Comparison between the Journalistic Cultures[1] of Switzerland, Spain and Ecuador: the effects of context influences on the journalists' perception of professional roles and the idea of objectivity

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Abstract

The number of global comparative researches of journalistic culture is increasing. More and more the samples of countries for comparisons are putting Non-Western cultures at the centre of its enquiry. In this article, we analyse the self-perception of professional roles and the idea of objectivity of Swiss, Spanish and Ecuadorian journalists. In order to study these dimensions we use fieldwork based on in-depth interviews with 70 journalists from 15 media in the three countries and multilevel analysis of the context influences. The objective is to determine the journalists' self-perception of their professional roles and the idea of objectivity as an ideal and method within their contexts. Results show that Spanish journalists tend to have an interventionist role and are opposed to the government. Swiss journalists tend towards a greater passivity and objectivity than Spanish journalists and, even though they do not see themselves as watchdogs, they have a critical position towards the centres of power. And, finally, Ecuadorian journalists believe they are neutral and impartial professionals, feeling that they must inform the citizens, and the objectivity as philosophical concept is not a goal for their profession.

[1] Journalistic culture builds the identity features of the roles and routines that, in the abstract context, represent the symbolic framework of a collective. Its knowledge, then, is essential to the journalist because journalistic culture defines the perimeter that surrounds his work (OLLER; BARREDO, 2013). According to Esser (2004), different cultures cannot be understood as communities of homogeneous values, but rather as hybrids that involve national traditional elements linked to other international elements, interacting with each other dynamically.

Keywords

Journalistic culture. Professional roles. Comparative studies. Switzerland. Spain. Ecuador.

1 Introduction

In this article we analyse the perception of journalists of their professional roles and the concept of objectivity within the journalistic cultures of Switzerland, Spain and Ecuador. The roles of journalists in the societies are more and more relevant nowadays, not only in the media system, but also in the social, economic and political systems. Therefore, they play a central role in democratic processes (DEUZE, 2002). In order to better understand their professional work and the production of contents, we need to analyse the journalistic culture based on different criteria and dimensions (HANITZSCH, 2007).

The empirical field of study of this exploratory proposal, based on in-depth interviews with 70 journalists from 15 media in three countries and a multilevel analysis of the context influences, presents the similar and different characteristics that define the journalistic culture in which journalists carry out their daily work. According to Hanitzsch (2007), the analysis of the attitudes of journalists in a specific country is best achieved by comparing them to the journalistic attitudes existing in another country. Based on this suggestion, we decided to undertake a comparative analysis between Switzerland, Spain and Ecuador[2].

The objective is to know the journalists' perception of their roles and of the concept of objectivity that relates to the manner in which media professionals describe values and attitudes in the information they provide for the public, and to which roles and values they consider important when executing their work.

The empirical research in this field will be amplified in the future with two international projects: Journalistic Role Performance around the Globe (JRP)[3] and Worlds of

[2] In a previous study we analysed the journalistic cultures from Spain and Switzerland, and now we complete this work with Ecuador.

[3] *Journalistic Role Performance Around the Globe* (JRP) is a comparative research project which addresses this disconnection between ideals and practices in journalism, analysing how different dimensions of professional roles materialise in the news product. The main objective of the project is to compare the journalistic role performance cross-nationally, understanding the influence that different media systems have on the practice of journalism, as well as the gap between role conceptions and professional practice. Specifically, this study connects the characteristics of different professional role conceptions that have been theoretically and empirically operationalised and validated in comparative contexts (that is, the journalists' understanding of what role they should play in society) with the study of news production – the visibility of such a role in news content (JOURNALISTIC ROLE..., 2015).

Journalism Study (WJS)[4]. These are two quantitative studies that complete the results of this qualitative analysis.

2 Comparative studies of journalistic cultures around the globe

Media culture has been explicitly theorised as a unit for comparative research (HEPP; COULDRY, 2012) because it helps to broaden the perspective and to address a range of questions that cannot be answered in the context of single-country studies (VOLTMER, 2008).

> Comparative research in communication and media studies is conventionally understood as contrasting different macro-level cases (e.g., world regions, countries, subnational regions, social milieux, language areas, cultural thickenings) at one or more points in time. [...] [It] differs from non-comparative work, since it attempts to reach conclusions beyond single cases and explains differences and similarities between objects of analysis against the backdrop of their contextual conditions. (ESSER, 2013, p. 115).

For these reasons, comparative media and journalistic culture researches have gained relevance in recent years (ESSER; HANITZSCH, 2012). "This growing number of comparative studies indicates that journalism and journalism research no longer operate within national or cultural boundaries." (WEAVER; LÖFFELHOLZ, 2008, p. 8).

This study contrasts the universal Continental European model of Hallin e Mancini (2004), that analyses the highly politicised and literary style of the southern European journalistic model (Spain), and the moderately politicised, corporatist style of central European journalism (Switzerland) (HALLIN; MANCINI, 2004; MANCINI, 2005; ESSER; UMBRICHT, 2013) with the model of intermediate journalistic cultures (OLLER; BARREDO, 2013) of Ecuador. Hence, the model of Hallin and Mancini is criticised, since the discussion is centred on the applicability of this model to other parts of the world (ALBAEK et al., 2014). In the case of Ecuador, its contextual conditions and "[...] national historiographies of socialist mass cultures [...] are a necessary first step for cross-national comparative research." (PERUŠKO; ČUVALO, 2014, p. 137).

[4] The *Worlds of Journalism Study* (WJS) is an academically driven project that was founded to regularly assess the state of journalism throughout the world. The primary objective of the study is to help journalism researchers, practitioners, media managers and policy makers to better understand world views and changes that are taking place in the professional orientations of journalists, the conditions and limitations under which they operate, as well as the social functions of journalism in a changing world (WORLD OF JOURNALISM STUDY, 2015).

Despite the difficulties, risks and problems of the comparative work (BLUMLER & GUREVICH, 1995; SANDERS; CANEL, 2013), some scholars consider the comparison of media system indispensable because:

a) this type of analysis helps to establish the generalisability of theories and the validity of interpretations derived from single-nation studies [...];
b) it forces us to test our interpretations against cross-cultural differences and inconsistencies (KOHN, 1989; VAN DE VIJVER; LEUNG, 1997; HANITZSCH, 2008);
c) it improves understanding of our own media system by contrasting it with others;
d) it helps to create and foster networks of scholars that can sustain particular research projects;
e) and comparative research also poses many challenges to the analysis of media systems (HANITZSCH, 2008).

Kohn (1989) created a model for international comparison called the "transnational model". From this model, two sub-approaches can be distinguished here, according to Esser (2013, p. 118):

> [...] the first sub-approach (termed 'glocalisation') asks how global media phenomena are appropriated within distinct national borders, the second sub-approach (called 'deterritorialisation') questions the idea of fixed national borders and asks which new border-transgressing escapes and cultures have emerged that are cutting across national borders.

The nation state is, thus, not the only context for media system analysis (PFETSCH; ESSER, 2008). Here two different semantics are connected: a semantics of the "Inter", which is based on communication links between countries and cultures, on the one hand, and a semantics of the "Trans", the media communication focused beyond and across national and cultural boundaries, on the other hand (WESSLER; AVERBECK-LIETZ, 2012).

It is, therefore, extremely important to avoid:

a) the excessive westernisation of journalism research (CURRAN; PARK, 2000; MELLADO et al., 2012);
b) "[...] the reduction of comparative analysis to a categorisation of cases, in which a label becomes a substitute for more concrete explanation [...]." (HALLIN; MANCINI, 2012, p. 300);

c) to show comparative research only across nation states, because some countries offer significant internal regional variations in media practice and uses (DOWNING, 2012);
d) and to decontextualise the cases of study.

3 Journalistic cultures of Switzerland, Spain and Ecuador

Until now, the majority of comparative studies on journalism culture across different countries have been focused on Anglo-Saxon and Northern European countries (BERGANZA; OLLER; MEIER, 2010). The comparison between European countries has been neglected, even though, as Hallin and Mancini (2004) point out, there are great differences and diverse models of media coverage among the different countries of this continent. In this paper we present a comparison between two European countries, Switzerland and Spain, and Ecuador, a Latin-American country.

Spain and Switzerland are within the analysis of Hallin and Mancini (2004) about the media and social systems in Western countries. According to the authors, the liberal model prevails in Britain, Ireland and North America (characterised by the relative strength of market mechanisms); the democratic corporate model prevails in northern continental Europe – such as Switzerland (characterised by the historical coexistence of commercial media with dependent social and political groups) and, finally, the polarised pluralist model is prevalent in Mediterranean countries of Southern Europe – like Spain (characterised by the integration of the media in political parties and by a weaker media development). This classification shows that Western journalistic culture and media systems are not homogeneous and that in most countries not one single system with only one purpose or philosophy dominates, but that journalistic cultures are composed of many elements based on freedom and diversity of models, equality and equal access to the media or to established social and cultural schemes (MCQUAIL, 1999).

