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Learning from Indigenous Journalism: A Case for Standpoint Journalism

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ABSTRACT

This essay examines the similarities and differences between the values underpinning Indigenous and Western journalism. It contributes to broader conversations about the conception and study of journalism through three key contributions. Theoretically, it bridges feminist standpoint and Indigenous epistemologies to enrich journalism studies and practice. Conceptually, it offers a typology of universal themes in Indigenous journalism, identifying five key dimensions – values, roles, approaches, narratives, and organizational structures. Practically, this framework points to how Western journalism can adopt lessons from Indigenous practices to address ongoing ethical and professional challenges.

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Indigenous Journalism encompasses two distinct spheres: the pragmatic one of Indigenous Peoples' communication practices and spaces and another within the academic realm. The former has a well-documented history of nearly two centuries (Hanusch 2013), while the latter has only recently gained research interest, spanning approximately two decades (Ní Bhroin, Sand, and Rasmussen 2021). The relatively recent acknowledgment of Indigenous Journalism in academia highlights the consistent failure of academic institutions to incorporate diversity in knowledge production (Haraway 1988). However, this encounter provides an opportunity for critical reflection on how Indigenous journalism values can enhance the theoretical foundation of standpoint journalism.

Research consistently highlights the shortcomings of mainstream journalism (Durham 1998), which, at best, overlooks or misrepresents marginalized communities and, at worst, normalizes power structures that perpetuate inequalities. Standpoint epistemology is a theory of knowledge that socially situates and grounds knowledge in lived experience (Haraway 1988). As such, it offers a powerful framework for challenging traditional journalism norms through fostering inclusive, emancipatory reporting. By embracing

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reflexivity, standpoint journalism provides a pathway for the field to realize its moral commitment to foster democracy.

Increasingly, journalism as a discipline has engaged with such critical reflection. Specifically, recent work has advocated for a paradigm shift in journalism that centers Indigenous worldviews to foster equitable and sustainable media practices (McCue 2023; Patrick et al. 2024). Patrick and colleagues (2024) argue that in order to shift from the historical marginalization of Indigenous voices and deficit framing of issues, the adoption of Indigenous standpoints is required to foster a necessary transformation of journalism through the unlearning of colonial narratives.

In arguing this, the authors propose several pathways forward, which include "foregrounding Indigenous knowledge and perspectives," "cultivating critical thinking leading to cultural intelligence," and "identifying and developing non-Indigenous people's standpoints and understandings of bias, subjectivity-objectivity, and broader questions around truth, values, and ways of knowing" (Patrick et al. 2024, 15–16). In response, we argue that the values underpinning Indigenous and Western journalism are strikingly similar. What differentiates them, however, is the refusal of Western journalistic norms to acknowledge their own positionality and to be transparent about it.

While our resulting discussion initiates more extensive conversations about how to conceive and study journalism, our article makes three noteworthy contributions. Theoretically, our work highlights how bridging feminist standpoint theory and Indigenous epistemologies can enrich journalism studies and practice. Conceptually, our work contributes a typology of universal themes that cut across Indigenous journalism. The resulting framework, which identifies five key dimensions – values, roles, approaches, narratives, and organizational structures – within the context of Indigenous journalism as normative Western journalism practices, lays the foundation for our third contribution. The practical implications of this typology lay in the ability to point to areas where Western journalism can reimagine its current practices by adopting lessons from Indigenous practices to address ongoing ethical and professional challenges.

We begin by situating Indigenous journalism within the boundaries of journalism, which we see as plural – hence, "journalisms". Next, we propose an operationalizable definition of Indigenous journalism and disentangle its experiences from those of other journalisms. Rooted in Indigenous epistemologies and feminist standpoint epistemology, we examine five key dimensions of Indigenous journalism, identifying where Western journalism practices deviate from it. Finally, we discuss what Western journalism practices can learn from Indigenous journalism practices and how these lessons can strengthen the discourse on standpoint journalism. Before we continue, however, it is important that we lay out three crucial components that ground our entrance into the discourse that follows.

