

Journalists' salary structure in Spain during the crisis

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Abstract: Media companies are implementing staff cost reduction strategies as a way to confront the current economic crisis. This article describes the salary structure of Spanish Journalists during the 2009 crisis, based on data collected through a phone survey applied to a sample of one thousand Spanish journalists. The description of the data is based on a set of social and occupational variables. The study is accompanied by a bivariate analysis of the relation between the salary level of the surveyed journalists and the aforementioned variables. The results show that the salary level of Spanish journalists depends on such variables as sex, age, professional experience, the type, size, and geographic location of the employing media company, occupational category, contract type, and seniority in employment. However, journalists' income is independent of education level, or the completion of graduate or postgraduate degrees in Journalism, Communication or Media studies. The findings of our study –of interest to scholars and media organisations- will help monitoring in the near future the effects of the media's cost-cutting policies on the salaries of Spanish journalists.

Keywords: Journalists; salaries; working conditions; precariousness in employment; journalism; economic crisis.

Summary: 1. Introduction. 1.1. Background. 1.2. Objectives. 2. Methodology. 2.1. Methodological strategies. 2.2. Measurements. 2.3. Data analysis. 3. Results. 3.1. Univariate analysis. 3.2. Bivariate analysis. 4. Discussion and Conclusions. 5. References. 6. Notes.

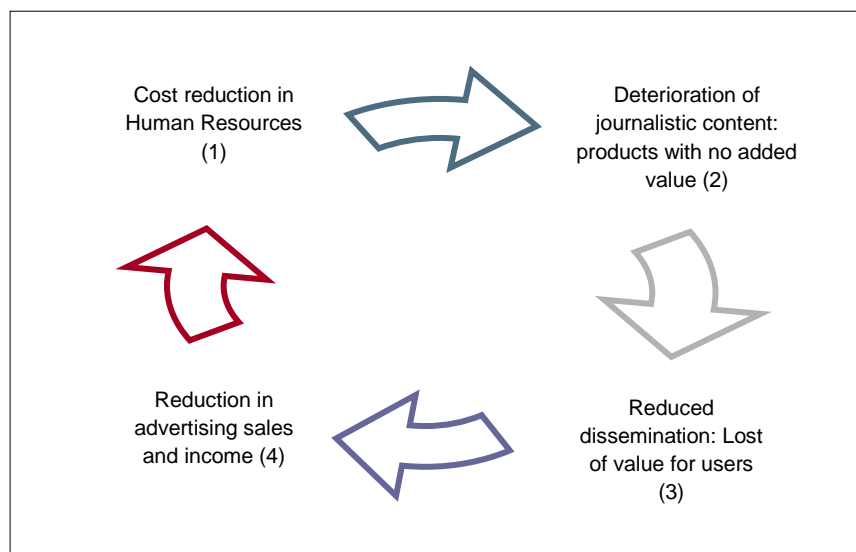
Translation by **Cruz Alberto Martínez-Arcos** (University of London)

1. Introduction

The global economic crisis has provoked several changes in the media business (Larrañaga, 2009). Media managers are implementing different strategies to reduce costs and increase their competitiveness in a market that is saturated with supply and subject to *hyperactive* dynamism. The main source of income of media companies has decreased as a result of the reduction in advertising sales, which is an effect impossible to counteract with the relatively small income from paper copies sales in the case of printed press, or other income sources (Farias and Roses, 2009).

Among the strategies implemented by media companies –such as merging or collaboration processes, request for public subsidy or private capital investment alien to the sector- the most worrying for this study is the reduction in fixed staff costs. It is hard to prove empirically, but it is easily and rationally understandable that the reduction in professional capital has an ambivalent impact on profits, due to the almost direct correlation between the workforce and the quality of the informative product. While this action allows stabilising the costs-benefits relationship in the short-term; in the long-term the deterioration of the informative product can only produce discontent and mistrust in the citizen-consumer (Roses, 2009), and consequently, a progressive retraction of the social fabric affiliated to the media company, which maintains the advertising investment in the current business model. This human resources policy has therefore created a vicious circle.

Graph 1: Vicious circle of the human resources policy implemented by the media to face the crisis

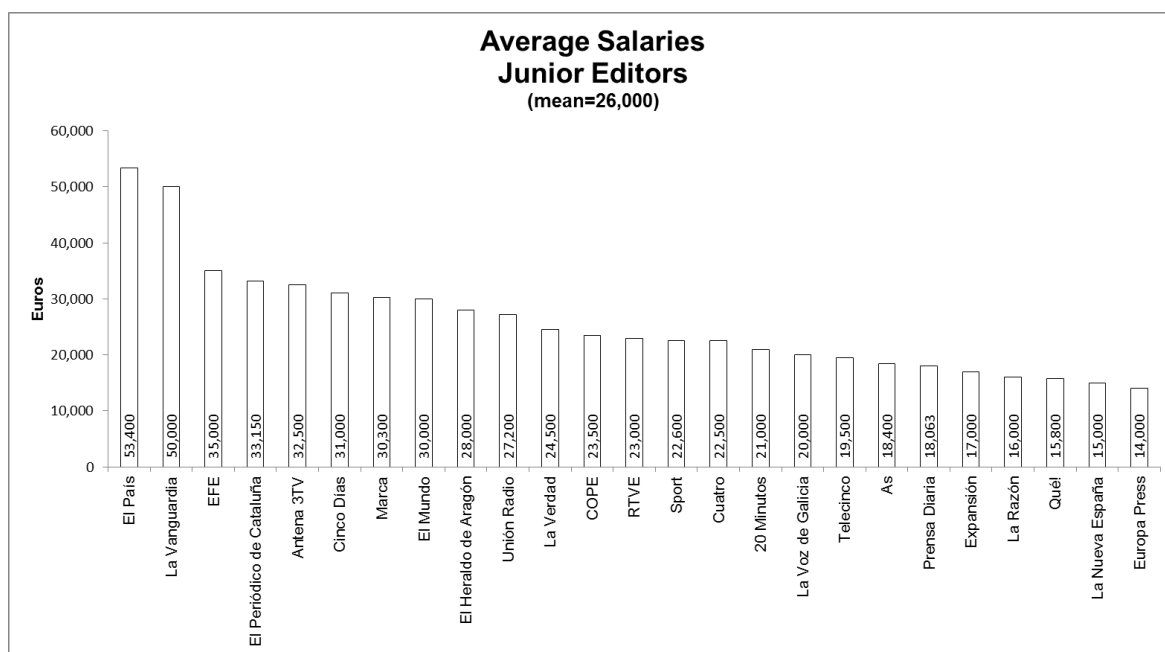


Source: Author's creation.

In parallel, media companies increasingly demand their journalists to have a better education, versatility and dedication in order to make their staff and informative products profitable through their distribution in the several media outlets that are part of the business group, and by making journalists responsible for the execution of multiplatform tasks that, presumably and according to the case, do not respond to contracts and are not remunerated as they should. Studies by American scholars have already shown that this trend has side effects on the professional independence of journalists. These works show that journalists whose workload was increased and whose companies implemented staff layoffs saw their ability to cover important issues reduced (Weaver, 2009: 396; Beam, Weaver, Brownlee, 2009).

