

TRENDS IN THREE 2003/4 JOURNALISM ACADEMIC MEETINGS

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SBPJor / Associação
Brasileira de Pesquisadores
em Jornalismo

EDUARDO MEDITSCH & MARIANA SEGALA
Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina, Brazil

ABSTRACT

This paper provides a report of the consolidation of journalism studies in Brazil. It reviews the pieces of research reported in 263 papers presented in six national conferences in 2003 and 2004, according to topic, region, media, quotations, national and disciplinary sources, and type of investigation. The paper concludes that there is a prevalence of studies on approaches, formats and newsmaking, local and national interest, the press and the Internet. The paper also classifies quotations of authors from Brazil, France and the United States in the fields of Journalism, Communication studies and Sociology.

KEY-WORDS

Thematic areas, research focus, rank quotation, empirical and theoretical research

1 ■ BACKGROUND: CONSOLIDATING THE ACADEMIC FIELD OF JOURNALISM IN BRAZIL

In 2003, several Brazilian researchers met in the hallways of Fernando Pessoa University. During the I Luso-Brazilian Congress of Journalism Studies and II Luso-Galician Congress of Journalism Studies. What came out of the discussions was a consensus: the significant attendance of Brazilian researchers was a further evidence of the vitality of Journalism Studies in Brazil. And that it was time to create a scientific society of researchers in Journalism, a dream that had been nurtured for a decade.

Back in Brazil, researchers met again around the Journalism Studies Work Group (WG) at Compós, in the city of Recife, in June. They drafted a manifesto signed by representatives from seven universities. This manifesto was released in September during the Belo Horizonte Intercom Congress. In November in the same year, Brasilia hosted the I National Journalism Researchers Meeting, and saw the foundation of the Brazilian Society of Journalism Researchers – SBPJor, with the participation of about

a hundred researchers and the presentation of sixty scientific papers. In the following year, 2004, the II National Journalism Researchers Meeting attracted three hundred participants, and had over a hundred papers presented. This historical detail – the talks in the city of Oporto about the creation of SBPJor – highlights the importance of this forum, the Luso-Galician and Luso-Brazilian Congress, as a pioneer initiative for consolidating Lusophone Journalism Studies; such initiative reverberates in all our countries.

In Brazil, the first theoretical texts on Journalism date back to the early twentieth century, even before professional training for our field had found its way into university halls in the 1940s. During that period, which lasted until the creation of postgraduate programs in Communication Studies in the 1960s and 1970s, all we had were isolated studies, resulting more from individual talents and efforts than from the existence of a favorable research environment. In 1972, Professor José Marques De Melo presented the first Brazilian PhD thesis on Journalism at the São Paulo University – USP. However, at that time we were already faced with the problem of legitimizing Journalism research, due to the introduction of Social Communication Studies as a new discipline to which Journalism became subordinate.

The horizontal expansion of our academic field, gradually turning from Journalism into Mass Communication, or Social Communication, also had its origin in the 1940s in the United States, when the State Department brought together experts from different areas to tackle Hitler and Goebbels' communicative strategy during World War Two. That experience yielded the concept of Mass Communication, a new discipline according to Wilbur Schramm, which was able to attract more support, power and funds in American universities than Journalism Studies had ever been. This view sought academic legitimacy by widening our area of study, and gradually became hegemonic. Wilbur Schramm, despite his Journalism background, went as far as saying that under the new perspective it no longer mattered to study the specific problems of Journalism (Moreno, 2004).

Propagated by Unesco in the post-war years, Mass Communication – now known as Social Communication – arrived in Brazil as a new discipline through CIESPAL and the minimum compulsory syllabus established in the 1960s. However, differently from what occurred in other Latin American countries – and even in some parts of Europe and the U.S. – in Brazil there was not exactly a “loss of the object of study” of Communication due to its expansion. On the contrary, Journalism, now

an academic sub-area of a field known as Communication Sciences, has conserved its identity in the bosom of a new area, and despite going through legitimacy and adaptation crises, it preserves its vitality as an area for academic production.

After over 30 years since the first PhD thesis was presented on this subject, we see research on Journalism find its space as a specific subject. The quality of Brazilian academicians' theoretical production in this field may be assessed in the innumerable articles published in national and international Communication Studies scientific journals. This increased academic production led to the appearance of new publications, such as *Pauta Geral*, published in Salvador, state of Bahia, since 1993; the Casper Libero College 2000 Journalism Yearbook (*Anuário de Jornalismo*); and the UFSC Journalism and Media Studies Journal (*Estudos em Jornalismo e Mídia*), published in 2004. These new generation periodicals form an editorial market that was first explored by journals such as the JB Journalism Review (*Cadernos de Jornalismo do JB*), in the 1960s; USP's School of Communication and Arts Studies – ECA's Journalism Review (*Cadernos de Jornalismo da ECA-USP*), in the 1970s; or the Journalism Yearbook (*Anuário de Jornalismo*), launched in the 1990s by USP's ECA.

