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# WHO ARE THE SPANISH JOURNALISTS?

## Professional profiles and changes in the profession

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**ABSTRACT** - This study analyzes the current socio-demographic and labor profile of Spanish journalists, as well as perceived changes they view to their profession, based on results obtained in a representative survey of 390 Spanish journalists between March 1, 2014 and May 30, 2015 performed as part of the *Worlds of Journalism Study* project. Our findings show that the average Spanish journalist is a man in his late thirties with advanced university degrees in communications or journalism who has been working in the profession for over fifteen years. The results show that job insecurity is commonly viewed as an issue in the profession, as are hierarchical and salary differences with respect to gender. The relevance of audiences and the perceived influence of economic difficulties on the media are among the most important changes experienced by journalists in Spain in recent years.

**Key words:** Journalistic profession. Spanish journalist. Professional profile

## QUEM SÃO OS JORNALISTAS ESPANHÓIS? perfil atual e transformações da profissão

**RESUMO** - Este estudo analisa o atual perfil sociodemográfico e trabalhista do jornalista espanhol, assim como as mudanças percebidas na profissão a partir dos resultados obtidos numa pesquisa representativa realizada junto a 390 jornalistas espanhóis entre 1 de março de 2014 e 30 de maio de 2015, no âmbito do projeto *Worlds of Journalism Study*. Os resultados mostram que o perfil profissional do jornalista espanhol é o de um homem com mais de 35 anos, com formação universitária em comunicação ou jornalismo e que está há mais de quinze anos na profissão. Os dados assinalam a precarização da

profissão, assim como as diferenças hierárquicas e salariais de género. A relevância dada às exigências da audiência, bem como a percepção das dificuldades económicas dos meios de comunicação são algumas das mudanças mais importantes experimentadas pelos jornalistas na Espanha nos últimos anos.

**Palavras-chave:** Profissão jornalística. Jornalistas espanhóis. Perfil do profissional.

## **¿QUIÉNES SON LOS PERIODISTAS ESPAÑOLES? Perfiles profesionales y transformaciones en la profesión**

**RESUMEN** - Este estudio analiza el perfil sociodemográfico y laboral actual del periodista español, así como los cambios percibidos en su profesión a partir de los resultados obtenidos en una encuesta representativa realizada a 390 periodistas españoles entre el 1 de marzo de 2014 y el 30 de mayo de 2015, dentro del proyecto *Worlds of Journalism Study*. Los resultados muestran que el perfil profesional del periodista español es el de un hombre a finales de la treintena, con estudios universitarios superiores en comunicación o periodismo y que lleva más de quince años trabajando en la profesión. Los datos señalan la precariedad laboral de la profesión, así como las diferencias jerárquicas y salariales de género. La relevancia cobrada por la audiencia y las influencias percibidas debido a las dificultades económicas de los medios son algunos de los cambios más importantes experimentados por el gremio en España en los últimos años.

**Palabras clave:** Profesión periodística. Periodistas españoles. Perfil del profesional

### **Journalism in Crisis: Economic Transformations in the Digital Era**

For years, the profession of journalism in the Western world has been undergoing a series of changes to both its template for news production and its business model. Indeed, so notable are these changes that there is now talk of a “crisis in journalism” (Franklin, 2012, p. 665), manifest in the rampant closures of communications media organizations, slackening press circulation, and declining advertising revenue in both the United States and Europe.

The arrival of the digital era ushered in a series of consequences of different kinds that were felt throughout the entire Western world. On the one hand, these were of an economic nature, involving declining revenue streams from the key source of income for media companies, their advertisers, who began to channel their investments into the digital realm—not necessarily at online media, but rather at such internet giants as Google and Facebook (Bruno & Nielsen, 2012). Moreover, these developments exacerbated already

existing budget cuts at media companies, resulting in a heavier workload for their journalists and intensifying pressure to turn a profit and secure advertising revenue (Hanusch, 2012).

On the other hand, the digital era also brought with it consequences of a cultural nature, that is, those of a kind involving the knowledge and skills needed to carry out journalistic work routines. Such routines changed as digital technologies and tools were integrated into the workplace, transforming the creation and broadcasting of information that now needed constant updating. This forced those in the trade to develop technical skills previously not required for their job, such as producing content for different kinds of platforms (Singer, 2011). Furthermore, new technologies also altered the role of audiences, who found that influence growing thanks to Web 2.0 feedback and social networks as well as because they themselves were also becoming content creators, or so-called prosumers (Toffler, 1980).

