

ECREA's 7th European communication Conference (2018) –  
Journalism Studies Section – 3 November



***A contested field: how journalists  
around the world give meaning to  
their work***

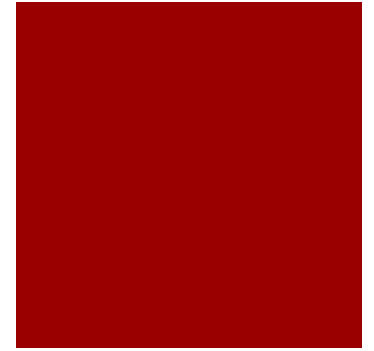
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Thomas Hanitzsch (LMU Munich – Germany)

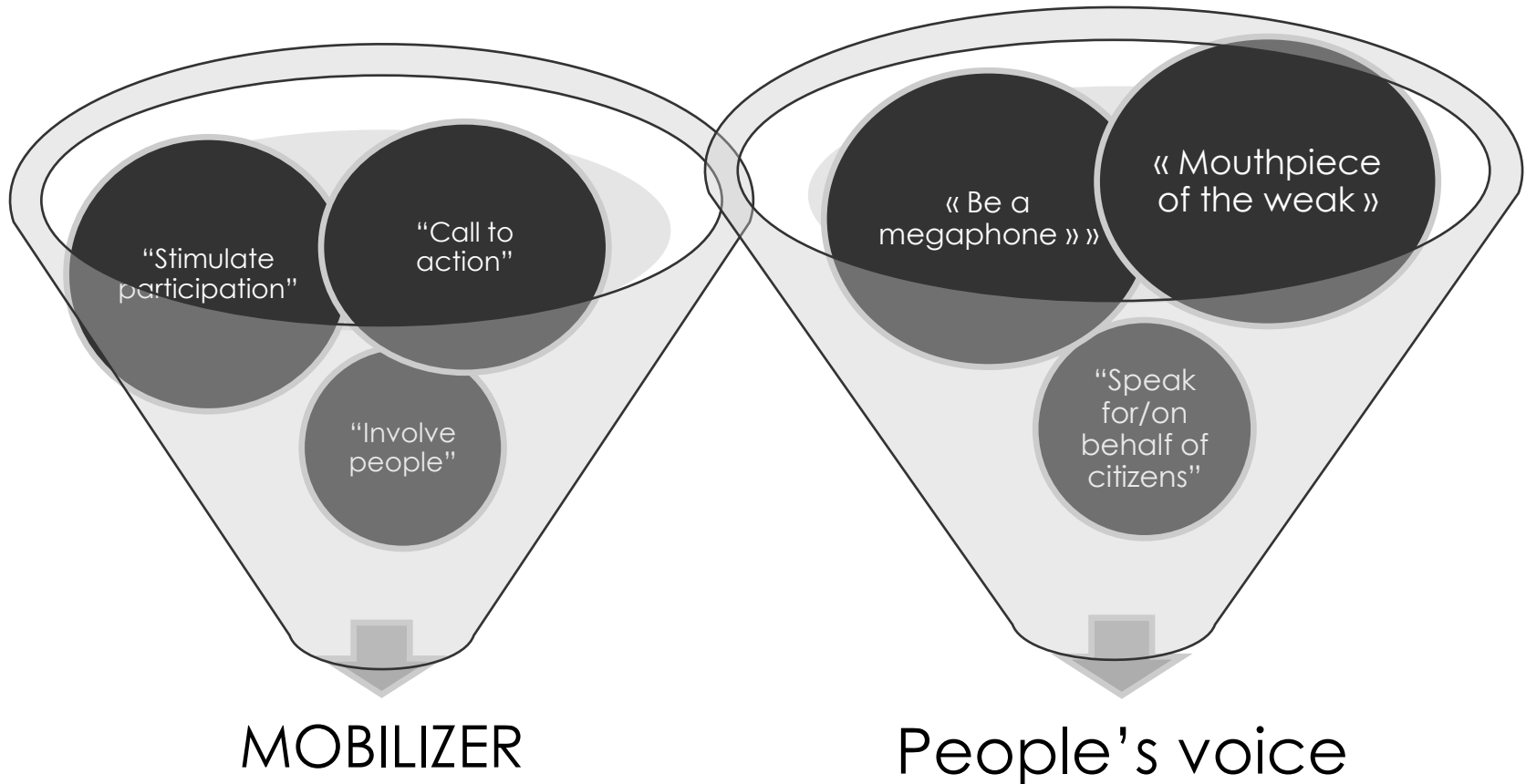
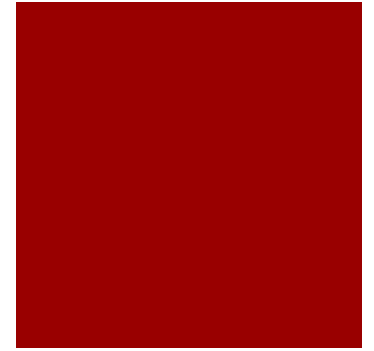