Recent results by Hanitzsch et al. (2011) establish certain features of journalistic culture in Western countries based on: (1st) the separation of journalism and the bodies of power, (2nd) the non-personal intermediation within the topics covered and (3rd) the role to act as a controller and an observer of the political and economic elites. In Western journalistic culture (Switzerland and Spain) certain similarities can be established, but "The

media systems of new democracies (Ecuador) cannot easily be classified into the three models proposed by Hallin and Mancini (2004)." (VOLTMER, 2008, p. 37).

To understand the journalistic culture in Ecuador, one needs to apply a model that is different from the one applied to countries in Europe or North-America. For this reason, we use the term Intermediate Journalistic Cultures for cultures with characteristics that are different from the ones perceived in Western countries. For example, Gencel Bek (2011) affirms that the Turkish media system resembles in certain aspects the South and Latin American media systems, following the indicators offered by Hallin and Papathanassopoulos (2002). To understand intermediate journalistic cultures, according to Oller and Barredo (2013), it is necessary to:

a) define journalists as symbolic producers able to conceptualise, build and transmit meanings of cultural forms. Moreover, they are able to articulate and disseminate ideologies that identify a nation. The study of these journalistic cultures must be adapted to the intercultural and multicultural characteristics of this kind of countries. These multicultural environments, according to Sonwalkar (2004), due to the phenomena of multiculturalism, local cultures and different policies (re)presented in the country, must work in a way that improves the local and mediatic democratisation. As well as, to understand this sense of nationalism and regional cohesion, it is necessary to integrate the global cultures and politics. In many cases, certain ethnocentrism and individualist tendencies presented by the dominant or dominated journalistic cultures may become unavoidable and even functional from the point of view of conservation of the native culture. Therefore, to better understand cultural diversity of journalism across the globe, this paper presents below the characteristics of cultural groups defined as intermediate journalistic cultures;
b) emphasise the relevance of these professionals as symbolic, since these countries (postcolonial, developing or under undemocratic regimes) are major producers of strategic meanings that try to dominate the reality (MAHON, 2000). Following the Mass media declaration of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in 1978 (UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION, 1978), the public debate about media control

> and the granting of licenses in authoritarian regimes in the Third World began. These documents, at all times, were taken as liberal principles concretised in the freedom of the Western press (GOLDING; HARRIS, 1997). However, it seems inappropriate to perform a theoretical foundation based solely on the media. Like Khondler (2000), this study suggests an approach to globalisation away from a reductionist concept focusing exclusively on media relationships, because it is believed that globalisation is a multidimensional and complex process that must consider other factors associated with symbolic notions of cultural diversity and identity.

Therefore, this project focuses on the analysis of the characteristics that identify the different journalistic cultures and attitudes of journalists in Switzerland, Spain and Ecuador. It is important to emphasise, though, that the journalistic culture of Ecuador has not yet been studied and, much less, compared to those of other countries.

Firstly, this comparison is very relevant due to the fact that Switzerland is an established democracy with strong political and social structures, what makes it interesting to compare it to the young Spanish democracy and to a developing democracy such as Ecuador. Secondly, Switzerland and Spain share Western European values that are the common ground for their journalistic cultures, while Ecuador has a different journalistic culture based on the characteristics of Latin-America and on the process of change brought about by the new communications policy of the government of Rafael Correa, whose best exponent is the Communications Law approved in 2013.

As some authors (KLEINSTEUBER, 2003; HANITZSCH, 2007) point out, these similarities and differences are interesting when comparing journalistic cultures, since they allow for integrating the perspectives of concordance and dissonance.

4 Analysis of dimensions of journalistic cultures: objectivity, professional roles and perceived influences in journalism

In the study of the journalistic cultures of Switzerland, Spain and Ecuador, four of the seven dimensions raised by Hanitzsch (2007) are analysed: first, institutional roles related

to the manner of exercising the profession of a journalist. This component is divided into three dimensions:

a) interventionism (referring to the socially committed journalist or, on the opposite side, the neutral, observant and objective professional);
b) power distance (journalism as the fourth estate or journalists who support and stand by the government, being collaborative);
c) and market orientation (in terms of audience orientation or prioritizing the informative and political role of media).

The second component is epistemology as the theoretical foundation of knowledge in which the journalist asks himself about the truth within the profession and if the information can be based on this or not. This is divided into two dimensions: objectivity and empiricism. Objectivity means that journalists tend to accept the absolute existence of reality and believe in the possibility of separating facts from values. In contrast, subjectivists see reality only as representation, effect of an intrinsically changeable action. Empiricism, not considered in this analysis, is found in the analysis of the means that journalists use to claim the truth.

Table 1 – Components and dimensions of analysis of journalistic culture used in this research.[5]

INSTITUTIONAL ROLES			
Interventionism:	(+) Intervention	---	Passive (-)
Power distance:	(+) Criticism	---	Loyalty (-)
Market orientation:	(+) Consumers	---	Citizens (-)
EPISTEMOLOGY			
Objectivity:	(+) Objectivists	---	Subjectivists (-)
Empiricism:	(+) Empiricists	---	Analysts (-)
ETHICAL IDEOLOGY			
Relativism:	(+) Contextual	---	Universal (-)
Idealism:	(+) Means	---	Goal (-)

Source: prepared by the author with basis on Hanitzsch (2007, p. 376).

[5] Only the parts selected are studied in this paper. The parts in white are simply for the reader's visualisation of the whole of the dimensions.

The study of these dimensions, objectivity and professional roles is supported by the analysis of different levels of influence and the contexts of these three journalistic cultures. Journalists perceive influences in their newsrooms as being crucial to perform their job (HANITZSCH; MELLADO, 2011). The different influences factors have been put as indicators in this cross-cultural study because their impact defines journalists' professional perceptions and actions.

The model of analysis of influences in this study is based on previous theoretical and practical studies in the area:

Table 2 – Synopsis of multilevel models.

AUTHORS	Individuals	Media routines	Media organisation	Media structure	Society (Politics & Economy)	Culture & Ideology
McQuail (1983, 1999)	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	
Ettema & Whitney (1982)	♦	♦		♦		
Chaffee & Berger (1987)	♦		♦		♦	
McQuail & Windahl (1993)			♦			
Weischenberg (1992,1995)	♦	♦	♦		♦	
Reus (1998)	♦	♦	♦		♦	
Shoemaker & Resse (1991)	♦	♦	♦		♦	♦
Esser (1998)	♦	♦		♦	♦	
Whitney, Sumpter& McQuail (2004)	♦	♦		♦		
Grossberg et al. (2006)	♦		♦	♦		♦
Donsbach (2000, 2008)	♦	♦	♦		♦	
Preston & Metykova (2009)	♦	♦	♦	♦		♦
Hanitzsch et al. (2010)	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦
Oller & Meier (2012)	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦

Source: prepared by the author with basis on Hanitzsch (2009, p. 156).

5 Methodology

This is a theoretical project that has been applied empirically to prove its efficiency. The empirical field work is based on a qualitative technique – in-depth interviews – and an exploratory study which has attempted to construct a model to theoretically analyse these journalistic cultures in a similar line to the proposal of fuzzy set qualitative comparative analysis (fsQCA) for comparative media research proposed by Downey and Stanyer (2010). The model was applied (table 3) to a sample of 70 journalists from 15 news and media organisations – public, private and community – considered "quality media" (JARREN; VOGEL, 2008, p. 72)

The sample selection was based on parameters that allow a greater representation of journalists and the media in these countries. For this reason, the configuration of the sample is based on quota sampling. Although the sample is not quantitatively representative, since it is very small, as Wyss (2002) showed, a qualitative study with a total of 70 interviews is acceptable, and allows for having sufficient data for research at the time of its statistical treatment.

Table 3 - Basic parameters of the sample.

Basic parameters of the sample	Ecuador	Spain	Switzerland
Interviewed journalists	31	19	20
Female journalists (%)	29	21	40
Age (A)[6]	35	39	46
University degree in Communication (%)	81	89	25
Years of experience as journalists (A)	11,1	10,5	14,9
Mass media data			
Media ownership (%)	Public: 42 Private: 51 Community: 7	Public: 53 Private: 47 Community: -	Public: 50 Private: 50 Community: -
Media type (%)	Broadcasting: 58 Print: 42	Broadcasting: 53 Print: 47	Broadcasting: 50 Print: 50

Source: prepared by the author.

This research follows the tendency expressed by Hanitzsch (2008, p. 116): "Another important task for the future is the development of concepts and research instruments that deliberately serve a comparative purpose and that extend beyond Western-grown models". In order to consistently study journalistic culture, we have designed a multilevel model of analysis from the "Integrated Model" of Oller and Meier (2012, my translation) and the approach offered by Luke (2004, p. 4), who states that "[...] much of what we study in nature is multilevel, so we must use the theories and analysis techniques that are also multilevel. If we do not do this, we have serious problems".

