Journalists facing media monitoring: an analysis from field theory[1]

Periodistas frente a los monitoreos de medios: un análisis desde la teoría del campo

Jornalistas diante do monitoramento da mídia: uma análise a partir da teoria de campo

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Media monitoring is usually not accompanied by inquiries into how journalists consume and interpret projects of this kind. Through interviews, this study fills that information gap by focusing on the subjectivity of monitored media journalists. The study, based on Bourdieu's field theory, revealed positions towards monitoring grouped in two poles (preserve/subvert the field) structured around the accumulation of capital. Knowing the internal dynamics of the journalistic field made it possible to understand the degree of openness to change.

KEYWORDS: Monitoring, media, journalism, media development, field theory.

Los monitoreos de medios no suelen acompañarse de indagaciones sobre la manera en que las y los periodistas consumen e interpretan estos proyectos. Mediante entrevistas, este estudio llena ese vacío de información al centrarse en la subjetividad de periodistas de medios monitoreados. El estudio, fundamentado en la teoría del campo de Bourdieu, reveló posiciones frente al monitoreo agrupadas en dos polos (conservar/subvertir el campo) estructurados en torno a la acumulación de capitales. Conocer las dinámicas internas del campo periodístico permitió comprender su grado de apertura al cambio.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Monitoreos, medios de comunicación, periodismo, desarrollo de los medios de comunicación, teoría de campo.

A monitorização dos meios de comunicação social não é normalmente acompanhada de inquéritos sobre a forma como os jornalistas consomem e interpretam estes projectos. Através de entrevistas, este estudo preenche esta lacuna de informação, concentrando-se na subjetividade dos jornalistas dos meios de comunicação monitorados. O estudo, baseado na teoria do campo de Bourdieu, revelou posições de monitoramento agrupadas em dois pólos (conservar/subverter o campo) estruturados em torno da acumulação de capital. Conhecer a dinâmica interna do campo jornalístico permitiu-nos compreender o seu grau de abertura à mudança.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Monitoramento, mídia, jornalismo, desenvolvimento midiático, teoria de campo.

Introduction

Media observation and monitoring are activities conducted all over the world mainly in response to concerns relating to the need to monitor the behavior of the media and clarify whether they are fulfilling the democratic functions that have been attributed to them (Trappel, 2011) –for example, to monitor powerful groups–; as well as to find out to what extent they have assumed values such as equality, diversity, public service, and social responsibility. A common focus of media monitoring and observation projects is on improving the performance of media organizations (Galtung, 1995). Despite the above, there are not many studies that seek to investigate the impacts of monitoring projects on those who make up the institutions they seek to influence: namely, journalists in media organizations.

In Mexico, media monitoring during electoral campaigns has been institutionalized under the precept of observing the production of journalistic information, based on the assumption that in some way such vigilance will prevent abuses in news coverage and, above all, inequity during the elections (Aceves González, 2000, 2011). Likewise, in the context of the promotion of political participation by women, a new concern has been added since the 2010s: to promote a media representation of female candidates that will contribute to reducing gender inequality and that refrains from fostering prejudices against women.

Given the aforementioned information gap, our research objectives are: (1) to know what media people *do* with the results of media monitoring –that is, how they use it and whether it fosters changes in journalistic practices or, on the contrary, does it encourage resistance practices–; (2) to reveal the *meanings* that media people attribute to the monitoring project; and (3) to develop recommendations based on the findings of this research to increase the impact of media monitoring projects. To meet these objectives, we focused on the case of the monitoring project of news coverage during elections in the state of Jalisco (Mexico), a well-established, large-scale monitoring project with high potential for social impact. Data were collected from qualitative interviews with media people who collaborated in the media observed by this monitoring project.

MEDIA, DEMOCRACY, AND MONITORING

Theoretical models of democracy propose specific roles for the media. In contemporary times, liberal aspirations are hindered by the prevailing conditions of society and the market and their impact on the media –organizations with democratizing functions that can also serve as instruments to pursue political and economic interests (Guerrero, 2008). In fact, it is common to find powerful media with ample freedom of expression all over the world (Nordenstreng, 2001). However, it is difficult for the media to be at the same time financially sustainable, committed to public service, and sufficiently independent to monitor the exercise of economic, political, and military power in society (Trappel, 2011). It has been argued, therefore, that there is a need to make transparent the performance of the media (Galtung, 1995), and make them "accountable" to the citizenry (Trappel, 2011, p. 13), also to influence the media as to make them responsibly exercise their freedom of expression (Nordenstreng, 2001).