A study of the salary conditions established in 25 collective agreements signed by Spanish media (*Asociación de la Prensa de Madrid / Press Association of Madrid, 2010: 8*) describes the salary structure underlying these regulatory texts and suggests that the average pay of journalists covered by these collective agreements is 35,000 Euros per year:

“Leaving aside the workers that are increasingly excluded from the collective agreement, either because they took higher managerial positions or as a mechanism to implement variable remunerations not covered by the regulatory texts, it can be concluded that editors-in-chief are paid an average of 53,200 Euros per year; senior editors 38,500 Euros, and junior editors 26,000 Euros. These average figures mask large differences between media, as well as small abysms within a same editorial room as a result of arbitrary compensation formulas designed to satisfy variable bonuses that are not admitted by the committees”.



Source: *Asociación de la Prensa de Madrid, 2010.*

The figures provided by this study should be taken with caution because the calculation to obtain the salary has several biases. First, the collective agreements that were examined included “bulky quantitative weigh” of media located in Madrid. Second, the calculations are “biased downwards” due to the inability to include in the operations the different commissions or bonuses included in each of the texts. Third, the study was not based on empirical data obtained from journalists, but on the figures drawn from documents that are not necessarily adjusted to journalists’ reality. Fourth, the text does not explain how the calculations were made nor details the design of the sample of texts beyond stating the number of collective agreements taken into consideration. And fifth, the study does not provide data of

statistical significance. In spite of this, the document is useful insofar as it warns about the large salary differences across media and journalists, and describes how the salary structure “should be” if the normative texts were strictly conformed.

The reality of the crisis suggests that the “normative portrait” of the salary structure may not match the “empirical portrait” based on the media’s human resources policy. Costs-cuts –which are implemented not only by companies facing difficulties, but also by those that still make profits- are made directly through redundancy dismissal procedures or indirectly through the outsourcing of services, which allows avoiding the collective agreements (Matthew, 2009). In view of this situation, organisations of journalists, including press associations and trade unions of journalists have increased their complaints and demands and have continued to provide legal services for layoffs or labour disputes occurring in 48% of the associations linked to the Federation of Press Associations of Spain (FAPE) (Cortés and Paniagua, 2008).

In 2010, the unions denounced some sectors of media employers for breaches to the collective agreements [1]. Therefore the business and economic contexts of the media justify and legitimise the exploration of the salary structure of journalists in Spain. As we have noticed, precarious employment conditions -the low salaries are an indicator of this- involve a loss of independence from the journalist, and a demotivation that can only provoke negative consequences on the health of the journalistic product. On the other hand, staff costs reduction strategies might include the following:

- I. Unfair dismissals, early retirement and redundancy dismissal procedures. 16.7% of the journalists surveyed for a recent study claimed that layoffs, unemployment and redundancy dismissal procedures had affected them as a result of the crisis (Farias et al., 2009: 32).
- II. Services outsourcing, i.e. subcontracting of services from smaller businesses that do not have to obey collective agreements. Sometimes this outsourcing could be established with small businesses of which the contracting company is a shareholder, in order to evade the tax and work responsibilities. On the same line, services outsourcing can also occur by subcontracting services to freelancers, “false self-employed”, contributors whose remuneration is not regulated, and “false scholarship holders” (Farias et al., 2007).
- III. Reduction of remunerations through: a) non-payment or abolition of salary supplements, b) modification of contracts to economically less advantageous arrangements for journalists, c) formalisation of new contracts not adjusted to the occupational category of the employee, according to the relevant collective agreement. Precisely, 29.4% of journalists surveyed in a recent study said the economic crisis was harming their salaries (Farias et al, 2009: 32).

In most cases, journalists' associations and trade unions, and labour inspection organisations have many difficulties to get a comprehensive view of the whole sector to perform sophisticated analyses of the effects of the aforementioned corporate strategies on journalists' remuneration. The data provided in this study, added to those that will be obtained in subsequent research studies, will establish whether there are indeed changes in salaries trends and will identify the most disadvantaged groups.

1.1. Background

The study of the employment situation of journalists in Spain is not a ground breaking line of research. The discourse about the precarious nature of the profession has led to different initiatives that in a tangential manner have also studied the salary of journalists.

Caro and Jiménez (2006: 322) found evidence in the CHEERS survey [2] that the salary of graduated journalists is below the average of their group:

“Journalists have average annual incomes of 14,780 Euros against the average yearly salary of Civil Engineers and Architects of 29,660 and 26,190 Euros, respectively. In contrast, journalists are better paid than graduates in Biology and Pedagogy, who are paid an average annual salary of 11,900 and 12,430, respectively. The average salary of graduates in Social Sciences is also of 16,000 Euros” (Caro and Jiménez, 2006: 322).

According to Spain's 2007 National Salary Structure Survey [3] the average gross annual income per worker in Spain in 2007 was of 20,390.35 Euros. However, the most common salary amounted to 14,503.61 Euros. The professions associated with graduate and postgraduate degrees –in which journalists are located, according to the National Classification of Occupations (CNO-94)- earned in average 34,093.36 Euros. Therefore, in general this is the third best remunerated occupation group, only behind the managers of public institutions or companies of more than ten workers, and managers of companies of less than ten employees.

If we look at the average annual salaries by economic activity type in this national survey, the figures for journalists are worrying. While financial intermediation was the economic activity with the greatest salary (38,870.30 Euros), hotel employees received the lowest salary (14,000.12 Euros). The activities carried out by a large part of journalists (activities in radio and television, and news agencies) are included within the category “other social activities and services to the community; personal services”, which is governed by the National Classification of Economic Activities (CNAE-93). In this case, the average salary is the third worst, just beating hotel employees and people engaged in trade; and repair of motor vehicles, motorcycles and mopeds, and personal and domestic appliances (17,618.97). Other activities associated with journalism, like the edition of newspapers and magazines are included in the category “Manufacturing”, which in 2007 had an average salary of 22,757.14 Euros gross per year.

Job insecurity and precarious working conditions are concerns installed in the collective imagination of the journalistic profession, as proved by several studies (Farias et al, 2006, 2007, 2008, and 2009). In fact, the concern and discontent over the salary conditions has been shown in numerous investigations based on quantitative methods, essentially surveys (Farias et al., 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009; Herrera and Maciá, 2009; Cantalapiedra, Coca and Bezunarte, 2000; etc.), or qualitative techniques (Farias et al., 2007; Herrera and Maciá, 2009; Suárez, Romero and Almansa, 2009; among others).

Precisely in a qualitative research, Herrera and Maciá (2009) illustrate the feeling of fragility and lack of independence suffered by journalists as a consequence of the precarious working conditions:

“In practice, both conditions seem to be the cause of a progressive deterioration of the quality of the informative product. In particular, the fierce competition, the excessive youth of some professionals, their lack of experience, the absence of further training in their employer company, the low salaries, the intrinsic urgency of the profession, insecurity by layoffs, pressure” (Herrera and Maciá, 2009: 7).