From the combination of multilevel models and the concept of organic analysis of journalism (based on the idea of dynamism, change and heterogeneity), the "Organic Multilevel Model" (OLLER, 2015) is achieved and proposed in the study of the journalistic cultures of Switzerland, Spain and Ecuador.

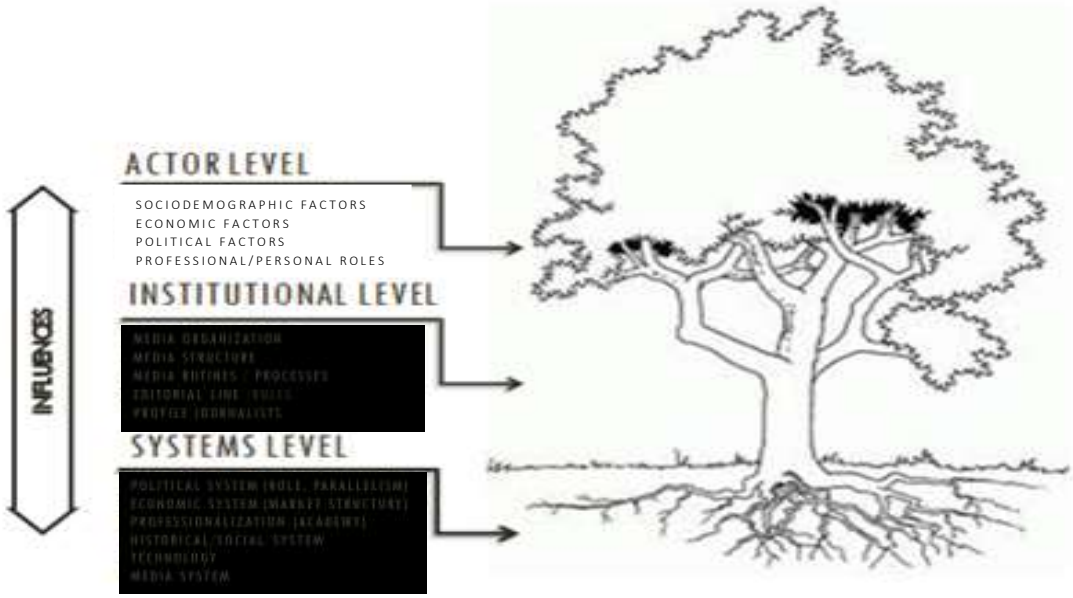
[6] "A" for "average".

The structure of this model changes the concept of superposed levels where journalists are in the middle. This structure, based on nature, is more logical because the "roots" are the structuring systems and the base of a country. The Systems level comprises the political system – role, parallelism –, economic system – market structure –, professionalisation – academy –, historical/social system, technology and media system[7].

The "trunk" symbolises the institutions and organisations. The Institutional level is composed of media organisation, media structure, media routines, processes, editorial line, rules and profile of journalists as a group and are held up by the main systems level.

Lastly, "branches" and "leaves" represent the individual journalists due to their irregular position, diversity and number – because the perceptions and ideas of journalists within a country are not homogeneous. The Actor level includes the sociodemographic factors, economic individual factors, political individual factors and professional/personal roles.

Figure 1 - Organic multilevel model.



Source: prepared by the author.

[7] Facto and constitutional powers.

6 Results

In this section we will discuss about the research results.

6.1 Switzerland: results of the analysis of dimensions

Swiss journalists tend to be passive and neutral. In Switzerland 45% of the interviewees said they always compromise with their subjects, but keep enough distance as not to influence the information with their emotions or feelings: "Internally I maintain a total commitment, we commit ourselves to our work" (21)[8] ; "We are not lawyers, defending things that happen or are done by others" (20); "I am proud to uncover or bring something to light that is not right, nevertheless, the role of a journalist is to describe the facts" (2); "We don't guide or change the world. We expose things, but what happens after our information is not our responsibility" (22).

In addition, Swiss journalists hold a position of relative neutrality: "The journalist has to be very interested in his work and know how it works. That's the basis. From there, I guess, some neutrality helps to do the work in the right way" (25); "I am committed to my work to the extent to which I can inform and help people with my work. In order to do this, I try to be fair, transparent and balanced in what I am reporting" (24).

They do not see themselves as watchdogs, but they have a critical position towards the centres of power. In the research, 75% of the respondents speak of their role as mediators between the various estates and public powers, so that journalism should be "monitoring structures of leaders" (9) and "touch on the sore spots" (27). With regard to whether journalism should act as a "fourth power", there is a general idea that it should be so with some qualifications: "Journalism can be the fourth power, but not everything can depend on us" (25); "In principle yes, but in Switzerland this is now not the case" (24); "Basically it is a matter of critical accompaniment of public affairs" (22). They keep only certain critical scepticism regarding political activity: "Surely, we try to be critical from our point of view, but departing only from the given information, showing a representation of reality within our commentaries. Starting from the information, we show a representation of reality linked to commentaries" (3).

[8] Each number assigns one or the journalists interviewed.

The Swiss journalists interviewed see their public as citizens. Almost all the interviewed journalists (90%) want to motivate the public into civic activities and political discussions: "People must have the necessary knowledge to participate in these processes" (23); "Our public are all adult citizens, trained and with a liberal vision of the world" (7); "In our company the legitimacy of our public is very important, as well as the information we can offer" (28); "Most importantly, the public must understand the information we try to transmit" (22).

Three quarters of the respondents (75%) do not think of the phenomenon of entertainment as something negative, but as an value added to the media that allows to maintain and enlarge the audience: "We have also entertainment, you cannot do only information programs because then no one will listen to you" (22); "Journalists must not ignore the phenomenon of entertainment because they cannot create only boring texts for the audience" (23); "The phenomenon of entertainment is a trend and a reality. We must mix entertainment and information" (29); "Information can also be entertaining, so it can be demonstrated that the interesting can be also entertaining" (26).

The Swiss journalists interviewed maintain a quite divided opinion within the dimension of objectivity. They avoid to be situated at the extremes of "correspondence" or "dissonance": "Copying the reality absolutely is not possible in our daily work as it is very complex to try to compress all the information into forty seconds" (20); "If you are a journalist as I understand it, it should be possible to reach a peak of objectivity so that we can know what reality is" (25).

The commonly used methods to reach objectivity are "the contrast by presenting several sources" and "consulting a second opinion": "Presenting different opinions and diverse subjectivities can help in some way to reach objectivity" (25); "A concrete method I use is when I argue with a colleague the layout of my information by asking, what do you think? or what other way would you propose?" (23).

6. 2 Switzerland: results of the analysis of context

The analysis of **Systems Level** shows that this country has a strong democracy (the first Swiss Federal Constitution was approved in 1848) based on economic and historical

stability (the country was neutral in both World Wars) and social inclusion[9]. In this context, Swiss media have an important role in the exercise of direct democracy, since media grants the audience their right to vote by providing the information necessary to form their opinion about what happens around them; supporting the media orientation for the "common good" of population, to serve as instrument of public discussion, and to represent the interests of different social, economic and political groups (HALLIN; MANCINI, 2004). This leads journalists them to maintain a certain parallelism in relation to the political parties, as shown by the strong bond between the media and political and social actors, which has endured for almost the entire twentieth century (HALLIN; MANCINI, 2004).

When one of the oldest Swiss newspaper, the Neue Zürcher Zeitung, was founded (then called Zürcher Zeitung) in 1780 (MEIER, 2004), it was produced with a classic "party press" concept in which the newspapers maintained a very close relationship with political parties, churches, social institutions, etcetera (HALLIN; MANCINI, 2004). This political parallelism is still evident in this small "Duz-Land" (BLUM, 2005, p. 125) due to the political orientation of the print media when selecting the news. However, from the 1970s on, a depoliticising effect has been appearing in the media (HALLIN; MANCINI, 2004), especially among public media, more focused on the idea of public service. Moreover, the social changes of the 1960s led to a first wave of media concentration, decimating mainly the "partisan press" that operated in small areas and, hence, encouraging the newspapers produced in large cities (MEIER, 2009, p. 592).

Switzerland is one of the countries with the greatest journalistic tradition of the world (BLUM, 2003). Proof of this is the newspaper Neue Zürcher Zeitung (NZZ), published under this name since 1821, which is the second oldest newspaper in Europe still being published. Furthermore, the development of broadcasting in Switzerland began in 1911, when the first license for radio reception was granted, and, in 1921, the first radio station began broadcasting.