First, we must take a moment to address our use of the generalized term "Indigenous" throughout this article. Our use of this term is foundationally aligned with that of Oji-Cree journalist Tashiina Buswa's consideration of the word "Indigenous" as a term that recognizes "the many differences between Indigenous peoples across the planet, but also captures their common struggles against colonial oppression" (Todorova 2016 as cited in Buswa 2021, 7–8), and acknowledges "that Indigenous identity is not monolithic" (Buswa 2021, 7–8). We extend upon Buswa's geographic scope to apply this globally. In doing so, we acknowledge that the word Indigenous refers to multiple realities, from

the oppressed and colonized original Peoples in the Americas to the Indigenous dominant groups in the Pacific island-states (Ní Bhroin, Sand, and Rasmussen 2021), as well as the vulnerable Indigenous populations in the Artic's Sápmi and Siberian regions, who sustain ancestral ties to their lands while also navigating the impacts of modern resource extraction and global environmental change (Koptseva 2017; Östlund and Norstedt 2021).

Similarly, we want to highlight that while we use the term "Indigenous journalism" as an umbrella term, it is not meant to collapse or imply that Indigenous Peoples or Indigenous journalism is homogenous. As Anishinaabe journalist Duncan McCue's (2023) work shows, Indigenous journalism is diverse and multifaceted, with no one form of Indigenous journalism, even within the same Indigenous Peoples. We will elaborate upon the dimensions of Indigenous Journalism later on.

Lastly, we want to acknowledge our positionality while responding to past calls for future work. Scholars such as Patrick and colleagues (2024) and Todorova (2016) have argued that a paradigmatic shift that would disrupt the existing colonial structures of Western journalism requires the integration of Indigenous and non-Indigenous perspectives and practices. As non-Indigenous communication scholars, we enter the discussion of Indigenous journalism as observers drawing on our academic and professional experiences with and adjacent to Indigenous communities in South and North America. Such experiences have ultimately led us to reevaluate Western approaches embedded within our practices. In offering our non-Indigenous perspectives to the larger discussion of decolonizing journalism, we view our contribution as demonstrating how non-Indigenous journalism scholars and practitioners can improve our understanding of standpoints and integrate it into journalism theories.

Indigenous Journalism

A substantial body of research on Indigenous media, much of it rooted in Anthropology, has shown how communities worldwide employ media technologies as defense and representational sovereignty tools. They help us understand the breadth and importance of Indigenous media, as well as the prejudices and limitations of Western media in representing Indigenous perspectives. However, these discussions rarely focus on what we, non-Indigenous scholars and practitioners, can learn from Indigenous ways of knowing and doing. Turner (1992), for example, analyses the Xavante and Kayapó Peoples' use of audiovisual tools for self-representation, but goes just as far as emphasizing the need for more ethnographic attention to Indigenous media production as an active cultural process. Graham (2011), analyzing the case of Mario Juruna use of tape recordings for rights advocacy and how mainstream media represented him, draws attention to how editorial conventions shape the public's perception of Indigenous political actors through linguistic representation. The authors highlights the importance of examining how these mechanisms of discursive manipulation persist in contemporary media and proposes comparative research to understand their broader implications for Indigenous political legitimacy.

Similarly, studies have highlighted video as a medium for cultural mediation and assertion of identity, whether through the performative and political use of video among the Kayapo (Turner 1992), its role as a dynamic site of cultural invention and hybrid expression

(Ginsburg 1991), or its function as a tool for Indigenous cultural activism and internal and external self-representation (Budka 2015). But they go just as far as urging future inquiry into the balance between empowerment and co-optation in Indigenous media initiatives under conditions of global media convergence and neoliberalism.

More recent scholarship has examined Indigenous engagement with social media. Carlson and Frazer (2020) focus on how Indigenous Australians navigate the "settler gaze" online, highlighting the dual strategies of self-policing and circulating affective content as acts of hope and resistance, while Virtanen (2015) looks into how Arawakan- and Panoan-speaking youth in the Brazilian Amazon use social media to sustain social ties, reflect on Indigenous knowledge, and negotiate identity across rural and urban contexts. Collectively, these studies showcase the realities of Indigenous media practices in the context of globalization and relationship with the dominant society and pave the way for us to look more closely to the epistemological frameworks Indigenous communities bring to media-making.