Some evidence of the increasing number of researchers in the field of Journalism included the consolidation of Journalism research groups in postgraduate programs; Unicamp's creation of the Journalism Studies Advanced Laboratory – Labjor; and the launch of specific Working Groups by the main scientific associations in the area. Such WGs were first set up by Intercom in 1993, followed by Compós in 2000, and soon began to attract more papers than any other groups in both events. It is also worth mentioning the consolidation of the National Journalism Professors Forum, and the creation of the Brazilian Society of Journalism Researchers – SBPJor, in 2003. These initiatives by the existing scientific societies reflected the growth recorded in CNPq's Research Groups Directory. The first census – in 1993 – showed that no Research Group had Journalism among their keywords, whereas the 2002 census found 15 groups that did so. The total number of Research Groups that included Journalism as a keyword rose up to 47 in 2003, and has reached 68 in 2005.

In a way, the expansion and consolidation of Journalism Studies in Brazil have followed international trends: Nelson Traquina notes a growth by geometric progression in Journalism Studies since the 1980s, particularly in Europe and the U.S. This is confirmed by the appearance of international academic journals such as *Journalism – Theory, Practice and Criticism*, and *Journalism Studies*, both in 2000; the creation of new

academic bodies, such as the *Sociedad Española de Periodística*, in 1989; or the increased space given to Journalism in traditional bodies, e.g. the creation of a Journalism Interest Group at the *International Communication Association – ICA* in 2003.

Despite this growth of Journalism Studies – which are mostly developed under postgraduate programs around the country – very few among the 19 existing programs in Brazil place specific emphasis on such studies. In fact, only 2 of these – at USP and at UnB – keep areas of research in this field.

According to Márcia Benetti Machado, coordinator of the Compós Journalism Studies WG:

"The absence of specific areas on Journalism in the other programs has neither limited the research conducted by supervisors, nor the access of students who have Journalism as their object of study. However, since the assessment tool used by CAPES looks at the "link between research areas and projects", among other things, there is always an effort to adapt project themes or approaches to the areas of research, which are always more comprehensive than the already extensive field of Journalism. While this strategy has enabled the inclusion of these projects in the area of Communication Studies, thus strengthening it in terms of diversity, it may be hindering the development of a major research axis with unique objects and theories. This applies to Journalism" (Machado, 2004).

Despite the existing limitation at postgraduate level, Brazilian research in Journalism has followed an ascending route, both in quantity and quality, as has been demonstrated by the national congresses in this area over the past two years.

2 ■ AREAS OF RESEARCH: BRAZILIAN RESEARCH IN JOURNALISM PRESENTED AT NATIONAL CONGRESSES IN 2003-2004

Brazil's academic field is large and diffuse, and therefore any attempt to systematize previous investigations poses a very complex challenge. There is no central databank where one can find all Brazilian production on Journalism at postgraduate level, for example, and since there are very few specific publications, papers related to this area are scattered throughout periodicals dedicated to several other disciplines. The existing databanks, such as CNPq's Lattes System, depend on the researchers themselves for the input of new data, and have not been used in a very conscious way, as Márcia Machado points out (Machado, 2004).

Under the conditions described above, in order to carry out a limited exploration of the areas in Brazilian Journalism research, we have decided to look at a random sample of papers presented by Brazilian researchers at national congresses in this area. More specifically, these papers – 263 in total – were presented at the I and II SBPJor Meetings (Brasilia 2003 and Salvador 2004); at the Journalism Research Unit (RU) at the XXVI and XXVII Intercom Congresses (Belo Horizonte 2003 and Porto Alegre 2004); and at the Journalism Studies Working Group at the XII and XIII Compós Congresses (Recife 2003 and Sao Bernardo do Campo 2004).

Not all research papers on Journalism reach the congresses or the specific groups dealing with Journalism in such events, and many do not manage to get through the selection process. However, except for what may take place at Compós, where there is a very strict quantitative limitation (only 10 papers/year per WG) and 80% of all applications are left out, there is reason to believe that nearly all quality papers are accepted at the other meetings (SBPJor and Intercom). Nonetheless, there may also be, even in such events, a rejection rate higher than 50%, as has been the case at the Intercom RU.