In Spain, the specific case considered here, other factors must also be noted: for example, to the economic crisis, which began in 2008 and ultimately took a high toll on the country, one must add the media industry's structural crisis, which was made worse by the rise of the digital era (Casero-Ripollés & Cullell-March, 2013). According to data from the Observatory that was created by the Madrid Press Association (APM) to monitor the crisis, between 2008 and 2015, 12,200 people working in the communications media—not only journalists—were laid off and 375 media communications organizations shut down. Moreover, since 2010 the average base salary for members of the profession has dropped by 17% and a two-tier salary scale has been imposed on editorial staffers doing the same job: one for those were working before contractual norms were renovated and one for those who were hired under the new contractual arrangements put in place during the years of economic crisis (APM, 2015). With respect to both salary and working conditions, the feeling of job insecurity in the profession has deepened dramatically.

The economic crisis together with new digital developments also had other repercussions on Spanish journalists of both genders, affecting their professional identity and role (Berganza et al., 2017), both of which have now become integrated into a model where unidirectional news has been modified for the sake of multidirectionality (Rheingold, 2002). The profession itself acknowledges that there has been a decline in news quality, caused

by its weakening economic and political independence, the impact of recent technological developments, and widespread job insecurity (Gómez Mompert et al., 2015). Ultimately, taking into account all the factors clustered together in the case of Spain,

[t]he crisis suffered over the course of recent years—and which is still ongoing—has prevented a clear view of the professional changes that have taken place: transformations in labor relations with the advent of “self-employment”; the impact of technology on daily activity; the role of audiences within the new communications sphere; the profile of journalists and their image in society; new professional specialties looming on the horizon... (APM, 2016, p. 12)

Given the backdrop of these media transformations, the current profile of Spanish journalists is worth considering. The APM began conducting surveys on journalists in the 1990s throughout Spain. In 1999, a study on Spanish communications media established the profile of that country’s journalists at century’s end (Canel et al., 2000). Its conclusions indicated that the average journalist was a man who was 34 years of age (younger than earlier surveys conducted by the APM had suggested), earned a low salary, and had a work week that clocked in at well over 8 hours a day (Rodríguez Andrés, 2003).

In general, most of the research done on Spanish journalists has focused on specific features, such as the roles journalists perform (Canel & Sánchez Aranda, 1999; Tuñez & Martínez, 2014; Gómez Mompert, 1999; Gómez Mompert et al., 2015; Berganza et al., 2017), the defining characteristics of their profession (Humanes, 1998; Humanes, 2003), the ways the profession was transformed over the course of the last century (Gómez Mompert, 1999; Martín Sabarís & Amurrio Vélez, 2003), or the impact that different workplace attitudes and conditions has had on news production (Túñez & Martínez, 2014). However, in recent years there have been no studies which, in light of recent changes, analyze the current profile of Spanish journalists in depth, taking their sociodemographic and working features into consideration. Given this academic lacuna, we propose two research questions:

Q. 1: What sociodemographic and professional features characterize the figure of the 21<sup>st</sup> century Spanish journalist?

Q. 2: Has this profile varied since the inception of the so-called “crisis in journalism”?

Given the changes which took place during the crisis, which had repercussions, as we have seen, on working routines and conditions (Túñez & Sixto, 2011) as well as on factors that had

traditionally been influential within the profession, we propose our third research question:

Q. 3: How do journalists view the changes of recent years, with regard to different aspects of their job and to notable sources of influence within it?

The crisis of journalism in Spain, however, has not made its effects felt on all media equally. Thus, if in 2015 television and the internet were already showing signs of a recovery as advertisers began again to invest in them, print media continued to suffer from diminishing revenue streams (APM, 2015). Meanwhile, other factors may also have had influenced the way journalists of both genders viewed these differences, such as the form of the media's ownership (whether public or private) or its scale (whether local, regional, or national), as Berganza et al. have pointed out (2016c). Past research has confirmed that these organizational factors are decisive (Mitchelstein & Boczkowski, 2009; Paulussen & Ugille, 2008), given that most news is produced in highly organized environments. It is often understood that a media organization's structure has an impact on its editorial policy, its economic prospects, and the available time and resources available to research stories (Reich & Hanitzsch, 2013, p. 137). We thus formulate our fourth research question:

Q. 4: Are there any significant differences in the ways that journalists view changes to their professional praxis, and influences upon it, when structural factors are taken into consideration, specifically media type, its form of ownership and scale?