Despite the long journalistic tradition, Switzerland – compared with its neighbours – can be considered a small country (MEIER; SAXER, 1992). Even though it has an area of only 41,293 km^2, its geographic features, cultural diversity and politics present a media landscape that is dense and varied (MEIER; SCHANNE, 1994). Furthermore, Swiss media

[9] Over the years there has been an increasing demand for licenses in search of improved radioelectric spectrum and better coordination to ensure the rights of access to social minorities and ensure the production of non-party, culturally responsible programs for all segments of the population (MEIER, 2004).

structure is multilingual (German, French, Italian and Romansh); as a result, the four linguistic regions also form four separate markets. The linguistic borders form the media market borders (BLUM, 2003). These physical, social, political, geographical and linguistic characteristics of the country have made the citizens disperse, making it essential to the citizens to read the newspaper to stay informed about the affairs of their community (HALLIN; MANCINI, 2004). This is another reason for the communicative maturity and awareness of the importance of access to information and the civil participation, which are strongly rooted in the Swiss population.

Media regulation, according to Hallin and Mancini (2004), joins the high level of professionalisation of journalism in Switzerland. In this country, the statutes of the profession were established relatively early. For example, in 1972 these statutes reflected the right of labour freedom and of free expression, the obligations of journalists to practice their profession in a truthful way, etc. Additionally, The Swiss Press Council was founded in 1977, becoming responsible, almost entirely, for media reports in favour of the principles of journalistic ethics that appeared in the statutes of voluntary compliance that were controlled by the Swiss Press Council itself (MEIER; SCHANNE, 1994).

After establishing the professional statutes, the requirements for the training of journalists were established. Even though today this is a secondary character rather than a legal matter, it remains important for maintaining ethical standards and professional identity (Hallin; Mancini, 2004). For all that, there is no requirement based on a strictly formal training for the journalistic profession in Switzerland. So there is an open professional field, leaving unprotected the title of Journalist (MEIER; SCHANNE, 1994).

Within the **Institutional Level**, the media enjoy a high capacity of self-regulation. From the outset, print media has been able to remain as free institutions where the State has not been able to intervene. Press freedom was proclaimed in early 1798 (BLUM, 2003) and ratified in 1830 during the "regeneration movement" in Switzerland. With the advent of broadcast media, and after of the State monopoly of these, media legislation has been restructured until the approval of the Federal Constitution of January 1st, 2000. It contains the three major laws in relation to media: Article 16 provides for freedom of opinion and information, Article 17 expresses the freedom of the media, and Article 93 regulates radio and television (MEIER, 2004).

Nowadays, in Switzerland, there is the Federal Law on Radio and Television (RTVG)[10], approved in April 1st, 2007, which has been undergoing some changes until today. On September 26th, 2014, the Parliament adopted the partial revision of the radio and television Law, now also covering the new tax on broadcast media (SCHWEIZERISCHE, [2015]). And on June 14th, 2015, the population will vote on an amendment to the Federal Law on Radio and Television because the Federal Government wants to revise the licenses and the redistribution of state subsidies (VIMENTIS, 2015).

The capacity for self-regulation has allowed a high standardisation of media processes. This is due to the consensus between standards and norms of behaviour, focusing especially on the general interest, which allows them a high autonomy (OLLER; MEIER, 2012) from social, economic, political and constitutional powers. This consensus facilitates the relationship between journalists within the hierarchy of the medium, favouring horizontal processes and collaborative work.

Regarding the editorial line, print media – private ownership – show, still today, a political orientation in the selection of news, and political parallelism is still evident. However, broadcast media – public ownership – tend to have a Social Publishing line. The main structural tension in the Swiss broadcasting system since the Swiss Broadcasting Corporation (SBC) was founded, in 1931, is in the struggle between federalists and centralists. Coupled with that, the fear of an excessive political influence in the media control postponed the introduction of television to the end of 1950, a media that, together with the radio, had the "monopoly of public services" from 1931 to 1983 (MEIER, 2004, p. 256). In 1983 a process of privatisation of the broadcast media began. Nonetheless, the acceptance of the Federal Law on Radio and Television (RTVG) in 1984, which became effective in 1992, provided citizens with the basic services of broadcasting. From this point on, a new era between politics and the Swiss media system began (MEIER, 2004), mainly in broadcast media. An example is that Switzerland was one of the first countries to make the digital transition in 2007 (CAMPOS-FREIRE, 2013).

Media in Switzerland are not market orientated because the national broadcast media are public (receiving money from state subsidies). However, the country exhibits a trend very similar to the television landscape in Europe, which includes:

[10] *Bundesgesetz über Radio und Fernsehen.*

> The gradual loss of strength and influence of public television due to the strong private competition, the greater dynamism of private television and the legal and organisational difficulties faced in the restructuring of public TV networks. [...] The SRG-SSR, which comprises twelve networks broadcasting in the four national languages, approved a strategic plan for 2010-2014 to freeze its spending and investment. (CAMPOS-FREIRE, 2013, p. 103).

Nowadays, according to the data provided by the International Comparative Legal Guide (2015), the public service managed by the SRG SSR is composed by TV and radio channels divided between the four linguistic regions that form Switzerland: two TV and four radio channels in French; three TV and six radio channels in German; two TV and three radio channels in Italian; and one radio channel in Romansh. The SRG SSR is funded through the collection of radio and television license fees ("redevance") and the display of advertisements. There is no nationwide public or private TV broadcaster. In addition to the public sector, Switzerland counts with 50 licensed regional radio stations and 14 licensed regional TV channels. These are the broadcasters with a performance mandate (some of them receive a part of radio and television license fees). There are also 42 minor radio stations and 105 minor TV channels that do not have any performance mandate and that just need to register at the competent federal office. Furthermore, the market is liberalised and open to foreign investments.

The print media is being sold mainly through sales subscription – especially in the German-speaking part of the country –, so that large national newspapers do not have to compete on newsstands on a daily basis. But nowadays the big news come from the internet, and the free newspapers maintain a positive development, while daily paid newspapers are losing readers (BLUM, 2003).

Journalists, as well as Swiss citizens, have high levels of access to information. Evidence of this is that year after year the number of individuals using smartphones to connect to the Internet increases. In February 2013, 58% of mobile phone owners had a smartphone and used it to connect to the Internet. In 2014, 23% of the Swiss population owns both a smartphone and a tablet (INTERNATIONAL COMPARATIVE..., 2015).

Regarding the **Actor Level**, at the beginning of the 21st century, women are represented in all areas of journalism, except in sport, with a percentage close to 27% (MARR et al., 2001), while in 2008, 35% of all journalists in Switzerland were women. These

findings support previous studies that found that the proportion of female journalists in the country has been increasing steadily (BONFADELLI et al., 2011).

The average age of Swiss journalists has slightly increased during the last 10 years from 41 to 43 years. The age of entrance in the profession is considerably higher. While it was at 26.5 years in 1998, it went up to 33.5 in 2008 (BONFADELLI et al., 2011). Furthermore, with regard to age, Swiss journalists have a young average age. They can be divided into three groups based on their studies: younger beginners (35 years old), established (35-44 years old) and experts (from 45 years old on) (MARR et al., 2001).

Until today, a large part of Swiss journalists do not have a specific journalism education. In the early 21st century, the number of graduates from university among journalists does not reach 44%. Furthermore, only 17% have completed specific studies in journalism at university (MARR et al., 2001).

> [During] the last 10 years with the establishment of new universities in Switzerland, the share of university-trained journalists raised to 56% in 2008. [...] Besides the university courses, there are many other ways to receive a journalistic education (BONFADELLI et al., 2011, p. 14).

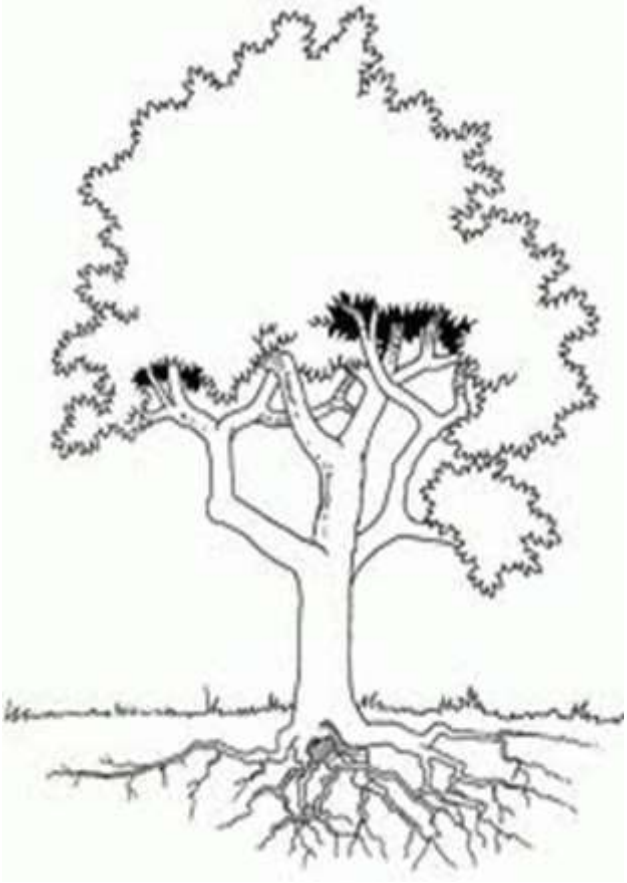
There are various differences between journalists depending on the canton and idiomatic region and on the behaviour of consumers. Moreover, some differences between journalists are reflection of their age. The younger professionals maintain a more commercial view of the profession due to 1) the decline in good working conditions even though wages still remain quite high – even if lower than their counterparts in other professions – and 2) "The media have been going through a fundamental crisis, facing enormous challenges from all sides" (BONFADELLI et al., 2011, p. 18).

