

ARTICLE

THREE SCENARIOS IN 25 YEARS OF JOURNALISM RESEARCH (1997-2021)



CARLOS EDUARDO FRANCISCATO

Universidade Federal de Sergipe, São Cristóvão – SE – Brazil

ORCID: 0000-0002-5108-8677

DOI: 10.25200/BJR.v19n1.2023.1573

Received on: November 28th, 2022

Desk reviewed on: December 26th, 2022

Desk review editor: Nelía Del Bianco

Revised on: April 03rd, 2023

Approved on: April 06th, 2023

ABSTRACT – This work presents results of research carried out with a representative sample of scientific articles in journalism indexed in English to identify trajectories in the development of journalism studies over 25 years (1997 to 2021). Three time periods with five years each were observed (1997-2001, 2007-2011 and 2017-2021). We sought to verify the emergence and consolidation of research areas at each moment, as well as indications of trends in journalism investigation. The empirical object of the survey was 326 scientific articles and their titles, abstracts and 1,286 keywords, obtained by searching the Google Scholar platform. The analyzes explored three research scenarios and trends: epistemological foundations and questions, broad study perspectives applied to journalism, and specific research models and areas.

Key Words: Research in journalism. Epistemology of journalism. Scientific field. Crisis. Tendencies.

TRÊS CENÁRIOS EM 25 ANOS DA PESQUISA EM JORNALISMO (1997-2021)

RESUMO – Esta investigação apresenta resultados de pesquisa realizada com uma amostra representativa de artigos científicos em jornalismo indexados em língua inglesa para identificar trajetórias no desenvolvimento dos estudos de jornalismo durante 25 anos

(1997 a 2021). Foram observados três períodos temporais com cinco anos cada (1997-2001, 2007-2011 e 2017-2021). Buscou-se verificar a emergência e a consolidação de cenários de pesquisa em cada momento, bem como sinais de tendências da investigação em jornalismo. O levantamento teve como recorte empírico 326 artigos científicos e seus títulos, resumos e 1.286 palavras-chaves, obtidos por consultas à plataforma Google Acadêmico. As análises exploraram três cenários e tendências da pesquisa: fundamentos e questões epistemológicas, perspectivas amplas de estudo aplicadas ao jornalismo e modelos e áreas específicas da pesquisa.

Palavras-chave: Pesquisa em jornalismo. Epistemologia do jornalismo. Campo científico. Crise. Tendências.

TRES ESCENARIOS EN 25 AÑOS DE INVESTIGACIÓN PERIODÍSTICA (1997-2021)

RESUMEN – Este trabajo presenta resultados de investigaciones realizadas con una muestra representativa de artículos científicos en periodismo indexados en inglés para identificar trayectorias en el desarrollo de los estudios periodísticos a lo largo de 25 años (1997 a 2021). Se observaron tres periodos de tiempo de cinco años cada uno (1997-2001, 2007-2011 y 2017-2021). Se buscó verificar el surgimiento y consolidación de áreas de investigación en cada momento, así como indicios de tendencias en la investigación periodística. El objeto empírico de la encuesta fueron 326 artículos científicos y sus títulos, resúmenes y 1.286 palabras clave, obtenidos mediante la búsqueda en la plataforma Google Scholar. Los análisis exploraron tres escenarios y tendencias de investigación: fundamentos y preguntas epistemológicas, amplias perspectivas de estudio aplicadas al periodismo y modelos y áreas de investigación específicas.

Palabras clave: Investigación en periodismo. Epistemología del periodismo. Campo científico. Crisis. Tendencias.

1 Introduction

Studies on journalism have always followed and interpreted the ongoing changes around this social phenomenon in the 21st century. The diagnosis presented in this article is based on three work intentions: to determine how academia has characterized the changes in journalism; how these studies have shown the depth and extent of these changes; and the trends these studies point to that have helped reshape journalism research in recent decades.

The research proposal consisted of analyzing a representative sample of scientific articles in journalism indexed in the English language to identify trajectories in the development of journalism studies over 25 years (1997 to 2021). Three-time periods of five years each (1997-2001, 2007-2011, and 2017-2021) were observed.

There was a 5-year interval between each of these periods. With this expanded time frame, we sought to verify the emergence and consolidation of research scenarios at each moment, as well as signs of trends between the three periods.

These studies had, as a background and as an object of research, changes that journalism has undergone in its social role in at least eight aspects:

a) a decreased sense of value for journalistic information as a central element in holding rational debates to clarify and come to a consensus about a larger crisis in the democratic public space and the spread of informational disorder and disinformation;

b) distrust of the authority and legitimacy of the journalistic institution to produce and circulate knowledge with a public purpose in a world where deinstitutionalization movements are on the rise;

c) questioning the notions of social mediation in journalism in the cognitive, institutional, and communicative (dialogical) dimensions;

d) the weakening of the notion of journalistic truth as a truthful account of public knowledge about the world in an era where governments hold post-truth discourses;

e) a deep distrust of journalistic values beyond the very notion of truth: independence, impartiality, objectivity, plurality, and universality;

f) threats to the professionalization of journalism in a precarious environment, uberization of work, questioning the status of the profession, and the emergence of new specialists and amateur actors looking for visibility and public action in the field of information;

g) replacing traditional journalistic mediums (newspapers, radio, and television) for platform environments that are controlled by the structures and logic of digital social networks;

h) crisis in the market and within the journalism business model, which greatly affects the production and circulation of journalistic information and opens up space for more autonomous news organizations looking for new financing models.