One response to these needs has been the development of media monitoring and observation projects. Reflections on the practice of media monitoring have positioned the principles of participation of the observed subject, dialogue, and linkage between stakeholders as basic for the success of such projects. The participatory communication approach has established that for an intervention to be successful, a relationship between the different groups interested in the issue must be established through dialogue (Tufte & Mefalopulos, 2009). This aspect has been widely pointed out: Galtung (1995), for example, noted that successful media monitoring requires dialogue with stakeholders about the dimensions of the evaluation, which must be meaningful to the people involved. Gallagher (2001) and Ryan et al. (2006) noted the importance of using empirical data to approach journalists and media representatives and establish a constructive dialogue with them.

Several authors in Latin America (Castellanos Díaz, 2010; Larrosa, 2020; Rey, 2003) have detected the need to improve the social impact of media monitoring and observatories through a better linkage of these projects with the observed media and with society. A link with citizens and the appropriation of these projects by ordinary people is key since,

in this way, citizens will obtain knowledge that will make it possible for them to demand better media content (Aceves González, 2000). Journalism studies have also advanced the imperatives of increasing the social impact of research and of conducting research that will not be satisfied with extracting data from communities but that is capable of offering a more active role to journalists and of returning to the studied community and being accountable to it (Bélair-Gagnon & Usher, 2021).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK:
FIELD THEORY AND CHANGE IN THE MEDIA

To understand the obstacles to the promotion of change in the media, it has been considered crucial to understand the different influences on journalistic practice (Castellanos Díaz, 2010; Gallagher, 2001; Ross & Carter, 2011; Ryan et al., 2006). Media sociology scholars Shoemaker and Reese (2014) have proposed breaking down this problem through a hierarchical model that organizes the influences on media organizations at different levels of analysis, ranging from an individual level to that of the social system –including the institutional sphere, a level already addressed in the previous section, in which an aspect of the media-government relationship was examined.

At the institutional level, field theory provides elements to analyze the conformation of the journalistic field and its resistance or openness to change. This is one of the reasons why the use of this theory in journalism studies has increased in recent years (Maares & Hanush, 2022). According to this theory, a field is a structured space of positions that, to function, requires its members to believe in it, that is, to be accustomed to the rules of the game (Bourdieu, 1990). The social world is structured based on the opposition between two types of capital: the economic (which is the most powerful) and the cultural. Each field is structured based on the opposition between two poles: the heteronomous, sensitive to (mainly economic) forces external to the field, and the autonomous, where the specific capital produced in the field is produced and where there is greater resistance to external influences (Benson & Neveu, 2005; Bourdieu, 1990). The journalistic field is part of the field of power and is also characterized

by a high degree of heteronomy. Another peculiarity of the journalistic field and the fields that surround it in the field of power (such as politics and social science) is that they compete to impose a legitimized vision of the social world.

Access to the field's resources is unequal and determines the way in which journalists react to aspects such as labor precariousness (Hernández-Julián & Vera-Zambrano, 2020). In each field, there are struggles to preserve or change its structure, especially its power relations, that is, the access of participants to the resource or capital produced in the field, as well as the principles by which the field is divided. Thus, individuals more endowed with capital use orthodox or *conservation* strategies, while those less endowed recur to heterodox or *subversive* strategies. For example, in his analysis of the journalistic field, Bourdieu (2012) argued that senior journalists (that is, journalists with more capital) tend to be more willing to submit to the commercial logic that has invaded this field. In contrast, he considered younger people to be more likely to uphold the principles and values of the journalistic profession (that is, to place themselves in the autonomous pole). However, this is not a general rule because power relations are also the result of field-specific conditions. A second example illustrates the above: agents starting in the field can influence its transformation when new editors try to distinguish themselves from what others have done; however, at the same time, newcomers can influence the preservation of the status quo when, due to a scarcity of work positions, they adopt attitudes of caution and conformism (Benson & Neveu, 2005).