In the same line, Suárez, Romero and Almansa (2009) developed a qualitative work in which they examined the perception of Andalusian journalists about precarious working conditions. The interviewed journalists considered that there are serious problems since the basic needs of contract, schedule, and salary are not covered. Likewise, respondents considered that a precarious journalist is more docile, and that among these lower paid journalists many lose their vocation (Suarez, Romero, Almansa, 2009: 163).

Other studies denounced the inexistence of a legal framework to regulate the salary conditions of journalists, and identified the most controversial points of the negotiation about remuneration between employers and trade unions (Labio, 2002).

Cantalapiedra, Coca and Bezunarte (2000) examined the professional and occupational situation of Basque journalists between 1997 and 1999. In addition to identifying the dissatisfaction of journalists regarding their salary, the researchers reported that the average salary of Basque journalists ranged between 150,000 and 200,000 pesetas for those on payroll and less than 100,000 for contributors. Thus, 53% of respondents earned a gross monthly income of less than 200,000 pesetas, i.e. less than 1200 Euros.

Subsequently, another study addressed the salary conditions of journalists working in the Basque Country (Martín and Amurrio, 2007) but this time the focus was on journalists working for audiovisual media. The results of the survey applied to a sample of journalists (n=201) showed that a fifth of respondents earned less than 600 Euros per month (not specified whether gross or net); one third

gained between 600 and 1200 Euros; a slightly lower percentage of respondents received between 1200 and 1800 Euros, and 12% earned more than 1800 Euros a month.

Canel, Rodriguez and Sánchez (2000) distributed a survey questionnaire among a sample (n=1000) of Spanish journalists. Although the number of actual respondents was finally more reduced (n=292), this study provides an interesting description of the salary profile of participant journalists by offering a distribution of responses according to different variables. In general, the results indicated that 33% of respondents earned between 200,000 and 300,000 pesetas per month (not specified whether net or gross); and only few exceeded 300,000 pesetas. Nearly half of respondents earned less than 200,000 pesetas; 11.9% earned between 80,000 and 120,000 and the payroll of 6.1% was less than 80,000 Euros (Canel, Rodriguez, Sánchez, 2000: 43). The authors of this study found that journalists employed by national media earned more than those in regional or local media; young journalists, less than older ones; journalists working in television were better paid than those in radio and press, and the payment of journalists in public media was greater than the one of those in private media (Canel, Rodríguez, Sánchez, 2000:46).

Also, the University of Salamanca studied the status of journalists in its region (n=100) (ASPE, 2002). More than half of those surveyed did not earn more than 900 Euros. 80% considered themselves to be poorly paid and 60% had a complementary work.

In the last decade, there have been several studies on the labour situation of digital journalists, a collective that had not been studied specifically in previous investigations. These works suggest that precarious working conditions affect this type of journalists the most (see Hidalgo López and Mellado, 2006).

Del Moral (2005) recently studied the working situations of Basque digital journalists (also, Larrañaga, 2006). In the Basque Country the salary of digital journalists usually ranges between 600 and 1,000 Euros per month. According to Del Moral, digital journalists tend to be younger and therefore have not received more favourable conditions in the collective agreements (Del Moral, 2005: 204).

García, Túñez and López (2005) examined the profile of digital journalists in Galicia in 2002. This study found that 34% of participating journalists earned between 601 and 901 Euros gross per month, which is the same average salary paid to Galician journalists; 58% of respondents earned between 601 and 1202 Euros gross per month; 10% worked for less than 601 Euros and 3% did not even earned 300 Euros per month (García Orosa, Túñez Lopez and Lopez Garcia, 2005: 163).

Calvo (2005) collected the results of the Report on the Labour and Professional Situation of the Digital Journalist in Catalonia, written by the *Grup Periodistes Digitals*. In his work, he affirms that many digital journalists have no collective agreements within their companies like their colleagues in other

media with the same occupational categories, functions, salary sections and schedules (Calvo, 2005: 172). Data from a survey conducted in 2003 to a sample (n=66) of Catalan digital journalists revealed that 38% of participating journalists earned less than 900 Euros a month, while the rest exceeded this amount. The study identifies differences depending on the type of company. 25% of journalists employed by exclusively digital media earned between 600 and 900 Euros and 15% less than 300 Euros per month; while in traditional media companies with their digital enterprises, 38% earned between 900 and 1,200 Euros per month and 38% of respondents earned more than 1,200 Euros per month (Calvo, 2005: 178).

The job situation of journalists has also been reviewed from a gender perspective (see Ufarte, 2007; Soriano, Canton, Díez, 2005). The most recent work, and therefore with data more adjusted to the reality of the field, was developed by Gómez Aguilar (2009), who gives details on the salary inequality between male and female journalists [4]. These differences, which were not found in previous studies (Canel, Rodríguez Sánchez, 2000), are described as follows in the study of Gómez Aguilar:

“Another indicator of the inequality in the distribution of positions of responsibility, are the monthly incomes. In this regard we observe how the major differences between men and women are in the salary band ‘2,501-3,000 Euros’, since this salary is only earned by 7.2% of female journalists, and 12.8% of male journalists; and the ‘over 3,000 Euros’ band, since this monthly net income is perceived by 20.8% of male journalists, and only 5.3% of female journalists, which is a difference of 15.5% in favour of males. An inverse situation occurs in salary bands ranging from 600 to 1,800 Euros, in which women earn more than men. Thus, 13.3% of female journalists and 5.0% of male journalists get a net monthly income ‘between 901 and 1,200 Euros’, and moreover 18.1% of female journalists earn ‘between 1,201 and 1,500 Euros’ while only 10.5% of male journalists earn this figure” (Gómez Aguilar, 2009: 6).

As we have seen in the previous lines, the salary structure of journalists in Spain has been inspected with varied and interesting approaches, but so far we only have referred to specific investigations scattered in time aimed at specific populations, except for Canel, Rodríguez and Sánchez (2000), whose study focused on all journalists working in Spain. The work of Farias Batlle, who directed the annual reports of the Journalistic Profession of the Press Association of Madrid since 2006 (Farias Batlle et al, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009) resolves this lack of continuity in the studies on journalists’ earnings. According to these works, the net monthly incomes of journalists between 2006 and 2008 were distributed follows:

Table 1: Net monthly income 2006-2008

Net monthly income (relative values-%)			
Incomes in Euros	2008	2007	2006
Less than 600	1.4	2.7	2.9
601-900	4.7	6.3	7.1
901-1,200	8.9	13.1	10.1
1,201-1,500	14.1	14.0	13.3
1,501-1,800	12.9	12.7	11.8
1,801-2,200	15.0	15.1	15.2
2,201-2,500	10.4	9.3	8.6
2,501-3,000	10.1	8.1	8.6
More than 3,000	13.4	10.0	8.7
N/A	9.1	8.7	13.7

Source: *Informe Anual de la Profesión Periodística 2009* (2009 Annual Report of the Journalistic Profession)

While these data do not indicate what is the average salary, though the publication we can establish that the most common salary band (mode) in the sample is between 1,801 and 2,200 Euros net per month, which remained constant since 2006. These figures demand us to investigate the identity of the journalists who receive these salaries. Or in other words, we need to know in what media do they work, what is the size of their company, what is their role as journalists, what kind of contract do they have, what is their work experience, etc. In short, we need to offer a more detailed description of the salary structure.