The crisis, the transformations, and the future of journalism were the topics the 326 scientific articles in our initial research corpus covered the most, although the emphasis was more gradualist and less fatalistic: the term “crisis”, for instance, rarely appeared in the keywords, as we shall see later. On the other hand, there are

substantive notes on how changes to journalism are unpredictable and occur quickly, which means academia has to monitor and understand the level of these changes, as well as the demand for new theoretical, thematic, disciplinary, and methodological positions to review the fundamentals, procedures, organizational design, and perhaps even the foundations of the status of journalism due to phenomena such as intensive digitization, globalization, and the erosion of democracy.

That is why Hanitzsch (2019, p. 215) reviews contemporary academic work on journalism, looking for repetition of verbs such as rebuilding, rethinking, and reinventing when it comes to journalism, predominantly from a Westernized perspective focused on European and North American scientific communities. Furthermore, the authors Deuze and Witschge (2018, p. 165) seek to “move through and beyond journalism as it has traditionally been conceptualized and practiced” in order to understand it. Mancini (2013, p. 127) specifically calls into question the assumption that there is a “universal model of journalism” in his geographic and historical limit findings which, when added to the wide circulation of information in the environment of digital technologies, challenges the idea of journalism as a profession.

This article is similar to the work of Steensen and Westlund (2021, p. 320) who tries to understand, in the specific area of “digital journalism”, the theoretical repositioning of research between 2013 and 2018. They argue about the possible lack of connections between empirical research and conceptual discussions. We chose to focus our research on four thematic analyses in the studies of scientific articles between 1997 and 2021, which we shall refer to as areas of research concentration in journalism studies: a) Fundamentals and epistemological issues of journalism; b) Broad study perspectives applied to journalism; c) Journalism models and fields of study; and d) Connection to other areas of knowledge.

For fundamentals and epistemological questions, we looked for studies that focused on fundamental concepts and values for understanding the phenomenon, as well as its characteristic as knowledge. The second and third areas of concentration verified both the broader approaches and theories of the study of journalism as a social and historical phenomenon and the development of specific models to explain the modes of existence and functioning of journalism. The fourth area of concentration (finding connections

between journalism studies and other major academic disciplines) only generated partial and inconclusive data, and consequently, will not be explored in this article.

Next, we shall present the methodology and the results before reflecting on some empirical data. We hope to better understand some of the operations performed among journalism researchers as expressions of the logic of the scientific field. In this regard, we agree with Pierre Bourdieu and his description that the scientific field is formed by a non-homogeneous community of scientists who work through oppositions between consensus and debates. There are intrinsic relations of strength and power between researchers in different institutional positions as a result of the symbolic capital they possess (academic authority and productivity) (Bourdieu, 2004).

2 Methodological questions

This study used the following guiding question: how have journalism studies addressed and identified the ongoing transformations in the 21st century? Our search for clues about academic performance involved an empirical sample of 326 scientific articles in journalism (units of analysis), indexed in English, during three separate periods over a 25-year span: 1997 to 2001, 2007 to 2011, and 2017 to 2021. The registration units (final corpus research) consisted of keywords (preferred), titles, and abstracts (complementary) for each article, all in English. The objectives were to identify the most recurrent terms, group them into larger units, establish interrelations between these groupings, and understand trends in time intervals.

The following two samplings were used for building the final corpus analysis:

a) Selection of scientific research articles in journalism:

We used Google Scholar to search for articles indexed as “Journalism studies”, “Journalism theories” and “Journalism theory”. We searched a total of 300 articles, of which, we selected only those that had at least 40 scientific citations. The decision to use the Google Scholar platform was made due to the large number of digital documents it contains compared to other scientific platforms. The cross-stratification criterion (ranking the first 300 documents and

a minimum of 40 citations for each article) was employed in order to reduce the effects of the platform's algorithms when building the initial corpus of articles (Table 1).

Table 1

Scientific articles identified in the three time periods

Search terms	Publication period			Total
	1997-2001	2007-2011	2017-2021	
<i>Journalism studies</i>	56	117	110	283
<i>Theories of journalism</i>	2	8	12	22
<i>Theory of journalism</i>	3	12	6	21
Total	61	137	128	326

The table shows an increase in the number of articles searched when comparing the first interval with the other two. This is for two main reasons: the increasing digitization of scientific production as of the 2000s, and the increased number of scientific journals specializing in journalism over the last 20 years.

b) Selection of the final sample of keywords:

The initial sample reached all the keywords of the 326 scientific journal articles. In the case where no keywords were found (a rare occurrence), more representative terms were found in the abstract or title. Thus, there were a total of 1.796 keywords in the 326 articles. We then defined the final corpus using the terms connected with the four areas of research concentration listed above. We identified a total of 1,285 keywords (71.54% of the total), as shown in Table 2.

