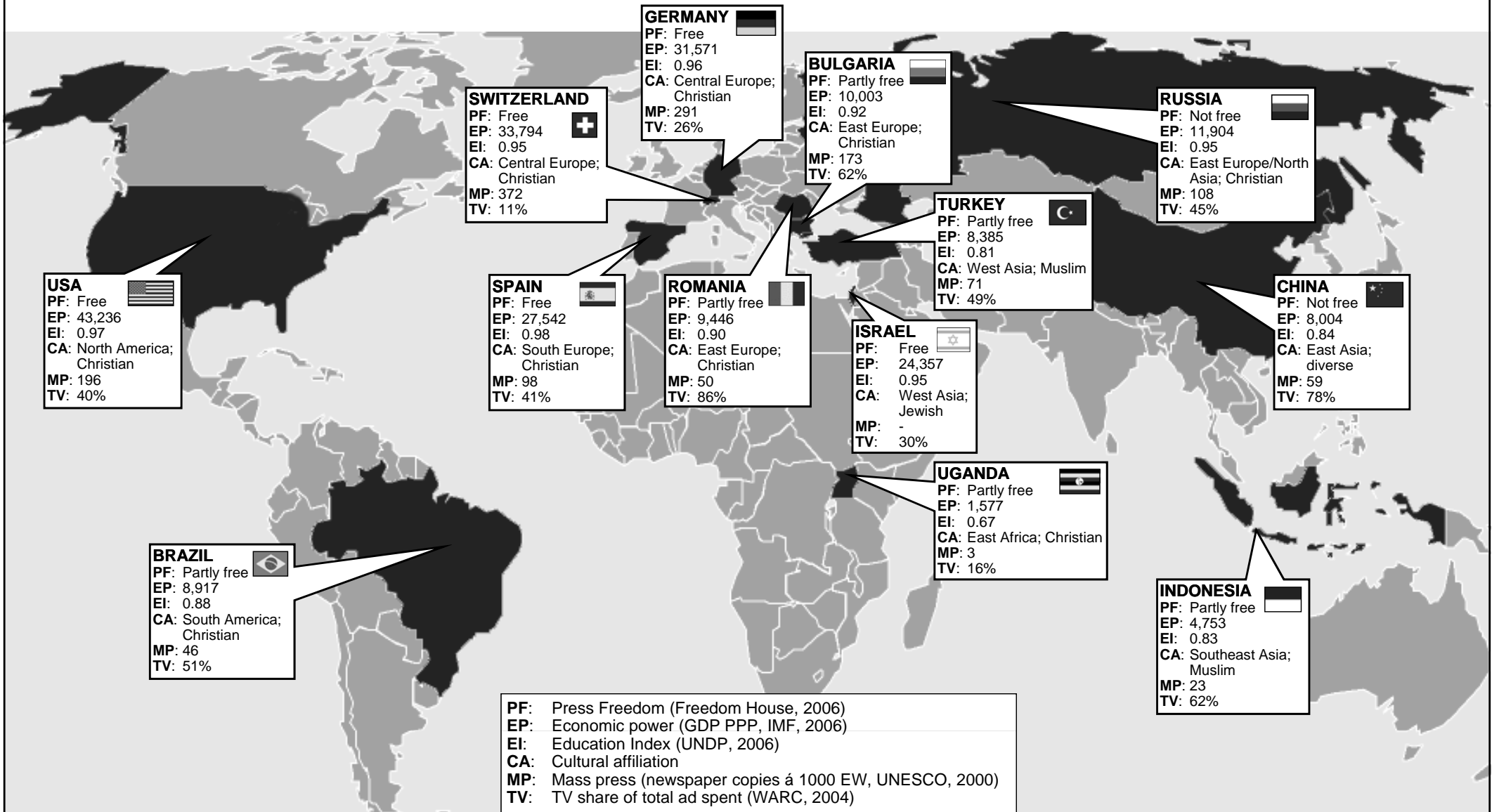


Methodology: Data collection

Three levels of analysis:

- *individual level:*
fully standardized telephone interviews with a quota sample of 100 working journalists for each country
- *organizational level:*
document analysis (annual business reports, public databases, etc.) and telephone inquiries to gather data about 20 media organizations per country
- *societal level:*
information obtained from public and commercial data bases (World Bank, UNESCO, World Advertising Trends, etc.) as well as from accessible sources of aggregated context data (Polity IV, World Values Survey, etc.)

Methodology: Most Different Systems Design



Worlds of Journalisms

http://www.worldsofjournalisms.org/

Worlds of Journalisms - home

Worlds of Journalisms

BACKGROUND
OBJECTIVES
THEORY
METHODOLOGY
RESEARCH SCHEDULE
PUBLICATIONS & SLIDES
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WHAT'S NEW

02 May 2007
Updates of research tools are available for download.

12-15 April 2007
Principal investigators from ten countries meet in Zurich to discuss the design of the study.

UPCOMING

A paper outlining the theoretical background of the study will be published in the November issue of *Communication Theory*.

Welcome to the *Worlds of Journalisms* project. This web site provides information about the project's background, objectives and organizational structure as well as the theoretical approach and research design.

The project in brief

The study *Worlds of Journalisms* sets out to develop a universal concept of journalism culture and explore cultural variation in professional orientations across nations, organizations and journalistic milieus. National surveys will be conducted in thirteen culturally diverse countries, including Brazil, Bulgaria, China, Germany, Indonesia, Israel, Romania, Russia, Spain, Switzerland, Turkey, Uganda and the United States

The study is mainly funded by the German Research Foundation (DFG) which provided central funding for six of the countries. The first wave of surveys will be carried out in summer and fall 2007, and first findings will be presented in early 2008.

Download *Worlds of Journalisms I* in brief (01-10-2007, Powerpoint slides)

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