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## ACKNOWLEDGMENT MODALITIES, PROFESSIONAL TRAJECTORY, AND POLITICAL POSITION IN THE ARGENTINE JOURNALIST FIELD

MODALIDADES DE RECONOCIMIENTO, TRAYECTORIA PROFESIONAL Y POSICIÓN POLÍTICA EN EL CAMPO PERIODÍSTICO ARGENTINO

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### ABSTRACT

The article studies different acknowledgment modalities in which Argentine journalists validate media and colleagues as more important ones. Characterization of the journalist's field is developed in terms of the professional trajectory and political positioning, considering correspondences between social space positions and the definition of hierarchical social places. A quantitative methodology was applied. Surveys made on 221 journalists led to the confection of a taxonomy in which their social field could be illustrated. It is considered that the professional space can translate a series of asymmetrical references from established positions to the "newcomers". These references are not politically neutral; they tend to favor conservative media. On the contrary, the acknowledgment of colleagues as consecrated involves a political segmentation, in which those superior positions in the social space are validated, but on the bases of a political differentiation between proximity to the Frente de Todos or Juntos por el Cambio, Argentina's two principal political forces. The analysis describes the superposition between media and journalists mentioned in the survey and the taxonomy. In this way, the mapping of the social space seeks to find correspondences between the actor's representations – which symbolically consecrate both media and colleagues- and their places in the professional's field structure.

**Keywords:** Argentine journalists; Social field; Professional trajectory; Political position; Acknowledgment modalities; Agenda building; Gatekeepers.

## RESUMEN

El artículo indaga diferentes modalidades de reconocimiento a través de las cuales periodistas argentinos validan diferencialmente a medios y colegas como los más importantes. Se desarrolla una caracterización del campo periodístico en términos de la trayectoria profesional y el posicionamiento político, estudiando correspondencias entre las ubicaciones en el espacio social y la definición de quienes ocupan las posiciones jerárquicas. Se implementó una metodología cuantitativa, de encuestas a 221 periodistas, que permitió elaborar una taxonomía en la que ilustrar la composición de su campo. Se sostiene que el espacio profesional consigue trasladar una serie de referencias asimétricas desde las posiciones establecidas a los "recién llegados" que no son políticamente neutras sino que favorecen a medios de postura política conservadora. En cambio, el reconocimiento de los colegas consagrados tendería a una segmentación política, en la que aquellas posiciones superiores en el espacio social son validadas, pero bajo diferenciaciones según la cercanía al Frente de Todos o a Juntos por el Cambio, las dos principales fuerzas políticas argentinas. De esta manera, el mapeo del espacio social busca ubicar correspondencias entre las representaciones de los actores -que consagran simbólicamente a colegas y a medios- y su ubicación en la estructura de su campo profesional.

**Palabras clave:** Periodistas argentinos; Campo; Trayectoria profesional; Posicionamiento político; Modalidades de reconocimiento; Agenda *building*; *Gatekeeper*.

## MODALIDADES DE RECONHECIMENTO, CARREIRA PROFISSIONAL E POSIÇÃO POLÍTICA NO CAMPO JORNALÍSTICO ARGENTINO

### RESUMO

O artigo pesquisa diferentes modalidades de reconhecimento por meio das quais os jornalistas argentinos validam diferencialmente meios de comunicação e colegas como os mais importantes. Desenvolve-se uma caracterização do campo jornalístico em termos de carreira profissional e posicionamento político, estudando correspondências entre locais no espaço social e a definição daqueles que ocupam posições hierárquicas. Foi implementada uma metodologia quantitativa, de inquéritos a 221 jornalistas, que permitiu a elaboração de uma taxonomia para ilustrar a composição da sua área. Argumenta-se que o espaço profissional consegue transferir uma série de referências assimétricas das posições estabelecidas para os "recém-chegados" que não são politicamente neutros, mas privilegiam a mídia com postura política conservadora. Por outro lado, o reconhecimento de colegas consagrados tenderia a uma segmentação política, em que essas posições superiores no espaço social são validadas, mas sob diferenciações conforme a proximidade com a Frente de Todos ou Juntos pela Mudança, as duas principais forças políticas. Dessa forma, o mapeamento do espaço social busca localizar correspondências entre as

representações dos atores -que simbolicamente consagram colegas e a mídia- e sua localização na estrutura de seu campo profissional.

**PALAVRAS-CHAVE:** Jornalistas argentinos; Campo; Carreira profissional; Posicionamento político; Modalidades de reconhecimento; Construção de agenda; Gatekeeper.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The importance of the dynamics of journalistic work on thematic selection in the media has been increasingly acknowledged from different approaches. While some research has drawn attention to the self-representation of journalists when privileging issues related to politics or the economy (Boczlowski; Mitchelstein, 2015), other works have delved into the impact of new communication technologies on the workplace, the rights of journalists, and news production routines (Martini; Luchessi, 2004). Meanwhile, already traditional theoretical currents such as framing or agenda-building have given an analytical space to these practices, linking them to a broad set of symbolic elements (Amadeo, 2008) or the thematic translation from the media to the public (McCombs, 2007).

This relatively optimistic panorama contrasts, at least in Argentina, with two important vacancies. On the one hand, to date, there is little research history, particularly quantitative, on journalistic work (Amado and Bongiovanni, 2016), its hierarchies, practices, and representations. On the other hand, the acknowledgment of the influence of the profession on the construction of news has received a scarcely sociological interpretation, in which analyses that hardly place journalists in a structured, asymmetrical field, which is updated in the professional dispositions and in the meanings that, for their actors, give meaning to their work and the news character of certain elements of social reality (Barba, 1995), tend to predominate. Although Bourdieu's definition of the journalistic field's claim to monopolize legitimate information constitutes a recurring bibliographical reference, few research works have aimed at mapping this social space.

At the same time, the public -and sometimes academic- discussion about journalism has tended to highlight its relationship with partisan politics, the ambiguities of that link, and how editorial lines and political alignments affect media coverage. Although journalists themselves tend to emphasize their distance from ideologically opposed media, it is worth asking how much these positions segment the hierarchies that structure their professional field. Thus, both the journalistic trajectory -that is, the individual incorporation that each journalist makes of their location in the field- and the political position make up two segmentation variables that could influence how journalists represent the social space in which they participate and, especially, those who acknowledge in the upper hierarchical scales as hierarchical leaders of the field.

In this work, this problem will be researched by carrying out a general mapping of this field, in which it will be described how journalists themselves build references about the most important media and colleagues. It will seek to account for the intersections between the position they occupy in terms of these two variables and who they place in hierarchical spaces of their profession, whether in collective (media) or individual (other journalists) terms.

The article provides, first, a brief historical contextualization and, then, a series of conceptual and methodological clarifications. The analysis describes a taxonomy of the Argentine journalistic field, which illustrates the consecration of media and journalists.

## **1.2. OBJECTIVES**

The general objective of this article seeks to account for the incidence of the professional career and identity of Argentine journalists in 2021 on the differentiated recognition of media and colleagues.