Table 2

Final corpus of keywords for scientific articles over the three time periods

Areas of research concentration	Publication period			Total
	1997-2001	2007-2011	2017-2021	
1) Fundamentals and epistemological issues in journalism	4	47	41	92
2) Broad perspectives of study applied to journalism	65	126	215	406
3) Models and areas of study in journalism	84	248	310	642
4) Connections to areas of knowledge	25	66	55	146
Total	178	487	621	1,286

Some early indications are that the increased number of scientific articles consequently led to a greater number of keywords over the three time periods. There was an increase in the number of keywords from the second to the third period, even with very little variation in the number of articles. This was due to the large concentration of articles in the four themes of the research. The two areas of concentration with the highest number of keywords in the three periods are easily identified: “Models and areas of study in journalism” (641) and “Broad perspectives of study applied to journalism” (406). Due to this concentration, relevant terms related to the research methodologies, spatial references (e.g. countries surveyed), or most cited authors were not included in the final corpus.

This work developed a thematic content analysis (Bardin, 2003, p. 34) to determine the frequency and meaning of the collected terms. We applied an inductive content analysis from a constructive interpretive perspective in order to form a single categorical framework throughout the research process, and then compare the periods to recognize trends in the development of journalism studies throughout the interval studied. Inductive content analysis is more appropriately related to understanding goals through empirical

objects. Inferences were generated (Bardin, 2003, p. 38) from the indicators and categories based on the guiding question.

After defining the final corpus of the sample, we then developed a provisional framework of analysis categories based on an initial reading (intuitive, open to ideas and hypotheses) (Bardin, 2003, p. 75) of the empirical material. The provisional table of categories was built by consulting other works that systematize the main approaches in journalism studies (Löffelholz & Rothenberger, 2011; Zelizer, 2004; Traquina, 2005) and by analyzing the abstracts from 15 sample articles that focused more on systematizing theories and models of journalism studies. This provisional table of categories served as an initial tool with which to investigate the entire sample.

3 Results

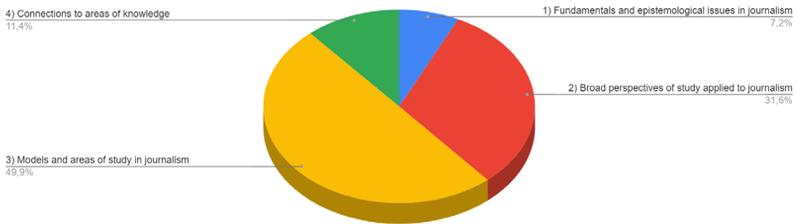
Using the provisional framework of analysis categories, we started to group the registration units (the keywords in the scientific articles) (Bardin, 2003, p. 104) into categories of terms or expressions (“tags”) that were most similar in meaning to the keywords. Registration units were counted according to the following two rules: a) presence: keywords indicate the variety of approaches achieved by each article; b) frequency: “the importance of a registration unit increases according to the frequency with which it appears” (Bardin, 2003, p. 109).

We then performed a direct count for the number of times the keywords appeared, taking into account the frequency within each five-year period and also the trends over the 25 years that encompass the three time periods of our study. Although some terms could be classified into more than one area, we decided to insert them into the areas that were most relevant to the approach adopted in this article. Data analysis was performed using Excel software.

The distribution of the 1,285 keywords in the four areas of concentration is expressed in Graph 1. In the next section, we shall present the results from three of the four areas: a) Fundamentals and epistemological issues in journalism; b) Broad perspectives of study applied to journalism; and c) Models and areas of study in journalism. The fourth area, “Connections to areas of knowledge”, did not generate conclusive data and will therefore not be discussed in this article.

Chart 1

Keywords distributed by concentration area (1997-2021)



Practically half of the keywords were grouped into the category “Models and areas of study in journalism”. This remained constant for all three time periods over the 25-year examination period. We believe this shows the scientific community’s effort to approach journalism as a particular phenomenon that demands its own study models. The second largest area of concentration, “Broad perspectives of study applied to journalism” (containing 31.6% of the terms) also remained stable, although it did fluctuate slightly in each semester. The third area of analysis, “Fundamentals and epistemological issues in journalism”, registered the greatest variation. We shall discuss the specific characteristics of each area below.

3.1 Fundamentals and epistemological issues in journalism

We identified and classified 92 keywords in this area (7.2% of the total). Indeed, this is a relatively low number, but we must remember that studies focused on the theoretical construction of the conceptual foundations of journalism (as well as other disciplines and areas of knowledge) have always been proportionally reduced. Although the numbers are still statistically weak for trend analysis, it is important to note the increased frequency in the following two intervals (2007-2011 and 2017-2021) compared to the first. Admittedly not conclusive, the data does indicate a collective effort is being made by the present-day community to discuss and build its foundations.