As can be seen in the examples of Benson & Neveu (2005) and Bourdieu (2012), analysis guided by field theory helps to clarify the internal dynamics of the journalistic field. It also promotes an understanding of the relationships between individuals and groups belonging to different fields. For example, scientific people with less communicative skills tend to consider as "prostitution" the use that media and journalists make of scientific experts, as well as not recognizing the value of these skills, because to value this form of capital would be to reduce their power within the field (Hartley, 2017). Likewise, journalistic people with higher scientific capital prefer scientific people with lower science communication skills, and vice versa. The diversity

of positions on the source-media relationship is explained, according to Hartley (2017), by struggles within the journalistic and scientific fields and the desire of their occupants to preserve their respective professional identities.

CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

Emerging from a historical concern about inequity in electoral competitions (Aceves González, 2000), the electoral monitoring of news coverage has been carried out in Mexico by legal mandate and with public funding, at the national and local levels. These monitoring projects have also incorporated elements related to the promotion of women's political participation and the prevention of political violence against female candidates.

The results of the media monitoring of radio and television news coverage of the 2021 electoral process in Jalisco (Mexico) were disseminated through press conferences and social media. The analysis reported indicators on the proportions of media coverage devoted to each party and candidate, as well as on the use of media frames. Likewise, the reports included transcriptions of the journalistic contents in which gender stereotypes affecting female candidates were detected. The monitoring was carried out by a team from the University of Guadalajara, an autonomous public institution of higher and secondary education recognized not only for its educational and cultural work, but also for its political influence and power.

METHOD

Given the lack of information on how media people interpret media monitoring reports and activities, we opted in this study to follow a qualitative perspective that would allow us to learn about and delve deeper into the meanings and practices of media monitoring.

Following a sampling logic of maximum variation (Patton, 2014), we conducted structured interviews with media people who collaborated in any of the 12 media organizations studied as part of the media monitoring of news coverage during the 2021 elections in

Jalisco (Mexico). The sampling sought the greatest possible diversity in the media organizations, gender, hierarchy (in terms of the level of authority of the participants within their organization), and type of position. The sample size was not determined *a priori* but guided by the data analysis, which was conducted at the same time as the data collection. The latter ended once theoretical saturation was reached, that is, when, having explored in detail the research questions in the interviews, no new themes or concepts emerged (Trotter, 2012).

The sample of interviewees consisted of 12 participants and had the following characteristics: age ranging 31-65 years old (median = 39), experience ranging from 9-45 years (median = 23), 42 % women, 58 % men; in positions including news director (1), program coordinator (1), head of information (3), anchor (5), reporter (1), and analyst (1), in 14 different media outlets (several interviewees worked in more than one media outlet at the same time). The structured interviews were conducted face-to-face and via video call. After explaining the research objective, each participant was asked for their consent for recording the interview and using the data exclusively for the project, safeguarding their personal data during the research process. The interview included questions about the meanings of media monitoring, the consequences of being monitored, the participants' perceptions about the benefit or lack of benefit of media monitoring, their diagnosis of the limitations of monitoring and their causes, and their suggestions on how to increase involvement between the media people and the researchers.

As the interviews were conducted, the data were independently read and coded in accordance with the perspective of multi-grounded theory (Goldkuhl & Cronholm, 2010). Multi-grounded theory reformulates grounded theory (Strauss, 2003) to admit a foundation not only based on empirical data but also on already existing theories. The steps were as follows: at a first stage, new codes were assigned (open coding); subsequently, the codes were related to each other through hierarchical or tree models (axial coding); finally, propositions based on the model and interrelating the categories were constructed (selective coding).

After each author had completed the three stages of coding, coincidences were identified in the emerging codes and model; differences were reconciled through dialogue. Specifically, it was

noted during coding that the notion of distance or remoteness between media and academia was central; also, it was found that the opinions of senior and junior journalists tended to differ. This finding suggested the use of an existing theory –the field theory– to support the categories that emerged in the analysis. Thus, the result of the analysis is grounded in both empirical data and theory.

RESULTS

The semi-structured interviews made it possible to recover data on the meanings and practices of media people regarding media monitoring, as well as their discourses on how to improve this kind of project. The results are summarized in Table 1, which proposes that media people's discourses on monitoring tend to be organized in two poles: preserving the field, which is more present in people with greater hierarchy and experience in journalism (therefore, having greater economic and social capitals), and subverting the field, which is more evident in media people of lower hierarchy and with fewer years of experience –though not lacking in capital, especially cultural capital (acquired by being graduates from journalism and communication majors, teachers, or participants in civil society organizations). The identification of both poles, manifested in the attitudes toward media monitoring projects, suggests that tensions about change in the media and about how to manage the influence of external agents on journalism permeate the journalistic field.