This objective requires, in turn, three specific objectives:

1. Describe media and peer recognition modalities as those of greatest importance.
2. Characterize Argentine journalists according to their dissimilar degrees of professional careers.
3. Differentiate Argentine journalists according to their political position.

The hypothesis that guides the analysis maintains that the Argentine journalistic field effectively manages to transfer to its members a hierarchy of media and journalists, who have relative acceptance beyond the valuation that is held of them. In this way, beyond the political-party segmentation and the dissimilar degree of trajectory, there is a certain homogeneity in terms of the established positions. At least concerning the media -although not necessarily to individual journalists- these hierarchical positions correspond to journalistic companies with a clear orientation in opposition to the current government of the Frente de Todos and close to the opposition of Juntos por el Cambio, the ruling party in the 2015-2019 period.

## **1.3. Transformations in journalistic work practices and media acknowledgment**

Research works on changes in journalism in recent decades have focused on two major themes. On the one hand, the impact of communication technologies on professional work has been extensively researched. If the 1990s had been marked by the growing professionalization of the field, from the 2000s greater alterations in labor practices were witnessed, marked by a greater physical distance from the sources, an acceleration of the informative temporality (Galup, 2019), as well as increasingly degraded working conditions (Edo, 2019). These changes modify the traditional image of journalistic newsrooms and the daily closing of editions, as well as the roles that structured the workspace (Monje; Rivero and Zanotti, 2020). However, it is not so clear how much the representations and expectations of

journalists have shifted, especially in terms of their expected relationships with the audience, political parties, and dominant sectors.

On the other hand, attention has been drawn to the changes in journalistic companies. The growing financialization favored the emergence or consolidation of media conglomerates in Latin America (Segura, 2014). Argentina was not an exception and the process, even with varied rhythms, has continued to the present. Journalists not only have to deal with changes in their work routines but also with employers that participate in diversified activities and that have dimensions that separate them from other smaller media (Monje; Rivero and Zanotti, 2020). Especially in the 2000s, the emergence of blogs and, later, social networks, cast doubt on the ability of these large companies to set the agenda (Becerra, 2014). However, the optimistic diagnoses of that time do not seem to have been confirmed empirically.

Besides changes in the profession and companies, interactions with partisan networks and political authorities have also focused academic attention. In the Argentine case, the discussion about the impact of the media on public opinion -and eventually on elections- peaked during the governments of Cristina Fernández de Kirchner (2007-2015). Broadly speaking, the main Argentine media have tended towards a hostile relationship with Peronism -and, in particular, with Kirchnerism<sup>1</sup> (Giarracca; Teubal; Palmisano, 2008)-, favoring a complacent view of the Cambiemos/Juntos por el Cambio coalition (Gené; Vommaro, 2017), which led to the presidency in 2015 and could not keep it in 2019.

Before delving into the conceptual tools that allow understanding of the journalistic field, a brief presentation of the main actors will be made, taking into account their dissimilar trajectory and their editorial line.

*Clarín*, *La Nación*, and *Infobae* make up the three main opposition references. In terms of semi-annual visits to its websites, *Infobae* would have had just over 23 million in the first half of 2020, with values a little lower in the case of *Clarín*. *La Nación* exceeded 18 million (Zunino, 2021). The *Clarín* group - whose first issue dates back to 1945 - is the most important media conglomerate in the country, which, from the 1980s onwards, has expanded through the acquisition of provincial newspapers, radio stations, audiovisual media, and telecommunications (Aruguete; Zunino, 2013). Its relations with Kirchnerism were conflictive, especially after the approval of the Audiovisual Communication Services Law, whose implementation was cut short. As a newspaper, *Clarín* historically had a generalist image combined with a self-presentation that tended to emphasize the journalistic objectivity of its coverage. For just over a decade, this representation has been altered and, today maintains a clear opposition profile. Until a few years ago, *La Nación* (founded in 1870) built a newspaper profile of the economic and cultural elites of the country, with a clear conservative ideological sign (Schuttenberg; Fontana, 2010). Unlike *Clarín*, it is not

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<sup>1</sup> The Frente de Todos is the government coalition that brings together Peronism, progressive, and left-wing sectors, which triumphed in the 2019 Argentine presidential elections. Juntos por el Cambio governed between 2015 and 2019, with a center-right and right-wing trend

such a large media conglomerate, although it has launched a television news channel, with a strongly oppositional editorial line. Finally, Infobae, much less studied in the academic literature, emerged in 2002 as an online news portal. For some years it was associated with radio stations and a television channel. Currently, it competes strongly with the Clarín and La Nación websites. Its editorial line has traditionally been right-wing (Fernández Aparici, 2020). Although editorial columns of different ideological persuasion can be found on the portal, the predominance of conservative opinions -especially on economic matters and human rights- is usually a characteristic of this media outlet.

Among the media close to the ruling Frente de Todos, *Página/12* stands out, whose website would have had almost 9 million visits in the first half of 2020 (Zunino, 2021). The newspaper was founded in 1987 with a clear progressive profile, which recovered human rights and militancy slogans from the 1970s and stood out for a different style from the main newspapers (Raffo, 1992). During the Kirchner administrations (2003-2015), it gradually approached Peronism, a trend that deepened with the acquisition of the newspaper by a group linked to porteño Justicialism (Ardisana and Britez, 2021). Besides *Página/12*, other smaller media outlets close to the Frente de Todos received mentions: *El Destape*, a portal that has had strong growth since 2015, with an agenda clearly opposed to the then government of *Juntos por el Cambio*; *Tiempo Argentino*, a cooperative newspaper recovered by its workers; and C5N, the news channel of the Indalo Group, which usually has good television rating measurements<sup>2</sup> and which also includes the news site *minutouno* and the financial newspaper *Ámbito Financiero*.

On top of these two media series, those surveyed reported some spaces that were not so identified in terms of editorial line: *elDiario.ar* and *Radio con Vos*. The first was launched in Argentina in 2020 at the initiative of a Spanish group of the same name. *Radio con Vos* has been broadcasting since 2015. Both are characterized by including journalists from different editorial lines and are presented as a third possibility compared to the other media. Given the relative weight of their mentions, they have been included separately in the analysis.

### **3.2. Theoretical framework: from theories of public opinion to the notion of field**

At least since the 1970s, the news production process has received increasing attention from different theories of public opinion. Among them, agenda building and framing stand out.

Understanding that the media as neutral social actors has the consequence of underestimating the role they play in the elaboration of political decisions (Cohen, 1963). In this sense, framing theory provides a significant theoretical perspective to study media frames, as they are patterns of cognition, interpretation, selection, and exclusion of symbols that organize discourse (Gitlin, 2003). Regarding the frames of the journalists, the perspective of Etman (1993) can be considered, who defines it as the values and criteria that they apply when preparing the news, whether they are

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<sup>2</sup> See: <https://www.ambito.com/espectaculos/c5n/el-canal-mas-visto-del-prime-time-2021-n5346486>

their own or that of the company. In this way, a way of defining and interpreting a theme is promoted. In addition to considering the values of journalists, the frames represent the contexts in which the events are presented. The narration used to build the news responds to the cultural and ideological contexts in which they are inscribed, and in which the hegemonic positions define what is newsworthy. These positions necessarily involve the hierarchization of certain media -and their personification in colleagues. However, the framing perspective is usually used in case studies and at a micro-level -often in the analysis of specific news pieces- that do not always manage to prove the link with the asymmetries that structure professional journalistic work.