Despite the far-reaching integration of such practices, the academic scope regarding Indigenous journalism has been relatively constrained. Bhroín and colleagues (2021) reviewed 47 peer-reviewed articles about Indigenous journalism written in English, revealing that most studies (19) concentrate on Australia and Oceania. Nevertheless, Indigenous media has a rich history in North America. The United States is home to the oldest documented Indigenous newspaper, the Cherokee Phoenix, which dates to 1828 and was printed in English and Cherokee (Hanusch 2013). Furthermore, Inuit communities in northern Canada during the 1970s set in motion what would expand into a robust network of Inuit, First Nations, and Métis-owned and managed radio and broadcasting (Brisebois 1983).

Several factors may influence Bhroín and colleagues' (2021) findings. One possible explanation could be that the well-established relationship between the Māori People and their news media outlets might have attracted more attention from researchers than in other places. Another possible reason is the publication language. Despite growing scholarship on Indigenous media in South America, the region only included two articles in the study, likely due to language barriers. Another factor that may shape Bhroín and colleagues' literature review is primarily focused on experiences at the field's core, such as newspapers and television broadcasts.

This emphasis is warranted given the scholarship, beyond their review, that highlights themes such as creating Indigenous-focused television networks (Brisebois 1983; Markelin 2017; Samson 2007; Torkel, Inker-Anni, and Krøvel 2021) and broadcasting news within the framework of shared cultural systems (Stuart 2003; Tshabangu and Salawu 2022). These initiatives not only provide representation but challenge conventional journalistic values centered on objectivity and detachment by prioritizing transparency and cultural appropriateness. Clark (2014) and Roth (2000) document the development of the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network (APTN) in Canada as a platform for representational sovereignty, while Budka (2015) discusses how APTN and Wawatay enable Indigenous communities to retain control over their narratives. Madden (1997) analysis of the Inuit Broadcasting Corporation's Qagik illustrates a shift in journalistic approach: instead of reflecting external notions of newsworthiness, Qagik was guided by Inuit values and practices, offering a culturally grounded, transformative mode of storytelling that diverges from the linear, event-driven format of Western news.

In the literature, radio is another vital news outlet for Indigenous communities often organized around communal, non-profit, and co-operative structures that contrast sharply with commercial, hierarchical models. There are around 70 radio stations in the United States in Indigenous territories, opening spaces for news in Indigenous languages, music, and other cultural expressions (Smiles 2019). Moylan (2022) analyses how the pan-Indigenous radio broadcast Beyond Bows and Arrows helped the communities face the COVID-19 pandemic. In Australia, the Māori radio network Iwi has operated for more than 30 years, recently facing the challenges of media convergence to digital platforms (McEwan 2019). In Panama, decades of experience creating programs for local and national radios and scrambling to finance them led the Guna People to develop their own radio system in their territory to promote greater internal governance (Mauri and López 2020).

Moreover, in the literature about Indigenous radio, we begin to see experiences that stretch and redefine the boundaries of journalism itself. According to Matt Carlson (2015), journalism is bounded by a wall of symbolic and practical distinctions that define what constitutes journalism, who qualifies as a journalist, and the norms and practices that guide the profession – themes revisited later in this essay. In West Africa, Heywood (2024) highlights how community radio stations serve as a critical platform to empower Indigenous women and their communities by providing access to information on sensitive social issues and often incorporating local cultural narratives, music, and formats that resonate with Indigenous audiences. In Bolivia, community radio stations have preserved the Aymara and Quechua languages for decades, functioning as spaces of resistance and fighting against gender violence (Galán 2020). These examples demonstrate that Indigenous journalism often takes a transformative approach, not merely reporting on reality but actively reshaping it through storytelling grounded in collective values and lived experience.

Locating Indigenous Journalism in the Field

A common thread in the literature about Indigenous experiences with news media is localizing the studies alongside the literature on alternative and radical media (Celigueta 2020; Mota and Boaventura 2021), as well as popular and community media (Doyle, Ortega, and Lizondo 2021; Gil García 2020; Muniz and Tapia 2021), especially in Latin America. Understanding Indigenous journalism in this context requires understanding community traditions and alternative communication. Both traditions have been shaped in Latin America by the historical context of repressive military dictatorships in the second half of the twentieth century and the resulting resistance movements by subaltern groups (Peruzzo 1999).

