



Call for Papers

Irreverent Journalism

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Irreverent journalism can be understood as a form of counterpower essential to the functioning of contemporary democracies, particularly in contexts marked by mistrust of political and media institutions. It also serves as an indicator of the profound transformations taking place in the profession, in an environment characterised by the crisis in information production financing models, technological changes, and the questioning of the dominant social definitions of journalism (Lévêque, Ruellan, 2010).

Far from being a marginal or deviant practice (Becker, 1985), irreverent journalism can be understood as one of the manifestations of the symbolic and professional struggles between journalism models and the profession's prevailing perceptions that permeate the field of journalism (Mathien, Pélissier, and Rieffel, 2001; Lemieux, 1992). It is part of the tradition of combative journalism, which defends the figure of the journalist who is fully engaged in the public sphere, critical of the powers that be and who assumes a position with the aim of enlightening the public. This model of engaged journalism is therefore defined in opposition to the figure of the impartial or disengaged journalist, often associated with forms of complicity, conscious or unconscious, with political, economic, and cultural elites (Lévêque and Ruellan, 2010). In authoritarian contexts, irreverent journalism can prove particularly important politically, but also innovative in editorial or linguistic terms (Kucinski, 2001).

From this perspective, irreverent journalism is not limited to a provocative style or tone; it refers to professional positions, editorial strategies, and the conditions under which the profession is practised, which question the very foundations of journalistic authority, its social legitimacy, and its relationship with power (Lemieux, 2005). This call for papers invites us to examine the conditions for the emergence, persistence, resistance, and resilience of irreverent journalism; the trajectories of journalists who identify with it; and the media, social, and political spaces in which these practices take place. We also welcome proposals regarding conceptual advances aimed at better defining and understanding irreverent journalism.

Proposals may fall under one of the following thematic areas:

Thematic Area 1 – Irreverence as a Professional Stance

This thematic area invites us to analyse the conditions that make irreverent journalism possible, examining trajectories and careers, modes of socialisation, and the processes by which individuals define themselves—or are defined—as irreverent journalists. It also seeks to explore how actors experience irreverent journalism and how professional roles are defined, negotiated, and organised within that structure (Mellado, 2022), as well as the tensions it generates in newsrooms, media companies, and the journalistic community.

In addition, this thematic area proposes to examine the concrete forms irreverent journalism takes. Around which political, economic, and professional issues is this stance constructed? How does it fit into the broader socio-historical perspective of critical journalistic practices? What is the role of social media in (re)defining this model? Finally, how do irreverent journalists represent themselves, what values do they defend, what causes do they support, and what is their relationship with “traditional” journalists?

Thematic Area 2 – Irreverence as a Journalistic Strategy

As a strategy, journalistic irreverence consists of challenging various forms of authority—political, economic, ideological, religious, military, moral, intellectual, or cultural—by questioning the mechanisms that legitimise power and participating in the very redefinition of journalistic authority. It is often characterised by a critical, provocative, or nonconformist tone, as well as by an explicit desire to break from dominant professional routines and oppose the figures of journalism associated with them.

This thematic area focuses on the strategies used by journalists to protect themselves from the constraints of complicit or deferential journalism, both in their relationships with sources and the public and in their editorial choices (da Silva and Pedro Neto, 2021). It invites us to analyse the restrictions, resources, and trade-offs which structure such strategies, as well as their effects on the credibility, legitimacy, and social reception of irreverent journalism (Gutmann et al., 2009).

Thematic Area 3 – Irreverence Challenged by Restrictions, Risks and Repression

This thematic area proposes to analyse irreverent journalism from the perspective of the structural restrictions, professional risks, and forms of repression faced by journalists who adopt this stance or strategy. Irreverence, as an explicit challenge to the powers that be, exposes journalists to multiple sanctions—legal, economic, symbolic, or physical—that contribute to redefining the conditions under which the profession is practised.

Articles may examine formal and informal mechanisms of control and regulation (censorship, self-censorship, political pressure, economic dependencies, violence, threats), as well as their effects on trajectories and careers, editorial choices, and forms of journalistic engagement. Special attention may be given to the strategies of circumvention, protection, and solidarity developed by irreverent journalists, individually or collectively, to maintain spaces for critical expression (Guimarães and Caetano, 2009).

This thematic area also invites us to analyse inequalities in the face of risk, taking into account national contexts, political configurations, organizational resources, and positions held within the media landscape. Finally, it is important to examine how such restrictions contribute to the transformation of practices, discourses, and representations of irreverent journalism, particularly in authoritarian or hybrid contexts (Frère, 2015), or in those characterised by significant job insecurity, recurring socio-political crises (Fierens, 2017) or armed conflict (N'sana, 2021).

Articles should be between 40,000 and 55,000 characters in length, including spaces, and may be submitted in Portuguese, Spanish, French, or English. If an article is accepted for publication, authors who submitted their work in one of the first three languages must also provide an English version.

All submissions to this special call will be sent exclusively through the Brazilian Journalism Research(BJR) electronic system, available on the journal's website: <http://bjr.sbpjor.org.br>

Guidelines for formatting texts can be found at:
<https://bjr.sbpjor.org.br/bjr/about/submissions>

If you have any questions, please send an email to bjr@sbpjor.org.br

Important Deadlines:

Submission of articles: 15 July 2026.

Acceptance of approved articles: 31 December 2026.

Publication of the edition: 30 April 2027.

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