

Análisis contextual de estudios comparativos sobre culturas periodísticas intermedias alrededor del mundo. El Modelo Orgánico Multinivel (MOM).

Contextual analysis in comparative studies of intermediate journalistic cultures around the world. The Organic Multilevel Model (OMM).

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Resumen

Durante la última década se han consolidado los estudios comparativos sobre cultura periodística más allá de un solo país o de estudios occidentales. Debido a la tendencia global, los investigadores en el campo están buscando nuevas herramientas y estrategias para estudiar la situación particular que encuentran los periodistas dentro de sus culturas en cada país o región. Para analizar las condiciones en que los periodistas viven y trabajan, este artículo presenta los modelos multinivel como métodos ideales para el análisis de las influencias contextuales en el periodismo para estudios comparativos. Estos modelos contrastan los puntos de vista de los periodistas dentro de sus culturas profesionales, con base en sus situaciones personales y profesionales dentro de las redacciones, las influencias

Abstract

The last decade has seen the consolidation of the comparative studies of journalistic culture beyond one single country or western journalism studies. Due to this global tendency, researchers in this field are looking for new tools and strategies to study the particular situation that journalists encounter within their journalistic cultures in each country or region around the world. To analyze the surroundings or conditions in which journalists live and work, this article presents the multilevel models as ideal methods of analysis of the contextual influences in journalism for comparative studies. These models contrast the points of view of journalists within their journalistic cultures based on their personal and professional situations within the newsrooms and the contextual influences from their media and the most important systems - economic, political,

contextuales desde sus medios, y los sistemas más importantes. Específicamente, se presenta el Modelo Orgánico Multinivel, basado en los conceptos de análisis orgánico y sostenido por las ideas de dinamismo, cambio y heterogeneidad, como modelo ideal para definir el periodismo dentro de las llamadas culturas periodísticas intermedias.

Palabras Clave:

periodismo, estudios
comparativos, culturas
periodísticas intermedias, modelo
orgánico multinivel

social, cultural, educational, media, etc. - and the technology of their countries. Specifically, this work presents the *Organic Multilevel Model* (OMM), based on the concept of organic analysis and supported by the ideas of dynamism, change and heterogeneity, as ideal model to define the journalism within the so-called *intermediate journalistic cultures*.

Keywords

journalism, comparative studies,
intermediate journalistic cultures,
organic multilevel model

1. Introduction

This article presents the Organic Multilevel Model (OMM), a method for the analysis of the contextual influences of journalists through the application of multilevel models (McQuail, 1983; Ettema & Whitney, 1982; Chaffee & Berger, 1987; Weischenberg, 1992, 1995; Shoemaker & Reese, 1991, 2016; Esser; 1998; Donsbach, 2000; Reese, 2001, 2007; Hanitzsch

et al., 2010; Oller & Meier, 2012) in comparative studies around the world. The last decade has seen the expansion of comparative studies of journalistic culture beyond those simply considering a single country or western journalism (Curran & Park, 2000; Ramaprasad & Rahman, 2006; Wasserman & de Beer, 2009; Hepp & Couldry, 2009; Shaw, 2009; Hanitzsch et. al., 2010, 2011; Mellado et al., 2012; Hallin & Mancini, 2012; Josephi, 2015; Hanusch, 2015; de Beer et al., 2015; Oller, 2015). These studies around the globe show that the concepts journalists have within their journalistic cultures are based on their own personal/professional situations, the contextual influences from the newsrooms where they work and the most important systems - economic, political, social, cultural, educational, media, etc. - and the technology within these countries.

Therefore, this article proposes the application of the OMM, based on the concept of organic analysis of journalism and supported by the ideas of dynamism, change and heterogeneity, as ideal method to define and analyze the journalism in countries denominated as having *intermediate journalistic cultures*. Those, according to Oller & Barredo (2013, p. 45), are "groups of countries that share certain situational characteristics: they are identified because they are developing countries or have different political regimes to democratic ones".

The structure of the OMM changes the concept of superimposed levels from previous models where journalists are at the center of a structure with a similar configuration to an onion. This new organic structure of analysis describes forms, methods and patterns of journalistic cultures as living systems, stressing the interdependence of the component parts, as well as its differentiation. Even more so in intermediate journalistic

cultures, where the cultural synthesis of colonial and precolonial elements, of archaic heritage and modern lives, defies the dualisms of dominant social science paradigms that identifies nonwestern cultures with the past and Western culture with the future (Bredin, 1993).

In the configuration of OMM in the shape of a tree, the *roots* (Systems level) are the structuring systems on which a country is based; the *trunk* (Institutional level) symbolizes media as institutions and organizations; and the *branches* and *leaves* (Actor level) represent the journalists as individuals.

2. Analysis of influence levels in journalism

Throughout the history of research in communication and journalism, numerous scholars have tried to understand the behavior of journalists and the (in)direct relationship between them and the different actors and contextual influences. Through empirical observations, they have constructed their theoretical models in an attempt to reduce the distance between the theoretical construct and the observable phenomena. Fiske (1971), in an effort to resolve this problem, advocates not only using multiple operationalizations of each construct, but also purposefully manipulating operationalization to span different theoretical perspectives and modes of assessment. At this point multilevel models are needed for the analysis of data that has a hierarchical or clustered structure (Hox & Mass, 2006).