In addition, journalists maintain moderate political ideas because media organisations give a fair and balanced opportunity to political actors to present their views and programs, insofar as this does not become simple advertisement. Right-wing politicians sometimes complain that journalists give centre-left politicians better access. But there is little hard evidence that such a bias exists to any substantial extent, although it is hard to find journalists who side with the Swiss Peoples Party, the right-populist party (ARMINGEON, LINDER; ZOHLNHÖFER, 2014). According to Saxer (1992), the images and ideas that Swiss

journalists have about themselves and their professional roles are based on the concept of a traditional and classic journalism whose main function is to inform.

Figure 2 - Organic multilevel analysis of the context of Journalistic culture of Switzerland

Actor Level	Upper middle class High salaries Descending good professional conditions Moderate left or right Young vs old journalists Regional and cantonal differences Non specific journalistic training High professionalisation
Institutional Level	Self-regulation High standardisation Print *vs* broadcast media Horizontal / transverse processes Political editorial line – print media Social editorial line – broadcast media Sales subscription High professionalism
Systems Level	Strong democracy Economic stability Historical and social stability Strong parallelism – print media Few schools of journalism High levels of access to information Dense and varied media landscape Long journalistic tradition Media concentration



Source: prepared by the author.

6.3 Spain: results of the analysis of dimensions

The Spanish journalists interviewed presented a tendency to assuming an interventionist role and to being opposed to the government: "Society must be well informed, and besides, the journalist must ensure that those who have power do not go too far" (18). This aspect of mistrust regarding centres of power is further stressed by 60% of the Spanish journalists. For them, journalism is primarily based on their role as

"watchdogs". According to them, media must put their cards on the table in precarious situations: "The most important role of journalists is to expose and bring to light what is hidden" (16); "A journalism that does not try to control the powers makes no sense" (33). The contact between journalists and the centres of power is determined by a relationship of mutual interests and by cynicism: "This is a fight between equals" (39).

Spanish journalists see their public as consumers due to the influence of the media market. Two thirds of the respondents in Spain feel that the choice of topics is important, as this will be decisive in "selling" their information: "You usually choose the closest topics to the everyday lives of the readers" (15); "Depending on the audience, you choose one way or another" (36). However, regarding the entertainment, there is a fairly negative generalised concept among the respondents: "Today's entertainment, in my view, leaves much to be desired" (31 and 35). But, in some cases it is necessary: "a balance between entertainment and information is kept" (37); "an attempt to provide training and information in an entertaining environment that is not boring" (36). Therefore, a significant number of interviewees distinguish between "good" and "bad" entertainment: "I work on a piece for a long time, preparing everything carefully. Yet in a sensationalist piece of the yellow press the people speaking often think they know everything and talk about issues based on unsubstantiated headlines" (30).

The Spanish journalists interviewed are quite sceptical about the philosophical concept of objectivity as an ideal in journalism. About 90% of them, when talking about this subject, made it clear that absolute objectivity as such does not exist: "At university I had a professor. The first thing he said was that objectivity does not exist. Objectivity as such does not exist because you cannot cover every angle of a situation" (32); "The absolute objectivity does not exist because a journalist should have a (positive) intention to transfer information" (30). And even that was defined as "utopia" (13 and 37) or "a lie" (18).

The most used methods to achieve objectivity are "contrasting opinions and information" and "approaching different views and perspectives": "I try to give them all points of view and then they draw their conclusions" (36); "If you give them a political point of view, we also must give another point of view" (39); "Contrasting information. Contrasting with at least three sources" (37).

6.4 Spain: results of the analysis of context

The analysis of **Systems Level** shows that in Spain, like in other Mediterranean countries, there exist few journalistic traditions. At first, the journalistic discussion was limited to small literary circles of aristocrats who exposed and discussed these ideas based on their political and literary opinions. Spain during the 19th century held a press of opinion based on these small circles of intellectuals (HALLIN; MANCINI, 2004).

Moreover, in Spain, the free market of the media was interrupted in the 1920s due to dictatorships and political instability. The Francisco Franco's dictatorship marked the end of the previous systems because in this period it established the prior censorship for the 1938 Press Law and confiscated most radio stations, newspapers and magazines that were not subject to the new regime. One example is that, since 1939, during the dictatorship of Franco, all newspapers belonged to the regime under the nickname of "Newspapers of Movement". The few "free" newspapers were subject to the State ecclesiastical governance (SCHULZE, 2005, p. 32).

The State's paternalism was accentuated with Franco. The Political Order acted in the field of communication using two different strategies: first, through tight control of all organs of the press and radio (in addition to film, books, comics, advertising, music, etc.), and second, through direct ownership and management of their own public or semi-public media.

Despite that, the Spanish State has undergone a remarkable development in recent decades, from dictatorship to democracy, which has influenced the State's relationship with the media (GUNTHER; MONTER; WERT, 2000; HALLIN; MANCINI, 2004; SCHULZE, 2005; BARRERA; VAZ, 2003). This situation has caused a strong parallelism between politics and media where this "paternal" tradition exercised by the State, according to Hallin and Mancini (2004, p. 134), sometimes has a reciprocal character to serve the media as a "shuttle" in debates and political discussions. And that has caused "The standards of political journalism [to] have worsened, as a result of politicisation and polarisation." (HUMANES; MARTÍNEZ; SAPERAS, 2013, p. 727).

The polarisation between political "right wing" and "left wing" began after the Transition period from dictatorship to democracy. There was a division of the media into two rival camps. When the PSOE (Spanish Socialist Party) began its government in 1982, the media company Prisa, which included the main radio network, publications and, over time,

television, stood at its side giving its support. The opposing rival group, formed around a more conservative point of view, were the newspapers ABC and El Mundo and the radio network COPE (HALLIN; MANCINI, 2004).

The young democracy brought with it big media corporations and strong influences from the media market. With the fledgling democracy (1978), during the Spanish Transition, a new type of press with a plural character appeared, and a press with a commercial vision and a strong market character began to arise, the first major media corporations emerged and, thanks to state aid, appeared in large numbers of new titles (SCHULZE, 2005).

Formal education in journalism was developed only after the dictatorship. With the advent of democracy in Spain, professionals were strongly influenced by the standards from American media. Thus, the American standards were adopted for the Spanish press during the young democracy. This situation produces until today in Spain a middle level in journalism education. However, today, there are no restrictions on the exercise of the profession, and more and more professionals have finished journalism at the university (SCHULZE, 2005; BOOM, 2005; BARRERA & VAZ, 2003).

At present, "The sector of the press is already suffering regression in sales with irreversibility traces. The diffusion index of the daily press in Spain fell again in 2008, as well as the sale of copies." (OLLER; MEIER, 2012, p. 154, my translation).

> [Currently] radio shows in Spain have a stable audience in quantitative terms, superior for over five years at 20 million listeners [...]. Overall, the massive monitoring of television practiced in Spain is maintaining or increasing each year. (OLLER; MEIER, 2012, p. 155, my translation).

Regarding the Institutional Level, the deregulation of the media in Spain began with the death of Franco in 1975. Since then, the activities of the press have been progressing and becoming freer. Proof of this is that currently they are protected by the laws of press freedom and free expression of the Spanish Constitution of 1978 (HALLIN; MANCINI, 2004).

Due to the process of change during the Spanish Transition, still today journalism has a middle level of professionalisation and standardisation of processes. The inconsistency and the political and economic instability create increasingly greater distrust indices that cause an increase of hierarchy in the processes of the profession.

There are differences in the ideas of journalists depending on the media ownership and type. First, there is a tendency to market orientation because newspapers in Spain are private and "[...] currently are sold almost entirely on newsstands. Only a very small percentage is sold through subscription." (DE MATEO, 2004, p. 227). Besides, a real idea of mass print media have never been established in Spain, given that the restrictive policy that Franco had developed against print media favoured television as the most important media (HALLIN; MANCINI, 2004). Although "Print media have a political editorial line in spite of the small social penetration of newspapers, these maintain a high value as social and media reference because its high quality-journalism forms the public opinion." (DE MATEO, 2004; 2005, p. 650). The public of newspapers is, as mentioned before, a minority with a particular political, social and cultural identity (OLLER; MEIER, 2012).