1.2. Objectives

The main objective of the study is therefore to provide a description of the salary structure among Spain journalists at the height of the crisis (2009), in order to establish a first empirical database to monitor the future changes in this variable. The study aims to enhance the outline offered by previous research studies (Farias et al., 2009) through the presentation and description of results according to a set of labour and social variables.

The second objective of the research is to determine whether there is correlation between the salary of journalists and various independent variables such as gender, age, training level, degrees, professional experience, type of media employer, company's size and location, occupational category, contract type, and seniority in the company. As we noted above, previous studies suggested there is certain correlation between variables, but do not provide data of statistical significance.

There are other derived objectives such as providing researchers specialised in studying journalists' situation with a secondary source of analysis, and creating a starting point for the study of trends in the wake of successive approaches to the field in the coming years [5], particularly in the years in which the economic crisis continues to provoke changes in the labour market of journalists. With this we could examine whether media companies effectively implemented a remuneration reduction policy as a strategy to combat the crisis, and identify the most affected professional groups.

2. Methodology

2.1. Methodological strategies

Following the tradition in the area, we are approaching the field of work through quantitative methods, in particular by means of a Computer Assisted Telephone Interview (CATI). This survey, which was designed as part of the CSO2008-05125 research project of the Ministry of Science and Innovation, was conducted by the company *Demométrica* from 8 to 22 September 2009.

The universe under study was composed of active journalists, members of the Federation of Press Associations of Spain (FAPE) and the Association of Journalists of Catalonia (*Col·legi de Periodistes de Catalunya*), which involved a reference population of approximately 12,412 individuals. The analysed population sample was 1,000 respondents. Thus, the absolute sampling error for the percentage estimates concerning the total sample is of +/-3 per cent, with a confidence level of 95.5%. The selection of the sample was based on geographical quotas in order to make sure the 50 provinces and the two autonomous cities of Spain were represented in the final sample (the sample was constituted by 51.6% of journalists from Madrid; 11.6% from Barcelona and 36.8% from the rest of Spain). The selection of individuals to meet the quotas was based on a random selection from a phonebook prepared for the research.

2.2. Measurements

In what follows we list the controlled variables that we use in our research, from the broad range of variables included in the survey, and explain how each of them was measured.

Salary levels:

We asked respondents to indicate in what section of the salary scale was located their net monthly incomes for his journalistic work at the time of the survey. This ordinal variable was coded using the following salary scale in Euros:

a) Less than 600

- b) 601-900
- c) 901-1200
- d) 1,201-1,500
- e) 1,501-1,800
- f) 1,801-2,200
- g) 2,201-2,500
- h) 2,501-3,000
- i) More than 3,000
- j) No answer

To facilitate the bivariate analysis with Pearson's Chi square test when there were more than 20% of the cells of the contingency table with less than 5 cases, we created the 'Salary level B' variable, based on the salary band levels of the 'salary level' variable. The new variable categories are the result of dividing the cases in three similar groups [6] in proportion to the sample. The three groups will be used also for the description of the results in the contingency tables in the bivariate analysis section:

- a) Low salary level (less than 1,500 Euros).
- b) Intermediate salary level (from 1,501 to 2,200 Euros).
- c) High salary level (over 2,201 Euros).

Age:

Respondents indicated their age in years, and this was measured through a variable type scale. However, the tables present the data grouped in intervals.

Gender:

Respondents indicated whether they were male or female.

Qualifications:

Respondents were asked to indicate whether they had received university education and, where appropriate, whether their degree was related to Communication Sciences. Respondents had the following response options:

- a) Bachelor's degree in journalism.
- b) Bachelor's degree in another field of Communication Sciences.
- c) Another bachelor's degree.
- d) Other non-university training.
- e) No answer.

Level of studies

Based on the categories of the “qualifications” variable, we created the ordinal variable ‘level of studies’ with the following categories:

- a) Without university education.
- b) With university education.

Postgraduate studies.

Respondents were asked to indicate whether they had taken and completed postgraduate studies like doctoral or master degrees programmes. They had the following response options:

- a) Doctorate (courses only).
- b) Doctorate with Ph.D. title.
- c) Master’s degree.
- d) No postgraduate studies.
- e) No answer.

Based on these categories the variable was recoded into ordinal:

- a) Without postgraduate studies.
- b) With postgraduate studies.

Years of professional experience:

Respondents were asked how many years had they devoted to journalism. This was measured using a variable scale. However, the tables present the data grouped in intervals.

Type of media company:

Respondents were asked to indicate the type of media in which they mainly worked as journalists. The response options for this nominal variable were:

- a) Print Press.
- b) Magazines.
- c) Radio.
- d) Television.
- e) Communication departments.
- f) News agencies.
- g) Internet.
- h) Other.
- i) No answer.

Size of the company:

Respondents were asked to calculate the number of workers employed by the media company in which they worked as journalists. The response options for this ordinal variable were:

- a) Very small (less than 6 workers).
- b) Small (between 7 and 50).
- c) Medium (between 51 and 250).
- d) Large (more than 250 employees).
- e) Did not know or did not answer.

Location of the company:

Respondents were asked to indicate the province or autonomous city in which their employing company was located. The responses to this nominal variable were recoded into three categories differentiated by their central or peripheral location:

- a) Media located in Madrid.
- b) Media located in Barcelona.
- c) Media from rest of Spain.

Seniority in the employing company:

Respondents were asked to indicate for how many years they had been working in their current employing company. This was measured using a variable scale. However, the tables present the data grouped in intervals.

Contract type:

Respondents indicated the type of contract they had signed with the company based on the following response options for this ordinal variable:

- a) Open-term contract.
- b) Temporary contract.
- c) Contract for work and service.
- d) Freelance / entrepreneur.
- d) Others not included in the previous answer.
- e) No answer.

We recoded this variable to turn into ordinal (contract according to job security), depending on the labour stability of the contract:

- a) Contract for work and service.

- b) Temporary contract.
- c) Open-term contract.

2.3. Data analysis

The database of answers was debugged to remove the cases in which respondents did not answer the question on income level, and other cases that are typically discarded due to erroneous values, for example. Therefore, the final sample size was smaller (n=899).

The univariate analysis involved techniques and resources of descriptive statistics, such as the use of graphics, averages, quartiles, etc.

A bivariate analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between the variables. This analysis was performed using non-parametric statistics given that the sample variables did not exceed the normality tests of Kolmogorov-Smirnov. Contingency and coefficient of contingency tables were used for the analysis of the association between categorical variables. Co-relational analysis of ordinal variables was made based on the Spearman's rho statistical test. Data analysis was performed with the help of the software SPSS v.17.