The Organic Multilevel Model, which is presented in this article, is based on previous theoretical and practical studies in journalism that tried to incorporate the contextual analysis in their works. The first prominent proposals appeared in the 1980s in works by McQuail (1983), an author

who developed five levels of analysis – international organisations, social level, institutional level, organisational level and individual level – in relation to the levels of influence from society, mass media, and audiences or users of the media; and Chaffee and Berger (1987) with their model of *levels of analysis*, who put forward three levels of analysis: individual, organisation, and legal as well as economic conditions and other institutions related to the information system.

In the 1990s, Shoemaker and Reese (1991) drew up their *hierarchy of influences* model based on the media content into five layers or levels across a *continuum* stretching from micro to macro. These authors take as an example the first work within this area by David Manning White (1950) and Warren Breed (1955) discussing the influences on content in their examinations of social control in the newsroom, and the works of Gans (1979) and Gitlin (1978). The *hierarchy of influences* model has been revised several times by the authors (Reese, 2001, 2007; Shoemaker & Reese, 2014; Reese & Shoemaker, 2016).

Weischenberg (1992) through his *journalistic paradigm* represented journalists as individual actors in the centre of a circular formation within his model of *zwiebelschalen* (onion skins). Reus (1998) added to the Weischenberg proposal the mutual influence between journalists and media systems. In 1993, McQuail and Windahl classified the factors influencing newsrooms and journalistic work: the audience, the owners, the social and political institutions, the advertisers, the content providers and the agencies. Voakes (1997) focuses on social influences on ethical decisions of journalists, proposing a hierarchy of influences in which he assigns relative value to each level: individual, small group, organization, competition, occupation, extramedia, and law.

At the end of this decade, Esser (1998) presented his model *mehrebenenmodell* (multilevel model) to use it in comparative international studies, structuring it in four levels: social sphere and the historical and cultural conditions of society; media structure and its rules; institutional sphere and the profile, the structure and the image of journalism and media; and journalists, their values, ideas and professional roles. This author, almost two decades later, referred again to the importance of comparative studies, because "there is little empirical evidence in support of such a global system, and comparativists have learned to be much more precise about the concrete mechanisms that connect and influence specific sets of cases under specific conditions" (Esser, 2013, p. 123).

The 21st century has been characterised by the continuity in the implementation of multilevel models in the contextual studies of journalism, but increasingly applied to international comparative analysis. The noteworthy authors are, first, Donsbach (2000, 2008), who established four levels of analysis - subject or individual, the profession, the institution, and the social sphere; second, Whitney, Sumpter and McQuail (2004) and Ettema and Whitney (2007), who based their models in a structure in three levels – individual, institutional and organisational; third, Grossberg, Wartella, Whitney and Wise (2006), proposed an analysis based on levels through the metaphor of the *ladder of abstraction*, where products from the media present a creation at an individual level of the organisation of the media and media industries, and the media together constitute an institution, and that, ultimately, these are influenced by the institutional systems and the culture; fourth, Preston and Metykova (2009) presented a model based on five areas of

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influence – individual factors, organisational elements, media routine, and, the last two that encompass larger systems that include the cultural / ideological and political / economic systems; fifth, the *conceptual model* of Hanitzsch and coll. (2010), that established, based on empirical evidence from the *Worlds of Journalism project*, a structure ranging from micro to macro: micro level of the journalist as an individual; meso level of the organisations such as the newsrooms of the media; and macro level of the political, economic and social systems that interact with the media system; sixth, Oller and Meier (2012), who proposed the *integrated multilevel model* structured in three levels – actor, institution and systems – in which they highlight the interplay between the actors and the different contextual levels; and, finally, the review of the model of *hierarchy of influences* by Shoemaker and Reese (2016), stressing the importance of ethnographic and quantitative analysis.

Table 1: Synopsis of multilevel models

AUTHORS	Individuals	Media routines	Media organisation	Media structure	Society (Politics & Economy)	Culture & Ideology
McQuail (1983)	X	X	X	X	X	
Ettema & Whitney (1982)	X	X		X		
Chaffee & Berger (1987)	X		X		X	
Shoemaker & Reese (1991)	X	X	X		X	X
McQuail & Windahl (1993)			X			
Weischenberg (1992,1995)	X	X	X		X	
Voakes (1997)	X		X		X	X
Reus (1998)	X	X	X		X	
Esser (1998)	X	X		X	X	
Whitney et al. (2004)	X			X		
Grossberg et al. (2006)	X	X	X	X		X
Donsbach (2000,2008)	X	X	X			
Preston & Metykova (2009)	X	X	X	X	X	X
Hanitzsch et al. (2010)	X	X	X	X	X	X

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Oller & Meier (2012)	X	X	X	X	X	X
Shoemaker & Reese (2014, 2016)	X	X	X	X	X	X

Source: Prepared by the author from Hanitzsch (2009: 156) and Oller & Chavero (2016: 147).