Table 3 lists all the categories extracted from the keywords of this area. The efforts being made to build knowledge about journalism are evident when developing theories, exploring fundamental concepts (such as objectivity), and discussing the scientific validity of understanding the phenomenon, as well as recognizing the need to support knowledge of journalism based on values (such as authority, credibility, and trust) that guide professional practices. The presence of the keyword does not necessarily mean the idea behind it is defended, it indicates problematization as a theoretical resource for journalistic thinking.

Table 3

Key Words in "Fundamentals and epistemological issues in journalism" (1997-2021)

Category	Key Words
Theory and epistemology of journalism/knowledge	19
Objectivity	11
Journalistic authority and credibility	10
Trustworthy	8
Transparency	6
Diversity	6
Independence and autonomy in journalism	5
Truth	4
Ontology of journalism/realism and idealism/reality	4
Fact/opinion dichotomy	4
Impartiality	3
Post-truth	2
Emotion and affection in journalism	2
Pluralism	2
Temporality	2
Mediation	2
Self-legitimizing discourse	1
Quickness, immediacy	1
Total categories in this item	92

3.2 Broad perspectives of study applied to journalism

This second area collected the keywords from the three periods between 1997 and 2021 to more clearly indicate which major theories researchers used to explain journalistic phenomena. This classification helps us to understand which areas of knowledge, macro theories, or scientific disciplines the researchers built their studies on. Table 4 only lists the theories that appeared from the keywords; it is not a classification of all 326 articles searched.

Table 4

Key Words in “Broad perspectives of study applied to journalism” (1997-2021)

Category	Key words
Social media and digital platforms	44
Audience and reception studies	40
Political communication, Public communication, and public interest	22
Innovation studies	21
Culturalist approach/Cultural studies	20
Gender studies	20
Institutional and organizational perspective of journalism	20
Democracy theories / Democratic and authoritative values	20
Globalization, post-colonialism, and local identities	18
Disinformation and informational disorder	13
Field theory	13
Public sphere	11
Sociology of everyday life	11
Scheduling	11
Normative theories	9
History of communication	8
Social practice and social action theories	8
Interactivity	8
Violence, censorship, and threats to the freedom of the press and of thought	7
Mediatization and media events	7
Social change	6

Communication theories	6
Reflection	6
Transmedia and cross-media	6
Ethnic and racial studies	5
Convergence culture and digitalization of society	5
Social representation theories	5
Media responsibility and accountability	4
Actor-network theory	4
Spiral of silence	3
Constructionist approaches	3
Studies on complexity	3
Monitoring	3
Rational choice theory	2
Theory of systems and media systems	2
Media ecology	2
Materialist and Marxist perspective of journalism	2
Game theory	2
Business models in journalism	2
Visibility and invisibility	2
Liberalism	1
Phenomenology	1
Total categories in this item	406

What is noteworthy here is the theoretical diversity of journalism studies. We put together 42 categories that cover a broad spectrum within the humanities. There are even some areas that focus on the classical theories of the social sciences and political sciences, either to facilitate a discussion within these approaches or to use their conceptual and descriptive framework toward understanding the dynamics of journalistic activity. Some areas combine social and computational sciences in a kind of interdisciplinary perspective, based on the phenomenon of digital technologies changing patterns of contemporary sociability. One example of this is the category “social media and digital platforms” (most cited).

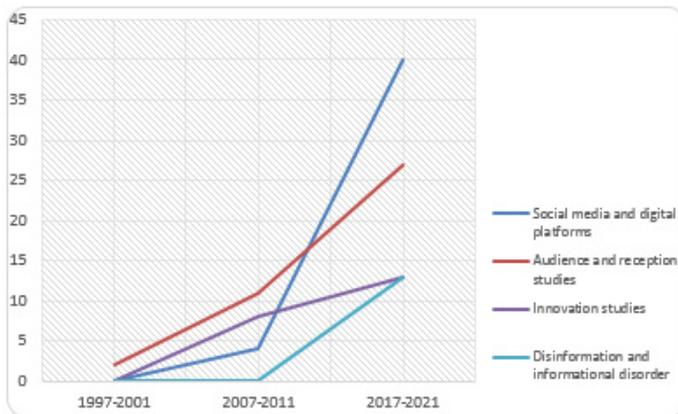
We shall now look at the 11 most cited categories, proposed from the systematization of 251 keywords (61.8% of the total for this item). Almost half of the categories are in the field of social theories (audience and reception studies, cultural

studies and other culturalist approaches, gender studies, institutionalist perspectives, and the theory of social fields). There is a significant number of studies in political science (political communication, public communication, public interest, democracy theories, democratic and authoritarian values) and also problems or phenomena that, due to their complex nature, involve interdisciplinary studies such as digital platforms and social media, disinformation and informational disorder, globalization, post-colonialism, and local identities, as well as pioneering studies with contributions from economic sciences.