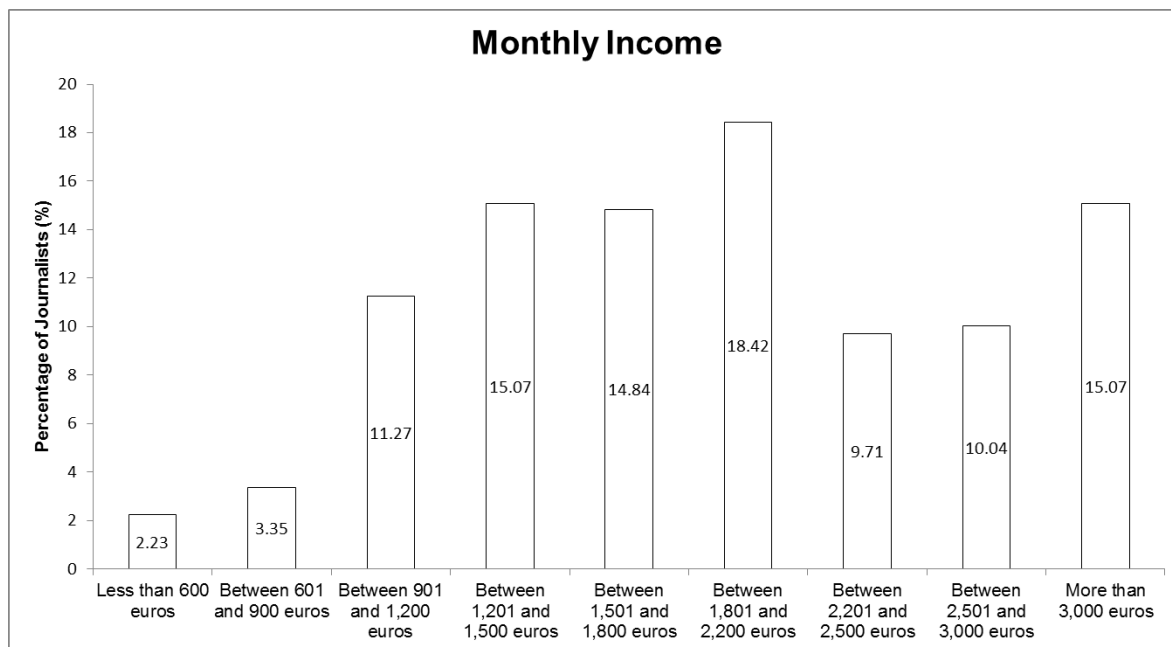
The analysis of data, and their presentation in tables, ignored the cases in which the participants selected "Do not know" or "No answer" to any of the studied variables, and the cases containing values lost by the system. The purpose of this measure was to facilitate the comparison of the different distributions of data across the categories of analysis. In other words, the percentages of the distributions of frequencies were calculated without the responses in which respondents chose "Do not know" or "No answer", which facilitates and clarifies the interpretation of the results.

3. Results

3.1. Univariate analysis

Salary levels

Graph: Net monthly incomes in bands.



The most common salary band among journalists (mode) was between 1,801 and 2,200 Euros, since 18.46% of respondents claimed their salary was covered by this band. More than half of journalists (58.06%) earned between 1,201 and 2,500 Euros net; while 16.91% earned 1,200 Euros or less, and 25.03% gained at least 2,501 Euros net per month.

Age
 29.4% of surveyed journalists were 35 years old or younger; 29.8% were aged between 36 and 45 years; 24% between 46 and 54 years of age, and journalists aged 55 years and over constituted 16.9% of the sample.

Gender
 52.2% of surveyed journalists were males, and 47.8% were females.

Level of studies
 94.2% of participating journalists had obtained bachelor's degrees, and only 5.8% had not.

Area of specialisation

75% of respondents held a bachelor's degree in journalism; 11.1% held a bachelor's degree in another specialty within communication sciences. Therefore, 86.1% of the sample held bachelor's degrees in one of the three degrees of the branch of Communication Sciences. 8.1% held another degree.

Postgraduate studies

22.9% of surveyed journalists held a postgraduate degree (18.7% held a master degree and 4.2% a doctoral degree). The remaining 77.1% had no postgraduate qualifications.

Years of professional experience

24.5% of respondents had 10 years or less of experience as journalists. 33.8% of the sample had worked as journalists between 11 and 20 years; 27.6% between 21 and 30 years; 11% between 31 to 40 years, and 3.1% had over 41 years of professional experience as a journalist.

Employing media company

Most participating journalists work for a newspaper (30.5%); while nearly one fourth of the sample (23.2%) works in television. These groups are followed by journalists employed in communication or press departments (15.7%), radio (11.3%), magazines (9%), news agencies (4.5%), digital media (3.8%), and other media or as freelance (2.1%).

Size of the employing company

More than half of participating journalists (57.4%) was employed by a large company, that is a company with more than 250 employees. 16.8% of respondents worked for a medium-sized company (between 51 and 249 workers); 19% for a small company (between 6 and 50 workers), and 6.8% for a company of less than six workers.

Location of the company

Over half of the sample of journalists worked in a media company located in Madrid (51.2%), while the employing companies of 11.5% of respondents were located in Barcelona and the remaining 37.3% worked in one of the provinces of Spain.

Seniority in the company

More than half of respondents (58.4%) have worked for ten years or less for the company that was employing them at the time of the survey. More than a quarter of the sample (26.9%) had worked between 11 and 20 years for their last employing company. On the other hand, 12% of journalists had worked between 21 and 30 years in the same company, and only 2.7% exceeded the 31 years of seniority.

Type of contract

The vast majority of participating journalists (69.2%) enjoyed an open-term contract at the time of the survey; 8.6% of the sample had a temporary contract; 11.4%, had contract for work or service, and 10.8% was freelance or entrepreneur.

3.2. Bivariate analysis

Salary level and gender

The data suggest that the salary level of journalists is associated to their gender. We found a statistically significant, yet moderate, correlation between the variables (chi-square=88.68; $p=0.000$; $C=0.30$; $p=0.000$). Therefore, the data show that male journalists largely earn higher salaries, while female journalists are mostly located in the lower salary levels.

Contingency table: salary levels distributed according to gender

Gender	Salary level			Total
	Low	Intermediate	High	
Males	22.6%	30.1%	47.2%	100.0%
Females	42.1%	36.7%	21.3%	100.0%

We can offer two explanations for these differences:

a) The first explanation is that the differences between genders occur because a lower percentage of women get access to the better-paid occupational categories, which explains the salary distribution. In our sample only 32.2% of managerial positions; 31.5% of editorial chief positions, and 29.5% of the section head positions were occupied by women. In the case of department heads, practically, there was equality (48.7% of women), while the writing positions belong mostly to female journalists (60.7%).

b) The second explanation is that while men might occupy most of the managerial positions, women are worse remunerated than their male counterparts even when performing the same activity and occupying the same position. This is confirmed by the analysis. If we cross the data of the variables 'gender', 'salary' and 'position' in a contingency table, we see how even when performing the same work, i.e. when they hold the same occupational category, women are paid less than men.