At the congresses dealing more widely with Communication Studies, such as Intercom and Compós, many papers on Journalism are presented in other thematic groups, such as Communication and Politics, or Audiovisual Communication, at the choice of the authors, who may wish to focus on some specific interfaces. Such papers – not always easily identifiable as related to Journalism from their title only – have not been included in our sample, a factor that may influence the conclusions regarding areas of research. The same may also occur due to the exclusion of national congresses with specific themes, such as the National Journalism Professors Forum (where over a hundred papers are presented on teaching Journalism every year), and the Alfredo de Carvalho Media History Network, which includes a History of Journalism WG.

Another factor that may weigh on the results is the geographic location of these congresses. Despite the reasonably wide geographic distribution of such events, a larger number of papers presented at congresses in some given regions, such as the Northeast, for example, may highlight the areas chosen by researchers in that region. The papers produced by foreign investigators were also excluded from this study, as our goal was to focus on Brazilian production. Table 1 presents the composition of our sample:

Table 1: Composition of samples

Event	Number of Papers
Compós 2003 Journalism WG – Recife	09
Compós 2004 Journalism WG – S.B. Campo	09
Intercom 2003 Journalism RU – B. H.	41
Intercom 2004 Journalism RU – P. Alegre	55
SBPJor 2003 – Brasilia	59
SBPJor 2004 – Salvador	90
Total	263

The first aspect analyzed with regard to these papers' areas of research was the theme. However, there is no consensus on thematic classification in our area, and some recent papers analyzing this issue have proposed differentiated classifications. In an article on the state-of-the-art research in Journalism, Pereira & Wainberg (1999) define 14 categories: Organizational Journalism; Journalism Ethics; Teaching Journalism; Communication Law; History of Journalism; Alternative Journalism; Journalism & Science; Journalism & Economics; Journalism & Journalistic Enterprise; International Journalism; Journalism & Politics; Journalism Language & Technology; Journalism Memory; and Journalism Theory. Elias Machado (2004) proposes eight categories or areas of research: History of Journalism; Theories of Journalism; Discourse Analysis; News Making; Reception; Digital Journalism; Narrative Theories; and Specialized Journalism. Luiz Gonzaga Motta (2004) prefers to classify all Journalism research within two large paradigms: mediacentric and sociocentric. Márcia Bennetti Machado (2004) proposes nine categories: 1) History of Journalism; 2) Language Studies; 3) News Production and Journalistic Processes; 4) Reception Studies; 5) Digital Journalism; 6) Ethics & Journalism; 7) Journalism & Education; 8) Journalism Theories; and 9) Specialized Journalism.

As suggested by Machado, the "construction of categories is an effort to coordinate research 'entry' sections that are not always on the same level, and very often cross with each other – that is why these categories reveal, in a way, each author's choices. Such choices are inevitably made at the expense of several other possibilities, and it is through the debate on the pertinence of having a category axis that we may consider, in the long term, a framework that may enable us – as much as possible – to understand research on Journalism." (Machado, M.B., 2004) It is in this context – and bearing in mind that we are dealing with a provisional framework – that we have attempted to put together a classification

system that quantifies the papers presented in congresses, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Themes of papers presented at congresses

Theme	Number of Papers	Percentage (%)
Framing / Themes and Coverage	64	24.3
Language / Narrative / Form / Format	62	23.6
Journalistic Production / Newsmaking	36	13.7
Theories / Basis of Journalism	26	9.9
History of Journalism	24	9.1
Reception and Effects	11	4.2
Profession Studies	9	3.4
New Technologies	5	1.9
Journalism Ethics	5	1.9
Journalism Criticism	3	1.1
Compared Journalism	2	0.8
Journalism in Education	2	0.8
Teaching Journalism	2	0.8
Hybrid Themes*	12	4.7
Total	263	100

A second aspect that was analyzed with regard to areas of research was the focus of the studies: papers with local and/or regional reach were the most frequent, followed by those of national reach. The studies on topics of international and/or universal reach were the rarest. However, 37.3% of all papers could not be classified according to these terms, generally because of their being too abstract, as shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Focus of Papers Presented at Congresses

Focus	Number of Papers	Percentage (%)
Local / Regional	84	31.9
National	67	25.5
International / Universal	14	5.3
Not Applied / Not Defined	98	37.3
Total	263	100

A further aspect that was observed with regard to areas of research was the type of media that is investigated in Journalism research. Results may have been influenced by the fact that some media have specific theme groups, such as radio at the Intercom congress (these papers are not included in this study). However, it is interesting to note that newspapers continue to be the dominating medium, and that the Internet has overtaken television in the interest of researchers.

