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# JOURNALISTS AND MEDIA OWNERSHIP:

## practices and professional conditions of Argentine Journalism

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Brasileira de Pesquisadores em Jornalismo

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**ABSTRACT** – The professional practices of Argentine journalists reveal the multiplicity of factors that impact journalistic culture. The results of the national study for the global project Worlds of Journalism offers evidence that the type of media organization in which journalists work does not generate different working conditions or respond to alternative professional models. The results reinforce the approach that the professional culture is the result of the interaction between personal values and the guidelines of organizations and companies. In this sense, the study of the professional culture of journalism needs to be approached from a multidimensional perspective that includes the study of legal frameworks, trade union protection, organizational guidelines and accepted ethical parameters.

**Key words:** Journalism. Journalistic Culture. Professionalism. Media Ownership

### **JORNALISTAS E PROPRIEDADE DA MÍDIA: Práticas e condições profissionais do jornalismo argentino**

**RESUMO** – RESUMO - As práticas profissionais dos jornalistas argentinos mostram a diversidade de fatores que impactam na cultura jornalística. Os dados nacionais da pesquisa como parte do projeto global Worlds of Journalism apresentam evidências de que meios distintos não oferecem condições de trabalho diferentes nem modelos profissionais alternativos para os seus jornalistas. Os resultados revelam ainda que a cultura profissional depende da interação entre valores pessoais e das pautas de organizações e empresas. Nesse sentido, o artigo se propõe a abordar o estudo de cultura jornalística com base em uma perspectiva multidimensional que analise os marcos legais, a proteção sindical, as pautas organizacionais e os códigos de ética profissional.

**Palavras-chave:** Jornalismo. Cultura jornalística. Profissionalismo. Propriedade da mídia

## **PERIODISTAS Y PROPIEDAD DE MEDIOS: Prácticas y condiciones profesionales del periodismo argentino**

**RESUMEN** – Las prácticas profesionales de los periodistas argentinos dan cuenta de la multiplicidad de factores que impactan en la cultura periodística. El resultado del estudio nacional para el proyecto global *Worlds of Journalism* ofrece evidencias de que el tipo de medios en los que se desempeñan no genera condiciones de trabajo diferentes ni responde a modelos profesionales alternativos. Los resultados refuerzan el enfoque de que la cultura profesional es resultado de la interacción entre valores personales y las pautas de las organizaciones y empresas. En ese sentido, se plantea la necesidad de abordar el estudio de la cultura profesional del periodismo desde una perspectiva multidimensional que incluya el estudio de los marcos legales, la protección gremial, las pautas organizacionales y los parámetros éticos aceptados.

**Palabras clave:** Periodismo. Cultura periodística. Profesionalismo. Propiedad de medios.

### **1 Background**

Argentine journalism has been at the center of public debate between 2003 and 2015, in relation to discussions about media ownership and political influences (De la Torre, 2013; Kitzberger, 2017; Waisbord, 2013). This discussion focused on issues of media concentration and public policies in the audiovisual sector (Arrueta & Brunet, 2012, Becerra & Mastrini, 2009, Natanson, 2014, Rincón, 2014), mostly focused on the media as companies with editorial interests rather than on the specific working conditions of journalists. The premise underlying this discussion is that the structural conditions of media companies, specifically the type of property, influence and determine journalistic culture. This argument is theoretically grounded in the political economy approach that holds that aspects such as ownership, financing and regulation of the media are key to understanding the information system and the impact of these variables on journalistic practices and news production. From this perspective, ownership and other structural and material aspects are central to the analysis of the quality of information. Then, as access to equal and pluralistic information is central to democracy, structural conditions should be regulated by public policies that guarantee a diverse media system (Mastrini & Becerra, 2006; Waisbord, 2010).

Data from the global study *Worlds of Journalism* (WJS) offers elements to analyze the potential influence of media property on professional conditions and practices. In this article, we examine the

argument according to which journalists' working conditions depend on the diversity of ownership and media investment, in order to assess whether economic factors are sufficient to explain issues such as journalistic practices and information production. Our interest is to review this hypothesis by analyzing the working conditions of Argentine journalists in order to understand the correlation of the variable private, public or state property with indicators of journalistic practices. Furthermore, we would like to discuss if structural aspects such as ownership, investment and regulation (key issues for studies on political economy of the media) explain journalistic practices (researched by journalism studies), particularly in current contexts where contemporary journalism faces serious difficulties and transformations.