On the other hand, the agenda building theory, unlike the agenda-setting theory that analyzes the establishment of the agenda and the hierarchy of the news in its first, moves from the concept of an establishment to the construction of the agenda (Aruguete, 2015). The implications of this passage allow us to deepen and complicate the social relationships and interactions that are put into play in the process of making news.

Within the social fabric that makes up the news, it is the journalists, as professionals dedicated to the journalistic activity, who prepare the news based on their representations, ideologies, and practices (Sigal, 1973). The activity of journalists is not neutral and newsrooms, as hierarchical spaces that create symbolic environments, are fundamental to understanding news production. Routines make up socialization processes that condition certain practices, attitudes, and conceptions about the role of the media and the journalistic role itself. Following Sigal (1973), the representation that journalists have of themselves and their work responds to the interactions they have with editors, colleagues, resources, and expectations.

Following this line, the particular position of the media -and journalists- regarding the circulation of information considered relevant (issues) has been described from the figure of the gatekeeper. Gatekeeping theory refers to the selection and access control of information. Gatekeepers can decide what information is allowed to pass or what is blocked (Lewin, 1947). They have the ability to both initiate and establish the thematic agenda by selecting the topics and arranging the order of relevance assigned to each one. In turn, they determine the permanence time of the topics in a media outlet, selecting which are the dimensions that define it. Ultimately, they would be the ones who decide which are the most important issues, their attributes, and their establishment periods. Tuchman (2013) identifies the gatekeeper as the origin of news production, in which professionals are part of a hierarchical structure in which they are assigned a role in the construction of the news. In this sense, the media and professionals are cultural references.

From a sociological perspective, this specific social location of journalists resembles the alleged legitimate monopolization of the circulation of information (Bourdieu, 1996). This work seeks to delve into the description of journalistic work based on field theory, complementing previous approaches to news production with this structuring dimension, in which the professional career would tend to accompany certain dispositions and representations (Bourdieu, 1996).

Indeed, the place that journalists occupy in the hierarchical structure of their workplaces as well as in the general acknowledgment of their peers defines the weight they will have in decision-making. Regarding this, Bourdieu is enlightening. His analysis of the journalistic field allows us to realize that, on the one hand, the autonomy of a media outlet is measured by the capacity of income from advertising and the State, and the degree of concentration of advertisers, on the other hand, the position that the media outlet occupies among others, as an intellectual, commercial media outlet, etc. Regarding journalists, their ability depends on their position within the media outlet that determines their status, and, finally, on their ability to produce the news.

Referring to the media as hierarchical spaces shows that they are not homogeneous spaces. The distinction between the newcomers and the established ones is defined by the prestige within the field that marks the legitimate power of the agents to place themselves above others in a hierarchical manner. The space occupied responds to the resources that the agents can effectively implement to establish their interactions. Therefore, the acquired positions respond to the volume of capital, its structure, and the trajectory of these properties (Bourdieu, 1996). Positions are the development of competition to reach certain positions within the field, to achieve or maintain a monopoly of authority (Bourdieu, 1996). Regarding the journalistic field, Bourdieu explains that competition within this field leads professionals to maintain constant surveillance of the activity of their colleagues. Through certain resources such as the lists of the best programs, journalistic intellectuals seek to impose a vision of the field, imposing assessment principles.

In this sense, we consider that the journalistic field is constituted by the acquired and hierarchical positions occupied by professionals. The representations of themselves and their colleagues respond to the symbolic capital that they possess as holders of the legitimate authority to define the classification of visions of the field. It is to be expected, therefore, that those consecrated in the field will have a certain capacity to transfer practical guidelines, dispositions (*habitus*), and symbology to the "newcomers".

This perspective complicates gatekeeping theory by accounting for how some can occupy this role to select topics of public interest, either by enabling or blocking information, but above all, because of the symbolic capacity they have to set the rules of the game in the journalistic field, that is, by elaborating expectations and references for newcomers. Second, analyzing the positions of journalists acknowledged by their colleagues can provide indicators of how this status recognition interacts with the ideological positions they hold. In this way, the study of acknowledgment modalities of media and peers mediates between the symbology that journalists daily put into practice and the structure of their field, which they update both in their workplaces and in broader, indirect, and not necessarily personalized relations with those figures that represent dissimilar positions in their social space. In the following section, the methodology used to describe these methods of valorization developed by Argentine journalism will be delved into.

## 2. METHODOLOGY

Carrying out quantitative research in the journalistic field must necessarily deal with a series of difficulties. The media often carry out surveys on the importance given to journalists by their peers but this information hardly reaches academic standards. Meanwhile, the state and university production of quantitative data has increased in recent years regarding the consumption of cultural industries or their composition, but the conditions of their workers and the material and symbolic hierarchies between them, at least in Argentina, remains vacant area. Some antecedents have advanced in the construction of quantitative information on the representations of journalists but they present little conceptual complexity (Amado and Bongiovanni, 2016). As a consequence, no sampling frame presents the basic distributions for the elaboration of a representative sample.

To contact journalists, a base of journalists was created following quotas derived from the two segmentation variables (the political position of the media outlet and its installation in the field). 67 media outlets with a national agenda were defined, located in nine provinces, besides the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires. Then, a database of 896 journalists was compiled, bringing together cases from diverse backgrounds, with dissimilar professional hierarchies -whether formal, in the structure of the media outlet, or informal, through esteemed public acknowledgment. The journalists were contacted through social networks. Three rounds were carried out, obtaining 221 responses - just under 10% acceptance, which accounts for a low response rate. The survey was conducted between June 18<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup>, 2021<sup>3</sup>.

The resulting sample brought together journalists from 113 different media from graphic, radio, television, and digital portals, as well as workers from large conglomerates with small spaces. About 42% of the sample was under 35 years old, another 40% was between 36 and 50, and the remaining 18 points were older than that age. 56% of the sample was made up of male journalists. 83% had some type of higher, university, or tertiary education. In terms of their job hierarchy, just under 57% of the sample held writing or similar positions. 9.5% said they were section chiefs; around 24% were editors, and almost 10% represented senior positions (deputy director or director). Concerning seniority, only 13% had less than 5 years of experience, a quarter between 5 and 10, almost a third between 11 and 20, and the remaining 30%, had more than 20 years of experience. Of course, these results cannot be considered as a reflection of the distribution of the journalistic field, although they did contribute some heterogeneity to the sample. In any case, the use of percentage comparisons was problematic as a way of illustrating the structuring of this social space and its symbolic provisions. It was decided to form a taxonomy, in

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<sup>3</sup> This research is part of the work of the @Agendas group, of the Political Science Career, Faculty of Social Sciences, Universidad de Buenos Aires. Director: Daniel Cabrera. Members: Maria Eugenia Tesio, Facundo Rivero, Nicolás Florio, Leonela Infante, Javier Nuñez, Macarena Parodi Gómez, Eliana Romano, Santiago Baez, Agostina Napoli, Ezequiel Jáuregui, Luisina Marchetti, Camila Teitelbaum, Sofia Montorfano, Iván Lysionek, Rocío Aguilera, Lihue Da Silva, Hermes Bouza, Iael Guelar, Emilia Kaczmarczyk, Felipe Sagastume, Eliana Toyos, Milagros Cabrera, Natalia Brítez, Macarena González Kelly, Adrián Miranda, Soledad Camardo, Joaquín Lovizio, Nuri Zanini, Leonel Baez, Rocío Di Lucía, Rodrigo Ardisana, Lucas Villa, Leandro Bruni, Fiorela Ríos, Daniel Andrada, Nicolás Fernández..

which the structuring of the field based on the two cut-off variables overlaps with the references of the journalists about their colleagues and the most important media.