Contingency table: salary levels of male and female journalists distributed according to their occupational category

Gender	Occupational category	Salary level			Total
		Low	Intermediate	High	
Male	Editor	3.7%	15.9%	80.5%	100.0%
	Editor in chief	16.0%	18.0%	66.0%	100.0%
	Department head	12.8%	41.0%	46.2%	100.0%
	Section head	4.7%	41.9%	53.5%	100.0%
	Staff writer	37.2%	35.8%	27.0%	100.0%
	Contributor	58.8%	17.6%	23.5%	100.0%
Female	Editor	12.8%	30.8%	56.4%	100.0%
	Editor in chief	21.7%	30.4%	47.8%	100.0%
	Department head	24.3%	51.4%	24.3%	100.0%
	Section head	16.7%	55.6%	27.8%	100.0%
	Staff writer	52.4%	35.4%	12.3%	100.0%
	Contributor	64.0%	24.0%	12.0%	100.0%

Salary level and age

The salary level of journalists is correlated to their age. There is a direct correlation between the two variables (Spearman’s $Rho=0.45$; $p<0.01$). We can therefore say that, as expected, the annual earnings of journalists improve as they get older.

Contingency table: Salary levels distributed according to age

Age	Salary level			Total
	Low	Intermediate	High	
35 & under	58.9%	30.0%	11.0%	100.0%
36-45	25.5%	43.8%	30.7%	100.0%
46-54	15.8%	32.6%	51.6%	100.0%
55 & over	19.2%	21.2%	59.6%	100.0%

Salary level and level of studies

We found that salary level is not associated with the level of studies (Spearman's $\rho=0.002$; $p=0.94$). Therefore, obtaining a university degree does not guarantee obtaining a higher income.

Salary levels and area of specialization/type of degree

The salary level of journalists turned out to be independent of their academic qualifications (Chi square=4.463; $p=0.61$) since we did not find statistical significance in the association of variables. Therefore, for our sample, obtaining a university degree in journalism does not guarantee obtaining a higher income.

Salary level and postgraduate qualifications

We neither found a significant correlation between the salary level and the possession of a postgraduate degree (M.A. or Ph.D.) (Spearman's $\rho=-0.50$; $p=0.13$). Therefore, journalists who had completed a master's or doctoral degree did not earn better salaries than those with no higher education.

Salary levels and professional experience

The larger the professional experience of journalists is, the higher their earnings are. We found a direct correlation between these two variables: the effect of work experience was small, but statistically significantly (Spearman's $\rho=0.52$; $p<0.01$).

Contingency table: Salary levels distributed according to years of experience

		Salary level			Total
		Low	Intermediate	High	
Years of professional experience	0-10	64.7%	28.4%	6.9%	100.0%
	11-20	26.9%	44.2%	28.9%	100.0%
	21-30	15.9%	30.5%	53.7%	100.0%
	31-40	13.3%	22.4%	64.3%	100.0%
	Over 41	20.0%	200%	60.0%	100.0%

Salary level and employing media company

We found a significant relationship between the salary level of journalists and the type of media company where they work (Chi-square=55.165; $p=0.000$). This suggests that salaries are associated with the type of media where journalists work. However, the value of the coefficient of contingency turned out to be low ($C=0.24$; $p=0.000$), and the association between the variables very limited.

Contingency table: salary levels distributed according to the type of media company employing journalists

		Salary level			Total
		Low	Intermediate	High	
Media	Press	34.6%	29.0%	36.4%	100.0%
	Magazines	40.0%	27.5%	32.5%	100.0%
	Radio	42.6%	30.7%	26.7%	100.0%
	Television	19.3%	36.2%	44.4%	100.0%
	Digital media	61.8%	17.6%	20.6%	100.0%
	Press department	23.6%	43.6%	32.9%	100.0%
	News agency	30.0%	42.5%	27.5%	100.0%
	Freelance	52.9%	35.3%	11.8%	100.0%

Salary level and company's size

We found a significant correlation between the salary level of journalists and the size of the company in which they worked, although the intensity of this correlation is very low (Spearman's rho=0.27, p<0.01). Therefore, it seems that the bigger the media company is, the higher the remuneration the journalist gets. Nonetheless, the size of the effect demands us to interpret this relationship with caution.

Contingency table: salary levels distributed according to the size of the employing media company

		Salary levels			Total
		Low	Intermediate	High	
Size of the media company	Very Small	45.0%	25.0%	30.0%	100.0%
	Small	54.2%	28.0%	17.9%	100.0%
	Medium	33.6%	36.2%	30.2%	100.0%
	Large	21.9%	35.4%	42.7%	100.0%

Salary level and geographic location of the company

We found a statistically significant, yet moderate, association between salary level and the location of the media company (Chi-square=80.90; p=0.000; C=0.29; p=0.000). Therefore, the data shows that the

media companies located in Madrid and, to a lesser extent, Barcelona give better remunerations to their journalists than the media companies located in the rest of rest of Spain do.

Contingency table: salary levels distributed according to the location of the media companies

	Salary level			Total
	Low	Intermediate	High	
Location Madrid	22.9%	34.2%	42.9%	100.0%
Barcelona	25.2%	36.9%	37.9%	100.0%
Rest of Spain	46.4%	30.8%	22.8%	100.0%

Salary level and seniority in the media company

We found a statistically significant correlation between the salary and the seniority of journalists in the company (Spearman's $\rho=0.43$; $p<0.01$). We can therefore point out that the longer journalists' seniority in the media company is, the higher their salaries are.

Contingency table: salary levels distributed according to seniority in the company

	Salary level			Total
	Low	Intermediate	High	
Seniority in 0-10 Years	44.3%	32.4%	23.2%	100.0%
11-20	17.9%	37.9%	44.2%	100.0%
21-30	5.6%	29.9%	64.5%	100.0%
31-40	11.1%	16.7%	72.2%	100.0%
Over 41	16.7%	50.0%	33.3%	100.0%

Salary level and type of contract

We found a statistically significant, yet limited, correlation between the salary level and the type of contract (Chi-square=56.180; $p=0.000$; $C=0.24$; $p=0.000$). Therefore, the data suggest that journalists who enjoy open-term contracts generally earn more money than those who have a temporarily contract or a contract for work or service. Moreover, there is a very marked polarisation in the salary level of freelance journalists.

Contingency table: salary levels distributed according to the type of employment relationship

Type of contract	Salary level			Total
	Low	Intermediate	High	
Open-term contract	25.5%	35.3%	39.2%	100.0%
Temporary contract	53.2%	33.8%	13.0%	100.0%
Contract for work	52.9%	25.5%	21.6%	100.0%
Freelance or entrepreneur	34.0%	27.8%	38.1%	100.0%

Salary levels and occupational category

As expected, the salary of the sample of journalists was associated with their occupational category [7] (Chi-square=226.97; p=0.000; C=0.45; p=0.000). In fact, the bivariate analysis indicates that salaries depend highly on the occupational category. As a result, the order of the occupational categories according to income, and based on the sample, is as follows: Editor, sub-editor, editor-in-chief, section head, department head, writer, contributor and technicians.