Since the 1980s, researchers such as Mário Kaplún, Juan Diaz Bordenave, and Luis Ramiro Beltrán have stressed the need to integrate communication into the organizational and educational processes of social and popular movements (Peruzzo 1999; Peruzzo 2009) - an influence that we can see on Aymara and Quechua radios in Bolivia (Galán 2020). Following the logic of the pedagogy of liberation advocated by the Brazilian educator Paulo Freire (2014, 2015), communication and education become part of a feedback movement in the search for the emancipation of groups historically deprived of their social rights, especially under dictatorial regimes. Peruzzo, one of the leading exponents

of the study of community communication in Brazil, links the concept to the communicative processes of subaltern groups that sought to ensure respect for "the fundamental rights of the human person and/or to address broader social issues that concern society as a whole, such as issues related to ecology, peace-building and life itself on the planet" (2013, 206). In this sense, community communication refers to the active exercise of direct participation, horizontality in decision-making, and broadening of the spectrum around the exercise of citizenship, going beyond the idea of community journalism (Peruzzo 1999).

Surely, oppression is not an exclusive reality of Latin America. Thus, a form of journalism moving away from the field's core erupted worldwide, as scholars attempt to locate and define these multiple journalisms. Atton and Hamilton (2008) describe alternative media as consisting of politicized alternative media and cultural alternative media. It is usually written, edited, and operated by non-professionals with some level of training, in most cases after initial involvement with the alternative media (Harcup 2005). Rooted in the Gramscian concept of organic intellectuals, alternative journalism emerges from direct social and political experiences and addresses underrepresented groups' interests, views, and needs. Its target audience includes both geographic and sociocultural communities, and its primary objectives are to redistribute media power, challenge the marginalization or demonization of social and cultural groups by mainstream media, and fill gaps in coverage perceived by alternative journalists (Atton and Hamilton 2008).

While alternative journalism is often framed as an opposition or supplement to mainstream media, the relationship is not strictly binary or oppositional (Atton and Hamilton 2008). Typically non-hierarchical and collective, alternative journalism is predominantly non-commercial, although the commercialization of alternative press outlets has increased. It spans various platforms, including newspapers, magazines, radio, film, internet, and local broadcasts (Atton and Hamilton 2008; Howley 2005). It sits close to radical journalism, although the latter tends to be more strongly defined by its political leanings.

As part of the broader category of "radical media," radical journalism is defined by Downing (2000) as a politicized form of alternative media rooted in social movements that oppose mainstream media structures. Often targeting niche audiences united by shared ideologies, radical journalism is most commonly associated with the Far Left but also encompasses ultra-right perspectives and both democratic and repressive radical media. Central to radical journalism is its use of standpoint, which incorporates insider perspectives, particularly from marginalized groups, alongside a commitment to transparency and disclosure of affiliations or connections to the story (Jeppesen 2023).

Scholars also describe grassroots journalism and community journalism, both sharing a foundation in anti-capitalist principles and a commitment to decentralized, collective practices. Grassroots journalism is closely tied to political perspectives such as anarchism, left-libertarianism, Marxism, and socialism (Jeppesen 2016; Jeppesen 2018). Community journalism, while similarly anti-capitalist in its content and funding models, emphasizes collective autonomy in political, cultural, and organizational decision-making. It operates through horizontal structures and anti-oppression practices, fostering inclusivity and collaboration (Jeppesen 2016; Jeppesen 2018). Both forms of journalism supplement mainstream media by focusing on the needs and concerns of local communities, offering localized and participatory alternatives to dominant media narratives.

All these journalisms stem from their communities' need or desire to represent themselves and their ideological positions more effectively than mainstream media allows. Although Indigenous journalism fits several traits of alternative, grassroots, and community media, Indigenous Peoples call for a definition that adheres to Indigenous values (Gil García 2020).

