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VIOLENCE AGAINST THE PRESS:

an approach to its causes, types, impacts, and responses



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ABSTRACT – Violence against the press is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon because it involves a variety of perpetrators, forms of aggression, and victims. Therefore, its analysis requires a broader perspective that includes its origins, typology, impacts, and responses of journalists who experience it. On this basis, this article aims to develop a theoretical and conceptual discussion of these four key aspects, and, second, to propose this approach as an explanatory model for this object of study.

Keywords: Violence against the press. Origins of Violence. Types of Violence. Impacts of Violence. Journalists' Responses.

VIOLÊNCIA CONTRA A IMPRENSA: uma abordagem a suas causas, tipos, impactos e respostas

RESUMO – A violência contra a imprensa é um fenômeno complexo e multifacetado, pois envolve uma diversidade de agressores, agressões e vítimas. Portanto, sua análise requer um olhar mais abrangente que inclua suas origens, tipologia, impactos e respostas daqueles que a sofrem. Nesse sentido, o objetivo deste artigo é, em primeiro lugar, estabelecer uma discussão teórica e conceitual sobre esses quatro aspectos-chave; e, em segundo lugar, propor essa abordagem como um modelo explicativo desse objeto de estudo.

Palavras-chave: Violência contra a imprensa. Origens da violência. Tipos de violência. Impactos da violência. Respostas dos jornalistas.

VIOLENCIA CONTRA LA PRENSA: una aproximación a sus causas, tipos, impactos, y respuestas

RESUMEN – La violencia contra la prensa es un fenómeno complejo y multifacético, porque implica una diversidad de agresores, agresiones, y víctimas. Por lo tanto, su análisis requiere de una mirada más abarcadora que incluya sus orígenes, tipología, impactos, y respuestas de quienes la sufren. En ese sentido, el objetivo de este artículo es, en primer lugar, establecer una discusión teórica y conceptual de estos cuatro aspectos clave; y, en segundo, proponer este enfoque como un modelo explicativo de este objeto de estudio.

Palabras clave: Violencia contra la prensa. Orígenes de la violencia. Tipos de violencia. Impactos de la violencia. Respuestas de los periodistas.

1 Introduction

The 21st century has been particularly difficult for journalism in much of the world. On multiple fronts, the press faces challenges that hinder its daily work of reporting and interpreting the events that unfold every day. Issues such as the decline in the consumption of news from traditional media (Newman et al., 2025), lack of trust in its work (González & Reyna, 2019; González & Salazar, 2023; Newman et al., 2025), the rise of populist and authoritarian regimes (Rothberg

& Ferracioli, 2025), job insecurity (Örnebring, 2018), and the growing disinformation wave facilitated by digital platforms (Echeverría, 2024) are just some of the challenges journalists must address.

In addition, news media are forced to operate in increasingly dangerous contexts, which puts their staff in a highly vulnerable position when covering sensitive issues such as organized crime, government corruption, or human rights violations. For this reason, contemporary studies on journalism have paid particular attention to violence against journalists, particularly those working in unconsolidated democracies (González, 2020; Jamil, 2020; Gever et al., 2023; Del Palacio, 2023).

Academic literature has consistently emphasized that this is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon, as it involves a diversity of aggressors, forms of aggression, and victims (González, 2020; Cottle et al., 2016). In other words, attacks can be perpetrated by actors such as public officials, hitmen from criminal gangs, and even enraged protesters; through forms of violence ranging from insults, digital harassment, and espionage to kidnapping, torture, and even murder, affecting not only those who conduct journalistic investigations but also those who cover soft news such as sports and entertainment (Committee to Protect Journalists, 2024).

In this regard, this article aims to discuss the origins, types, and impacts of violence against the press, as well as journalists' responses to it. Therefore, the paper is guided by four research questions: What are the factors that place journalists at risk? What are the different ways in which they are attacked? How does this violence affect them? And what do they do to counteract the attacks?

To answer these questions, this article offers a theoretical examination of the conceptual frameworks used in research on violence against the press. Drawing on this, the methodological strategy is based on a literature review and reflection on the authors' situated experience, as they have conducted several research projects on the subject in authoritarian, post-authoritarian, and hybrid contexts, focusing on Mexico and Cuba.