## **Methodology of the Analysis Procedure and Sample**

This study was carried out in conjunction with the WJS international project, *Worlds of Journalism Study* (<http://www.worldsofjournalism.org>), which applies a common methodology in order to undertake transnational comparative analyses (Hanitzsch et al. 2012). After a preliminary pilot study undertaken between 2007 and 2011, in which 18 countries participated, in the second wave, of which the present study is part, the number of participating countries rose to 63. If 100 professionals were interviewed during

the pilot study, in this second edition a representative, probabilistic survey was conducted that, in the case of Spain, included a total of 390 journalists (with a 5% margin of error), given that in 2014 the estimated target group consisted of 18,000 journalists (Berganza et al., 2016b). This study was made possible thanks to funding from the LMU University of Munich and received additional financial support from the Spanish Ministry of Economy, Industry and Competitiveness (CSO2013- 44874-R). The data, as it appears in the shared methodology, was gathered by telephone by a professional team with expertise in conducting surveys between March 1, 2014 and May 30, 2015.

A multi-stage procedure was employed to select sample units in aggregates. This was clustered and stratified according to scale (large and small), media organization type (newspapers, magazines, press agencies, radio, television, and online media), and autonomous community. Taking each category as an aggregate sample unit, five journalists were chosen at random for each “large” media organization; 3 for each “small” media organization. Given the absence of any exhaustive communications media directory in Spain, we estimated the number of communications media organizations (N=382) based on the 2013 report issued by the Press Association of Madrid and the Spanish Government’s Agenda for Communication. The study required comparing information from these two news sources and confirming if the media organizations concerned still existed, given that the economic crisis caused several large communications companies to close every month.

In order to select the professionals that we interviewed, we followed the criteria compiled in the *Worlds of Journalism Study*. The survey was therefore given to those journalists whose work in communications media generated at least 51% of their income. These were also required to be either actively involved in the production and editing of journalistic content or working in a supervisory capacity or in editorial coordination. Freelancers who did not meet these requirements or who, for example, worked only on a part-time basis, were not included in the sample.

The sample contains a total of 124 publicly- and privately-owned companies, including newspapers, news agencies, radio stations, TV channels, magazines, and native digital media.

## Means

In producing this article, we made certain that the people we interviewed had enough experience in the profession to be sufficiently aware of the changes that, in their view, it has undergone (PI3 y PI4). Thus, only those journalists who claimed to have five or more years of experience in the field were chosen for the sample. Of the 390 journalists we interviewed, 348 (89.23%) responded to questions about changes to the profession. These were asked two sets of questions about different aspects of work in journalism in Spain and about any changes to the influences upon it that they perceived, classifying them according to a scale measuring their increasing or decreasing importance. The scale went from 1 to 5, with 1 meaning that the factor at issue had weakened or decreased significantly, 2 that it had weakened or decreased somewhat, 3 that there had been no change, 4 that it had strengthened or increased somewhat, and 5 that it had strengthened or increased significantly.

## Analysis

The survey was carried out and codified in SPSS. In order to establish the global profile, a descriptive analysis was performed on the data as well on differences in the averages (Student's *t*-distribution) to find variations among the profiles of those hired before the crisis and those hired afterward. Likewise, an inferential statistical analysis (Student's *t*-distribution and ANOVA) was used to see if there were any differences between journalists deriving from organizational factors.

## Results

### Current profile of the average Spanish journalist

The results we obtained reveal that the sociodemographic profile of the average Spanish journalist is a man, given that of the 390 we interviewed, 59% were male. However, this does not mean that there are no women journalists; indeed, 41% of the professional journalists in Spain are women—a significant percentage of the total. The average age is somewhere in the late thirties ( $M=39,23$ ,  $DE=9,17$ ), a figure lower than

one would estimate based on the 2016 APM report, which suggested that the average age was approximately 45 (APM, 2016). Moreover, it is worth pointing out that the average age of those working in digital media ( $n=89$ ) ( $M=36.80$ ,  $DE=10.03$ ) is, at 36.8 [ $t(387)= 3.220$ ,  $p<0.01$ ], significantly lower than that of those who work in traditional media ( $n=301$ ) ( $M=40.31$ ,  $DE=8.75$ ), according to a study by Berganza et al. (2016a). Their political orientation is predominantly center-left (85.5%), and 62.2% of the survey sample self-identify as leftist.