Concept and Dimensions

The definition of Indigenous media as the forms of media expression conceptualized, produced, and circulated by Indigenous Peoples around the globe (Wilson et al. 2014) is a valuable starting point. However, it fails to capture the complex power dynamics between Western hegemony and Indigenous experiences of colonization, loss of territorial sovereignty and language, stigmatization and struggles for social justice. Furthermore, these power dynamics are important to consider as they shape and constrain media to exist within these power structures. Similarly, the concept of Indigenous journalism, defined as a "practice of journalism both by and relating to Indigenous people" (Ní Bhroin, Sand, and Rasmussen 2021, 186, original italic), is flawed because it includes non-Indigenous journalistic production, thus diluting the focus on Indigenous perspectives.

It is essential to make this distinction because historically, Indigenous Peoples have been an underrepresented beat in journalism, and coverage relating to Indigenous Peoples has been primarily dispersed between traditional desks. However, recent initiatives such as the Guardian Australia's Indigenous Affairs beat (Myers et al. 2021), APTN and CBC Indigenous, and their recent partnership have made strides in centering Indigenous-produced content. These exceptions highlight the importance of distinguishing between content that centers on Indigenous perspectives and reports on interpretations of those perspectives.

One way to address this disconnect is by turning to critical views. Brazilian Indigenous scholars coined the term ethnomedia to reflect the distinct historical, social, political, cultural, economic, and emotional contexts of Indigenous life, differing fundamentally from those created by non-Indigenous communicators in mass media (Maldonado, Hãe, and Carneiro 2021). Renata Tubinambá's definition of ethnomedia as "a tool for cultural and ethnic empowerment, through the convergence of various media within an ethnovision" (Araújo and Santi 2020, 4) is a critical concept that embodies Indigenous epistemologies and situates the media products in its particular standpoint. It is a tool for cultural and ethnic empowerment, enabling communities to reclaim their roles as historical agents while resisting colonial narratives and fostering intergenerational knowledge (Machado Tupinambá 2016; as cited in Maldonado, Hãe, and Carneiro 2021). By prioritizing flexibility and embracing non-canonical approaches, Indigenous ethnomedia challenges established norms and creates spaces for Indigenous voices to flourish. Through this process, it enacts a "citizen media" that supports cultural diversity and contributes to the collective autonomy and self-representation of Indigenous peoples (Maldonado, Hãe, and Carneiro 2021).

Ethnomedia sits close to Hanusch's proposed conceptualization of Indigenous journalism as all "production and dissemination of information about contemporary affairs of general public interest and importance, by Indigenous peoples for the benefit of

Indigenous but also non-Indigenous communities" (2013, 83). These definitions highlight key characteristics of journalism that are the result of collective action and Indigenous communities, a practice that must respond to the needs of Indigenous Peoples, or "something that exists in contrast or opposition to Western journalism" (Ní Bhroin, Sand, and Rasmussen 2021, 197).

The underlying theme of Indigenous survival in the face of Western hegemony is evident, with scholars pointing to examples of Indigenous experiences and studies. Since the sixteenth century, when European nations started to conquer and subjugate new territories to build a globalized world, "Indigenous Peoples' project has had one major priority: survival" (Smith 2012, 123). As the Māori researcher Linda Smith points out, "the globalization of knowledge and Western culture constantly reaffirms the West's view of itself as the center of legitimate knowledge, the arbiter of what counts as knowledge and the source of "civilized" knowledge" (2012, 72). Smith's critique of the centrality of Western knowledge is reflected in Ojibwe scholar Ryan Comfort's definition of Indigenous Science and Environmental Communication:

> "area of scholarship concerned with the production and distribution of Indigenous science and environmental information, the representation of Indigenous science and environmental issues in media, and the strategic use of science and environmental information in the furtherance of Indigenous self-determination, environmental management, and international environmental governance." (Comfort 2022, 232)

That leaves us with a critical concept of Indigenous journalism somewhere on the continuum between Tupinambá's ethnomedia as a tool for cultural empowerment and Comfort's concern about representation and self-determination – ideas found many times in Indigenous journalism studies. Thus, we define Indigenous journalism as the production and dissemination of information about contemporary issues of public interest, created by Indigenous Peoples, rooted in Indigenous epistemologies, and aimed at fostering self-determination, cultural empowerment, and collective autonomy. Information producers do not need to be formally trained in the standardized sense of J-School education/internships, which is prominent in Western journalism, although they certainly can be. Similar to non-mainstream Western journalism, Indigenous journalism organizational structures can be non-hierarchical, horizontal, or collective. This concept allows us to locate this form of journalism by its actors (Indigenous People), its discourse (Indigenous epistemologies), and its political goals (representational sovereignty and resistance to colonial oppressions).