FACTORS THAT DETERMINE JOURNALISTIC CONTENT

In the interviews, notions emerged about the main influences on journalistic practice. On the one hand, participants noted how journalistic values such as relevance and the timeliness of information take precedence over fairness, that the actions –or passivity– of political actors propitiate the journalistic coverage they receive, and that many journalistic practices are the continuation of an established tradition within the organization. These ideas were interpreted as discursive acts of conservation of the field, since the participants pointed out that recognizing these influences provides "context" (B) to

the indicators presented in the monitoring reports; that is, they justify inequities in the quantities of media coverage and other practices that are assumed to be inadequate from the perspective of media monitoring and electoral regulation.

On the other hand, when talking about the convenience of changing some journalistic practices, the participants pointed out as obstacles the lack of interest of people with decision-making power in the media, the lack of journalistic autonomy of those who occupy low and intermediate levels in the face of influences external to journalism –such as the State and the market–, and structural aspects of the journalistic field such as its business model –which positions Latin American journalism as a field dependent on the political field– and its accelerated work dynamics and precarious working conditions. The above ideas were considered discursive acts of subversion, as they were factors positioned as obstacles to desirable changes. The following excerpt illustrates the tension between journalism and political power:

> Before, it was like: "no, I'm never going to do that, am I?" Well, now you are there. I mean, I was given the indication, during this election, of: "You cover this candidate, but you can't ask anything, ok? You cover this candidate, but you can't ask them anything, right?" Because they already know I'll be going for the jugular. "You cannot ask": in other words, "you go along with whatever he proposes". That's what you make your news item about. You don't ask anything, right? I remember that in the past, for me, it used to be: "No, when they give me an order like this, I will resign", right? It was like a very unwavering, ethical position, right? And then, faced with reality, you say: Well, what can you do, right? (C, 10 years of experience).

Likewise, more experienced journalists spoke less about the possibility or convenience of making or promoting a change in the media, as they omitted this topic or –apparently– did not understand the questions that were asked to trigger a discourse on this topic. The antagonism between the younger and older media workers was not expressed overtly but through benevolent allusions by the younger journalists, who referred to their bosses as "old school" (F), "old-guard" (I) or "journalists who have always done things this way" (A).

TABLE 1

POSITIONS ON MEDIA MONITORING

	Preserving the field	Subverting the field
Topic	Factors that determine journalistic content	
Responses	Tradition, journalistic values, political actors	Disinterest and/or lack of power to change practices
Examples	"If my media sought to provide news coverage of all the candidates... the truth is I didn't have enough time" (E, 18 y). "It's a problem because they say to you: ...I have to give three minutes today to the PES [a small political party]... but the PES candidate didn't campaign and like him there were any number of stupid people who didn't do anything and then they come up with: 'they don't give me any coverage'. So, do something, I mean, do something and then I can cover you, right?" (H, 37 y).	"You don't criticize the news organization... and it does feel like... shooting yourself in the foot, doesn't it?, to be questioning the work of others" (C, 10 y). "I don't like it, but that's also where my salary comes from" (C, 10 y). "[One obstacle is] how the media are managed in terms [of] their business models and that they are not interested in professionalization and therefore in paying attention to tools such as [media] monitoring" (E, 18 y).
Topic	Emotions when reading the media monitoring evaluations	
Responses	Anger, discomfort.	Fun, expectation, interest.
Examples	"We talked it over and he [the director] was really furious and upset" (A, 20 y). "It caused a lot of discussion, a lot of commotion... And [my boss] said to me: well, we have to write a piece explaining how the [media] monitoring was done, how much it costs us and so on... But in the end, we never did" (C, 10 y).	"It works for gossiping, for finding out the nonsense that is said... Mostly that, isn't it? The mistakes, and to see how we came out too" (F, 17 y).