The taxonomy was made by bringing together the professional position of the respondents with their distance from the two main political coalitions (FdT and JxC). Two summation indexes were constructed, whose results allowed the location of each journalist in the axes that accounted for each of these variables. The operationalization of the professional position took into account the position currently held (director/deputy director; editor; writer or similar in audiovisual media) and seniority. On the other hand, the proximity to each political force was deduced from the opinion regarding Alberto Fernández and Horacio Rodríguez Larreta, to which was added the editorial line of the main media outlet in which they work. The difference between images of these two leaders, added to the score given to the media outlet, allowed the construction of a simple summation index. Although this way of defining the political position of the surveyed journalists -the third specific objective of this research- supposes a certain amount of imputation, it was reconcilable with a data construction instrument (survey), in which few questions were included to increase the response rate. Meanwhile, to define the political position of the journalists who received the most mentions from their colleagues, a review of their recent trajectory was used, bringing together the media in which they work and publications or statements from recent years.

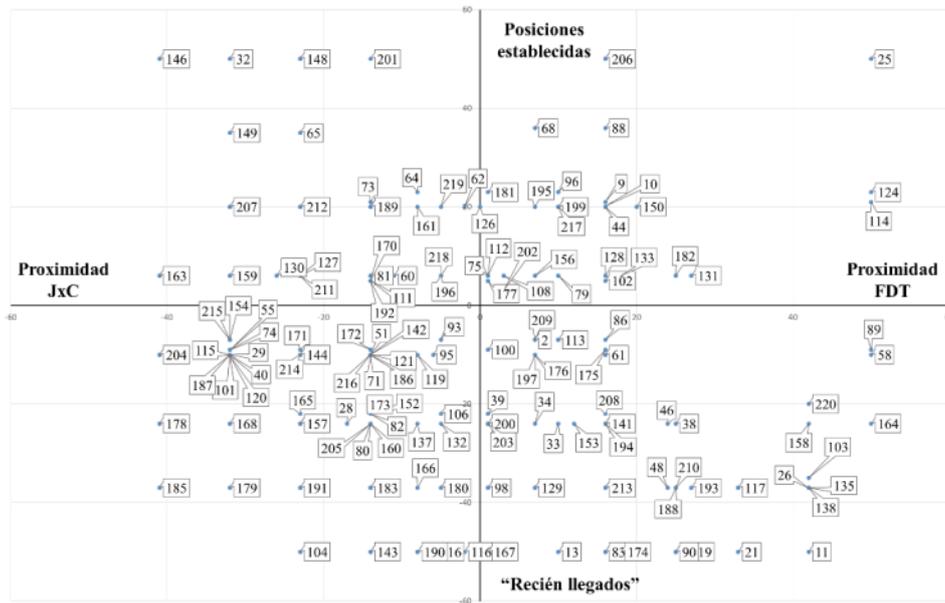
Concerning the workspaces, although the opposition media tend to have a marked conservative line while the official ones maintain progressive positions, these categories are relatively foreign to the Argentine political spectrum –or, at least, the actors rarely identify themselves in those terms. Therefore, the categories "distant" or "close" to the two main political coalitions have been privileged. On the other hand, the eminently political-ideological meanings (progressive, conservative, or similar terms) have been relegated, limiting them only to expository purposes during the analysis and when the media outlet exhibits a clear location in that editorial line.

### **3. RESULTS**

#### **3.1. Distribution of the journalistic field**

As mentioned, the surveyed journalists were placed in taxonomy, in which to illustrate the affinities between their location in the field (professional hierarchy and political position) and the acknowledgment modalities of media and peers. Figure 1 displays the big picture. The polar categories "newcomers" and "established positions" recover the traditional contrast of Bourdieu that accounts for the hierarchy within the fields. Meanwhile, the horizontal axis accounts for the proximity to Juntos por el Cambio and Frente de Todos.

**Figure 1.**  
*Taxonomy of Argentine journalists, 2021*



**Source:** Own elaboration.

Despite the absence of probabilistic sampling, the respondents were located in relatively dissimilar positions in the taxonomy, covering a good part of its space. The "newcomers" predominate over those of higher professional hierarchy - which would be expected to occur in a real distribution. The affinity with Juntos por el Cambio tends to increase among those in higher positions, while in the lower strata, a more balanced panorama is presented. From this distribution in the spaces of the taxonomy, we will seek to describe the coincidence of their positions in the dual structuring of the field (professional and political) with the constructed representations of media hierarchies.

### 3.2. Acknowledged media

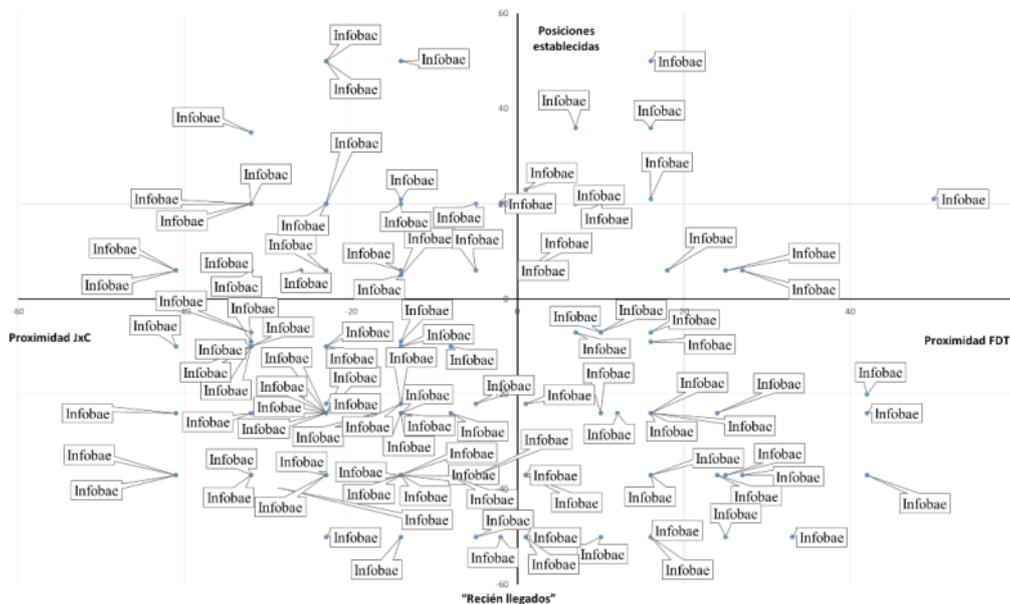
As anticipated, the hypothesis that orders the analysis is based on a double stratification of the journalistic field, according to a professional career and political position. These two segmentation variables do not affect the social representations of the respondents in the same way, which postulate who occupies each space -more or less hierarchical- of their discipline. While the professional trajectory tends to integrate the subjects in a shared set of dispositions and meanings, it would be expected -or, at least, this is how the doxa that journalists and the audience seem to share presumes - that political identification will act constituting opposing poles. In other words, while the elements of professional training would homogenize journalists, the partisan position would divide them into (sub)fields, which would be conceived as dissimilar to each other.