Hanusch's (2013) research on Māori journalism has identified five characteristics of Indigenous journalism culture: the empowerment of Indigenous societies, the ability to offer a counter-narrative to mainstream media reporting, which is frequently superficial and laden with misrepresentation and prejudice, language revitalization, culturally appropriate reporting, and watchdog function. However, Bhroín and colleagues (2021) have noted that these characteristics overlap with the values of mainstream journalism.

Feminist theories can help us better understand the distinctiveness of Indigenous journalism culture by examining the shared values that underpin it. This approach is not intended to detract from Indigenous journalism's unique position but to provide insights into what Western journalism can learn from Indigenous epistemologies. We trace a parallel with Sandra Harding's (1987) discussion of feminist methodologies, where she argues

Table 1. Key dimensions of Indigenous journalism.

	Western Journalism	Indigenous Journalism
Values	Objectivity, Detachment, Balance	Transparency, Ethnovision, Perspective
Roles	Uphold democracy, curate information, bear witness, watchdog	Self-determination, resistance, representational sovereignty
Approach	Reflecting and framing reality	Translating and transforming reality
Narrative	Linear storytelling	Non-linear storytelling, culturally appropriate
Organizational Structure	Hierarchical, for-profit	Communal, co-operative, non-profit

that what makes them distinct is not the method itself but the epistemology that directs the inquiry. What sets Indigenous journalism apart is the influence of Indigenous epistemologies, not the practices themselves.

Drawing on the literature on Indigenous and Western journalism, we identify five dimensions for comparing the two (Table 1) and exploring how Western journalism can integrate Indigenous epistemologies to inform practices that advance "journalism's most progressive, emancipatory, and democratic goals" (Durham 1998, 21).

Values

Hanusch's research with Māori journalists highlights the cultural values that influence how they think about and practice their work. Manaakitanga is the Māori value of "nurturing relationships, looking after people, and being very careful about how others are treated" (Hanusch 2015, 198). This value translates to how Māori journalists respect and care for sources to represent them accurately in the news stories, protect the sources when reporting controversial stories, and treat stories and sources with dignity and integrity. Although respect for the sources is a universal value in journalism, Māori journalists feel compelled to highlight it as a traditional value due to the frequent misrepresentation and prejudice Indigenous Peoples face in Western media. The Anishinaabe scholar Duncan McCue (2023) points to colonial stereotypes common in Canadian newspapers for a long time: to make the news, an Indigenous had to be defiant, drumming, dancing, drunk, or dead - which is consistent with similar findings in Brazilian literature (Silva and Raposo 2021). In recent years, the colonial stereotypes evolved to three core frames: the pathetic victim, the noble environmentalist, and the angry warrior (McCue 2023).

The second cultural value highlighted in Hanusch's work, marae and hui, can be understood as respect for Māori's meeting protocols. Māori journalists must follow all ceremonial aspects of a meeting to gather information for a news story. In contrast, non-Māori journalists often rush the information-gathering process without considering the cultural significance of the protocols to the Māori community. It is worth noting that reporters often must familiarize themselves with and adhere to special event protocols, such as government proceedings or sports events, to gather information. This raises the question of whether the non-observance of Indigenous protocols is due to remnants of the colonizer's perspective, which centered the Western traditions as the model and devalued the cultural significance of others.