2 Methodological strategy

This theoretical exercise on violence in journalism is grounded in the systematization of the authors' research experiences. Thus, the reflection is anchored in two risk contexts for the practice of

journalism, previously documented through several research projects. In general, it includes six research projects and 14 publications that directly address violence against journalism or use it as a key analytical category. Collectively, the six projects have gathered the testimonies, through qualitative interviews, of 355 journalists, and administered several data collection efforts based on standardized questionnaires to this population, most notably the one related to the global comparative project *Worlds of Journalism Study* (table 1).

Table 1

Empirical basis for the systematization of violence in journalism

Project title / Date	Methodology	Main result
Press under threat (project funded by the Mexican Ministry of Public Education) 2017-2019	93 semi-structured interviews with journalists from 23 states across the country	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Violence against the press is the result of internal factors (risks inherent to the profession) and external factors (socio-political context).- Attacks impact individual journalists, the media outlets they work for, and society in general.
The precarious situation of journalists in Mexico City (project funded by the FICSAC Patronage of the Universidad Iberoamericana, campus Mexico City) 2017-2021	50 in-depth interviews with active journalists in Mexico City	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Precariousness within the journalism field is often associated with vocation, which leads to its normalization.- Due to the unequal capital structure and accumulation at the individual level, journalists perceive precarious conditions in different ways (they resist, invest, or ignore them).- Precarity is much more pronounced in the digital journalism field.
Professional journalism 2023-2025	59 semi-structured interviews with journalists from six different Mexican cities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- In their discourse, journalists emphasize the importance of being guided by the profession's ethical values; however, in practice, this is difficult due to the multiple interferences and pressures on their work.
Journalistic ideologies and cultures in Cuba Stage I: 2010-2011 Stage 2: 2017-2018	141 semi-structured interviews in all provinces of the country and in exile communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Journalists' perceptions of their vocation and professional autonomy vary between independent and official media outlets.- Patterns of change and continuity are observed in the country's journalism, indicating erosion and transformation.

Representations of knowledge in the comparative analysis of risk in the practice of journalism in <i>Periodismo de Barrio</i> and <i>Quinto Elemento</i> 2021-2023	Comparative method 12 semi-structured interviews with journalists in Mexico and Cuba	- Multiple enabling conditions make investigative journalism possible in risky contexts. - Journalistic identities are a key factor in resistance to risks in professional practice.
Worlds of Journalism Study. Cuba and Mexico sections Stage 3: 2021-2024	786 standardized questionnaires were administered to a representative sample of journalists in each country	- Types of risks, levels of autonomy, conceptions of journalistic roles, among other variables, are identified to describe the journalistic cultures of each country and around the world.

The project’s empirical basis is used indirectly in the writing of this paper, tracing the analytical pathway used to review categories and organize empirical materials: origin, types, impacts, and consequences of anti-press violence. This includes a theorization process, analysis, and synthesis, following inductive-deductive and deductive-inductive logic (Swedberg, 2017), to identify conceptual tools that, from our perspective, have allowed us to better situate the empirical analysis.

Under this logic, the literature review included literature indexed in databases such as *Scopus* and *Web of Science*, as well as grey literature such as NGO reports and university theses, which have served as the intellectual basis for the projects described above. The analysis period focused on articles published between 2015 and 2025, which is when academic production on the topic intensified. The keywords used for selection were violence, journalists, resilience, and precariousness, in both English and Spanish, although some in Portuguese were also included. The highest density of empirical work was concentrated in Mexico, due to the authors’ context of observation and scientific experience, and because it is the country that has recorded the highest number of journalists killed in non-war contexts in the last two decades.

The corpus of scientific literature includes works that demonstrate methodological diversity in their approaches to the topic: statistical analyses, risk studies, longitudinal and comparative surveys, case studies, ethnography, interviews, testimonies, and theoretical frameworks. Some of the concepts used in these works

are: censorship, job insecurity, structural, symbolic, gender, and digital violence, digital harassment, media capture, impunity, press trust, journalists' safety, psychological impact, resistance, resilience, and journalistic autonomy.

3 Origins of violence against the press

As a complex phenomenon, violence against the press does not have a single origin. Rather, it is the result of internal and external factors (González & González-Galván, 2024). In this framework, the former are associated with the practice of journalism *per se*, and the latter are contextual in nature, depending on the environment in which journalism is practiced (González & González-Galván, 2024; Olivera & Arellano, 2024).