This provided an opportunity to observe the evolution of these studies over the 25-year span of research and make note of any possible trends (Graph 2). The following four categories showed significant growth: “Digital platforms and social media”, “Audience and reception studies”, “Pioneering studies” and “Disinformation and informational disorder”. Three of the categories did not exist in the first period surveyed.

Chart 2

Main variations of the categories in “Broad study perspectives applied to journalism” (1997-2021)



The first category (“Digital platforms and social media”) is about changes in socio-communicative environments with intense digitization and relationships on digital social networks.

Similar to audience studies, these digital environments reshape the role of audiences who, with new digital resources, redefine themselves as subjects of communication processes. It is no surprise then that the keyword “social media” is one of the most frequent keywords in the journalism studies we researched even though it only starts to appear more frequently in the 2017-2021 period, which shows it is a strong emerging trend in journalism practice and research.

The growth of the other two categories was certainly affected by this digitalization of society, which indicated the immediate need for journalism to transform itself and, as a result of redefining its organizational strategies, the need to also develop models to guide innovations. The category of disinformation only deals with conversation and public debate that centers on journalistic activity and the expansion of new places, actors, and communicational connections produced by non-specialists, balancing out an “informational disorder” that was favorable for misinformation.

3.3 Models and areas of study in journalism

This third area mapped the advances of works that excelled in emphasizing specific characteristics of the journalistic phenomenon and developing study models to outline the mechanisms of journalism. Table 5 groups the 641 keywords into 40 categories, revealing a diverse range of studies. Another perspective that could be included in this item is the “agenda-setting” model. We chose to insert it in the previous area (about the broader perspectives of research) because, although it is repeatedly applied to journalistic phenomena, its origin and foundations are more rooted in studies on the effects of a wide range of communication products. Regardless, the data in the previous table already indicates what extension it has for investigation in journalism.

Table 5

Key Words in “Models and areas of study in journalism” (1997-2021)

Category	Key words
Digital journalism	117
Studies on news and newsworthiness	57
Journalistic production and routines (newsmaking)	45
Global, international, and war journalism	36
Journalism education	33
Economy, the market, and consumption in journalism	31
Journalism as a profession and an identity	30
Framing studies	24
Journalism ethics and deontology	23
Cultural perspectives of journalism	18
Reference journalism, conglomerates, and traditional media	15
Literary and narrative journalism	13
Citizen, public and civic journalism	12
Proximity journalism	12
Financial and business model	12
Partisan journalism, journalistic commitment, and bias	10
Comparative journalism	10
Popular journalism	9
Participative or collaborative journalism	7
Solution based journalism	7
Quality in journalism	6
Editorial filters in journalism (gatekeeping)	5
Political journalism	4
Visual journalism	4
Alternative journalism	4
Development journalism	3
Investigative journalism	3
Media and journalism criticism	3
Scientific journalism	3
Photography and photojournalism	2
Sensationalism	2

Infotainment	2
Crisis in journalism	2
Repetition journalism (Churnalism)	2
Celebrity, diversional, and human interest journalism	2
Peace journalism	1
Watchdog journalism	1
Post-industrial journalism	1
Business and entrepreneurial journalism	1
Total categories in this item	642

When reading the table above, two main types of situations stand out: those linked to processes that bridge specific situations of journalism and research in the 25 years surveyed and seem to act as academic guiding models for understanding the phenomenon; and those that emerge in specific periods of journalism, normally the result of changes that led to specialization and developing new explanatory categories (such as “infotainment”, “copy journalism” or “ post-industrial journalism”). These categories are recognized by members of the scientific community and are attributed value through academic citation.

This relational dynamic of the scientific community is illustrated in Graph 3, showing the variation of main categories in the 25-year period of research. Initially, the graph shows how the category of “digital journalism” expands exponentially, particularly in the third time period. Conversely, the category of “journalism education”, present in the previous two time periods, practically disappears in the third one. After examining the texts, we were unable to identify the reasons for this trend. This is not to say that no research has been conducted on this topic, but rather that the works that were carried out were not widely recognized by the scientific community (at least 40 citations) and therefore did not make it into the final sample. This rule of presence and absence, of course, applies to all articles we searched.