The Western journalism we consume in legacy media is rooted in journalistic practices traced back to the late 19th and early 20th centuries, bounded by positivist ideas of

objectivity and neutrality (see Atton and Hamilton 2008 for more discussion). As Sue Robinson (2015) points out, to this day, "reporters "bear witness" and then use their agreed-upon conventions – such as quotations, third-person writing, inverted pyramid leads – to craft a narrative" (154). The decades of journalism studies contesting these ideas promoted some changes. Both the Society of Professional Journalists (SPJ) and the American Society of Newspaper Editors (ASNE) have begun to move beyond the traditional concept of objectivity by emphasizing the inclusion of multiple viewpoints and fostering reflexivity in reporting practices. The SPJ Code of Ethics encourages journalists to "tell the story of the diversity and magnitude of the human experience" (Durham 1998, 120), underscoring the need to represent varied perspectives while maintaining a commitment to truth. Similarly, the ASNE promotes principles like "balance, fairness, and wholeness" in journalism, urging reporters to reflect on the complexities of communities by capturing diverse voices and experiences (Durham 1998, 120). Nevertheless, Western journalism norms still detach the reporter's place in the community. As Durham points out,

> "Journalists are expected to simultaneously fulfill their obligations to objectivity and pluralism by conscientiously including a multiplicity of viewpoints in a news story, while carefully excluding any manifest evidence of their own." (Durham 1998, 3)

Indigenous journalism is often criticized as biased because of its commitment to its communities, which contrasts with the Western journalistic ideal that refuses to situate its viewpoint and thus perpetuates "the gaze that mythically inscribes all the marked bodies, that makes the unmarked category [Male and White] claim the powers to see and not be seen, to represent while escaping representation." (Haraway 1988, 581). By acknowledging its community ties, Indigenous journalism is more transparent about its standpoint and incorporates more clearly the communities' perspectives on the issues covered.

Roles

Journalism that aims to empower Indigenous societies can perform several roles, including creating an alternative public space for the community to discuss their daily lives, problems, and priorities (Almeida 2022; Smiles 2019); spearheading political and social movements (Araújo and Santi 2020); or serving as an instrument in battles for self-determination (Stuart 2003). In other words, it provides a public service for the community, aligned with its particular culture, politics, and values, a role local newspapers play when they focus on community problems, notably in health and environmental crisis coverage (Takahashi, Adams, and Nissen 2020).

Indigenous journalism performs typical societal roles related to self-determination, resistance against colonial oppression, and representational sovereignty. The Indigenous college students who created the radio show "A Hora do Xibé" in Brazil aimed to counter the hegemonic discourse that perpetuates stereotypes that Indigenous People are lazy, have too many privileges and are losing their culture. Those discourses misinterpret or straightforwardly deny Indigenous constitutional rights to their ancestral lands and culturally adequate access to education and health. The weekly program airs news about development policies that threaten Indigenous communities, and it also includes the

appreciation and dissemination of their ancestral knowledge, beliefs, myths, stories, cultures, and identities (Mota and Boaventura 2021). In Peru, the Wampís use radio not only as a tool for communication but also as a means to defend their rights, govern their territories, and sustain their cultures in the face of external pressures. Wampís radio broadcasts are pivotal for reinforcing community cohesion and promoting discussions on land rights, self-determination, and environmental preservation (Almeida 2022).

The objectives of Indigenous journalism within their communities are, at an abstract level, parallel to those of mainstream journalism in democratic societies. Kovach and Rosenstiel posit that "the primary purpose of journalism is to provide citizens with the information they need to be free and self-governing" (2021, 35–36). Nonetheless, the ways to pursue these roles differ, situating Kovach and Rosenstiel's roles in the Western epistemologies. The authors argue that contemporary journalism has four main roles: verifying the reliability of information (authenticator) in a networked world where audiences "have heard differing assertions about an event before they encounter a formal journalistic account." (2021, 50), contextualize events by synthesizing information and providing a broader perspective (sense maker); bear witness to events; and uncover wrongdoings (watchdog). Their definitions strive to keep Western traditions at the core of the field (formal journalism) and keep the reporter apart from the community as a witness, not a participant.