Internal factors represent inherent risks in the profession. In other words, when journalists perform their work according to the highest standards, there is a real possibility that they will become targets of powerful actors who seek to operate in complete opacity and ensure that their actions never come to light. Therefore, investigative journalism can put those who practice it at risk anywhere in the world (Márquez & Hughes, 2017; Mesquita & de-Lima-Santos, 2023).

According to the liberal journalism model, in a democratic regime, citizens have the right to be informed, and authorities are obliged to report on what they do. Thus, journalists act as mediators between both actors and, in doing so, promote transparency and accountability. Meanwhile, this facilitates the public's right to know how the government uses public funds. It can also affect the interests of powerful actors and, consequently, journalists' risk of being attacked (Márquez & Hughes, 2017; Mesquita & de-Lima-Santos, 2023).

The real possibility of being attacked for their work depends largely on external factors related to the political, economic, social, and cultural environment in which journalism is practiced. Aspects such as levels of freedom of speech, transparency, law enforcement, and respect for human rights, to name just a few, are indicators of a country's democratic health and, therefore, the possibility of carrying out journalistic coverage under conditions of relative safety (De León & González, 2020; González de Bustamante & Relly, 2021).

In this regard, journalists who live and work in many

countries of the Global South¹ face a double threat: on the one hand, in attempting to fulfill their social function, they accept inherent risks of their profession, which are more or less foreseeable. However, on the other hand, they must carry out their work in precarious conditions that make it more difficult and dangerous (González & González-Galván, 2024; González de Bustamante & Relly, 2021; Gevert et al., 2023; Mesquita & de-Lima-Santos, 2023; Olivera & Arellano, 2024). Hence, unlike a moderately consolidated democracy, hybrid or transitional regimes not only inhibit the freedom to practice journalism but also punish it.

4 Types of violence against the press

Based on Hughes and Brambila's postulates (2019), there are two types of violence: direct and indirect, understood as attacks that harm journalists in their personal lives and/or in their daily work. This typology encompasses multiple actions that are not limited to physical contact.

4.1 Direct violence

It refers to intimidation, threats, and written, verbal, and physical attacks against the press as a result of their work. Some of these attacks include defamatory statements or accusations against news organizations or individual journalists (Olivera & Arellano, 2024), as well as digital harassment (Chen et al., 2020; Posetti et al., 2021), hostile phone calls and messages, persecution, arbitrary detentions, raids, robberies, beatings, kidnappings, torture, disappearances, and murders (Hernández-Julián & Vera-Zambrano, 2020; Jimenez & Solano, 2024, among others), actions that are also carried out against journalists' family members (Lara Klahr, 2014).

Added to this is procedural violence, whereby various political actors use legal and judicial structures to their advantage (Tanger & Nunes, 2023) to intimidate and harass the press in a targeted manner with compensation claims against specific media outlets for their editorial stance or against journalists for the topics or sources they cover, especially if they are hard news (Díaz-Cerveró et al., 2022). Examples include lawsuits for "moral damages" against Mexican journalists who

have exposed questionable and even illegal practices (see Rosete, 2025) or the multiple lawsuits filed against the Brazilian press in different locations but based on the same journalistic content (Global Freedom of Expression, 2024; International Federation of Journalists, 2025). Direct violence is frequently associated with journalistic work carried out in armed conflict environments (Aranguren-Romero, 2022), as well as in anti-democratic and populist regimes (see Bartman, 2023; Ozawa et al., 2024; Waisbord, 2002), where journalists may be targeted for persecution and aggression. Nevertheless, the most dangerous and lethal places for the press are those with hybrid models of government (Hughes & Vorobyeva, 2021). Violence is present in consolidated democracies too (Löfgren Nilsson & Örnebring, 2016), as well as in places without armed conflict.

Similarly, attacks are related to lax protection measures and human rights violations, which allow complaints to be reduced to mere statistics. Therefore, it is necessary to consider that direct violence is “sustained and preceded” (Del Palacio, 2023, p. 52) by structural and symbolic violence that is overlooked because it constitutes indirect actions.

4.2 Indirect violence

It consists of attitudes, actions, omissions, and practices that constitute aggression through inequality, marginalization, and precarious working conditions, which blur the lines between social realities and the exercise of the profession, under the idea that journalists must develop their work even if their health and integrity are at risk.