3. Comparative studies of intermediate journalistic cultures around the world

A few decades ago, some scholars noted, on one hand, the need to study the different journalistic cultures beyond a single country, a proposal that brought with it the progressive consolidation of comparative studies in journalism. Due to the difficulties in explaining clearly some concepts and aspects within a single national context, researchers moved to analysis across national boundaries, based on comparative variables and contextual analysis.

The main challenge for research in this field is the complexity of theorizing global and local phenomena within a particular model. Furthermore, some communicational and journalistic processes and contextual influences between countries are more related to others, especially in some particular regions such as Latin America, Asia, Africa, or others considered within the global South. For example, Shoemaker & Cohen (2006) observed that news has a number of common patterns across nations, rooted in socio-biological needs. Likewise, according to Reese (2007), within the comparative project it is important to begin finding some empirical generalizations, rather than simply replicating case studies country by country, suggesting some difficulties for conceptualizing journalism internationally.

On the other hand, understanding the different “types” or “models” of journalism around the globe requires knowledge of other perspectives away from the traditional concept of Western journalism. In this sense, Clifford (1988) proposed the notion of “emergent” cultures and the rehabilitation of the culture concept for the conditions of postmodern existence, rejecting the Eurocentric assumptions upon which the belief in vanishing cultural diversity and monolithic cultural homogeneity are often based. According to Bredin (1993), he is critical of the way in which these narratives place the “other” in a context of “present-becoming-past”.

The first steps, taken by these scholars in the area of the comparative studies in journalism during the last decades of the of the XX century, have been consolidated in our days through some theoretical and technological guidelines, as state Oller & Barredo (2013) referring to the study of intermediate journalistic cultures: (1) the theory of journalistic culture has been created with a simplification of current data bases, (2) a theoretical base has been provided which allows the elimination of the concept of “universality”; (3) the concept of national or regional culture has been taken as an understanding basis of journalism; (4) the comparison of different journalistic cultures in an international level is the key to understanding the results obtained from a specific journalistic culture; (5) the international comparative analysis offers a great diversity and abundance of practical knowledge; (6) the analysis of the elements which configure the international comparative research in communication also benefits the process of transnational diffusion and the process of political, informative, economic and technological integration; and (7) through the comparison of how journalists develop their tasks in different media environments, it is possible to clarify and, in a certain form,

generalize the theories which have been drawn according to determined contexts.

Journalism, media and journalists around the world are presented as a challenge to scholars in their attempt to summarize the defining characteristics of journalistic practices, the media operations and the cultural norms in countries without research tradition in journalism. During the last three decades more and more research has been appearing which analyzes some "peripheral" countries and region. Without trying to make a complete list of all research carried out in journalism in countries and regions considered as global South, we present some examples in this chapter.

Metyková and Waschková Císarová (2009) proposed an explanation of political transformation in countries in the center and east of Europe, regions where the totalitarian practice of the new political elite has exerted increasing pressure on the media (Bajomi-Lazar, 2008) and has restricted freedom of expression (Baysha & Hallahan, 2004; Willard, 2003, 2007; Grynko & Tsetsura, 2009). For this reason, in countries such as Russia and the Ukraine the relationship between the media and political power is based on extreme distrust (Voltmer, 2006). Bajomi-Lázár (2008) and Sparks and Reading (1998) assert that in these regions the transition of the media is in a state of transformation of basic institutions towards a democratic model. Anikina, Dobek-Ostrowska & Nygren (2013, 2015) analyzes the values, ideals and autonomy of journalists in Poland, Russia and Sweden. In Poland and Russia, the journalists today are young and, at least in Poland, many of them lack professional education. Additionally, convergence, fragmentation and commercialization there are global trends in the three media systems.

Asia is one of the areas in the world with a high degree of cultural differences and, therefore, a more difficult place to be a journalist (Hanusch, 2009; Xu, 2005). According to Xu (2005) Asian values are based on piety, hard work, community-nation above individual interests, responsibility, rights about education, social stability, harmony, and respect for authority. The interrelationship of these areas produces a type of media system within the Asian journalism different to the Western culture. Cao (2005) concludes that in China most of the press is part of the propaganda apparatus of the Party Publicity Inc. In this regard, Guo and Chen (1997), Zhao (1998), and Huang (2001), confirm that the Chinese media is composed of two main media groups: Propagandistic and commercial.

The journalistic culture of the Pacific Islands was assessed by Hau'ofa (1993) under the approach of the so-called Pacific Way. Societies like Malaysia and Polynesia are still very underdeveloped, and the concepts of domination and subordination were still deeply rooted in the population. In Australia, Hanusch (2013) analyses the impact of cultural values on Māori journalists' professional views, noting that there exists a political motivation to the revitalization of Māori language and culture.