These questions are relevant in light of recent research about influences on journalistic performance that revisit the importance of the variable "ownership" and other political economy in each context (Hanitzsch & Mellado, 2011; Reich & Hanitzsch, 2013). This assumption takes into account the public media as they are run in Europe, where public media run with autonomous administration and budget (Hallin & Mancini, 2004), which conditions do not exist in Latin America. Empirical studies demonstrate that autonomy depends on diverse circumstances and it shows various occurrences in different countries (Mancini, 2013). For example, Spanish journalists, both from private and public television, affirmed that professional and organizational influences were higher than political, economic and group of reference influences (Berganza Conde, Herrero-Jiménez, & Arcila Calderón, 2016). Public media are not always agents of pluralism, as it is theoretically assumed, because it is this is closely related to socio-political circumstances, as it was observed among Spanish public television journalists (RTVE) (Humanes & Fernández Alonso, 2015). The comparison between Czech and South African journalists shows that the influence of the media ownership may vary. Among Czech journalists the influence of business people is associated with more freedom for emphasizing certain aspects in news stories and more frequency in participating in newsroom coordination, which is not observed in the comparison among the journalists of South Africa (de Beer, Láb, Strielkowski, & Tejkalová, 2015). These evidences suggest that media influence on journalists' autonomy and working conditions is not necessarily explained by type of ownership but it must be analyzed along with other political and economic variables.

Apart from the importance of the political economy of the

media, the levels of influence on journalistic performance are several and they operate diversely in different contexts (Hanitzsch et al., 2012, McQuail, 1998, Shoemaker & Reese, 1996). That is to say, the influence of structural factors should be supported by evidence and it would be better assumed as a hypothesis rather than as an *ex ante* conclusion, since the pluralism of news content should be better explained by a combination of influences. As classic works of the sociology of journalism demonstrated (Tumber, 2014), the individual level (personal and professional, hierarchical level) and ideological level (routines of news production, procedures, resources) are inserted in a particular organizational context (technological restrictions, editorial conventions, advertising conditions, hierarchy of editorial decisions). And these levels operate according to the media system (type of ownership of the media), which is in turn determined by factors of systemic level (social, cultural, political and ideological context). These levels interact in different ways when concrete parameters of legal and professional boundaries are given by journalistic institutions and when they are blurred (Amado & Waisbord, 2015, Weaver & Willnat, 2012). In Latin American democracies, journalism works in contexts of political and economic instability, where public information is controlled by a clientelism system based on the logic of the *quid pro quo* that journalists generally take for granted (Becerra, 2014; Hallin & Papathanassopoulos, 2002; Waisbord, 2013).

An additional problem in Argentina is the absence of general and sectorial statistics to define with some precision the professional profile of Argentine journalists in order to have an empirical basis to study working conditions and professional culture (Amado & Pizzolo, 2014) and its correlation with structural issues. This deficiency is aggravated by a low level of affiliation to fragmented unions, which, in turn, explains the absence of negotiation of general labor conditions, which have no systematic data, either (Amado & Waisbord, 2015). This scarcity of data on journalistic cultures and practices wasn't solved by local research, historically more focused in theoretical discussion than on empirical studies (Mellado, 2010; Villanueva, 2016). Within Latin American journalism studies, Argentine research on working conditions and professional identities between 1960 and 2007 is limited (Mellado, 2012). Local communication studies were focused on political economy of the media, especially on issues of ownership and concentration (Becerra & Mastrini, 2009; Mastrini & Becerra, 2006), besides some research about the impact of technologies on journalistic practices and the political context in the journalistic work (Amado & Waisbord, 2015, Boczkowski,

2010, L. De la Torre & Téramo, 2004, Luchessi & Videla, 2016, Rost & Bergero, 2012, Ure & Schwarz, 2014, Waisbord & Amado, 2014).

The hypothesis of direct and unambiguous influence of structural factors on occupational practices and information quality does not adequately describe the complexity of factors that impact on newsmaking. Amid these factors, power relations is one among others and, which is as important as reporting routines, decisions making, the relationships with audiences and sources, journalistic models and values (Livingston & Bennett, 2003). The analyses vary substantially if they are carried out from the structural perspective, more general and economic (Chomsky & Herman, 1990, Hallin & Mancini, 2004), than if they focus on organizational issues, which have been extensively studied by the sociology of the profession (Gans, 1979, Schudson, 1989, Tuchman, 1978, Wahl-Jorgensen & Hanitzsch, 2009). For example, journalism studies show that reporters recognize more clearly influences that directly impact their daily work than those more diffused (Hanusch & Hanitzsch, 2017).