Del Palacio (2023), Hughes and Brambila (2019) link it to structural violence, drawing on Johan Galtung’s postulates, as well as to symbolic and cultural violence, as all of these allow for its proliferation and legitimization. In this sense, structural violence is related to socioeconomic and political systems that limit freedoms and well-being, giving rise to injustice, dependency, precariousness, and informality, often under the state’s safeguarding due to the lack of protection and ineffectiveness (Flores, 2024) of governments and authorities at different levels.

Within this type of violence, precariousness stands out. This phenomenon blurs boundaries between personal and professional life. It has become more pronounced in recent years

(González, 2020; Márquez et al., 2021), and various political actors take advantage of journalists' fragile conditions to violate them through multiple coercion forms (Del Palacio, 2018, 2023), while in the media, it is seen as part of the profession (Örnebring, 2018) and confused with vocation (Hernández-Julián & Vera-Zambrano, 2020).

Added to this is the influence of public funding, embedded in economic and political structures. Such funding generates dependency (Guerrero & Márquez, 2015), as well as inequality in its distribution and uncertainty about what losing it would entail, leading to favorable coverage for government officials and other political actors, since otherwise the media and journalists would be excluded or subject to defamation (González, 2020).

These structural forms of violence converge and enable the reproduction of cultural and symbolic violence, consisting of "norms, values, beliefs, and manifestations of inequality" (Hughes & Brambila, 2019). There are numerous manifestations, including abuses of power by political actors and the marginalization of minority groups (Waisbord, 2024), such as women journalists, the LGBTQ+ community (see Amnesty International, 2024; Article 19, 2024), ethnic groups (see Brennan, 2024; Krøvel, 2017), and critics, independents, or opponents of certain regimes.

This violence is reflected in discrimination, racism, work devaluation, and rejection (Brennan, 2024); gender-based attacks linked to misogynistic discourse and patriarchal and traditionalist views (Adams, 2017; De Frutos, 2016; Jamil, 2020; Di-Fatima & Souza Mugnaini, 2024; Flores, 2024; Salazar, 2024), and exploitation, sexual harassment, lack of equity, harassment, and impunity (Brambila, 2017; Del Palacio, 2018). Besides, it manifests itself in the uneven ways in which many political actors and institutions share information with the press, as well as restricting and punishing journalists to prevent them from covering events (Masek & Aguasvivas, 2021) or asking questions, and in the revictimization of journalists who have already been victims of aggression (Del Palacio, 2020). Nonetheless, some situations have become normalized (Sampaio-Dias et al., 2023), being seen as "part of the job" (Adams, 2017, p. 861) or "occupational hazards" (Claesson, 2022, p. 1.809).

Finally, we propose including "subtle violence", which occurs in the workplace. It is generally verbal, textual, and symbolic

and is reproduced and institutionalized in discourses associated with the values of “what a journalist should be” (Lukan & ehovin Zajc, 2022). These include bullying and intimidation (Araújo, 2024) by colleagues, superiors, and managers; theft of ideas and work; intellectual and work capacity devaluation; and psychologically abusive remarks that undermine journalists’ value, making them feel that they are not aligned with professional standards or that they are not competent enough.

The attacks described, which constitute direct and indirect anti-press violence, are summarized in the following table:

Table 2

Types of violence against the press

Types/definitions-manifestations	Direct violence	Indirect violence
How is it defined?	Targeted attacks. These are textual, verbal, and physical. Furthermore, some of these attacks occurred under the protection of the judicial system. It is associated with contexts in which journalists work (conflict zones, unsafe environments, etc.), editorial work, and the type of sources or topics covered.	Attitudes, actions, omissions, and practices that cause inequality and marginalization. It is related to structural, symbolic, and cultural violence, through which it is reproduced, legitimized, normalized, and blurred to the point of becoming part of the profession, under a vocational discourse that extols resistance facing precarious conditions.
How does it manifest itself?	Through disparaging comments, finger-pointing, accusations, phone calls and messages, persecution, judicial harassment, arbitrary detentions, imprisonment, raids, robberies, beatings, kidnappings, torture, disappearances, and murders.	Through precariousness, informality, dependency, power abuse, exploitation, sexual harassment, revictimization, subtle forms of aggression, and marginalization of minority groups, including discrimination and racism.