However, this double segmentation turns out to be too mechanical and the professional trajectory is far from contributing to a relatively similar set of representations with total alienation from their political concerns. What is presented, instead, is an integration into the journalistic field that is more effective than the

apparent political oppositions. To describe it, the taxonomy presented in the previous section will be illustrated by overlapping on it the mentions of the media that received the most recognition. The exhibition follows a political order: first, those media that oppose the Frente de Todos will be reported; then it will be continued by the official ones, and, finally, by what is located in an intermediate space.

*Infobae* (115 responses), *La Nación* (87 responses), and *Clarín* (60 responses) received a greater number of mentions than the other media. The cross between the position in the taxonomy and the separate reference to those media will be illustrated<sup>4</sup>. Figure 2 describes the mentions of *Infobae*:

**Figure 2.**  
*Taxonomy of Argentine journalists by mentions to Infobae, 2021*



**Source:** Own elaboration.

The references to *Infobae* stand out for their transversal nature: journalists located in all the quadrants of the taxonomy acknowledged it as one of the most important media outlets in Argentina. Indeed, no considerable differences are noted in terms of the trajectory: both journalists from hierarchical positions and “newcomers” referred to the site in similar proportions. In political terms, those who sympathize with *Juntos por el Cambio* show a higher density of responses. However, the adherents to the current ruling party also acknowledged *Infobae*, symbolically recreating its consecrated position. It should be noted that *Infobae* was the only media outlet with such a wide dispersion of responses, which indicates that the modalities of

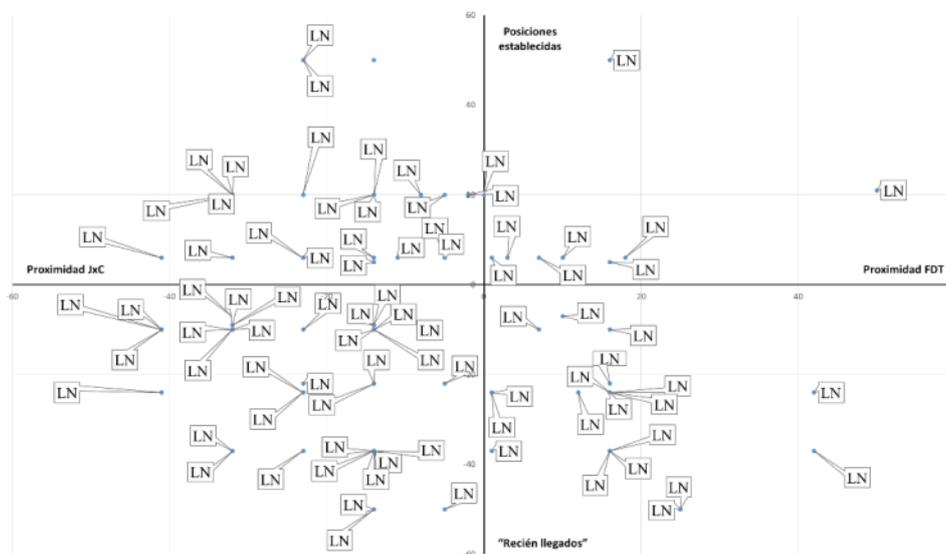
<sup>4</sup> Full versions of the taxonomy are included in the annex.

differential valuation of one outlet over the others are relatively autonomous from partisan identities. Certainly, the answer does not necessarily indicate approval about the style of the media outlet, its editorial line, or its professional practices; it does exhibit an ordering character of the field, in which the asymmetric location par excellence -a means of transversal acknowledgment- is granted to a portal with a conservative political position.

Figure 3 illustrates the references to La Nación -the second most named media outlet by those surveyed:

**Figure 3.**

*Taxonomy of Argentine journalists by mentions to La Nación, 2021*

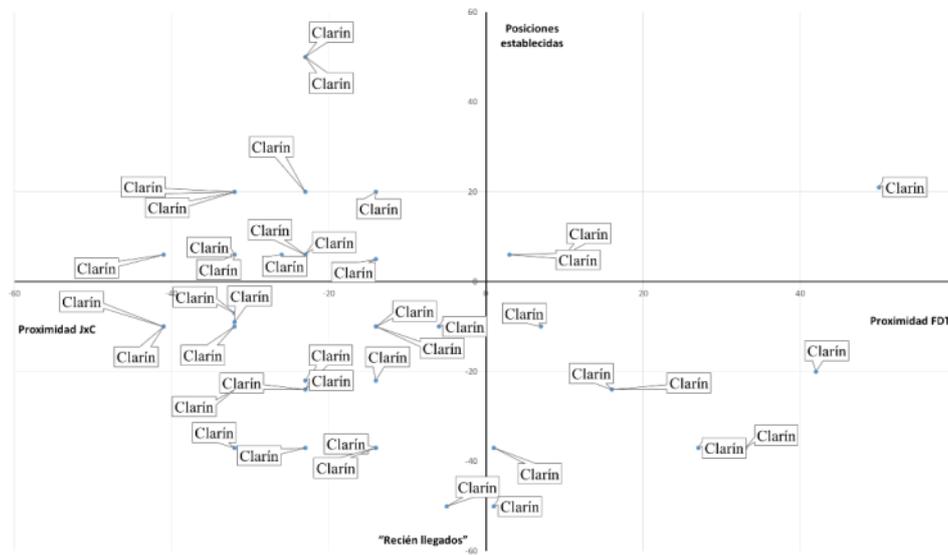


**Source:** Own elaboration.

Certainly, the mentions were more limited than those of Infobae while exhibiting a greater concentration on the political spectrum related to Juntos por el Cambio. It should be noted that the traditional image of the newspaper La Nación is associated with an elite newspaper, even though its editorial positions have had certain ambiguities over the decades (Sidicaro, 1993). However, its recognition is presented, although diminished, among journalists related to the ruling party, particularly in subordinate positions in terms of their careers. For the rest, La Nación has elaborated a presentation of itself as a canon of style ("doctrine tribune", in the words of its editorials), although in recent years it has considerably altered its forms.

