

Beyond Ink and Paper: the material and the symbolic in journalism¹

Muito além de tinta e papel: o material e o simbólico no jornalismo

Mucho más allá de tinta y papel: lo material y lo simbólico en el periodismo

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Abstract: Journalism is an activity that, beyond its material tangibility, encompasses a symbolic dimension. Seeking solely material, economic or functional explanations for understanding journalism helps in assessing specific situations, but runs the risk of overlooking many others. This study contemplates the inseparability of the material and symbolic dimensions in journalism, addressing three interrelated aspects: a) the material dimension, which often favors market aspects and, in recent years, is impacted by phenomena related to digital infotechnological transformations; b) the symbolic dimension and journalism as an activity of meaning production; and c) the idea of a hegemonic model of practiced journalism. The methodology adopted is a literature review combined with empirical observation. It is concluded that definitions and practices of journalism are strained by changes of both material and symbolic orders, demanding theoretical-interpretive research that does not neglect this condition.

Keywords:

Journalism, Discourses, Market, Hegemony, Contemporary

Resumo: O jornalismo é uma atividade que, além da concretude material, possui uma dimensão simbólica. Buscar explicações apenas materiais, econômicas ou funcionais para a compreensão

¹ This translation from a Portuguese original was AI-assisted.

do jornalismo, ajuda a avaliar algumas situações concretas, mas traz o risco de negligenciar outras tantas. Neste estudo reflete-se sobre a inseparabilidade das dimensões material e simbólica no jornalismo, abordando três aspectos inter-relacionados: a) a dimensão material, que tende a privilegiar aspectos de mercado e que, nos últimos anos, é atravessada por fenômenos ligados às transformações infotecnológicas digitais; b) a dimensão simbólica e o jornalismo como uma atividade de produção de sentidos; e c) a ideia de modelo hegemônico de jornalismo praticado. Adota-se como metodologia uma revisão de literatura associada a observação empírica. Conclui-se que as definições sobre jornalismo bem como sua prática encontram-se tensionadas por mudanças de ordem tanto material, quanto simbólica, exigindo pesquisas teórico-interpretativas que não negligenciem essa condição.

Palavras-chaves:

Jornalismo, Discurso, Mercado, Hegemonia, Contemporânea

Resumen: El periodismo es una actividad que, además de la concreción material, posee una dimensión simbólica. Buscar explicaciones solo materiales, económicas o funcionales para la comprensión del periodismo, ayuda a evaluar algunas situaciones concretas, pero trae el riesgo de desatender muchas otras. En este estudio se reflexiona sobre la inseparabilidad de las dimensiones material y simbólica en el periodismo, abordando tres aspectos interrelacionados: a) la dimensión material, que tiende a privilegiar aspectos de mercado y que, en los últimos años, es atravesada por fenómenos ligados a las transformaciones infotecnológicas digitales; b) la dimensión simbólica y el periodismo como una actividad de producción de sentidos; y c) la idea de modelo hegemónico de periodismo practicado. Se adopta como metodología una revisión de literatura asociada a la observación empírica. Se concluye que las definiciones sobre periodismo así como su práctica se ven tensionadas por cambios de orden tanto material, como simbólico, requiriendo pesquisas teórico-interpretativas que no desatiendan esa condición.

Palabras-clave:

Periodismo, Discurso, Mercado, Hegemonía, Contemporáneo

1. Introduction

Thinking about the material dimension of journalism as distinct from its symbolic dimension is tempting because it seemingly resolves troubling issues. With this distinction, one can attempt to understand phenomena linked to the objective economic material universe, apart from the symbolic universe of representations and subjectivities. Placing material and symbolic in irreconcilable spaces operating distinct logics of production, circulation, and consumption simplifies issues. Still, it is far from resolving them and risks failing to understand them in their multifactoriality.

Communication activities and journalistic practice have historically been crossed by a permanent tension between stability and changes, constituting a heterogeneous activity, subject to constant innovations and full of continuities, discontinuities, order, and dispersion (Pereira & Adghirni, 2011). In the last two decades, accelerated changes have been associated with infotecnological advances, investments in all communication sectors, transformation in conventional press financing modes, changes in the labor world, and the dominance of digital platform companies, which remain deregulated and impose a model where both traditional media and so-called alternative formats are integrated with them, do not control them. More than that, they have become dependent on the so-called big techs. This condition impacts not only communication and journalism but also contemporary democracies.