Considering the different perspectives with which journalism can be approached, that is to say, as a profession, institution, textual content, or people who work as journalists or their practices (Zelizer, 2017, p.24), this article analyzes the practices of Argentine journalists and the professional profile based on the results of the *Worlds of Journalism Study* (<http://www.worldsofjournalism.org>) for Argentina. Our objective is to analyze the influence of ownership in journalistic culture considering different demographic and professional indicators of journalists who work in private, state-run or public media, as well as the perceived autonomy and the dominant journalism model in the different media.

## 2. Methodology

The analysis is based on the results of the survey conducted among journalists from all over the country that examined aspects related to their work and the perception they have of their practices, a central aspect when defining the journalism models that guide them (Hanusch & Hanitzsch, 2017; Weaver & Willnat, 2012). The data comes from processing the results obtained in Argentina within the framework of the WJS. This global research is a comparative study of professional cultures in 66 countries, which established common criteria uniformly applied in all countries. Within these parameters, the Argentine sample was determined from a multi-stage sampling that included an

intentional selection by quotas based on ownership criteria, type of media (newspapers, magazines, news agencies, radio, television and digital media), media coverage and distribution of population. As a result, 366 journalists from 160 media outlets from all over the country were personally interviewed between 2013 and 2014.

The framework of the global survey initially proposed the methodological challenge of including the local media in the global categories in order to facilitate comparison with the results of the other participating countries. Those media that depend directly on the government, without autonomous functioning, were tabulated as state-run media, while their set-up and budget were determined by the central Government. By 2014, when the survey was carried out, the state-run media included Radio Televisión Argentina, the news agency Telam, AR-SAT and the TDA satellite TV system (Waisbord & Amado, 2014, p. 227). Only the news agency is an exclusively journalistic media, together with the news services in national radio and TV, hence the number of journalists working in state-run media is low compared to that in private media. This finding anticipates the conclusion that professional practice in private media is dominant in the country.

On the other hand, non-profit media that depend on civil society organizations or autonomous entities such as national universities were considered to belong in the public service category, only if they were run as an independent media, thus excluding the media that work as press offices of NGO's. In Argentina they are commonly called "medios comunitarios" (community media) and in those years they had been promoted through Law 26,522 of 2009, which reserved a third of the audiovisual frequencies to public media. However, few professional journalists were identified in this category. One explanation could be that most of the public licenses were granted to media such as the municipal ones, which in the global framework were tabulated as state-run media (Becerra, 2014, p. 347). The few journalists working in public media seems to contradict the high expectations in the regulatory reforms in Latin American, which are supposed to renew media landscape with new opportunities for journalists (Becerra & Mastrini, 2017, Kitzberger, 2009, Ramos, 2013).

Quite the opposite, journalistic work without pay or moonlighting in various jobs is common among reporters working for public and university media. Moreover, many journalists are likely to have other jobs as press officer, government officials or in universities. As the global framework defined journalists as people earning at least 50 percent of their income from news media and being involved in producing and

editing journalistic content, this research did not consider the cases in which journalism is practiced sporadically or without pay. Since this condition seemed to be widespread, only few of the one thousand two hundred journalists contacted during the fieldwork could participate in the survey (25.9% response rate), which shows the complexities of analyzing the professional profile of Argentine journalists.

### 3. Data analysis

The data of WJS were disaggregated by the variable of media ownership, in order to detect possible differences in working conditions. As regards the characteristics related to professional activity, state-run media show a greater seniority and a higher average age, with a slight difference in terms of full-time hiring (65.5% in relation to 58.3% of the general total), although without variations in permanent or temporary employment. State-run media also show a higher productivity, which can be explained by the fact that in the sample of state media, most of the interviewees work in the news agency in the production and editing of cables.