With respect to gender, inequality could be discerned both in the pay gap between the genders and in the fact that there are fewer women in senior positions (Table 1). It is also clear that Spanish women journalists attempt to mitigate such inequality through education and internships in the field as pathways to narrowing the gender gap (De Miguel et al., 2017).

**Table 1** – Hierarchical distribution of male and female journalists according to gender

Professional Rank <sup>1</sup>	Salary	Gender	
		Women	Men
Senior	< 1000€	50.0%	50.0%
	Between 1000 and 2000€	22.2%	77.8%
	>2000€	37.5%	62.5%
	Total	37.2%	62.8%
Junior	< 1000€	40.0%	60.0%
	Between 1000 and 2000€	32.6%	67.4%
	>2000€	37.1%	62.9%
	Total	34.9%	65.1%
Base	< 1000€	52.0%	48.0%
	Between 1000 y 2000€	42.5%	57.5%
	>2000€	41.7%	58.3%
	Total	44.3%	55.7%
Total number of journalists in the three hierarchical rankings		41.4%	58.6%

Source: elaborated by the author.

When we compare the profiles of those with fewer than 5 years of experience – and who, therefore, began working as

journalists at approximately the same time as the economic crisis got underway—with those with 5 or more years of experience (PI 2), we notice that there are indeed significant differences between their respective salaries. Even if this is due to the fact that the former group has less experience simply because they are younger, it does appear to confirm the abovementioned two-tier salary scale among editorial staff.

**Table 2** – Comparisons between profiles of male and female journalists according to professional experience.

	<b>5 years of experience or less (N=42)</b>	<b>5 or more years of experience (N=348)</b>	<b>Total sample (N=390)</b>	
Age in years	27.98	40.59	39.23	***
Experience in years	3.00	17.41	15.91	***
Salary. Scale 1 (<500€) – 10 (>6.000€)	2.13	3.91	3.72	***
Political orientation. Scale 0 (left) -10 (right)	3.75	3.71	3.71	
Gender (female)	59.5%	38.8%	41.0%	*
Full-time employment	66.7%	87.9%	85.6%	**
Member of a professional organization	35.7%	41.8%	41.1%	
With a university degree	92.9%	97.1%	96.7%	
Majored in journalism at university	83.3%	89.2%	88.6%	

\*\*\*p<0.001; \*\*p<0.01; \*p<0.05

Source: elaborated by the author.

Job insecurity can also be observed in contractual arrangements. Those who began working during the crisis have significantly fewer opportunities to work full-time than those who began earlier. In addition, the number of women has increased in more recent generations. No significant differences were found in the connection between access to the profession and the possession of a university degree in journalism, since for many years such access has gone hand in hand with having a university degree in journalism or communications.

If we compare Spanish journalists and their Latin American counterparts we can discern similarities in their sociodemographic profiles. The average Latin American professional is also a man (60.3%) who primarily works full-time (73.2%). Mexico and Colombia are the countries with the highest number of professionals with these types of contracts (Oller et. al., 2017). By contrast, if we compare differences among countries, in Spain the percentage of full-time employees is 85.6%, while in Argentina and Brazil, this percentage falls to 58 and 59% respectively, given that in these two countries journalists, unlike their Spanish counterparts, often work at other jobs that are supplementary to their main profession (Oller et. al., 2017).

In addition, both the Spanish and Latin American profiles predominantly characterize their politics as center-left. As for their membership in professional associations, fewer than a third of Latin American journalists report being members of such associations, although Brazilians stand out in this matter since, in their case, the total is 41% (Oller et al., 2017), a figure equal to that of journalists in Spain.

Similarly, the Latin American professional's average number of years of experience, at around 11 (Oller et. al., 2017), is lower than that of his or her Spanish counterpart (at around 16). Still, in both contexts a gender gap can be observed, since both Latin American and Spanish women journalists on average have approximately three fewer years of experience than their male peers.