And second to the tendency to market orientation, there is a polarisation between public and private broadcast media. While public broadcast TV has a social editorial line – although it has been many times accused of standing beside the government in search of greater political influence on public opinion –, private broadcast TV has a commercial editorial line focused directly on the achievement of economic benefits. Public television in Spain has already lost a share of its audience, but now is also losing its structure and programming opportunities because, as Campos-Freire affirms (2013, p. 113), "[...] private organisations can also fulfil the public service broadcasting function and be more efficient than public organisations [...]".

Within the **Actor Level,** we can mention the generation of "pre-transition", "transition" and "post-transition". During the Spanish Transition "[...] a new generation of journalists different of the 'old guard' participated actively unreservedly in the implementation of the new democracy and the removal of the remains of Franco [...]" (HUMANES, 1998, p. 77-78, my translation). Canel and Piqué (1998, p. 307), based on the three categories – disseminator, interpreter and adversary – of Weaver and Wilhoit (1996), show that there was a clear difference between older journalists, who had learned their profession in an "artisanal" way at the time of the Franco regime, and younger journalists who had their first journalistic experiences during the Spanish Transition. Journalists from the "old guard" saw themselves as lawyers and interpreters, while the younger saw themselves as professionals responsible for informing based on events (CANEL; PIQUÉ, 1998, p. 317, my translation). Currently, the generation of post-transition journalists

maintains a more skeptical view about the profession due to job precariousness, low salaries, high levels of political and economic corruption and lack of access to the profession due to professional surplus – due to the large number of schools of journalism, communication, advertising and the lack of employment.

As confirmed by the *Informe Anual de la Profesión Periodística*, or Annual Report of the Journalistic Profession (ASOCIACIÓN DE LA PRENSA..., 2014), although in 2014 the unemployment has declined in 9451 people, during the crisis (from 2008 until today) 11875 jobs in the area of journalism were destroyed. "This shows that the profession was severely hurt by the crisis, entering an 'alarmingly poor state'", according to Del Riego[11] at the presentation of this report in December 16th, 2014 in Madrid. In addition, derived from these circumstances, 81% of Spanish journalists recognise that there has been a deterioration in the quality standards of the journalistic product (GÓMEZ-MOMPART; GUTIÉRREZ-LOZANO; PALAU-SAMPIO, 2015).

According to the sociodemographic characteristics of journalists in Spain, it can be said of journalism that it is a young profession, because during the last decade of the 20th Century the "average age [...] was below 35 years" (CANEL; PIQUÉ, 1998, p. 301). Twelve years later, in 2003, the Spanish journalists were somewhat younger, with the average age of 34 years old (RODRÍGUEZ, 2003). In 2007, according to data from the Asociación de la Prensa de Madrid (2007, p. 55), the "average age was between 25 and 35 years". In general, this is a profession where the average age is not very high if compared to other professions.

Regarding gender, despite the fact that it is a profession fairly balanced, since 52% of journalists are men and 48% are women[12] (ASOCIACIÓN DE LA PRENSA..., 2014), in September of 2014, 64% of jobless journalists were women and 36% were men.

In 2014, 82% of the journalists exercising the profession has completed an university degree. Only 8,6% of journalists do not have university studies. Despite the increase in training in journalism, 10% of the contracted journalists have seen their salary reduced more than 30%, while among autonomous journalist the loss suffered was of 60% (ASOCIACIÓN DE LA PRENSA..., 2014). This situation, according to Sánchez-García, Campos-Domínguez and Berrocal-Gonzalo (2015, p. 204, my translation), stimulates "the academic

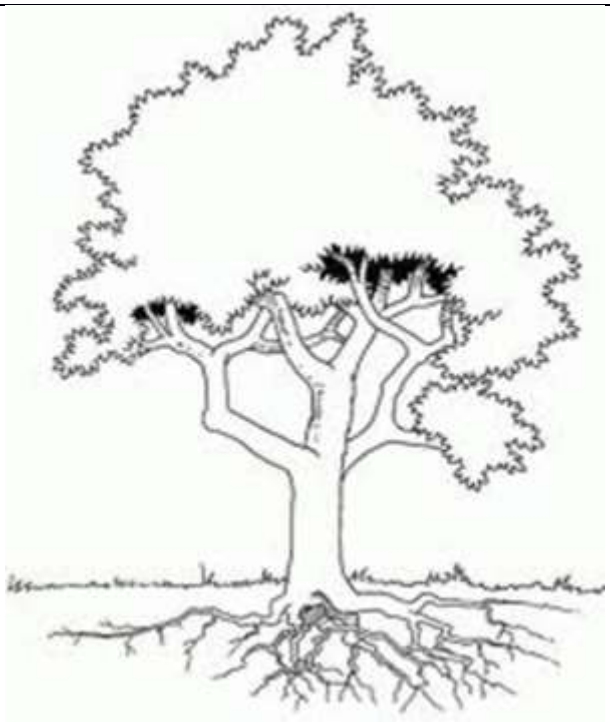
[11] Carmen del Riego is the president of the *Asociación de la Prensa de Madrid* (APM).
[12] Although the percentage of men in positions of responsibility in media and communication is higher than the percentage of women.

debate already addressing the need to link the new journalistic profiles with the training/education needs of 21st century journalists".

The analysis of context of the journalistic culture in Spain shows that:

Figure 3 - Organic multilevel analysis of the context of Journalistic culture in Spain.

Actor Level	Middle class Low salaries Generation of transition and post-transition Young profession Regional differences Specific journalistic training
Institutional Level	Deregulation Middle standardisation Vertical processes Political editorial line – print media Social editorial line – public broadcast Commercial editorial line – private broadcast media Middle professionalisation
Systems Level	Young democracy State paternalism Strong market influences Political and economic corruption Right and left polarisation Labour precariousness Middle level of training in journalism Recent dictatorships Big media corporations Low journalistic tradition



Source: prepared by the author.

6.5 Ecuador: results of the analysis of dimensions

The Ecuadorian journalists interviewed believe they are neutral and impartial professionals, 55% of them consider that their main function is to give accurate and balanced information. Therefore, they see themselves based on concepts such as neutrality, accuracy and approximation to reality: "The journalist is a storyteller, when we tell a story, we should give actual information [...] not distort the truth" (5); "I mean, the truth. Informing is always trying to tell the truth" (12).

They play the role of a diffuser, but with a mobilising and adversary twist. Nearly half (45%) of the respondents believes that acting as watchdogs of power is an important function. By contrast, 32% believe that they should never be watchdogs, and 23% that they should have different functions. Concerning the two latter positions, which are similar, it can be found that more than half of the respondents (55%) believes that exercising the role of watchdog or "adversary" is not a function to be included primarily in their professional practice.

It was found that 68% of the journalists interviewed maintained a cordial relationship with the centres of power, being kind, but without intimacy, to preserve neutrality: "A distant cordiality. I learned that you have to be close to the sources that give information, but be far away enough to question them" (18); "A relationship of respect, not trust. One thing is for you to have a relationship with your source, and another is a personal relationship of friendship" (16); "I always use 'ústed'[13], it's a way of setting limits. Another thing is not going out with them anywhere" (23).

The journalists interviewed believe that they must inform citizens and that there exists a low influence from media market. Most of the journalists interviewed have a high sense of social responsibility. They perceive their public as citizens, both in public and communal, as in private media, with a little nuance regarding private media, which give more value to market research and its targets. Therefore, private media tend to see its public as consumers: "In private media it is essential, we measure the behaviour of audiences, schedules, ratings and certain frequencies too. This is fundamental: we work for them and depend on them" (12); "We are in a globalised world, a world that turns around consumption; it is definitely of paramount importance" (24); "I think it's important to know the audience, to know the profile they have and then to structure the information they need" (27).

Objectivity as a philosophical concept is not a goal, only 3% of the respondents believe that objectivity is very important in Ecuadorian journalism, or that objectivity is the main goal to be achieved in their work.

According to 57% of the interviewees, the most used method to achieve objectivity and the main strategy for contrasting information is the "plurality of sources": "I try to put all the actors in the story [...], trying to show the public the different points of view so that

[13] Formal 'you' in Spanish.

they make their own conclusions" (13); "The fact of seeking both sides. I try to do this in the most active manner, that there is more than one source, and you can compare what one person says" (8); "First, I have the information there, I contrast it, I go to sources [...] and seek a second opinion to balance" (31).