# Context and data

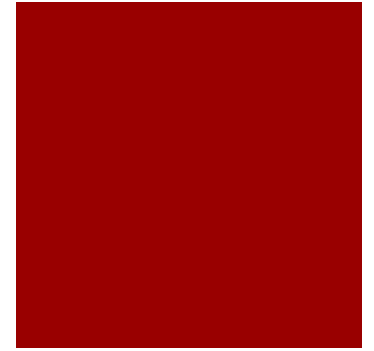


- Data from the WJS survey (2012-2016) : An open-ended question where respondents were asked to mention **the three most important roles for journalists in their country**
- Around 69.000 entries from 20.682 journalists (67 countries).
- Technical filtering → spelling errors, translations...
- Thematic filtering →
  - Removed: skills and practices (*being accurate, write fast, curiosity, ask the burning question...*)
  - Removed: values (*being honest, impartial, neutral, follow ethical guidelines...*)

# Inductive coding of 45 047 answers into 41 roles



# One role, one « dictionary »



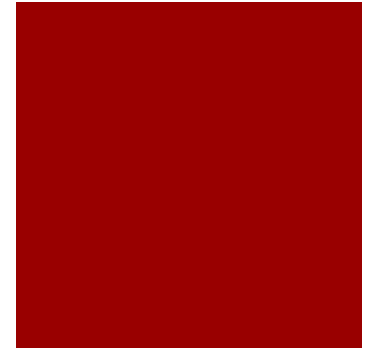
## ■ VERIFIER:

- Check (double, triple, cross, fact...)
- Ensure veracity (of information)
- Maintaining authenticity of information
- Provide verifiable information
- Report verifiable news, facts...
- Validation
- Verification/Verify/Verifier

## ■ REVEALER:

- Disclose
- Reveal
- Shed light (to abuses, injustice, corruption,...)
- Show the hidden (facts, truth...)
- Uncover
- Unveil

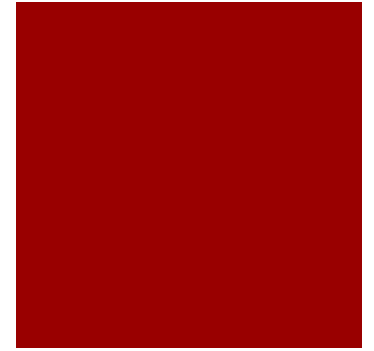
# Theoretical background



- We situate our data in the normative approach of journalistic roles:
  - The roles of journalists encompass generalized and aggregate expectations which journalists believe are deemed desirable in society.
  - Discursive constructions of journalism's place in society.
- Hanitzsch and Vos (2016) organized roles in two major domains: political life and everyday life.

# The six political functions of journalism

(Hanitzsch and Vos 2016)