### **Views from within the profession on changes to the work of journalism**

Our results indicate that the change interviewees regarded as most decisive in recent years is of a technical nature. Thus, 68.8% of those interviewed believed that the use of internet search engines has increased significantly while 24.1% believed that it has increased somewhat (Table 3). In fact, only one person (0.3%) believed that it has decreased somewhat. Similarly, 87.4% said that the importance of having technical skills has increased and only 9 people (2.6%) believed that it has decreased.

**Table 3** – Journalists’ views on changes in different aspects of their job.

	N	M	DE	Percent: "Has increased"	Percent: "Has decreased"
Use of internet search engines	348	4.64	.604	93.9	.3
Importance of technical skills	348	4.24	.768	87.4	2.6
Average working hours of journalists	347	4.23	.927	82.5	4.3
Interaction of journalists with his or her audience	345	3.88	.895	76.5	9.6
Having a University degree	348	3.38	1.063	40.5	15.8
The relevance of journalism for society	347	2.99	1.049	32.3	34.3
Importance of having a degree in journalism or related field	348	3.14	1.061	31.3	24.1
Journalist’ freedom to make editorial decisions	346	2.40	.944	11.8	55.5
The credibility of journalism	348	2.28	.982	10.6	66.1
Time available for researching stories	348	1.78	.821	3.4	86.2

Average range, between 1: has significantly decreased; y 5: has significantly increased)

Source: elaborated by the author.

Work routines have also changed dramatically. 86.2% of journalists believe that they have less time for researching and documenting stories. Only 13 professionals (3.4%) believe that they have more. However, this does not mean that the number of hours they work has decreased but rather just the opposite. The results show that nearly half of journalists (47.6%) claim that their work hours have increased significantly while 34.9% believe they have increased somewhat. Only 4.3% believe that they have decreased.

Interaction with audiences is a stand-out requirement in the new workload that is now apparently part of the job. 76.5% think that its importance has increased while only 9.6% believe that it has decreased. It is precisely here that we find significant differences depending on the organizational profile of the media organization (Table 4). Both with respect to ownership [ $t(301)=2,301, p<0,05; d=0,3$ ], where the test revealed that such interaction is perceived to be higher at private media organizations ( $M=3.92; DE=0.86$ ) than it is at public ones ( $M=3.63; DE=1.037$ )—where the difference can be considered medium—as well as with respect to scale, where the ANOVA test found significant differences among at the local, regional, and national levels [ $F(2.342)=4.133; p<0.05$ ]. The post-

hoc Tukey test showed that interaction with audiences is significantly greater ( $p < 0.05$ ) at national media organizations ( $M = 4.13$ ;  $DE = 0.769$ ) than at those of a regional nature ( $M = 3.80$ ;  $DE = 0.918$ ). The size of this difference can be considered medium ( $d = 0.39$ ). The increased importance of interaction with audiences, however, has apparently not brought with it a higher opinion of journalism's relevance to society, where we observe that the percentage of those who think it has fallen (34.3%) or increased (32.3%) is quite similar to that of those who believe it has not changed (33.4%). That attitudes toward journalism's relevance have not improved may be due to the rise of citizen journalism on blogs and other online services, as well as the role social networks play in generating news, where any citizen can act as a witness to news and disseminate it.

**Table 4.** Changes to various aspects of journalistic work at the organizational level (using average scores)

	Ownership		Press & Agency	Media Type			Media Scale				
	Private	State & Public		Tv	Radio	Online	Local	Regional	National		
Use of internet search engines	4.65	4.58	4.68	4.56	4.61	4.63	4.48	4.63	4.69		
Importance of technical skills	4.24	4.19	4.24	4.30	4.13	4.24	4.22	4.20	4.35		
Average working hours of journalists	4.24	4.19	4.27	4.10	4.35	4.18	4.12	4.27	4.14		
Interaction of journalists with his or her audience	3.92	3.63	*	3.92	3.68	3.80	3.99	3.78	3.80	4.13	*
Having a University degree	3.35	3.51	3.12	3.13	3.41	3.00	3.30	3.41	3.33		
The relevance of journalism for society	3.04	2.75	2.97	2.95	2.96	3.10	3.23	2.95	3.03		
Importance of having a degree in journalism or related field	3.12	3.23	3.12	3.13	3.41	3.00	3.22	3.17	3.00		
Journalist' freedom to make editorial decisions	2.43	2.25	2.39	2.44	2.22	2.50	2.37	2.44	2.31		
The credibility of journalism	2.30	2.23	2.26	2.22	2.22	2.43	2.59	2.30	2.14		
Time available for researching stories	1.77	1.81	1.78	1.81	2.00	1.60	1.67	1.75	1.90		

\*\*\* $p < 0.001$ ; \*\* $p < 0.01$ ; \* $p < 0.05$

Source: elaborated by the author.