	Preserving the field	Subverting the field
Topic	To be the object of monitoring surveillance	
Responses	It does not affect us.	It does affect us.
Examples	"It has no effect on me... because I am aware [that] I must take responsibility for what I say" (B, 35 y). "I'm not on the lookout for it [the media monitoring], because I prefer to be on the lookout for my contents" (D, 15 y).	"I measured myself" (A, 20 y). "You never stop feeling under pressure when you have people listening to your work" (E, 18 y). "Knowing that I am being monitored simply drives me to seek to do my job to the best of my ability" (K, 21 y).
Topic	Reasons to evaluate the media	
Responses	Enforcing electoral law.	Providing feedback; audience rights.
Examples	"[The media monitoring project] seeks to ensure that [the media coverage] is balanced, that it is even, and that the treatment is equal for all candidates" (G, 45 y).	"It can allow people who consume a media program to validate what they are consuming" (K, 21 y). "They can help in the discussion of things that we have normalized in the media" (C, 10 y).
Topic	Legitimacy of academia's authority	
Responses	It is questionable.	It is legitimate.
Examples	"There should not be any of these shadows influencing the monitoring, that is, you cannot start to monitor thinking that Televisa has sold out and favors Morena" (H, 37 y). "Those who carry out the monitoring...frequently don't have the foggiest idea of who is who on the microphone or in the camera area" (I, 30 y).	"It is quite valid to see external opinions that are not tainted by what you do, because that allows you to be a little more truthful, more objective in the sense of really distancing yourself from what is happening and it also allows you to understand your areas of opportunity" (K, 21 y).

	Preserving the field	Subverting the field
	"Sometimes [those doing the media monitoring] see things with a certain formation or presumption" (B, 35 y). "They are not developing them to bring about change [but] to fulfill their commitment to a customer" (B, 35 y).	"All studies, everything that is feedback, especially when coming from specialists, from researchers, adds up" (G, 45 y). "The existence of media monitoring is fundamental for the work of anyone engaged in providing something to the public" (L, 15 y).
Topic	Involvement of media organizations in the media monitoring	
Responses	Active: to collaborate, to intervene.	Passive: to receive guidance.
Examples	"You don't want a researcher to come in and impose himself and say, 'this is the decalogue, and this is what you have to do'. No, [it is] a feedback process" (G, 45 y). "Make it social, involve all of us as actors in society, regardless of whether I provide my services in a media organization" (B, 35 y).	"[It is necessary] to understand what the rules of the game are, and [for the media] to decide whether to follow them or not" (K, 21 y). "Maybe we should be invited to some workshop, [or] some training by those who do the monitoring" (J, 9 y). "Try to come a little bit closer in the sense of explaining that it's not something meant to hurt you, but... to help us" (K, 21 y).
Topic	Mode of media participation in monitoring	
Responses	Covert and informal	Public and formal
Examples	"Invite the media directors to a breakfast. Only the media directors! Right? And explain it to them" (I, 30 y). "There are many colleagues who, as soon as it [the report] is published and they feel confronted, will disqualify it... because	"[By having] working meetings, [or] some workshop where, let me tell you, we can understand more of the information you generate, and we can also learn how to apply it in our daily work" (E, 18 y).

Preserving the field	Subverting the field
they were singled out, right? But I'm sure the process has to be a little more like: 'buddy, wake up,' right? This is what came out, this is how you do it, but it doesn't mean it's wrong, it just means you don't know any other way to do it" (F, 17 y).	

Topic	Model of media change	
Responses	Top-down	Both top-down and bottom-up
Examples	"As a discussion circle that is not public where media managers can really see things–like these trends that are very clear, if they are right or wrong, if they are legal" (C, 10 y). "To really involve media managers in... this stage [of the project]... will allow you to find out what we too are looking for" (I, 30 y).	"Those of us who are part of the media should be disseminating this kind of topic, promoting training, or even asking the managers about them so that they really have... this impact you mentioned" (E, 18 y). "There is information that only reaches the bosses... I think that if this information was shared with the other people who work in the news unit, this could be improved" (K, 21y). "It would be more efficient [to work] with the reporters who are in the coverage, because all the meetings are with the directors, right? And the directors are not on the street..." (L, 15 y).

Note: The names of the participants were replaced by letters. y = years of experience in journalism. Source: Own elaboration.