Table 4: Media researched in papers presented at congresses (2003/4)

Media	Number of Papers	Percentage (%)
Newspaper	88	33.5
Internet	36	13.7
Television	23	8.7
Magazine	14	5.3
Radio	7	2.7
Web Radio	5	1.9
Web TV	3	1.1
Others	3	1.2
Various / Not Defined	84	31.9
Total	263	100

The references presented also tell us something about the areas of research. In view of that, we have carried out a bibliometric study of all quotations present in the bibliographies of the papers analyzed – excluding self-quotations. Table 5 presents a list of the most often quoted authors (appearing in at least 10 papers), their country of origin, and their main area of work. At the top of the list are those authors known for having systematized Journalism theories, and some of the main contemporary references in such theories, as well as in the area of Communication.

Table 5: Authors most often quoted and their respective countries of origin, main area of work and number of papers where they appear

Author	Country of Origin	Main Area of Work	Number of Papers where Author is Quoted
WOLF Mauro	Italy	Communic. St.	45
TRAQUINA Nelson	Portugal	Journalism	44
BOURDIEU Pierre	France	Sociology	34
SODRÉ Muniz	Brazil	Communic. St.	31
SCHUDSON Michael	USA	Journalism	29
TUCHMANN Gaye	USA	Journalism	25
MARTIN-BARBERO Jesus	Colombia	Communic. St.	24
MELO José Marques de	Brazil	Journalism	23
HALL Stuart	England	Sociology	23
MARCONDES FILHO Ciro	Brazil	Journalism	22
CASTELLS Manuel	Spain	Sociology	21
PALACIOS Marcos	Brazil	Journalism	21
FOUCAULT Michel	France	Philosophy	20
GONÇALVES Elias Machado	Brazil	Journalism	19
MIELNICZUK Luciana	Brazil	Journalism	18
SOUZA Jorge Pedro	Portugal	Journalism	15
BARTHES Roland	France	Language	13
MAINGUENEAU Dominique	France	Language	13
MEDITSCH Eduardo	Brazil	Journalism	13
ORLANDI Eni P.	Brazil	Language	13
MEDINA Cremilda	Brazil	Journalism	11
MORETZSOHN Sylvia	Brazil	Journalism	11
LAGE Nilson	Brazil	Journalism	11
RODRIGUES Adriano Duarte	Portugal	Communic. St.	11
BARBOSA Suzana	Brazil	Journalism	10
ECO Humberto	Italy	Language	10
GANS Herbert J.	Germany	Sociology	10
GENRO FILHO Adelmo	Brazil	Journalism	10
LANDOW George	USA	Literature	10
RIBEIRO Ana Paula Goulart	Brazil	Journalism	10

With regard to the geographic origin of the quotations, Table 6 indicates the predominant cultural influences: besides Brazilian authors,

France and the U.S. remain the strongest influence, followed by Portugal, Spain and other European countries. The information contained in Table 6 reflects the nearly non-existent impact of Latin America in Brazilian research on Journalism.

Table 6: Number of quotations according to their respective countries of origin

Country of Origin	Number of Quotations by Authors from this Country	Percentage (%)
Brazil	1062	43.6
France	312	12.8
USA	293	12
Portugal	123	5
Spain	112	4.6
England	93	3.8
Italy	86	3.5
Germany	76	3.1
Russia	32	1.3
Colombia	26	1.1
Netherlands	21	0.9
Argentina	19	0.8
Austria	19	0.8
Mexico	16	0.7
Canada	13	0.5
Belgium	12	0.5
Slovenia	10	0.4
Switzerland	8	0.3
Hungary	7	0.3
Denmark	7	0.3
Greece	5	0.2
Australia	4	0.2
Czech Republic	4	0.2
Israel	4	0.2
Romania	2	0.1
Chile	2	0.1
Turkey	2	0.1
Uruguay	2	0.1
Not Identified	64	2.6
Total	2436	Total

Table 7 gives some clues regarding the disciplinary interfaces of Journalism research developed in Brazil. Despite the multidisciplinary aspects inherent to this field, authors working directly on Journalism are responsible for over 40% of all the quotations, and those working on sub-areas of Communication Studies account for another 20%. Among the rest, the prevailing areas are Sociology, Language Sciences and Philosophy, followed by other human sciences. Although many authors may work in more than one area, their main areas of work were the main criterion, based on their CVs and publications.