This scenario places the various cultural industries as production hubs riddled with market interests, raising questions such as: what (still) can be called journalism? What is journalism becoming? What are the limits/boundaries/interfaces between material and symbolic conditions in journalism? And what kind of journalism can result from these "confrontations"?

This study reflects on the relationship between material and symbolic in journalism processes and practices, considering its relevant role in the constitution of contemporary democracies. To this end, it presents the discussion addressing three topics thus distinct for didactic purposes: a) the material dimension in which we evaluate the space of material growth of communication and the consolidation of a "market journalism" format; b) the symbolic dimension in which we observe the meanings and the conception of journalism as discourse; and c) finally, we address the idea of hegemony as a dominant or reference model of journalistic production, this also in transformation and marked by coercion/seduction mechanisms of journalism producers and consumers.

2. Material Dimension: market as the locus of expansion of communication and journalistic production

Since the 1980s, the reconfiguration of capitalism driven by globalization and privatization has helped design a world marked by a neoliberal format with market openings and deregulation. Characteristics of capitalist reconfiguration include monopolistic formatting and the transfer of economic and political authority to commercial production and circulation systems (Bolaño, 2008; 2000).

In this scenario, the communications sector has expanded materially, offering the capitalist system exploitation spaces previously unimagined and benefiting from this offer. With a resized importance, media and forms of communication began to provide a variety of content in search of meeting various interests such as the needs of the general market, dominant economic-political groups, as well as the needs of the "owners" of the media - these also with market interests.

[...] Culture companies began to play a role not only as economic units of capital valuation of their owners, increasingly originating from other sectors, but also of the market in general, given their key position in the differentiation process. Thus, cultural producing, programming, and distributing entities are revealed as overvalued [...] Understanding the phenomenon of communication-oriented corporations must be addressed considering the broad articulation between media communication and advanced capitalism, knowing that contemporary cultural industries relate to the very functioning of markets. (Bolaño, 2008, pp. 72-73)

The close link between the press and capitalist order is not new: "The history of the press is the very history of the development of capitalist society" (Sodré, 1999, p. 1). However, in recent decades, what is new in the relationship between the press and capitalism is that the area of communication technologies receives considerable investments, in quantities even more significant than in other historical moments, being driven by digital infotecnological formats and the expansion of giant platform companies, the so-called big techs (Morozov, 2018; Zuboff, 2020), which have taken a central role in recent years, subjecting countries, modifying democracies, altering political processes, and making various sectors of production and circulation dependent. Here, it is necessary to recognize how much communication and journalistic production companies are involved in these formats provided by big tech companies.

Like other businesses in global capitalism, communication companies invest in both horizontal growth - encompassing various firms in the communication area; as well as vertical growth - encompassing areas not exactly of communication production, such as distribution, for example; and also diagonal growth, investing in businesses not linked to journalism or even communication, but which benefit from the media apparatus to generate resources, promote products and services, promote businesses, face competition, and exercise power, influencing political-legal decisions.

This condition deepens with the expansion and dependence on digital platform companies and implies profound changes in journalistic practice. Parallel - or overlapping - to the historical idea of the social role of the press that helped to legitimize the profession and constitute its values and the professional ethos of the journalist, emerges increasingly incontestable the defense of the economic survival of the media in a competitive market with fewer formal job positions in search of a flexible and multitasking professional. Adghirni (2012) argues that the field of journalism proper is shrinking to the detriment of the field of communication and questions what definition can legitimize the profession practiced under conditions of significant structural changes.

This scenario, where the material dimension gains prominence, strengthens marketing strategies concerning audience ratings, increases in clicks, and the pursuit of producing profitable content, even if it is necessary to give up ideas of social responsibility and relevant content for journalism. These forces are also linked to the spread of misinformation and the flood of content produced outside newsrooms, outside journalistic control, or an editorial line.

The media's growing attention to the market led to the emergence in the United States of the expression "market journalism" (Neveu, 2006) to define a set of changes that seek maximum profitability and redefine journalistic practice. Among the changes are the priority to sections most likely to maximize audiences (which causes the increase of so-called soft news and entertainment), the valuation of information with emotional content, the hybridization between editorial and advertising content, and the global trend toward the loss of newsroom autonomy compared to management departments (Andrade, 2015).