Impact of media monitoring

Two different forms of the consequences of media monitoring that emerged in the participants' discourses were analyzed: the emotions when reading the reports, and the effects of being the target of media monitoring. The participants who recounted their experience of reading the extensive reports produced by the monitoring project (9 participants, 75 %) stated that they read these reports mainly to see if there was any reference to themselves and their media –to see if anything was said about their contents– and to find out if there were media or journalists who had been pointed out as transgressors of the logic promoted by the monitoring project. Underlying both points is the need to know if the media monitoring reveals something new that is not perceived in their day-to-day journalistic practice and, more specifically, to know if extra-journalistic agreements between decision-makers in the media organization and political actors are manifested in the study:

> Yes, it totally changes the way of working because many things really have been stitched up... It was like: "Oh, what a relief; it's not something you see, is it?" [...] Because you have to mention certain candidates every day, right? In other words, [there is] a very heavy follow-up for certain candidates who obviously have some commercial agreement that we do not know about, but it is a little obvious, and [in contrast] there are those who do not appear at all, right? Or–since we already have the indication to follow such candidates–there isn't any time to cover the others, right? It was a bit like: "Oh, we are going to get burned" (C, 10 years of experience).

This explains both the reactions of anger and discomfort of those who reject the logic of media monitoring and the reactions of interest, expectation, and even amusement of those who subscribe to this logic. It should be noted that the former are not expressed openly: younger personnel talk instead about the discomfort or negative reactions they observe in their bosses. Likewise, those closer to the subversion pole recognize that knowing they are being monitored does affect their journalistic practice, since it discourages media people from engaging in behaviors that may be interpreted as biased or inappropriate, and encourages moderation or self-regulation. In contrast, for people

closer to the conservation pole, the influence of media monitoring on journalistic practice is denied under the argument that, with or without surveillance, professionals maintain the same behaviors –under the guidance of professional values such as social responsibility. Therefore journalists in the conservation pole conclude that the journalistic field has internal mechanisms for self-regulation that make evaluations from an external field unnecessary.

Legitimacy of the authority of academia

Two themes relating to the legitimacy of the media monitoring projects emerged in the discourse of the participants: the reasons for evaluating the media, which are related to the functions attributed to the media monitoring projects; and the authority of academia. Five of the 12 participants emphasized that the media monitoring sponsored by electoral bodies has as its main function to enforce compliance with the electoral law by deterring journalistic practices that result in inequitable distributions of coverage time or may be interpreted as discriminatory. Nine participants, rather than focusing on compliance with the law, emphasized the need for the media to receive feedback from a neutral external actor since many journalistic practices have been "normalized" (see Table 1).

The authority of academia was questioned by 11 media people (almost the total number of participants) for reasons related to validity or accuracy, lack of ambition of the project, or the suspicion of a lack of neutrality. Regarding the first of these issues, the participants pointed out that media monitoring produces errors that show that those who do it do not know enough about who is who in the media in the region, or else that they do not agree with its methodological criteria or with the interpretation of the data:

> They are not interpreted with the reality that is lived in the media [...] Journalistically, I don't have the power to both please [the university] and meet my journalistic deadlines, right? (A, 20 years of experience).

The second criticism, of a lack of ambition, was raised by participants, who pointed out that the project does not help to change

journalistic practices since it is not accompanied by explanations addressed to the media. The third criticism is related to suspicions about the veiled political intentions of media monitoring, as it is carried out by political actors –the universities– that can selectively *hit* the media. The above questioning leads to the conclusion that the authority of academia to make judgments on the media is neither stable nor inexorable; on the contrary, its legitimacy is in permanent dispute since the journalistic field is not only constantly inspecting the technical accuracy of academic discourse but also its neutrality, ethics and social impact. Their criticisms can also be interpreted as a defense of the autonomy of the journalistic field in the face of an evaluation made by an external field.

Building a relationship between the media and the project

In most of the interviews, the participants expressed the convenience of having media participate in the media monitoring project. They expressed that this can be done mainly through dialogue between the media and academia (11 participants said so) or by building alliances that bring together researchers, civil society, and the media (6 participants said so). We also recorded the perception of distance and tension between both fields, since, as has been pointed out, the evaluations carried out in media monitoring projects are received by the media with indifference, or discomfort and irritation. Thus, when imagining the construction of a relationship between the media and the monitoring project, three questions emerged: What role would the media play in this relationship? What would be the mode of participation? How would any change to the media take place?

The way media people imagined a participating role varied according to the level of influence they wished to have on the monitoring project: In the conservation pole, participants envisioned an active media collaboration in which senior people in the media organizations covertly and informally accessed the data –something that implies allowing their intervention in the face of results that are disputed or potentially adverse to their reputation. In the subversion pole, participants emphasized receiving a detailed explanation of the media monitoring's method prior to observation: "If they [the media]

want to change, well, that's great, that's what it's all about, and if they don't want to change, well, they've already been warned, and the next time they get *screwed*, they've already understood that, right?" (A, 20 years of experience). The testimonies in this pole imagined these explanations as public, formal, and directed to any person interested in the project.