6.6 Ecuador: results of the analysis of context

The analysis of the **Systems Level** of Ecuador shows that this country, according to the Democracy Index of the Economist Intelligence Unit (2012), was ranked 87 (out of 167), with a score of 5.78 of Democracy points (on a scale of 0-10), which puts it in the category of "hybrid regime". Some causes that could explain this classification are the strong interventionism and paternalism of the State. In addition, the polarisation between neoliberal economic policies (last three decades) and the contrary reactions against these have led to a rise in discriminatory attitudes, increasing problems of poverty, social inequity, etc. This has led to diametrically opposed economic policies based on socialism. On the one hand, late in the last century in most countries of Latin America, the neoliberal thinking was introduced as an ideal. On the other hand, the first decade of this century was characterised by a bipolar trend where there was a relative consensus on the desirability of maintaining liberal economic policies, as in the case of Chile and Brazil (BURGES, 2010; CANCINO; CHRISTENSEN, 2010), and another opposite trend based on social policy, with the examples of Venezuela, Bolivia and Ecuador, among others.

The economic and political instability has caused some effects such as the social individualism – the main problem of democracies in Latin America and Ecuador is the culture of transgressor individualism, which pervades everyday society's sociability and all the institutions. The collective expression of this transgressive individualism is that social movements and political institutions are vectors of both progress and delays in the development of democracy (OLLER; CHAVERO, 2015).

The journalistic culture of Ecuador in the last decades of the twentieth century was defined by the privileges of economic powers "[...] taking advantage of privatisation processes, political instability, liberal legislation and the diversification brought about by new technologies." (CHECA-GODOY, 2011, p. 126, my translation). The last one is due to the

technological asynchronism caused by a high rate of asynchronicity and differences in access to information by the population (OLLER; CHAVERO, 2015).

In 2007 Rafael Correa became president of Ecuador; his first big bet was the approval of the new Constitution (ECUADOR, 2008) that brought the new Law of Communication (ECUADOR, 2013). The project was discussed at the National Assembly during 4 years, what has increased the level of tension in certain sectors of the journalistic profession and the confrontation between the president and the media. One of the criticisms of the final text was the inclusion of the figure of "media lynching" (Art. 26) and the creation, first, of the Council of Regulation and Development of Information and Communication[14] and, second, of the Superintendence of Information and Communication[15], entities whose creation had not been discussed in the process (ALMEIDA, 2014).

Despite government efforts to (1) strengthen public institutions in communication issues; (2) reorganise the media market for the development of the public and community media supported by the principles of universality, diversity, independence and specificity (UNITED NATIONS..., 2011), and (3) equitably distribute radio frequency spectrum in which 33% is for the public media, 33% for the private media and 34% for community media, nowadays, the media distribution in Ecuador, according to the Register of Media CORDICOM (2014), is 91% for private media, 5% for public and 4% for community media. Hence, as Abad (2009) states, we find a journalistic culture formed by private media. Proof of this is that in the latest report on professionalisation of journalism presented by the CORDICOM in September, 2014, of the 5619 journalists interviewed, 4049 (72%) work in private media.

This professionalisation process in Ecuador entails the certification of occupational profiles[16] of people engaged in communication[17], a number which currently stands at 17,000 in all areas of communication[18]. The CORDICOM, with SENESCYT[19], SECAP[20] and SETEC[21], has made during the second half of 2014 a process of:

[14] CORDICOM (Consejo de Regulación y Desarrollo de la Información y la Comunicación).
[15] SUPERCOM (Superintendencia de la Información y la Comunicación).
[16] There is a rating of 6 categories of occupational profiles: 1) Presenter for broadcaster for radio and / or television; 2) Plan worker of TV; 3) Photographer of media and multimedia; 4) Technical coordinator for community media programming; 5) News cameraman and 6) Producer of content for community media.
[17] The CORDICOM conducted a nationwide survey from July 3rd to 17th, 2014 on the level of training for communicators, journalists and employees connected and related with communication. Available a: >http://www.cordicom.gob.ec/caminemos-juntos-hacia-la-profesionalizacion/>. Acessed: Sep. 21, 2014.
[18] According to data provided by CORDICOM. Available at: <http://www.telegrafo.com.ec/politica/item/ecuador-tiene-17-mil-personas-que-trabajan-en-el-area-de-la-comunicacion.html>. Acessed: Dec. 09, 2014.
[19] Secretaría Nacional de Educación Superior, Ciencia, Tecnología e Innovación. Available at: <http://www.educacionsuperior.gob.ec/>. Acessed: Feb. 03, 2015.
[20] Servicio Ecuatoriano de Capacitación Profesional. Available at: <http://www.secap.gob.ec/>. Acessed: Feb. 03, 2015.

Public, documented and formal recognition of demonstrated capacity by workers, based on the evaluation of their competence in their job performance – these are not necessarily subject to the completion of an educational process [...]. (OLLER; CHAVERO, 2014, my translation).

On the **Institutional Level**, we can appreciate the low capacity for self-regulation of the Ecuadorian media system due to the policy of regulation of President Rafael Correa in the area of communication. On the one hand, this has been supported by international organisations such as Reporters Without Borders (REPORTEROS SIN FRONTERAS, 2010) that have opted for a legislation in Ecuador to ensure a better balance between the different media types, conferring greater visibility to some sectors of society. On the other hand, this also clarifies that this requirement should not be confused with a media regulation based on coercive control of the activity of journalists. Agencies like CORDICOM and SUPERCOM that exercise functions of supervision, monitoring, regulation, control and external sanction of the media, have led the media to enter into a process of progressive loss of capacity, of autonomy and of self-regulation (OLLER; CHAVERO, 2015).

This regulation is linked to a restructuration of the media system based on the strengthening of the public and governmental media through the development of the Media Public Service and the creation of the: Radio Pública de Ecuador (2008); channel Ecuador TV (2008); newspapers El Telégrafo[22] (2008), El Ciudadano (2008) PP, El Verdadero (2010); and the Agencia Nacional de Noticias de Ecuador y Sudamérica – Andes – (2009). Furthermore addition, there is the strong proposal of strengthening the community media[23].

The editorial line and the vertical processes define the structure and organisation of the media. The supervisors or chief editors exert a high influence on the development of the work of journalists – as more than half (54.8%) of the respondents affirm in the interviews of the Journalistic Culture of Ecuador (JCE) Project. Furthermore, there exists a general consensus on the idea of hierarchical verticality within the Ecuadorian media newsrooms; even the existence of an editorial line to follow is imposed by senior or chief editors (OLLER; CHAVERO, 2015). This situation of high control within the media is joined by the low professionalism in the sector, understood not only as the level of education of journalists,

[21] Secretaría Técnica de Capacitación y Formación Profesional. Available at: <http://www.secretariacapacitacion.gob.ec/>. Acessed: Feb. 03, 2015.
[22] It became a public company in 2015.
[23] According to data provided by the Superintendency of Telecommunications, in 2010 there were only two community radio stations in Ecuador and no television (in Checa-Godoy, 2011).

but also as its degree of autonomy, associationism or intrusions in the exercise of the profession (OLLER; CHAVERO, 2015).

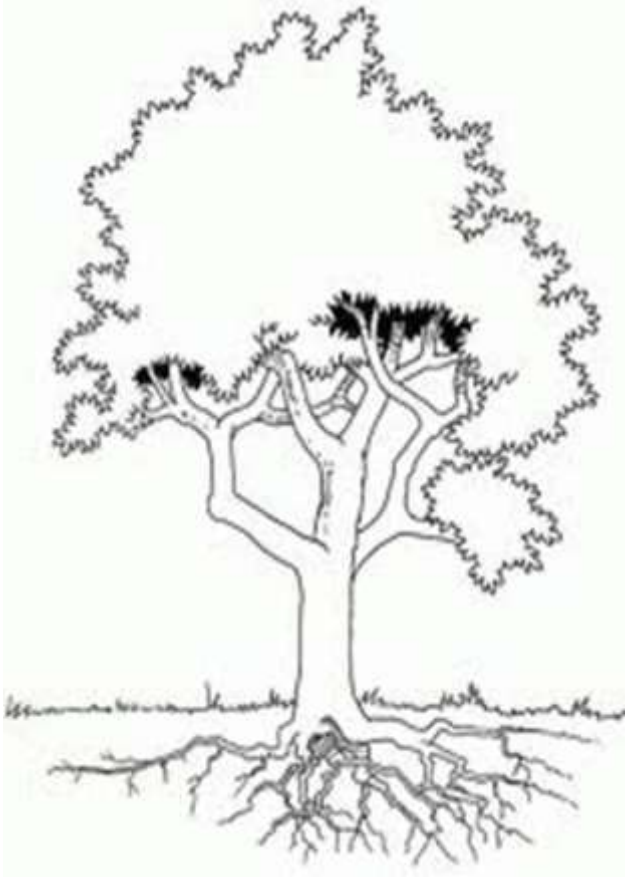
Within the **Actor Level**, we can regard the journalists in Ecuador as a "new middle class", because, despite the salary being low, it has increased in December, 2012 by Government order. If in the 1990s the minimum wage established for Ecuadorian journalists was $ 99 a month (72.4% of the sample stated to earn less than 400 dollars; 17.3% between 400 and 800 dollars a month) (VIRTUE, 1994), at present, 48% have a wage between 340 and 650 dollars a month, 18% between 651 and 900 dollars, and 15% of journalists declared to earn less than the minimum wage in Ecuador ($ 341) (CORDICOM, 2014).