Informational-instructive

Analytical-deliberative

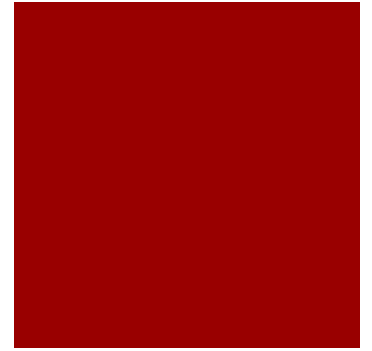
Critical-monitorial

Advocative-radical

Developmental-educative

Collaborative-facilitative

# The three functions of journalism in everyday life



Consumption

Emotion

Identity

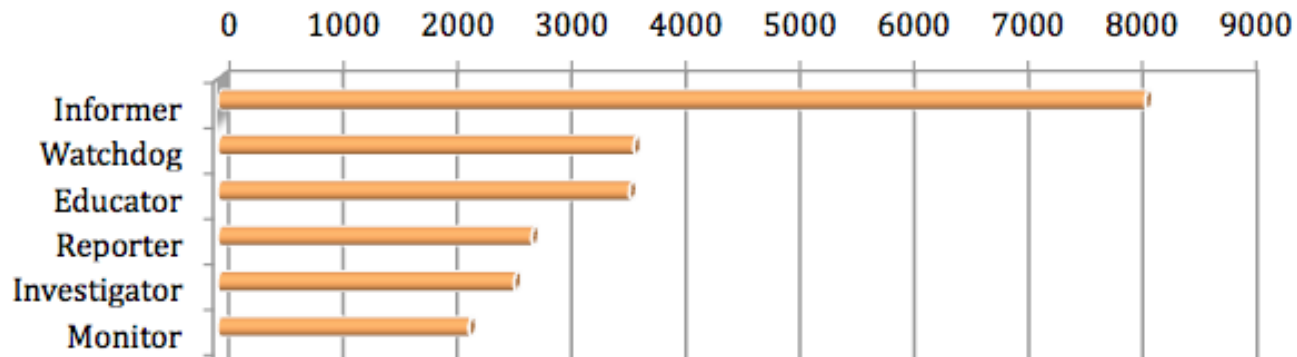
# Mapping journalistic roles around the world (n=45.047)



# Findings (part one): a universally shared vision of normative roles?

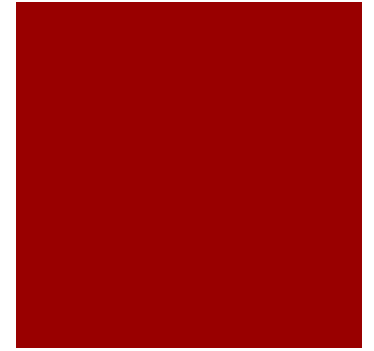


**Journalistic roles (more than 1% of the corpus)**  
(n=45,047)



the six most important roles attracted more than 50% of the entire corpus : 22.900 answers

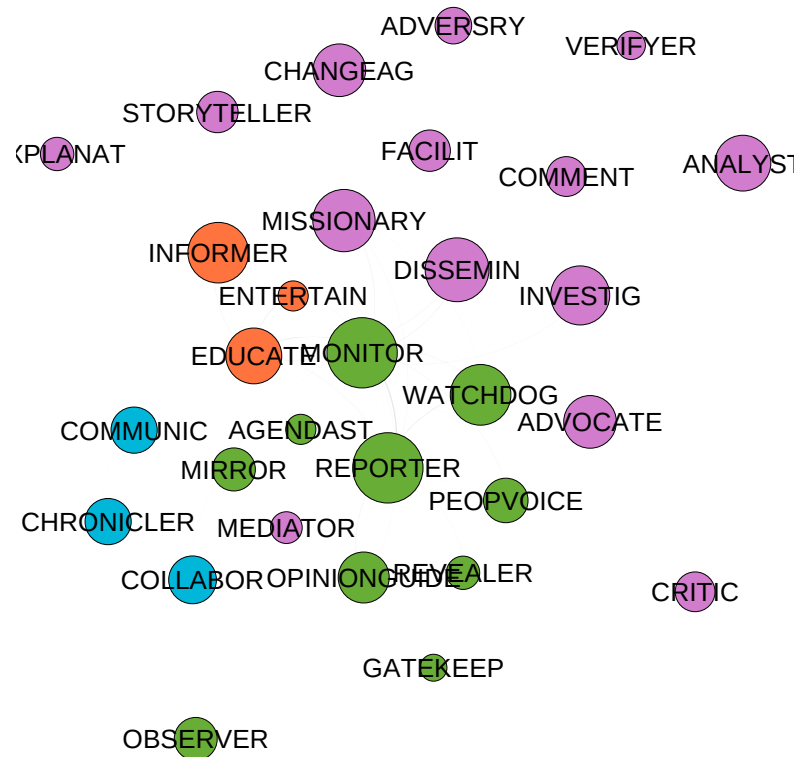
## Findings (part two): « beyond the wall », cultural nuances and different discursive constructions