Implicitly, two models of change emerged: from the conservation pole, it is crucial to involve media decision-makers in any project that seeks to promote changes in the media. It is also critical that these people feel as though their opinions are taken into consideration, given the tense relationship between academia and the media. From the subversion pole, the participants recognized the constraints or lack of autonomy of people at lower levels but also expressed their belief that change in the media can also be brought about through the demands of reporters towards their superiors. They also emphasized the need, first, to publicize the media monitoring project and, second, to train the media workers directly involved in content production. The latter was expressed several times as a benefit for the media guild, that is, for an imagined community of journalists.

Conclusions

Numerous efforts around the world have focused on monitoring the performance and structure of media organizations through projects of media observatories, media monitoring, or media oversight undertaken outside the journalistic field by academia and civil society, generating valuable reflections (Aceves González, 2011; Castellanos Díaz, 2010; Gallagher, 2001; Galtung, 1995; Larrosa, 2020; Rey, 2003; Ryan et al., 2006). Monitoring experiences, however, are not usually accompanied by observations focused on understanding how people within the journalistic field consume and interpret these projects, which is a crucial aspect of designing them, evaluating their results, and discussing their potential to incite media change and self-regulation (Gallagher, 2001; Ryan et al., 2006). In this sense, this study is unique, as it focuses on the subjectivity of the people whose practice is observed.

Media monitoring projects seek to improve media performance based on an academic perspective, often uncritically assuming that the academic field is superior in its legitimacy and epistemic authority. The conducted analysis, grounded in field theory, allowed us to verify, on the one hand, the complexities of the dynamics within the journalistic field, where competition for the definition of the rules of the game and for access to the capital produced in the journalistic field is manifested (Benson & Neveu, 2005; Bourdieu, 1990; Hartley, 2017; Hernández-Julián & Vera-Zambrano, 2020); and, on the other hand, the relationships between fields: we speak of two fields, academia and journalism, which both aspire to impose "the legitimate vision of the social world" (Benson & Neveu, 2005, p. 6; Hartley, 2017). Noticing this allows us to understand the motivations and incentives for action of the different actors involved.

Specifically, the research revealed differences within the journalistic field regarding how it should position itself in the face of an evaluation made by an external field (academia). These ideas were grouped into two poles: The first, preserving the field, presented discourses that question the legitimacy of academia, that ground coverage decisions on journalistic values such as relevance and timeliness, and consider media evaluation exclusively as a way to enforce electoral law. These discourses emerged to a greater extent from people with greater hierarchy and experience in journalism (i.e., people with greater economic and social capital). In contrast, the subverting pole was enriched mostly with considerations about how media benefits from obtaining feedback from a neutral actor external to the field, as well as the challenges that media owners' resistance and the journalistic field's lack of independence from politics present. These were discourses that emerged mainly from media people who, although less powerful, were not lacking in capital –particularly cultural capital. The discourses suggest that for this group, the incentives based on the symbolic capital emanating from the collaboration between journalists and academia are important.

The following recommendations can be drawn from the above points: The rich variety of discourses obtained suggests that those who intend to carry out a media observation project should, in

the first place, seek to understand the dynamics within the journalistic field and between the fields of journalism and academia. They should find out how the actors within the field interpret the project, as well as what their specific incentives are, which would include the formation of cultural capital, such as knowledge and skills, and symbolic capital, such as prestige and credibility. Secondly, a relationship must be built with the media during each of the different phases of the monitoring project: in the phase prior to implementation, clarifying the evaluation criteria and adjusting them if necessary; during implementation, providing timely feedback; and at the end of implementation, building a space for reflecting on the results. The table included in the results section provides a map of different possibilities in this regard, as well as listing their advantages and disadvantages.

As limitations of this study, it should be recognized, first, that the results and conclusions emanating from it come from a non-probabilistic sample of participants representative of a specific case: the reception in the journalistic field of a project devoted to the media monitoring of election campaign coverage. Therefore, although data collection reached theoretical saturation, these results are not generalizable. Nevertheless, they constitute a reflexive analysis susceptible to being transferred to other contexts. Second, this research was focused on the journalistic field and its relationship with the academic field, omitting other actors involved who should also be included in the design of this type of project and their evaluation of results: the audiences and the institutions sponsoring the project.

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