With "market journalism," the journalistic profession degenerates into a profession of communicators (Neveu, 2006). And journalism loses its borders with neighboring areas such as marketing, advertising, and public relations (Charron & Bonville, 2016).

In times of digital platforms, the issues remain material, with big tech companies promoting significant investments and expanding their actions. This requires analyses on concentration, commodification, and deregulation, even when these companies disguise themselves as clouds or something immaterial and more abstract.

Many analyses on capitalist reconfiguration, neoliberal format, market growth, and the consequent adoption by journalism of administrative marketing parameters seek to explain production in contemporary media, exploring the material dimension of communication. These are essential explanations, although they cannot exhaust the issues raised, as by concentrating on material aspects, they tend not to consider relevant symbolic issues that permeate both the production, circulation, and consumption of news.

Even journalism materializing in media vehicles and forms of communication and obeying business logics, the current scenario and the advancement of sizeable digital platform companies are besides material a phenomenon that sets in motion a discursive circulation that promotes the multiplatform environment and takes journalistic production - which is historical and contradictory - as naturalized, technical, and centered on the material. At the same time, it is produced, circulated, and consumed under the logic of a symbolic market.

3. Symbolic dimension: the space of representation growth

Ponte (2005) states that many studies that denounce the press as manipulative understand the news as autonomous from its production conditions. These views tend to privilege manifest content, seeing only the zones of luminosity and neglecting what is in the penumbra. Therefore, these studies prove insufficient.

For Silva (2006), the impossibility of translating reality as it happens does not mean that the press lies, invents, or tells untruths. It means that the world of journalism is constructed and reconstructed with subjective marks that are shared by the public, which makes it necessary to observe the symbolic dimension at play in the production of messages, their interpretation, and the construction of meanings in journalistic products (as in the rest of all communication products).

Reflecting on the form and meaning of the newspaper, Moiullaud and Porto argues:

At first glance, packaging and the object can be separated without the object losing its identity; however, does a perfume remain a perfume without its bottle? The material limit is

evident, and the symbolic limit? Does a gift remain without the ribbons and charms surrounding it?. (Moiullaud & Porto, 2002, p. 29)

Journalism is part of the industries of symbolic goods increasingly valued by capital. For Dantas (2011), it is around cultural industries that a robust economic system has been structured in recent decades, generating jobs and income. He remembers that cultural industry does not refer to culture in its ethical, aesthetic, or anthropological sense but to a specific way of producing culture that aims at profit for the agents involved in it. In the market model, instead of the term "cultural industry" of critical origin, "creative industry" or "creative economy" is more commonly used.

To reflect on cultural products and their symbolic dimension, we highlight three aspects: the issue of representation, journalism understood as discourse, and the reception process as an element of interaction in the productive system of meanings. It is worth noting that the idea developed here refers to the exact definition of a productive system in Verón (2004): the articulation between production and recognition of discourses.

3.1 Representation

In the French sociological tradition, there is a way of seeing the social fact as a "thing" and, simultaneously, a "representation." For this line of thought, social fact is always arbitrary, even the most human or rational phenomenon. The culture of a group as a symbolic system is also arbitrary. However, the notion of arbitrary should not be confused with the idea of gratuity, as symbolic systems are sociologically necessary since they derive their existence from the social conditions they are a product of and legitimize their acceptance by the significant functions they exercise.

The arbitrary character brings the capacity to involve agents in representations, beliefs, and symbols, making the arbitrariness go unnoticed and be adopted as natural. For Bourdieu (2009): "Every social activity that in a society has created for itself a structure and to which a group of men has specially devoted itself surely corresponds to a need of the life of that society" (p. 12).

Thus, even knowing the code does not constitute a sufficient condition to apprehend everything that happens, nor does it serve as an antidote to avoid being involved in the seduction of the symbolic.

Representation is a way of presenting what is absent, and it is in place of something else. For this reason, for some scholars, representation always implies alienation and loss of transparency. On the other hand, there is a perspective that highlights the constructive aspects of representation, stating that it organizes a society through the symbolic order. Representation thus constitutes a type of social reality.

Representation has the function of presenting objects, people, or events, facilitating interpretation. Moscovici (2010) says that it imposes itself with irresistible force, anchored in a structure present even before we begin to think, and emphasizes: "the invisible is inevitably more difficult to overcome than what is visible" (p. 40).