The strong polarisation and low levels of trust among professionals reflect the confrontational stance that defines the journalistic culture of Ecuador (OLLER; CHAVERO, 2015). Furthermore, these different professional ideologies are heightened due to the difference between the urban and provincial journalists, both in access as in interventions in the processes and decisions.

The professional competences are linked to the idea of professional training. In this country there is lack of consensus among "empirical" journalists – with more experience – and "graduates" (OLLER; CHAVERO, 2015). The classic debate continues in the line of defining who can call themselves a journalist; the ones who graduated in Journalism at University, the empirical professionals with over a decade of work experience in the media or the people whose main source of income comes from the media.

Figure 4 - Organic multilevel analysis of the context of Journalistic culture of Ecuador

Actor Level	New middle class Low salaries / salary increase Polarisation City vs province
Institutional Level	Non self-regulation Public /private /community Vertical processes Editorial line for or against the government Low professionalisation
Systems Level	Hybrid system (democracy) New law of communication (2013) Strong interventionist state State paternalism / tension Neocapitalism *vs* Socialism Professional training: Title *vs* Empirical Instability Social individualism Technological asynchronism Current structure of the media in Ecuador: 91% Private, 5% Public and 4% Community media



Source: prepared by the author.

7 Conclusion

The outcomes of this comparative study show an evolution and a complementary viewpoint of the transcultural comparative media research approach, where the journalistic culture of each country is not a subordinate culture of other Western countries, with its own media flows and journalistic products and practices. As Couldry (2012) maintains, media cultures are the result of territorial or deterritorialised thickenings or amalgamations. For these reasons, this study of objectivity and professional views focuses on – as stated by authors like Cook (2006), Sparrow (2006), Hamilton (2004), Patterson (2000), Oller & Meier (2012) – the study of the "micro/meso/macro influence factors". Similarly, other

researchers as Esser (2004), Hanitzsch (2007), Mellado et al. (2012) and Oller (2014) have emphasised the analysis of cultural roles, values and norms.

The Swiss journalists interviewed do not act as watchdogs, but have a critical position towards the centres of power because in Switzerland there is a mature democracy with high social participation (strong concept of citizens). This attitude is due to the journalistic tradition that is based on opinion and the parallelism between politics and media, especially print media. However, today, journalists tend towards a neutral and passive role, keeping enough distance to sources and information as not to influence the story with their opinions and feelings.

This situation causes a divided opinion within the dimension of objectivity. We find two opposite ways within media. The journalists within print media maintain a more active attitude – with a tendency to opinion –, while journalists in broadcast media are more neutral and objective, since the national media are public, therefore thinking that they have to be oriented to the citizens. In both cases, the objectivity as an ideal is not the main goal, using commonly the "contrast by presenting several sources" and the "consulting a second opinion" as methods to achieve objectivity.

Older journalists see their public as citizens and think that their profession and the Swiss society do not need great changes. Nevertheless, young journalists have a slight tendency and orientation towards the market due to the fact that they are more aware of changes that occur in the media related to internet communication, social media networks, increased labour precariousness and the new role of citizens within journalism.

Spanish journalists, due to the short democratic period that Spain currently lives (36 years), still reflect a journalism that tries to leave behind the servility of the media during the dictatorship. The freedom of press and expression that the media currently experiences allows a greater plurality of views. However, in recent years, journalists have been taking an interventionist role, opposed to the government and to other centres of power, due to the high level of corruption (political and economic). Hence, the relationship between journalists and politicians is based on cynicism and lack of trust. In spite of that, Spanish journalists nurture a relatively short distance with politicians. This situation shows the opportunistic aspect of journalists in the country.

From the economic point of view, due to the current crisis, the labor precariousness and the economic policy of media companies, journalists see their public as consumers. The

influence from the media in this perception is fundamental, because, although they consider that they should provide information to citizens, they are aware of the economic needs of the company. This is reflected in the support of the contents of entertainment. This opposition between "good" and "bad" entertainment shows that journalists consider it necessary to attract the public and incomes, but try, from an ethical point, to avoid extreme or empty sensationalism.

Although they study at university, the traditional ideas of objectivity – remember that more than three-quarters of journalists in Spain are licensed in Journalism or Communication at the University –, they are quite skeptical about the philosophical concept of objectivity as an ideal in journalism. They tend towards subjectivism and the practical idea of objectivity – contrasting opinions and information and approaching different views and perspectives – because there are not time or resources in the newsrooms for philosophical dilemmas; thus rejecting objectivity as an ideal.

In the end, instability and crisis are causing a process of change within the structure of journalistic culture in Spain, producing a reduction of the level of professionalisation of journalism and the professionalism of journalists.

Ecuadorian journalists see themselves as neutral and impartial professionals, where the role of watchdog or adversary is not a function to be included primarily in their professional practice. They see themselves as diffusers (only the journalists from private media are opposed to the government – polarisation) that must inform the citizen, but with a mobilising and adversary accent. The reason that leads them to maintain this attitude could be related to, firstly, the current strong process of democratic awareness and the idea of "democratisation of communication" and, secondly, to the rules of media, the editorial line, the vertical structure, the deontological codes and, mainly, the sanctions from the State. Hence, journalists perceive a low level of influences from media market due to the strong influences of the state.

Ecuador has a paradigmatic media structure that highlights the strengthening of public institutions in communication issues, the reorganisation of the media market for the development of the public and community media and the increasing investment of the public on government and institutional advertising in the media. Despite the government efforts, even today (2015) over 90% of the media are private and nearly 75% of journalists are working for them.

The process of professionalisation of journalism carried out by CORDICOM causes that journalists try to justify their level of professionalism through traditional concepts such as objectivity. But this idea of objectivity is more practical, using methods such as contrasting information or the use of plural sources, because they do not see the philosophical concept as a goal.

The results contradict, somehow, the conclusions formulated by Hanitzsch et al. (2011), exposing that the interventionists role is, generally, assumed by journalists of emergent societies and transitional democracies. In the case of Ecuador, perhaps due to government control and the fear of possible sanctions, journalists maintain an attitude between submissive and slightly vindictive. However, in Spain – an established democracy, but in risk – there is, in certain sectors, a clear tendency to interventionism due to the crisis that exists since 2008. However, the case of Switzerland is clearly an example of professional stability, where, as Bonfadelli et al. (2011) affirm, many media managers believe that the only way for the traditional media to survive is to refocus on the traditional tasks and duties of the media – and journalists.

These results show that beyond the political (established, weak or hybrid democracy) or economic (capitalism or socialism) regime in a country, the perception that journalists have about these professional role depends of the moment of strength or weakness of these systems.

This comparative analysis of Switzerland, Spain and Ecuador offers a contextualised view of the cultural diversity of journalism of each country. Despite sharing characteristics, their journalistic cultures are clearly defined by historical processes, structures, systems, etc. In consequence, each of the three countries present a "unique journalistic culture", beyond the "Western Monocentric model" or the bipolar and reductionist "Centre-Periphery model".

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Comparação entre as culturas jornalísticas da Suíça, Espanha e Equador: os efeitos das influências de contexto na percepção dos jornalistas do seu papel profissional e da ideia de objetividade

Resumo

O número de pesquisas comparativas globais sobre cultura jornalística está aumentando. Mais e mais as amostras de países para comparação estão colocando culturas não ocidentais no centro da pesquisa. Neste artigo analiza-se a autopercepção de papéis profissionais e a ideia de objetividade de jornalistas suíços, espanhóis e equatorianos. Para estudar essas dimensões utiliza-se trabalho de campo baseado em entrevistas de

profundidade com 70 jornalistas de 15 mídias nos três países e uma análise em diversos níveis das influências do contexto. O objetivo é determinar a autopercepção dos jornalistas em relação aos seus papéis enquanto profissionais e a ideia de objetividade enquanto ideal e método para reportar uma história dentro de cada contexto. Os resultados mostram que jornalistas espanhóis tendem a assumir um papel intervencionista e se posicionam contra o governo. Jornalistas suíços tendem a ser mais passivos e objetivos o que os espanhóis e, mesmo não considerando a si mesmos como cães de guarda, assumem uma posição crítica em relação aos centros de poder. E, finalmente, os jornalistas equatorianos acreditam que são profissionais neutros e imparciais, que devem informar os cidadãos, e que a objetividade, enquanto conceito filosófico, não é um objetivo da profissão.

Palavras-chave

Cultura jornalística. Papéis profissionais. Estudos comparativos. Suíça. Espanha. Equador.

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