

Worlds of Journalism Study

Data Sharing Protocol WJS 3 (2022-24)

Version 1.5.1 (January 21, 2022; update: April 17, 2025)

1 BACKGROUND

- a) The **WORLDS OF JOURNALISM STUDY** (WJS) is an academically driven project founded to regularly assess the state of journalism throughout the world. The Study's primary objective is to help journalism researchers, practitioners, media managers, and policymakers better understand the worldviews and changes that are taking place in the professional orientations of journalists, the conditions and limitations under which they work, and the role of journalism in a changing world. We believe that this is particularly relevant during a time of major transformations taking place within the institution of journalism around the globe.
- b) In order to do so, the national **Principal Investigators**, who are members of the WJS network, are responsible for carrying out representative surveys of journalists in their respective countries.
- c) Field research in the various countries is guided by the WJS overall **Methodological Framework** as specified in the Field Manual and the Master Questionnaire.
- d) The WORLDS OF JOURNALISM STUDY is directed by the **WJS CENTER** (currently based at LMU Munich) under the general supervision of the WJS Executive Committee. The WJS CENTER is responsible for field research coordination, data management, and the organization of WJS meetings.
- e) WJS Principal Investigators are collaborating based on the understanding that their data will be shared among all participating researchers. All participating researchers will have access to the WJS **Consolidated Data File** if their submitted data sets comply with the WJS overall Methodological Framework.

2 DATA OWNERSHIP

- a) As a matter of principle, and in respect of intellectual property rights, ownership of national data sets rests with the respective Principal Investigators.
- b) In cases where the WJS CENTER has financially supported field research, national data sets are owned by the Principal Investigators and the WJS CENTER collectively. Decisions regarding data use, data sharing, data proliferation, and publications based on this data set are subject to approval by the WJS CENTER.
- c) Data owners in the sense of the above can withdraw their country data sets from the WJS Consolidated Data File at any point in time. However, this does not apply to Principal Investigators who received financial support from the WJS CENTER.

3 DATA MANAGEMENT

- a) Members of the WJS network collaborate with the understanding that data needs to be managed and processed with necessary care. Data protection measures will be applied to an extent that is deemed sensible and practicable given the resources available, as well as in ways that are proportionate to the data security needs and the practical circumstances on the ground.
- b) Principal Investigators must submit their national data sets to the WJS CENTER no later than by December 31, 2024.
- c) All exchanged data sets must not carry any information that could allow identification of individual respondents.
- d) The WJS CENTER will assess national data sets for validity, reliability, and integrity. Identified data issues will be discussed with the respective Principal Investigators and resolved, if possible, collaboratively. Specific attention will be paid to the following issues: sample size, missing variables, scale deviations, missing values, non-response as well as invalid and inconsistent values.
- e) The WJS CENTER will carefully inspect methodological documentations of all countries to make sure that the overall survey design adheres to the WJS Methodological Framework. The necessary methodological information will be collected by the WJS CENTER through a separate survey to which all national teams are required to respond.
- f) The WJS CENTER will make recommendations as to whether a national data set is eligible for inclusion in the WJS Consolidated Data File based on overall considerations of data quality and compliance with the WJS Methodological Framework.
- g) Based on these recommendations, the WJS Executive Committee will decide which national data sets will be incorporated in the WJS Consolidated Data File.

4 DATA PROTECTION

- a) Since the WJS method relies on interviewing journalists, national data sets may contain sensitive information. Data protection issues may arise from internationally uneven conventions and regulations regarding the protection of personal information.
- b) For the gathering of personal data (through surveys), an informed consent process will include language to ensure that all participants understand the purpose of the project and the way their data is handled. By default, the WJS network ensures strict confidentiality of personal information. Participants will be able to refuse to answer questions and stop the interview at any stage without giving any reason.
- c) In the Consolidated Data File, the WJS CENTER will make sure that all information that allows identifying respondents and/or their institutions is removed. Once deposited, the data will undergo procedures to protect the confidentiality of individuals whose personal information may be part of archived data. These include: (1) rigorous review to assess disclosure risk, (2) modifying data if necessary to protect confidentiality, and (3) consultation with data producers to manage disclosure risk.

5 DATA USE AND DATA SHARING

- a) Data owners in the sense of Section 2 above are free to use their data sets for all kinds of purposes without seeking permission from the WJS CENTER. Furthermore, country teams may team up, share data sets, and use them for focused or regional comparative analyses as long as this does not conflict with Subsection 7b below.
- b) Premature use of data sets (without clearance from the WJS CENTER) should be avoided because it can lead to inconsistent results across different publications. Country teams may start publishing national results once their national data set is cleaned by the WJS CENTER.
- c) For countries where the WJS CENTER has financially supported field research, Principal Investigators must coordinate with the WJS CENTER when they wish to use and/or share their data for the above listed purposes.
- d) The WJS Consolidated Data File will be shared among all Principal Investigators, but conditions apply:
 - Principal Investigators will have *full access* to the WJS Consolidated Data File if their national data files fully comply with the WJS overall Methodological Framework.
 - Principal Investigators will have *partial access* to the WJS Consolidated Data File if their national data files do not comply with the WJS overall Methodological Framework for all of the variables (e.g., because some questions were asked in substantively different ways, or not at all). Partial access means that PIs receive a version of the WJS Consolidated Data File that excludes questions/variables not asked in the respective country.
 - Principal Investigators will have *no access* to the WJS Consolidated Data File if their national data files were found to be fraudulent or (partially or fully) fabricated, if samples do not meet criteria outlined in the Field Manual, or if critical methodological information is missing.

6 DATA PROLIFERATION

- a) Consistent with the WJS Statutes, the Consolidated Data File will remain strictly under embargo for three years after the end of the designated fieldwork period, i.e., until April 16, 2028. During this period, the Consolidated Data File must not be shared with individuals and institutions outside of the WJS network.
- b) After the embargo period, the WJS Consolidated Data File will be made available to the global research community.

7 DISSEMINATION AND PUBLICATION POLICIES

- a) The WORLDS OF JOURNALISM STUDY is a collaborative endeavor. As such, collaborative publication and collective authorship should be the principle avenue of disseminating the Study's results to a larger audience, academic and non-academic.
- b) Principal Investigators are free to use the WJS Consolidated Data File for all kinds of comparative analyses and publications.
- c) If the WJS Consolidated Data File is used for analyses incorporating a rather small

range of countries (e.g., regional analyses), the relevant data owners (see Section 2) should be offered co-authorship as a matter of good scientific practice.

- d) Analyses and publications involving a single country or context should be left to the relevant Principal Investigators and their country teams.
- e) Co-authorship in the above sense may be claimed if one has made an active and tangible contribution to the publication in question.
- f) Having contributed a country sample to the WJS Consolidated Data File does not automatically entitle data owners to become co-authors of publications.

8 ATTRIBUTION RULES

- a) Publications based on the Consolidated Data File must acknowledge both the WORLDS OF JOURNALISM STUDY as its intellectual context as well as the collaborative nature of the study.
- b) Publications based on national data, or a selection of WJS countries, shall acknowledge the larger WORLDS OF JOURNALISM STUDY context and the collaborative nature of the study.
- c) After April 16, 2028, the Consolidated Data File will be available under a Creative Commons License (“Attribution-NonCommercial”). No commercial use is permitted.