Studies that reject representation do so by usually highlighting its aspects of covering up the real. They consider representation manipulative and tend to believe in the real as an instance to be restituted as it is. They forget that the manipulation (in the literal sense) of reality is more complex than imagined since access to the real is always mediated by the symbolic. This forgetfulness can ignore that representations "contribute to the constitution, reproduction, and transformation of social relations of power and domination" (Fairclough, 2016, p. 20).

The news, at the moment, occupies the place of the fact that it is no longer there and is a form of representation of reality. It constitutes a kind of substitute formation that tries to place itself in the place of something else that is exterior to it. Journalism, although it has legitimized itself under the idea that it "represents" reality, actually "presents" what happened. That is journalism: a discourse about reality, a way of re-presenting the real under a tension of material and symbolic forces.

3.2 Journalism as Discourse

Journalism is an institution created to bring the world to the reader based on the belief that it is a transmitter of true accounts. Some factors help to explain this. First, one must consider the growth of empiricism in the 18th century, which led to the belief that truth can be found in reality. This idea that reality corresponds to a truth ready to be harvested is a consequence of the growth of the scientific method. In journalism, news was understood as the possibility of transforming the world into texts and images.

The literary trend of realism also influenced journalism to abandon the more romantic press practiced in the 18th century and adopt a "mirror of reality" model from the 19th century.

To these two factors is added the growth of the press as a communication company, which helped to consolidate valuable criteria for journalism such as impartiality and objectivity, creating a press model attached to the idea of absolute truth, which was generally adopted by Western media during the 20th century, a period in which the press achieved spectacular growth, essentially legitimized by this idea. For journalism to sustain itself as "capable of translating the truth of the facts," it uses strategies such as the use of the third person, the recurrence of quotes, interviews, photographs, tables... to create the "effect of the real" (Gomes, 2000, pp. 24-25).

The assumption of journalism produced under the aegis of objectivity, neutrality, and capability of reproducing truth has been questioned in recent years by the crossing of various factors such as the growth of an alternative and digital media ecosystem that rejects the idea of neutrality (Rovai, 2018; Fígaro, 2018; Andrade, 2020), the claim of social and cultural movements for journalism that recognizes inequalities and contributes to addressing them (Moraes, 2022), and the growth of misinformation that, industrialized, prevents a naive look at the idea of truth-telling. This is a dialectical and contradictory scenario.

It must be said that even when journalism defends the possibility of access to the real, language and discourse studies have long treated truth as a result of a symbolic struggle, assuming that words cannot account for meanings. Access to the real is always mediated and given in a symbolic order. Ponte (2005) states that more clearly in the last decades of the 20th century, what she calls three turns in social research occurred: the linguistic turn - which moves from the formal analysis of the text to the context of the text and discourse; the sociological turn - which included Bourdieu's concepts of field and habitus; and the cultural turn - which analyzes media in processes of identification and projection.

To these three turns is added the recognition of the category "emotion" in research environments also since the final decades of the 20th century, causing a rehabilitation of affectivity, pointing out reason and emotion as interconnected, and seeing terms such as "emotional turn," "affective turn," "emotional turn" with studies that observe the behavior of groups and how different emotions emerge and what they can provoke (Scheff, 2006; Lordon, 2015; Ahmed, 2017).

From the linguistic turn, it became possible to understand journalism as discourse. The objective here is to perceive it as a social practice that acquires specificities due to the actions of subjects subjected to the world of rules. However, those who create the objects are not

necessarily the subjects but the discourses and the laws of their functioning. Objects always speak from somewhere and do not speak alone; they are traversed by material and symbolic production conditions.

Journalism results from a process of production, circulation, and consumption of meanings where all the stages that constitute it and by it are constituted are interconnected in a discursive construction process. It is produced, circulated, and consumed under the material and symbolic market logic. Thus, it negotiates space and articulates meanings to achieve hegemony, to bring to itself the condition of builder of reality.

Thus, journalism also belongs to a discourse genre with underlying rules and conventions that preexist with the subject. According to Silva (2006), language is not ready for use, nor is the world organized clearly and perceptibly in the same way for everyone. Thus, a single language will not be able to say it. Only from the new conceptions inaugurated by Wittgenstein about the relationship of language with the world does a new perspective of studies for linguistics begin, as well as its application to journalism. Wittgenstein's ideas influenced an entire line of studies for which words no longer have a necessary connection with their referents. "The idea that truth is a copy of reality no longer has support. Statements are found within the 'patterns of rational acceptability' that people adhere to" (Silva, 2006, p. 79). The concept of "patterns of acceptability" refers to the messages we accept given the impossibility of access to the real, although we do not believe they can be entirely real.