The values inherent to journalism, such as the autonomy and freedom of journalists to make editorial decisions, seems to have suffered from this process, since 55.5% point out that they have become weaker while only 11.8% believe they have become stronger. Journalists' sense that they have lost autonomy might be related to lower views of the profession's credibility, since 66.1% of professionals believe that the latter has become diminished. As for the importance of having a degree in journalism or communications, it does not appear to have undergone any modification (44.5%).

### **Journalists' perception about changes of influence**

Analysis of the ways that influences upon the profession have been perceived to change over the last five years clearly underscores the themes and trends noted above.

Matters related to the role of audiences have undergone the most notable changes. Thus, the four questions at the top of Table 5 deal with questions of this kind. The greatest change perceived was involved social networks: 73.3% believed that the use of such networks has increased significantly and 23.3% that it has increased somewhat. Only 4 people believed that it has decreased somewhat (0.9%) or significantly (0.3%). Responses to questions about audience feedback are similar, since only 4.3% believe that its importance has declined, in contrast to 80.1% who think that it has increased.

**Table 5** – Journalists’ perception of changes of influence caused by various factors related to their job.

	N	M	DE	(In %): “Has increased”	(In %): “Has decreased”
Social media such as Twitter or Facebook	348	4.68	.597	96.6	1.2
User-generated contents, such as Blogs	348	4.32	.822	85.9	3.4
Audience feedback	346	4.02	.805	80.1	4.3
Audience involvement in news production	346	3.88	.925	71.7	6.9
Pressure toward sensational news	348	3.90	.979	69.3	6.6
Audience research	342	3.87	.893	68.4	5.3
Pressures due to economic forecasts and earnings	338	3.72	1.124	63.3	14.8
Competition between professionals and media organizations	347	3.69	1.018	61.7	13.5
Advertising considerations	332	3.54	1.244	59.6	22.0
Public relations	342	3.34	.923	40.3	14.9
Journalism education	336	2.75	1.135	24.7	46.7
Ethical standards in the profession	347	2.26	.993	10.4	63.7

Average range, between 1: has greatly diminished; y 5: has greatly strengthened

Source: elaborated by the author.

As for audience participation in news production, 71.1% believe that it has increased.

The next set of questions focus on economic pressures affecting the profession. Almost seven out of ten journalists claim that the pressure to produce sensationalist news has increased, probably because of the need to spur audiences to consume their product. These figures resemble those of professionals who speak about the increased influence of market and audience research aimed at discovering ways to attract larger audiences.

The questions that follow deal even more explicitly with economic matters: pressures involving economic forecasts and earnings, competition among professionals and media organizations, and the role of advertisers and publicity interests. Six out of every ten journalists believe that these have become more important. As for public relations, by contrast, the greater percentage of journalists (44.8%) believe that there has been no change.

On the other hand, nearly five out of every ten journalists believe that the importance of journalistic training has declined, while 24% think it has increased. This can be understood as coming an environment in which companies hire young people who have not yet graduated from university, thereby allowing them to spend less on salaries. Ethical standards have also declined over the last five years, according to responses from over six out of every ten professionals.

As for influence, we find that there are significant differences at the organizational level, depending on the type of ownership (whether public/state or private, the scale (whether local, regional, or national), and the type of media organization under consideration.

We discovered that the perceived influence of audiences on the media organization varies widely depending on its form of ownership. Those who work for private media firms believe that the influence of both audience participation [ $t(344)=3.615$ ,  $p=0.004$ ;  $d=0.48$ ] and audience feedback [ $t(344)=3.365$ ,  $p=0.012$ ;  $d=0.42$ ] on news production is significant, outnumbering those with the same belief but who work for public and state media organizations. The size of the difference in both cases can be considered medium.