Table 7: Number of quotations by authors according to their respective main areas of work

Main Area of Work	Number of Quotations by Authors Acting in this Area	Percentage (%)
Journalism	989	40.6
Communication Studies	491	20.2
Sociology	239	9.8
Language Sciences	181	7.4
Philosophy	166	6.8
History	86	3.5
Anthropology	59	2.4
Literature	52	2.1
Psychology/Psychoanalysis	26	1.1
Geography	20	0.8
Political Sciences	17	0.7
Theology	10	0.4
Information Technology	7	0.3
Medicine	4	0.2
Economics	4	0.2
Physics	4	0.2
Education	3	0.1
Chemistry	3	0.1
Scientific Methodology	3	0.1
Law	2	0.1
Social Services	2	0.1
Not Identified	68	2.8
Total	2436	Total

Table 8 describes the types of research conducted. In addition to the high percentage of papers in the first item, another important aspect to point out is that only one paper represented applied research, despite the fact that Communication Studies are classified by research promotion agencies in Brazil as an “applied social science”.

Table 8: Types of research

Types	Number of Papers	Percentage (%)
Essay / Theoretical	148	53.6
Empirical	114	43.3
Applied	1	0.4
Total	263	100

In this current mapping exercise, we have refrained from classifying papers according to the research methodologies and techniques used, although this is one of the most stimulating aspects of mapping areas of research. In the previous version of this study, presented at the II SBPJOR Meeting (MEDITSCH & SEGALA, 2004), this item received some pertinent criticism, and there has not been enough time since then to reclassify the entire sample. Certainly, this is one of the most difficult aspects to map, considering the absence of a universally accepted tradition and the little scientific maturity in our field. As stated by Isabel Ferin Cunha:

“Both the delimitation of the research universe – by sample and/or corpus – and the collection of data imply a previous theoretical stance and a previous epistemological choice. On the other hand, in order for any research to be credible, reliable and universally valid, it is necessary to present the theoretical premises and the methods that served as a basis for such delimitation and for the collection of evidence. In line with such requirement, it is fundamental to develop an outline of the research. This involves, firstly, the contextualization of the phenomena, followed by the justifications that guided the choice of procedures, as well as the procedures themselves. This last item establishes four stages of research: identification and definition of the type of research to be carried out (quantitative, qualitative, or mixed); methods and techniques for data collection and/or generation; data analysis (e.g. statistical analysis, content analysis, discourse analysis); data interpretation and recontextualization”(Cunha, 2003).

However, a strict analysis based on these criteria would exclude from the scientific field a large portion of the papers analyzed, nearly 60% of which represent theoretical discussions – mostly essays – with no reference

to research methods or techniques. The inherent interdisciplinarity of this field makes it difficult to clearly identify the epistemological choices that ought to precede research work, as sustained by Isabel Ferin Cunha. We see a widespread decontextualized appropriation of concepts from several subjects and conceptions of different philosophical schools – sometimes contradictorily. These are applied, in turn, to data obtained from reality according to concerns that are more rhetorical than methodological.

In addition, we must note that in the field of Journalism, and in Social Communication as a whole, empirical research is not as prestigious as theoretical formulation. An example is the fact that the Journalism WG at Compós, the most selective of all, has Journalism Theory as its most frequent theme (Machado, 2004). Nevertheless, the maintenance of such tradition represents a serious risk of losing rigor, since such theories are rarely put through empirical tests at all, a factor that may give rise to a dangerous entification of concepts (Freire & Shor, 1986). As recently pointed out by Berger & Luckmann (2004:14), many suppositions by modern and post-modern critics “have a great power of suggestion and therefore persuasion, which does not mean that they would resist empirical investigation”.

We are facing, in the field of Journalism, what Ginzburg (1997) describes as the unpleasant dilemma of all social sciences: either they settle for a feeble scientific status, in order to reach results that appear more relevant; or else they aim at a stronger scientific status, but obtain results of limited relevance. However, we will only be able to unite scientific rigor with relevant results when our field has matured, and we have created networks of researchers who effectively commit to exchange and mutually criticize their results. In order to do so, we also need to acquire the habit of reviewing our bibliographies in a more systematic and rigorous way, something that is lacking in most papers analyzed under this study.

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Eduardo Meditsch is professor at the Santa Catarina Federal University (UFSC, Brazil), Researcher at the National Council for Scientific and Technological Development – CNPq, and Scientific Director of the Brazilian Society of Journalism Researchers – SBPJOR
meditsch@cce.ufsc.br

Mariana Segala is member of the Journalism Academic Team at the Santa Catarina Federal University (UFSCBrazil) , and Scientific Initiation Scholarship Holder at the National Council for Scientific and Technological Development – CNPq
mariana_segala@yahoo.com.br