Although these forms of violence are often perceived as common in the journalism field, not all journalists experience them throughout their professional careers. Nor do they experience them in the same way, as the diverse and unequal conditions of journalists themselves, the different types of journalism that exist, and

the media allowing forms of violence to be experienced in multiple ways (for example, it is not the same to be a local journalist who is abused as one who is considered elite, or to be independent as opposed to being part of a national company). In other words, just as there are multiple manifestations of violence, there are also numerous ways of perceiving it.

5 Anti-press violence impacts

Because it has diverse origins and multiple forms of expression, violence against journalists has different impacts. González (2020) suggests this phenomenon has a ripple effect affecting reporters, the media outlets they work for, and society in general. Three types of impacts can be distinguished: individual, organizational, and social (González, 2020).

As direct or potential victims of the attacks, journalists experience the individual impact personally, which is reflected in three ways: mental health, personal dynamics, and professional routines. The first is associated with psychological effects such as post-traumatic stress, depression, loneliness, and even paranoia, as well as alcohol or other substance abuse (González, 2020; Flores et al., 2014; Hughes et al., 2021; Olivera & Arellano, 2024). The second aspect has to do with changes in personal activities, such as changing phones, cars, addresses, cities, and even countries; modifying usual travel routes; minimizing presence on social media; and establishing family safety protocols (González, 2020; Del Palacio, 2018; González de Bustamante & Relly, 2021; Olivera & Arellano, 2024). The third factor is linked to changes in their journalistic work, which can be oriented, on the one hand, toward a more professional practice (strictly factual reporting, diversification of sources, use of technology, among others); or, on the other hand, toward more passive routines (coverage of official events and reliance on press releases), or even self-censorship (González, 2020; Del Palacio, 2018; González de Bustamante & Relly, 2021).

On the other hand, the organizational impact is generated within the media outlets themselves. Violence against journalists not only affects them but also the organizations they work for (González, 2020). Thus, when someone on their staff suffers an attack, newsrooms are equally affected, which is reflected in three

areas: editorial changes, security measures, and the formation of journalist collectives (González, 2020). The first aspect is linked to institutional journalistic routines, which are similar to the individual-level routines described above and represent, on the one hand, the decision to practice more robust and professional investigative journalism or, on the other, to adopt a more passive approach involving organizational censorship. In terms of security measures, the media have opted to remove the bylines of stories on dangerous topics (such as organized crime or government corruption), change the beats assigned to journalists at risk, and reinforce the digital security of equipment, among other measures (González, 2020; Del Palacio, 2018; González de Bustamante & Relly, 2021). Journalist collectives are formal – and even informal – groups from different media outlets and freelancers who promote the protection and professionalization of those who do their work under risky conditions (De León, 2018; Relly & Waisbord, 2022).

Despite the widespread impact of attacks, not all media outlets react in the same way when someone on their team is attacked, as not all have the same capacity to respond. In other words, those organizations that are more solid in terms of professional, economic, social, and even political capital have greater resources to protect their staff, since they are generally located in large urban centers, offer national or regional coverage through many platforms, have more robust and better-equipped newsrooms, and derive their income from a diversity of commercial advertisers. On the other side of the spectrum are small media outlets and one-person projects, located in more rural communities far from capitals or larger cities, which focus on local news, published mainly online or on social media, and rely on limited financial resources coming almost exclusively from government advertising. In short, no media organization is immune to violence, but not all respond in the same way. This situation reinforces the concept of multiple journalismisms, which points to the existence of different ways of practicing journalism within any media system (González & Echeverría, 2018). In the specific case of violence against the press, there is a widespread and generalized impact on the media, but one that is differentiated by the characteristics of each outlet.