**Table 1** Professional profile of Argentine journalists

	Private/ commercial	Public service	State-run	Total
<b>Average Age</b> (in years)	38.5	36.0	41.3	38.8
<i>N</i>	264	24	65	343
SD	10.207	11.169	9.331	10.193
<b>Female (%)</b>	37.7	25.0	39.0	37.0
<b>Years working in journalism</b> (media)	13.62	11.88	15.53	13.82
<i>N</i>	269	24	59	352
SD	9.082	9.105	9.440	9.160
<b>University Degree</b> (media)	.66	.63	.76	.68
<i>N</i>	271	24	58	353
SD	.473	.495	.432	.468
<b>Education</b>				
Doctorate	.7	.0	.0	.6
Master's degree or equivalent	11.1	20.8	15.5	12.5
College/Bachelor's degree	54.6	41.7	60.3	54.7
Some university studies but no degree	22.1	33.3	19.0	22.4
Completed high school	11.1	4.2	3.4	9.3
Not completed high school	.4	.0	1.7	.6

	Private/ commercial	Public service	State-run	Total
<b>Permanent employment (%)</b>	79.7	73.7	82.1	79.9
<b>Employment (%)</b>				
Full-time employment	58.0	54.2	65.5	58.3
Part-time employment	31.2	29.2	32.8	31.2
<i>Freelancer</i>	10.9	16.7	1.7	10.5
<b>Belonging to any professional organization (%)</b>	36.3	45.8	29.3	36.2
<b>Number of news edited or produced by week</b>				
Media	32.03	10.41	49.40	32.93
Median	16.50	6.50	20.00	15.00
<i>N</i>	238	22	43	303
SD	50.10	9.610	72.559	52.775
<b>Work</b>				
Number of newsrooms worked for (media)	1.75	1.53	1.53	1.71
<i>N</i>	204	15	43	262
SD	1.105	.743	.855	1.051
Number of news outlets worked for (media)	2.31	2.43	2.04	2.28
<i>N</i>	264	21	52	337
SD	1.429	1.568	1.22	1.408
<b>Salary</b> (% of journalists in each range)				
<i>N</i>	210	20	50	280
<b>Less than U\$ 1,500</b>	28.1	45.0	20.0	27.9
<b>More than de U\$ 5,000</b>	31.9	20.0	30.0	30.7
<b>Position in newsroom (%)</b>				
<i>N</i>	274	24	58	356
Editor in chief	13.5	8.3	15.5	13.5
Managing editor	6.9	8.3	6.9	7.0
Desk head or assignment editor	8.4	4.2	15.5	9.3
Department head	1.5	.0	.0	1.1
Senior Editor	10.2	8.3	10.3	10.1
Producer	13.9	20.9	17.2	14.9
Reporter	16.4	8.3	5.2	14.0
News writer	21.9	25.0	22.4	22.2
Trainee	1.5	8.3	.0	1.7
Others	5.8	8.3	6.9	6.2

Source: Own results based on Worlds of Journalism Study.



The public service media present certain differences in comparison with the private and the state-run media, since their journalists have higher membership in professional organizations, more multiple employment, and smaller amount of permanent employment, lower wages and lower professional categories, with a high percentage of trainees. In public media newsroom there is also a lower presence of women (25%), less than the 36.9% shown by the sample in general, where Argentina has the 49th position among the 66 countries surveyed in the WJS (Amado, 2017, p.331).

It should be noted that, with the exception of specialized journalistic associations, such as foreign correspondents and sports journalist, in Argentina there are no journalists' organizations with sufficient representation to exert any influence on professional conditions. This could explain the low membership of professional organizations, which is one third in the commercial and state media and a little higher in the public media. This situation would clarify the gap between the salary scales proposed by the Argentine Federation of Press Workers (March 2013 to February 2014) and the income declared by the interviewees. The comparison shows that a third of the sample received a lower salary than that established wage for the category of Editorial Secretary (around US\$ 1,500 for February 2014, according to the official exchange). However, many more than half of the interviewees were below that category, which indicates that the salaries of the basic positions would be above the agreement. It is worth noting that last union negotiations for Argentine journalists were carried out in 1975, to be taken up again 2012, when the print media industry established salary standards, which were extended to private radios in 2014 (Waisbord & Amado, 2014, p.214). This context explains that the salaries of working journalists vary in relation to the salaries propose by the unions, especially in numerous cases in which there are not labor contracts but with different schemes of commercial exploitation.

**Table 2:** Perceived Autonomy (Media and Standard Deviation; scale from 1 to 5, where 5 is the highest)

Ownership of media		Autonomy in selecting stories	Autonomy to emphasize certain news aspects	Frequency in participating in editorial coordination
Private	Media	3.97	4.08	3.14
	<i>N</i>	275	276	270
	SD	.885	.893	1.525
Public Service	Media	4.13	3.91	3.36
	<i>N</i>	23	23	22
	SD	.757	1.041	1.399
State-run	Media	3.75	3.83	3.44
	<i>N</i>	59	59	55
	SD	.843	.874	1.437
Total	Media	3.95	4.03	3.20
	<i>N</i>	357	358	347
	SD	.874	.902	1.504

Source: Own results based on Worlds of Journalism Study.