According to Ramaprasad and Nabil Hamdy (2006), the Arab regions have significant journalistic traditions with their own identity that have played fundamental roles in all countries. The functions of the media are closely regulated by local cultural norms and political conditions of the time (Rugh, 2004). In India, Malik (2015) analyses the Codes of Practice for Community Radio, highlighting them as being a mix derived from a selection of universal core values that media activists, academics,

grassroots organizations, CR broadcasters and the policy makers share in this country.

Boyd & Kushner (1979) noted the tendency of journalists and media to follow the foreign media in Egypt. Bekhait (1998), also regarding to Egypt, showed that the media tended to include or exclude certain social news. Al Rasheed (1998) in a survey of journalists in Kuwait found that security was the most important factor in their work, followed by editorial policy. In Saudi Arabia, according to Tash (1984), journalists considered their professional role as complementary to the function of the regime in improving the Principles of Islamic Confederation and government aid for development. Kirat, in 1987, provided a portrait in which he acknowledged that the media in Algeria encouraged socialist revolutionary ideals, national development aims and advocated social change. Rampal examined in 1996 education programs in Algeria, Libya, Morocco and Tunisia, revealing the frustration of journalists due to the lack of objectivity and political and legal constraints imposed on the media in their respective countries.

Zayani and Sahraoui (2007) examine the organizational culture of Al Jazeera. This work revealed, among other findings, the frustrations of some staff members for certain favoritism and a lack of sense of belonging to the media. In Nigeria, Nyamnjoh (2005) states that the media are victims of hierarchical imposition of national and global cultures, standardization and homogenization of the content in media. In the same country, Malaolu (2014) emphasizes that the link between economic powers and sources' activities has been identified as one of the main reasons for the huge disparities in terms of the category of sources accessed. Haijer (2011) compared the Journalism culture of South Africa,

Kenya and Ghana, highlighting the journalist tendency to play the watchdog and civic role.

In Latin American media there is a low level of newspaper circulation, a long tradition of advocate journalism, the instrumentalization of private media, politicization in the regulation of public broadcasting and media, and the limited development of journalism as an autonomous profession (Hallin and Papathanassopoulos, 2002). Furthermore, this region has been characterized by the introduction of external economic models (from Europe and North America) linked to social and cultural openings subordinated to hegemonic countries (Mellado Ruiz, 2009). In Chile, Brazil and Mexico, Mellado et al. (2012) found in their results the predominance of political structures, levels of press freedom and the size and concentration of media ownership vs the dominance of political cultures and political parallelism. In a comparative study between Brazil and Portugal, Novais et al. (2013) find Portuguese and Brazilian journalists adhere to the ideals of detachment and a neutral role.

In Ecuador, according to Oller (2015) and Oller & Chavero (2016), a paradigmatic media structure exists that highlights the strengthening of public institutions in communication issues, the reorganization of the media market for the development of the public and community media, and the increasing investment of government in institutional advertising in the media. Hughes et al. (2016) affirm that journalists in Mexico and Colombia perceive autonomy differently at different stages of the production process. Gutiérrez et al. (2016) in their comparative study in Chile, Ecuador, Colombia, Argentina and México about the issues that condition the performance of journalists, indicate that they talk about the lack of transparency in journalism. Until today, Salaverría (2016) has

coordinated the biggest project in the area of cyberjournalism in Latin America. In this work, there are twenty-two countries of the region included.

4. Proposal of the Organic Multilevel Model (OMM)

Due to the global comparative tendency, researchers in the field of journalism are looking for new tools and strategies to study the particular situation that journalists have within the journalistic culture of each country or region around the world. However, until today, some scholars maintain an ontological point of view trying to find the static and transcendental properties of the concepts based on their immanent sense. This attitude creates serious obstacles to empirical research, as Pan & Mcleod (1991) confirm, not only is the assumption about the hierarchy of nature limited by what is known at a particular historical period, but the ontological view of natural hierarchy fails to provide solutions to empirical questions of cross-level linkages.

In this regard, Hox et al. (2012, p. 91) warns that "when measurement instruments are used in different cultures or are translated into different languages, the first analysis questions concern measurement equivalence". For this reason, and trying to solve the ontological and equivalence problems, the Organic Multilevel Model is proposed as an ideal prototype of contextual analysis and as crucial in the field of research in journalism due to 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", because, as Pfetsch & Esser (2008, p. 119) highlighted, "it also seems timely to discuss

methodological developments and the challenges that must be met by theoretical reflection”.

On these grounds highlighted by these authors, and in order to consistently study journalistic cultures, the Organic Multilevel Model has been designed from the *integrated model* of Oller & Meier (2012) 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”. This concept is crucial because, as Anderson (2013) emphasizes, news organizations are not isolated as singular institutions, but rather are part of a larger journalistic “ecosystem”. Moreover, within the complexities of newsmaking in the era of digitization and convergence, where, according to Cottle (2007), news production can no longer be understood as concentrated in the material space of the newsroom and carried out by specialized professionals, but rather as a radically diverse and dispersed set of activities involving a broad range of organizations, groups, and individuals in many places and on varied platforms.