Of greater interest are the answers related to *Clarín*, the main media conglomerate in the country:

**Figure 4.**  
*Taxonomy of Argentine journalists by mentions to Clarin, 2021*



**Source:** Own elaboration.

Despite its business weight, the mentions of *Clarín* were less than those of the other two media outlets with a similar editorial line. Although in public discussion, *Clarín* usually appears as a synonym of the large media groups, its acknowledgment by journalists would be, even partially, distanced from its business weight. On the other hand, the set of references is much more segmented, in political terms, than those of *La Nación* and, especially, *Infobae*. Although some respondents close to Peronism considered *Clarín* as the most important media outlet, the vertical axis that crosses the taxonomy acted considerably as a threshold: in the right half of the chart, the responses of *Clarín* are interrupted.

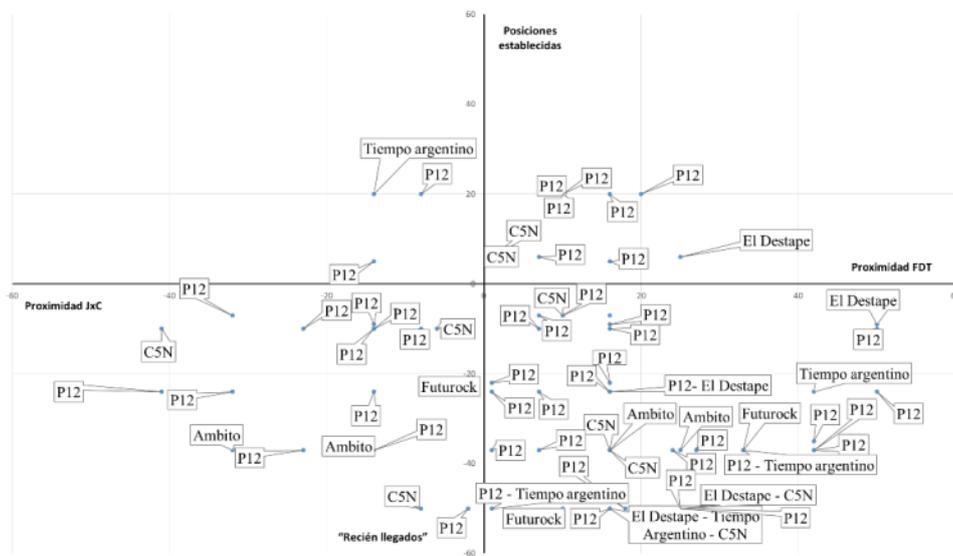
As a whole, it is worth providing some preliminary conclusions concerning the three most recognized media. In the first place, these are three companies with a defined editorial line, which although they do not maintain institutional relations with political parties, do express frequent sympathy for the space Juntos por el Cambio and in clear opposition to Frente de Todos. In this way, even if the symbolic hierarchies derive from the practices that integrate journalists into the field, in no way are these operations of consecration politically neutral. In the second place, the media outlet that received the largest number of responses and with the greatest degree of dispersion in the social space was *Infobae*, of more recent emergence -although perhaps with a profile more in line with new technologies-, with more limited economic weight and with a more conservative editorial line. These distances between the structure -the weight of companies as employers of journalists- and social representations remind us that the meanings refract rather than reflect the practices of the subjects: in other words, the symbolic magnitude of *Infobae* is greater than its business dimensions. *Clarín*, on the other hand, reveals an opposite

panorama: it is by far the largest economic group but it would not receive a proportional acknowledgment.

Among the media close to the Frente de Todos, Pagina/12 (49 mentions) and, with some distance, Tiempo Argentino (12 mentions), C5N (11 mentions), and El Destape (8 mentions) stand out. Figure 5 illustrates their location in the structure of the journalistic field:

**Figure 5.**

*Taxonomy of Argentine journalists by mentions to media close to the Frente de Todos, 2021*



**Source:** Own elaboration.

A quick look reveals the dissimilar behavior of the references to the official media compared to the opposition. While the acknowledgment of the importance of *Infobae*, *La Nación*, and -to a considerably lesser extent- Clarín tends to be transversal, that of those close to Frente de Todos is politically segmented: the vertical axis of the taxonomy operates as a strong threshold, which regulates the intensity of the mentions. Page/12 forms a partial exception since it receives a certain number of mentions from journalists with sympathy for Juntos por el Cambio. The trajectory of the media outlet and its role as the counterpart of *Clarín* and, especially, *La Nación* could explain its relative importance.

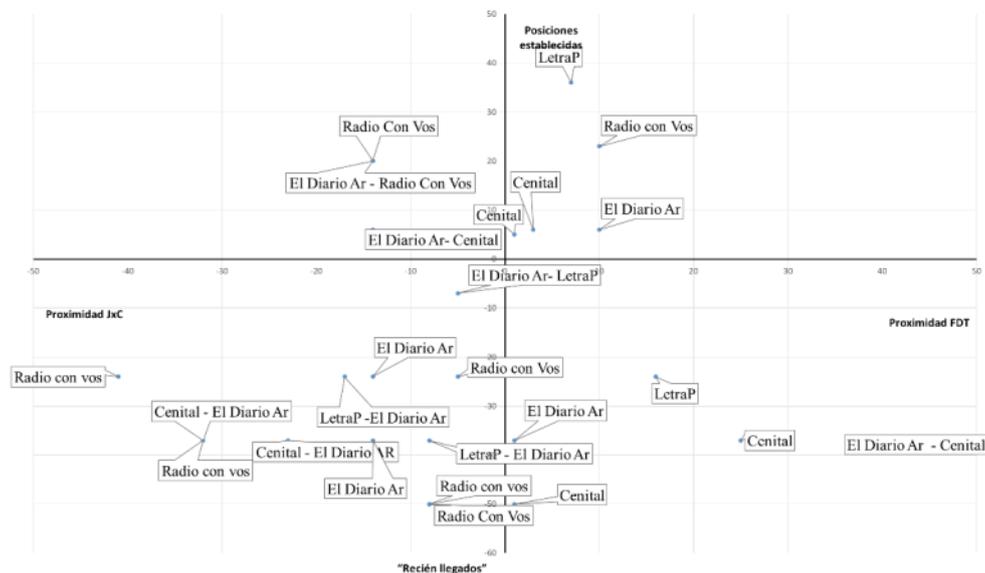
In any case, the modalities of symbolic hierarchization of the media with a progressive tendency are opposed to the validation of the three previous ones, with an editorial line closer to the right. While all groups of journalists tended to accept the asymmetric role of, at least, *Infobae* and *La Nación*, the newspapers, portals, and channels close to Frente de Todos do not receive reciprocal verification; only -or to a great extent- its adherents tend to mention their importance in the field. This contrast between transversal and segmented acknowledgments reveals an interesting line of inquiry, which could contribute to the knowledge not only of how

certain media become gatekeepers but also of the complexity of the asymmetries within the field, in which symbolic components favor certain hegemonies -that is, of the differential consecration of certain actors in the hierarchical positions par excellence, which order the social space. At least in the journalistic sense, these differentiated locations are not deduced linearly from the economic weight or the trajectory of the media.