The interviewees were asked to evaluate perceived autonomy according to their freedom to select stories, to emphasize certain news aspects and the frequency which with they participate in the editorial meetings. This issue, where the hierarchy determines to a great extent the participation in places of editorial decision, is similar in the three types of media, with a slightly higher level in state-run media. Journalists working in public service media express more autonomy, but without significant differences from private media and state media, with slightly lower rates. This can be explained by the preponderance of procedural and organizational influences (Table 3), as state-run companies are much more hierarchical and have highly bureaucratized procedures. By contrast, the Argentine private media tend to be more adaptable to changes in the economy context (Boczkowski & De Santos, 2007; Dessein & Roitberg, 2014; Luchessi & Videla, 2016) and they tend to meet audience demands and to demonstrate to public opinion their commitment to editorial freedom, similar to what was observed in the Czech media (de Beer et al., 2015).

The *Worlds of Journalism* Study categorized the variables that describe influences in six dimensions: organizational, professional, procedural, political, economic and reference groups. Formerly the pilot study found that the first three were the most critical (Hanusch & Hanitzsch, 2017, p.528). Later findings confirmed that the procedural and organizational influences have more impact, with high consensus in the answers (Berganza Conde et al., 2016; Hanitzsch & Mellado, 2011; Hanusch & Hanitzsch, 2017). Paradoxically, they are the aspects least analyzed when Argentine journalism studies.

**Table 3** - Factors of influences by dimensions (political, organizational, professional, procedural and economic) (Type of media: Private, N=276; Public service, N=24; State-run, N=59).

Type of influences	Type of media	Media	SD
Political Influences (Politicians; Government officials; Pressure groups; Business people)	Private	2.3004	.93664
	Public service	2.0833	1.16252
	State-run	2.1525	.80292
Organizational Influences (managers of news organization; editorial supervisors and higher editors; owners; Editorial policy)	Private	3.4703	1.00408
	Public service	3.4167	.70083
	State-run	3.3709	.80525
Influences procedural (Information access; Journalism ethics; Media laws and regulation; Availability of news-gathering resources; Time limits)	Private	3.5838	.60584
	Public service	3.6587	.71805
	State-run	3.5552	.66825
Economic Influences (Profit expectations; Advertising considerations; Audience research)	Private	2.5780	1.01988
	Public service	2.3406	1.11518
	State-run	2.1765	.88469

Source: Own results based on Worlds of Journalism Study.

Question: "Please tell me how much influence each of the following has on your work. 5 means it is extremely influential, 4 very means influential, 3 means somewhat influential, 2 means little influential, and 1 means not influential."

Just as there are no significant variations in objective working conditions, there are no variations in the symbolic aspects of journalistic practices (Zelizer, 2017). The survey inquired into professional conceptions based on certain indicators that were assessed separately throughout the questionnaire and then were added to variables that make up different professional models. On this issue, the variations by type of media are also insignificant and, therefore, they do not warrant to conclude that journalistic practices are different according to the type of property of the media. The two models most valued by Argentine journalists are the interventionist role (defined in terms of agreement with journalism functions such as advocating social changes, influencing public opinion, setting the political agenda, supporting national development) and the monitorial role (providing political information, monitoring and scrutinizing politics and business, motivating people to participate in politics). The elements that make up these models are considered slightly more important among journalists from state-run media. The indicators of entertainment journalism (which assumes that its function is to provide entertainment and relaxation, to produce news that attract large audience, to provide advice and guidance for daily life) are considered more important for journalists in the private media but without significant difference in public service media, although entertainer profile would be expected in this type of media.

The model of collaborative journalism (committed to support government policy, to convey a positive image of political leaders) was advocated by a sector of journalism and stimulated by the government between 2009 and 2015, known as “militant journalist” (Arrueta, 2012, p 115; Waisbord & Amado, 2014, p 221). However, the practices associated to this model are less accepted among the interviewed journalists, even though it is the model that shows the greatest presence in the state-run media. Even though these are aspirational models that journalists recognize as a guide to their practices, an additional analysis shows similarities with real practices. In this sense, a study conducted in the same years within the *Journalistic Role Performance Project*, which analyzes the performance from the content analysis of the news, shows certain coincidences in the findings. For example, in analyzed

newspapers the interventionist model is the most important while the collaborative model has less presence in the practices, which coincides with the way in which journalists answered the WJS (Mellado, Marquez-Ramirez, Oller Alonso, Mick, & Amado, 2016).