OMM is based on organic models used in biological sciences and, as Greer (1989, p. 133) confirms,

“the metaphor of the interaction between, on the one hand, an internally organized structure, which transforms energy in orderly ways and perpetuates itself and, on the other hand, its environment, is particularly appealing to those who study social groups. Yet the major laws involved in using this kind of theory are not mechanical in nature; they are typologies of structures, of environments, and of interaction between the two”.

This organic model, according to Bennett (1976, p. 20-21),

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“is the origin of the functionalism in both sociology and social anthropology, based on the analogies to the cooperation (or in some versions, competing) between organism and biological systems. Like the mechanical model, however, the functionalists’ approach has emphasized order and equilibrium, or at least homeostasis (regular fluctuations, with maintenance of a constant average state of the system)”.

These ideas are not new, Spencer (1878), in the late XIX century, thought about the relationship between biology and sociology: “The extremist, systematic representatives of the integration of the theory of natural selection organicist vision of society” (in Guillo & Jacobs, 2002, p. 125); and Hughes and Park, within the Chicago School, discussed the “ecology” of communities (in Reese, 2009). Nevertheless, besides the dispute between the concepts of mechanism and organicism, our proposal shows the OMM as a tool capable of analyzing journalism as an instrument that is configured with a specific end. In this sense, journalism could be a mechanism, but, paraphrasing Guillo & Jacobs (2002), a very special one, given that intention has determined its architecture and movement in view to a specific result.

The OMM, addressing the comparative contextual analysis of intermediate journalistic cultures around the world, compels us to consider ethnography as an object of knowledge -culture- that has remained relatively constant across changes in theoretical positions and interpretive methods (Bredin, 1993). In the countries with a model of journalism defined by their “intermediate condition”, journalists play a transversal role within networks of power, constitutional and factual, which places them as an ideal object of analysis due to historical, social, political, economic, educational, technological and media systems. This context shapes the epistemological bases that define the journalistic cultures of these countries, traditionally located in the so-called global South and that

share a conflictive ecosystem in which the historical processes of colonization and domination and the ancestral cultures converge.

In this process of self-recognition and self-representation the ethnographical methodological strengths flourish. As Cottle (2007) points out,

“...in the context of news study, participant observation or ethnography refer to the research method that involves the researcher spending considerable time in the field, observing and talking to journalists as they go about their daily tasks and documenting their professional practices and culture. This requires time, commitment and self-reflexivity as the participant-observer adjusts his or her stance towards those encountered in the field, sometimes with the accent on ‘participation’, sometimes on ‘observation’, as the research proceeds and relationships develop through time”.

These ontological and epistemological questions in the study of intermediate journalistic culture have to be completed by the field of anthropology to avoid results associated with ideas of exotic, bizarre, and outsider cultures; analyzed in the distance as the “others”. Anthropology can help us avoid this gap in our analysis because “it has raised the fundamental question of how knowledge of ‘the other’ is produced. [...] Anthropology is both the ‘capturing’ of an external cultural diversity and at the same time an internal cultural critique” (Marcus & Fischer, 1986, p. 20). Even further, the European discovery of different cultures and constructions of cultural difference pointed to the ambiguity of the West's own concept of humanity and required reflection upon the very notion of civilization (Bredin, 1993).

This modern reality within journalistic research requires a model able to measure the meaning and the internal coherence of all communicational processes and the complexity of internal/external relations between the

different structures, systems and actors within their context. And, above all, a model of analysis of intermediate journalistic cultures which is capable of avoiding the preconceived notions of “peripheral countries”, “primitive cultures” or “noble savage” - based on their natural, unexploited and uncontaminated conditions -; emphasizing their “complex nature” defined by “precepts of conflict, miscegenation and inoculation, from a positive point of view, leaning on its serendipic and biocentric condition” (Oller, 2016, p. 226).

4.1. Systems level

From the combination and adaptation of multilevel models and the concept of organic analysis of journalism, the OMM is proposed for the study of the intermediate journalistic cultures, whose different influencing factors are fundamental indicators in the cross-cultural studies because they define journalists' professional perceptions and performances. Its structure changes the concept of superimposed levels shown by other previous models where journalists are in the middle.

In the OMM, through the configuration of reality as a tree, the *roots* are the structuring systems and the base of a country or region. The Systems level comprises the *political system* – executive, legislative and judicial; the *economic system* – market structure, economic politics, etc.; *educational system* – academy, professionalization, training, etc.; *cultural / historical / social systems* – social organizations, cultural institution, historical memory laws, etc.; *media system* – ownership, type and range of media; and technology – development, laws, access, legislation, infrastructure, etc.

“The systemic level of influence combines the relevant social, cultural, and ideological contexts within which journalists work, including the political and legal conditions of news-making as well as the nature of professional self-organization and national conventions within the profession” (Hanitzsch & Mellado, 2011, p. 406). Hallin and Mancini (2004) place in their contextual level the development of the media market, the relationship and the proximity to political power, the level of professionalization - from the autonomy of journalists, the professional standards and the value given to the public interest, and the State's role concerning the professional freedom of journalists. Political and financial actions and the audience pressures define the economic forces. Joined with the pressure from the government in countries with more restrictive political systems, “the increasingly precarious economic environment for many news organizations has arguably led to growing influence from advertising and PR efforts” (Hanusch et al., 2015, p. 4).