Therefore, the world is not this space ready to be said, nor is it already given in advance. But it is constructed interactively and discursively. The journalistic fact is entirely built on discursive bases. That is, the statements reflect sense relations that are linguistic forms offered to the reader, but also mainly discursive modes put into action so that he can both know and recognize how the world is presented, considering the extra-discursive context.

The line of studies inaugurated with linguistics does not deny the existence of an objective world but argues that this world is organized and structured by language. The journalistic fact, constructed on discursive bases, is not reality but a construction about reality. Lopes (2008) says, "Western civilization solidified itself on the myth according to which truth is something concrete and not a construction accepted and shared, even if it is a lie." (p. 133). Gomes (2000, p. 30) suggests that words like "truth" and "true" could be replaced by "verisimilitude" and "credibility."

If the objects of the world are not created by us, on the other hand, signification is interactional. This brings up the point we address below: reception as a constituent element of the meaning production process.

3.3 Reception: a question of interpretation?

Being interested in journalistic discourse only from the point of view of production corresponds to trying to understand only part of the message. According to Charaudeau (2016), "Every act of language is an act of interactional exchange between two partners (communicating subject and interpreting subject) linked by a principle of intentionality [...]." (p. 08). Since messages are always elaborated for someone, understanding reception is a fundamental part of the process.

Bakhtin (1992) reminds us that enunciation is social. For him, every word has two faces because it is determined by the fact that it comes from someone and is directed to someone. It is, therefore, a product of the interaction between speaker and listener. "The interlocutor is constitutive of the very act of language production; in a certain way, he is co-enunciator of the text and not a mere decoder of messages" (Vizeu, 2003, p. 108). Each individual who integrates the audience, when interpreting the discourse from his world, can become a subject of meaning constitution. That is, the meaning is not determined in the message but is constituted in interaction with reception.

Understanding the role of reception as a fundamental part of the meaning of the constitution is to realize that this reception cannot be interpreted only based on marketing research that helps journalistic companies act in the market. This information is essential to reach an idea of the audience profile. On the other hand, it is crucial to be aware that reception is also constructed as part of the enunciation itself. The other to whom journalism is directed is not only a character-rich in concrete social indicators but someone who also exists in the enunciator's imagination.

Just as the journalist is not limited to reflecting reality, as he acts on it and thus contributes to directing it, reception is also active. There is always an intervention by producing and receiving subjects on discourse (this distinction between producer and receiver is made here for didactic purposes, knowing that these roles are interchangeable), impregnated with their cultures, values, knowledge, intentions, and interests. Benetti (2006) argues that saying and

interpreting are movements of meaning construction and, therefore, are affected by signification systems. Meaning is never only in what the enunciator elaborated, nor only in what the reception interpreted, but in an interaction between both. "Meanings are not tied to the text, nor do they emanate from the subject who reads; on the contrary, they result from a text/reader interaction" (Benetti, 2006, p. 4).

Any communicational interaction puts the issue of power at stake. However, power is not only on the side of the discourse producer. The power of discourse only happens in reception (or recognition, as Verón prefers to designate). In studying the power of a discourse, it is insufficient to analyze production. It becomes necessary to understand who is consuming it. For Verón (2004, p. 160), "the notion of 'power' of a discourse can only designate effects." Pinto (2002, p. 43) complements: "and these effects can only take the form of another meaning production." Thus, "power is the name of the system of relations between a discourse and its social conditions of recognition" (Verón, 2004, p. 59). Production and recognition are, therefore, the two poles that produce meaning.

To reflect on the adherence of reception to a discourse, we will resort in the next section to Gramsci's concept of hegemony.

4. Hegemony: mechanisms of domination/seduction

Formulated initially by Gramsci, hegemony refers to a multidimensional process that is not only domination but much more the idea of direction. The moral, intellectual, ethical, political, economic, cultural, and ideological direction a class manages to establish over the others. Hegemony occurs when the predominance of the needs and wills of a fraction of classes over the whole of the other classes is verified. Thus, when discussing hegemony, we quickly resort to the image of domination. In the hegemonic idea, a worldview belongs to it, even if it is originally from another group.