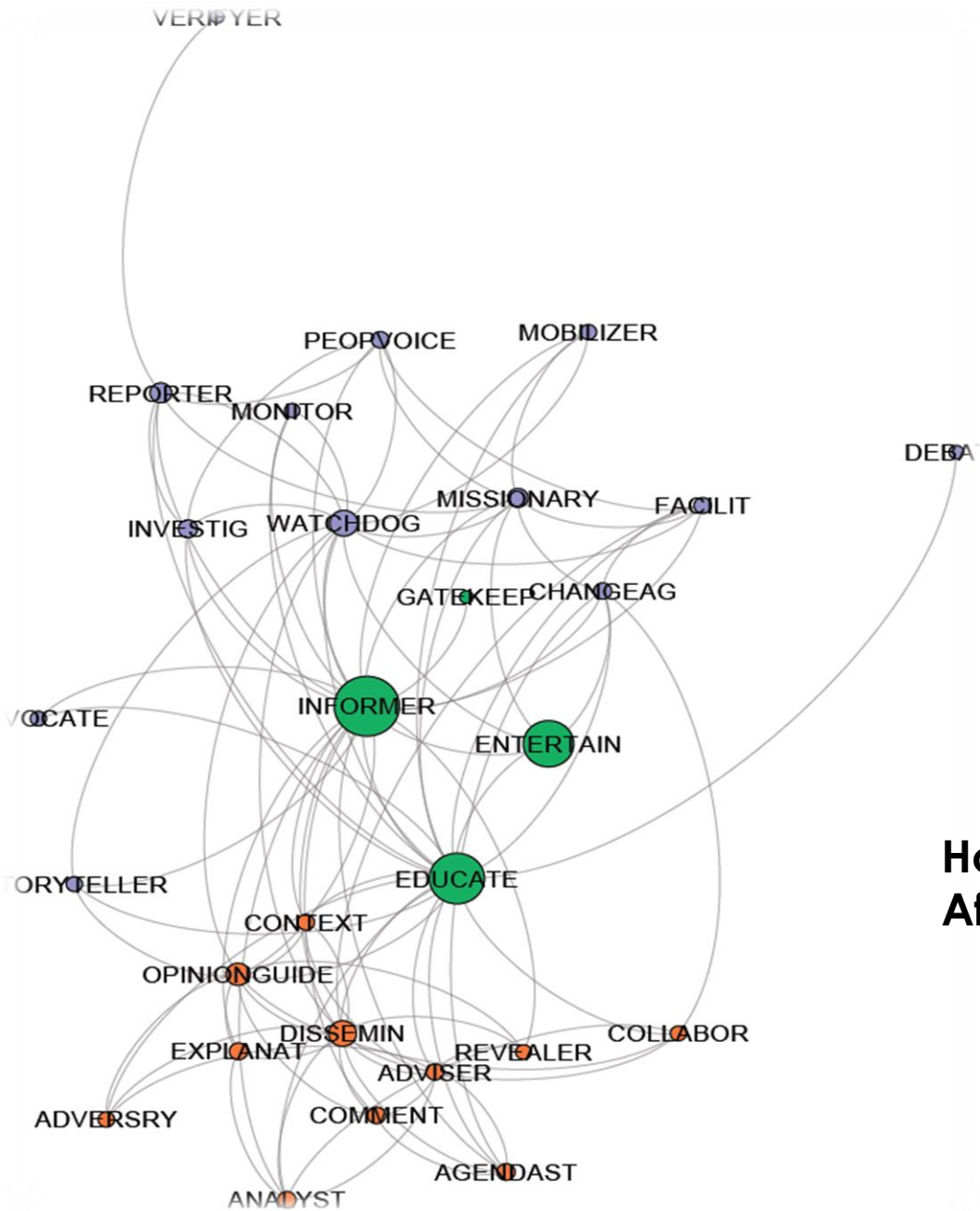


- Looking at « alternative » roles, that is to say roles which are not centered on a political dimension or understood in the western-democratic context.
  - 1. Stress other aspects of journalistic functions that are less visible:
    - ENTERTAINER, MARKETER, INSPIRATOR, ACCESS/SERVICE PROVIDER...
  - 2. Stress some cultural variations/nuances in terms of roles priorities, mostly visible in non-western countries
    - CHANGE AGENT, OPINION GUIDE, COLLABORATOR, FACILITATOR, MISSIONARY, EDUCATOR.