While political and economic determinants are of unquestionable importance in understanding journalism and news culture, additional variables relating to a nation's or community's cultural environment are crucial to consider because cultural differences can account for variation in journalists' professional views (Hanusch, 2013). More if it fits because ideological forces concern ideas and meaning in the service of interests and power. In addition, in the social system, such as the system of communications (Luhmann, 1989), the media find themselves within institutional relationships, and professionalism takes a different form depending on the nature of those relationships (Reese, 2007).

The development of technology in journalism, and society at large, has a growing significance within the media industry and for journalism in

practice and as a profession (Lewis, 2015). Its implementation in all communicational processes has come to change the nature of the profession. In this regard, Cottle (2007, 2008) affirms that

“...processes of corporate conglomeration and convergence as well as the arrival of new digital technologies of communication are facilitating a global network of communication flows. In this interpenetrating communications environment news production no longer takes place within any one organizational center of production but has become increasingly dispersed across multiple sites, different platforms and can be contributed to by journalists based in different locations around the world or on the move”.

The educational system is a fundamental part of the professionalization process of journalism in numerous intermediate countries. The educational training of future journalists influences their perception of the profession and “leads them to realize their professional practices in certain ways” (Fröhlich and Holtz-Bacha, 2003, p. 319). Furthermore, directly related to legislation of journalism, there are many changes in the (de)regulation of the media systems, causing a restructuring of the idea of professionalization of journalism and the consideration of professionalism in journalists (Oller and Chavero, 2016).

4.2. Institution level

In the OMM, the *trunk* of the tree symbolises the institutions and organisations, analysing the “organisational structure and the areas of competence” (Esser, 1998, p. 27) of the newsrooms because, as has been stated by Altmeppen (2008, pp. 52- 53) and Shoemaker and Reese (1996, p. 140), “contemporary journalism is characterised by its high organisational nature”. The Institution level in OMM is composed of *media organisation, media structure, routines, processes, editorial line, rules and profile of journalists as a group* and the *type, ownership and coverage*

of the media. All of them are held up by principal systems – similar to the structure proposed by Esser (1998) and Marr et al. (2001).

“The editorial environment is a strong conditioner of journalism” (Reich & Hanitzsch, 2013, p. 137) because journalists perceive the influences on their newsrooms as crucial to perform their job (Hanitzsch & Mellado, 2011). The media organizations and routines are a direct result of how media work is organized. The organizational routines include the most immediate constraining and enabling structures, larger patterns, or routines within which the individual operates. The organization level is distinguished from routines in describing the influences of the larger organized entity within which the individual operates, the larger context of the routinized activities, which includes occupational roles, organizational policy, and how the enterprise itself is structured (Shoemaker & Reese, 2014).

The organizational culture is integrated in the newsroom culture (Hofstede, 1980; Hall, 1976). According to Schmitz (2008),

“...in understanding the organization and the structure of how journalists work, it is necessary to understand the culture of that workplace. We need to know what resources, artefacts, attitudes, beliefs and assumptions are embedded in the newsroom itself that define it as well as the people who work in it. These are components of a culture and demonstrate how an organization operates, how the people within it communicate with each other, and how they complete tasks”.

The technological innovation gives shape to the organizational environments, being responsible for various changes (Boczkowski, 2004). “A growing body of research has concentrated on the newsroom and changes in news production as an interaction between institutional priorities in news organizations and journalistic practices, which in many

cases can be seen as being in tension” (Tameling & Broersma, 2013, p. 21).

The type, ownership and coverage of the media where journalists work define the model of journalism and journalists within their newsroom. In countries with intermediate journalistic cultures, the principal system influences dramatically the *types of media*, conventional or online; the *ownership of media*, the public media, associated with the idea of communication as a public service and the control of governments, private media, which incentivizes the importance of market research and target audience (Oller & Chavero, 2016) and community media, defined by a socio-cultural logic and the participation of the citizen; and the *coverage of media*, that depending on local, regional, national and international coverage, journalists have a determined relationship with their sources and audience and have varying capacities of decision-making within the editorial hierarchy.

4.3. Actor level

Lastly, in the OMM, *branches* and *leaves* of the tree in our model represent the individual journalists due to their irregular position, diversity and number – as the perception and ideas of journalists within a country are not homogeneous. For these reasons, within this level the interests and working methods in the newsroom at an individual level are carefully detailed, being determined by the training, work experience, age and gender of journalists (Johnstone et al., 1976) – among others.