Chart 3

Variations of the top five categories in “Models and Areas of Study in Journalism” (1997-2021)

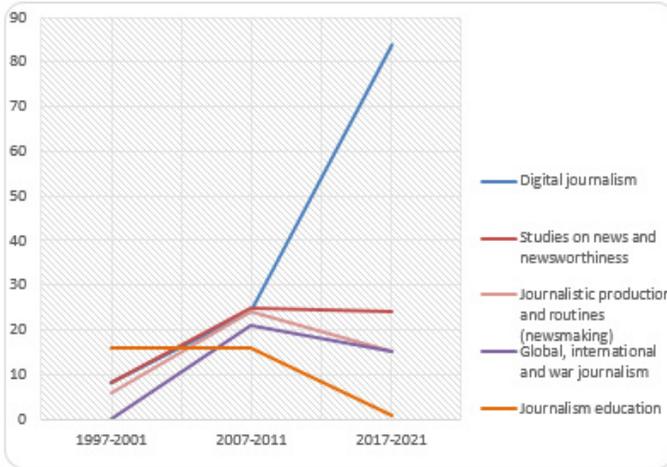


Chart 3 also shows a trend of stability in traditional models of journalism studies, with fewer variations. This applies to the categories “studies on news and newsworthiness” and “journalistic production and routines (newsmaking)”, and also to other categories with a similar number of mentions, such as “journalism as a profession and an identity”, “framing studies” and “journalism ethics and deontology”. These categories show the effort the research community has been making to recognize and preserve models that delimit and effectively explain journalistic phenomena, declaring its support for the field of research in journalism.

Regardless, we need to take a closer look at the one category that stands out the most: “digital journalism”. The phenomena that it seeks to describe and synthesize are temporally glued to the research period for this article, which leads Salaverria (2019, p. 1) to state that “research in digital journalism is a strong and continuous discipline, despite several methodological and thematic challenges that will have to be faced in the coming

years". To get a better understanding of this evolution, we can look at the construction of academic terms used for analyzing digital journalism since its inception (Table 6).

Table 6

Characteristics of keywords in "digital journalism" category (1997-2021)

Period	Keywords
Period 1997-2001	a) Perceptions of technological changes: Changing technology, convergence, interactivity, and hypertextuality, hypertext research
	b) Recognition of change in the media: Internet mass media, online media, online journalism, network journalism
Period 2007-2011	a) More open definitions of the phenomenon: Online news, online newspapers, online video, new media, news websites, online journalism
	b) Identification of characteristics: Hypertext, hyperlinks, multimedia, Internet technology, weblog, SMS, user-generated content
	c) Identification of sociabilities: Online news history, online newsroom culture, online-only newspapers
Period 2017-2021	a) Defining the research area, knowledge, and experience: Digital journalism, digital journalism studies, digital journalism research
	b) Decrease of general terms: Online media, online news, online editions, new media
	c) Identification of characteristics: News aggregators, homepages, online media, online news, online native, online shares
	d) Specialized research on advanced phenomena: Mobile, immersive journalism, experiential, 360° video, Virtual reality, VR journalism, digital long-form journalism, storytelling, data journalism, data-driven journalism, datafication, Big Data, automated journalism, automation, algorithms, robot journalism, metrics, user rankings, ratings analysis, audience measurement, analytics

The keywords used by researchers in each time period help to understand the growth of digital journalism as a specific theme, subfield, or discipline. In the first period (1997-2001), just before digital journalism started producing and providing content, the keywords point to an initial attempt to identify the ongoing transformations of digital technology and recognize how it affects traditional media. The second period (2007-2011) focuses more on specific definitions of digital journalism, ones associated with “online” or “web”, as well as on showing its characteristics and identifying the resulting sociabilities. In the third period (2017-2021), general terms tend to be replaced by definitions of areas of research, knowledge, and experience, by expanding on specific characteristics, and by specialized research in advanced phenomena of digital journalism.

4 Additional notes about the results

In addition to the more general aspects of scientific production highlighted above, we conduct some cross-sectional readings of the data, with more interpretative questions. The two main issues we highlight are:

a) Conclusions about the crisis (in journalism)

Surprisingly, only three keywords out of the 1,285 in the three time periods used the term “crisis”, and only one referred directly to the “global financial crisis” and not to journalism. So, the obvious question here is: do the researchers and their 326 articles not consider journalism to be going through a crisis?

Of course, there have been several academic publications in recent years on the extensive changes in journalism which tend to label these changes as a “crisis”. Outside our sample, there are authors such as James Curran (2019, pp. 190-191) who refer to a triple crisis in journalism, which is a lack of freedom and censorship, the power of influence and domination of the elites over journalistic work, and the economic decline of the journalistic business model. Mancini (2013, p. 127) attributes the idea of a “universal” crisis in journalism to the weakening of the historical model and the recent technological developments that circulate information not related to traditional journalism.

From a more regional perspective, Yamakoshi Shuzo (2019, pp. 5-6) refers to a “legitimation crisis” in Japanese journalism in his examination of studies that identify the increased apathy for and silent distrust of the Japanese media. Monje et al. (2020) conduct a comparative study between Argentina, Brazil, and Chile and equate the deterioration of journalistic work and the exercise of freedom of expression to the structure of media ownership and the role of the state. Conversely, Sabrina Wilkinson (2019, p. 373) adds to the debate by reporting that the number of journalists employed in Canada has increased slightly in absolute terms over the past two decades.