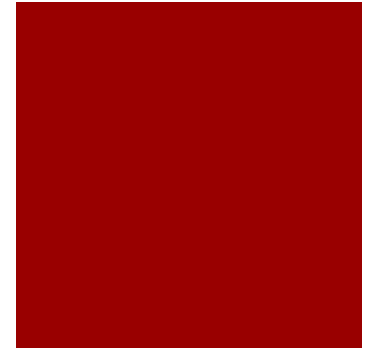
## How roles are associated: Asian countries





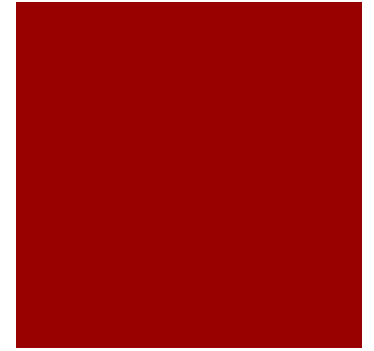
**How roles are associated:  
African Countries**

# Pushing the comparison further

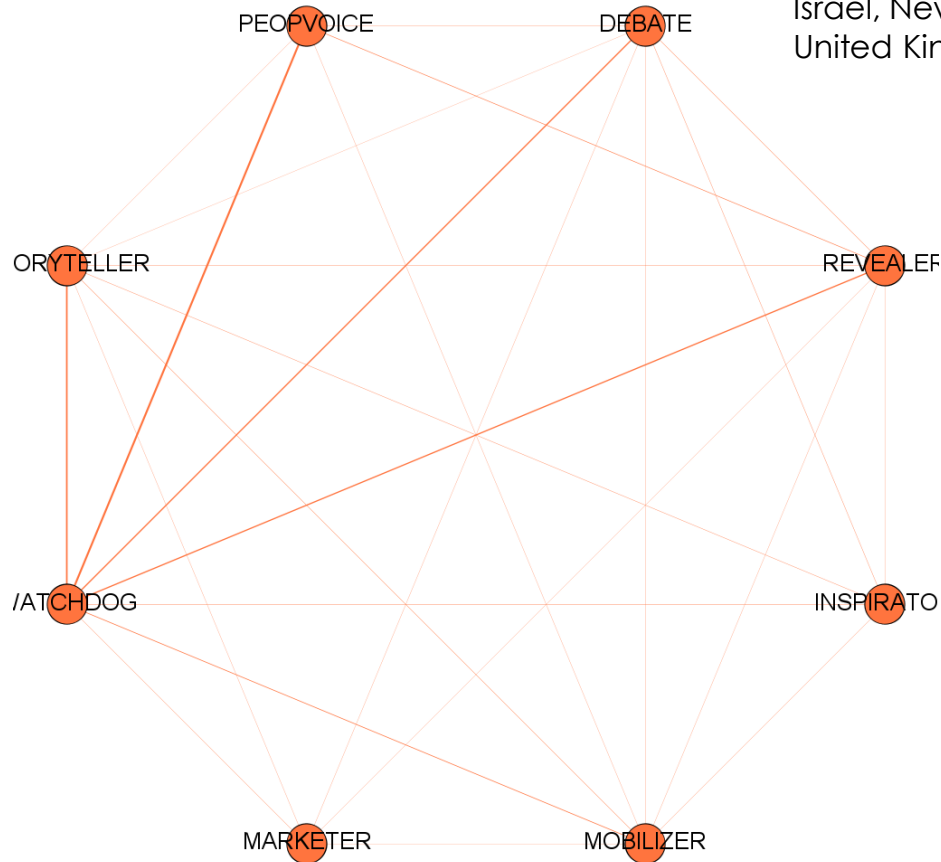


- National rankings can show different/competing representations of journalistic roles
  - China versus Asian countries
  - Northern Europe vs Southern Europe
  - Anglo-saxon countries vs other western countries