According to Reich and Hanitzsch (2013), the influences come from professional reference groups – colleagues from other media, audiences and organisational processes; and personal – friends, acquaintances and

family. At this level, there are “factors with strong social-demographic character [...] very valuable when developing the empirical study of an investigation” (Oller & Meier, 2012, p. 147). Furthermore, according to Garcés and Arroyave (in press), the “psychosocial influences of reference” such as values, principles and beliefs of journalists would be included within the actor level, which are psychological aspects previously recognized by Donsbach (2009), Reese (2001) and Voakes (1997). Even here, other points of reference could be added in the contextual analysis of the intermediate countries, such as security concerns and the influence of organizations working for the protection of journalists (Relly & De Bustamente, 2014). On these grounds, the influencing factors from the individual level are critical because “journalists are constantly forced to make decisions” (Donsbach, 2004; Hanitzsch, 2009, p. 157).

The Actor level of OMM includes sociodemographic and cultural factors, economic individual factors, political individual factors and professional/personal roles (level of professionalism) such as: level of education; specialization in journalism; gender; age; political leanings; ethnicity; religious affiliation; salary; professional position, permanent or temporary, section, range, etc.; membership of a professional association; years of experience and, finally, journalists’ perceptions about their professional roles, journalistic ethics, trust in institutions, changes in journalism, concept of objectivity / subjectivity, contextual influences and level of autonomy.

The analysis of the level of socialization and attitudes of journalists emphasizes the psychological and social factors impinging on an individual’s work: personal and professional. The individual level, according Shoemaker & Reese (2016), includes the characteristics of the

individual communicator, where the professionalism can be considered on one level as an individual value that is espoused, a trait of individuals that indicates the extent to which they belong to a professional group, which calls them to certain shared norms and outlooks.

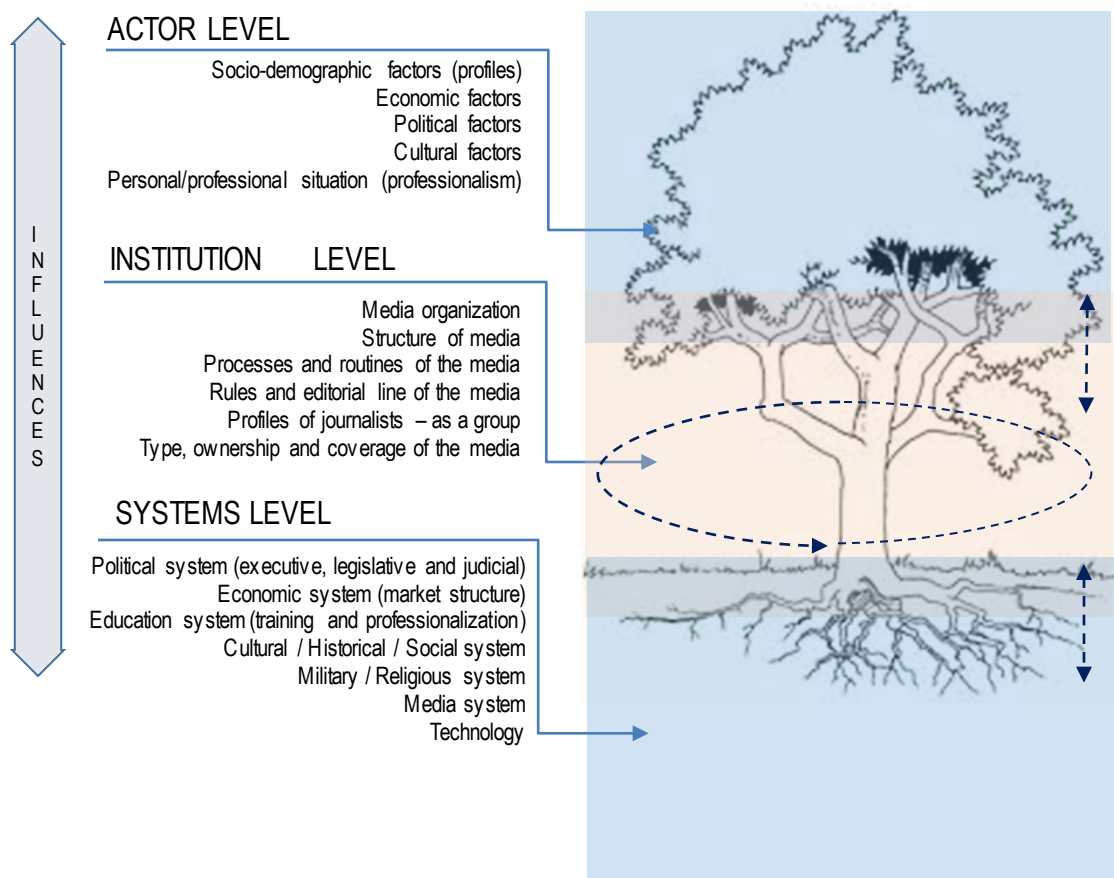
The importance of the analysis of the actor level lies in the need to know the grade of its influence on the final decisions of journalists in relation to the other levels. This is mainly because, as Hanitzsch & Mellado (2011) highlight, early gatekeeping research suggested that individual factors reign supreme in the process of news production (e.g. Flegel & Chaffee 1971; White 1950), while more recent evidence points to a rather modest influence of individual predispositions on the final work of journalist (e.g. Patterson & Donsbach 1996). The contextual deconstruction realized by OMM entails a bidirectional analysis between the journalists, as individuals, and the rest of actors, organizations and institutions in the other contextual levels – institution and systems. The individual norms, values, ideas, perceptions, behaviors and performances of journalists are formed within a professional and social structure that recognizes them as citizens and professionals, influencing both mutually in different degrees depending on variables such as time and space.