The limited use of the term “crisis” in the keywords meant we had to expand the reach of this term and look at the titles and abstracts of the articles. By doing this we identified 16 texts in our sample distributed evenly throughout the three time periods. These aforementioned texts used one of two approaches. The first approach was to recognize the crisis as an object of journalistic coverage: immigration crisis, public life crisis, the global economic and financial crisis of 2008, the political crisis of nations, and discourses on European crises from the post-war period. These journalistic treatments, however, are not focal points of this study.

The second approach was to understand the crisis of the media system and journalism over the 25-year research period. The national newspaper crisis in Brazil is attributed to the crisis in the printed press and the emergence of digital, the high number of journalists who have been laid off, the fragmentation of audiences, and the loss of advertising revenue. There are also views on changes such as the weakening of international journalistic coverage, traditional investigative journalism, and the emergence of collaborative investigative journalism which uses digital technologies, not to mention experiences with “news games”.

Overall, the sample indicators show that the research used a fragmented approach when addressing the ongoing changes and how in-depth or severe they are. A better understanding of this could be attained by analyzing the article by Carlson and Lewis (2019), who identify a different “temporality” between the ongoing phenomena and the work researchers do in order to understand them and produce their analyses. These authors question how a field of studies in journalism can be consolidated when the phenomena within it

tend to change constantly, and then understand what that break or continuity actually is.

b) Hegemony of thought on journalism from the West and the Global North

Hanitzsch (2019) presents an analysis that allows problematizing, in a transversal way, most of the articles in the sample. He talks of a Western bias in the understanding of journalism, whose foundations and analysis models are based on Western journalism developed in the Northern Hemisphere. These studies mirror the social, cultural, economic, and political values of these societies, which develop specific modes of journalism that tend to spread internationally in a hegemonic and unequal way. In 2006, when presenting a paper at the 15th Meeting of the National Association of Graduate Programs in Communication (Compós) in Brazil, Elias Machado took a critical look at Barbie Zelizer's book, *Taking Journalism Seriously – News and the Academy*, released in 2004, by pointing out limitations to the predominance of what he called the “Anglo-American paradigm” in journalism studies, which was expressed in the absence of authors outside the North American and English academic environment, associating academic hegemony with linguistic hegemony. “None of the main contemporary theorists of journalism in countries like Germany, Brazil, Bolivia, Spain, France, Italy, Portugal, Mexico and the Czech Republic, just to name a few, appear with specific works on Zelizer's list”, comments Machado (2006, p. 7).

Despite the time interval and the different contexts between these two analyses, their main line of argument is similar. Hanitzsch states that, in order to consolidate journalism studies into one scientific field, research needs to be “truly international” and “recognize a global diversity of journalistic cultures and lines of intellectual thought that go beyond North America and Western Europe” (2019, p. 215). According to Bourdieu's theory of social fields, this scenario expresses a struggle within the scientific field for “symbolic capital” which leads to academic power and, ultimately, institutional control over science, over the instruments of knowledge, and over-concentration and accumulation of knowledge; it creates accumulation and concentration of academic capital (Bourdieu, 2004, p. 57).

In our research, the criteria for sample selection, conducting searches, and material classification also showed these biases. The first bias was a linguistic one, where the choice was made to search for articles indexed in one of the terms “Journalism studies”, “Journalism theories” and “Journalism theory”. We are aware of course that, overall, English is the language with the greatest international academic library and therefore has wider access to scientific materials and the generating of keywords and abstracts, even for articles written in other languages. These search criteria employed in our research mean that even articles not written in English could be included in the analysis. Maintaining a system like this, however, does not do away with the hegemonies and might even intensify the hegemony of English if we consider that current digital databases work with machine learning technologies that tend to replicate previous results in Internet search engines.

As the focus of this study is on building journalistic thinking from a scientific perspective, other relevant variables were not considered in our content analysis, particularly the geographical origin of the authors’ institutions or the size of the national journalistic problem. This means there is lots of room for further research into geopolitical international academic construction in journalism. The hegemony of North American and European scientific journals in English also controls the flow and publication of most localized articles, a mechanism that leads to the concentration of power and scientific capital.

5 Final considerations

This study analyzed 326 scientific articles located over three designated periods (1997-2001, 2007-2011, and 2017-2021). We found some aspects that help us determine the contemporary scenario in which journalism research finds itself, as well as some of the trends that existed during the same time frame. Based on the number of academic articles, we were able to see that, even at a time when journalism may be weakening, it is still an important object of study for researchers who analyze the forms, places, and importance of journalism in contemporary societies.

Our data showed there is a rich and growing diversity of themes in journalism studies when interlacing theories and

specialization models; it is a combination of disciplinary efforts with interdisciplinarity and transdisciplinarity. Journalism study models have remained stable over the last few decades on issues such as studies on news and newsworthiness, news routines, journalism as a profession and an identity, framing studies, and ethics and deontology of journalism.

At the same time, the effects of digitalization are visible as it redefines objects, problems, and scenarios in journalism and journalism studies, one case in point is the category “digital journalism” and the frequency of the keyword “social media”. What’s more, the growth of the “audience and reception studies” category shows concern over the role active audiences play at a time where an “audience turn” is similar to the culturalist, linguistic or imagery turns in communication and journalism.