Finally, the social impact is manifested outside the journalistic profession, namely in the audience. To put it in another way, violence against the press not only affects journalists and the media

but also society (González, 2020). However, this impact is more abstract than the previous ones, as it has to do with the ideal of journalism as a mediator between citizens and the ruling class. As mentioned above, in a democratic environment, society has the right to be informed, those in power are obliged to be accountable, and the media ensures that this actually happens. In this sense, attacks on journalists prevent the fulfillment of this objective (González, 2020; Cottle et al., 2016; Del Palacio, 2018). Nevertheless, the growing political polarization fostered by authoritarian and populist regimes (Reyna et al., 2024; Echeverría, 2024) has led a large part of society to disregard the risks that reporters take to bring them important news, which is mainly caused by growing social distrust of the media (González & Reyna, 2019; González & Salazar, 2023; Newman et al., 2025). In other words, far from strengthening ties of solidarity and mutual understanding between journalists and audiences, as would be expected in a democratic environment, violence against the press seems to be driving them apart. This situation is particularly evident in polarized societies, such as in several Latin American and Global South countries, where attacks against journalists do not generate any kind of supportive reaction from the public, whose members even celebrate when a reporter suffers an attack. Silencing a critical voice through violence does not seem to be of interest to society, at least in this type of political context (González & Salazar, 2023).

6 Journalists' response to violence against them

The consequences of anti-press violence are closely associated with coping strategies. In these, Slavtcheva-Petkova et al. (2024) distinguish between an individual component (problem solving, mitigation of negative emotions) and a social component (solidarity, teamwork). Both components tend to manifest themselves in an interrelated manner (Hughes et al., 2021), as perceptions and behaviors linked to attacks on journalists are usually influenced by the newsroom “culture” (Ivask et al., 2023).

Focusing on solving problems or mitigating negative emotions associated with violence does not depend solely on the journalist's individual capacity. Several studies have highlighted the relevance of certain risk reduction practices, such as media

protection policies (Márquez & Hughes, 2017), the formation of strategic alliances (Salazar, 2019), and the creation of support and solidarity networks and communities (González & Relly, 2015), among others.

According to Buchanan & Keats (2011), strategies for coping with risks are either adaptive or maladaptive. The first are problem-oriented and include active planning and seeking social support. The latter are associated with avoidance (such as denial, suppression of emotions and thoughts, and social isolation). Slavtcheva-Petkova et al. (2024) add that the coping approach can lead to resilience, conformity, or avoidance, and these pathways may ultimately result in resistance, submission, or exit.

From this perspective, coping may protect or reduce editorial autonomy. However, if successful, it “builds resilience and allows journalists to prevail in a threatening situation (...), continue to perform their duties, and serve their societies” (Slavtcheva-Petkova et al., 2024, p. 12). In other words, the effects of journalists’ exposure to various risks and violence against them also produce results that are “undesirable” to those in power. The media are “actors with agency, negotiation, and decision-making power; and, above all, they interact with other actors who have their own resources and different motivations for intervening in the press” (Salazar, 2021, n.p.).

Resilience and resistance are key to understanding the success of coping strategies and, therefore, the media’s capacity for agency in contexts of violence against journalism. Resilience is associated with the process of adaptation and with the ability to create, adapt to, and withstand trauma and violence (González de Bustamante & Relly, 2021). To identify it, attention is usually put on stability in psychological and physical functioning, the development of activities distant from traumatic tasks (religion, spirituality, self-care, training, counseling, socialization), or the establishment and strengthening of journalistic communities. However, from a critical perspective, resilience would become a functional narrative exploited by the system, as it requires journalists to resist on an individual level without questioning structural conditions generating precariousness and violence (Joseph, 2013).

Resistance, on the other hand, is defined as conscious acts by journalists and members of journalistic communities to individually and collectively oppose adverse and threatening conditions with the intention of improving safety, professional autonomy, and

journalism as a whole (González de Bustamante & Relly, 2021). Furthermore, the concept of resistance allows us to emphasize the collective and political ways in which journalists respond to violence, such as solidarity networks or the creation of alternative media, which have been systematically documented in Latin America (Guerero & Marquez, 2015).

Differences can be observed in the most common use of both concepts in journalism studies. One approach suggests that systematic forms of resistance could “lead journalists to recognize or perceive that they control their own destinies” (González de Bustamante & Relly, 2021, p. 104) and therefore lead to resilience. These forms include, for example, remaining in the country of origin despite violence or taking a stand against injustices in the profession.

Another perspective associates resilience with reactions of conformity and avoidance in the face of aggression, for example, ceasing to publish on a topic or changing personal attitudes. By contrast, it identifies a few acts of resistance, for example, continuing to denounce corruption or practicing journalism in the face of criticism (Del Palacio, 2023).