Finally, a third media profile is made up of those that do not have such a defined editorial line or, at least, those that include journalists of different political persuasions, without an institutional framework that, up to now, has been so clear. Their responses had a much lower frequency than other media. The following chart accounts for their mentions in the field:

**Figure 6.**

*Taxonomy of Argentine journalists by mentions to intermediate political position media, 2021*



**Source:** Own elaboration.

To a large extent, the symbolic validation of these media corresponds to their location on the political spectrum: their responses are densified in the center of the chart and reduced towards the extremes. As will be seen in the next section, the references to specific journalists behave, partially, in terms similar to this media profile. However, it should be reiterated that the two most mentioned -eldiario.ar (12 mentions) and Radio con Vos (8 mentions)- are relatively recent companies. To these are added certain portals dedicated to political issues, which received few mentions and have different degrees of closeness to party forces -especially with Frente de Todos- although they maintain a presentation of themselves closer to that of specialized media.

In this section, three major acknowledgment modalities of media in the journalistic field were developed. They configure in divergent ways the structuring plans of the social space (the trajectory) with the consecration of the hierarchical positions, at the same time that they involve the editorial lines of the media. Thus, while the field

seems to have a certain efficacy when it comes to integrating subjects on an asymmetric scale -with *Infobae*, *La Nación*, and *Clarín* at the top-, its effects favor media opposed to Frente de Todos and identified with right-wing political positions. On the other hand, the acknowledgment of the media close to Peronism is partial -ideologically segmented- and that of those with an intermediate position tends to coincide with the political identification of the respondent.

### 3.3. Acknowledged journalists

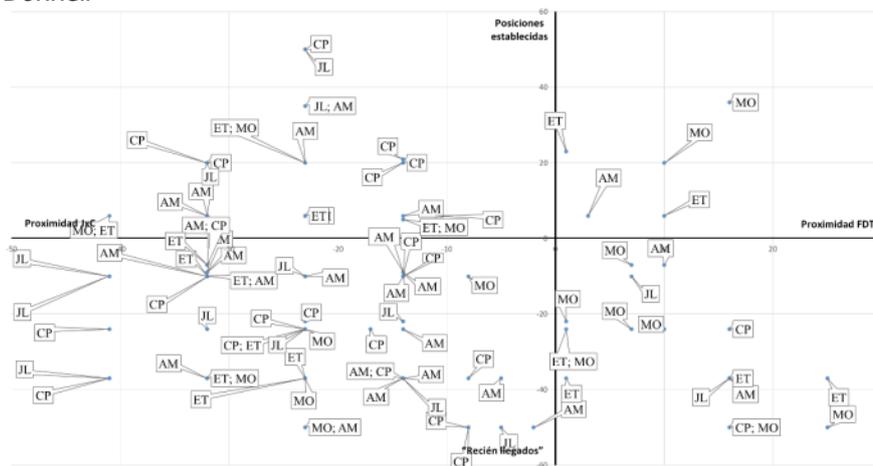
Besides meaning certain media in dissimilar positions compared to others, the social representations of journalists also differentially value certain colleagues. In effect, the institutions are personified, at the level of meaning, in traits, characteristics, and expected trajectories of the subjects, which can be attributed to other participants in the field, defining different displacements and careers. Just as media acknowledgment recreates the hierarchies of the field, an analogous process can be approached in terms of colleagues. Again, it is worth asking about the relationships between integration into the journalistic field and the political-partisan oppositions emphasized by the journalists. The mentions of the typology will be broken down according to the political position of the journalists mentioned as most important by the respondents. As will be developed, the references do not simply recreate the acknowledgment modalities that refer to the media.

Figure 7 presents the mentions of journalists who have a clear position in opposition to the government of Frente de Todos, although to different degrees and with dissimilar trajectories:

#### Figure 7.

*Taxonomy of Argentine journalists by mentions to journalists distant from Frente de Todos, 2021*

References: AM: Hugo Alconada Mon; PC: Carlos Pagni; JL: Jorge Lanata; ET: Ernesto Tenembaum; MO: Maria O'Donnell



Source: Own elaboration.

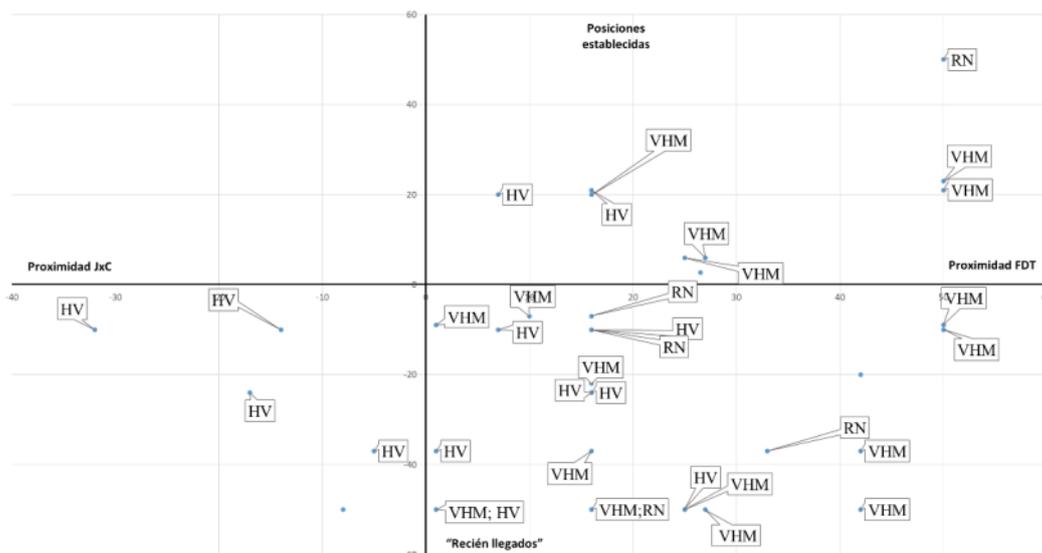
The responses show a scarcely transversal acknowledgment modality, although with certain limited extensions on the proximities of Peronism. Some features of these journalists are of interest. They all made a career focused on political issues:

although the survey did not specifically ask about specialization, all the most renowned journalists belong to that category. Several of them worked in the media mentioned in the previous section, notably *La Nación* and *Página/12* (at least in the 1990s). Some develop a strongly refractory self-presentation of Kirchnerism while others recreate an ethos closer to the objectivist and professionalist gaze. How much the intensity of their mentions accounts for the integrating capacity of the journalistic field? Although the references appear segmented in the taxonomy, the differentiation only acts vertically: in no case is there a clear contrast between hierarchical positions - managers, editors, or similar positions - and "newcomers". Once again, the role of the field as a generator of symbolic consecrations mirrored in its structure is clear, even if it is only corroborated by the opposing (sub)universe.