In social theory, space cannot be conceived separately from social practices. And time, in social terms, is defined as a sequence of practices (Castells, 1997). The spatial and temporal concepts are the base of our contextual analysis because, according to Castells (1997), in all historical transformations, the emergence of a new social structure is related to the redefinition of the material foundations of our existence, space and time. Power relations are embedded in the social construction of space and time

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while they are conditioned by the spatiotemporal characteristics of society formations and, of course, in professional relations among journalists.

Figure 1. Organic Multilevel Model (OMM)



Source: Prepared by author.

Conclusions

Until recently, the majority of comparative studies on journalistic cultures across different countries have been focused on Anglo-Saxon and Northern European countries (Berganza, Oller & Meier, 2010). Nowadays, this tendency is changing very fast because, as Hallin & Mancini (2004) point out, the comparison between European countries has been neglected, because there are great differences and diverse models of media coverage among the countries of this continent. Furthermore, in other regions of the world it is necessary to change this monopolistic and centrist way of thinking, as is the case of the global South, defined by its own idiosyncrasies and multicultural territories formed by a huge mosaic of identities and hybrid cultures.

Due the specific contextual condition in these countries and regions, in this article we discuss a measurement logic capable of capturing the specificity of each context that defines the diverse journalistic cultures, isolated or in a comparative perspective. In this sense, the Organic Multilevel Model is presented as an example of a method suitable of systematizing the data from the empirical and theoretical work in different spaces - geographical and digital - and times.

All previous theoretical models of OMM presented in this article show the influence of context on the decision-making, the actions of journalists, and the journalistic routines that determine the production of information in a media, region or country (Weischenberg et al., 1994) as a close structure based on superimposed levels. However, during the last two decades, some of them have evolved to adapt to the conditions required by the new trends in journalism research – e. g. Esser (1998) with his

multilevel model adapted to comparative international studies; Hanitzsch et al. (2010) with the conceptual model based on empirical evidence from the *Worlds of Journalism Study* (WJS); and Reese & Shoemaker (2016) through a revision of their model of hierarchy of influences and level-of-analysis perspective of how to accommodate this to new theories and media network based on an ethnographic and quantitative approach.

These attempts at methodological adaptation, made by these researchers in recent years, show that a methodological change in the analysis of the context of the journalistic field is needed. The OMM, the first general model made in / from / to the global South, comes to change two fundamental aspects of deconstructed contextual analysis: First, the contexts of instability, imbalance and inconsistency that define the global South countries require a linear and cyclic study performed in determined periods of time (time variable) and established and bounded spaces (space variable); and, second, the arborescent figure of this model presents a branch structure based on the theory of bifurcation [mathematical study of dynamical systems] (Costa, 2016), structured in superposed levels with interpolated elements that permeate other levels, breaking the limits between them.

In this sense, the OMM represents a new direction within the cultural, contextual and ethnographic analysis of intermediate journalistic culture in the countries from global South. Specifically, this model is part of an ecological transition in the study of "glocal journalistic models" emerging from a globalized culture and the own identities of each country or region defined by their borders and conjunctures.

The OMM has been applied empirically to prove its efficiency [1] in the study of intermediate journalistic cultures, because the empirical fieldwork, based on qualitative or quantitative techniques and exploratory studies, attempted to construct each particular reality through a theoretical model capable of analysing the different journalistic cultures of each country or region. Evidence of this, the outcomes of this study show an evolution and a complementary viewpoint of the transcultural comparative media research approach. The journalistic culture of each country is not a subordinate culture of any other – for example Western countries – but has its own media flows and journalistic products and practices. As Couldry (2012) maintains, media cultures are the result of territorial or deterritorialized thickenings or amalgamations. For these reasons, this study focuses on the micro/meso/macro factors (Cook, 2006; Sparrow, 2006; Hamilton, 2004; Patterson, 2000; Oller, 2014) - and the relationship between them.

In the debate created around journalism studies, the methodological innovations are challenged to approach the practical and theoretical perspectives, even more, within a journalistic ecosystem characterized by a networked environment in constant transformation. However, the complexity of the analysis of intermediate journalistic cultures lies in the paradox of their countries: “It is the story of a simultaneous vortex of external events and the complete lack of change of any kind [...]. Everything seems different, and yet everything remains the same” (Anderson, 2013, p. 159).

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Notes:

[1] The OMM was used as model of contextual analysis in studies such as: Comparison between the Journalistic Cultures of Switzerland, Spain and Ecuador. The effects of context influences on the journalists' perception of professional roles and the idea of objectivity (Oller, 2015), and Journalism in Latin America: Journalistic Culture of Ecuador (Oller & Chavero, 2016).