Hodson (1995), for his part, considers attempts to regain dignity in the face of organizations that violate workers’ interests to be acts of resistance. Meanwhile, Wasserman (2019), focusing on repressive contexts, also considers acts of resistance as any apparently non-journalistic form of expression that allows for political and social connection with communities.

However, beyond these differences, the conditions that enable journalists’ resistance or resilience in different forms are the subject of analysis, especially where the exercise of press freedom is not possible. In this sense, as both an enabling condition and a result, the identity dimension stands out, because through critical and quality journalism in risky contexts, and its processes of professional reflexivity (González de Bustamante & Relly, 2015), not only are journalists’ coping strategies in the face of violence revealed, but also the institutional and cultural reconstitution of journalism globally as a high-risk profession. As a result, the normative models and traditional roles of journalism are called into question, become malleable, and expand.

7 Conclusions

Anti-press violence is a complex and multifactorial phenomenon. Hence, this article aims to propose a framework for explaining some of its most important aspects. In this sense, it starts with an analysis of its origins, types, impacts, and victims' responses. Nevertheless, before summarizing and establishing the connections between these factors, it is important to highlight that there is a widespread feeling of vulnerability among a large part of the journalistic community, particularly in countries where attacks are more serious and frequent. That is, regardless of their gender, the media outlet they work for, or the topics they cover, journalists do their work in an environment of constant insecurity.

However, not all journalists face the same risks simultaneously, as explained above, there are both internal and external factors that increase or reduce the likelihood of an attack. While the first are inherent risks of the profession, which are consciously assumed by those who practice it, the second depends on the political, economic, and social context of the place where they work. As a result, in countries of the Global South, where there are high rates of corruption and impunity, little freedom of speech, and limited access to public information, journalistic work becomes doubly dangerous.

Moreover, there are multiple ways in which reporters are subjected to violence. While physical attacks – such as murder, kidnapping, or torture – are the most extreme, they represent only the tip of the iceberg. These types of attacks can be classified as direct violence, although there is also another form known as indirect violence, which includes a variety of more subtle attacks that are normalized as part of the job but are no less harmful, such as job insecurity or discrimination based on gender or ethnic origin.

Whether direct or indirect, violence against journalists has a broad, far-reaching impact on victims, media outlets, and audiences. The effects at the individual level are the first and most obvious because they are suffered directly by journalists, who may develop psychological problems or be forced to change their personal and/or professional routines. For its part, the organizational impact is felt within newsrooms, whose members also change the topics they cover and the way they do so. Finally, anti-press violence affects society too, because when a journalistic voice is silenced, the audience

no longer receives the necessary and adequate information. Despite this, society seems oblivious to this situation, as there is growing mistrust of the media and low news consumption, which creates a rift between the two sides.

Faced with this complex situation, the journalistic community has tried to confront and contain the attacks against it on an individual level (through psychological support or the adaptation of their professional routines) and on a social level (through professional solidarity and collaborative work). These responses are aimed at strengthening journalistic resistance and resilience, allowing them to work more safely and professionally, or at least to survive to continue producing news. Though the theoretical pair of resistance and resilience allows for a broader debate on the professional identity of journalists and the practice of critical journalism.

In short, this article proposes considering anti-press violence as a multifaceted phenomenon with different origins, forms, impacts, and responses. Therefore, its study requires a panoramic view that permits a more robust analysis and a more complex problematization. This approach establishes the parameters necessary to explain how this phenomenon develops and what dimensions it takes on in a specific environment and moment. In this sense, the proposal involves discussing not only the attacks themselves but further investigating the context that fosters them; the implications they have for the victims, the media outlets they work for, and the audience; and the way in which journalists respond to them. This approach allows for a more comprehensive analysis of a phenomenon that is increasingly frequent both in countries with democracies considered solid and developed, and in authoritarian or post-authoritarian regimes, such as several in Latin America. Obviously, this is a proposal that must be operationalized in a more precise manner. Nevertheless, it represents a first approach to a model with a more explanatory than merely descriptive scope.

NOTES

- 1 The term “Global South” is used here as a category that encompasses developing countries with emerging democracies, as well as authoritarian or post-authoritarian regimes. It refers to a group

of nations characterized by diverse economic, political, and cultural asymmetries, and not associated with Western, capitalist, and developed states (Brun, 2024).

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