**Table 4:** Roles scale from 1 to 5, where 5 is the highest)

Type de media	Journalism	Monitorial role	Interventionist role	Collaborative role	Populist role
	Media	3.6630	3.4758	2.1053	3.0652
Private	N	275	275	266	276
	DE	.87475	.86867	.94779	.96262
	Media	3.6250	3.4549	2.2917	2.6111
Public Service	N	24	24	24	24
	DE	.95837	.90589	.97709	.83212
	Media	3.7020	3.7331	2.6842	2.6667
State-run	N	59	59	57	57
	DE	.73471	.76326	.98030	.81650
	Media	3.6669	3.5168	2.2133	2.9711
Total	N	358	358	347	357
	DE	.85703	.85787	.97619	.94649

Source: Own results based on Worlds of Journalism Study.

#### 4. Discussion and conclusions

The analysis shows that there are no substantial variations in working conditions and professional practices among journalists working in private, public and state-run media. That is to say that, according to these data, the type of property does not explain fundamental questions about journalistic practices, working conditions or perceived autonomy. The findings propose to refine the analysis in order to understand the multiplicity of factors that explain key dimensions of the journalistic practice. They also offer several conclusions with theoretical and methodological implications, as well as some suggestions for understanding Argentine journalism and public policy:

- The findings that the different media ownership are not correlated with different working conditions partially confirmed the hypothesis that the professional situation depends on factors beyond ownership. This conclusion suggests that, high levels of informality and labor precarity could be more influential than differences in ownership. In fact, such indicators of labor precarity, besides the low union representativeness, are equal for every type of media. The blurred working conditions for journalists are also explained by the fact that the legal framework of the profession has not been modified since 1948.

- As these results show, private industrial media configure the main employment context for Argentine journalists; hence speaking of journalism refers generally to journalism in commercial media. These are the media that attract more audiences and which offer more opportunities in the newsrooms for journalists and Masters' programs for professional training. And among them are the few that have once outlined ethical handbooks (Waisbord & Amado, 2014, p.227). Along the same lines, practical training in journalism is oriented in Argentina to private media. As Journalism as a profession is defined by its legal, labor, educational and ethical institutions, the development of state-run and community media must be followed by effective institutional changes rather than only statements or ownership frameworks.

- The high level of autonomy declared by journalists in every type of media, contrast with the determinist assumption of journalism outsiders that it is a profession constantly exposed to political and economic pressures. The self-perceived autonomy,

without being conclusive, gives evidence that the pressure, if any, is neither necessarily direct nor it is always clearly perceived by the journalists themselves. This conclusion makes it necessary to refine methodological instruments to determine the influence factors in each case, and learn from previous studies that show a diversity of results in different countries.

- The conclusion that public service media offer more unstable working conditions contradicts the idea that universal principles of journalism are more achievable in civil organizations. At the time of the survey, the law that assigned a third of the audiovisual frequencies to non-profit organizations had been in force for more than five years, with solid political and financial support from the Kirchner government. However, the survey did not detect either a significant number of journalists performing in the sector, or better professional conditions in public service media than in the commercial media. Likewise, state journalists have more employment stability but in contrast they show more pressures of procedures such productivity, problems of accessing to information or availability of resources, besides they declare less autonomy than their colleagues in private media.

- The comparison of the results of Argentina with other countries confirms the significance of these kind of comparative studies that allow contrasting results and open new perspectives. For example, the conclusions of Argentina are similar of those on autonomy (de Beer et al., 2015) and trust (Tejkalová et al., 2017) for countries in Eastern Europe and Africa, contexts that have been ignored by the local discussion and the theoretical frameworks.

The complexity of journalistic practices demands a manifold analysis of factors and levels of influence without supposing beforehand the importance of ownership and economic structures. As this study found remarkable similarities in professional conditions, regardless of the type of ownership, it also reinforces the idea that the economic concentration is just one factor among a set of variables that affect journalistic performance. Without denying the influence of economic and political power on the information, these results invite considering the complexity of the factors of influence and to refine research methods that go beyond the casuistry and to apprehend the complexity of the factors of influence. On the other hand, it cannot be ignored that the professional culture is an interaction of several factors including personal values and the guidelines of organizations

and companies. Changes in the journalistic culture are highly unlikely to occur if changes in economic variables are not accompanied by modifications in the legal framework, union protection, current professional guidelines, and accepted ethical parameters of journalism practices.

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