But Gramsci (2007) reminds us that hegemony is a result of a symbolic struggle that is domination but also seduction. Like Machiavelli's centaur, it works on both the beastly and human sides, combining force and persuasion to establish itself and become dominant. The media would be among the instruments that build and organize the worldview, the hegemony, becoming disseminators of a vision that, being from one class, intends to be seen as naturalized and inescapable (Moraes, 2008).

As part coercion, part seduction, hegemony operates by uniting material and symbolic arguments, using rational and emotional justifications. It includes part of the required demands and packages everything in seduction packages in search of consensus and to avoid rupture situations. Trying to identify the seduction of the American lifestyle model, Gramsci states:

Americanism is an ideology manifested in the 'life in cafés,' which can appear in the form of makeup, a superficial foreign fad, while capitalism per se does not undergo any alteration, but simply acquires a 'new look' in this Americanism climate. (Gramsci, 2007, pp. 317-318)

The format of the mainstream press becomes hegemonic by uniting material and symbolic needs - its own and the public's - into a single type of product. The so-called "life in cafés," the consensual, even light and fun, persuasion side can be identified, for example, in the increase of soft news and entertainment content and in the journalistic treatment that arouses sensations. Marcondes Filho (1989) had already pointed out: "All newspapers are, some more, some less, sensationalistic" (p. 29). He referred to the sensations that the press arouses in search of mobilizing audiences.

All discourses, being constructions of meaning, are ideological. Thus, both the constructions of discourses intended to seduce the public and those that want to alert it to the risks of this seduction are ideological, although their authors often do not realize it. Pinto (2002) says that Plato criticized those who replaced the search for knowledge and truth with satisfaction with plausible simulacra, or as the philosopher called them: "interested simulacrum." "Plato, like most people [...] believed that his discourses were not simulacra in the sense he criticized. He was an illustrious victim of ideological blindness" (Pinto, 2002, p. 13).

To think about the combination of force and seduction in a process in which hegemonics and the so-called subalterns relate, Canclini (2011) uses the term "complicity." "Hegemonic, subaltern: heavy words that helped us name the divisions between men but not to include the movements of affection, participation in solidarity, or complicit activities in which hegemonics and subalterns need each other" (Canclini, 2011, p. 347).

The great legacy of Gramsci's notion is to remind us that the seduced by discourse is not a victim; he participates in the game, allows himself to be seduced, is complicit, and is also an actor.

5. Final Considerations: the world is neither only material nor only symbolic

Journalism materializes in products for various media. Transforming into something material, it becomes an object of study more easily identified, observed, and measured. It is no coincidence that quantitative, empiricist and descriptive research on media and communication products multiply, often being little interpretative.

Concerns about a more pragmatic, functionalist order and questions such as "What is it for?" "what function does it have?" meets a certain number of necessary studies for the field. However, they can harden views and not exhaust the concerns that continue to arise in communication research, which always escapes more instrumental questions, revealing the symbolic dimension in journalism.

Since the 1980s, a more qualitative approach in studies has been stimulated by linguistic, sociological, cultural, and emotional turns, and with these, by issues brought by the expansion of reception studies, discourse analysis, and sociocultural and identity movements, for example.

The complexity of journalistic production, circulation, and consumption in the contemporary world, where communication and politics are central, and its multidimensional character constitutes a field of diverse forces contributing to making temporary or even ineffective explanations that seek easy answers. Questions that aim to understand journalism cannot be content with only material justifications and must consider points we evaluated in this study: that reality is only reached through language, that meaning is produced in the interaction between production and reception, that the public is not a victim but an accomplice of the communication it receives/reworks, that the variables at play in communication are many and their relationship is complex. A newspaper is a subject and subjected. Producing it is more linked to the symbolic than a more administrative view might want. It is also more limited by language restrictions than a more romantic conception might desire.

Journalism is a social activity that is too important for its critical reflection to be restricted to economic-business logic alone and to consider symbolic as something of lesser value, dispensable, or useless. Much beyond ink and paper, journalism is material and symbolic, a coexistence in permanent tension and negotiation, requiring studies that consider this condition to understand the undeniable interrelations between journalism and contemporary democracies.

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