Contingency table: salary levels distributed according to occupational category

Occupational Category	Salary level			Total
	Low	Intermediate	High	
Editor	6.6%	20.7%	72.7%	100.0%
Editor in chief	17.8%	21.9%	60.3%	100.0%
Department head	18.4%	46.1%	35.5%	100.0%
Section head	8.2%	45.9%	45.9%	100.0%
Staff writer	46.4%	35.5%	18.1%	100.0%
Contributor	61.0%	20.3%	18.6%	100.0%

We also examined the distribution of writers' salaries (the largest occupational category in the sample) according to the type of the employing media company. The contingency table shows how the lower paid writers are those working for digital media and magazines, while the highest paid work for the newsrooms of TV stations and newspapers.

Contingency table: Distribution of salary levels among writers according to the type of media company

Writers	Salary levels			Total
	Low	Intermediate	High	
Print Press	50.9%	31.6%	17.5%	100.0%
Magazines	63.0%	22.2%	14.8%	100.0%
Radio	50.0%	39.6%	10.4%	100.0%
Television	26.3%	44.2%	29.5%	100.0%
Digital media	82.4%	11.8%	5.9%	100.0%
Press department	50.0%	39.3%	10.7%	100.0%
News agency	40.0%	46.7%	13.3%	100.0%

4. Discussion and conclusions

The data obtained in our study indicate that one-third of journalists (31.92%) is paid less than 1,500 Euros net per month, i.e. less than 21,000 Euros net per year. 58.06% of the sample of journalists earned in 2009 between 16,800 and 35,000 Euros net per year. The most common salary band (stated by 18.46% of respondents) ranged between 25,200 and 30,800 Euros net per year. These figures are below the ones put forward by a study of the salaries agreed in 25 collective agreements signed by Spanish media companies (APM, 2010). If we compare these figures with the ones provided by the 2007 National Survey on Salary Structure, we can see that journalists are worse paid than other professionals with bachelor studies (which in average earned 34,093.36 Euros per year).

Thanks to the bivariate analysis we can conclude that the salary level is determined, at least in part, by the gender and age of journalists; as well as by their professional experience, the type of media in which they work, the geographic location and size of the employing company, the kind of contract signed with the company, the occupational category and the seniority of the journalist in the company. On the other hand, the salary level of journalists is, currently, independent of the level of studies, the type of degree, and the holding of postgraduate degrees.

The salary gap between male and female journalists is worrying. Male journalists are better paid than their female counterparts (47.2% of male journalists earn over 2,200 Euros net per month, while only 23.1% of female journalists earn this figure). The differences between the two gender groups are due to the fact that men occupy the better-paid positions and because women are paid less even when doing

the same tasks and occupational the same position (52.4% of female writers earn less than 1,500 Euros net per month, while only 37.2% of the male writers is paid that amount).

There is also a wide gap between younger and older journalists. Statistically, journalists' salaries increase as they get older. Journalists under 35 years of age are the worst remunerated, since 58.9% of them earns less than 1,500 Euros net per month. Most journalists between 36 and 45 years of age (43.8% in our study) earn intermediate salaries (between 1,501 and 2,200 Euros per month). And it is not until they are 46 years older when most journalists (55% in our study) begin to earn salaries over 2,200 Euros. The data highlight that the age-salary progression is very slow. A newly graduated in journalism (21 years old) will have to wait about 14 years (until he is 36) in order to go from the low salary band to the intermediate section, which ranges between 1,500 and 2,200 Euros.

Despite efforts to professionalise the profession of journalism through the formalisation of university studies in Journalism and Communication, our survey data confirm that, at the moment, obtaining university degrees does not affect journalists' salary level. There are no significant differences among the journalists who have obtained a university degree and those who have not; or among those who studied journalism and those who studied another area with no connection to the field of Communication. Having a master's or doctoral degree, which should enhance the value of journalists' work, is neither reflected in on the salary level of journalists.

Despite the request made to media companies, government and journalists to consolidate Journalism as a university certified profession, through the creation of associations of graduate and postgraduate journalists (Fernández Areal, 2010), the reality indicates that media companies do not reward financially the specialised university education of their employees. Perhaps this tendency is due to the fact that a large share of journalists in the sample were old journalists (16.9% of the sample were aged 55 years and over) and, therefore, they have benefitted from intermediate and high level salaries. Precisely this group has the lowest level of university education (42.3% of journalists over 55 years of age in the sample had no university education). Thus, this fact, probably, prevents us from observing a linear association between the variables "salary level" and "level of studies".

Obviously, in the absence of university education, professional experience is crucial to reach a high salary. Our study has demonstrated that as the years of professional experience accumulate, the salary level of journalist gets better. However, the process to achieve a substantial improvement in remuneration is surprisingly slow since the access to a higher salary level (more than 2,200 Euros) usually takes the majority of journalists between 21 and 30 years of professional dedication. The first years in the profession are characterised by precarious salaries, since 64.7% of journalists with less than ten years of experience earn less than 1,500 Euros net per month. Less than half of the journalists with an extra decade of experience (44.2% of those with 11-20 years of experience) earn intermediate salary levels. Finally, 53.7% of journalists with 21-30 years of experience manage to earn more than

2,200 Euros per month, which is the most common figure among journalists with more than 31 years of experience.

Regarding the differences across media platforms, television is the best payer (44.4% were paid a high salary), followed by the communication and press departments (only 23.6% earned low salaries); news agencies (42.4% were paid intermediate salaries), and the press, although the latter presented a polarized structure (34.6% earned low salaries and 36.4% earned high salaries). The media that gave the lowest salaries to their employees, in our sample, were magazines (42.6% had a low salary); radio (low salaries for 42.6% of employees) and especially the digital media, which remunerates 61.8% of its journalists with salaries under 1,500 Euros.

Regardless of the type of media, the larger the company is, better the salary conditions are. In our sample, small and very small companies paid low salaries to approximately half of their journalists (45% and 54.2%, respectively). However, in medium-sized media companies the distribution is more equal, and the intermediate salaries predominate (36.2%). Companies with more than 250 employees turned out to be the best payers since 42.7% of their journalists earned over 2,200 Euros per month.

Our analysis also confirms that the media located in Madrid and Barcelona predominantly pays intermediate and high salaries (especially in Madrid, where 42.9% of journalists had high salaries). On the other hand, 46.4% of journalists employed by media located in other Spanish provinces received less than 1,500 Euros net per month. We can therefore talk about the existence of marked salary differences between the media-political centres and the media periphery, which is also a salary periphery.

Focusing the analysis on the relationship between journalists and employers, we discovered that there is a direct relationship between loyalty and remuneration, so journalists who manage to stay longer in a company achieve better salaries. Almost half of the journalists with less than ten years of seniority in their last company earned low salaries. The trend reverses among those who have accumulated between 11 and 20 years of seniority, which is rewarded in 44.2% of cases with a high salary level. Accordingly, the worse paid journalists are those with the shortest relationship with their employer. In fact, 53.2% of temporary contracts and 52.9% of contracts for work involve a remuneration of under 1,500 Euros a month, which is a figure that only affects a quarter of the open-term contracts.