**Table 6.** Changes to various aspects of journalistic work at the organizational level (using average scores)

	Ownership		Press & Agency	Media Type			Media Scale					
	Private	State & Public		Tv	Radio	Online	Local	Regional	National			
Social media such as Twitter or Facebook	4.71	4.54	4.73	4.62	4.59	4.68	4.44	4.68	4.75			
User-generated contents, such as Blogs	4.35	4.19	4.35	4.27	4.30	4.32	4.19	4.35	4.30			
Audience feedback	4.09	3.70	*	4.03	3.85	3.89	4.24	*	3.96	3.98	4.18	
Audience involvement in news production	3.96	3.48	**	3.92	3.71	3.62	4.13	*	4.04	3.85	3.94	
Pressure toward sensational news	3.88	3.98		3.83	3.92	4.22	3.82		3.70	3.84	4.14	*
Audience research	3.86	3.89		3.79	3.97	3.84	3.97		3.65	3.82	4.09	*
Pressures due to economic forecasts and earnings	3.74	3.61		3.86	3.50	3.95	3.47	*	3.48	3.70	3.89	
Competition between professionals and media organizations	3.72	3.53		3.68	3.73	3.72	3.65		3.44	3.63	3.92	*
Advertising considerations	3.55	3.49		3.54	3.34	3.87	3.54		3.00	3.46	3.96	*
Public relations	3.31	3.47		3.29	3.27	3.63	3.32		3.27	3.32	3.42	
Journalism education	2.73	2.82		2.80	2.65	2.83	2.65		2.73	2.76	2.71	
Ethical standards in the profession	2.28	2.19		2.32	2.19	2.30	2.17		2.41	2.26	2.22	

\*\*\*p<0.001; \*\*p<0.01; \*p<0.05

Source: elaborated by the author.

The same categories involving audiences differ significantly when we look at responses according to communications media type. Thus, with the respect to the influence of audience participation on news production [F(3, 342)=3.688, p=0.012], the Tukey test reveals that those who work in online media regard such influence as significantly greater than those who work in television (p=0.047)

and radio ( $p=0.021$ ). For its part, the ANOVA test also revealed significant differences ( $F(3, 125.377)=2.907, p=0.02037$ ) regarding the influence exerted by audience feedback, although the post-hoc T3 Dunnett test revealed only that online media professionals tend to perceive ( $p=0.064$ ) such influence more than journalists of either gender who work in television.

Moreover, the ANOVA test also shows that there are significant differences depending on the type of media concerned. These involve perceptions of the influence exerted by economic forecasts and earnings, even though the post-hoc T3 Dunnett test does not report significant differences among peers.

The influence of economic pressure appears to vary depending on the scale of the media organization. Accordingly, results reveal that the influence exerted by sensationalism on news production differs widely depending on whether one works for a national, regional, or local media organization [ $F(2, 64.606)=4.106, p=0.021$ ]. The T3 Dunnett test shows that at the national level, it is widely acknowledged that such influence has increased more than it has at their regional counterparts ( $p<0.05; d=0.31$ ). This difference can be regarded as medium. As for audience research [ $F(2, 339)=3.624, p=0.028$ ], the post-hoc Tukey test shows that in national media, this influence is viewed as more significant ( $p<0.05, d=0.1$ ) than it is in regional media. For its part, national media organizations tend to view the influence of audience research as being greater than do local media organizations ( $p=0.077, d=0.45$ ). The size difference among such influences, as viewed by journalists working for national media organizations versus their counterparts at regional or local counterparts, can be understood as medium.

Similarly, significant differences were revealed when it came to views on the issue of competition among professionals and among media organizations. These varied depending on the scale of the media organizations for which the journalists [ $F(2, 63.87)=3.314, p=0.043$ ] worked. In particular, the post-hoc T3 Dunnett Test revealed that its influence tends to have increased in national media organizations more than it has in regional ones ( $p=0.064, d=0.3$ ). The size of this difference is medium. As for the greater influence exerted by advertisers and publicity interests, here too significant differences appeared [ $F(2, 62.355)= 7.966, p=0.001$ ]. Specifically, national journalists

perceived this influence more strongly. The size of the difference between national and regional journalists ( $p=0.002$ ;  $d=0.43$ ), and between national and local ones ( $p=0.012$ ,  $d=0.74$ ), was medium and large respectively.