In addition to these aspects, there are some challenges in journalism research, which increasingly have to do with information systems controlled by large conglomerates (the platforms) that develop their algorithms for indexing, storing, and retrieving materials without transparency. In addition to Google Scholar ranking, this study only took the articles from the platform that had at least 40 citations to offset the original ranking. However, even identifying these citations requires the use of procedures that academic knowledge does not use. We hope that, in order to run a more effective academic environment, the procedures and tools for processing and capturing data will be made available, thus producing transparency and peer verification in accordance with good science practices.

The main purpose of this study was to produce an overview of articles with keywords, abstracts, or indexed titles in the English language to achieve an international understanding of academic production in journalism. Even still, being able to replicate this analysis proposal in regional communities in their native languages could help in understanding the different ways that important themes and journalistic problems are handled and dealt with, and towards identifying the dynamics behind the scientific communities that differ socially and culturally.

REFERENCES

- Bardin, L. (2003). *Análise de conteúdo*. Edições 70.
- Bourdieu, P. (2004). *Para uma sociologia da ciência*. Edições 70.
- Carlson, M., & Lewis, S. C. (2019). Temporal reflexivity in journalism studies: Making sense of change in a more timely fashion. *Journalism*, 20(5), 642–650. DOI: 10.1177/146488491876067
- Curran, J. (2019). Triple crisis of journalism. *Journalism*, 20(1), 190–3. DOI: 10.1177/1464884918807034
- Deuze, M., & Witschge, T. (2018). Beyond journalism: Theorizing the transformation of journalism. *Journalism*, 19(2) 165–181. DOI: 10.1177/1464884916688550
- Hanitzsch, T. (2019). Journalism studies still needs to fix Western bias. *Journalism*, 20(1), 214–7. DOI: 10.1177/1464884918807353
- Löffelholz, M., & Rothenberger, L. (2011). Continuum Eclético, Disciplina Distinta Ou Subdomínio Dos Estudos De Comunicação? Considerações teóricas e conclusões empíricas a respeito da disciplinaridade, multidisciplinaridade e transdisciplinaridade dos estudos de jornalismo. *Brazilian Journalism Research*, 7(1), 7-31. DOI: 10.25200/BJR.v7n1.2011.283
- Machado, E. (2006). Três pressupostos para que o estudo do jornalismo seja levado a sério (Uma crítica à Taking journalism Seriously, de Barbie Zelizer). *Proceedings of the 15^o Encontro Anual Da Compós*. Associação Nacional dos Programas de Pós-Graduação em Comunicação.
- Mancini, P. (2013). What Scholars Can Learn from the Crisis of Journalism. *International Journal of Communication*, 7, 127–136. Retrieved from <https://ijoc.org/index.php/ijoc/article/view/1967/844>
- Monje, D., Rivero, E. A., & Zanotti, J. M. (2020). Crisis del periodismo y políticas de retracción de los estados en Argentina, Brasil y Chile. *Comunicación y Sociedad*, e7622, 1-22. DOI: 10.32870/cys.v2020.7622
- Salaverría, R. (2019). Digital journalism: 25 years of research. Review article. *El profesional de la información*, 28(1), e280101, 1-26. DOI:10.3145/epi.2019.ene.01
- Steenen, S., & Westlund, O. (2021). *What is digital journalism studies?* Routledge.

Traquina, N. (2005). *Teorias do jornalismo, porque as notícias são como são*. Insular.

Wilkinson, S. (2019). Crisis or transformation? Debates over journalistic work in Canada. *Canadian Journal of Communication*, 44(3), 373–95. DOI: 10.22230/cjc.2019v44n3a3347

Yamakoshi, S. (2019). “Legitimation crisis” of journalism in Japan. *Keio Communication Review*, 41, 5-14. Retrieved from <http://www.mediacom.keio.ac.jp/wp/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/01-YAMAKOSHI.pdf>

Zelizer, B. (2004). *Taking journalism seriously. News and academy*. Sage.

CARLOS EDUARDO FRANCISCATO. Master and doctor in Contemporary Communication and Culture from the Federal University of Bahia. Postdoctoral fellow at the Graduate Program in Communication and Information at the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul. He holds a degree in Social Communication/Journalism from the Federal University of Santa Maria and a specialization in Political Science from PUC/RS. He is a Full Professor at the Federal University of Sergipe. He coordinated the Graduate Program in Communication at UFS and held the presidency of the Brazilian Association of Researchers in Journalism (SBPJor). He primarily researches theory and history of journalism, journalism and technology, and applied research in journalism. E-mail: cfranciscato@uol.com.br

TRANSLATED BY: LEE SHARP

One review used in the evaluation of this article can be accessed at <https://osf.io/bcnjq> | Following BJR's open science policy, the reviewer authorized this publication and the disclosure of his/her name.