There is also a great salary gap between journalistic occupational categories. There are large salary differences between managerial and writing positions, but also between writers and the middle positions. In fact, 46.4% of all writers earn a low salary (82.4% of the writers in digital media; 63% of writers in magazines and half of writers in press, radio and press offices). Conversely, 45.9% of their immediate bosses, the section heads, enjoy high salaries (more than 2,200 Euros), like 60.3% of the

editors-in-chief and 72.7% of editors. In spite of this, contributors are worse remunerated than the writers since 61% of them were paid less than 1,500 Euros a month.

At this point, we are able to describe the typical profile of the journalist with high, intermediate and low salary levels.

The prototype of a journalist with a high salary level would earn more than 2,200 Euros net per month. It would be a 46 year-old man with approximately 28 years of professional experience, and preferably in the same company. This journalist would be an editor or sub-editor of a news TV programme in a large company, located in Madrid, with which he would maintain an open-term contract.

The prototype of a journalist with an intermediate salary level would win between 1,501 and 2,200 Euros net per month. It would be a woman aged between 36 and 45 years, with 15 years of work experience, preferably tied to the same company. This journalist would occupy a position of intermediate responsibility (department head) in a press office within a medium-sized company located in Barcelona, with which she would maintain an open-term contract.

The prototype of a journalist with a low salary level would receive less than 1,500 Euros a month. It would be a woman under 35 years of age, with less than 10 years of professional experience, newly hired by a digital media company, owned by a small media conglomerate located in any Spanish province apart from Madrid and Barcelona. The journalist would have the professional category of writer and her working relationship with the company would be based on a temporary contract.

The data obtained from the study confirmed that most journalists are poorly remunerated for their work. Now it is appropriate, therefore, to wonder why.

An explanation of the critical perspectives leads us to think that this is a strategy of the forces in power (the media owners and their commercial and political partners) to undermine the independence of journalists and thus weaken the civic power of society. This explanation would link the poor regulation of the profession to the working conditions of communicators, who would be more concerned with paying the bills than with conducting journalistic investigations that might be prejudicial to the interests of the forces in power.

Another completely different explanation can be inferred from the hypothesis proposed by Robert Picard (professor of Media Economics in *Jonkoping University* of Sweden and editor of the *Journal Media Economics* for over a decade) at a conference in *Oxford University's Reuters Institute*. Picard explains why journalists earn little and “must earn little”:

“Salaries are a compensation for the creation of value. And journalists, simply, are not creating much recently [...]. Unfortunately, the journalistic work has become standardised. Most journalists share the same set of skills, give the same approach to articles, they go after the same sources, make similar questions and write relatively similar articles. Permutability is one of the reasons why the salary of an ordinary journalist is relatively low and why columnists, cartoonists and specialised journalists (e.g., in economics and financial information) are better paid”.

According to this expert, the problem is that journalists are not professionals with a set of unique knowledge, as it is the case of professors, for example, since the main economic value of journalism is not derived from journalists' own knowledge. Picard warns that technology is subtracting skills from journalists, and threatening the three fundamental functions and their corresponding skills that have generated economic value in journalism so far (access to sources, determining the relevance of information, and effective expression), because it allows anyone to do it:

“[Technology] is giving individuals without the support of a press company the possibility of accessing sources, locating information, determining its relevance and expressing it effectively”.

According to Picard, this loss of unique and exclusive skills regarding the access to information sources and the immediacy of information access and distribution, justifies the low salaries of journalists.

Acknowledging the arguments of both explanations, we consider they are complementary because while it is true that in recent years the work of journalists has become standardised –thus losing economic value-, perhaps this has occurred due to the conditions imposed by the organisational structure of the media and the legal context surrounding the journalistic activity. Journalism is increasingly understood by companies and, sadly, by the authorities as a ‘sale’ activity in which journalists are not even the ‘producers’, but the ‘packers’ of a low cost product. For this reason, the academia -where we are aware of the social importance of journalists in a democratic society- must continue to monitor the profession, with the objective of diagnosing the “diseases” that are affecting it, and thus avoid the predicted “death” of journalism.

In the near future, therefore, it will be important to replicate the study, taking into account that in the coming years we can expect changes and legislative reforms in the general regulatory framework (reforms to the labour market) and the specific field of journalism and the media (the professional statute of the journalist and the collective agreement of the broadcasting sector) that may modify the salary structure of journalists in Spain.

Likewise, as we briefly mentioned in the introduction, during the economic crisis the media companies begun implementing staff costs-reduction policies that should be assessed once the data from 2010 and 2011 is collected. However, a more ambitious approach should aim to study this subject in a group of democratic countries.

Moreover, in the next approaches to this object of study it should be important to reconsider some methodological issues based on the ones applied in this research [8].

It would be interesting to select participants based on quotas of media type, age and occupational category to improve the representativeness of certain minority groups.

We would obtain richer information for statistical exploitation had the variable salary level been a scale variable and not ordinal. It would be more advisable not to collect salary bands, but instead absolute data, which would facilitate the descriptive and inferential statistics (we could use the arithmetic mean), and especially, would enrich the analysis of the chronological series that can be produced in the next few years.

It would be convenient to reformulate the question regarding the income and ask for the annual gross income (including bonuses) instead of just monthly net income. This would allow a more convenient comparison of data from other studies and surveys on salary structure.

The survey questionnaire could also include an item requesting participants to explain whether their job contract is governed by a specific or sectorial agreement.

Apart from these issues, it would be progressive if the next investigations on the salary situation of Spanish journalists would aim for the homogenisation of methodological approaches in this area of study to allow comparative analysis between the results of several researchers.

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6. Notes

[1] The Media Sector of the Federation of Social Services of the Labour Commissions (FSC-CCOO) announced via press release on 11 March, 2010, that it would sue the non-daily press employers association for failing to comply with the commitments made in the salary review. This release was retrieved on 12 March 2010 from: <http://www.fsc.ccoo.es/comunes/temp/recursos/17554/376136.pdf>

[2] The CHEERS (Careers after Higher Education) survey reviewed the labour situation of European graduates four years after finishing their undergraduate during 1994 and 1995.

[3] Instituto Nacional de Estadística / National Institute of Statistics (2007). Encuesta Nacional de Estructura Salarial (National Survey of Salary Structure). Retrieved on 1 January, 2010, from: <http://www.ine.es/jaxi/menu.do?type=pcaxis&path=%2Ft22/p133&file=inebase&L=0>

[4] The work of Gómez Aguilar uses data collected from the same survey used in this investigation (developed as part of the CSO2008-05125 R&D project, which is directed by Farias Batlle).

[5] The CSO2008-05125 project will review next year the salary structure of journalists in Spain, again by means of a survey applied to a sample of journalists.

[6] Of the sample of journalists, those with a low salary level account for 31.9%; those with an intermediate level account for 33.3%; and those with high level salary 34.8%.

[7] The tables only reflect those positions with a significant number of cases for analysis.

[8] The latest research conducted by Farias et al. (2010) includes the methodological changes I describe below.

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