### **Discussion and conclusions**

Our study reveals that there have been important changes in the sociodemographic profile of the average Spanish journalist since the last century's end. His or her average age has increased from 34 to 39, in contrast to earlier data, which had indicated that the profession was, between 1990 and the year 2000, getting gradually younger. This might be the result of the economic crisis, since media organizations in recent years have been forced to make budget cuts and curtail hiring. The results reveal that young people appear to have found a niche in the labor market via the new digital media, whose creation was spurred by the arrival of the digital era. This data matches results obtained by the Madrid Press Association, which in its 2016 report had already pointed out that 33% of the journalists whom they had interviewed were working in digital communications media (APM, 2016, p. 20).

One change brought about by the crisis is that the gradual inclusion of women in the profession might be accelerating. Data indicates, moreover, gender disparities with respect to salary and access to top positions, despite women's more specialized academic training. This inequality has already been observed in previous studies, which indicated that the percentage of women with indefinite contracts was 12 points lower than that of males (APM, 2016, p. 19).

To this apparent nonegalitarian increase in the number of women journalists must be added job insecurity, beginning with what appears to be a two-tier salary scale between those who entered the profession before the crisis and those who entered it afterward, as well as in the decreasing numbers of full-time contracts. That new hiring decisions involve, according to the percentages, fewer degrees in journalism is a fact that journalists corroborate when they claim that training in journalism has become less important. This might be because media companies are adding new professionals

without completed degrees to their workforce with the aim of obtaining competent but less costly labor.

One of the most important changes experienced in the profession in recent years involves technical issues ushered in by the digital convergence (Salaverría et al., 2010). The increased importance of technical skills, as indicated in our results, goes hand in hand with the appearance of new forms of journalism, such as data journalism (Ferrerías Rodríguez, 2016), requiring expertise in technical areas previously unrelated to the profession's profile.

Our analysis shows that work routines have also been modified with the arrival of the internet and Web 2.0, which have accelerated production procedures in the field, as indicated in the previous bibliography (Breems, 2014). Thus, Spanish journalists confirm that they have less time available to do research for stories and instead spend more time updating news on different media platforms, chiefly social networks, and thereby generating more audience feedback. As our data indicates, private media organizations have experienced this change to a greater degree due to their greater need for publicity. Among these are native digital media organizations, which have experienced the change most strongly, confirming at least in part that such media are now operating according to a logic distinct from that noted in previous studies (Deuze & Dimoudi, 2002).

The job insecurity associated with heavier workloads can also be felt in economic changes affecting the trade: stronger pressure to earn revenue—whether from advertisers, through audience research, or from the use of sensationalist news stories to attract greater audiences—speaks to the general crisis that communications media in Spain have weathered and indeed, to a lesser degree, are continuing to weather (APM, 2015). It is particularly noteworthy that journalists working for national media organizations sense these pressures more acutely, perhaps due to their high business volume or to stiffening competition. Later studies should attempt to explain these differences.

Finally, many of journalism's inherent values have undergone modifications. Thus, one can perceive a lowering of professional ethical standards and a concomitant loss of editorial autonomy, which is consistent with the previously mentioned drop in journalism's credibility.

Broadly speaking, we can conclude that such organizational factors as media type, ownership type, and scale, have been shown to be decisive to the differing ways that, over the course of the last five years, journalists have perceived influences upon and experienced changes to two crucial areas: media's relation to audiences and economic matters. In the future, it would be useful to analyze if individual factors determine how these changes are perceived and which are significant. The same applies at the national level: with data compiled by the WJS, in the future it will be possible to see how such changes and influences have made themselves felt in various countries in recent years, as well as if the crisis in journalism originated, as has been claimed, primarily in Western societies.

Lastly, in years to come it will be interesting to figure out if the changes experienced in Spain are consequences of the crisis and, as the global and national economy improves in the future, whether journalism will recover the values which make it a public service.

\* Translated by Michael Engle

## NOTES

- 1 The criteria for hierarchical distribution, as they are indicated in the WJS Field Manual (<http://www.worldsofjournalism.org/research/2012-2016-study/methodological-framework/>), are the following: senior journalists are those with authority over the entire editorial process (chief editors, directors and subdirectors), juniors are those who enjoy operational authority and make decisions on a daily basis (section editors), and base journalists are those who produce information and whose editorial responsibility is limited (reporters and staff writers).

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