A similar reading can be made regarding the journalists close to Frente de Todos, whose mentions distribution in the social space appears graphed in the following image:

**Figure 8.**

*Taxonomy of Argentine journalists by mentions of journalists close to Frente de Todos, 2021*  
 References: HV: Horacio Verbitsky; RN: Roberto Navarro; VHM: Víctor Hugo Morales



**Source:** Own elaboration.

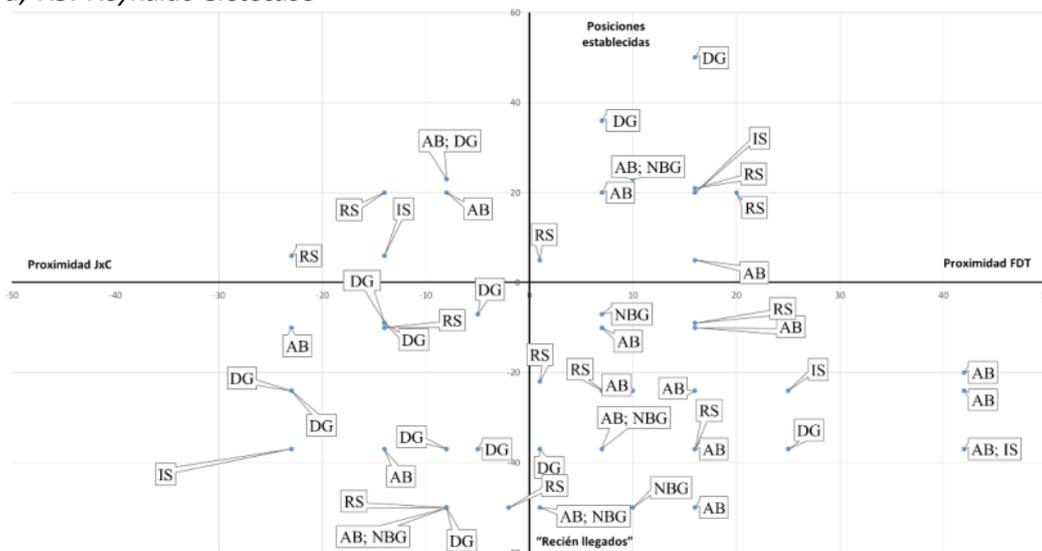
The set of official consecrations is somewhat more limited than the opposition, in terms of the journalists who received a greater number of references. Once again, the profile highlights political specialization, although one of them is also strongly devoted to sports journalism. Only one of them -with a career in political journalism with the greatest scope- received some mentions from respondents far from the ruling party. In line with the valorization of opposition journalists, the validation of those close to Frente de Todos is also politically segmented. In this sense, the personifications of the field seem to be closer to the doxa of its participants -which emphasizes the opposition between political guidelines- than the representations

referred to institutional spaces (media, conglomerates of companies). At the same time, a segmentation between higher and lower positions in the field was not corroborated either: their effectiveness, even if partial, seems to be corroborated when transferring the structure of the professional space to the symbolic plane.

To finish, some journalists, with a different degree of closeness to each political force, can be placed in an intermediate position:

**Figure 9.**

*Taxonomy of Argentine journalists by mentions of journalists close to Frente de Todos, 2021*  
 References: AB: Alejandro Bercovich; DG: Diego Genoud; IS: Ivan Schargrotsky; NBG: Noelia Barral Grigera; RS: Reynaldo Sietecase



**Source:** Own elaboration.

As with the two previous profiles, all those mentioned stand out for their specialization in political journalism -or economics journalism, in the case of one of them. Their political position is not homogeneous; some develop their activity in media conglomerates close to Frente de Todos; others in media that do not have such a defined line. However, they are characterized by a presentation of themselves more removed from the two main political forces. Similar to the acknowledgment received by media with a similar profile, the mentions tend to be located in the center of the social space, with a certain dispersion towards the ruling party -which is explained, perhaps, by the professional trajectory (their places of work) of those journalists. Again, there are no distances between respondents in the hierarchical position and those with less experience: the set of references is homogeneous in the vertical sense; only that it is politically segmented. Unlike the two previous groups of journalists, those mentioned in this profile are, for the most part, younger, with a more recent career.

In this way, journalists' acknowledgment modalities seem to be marked by certain continuities and differences regarding the differentiated valuation of media. Both individually and collectively, the journalistic field seems to be efficient enough to transfer its hierarchical structure to the social representations of its members: the

"newcomers" are far from opposing the established figures or, at least, they do not reject their present location, postulating alternatives. However, while the significance of the media tends to accompany a transversal acknowledgment of spaces with a conservative editorial line, the thematization of journalists considered to be more important would point to a political segmentation that does not, however, prevent integration into the professional field.

#### **4. CONCLUSIONS-RESULTS**

Although the effects of journalists' work routines on the construction of news and thematic selection have received more academic attention in recent decades, the production of quantitative data and the description of the insertion of the actors in their disciplinary field constitute, at least in Latin America, areas of relative vacancy. The growing weight of the transformations produced by new technologies or the development of diversified media conglomerates on the profession has usually led to conceive their immediate impact on the subjects as if they did not participate in regional structures -fields- that precede them and that they update through their action, practices, representations, and asymmetrical positions.

The acknowledgment modalities of peers and institutional spaces -media- provide an object of study from which to develop mediations between the individual and the structural, between the work of journalists and the meanings they give them, and the social space in which they participate, which provides them with references, expectations, and action formats. In this work, we sought to advance in the description of the Argentine journalistic field, researching its ability to transversely transfer a set of consecrated hierarchies. This process was studied in terms of two variables: the professional trajectory of the respondents and their political-partisan position. Broadly speaking, it can be argued that the modalities of recognition symbolically validate certain media that occupy superior spaces in the field. This process is far from being politically neutral and favors conservative-leaning media.

The study of these acknowledgment modalities involves different lines of research while stressing some of the assumptions that have accompanied the academy in recent years. One of these lines could be linked to the impact of digital technologies and their symbolic counterfaces: even if the actors -and the researchers- seem to agree in terms of the strong transformations of the profession, the meanings they use to account for the professional field would be far from the irruption of fragmented agendas, which -in the 2000s- used to be associated with the emergence of blogs and, later, social networks (McCombs and Valenzuela, 2007, Aruguete, 2015). At least Argentine journalism would not be discussing the uniqueness of its social space, as if multiple agendas and issues lacked a social framework that overlapped them. On the other hand, the production of quantitative information and the detailed description of the journalistic field remains a challenge that is still striking, in the case of the public field, of expected easy access, par excellence. Knowing in greater detail the general distributions of those who claim the professional -and, therefore, monopolizing (Bourdieu, 1996)- treatment of the circulation of information will help to understand the articulation between practices

and symbols, through which the journalistic social space, not only makes sense for its actors but is also recreated in time.

Finally, it is worth asking about the specificity of Argentine journalism compared to that of other countries, at least in the region. The fact that Argentine journalists partially structure their acknowledgment modalities in line with national politics certainly points to the difficulties of extrapolating the conclusions to other possible case studies. However, many of the processes that go through –and transform– workspaces are global. The confrontation between media and political spaces does not constitute, either, an Argentine exceptionality; on the contrary, it was a regional discussion in the first two decades of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In this sense, future works could think about how the tendency of journalistic fields to define themselves by national elements, dialogues with the characteristics of their field and is not simply the effect of a methodological cut on the case study.

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