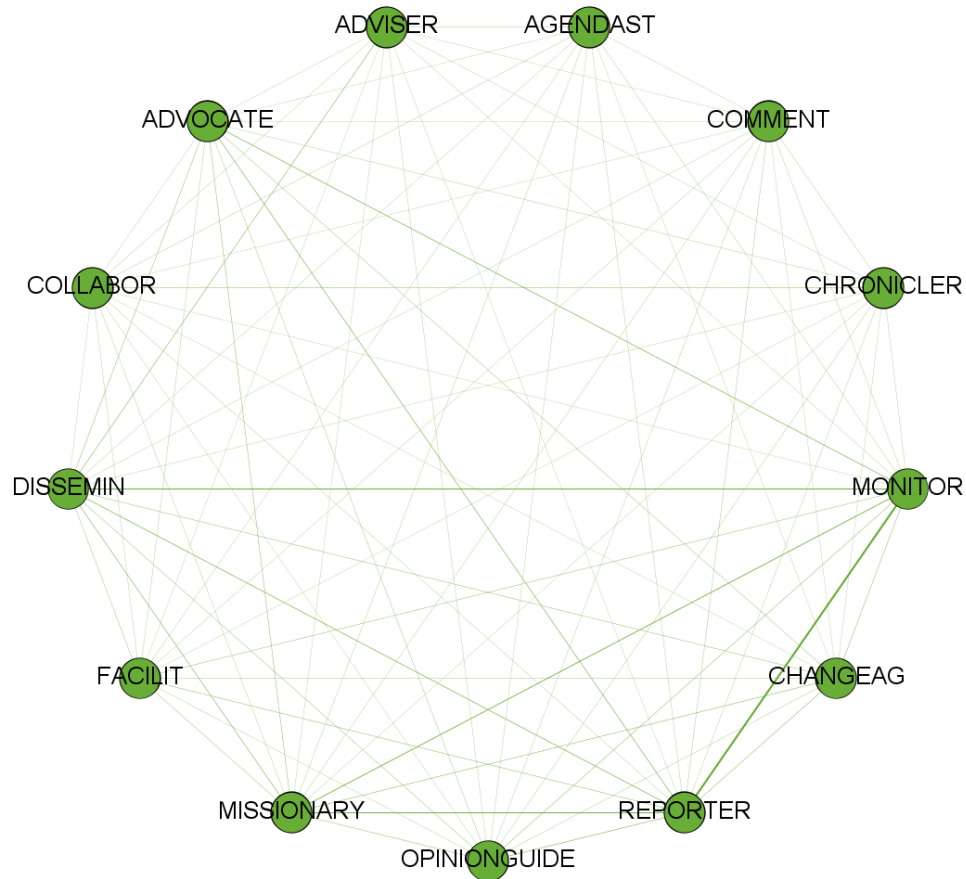
# Most frequently associated roles



Australia, Canada, Denmark, Ireland, Israel, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, United Kingdom, USA.

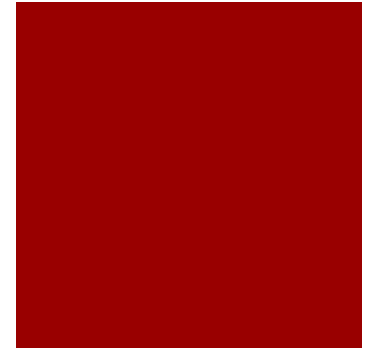


# Most frequently associated roles



Bangladesh, Buthan, China, Egypt, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Finland, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, Philippines, South Korea, Thailand, United Arab Emirates.

# Conclusion



- The normative core of journalism around the world seems still invariably built on the news media's contribution to political life.
- Other areas remain minority and become visible only when we choose a specific scope for analysing the data (geographical, cultural, political)
- The most shared roles seem still relevant in a normative perspective/understanding, despite the many changes in the field and the ways journalism is challenged around the world.
- Next step → WJS Third wave (2020)