It is worth noting that, similar to Western journalism, many Indigenous news media functions as watchdogs, ensuring the accountability of leaders for the benefit of their wider community. However, Indigenous journalists may face ethical dilemmas and conflicts of interest when reporting controversial stories within their communities. Exposing deviance of power inside a community facing marginalization and prejudice is a challenging task that can reinforce stigmatization and erode what little public trust the community has built within society more broadly (Hanusch 2015; LaPoe and LaPoe 2017). Moreover, accountability for the impact of its work is an ethical value present in codes of journalistic conduct like the United States Society of Professional Journalism, which states that journalists need to "balance the public's need for information against potential harm or discomfort" (SPJ 2014). Similarly, the Global Charter of Ethics for Journalists of the International Federation of Journalists highlights that journalists "shall do their utmost to avoid facilitating the spread of discrimination on grounds such as geographical, social or ethnic origin, race, gender, sexual orientation, language, religion, disability, political and other opinions" (IFJ 2019).

Approach

Despite its theoretical commitment to speak to power and defend democracy, journalism is historically based on values that structure itself as a social institution (Vos 2013), and transform its discourse into slogans adopted by the whole society, such as the search for "truth" (Schudson 1978; Vos and Moore 2020). News based on the detached description of facts represents the hegemonic way of accessing the discussions established in the public space (Barnhurst and Nerone 2002). As a result, Western journalism "reifies power structures, social identities, and hierarchies" (Carlson et al. 2018, 9). In her research with Indigenous media producers from Australia, Canada, Finland, Sweden, and New Zealand, Elizabeth Burrows (2018) found that Indigenous media producers:

"Give voice to Indigenous People and perspectives, including those opposing dominant views and structures, and enhance democratic engagement and public sphere access. They are tools of decolonization and resistance, public relations mechanisms, strategic social movement aids, community hubs, and sources of essential information about health, treaties, fishing rights, education, and more. They inspire and support Indigenous youth; they protect, regenerate, and uphold Indigenous languages; and maintain family networks. Their producers cannot fulfill these functions from a detached, impartial position." (Burrows 2018, 1131)

Despite efforts to broaden perspectives, diversify sources, and be accountable for its impact on underrepresented and underprivileged communities, Western journalism is still attached to a practice that intends to reflect reality. It can go as far as to advocate for democracy but must refrain from advocating for solutions (Durhan 1998). Indigenous journalism, with its purpose of empowering Indigenous Peoples, approaches newsmaking to transform realities of oppression. This was the case in Bolívia, where community media, especially the radios in the Aymara language, contributed to the land reform and distribution in the 1950s and later the democratization of the state (Galán 2020).

Indigenous media also engage in a dynamic intercultural translation that connects Indigenous and non-Indigenous audiences. Platforms like the Brazilian Rádio Yandê integrate traditional oral storytelling with modern technology to preserve and communicate Indigenous realities, fostering a reciprocal exchange of cultural insights (Maldonado, Hãe, and Carneiro 2021). Similarly, radio initiatives in Bolivia empower Indigenous women to bridge communal narratives with broader societal discourses, reinforcing gender equity and political voice (Morán 2020). In Colombia, audiovisual projects by the Arhuaco highlight a dialogical approach, engaging non-Indigenous viewers through Indigenous cosmologies and environmental ethics (Ruiz 2020). These practices preserve Indigenous knowledge systems and promote a collaborative understanding that challenges hegemonic perspectives, emphasizing the adaptability and transformative potential of Indigenous communication.

Narrative

In the realm of narrative, Lara Guimarães (2019) offers valuable insights by exploring the contributions of shamanic perspectives from native cultures as tools for "translating worlds" within journalism. This approach reimagines how stories are constructed and communicated. Guimarães highlights five key elements for this transformation: (1) critically reflecting on how journalism translates the world through legitimized epistemologies, such as objectivity, and examining how shamanic practices facilitate shifts in perspective through trans-specific conversations; (2) understanding the modes of knowing inherent in Amerindian cosmology; (3) advocating for an ontological turn in journalism, inspired by the relational and perspectivist frameworks of Amerindian traditions; (4) constructing a theoretical foundation that integrates anthropology, communication, and journalism studies; and (5) providing tools for rethinking journalism's narrative practices, moving beyond viewing the "other" as peripheral.

After analyzing audiovisual production by Terena and Guarani Kaiowá People in Brazil, Corrêa (2017) suggests reinterpreting the "inverted pyramid" metaphor (Barnhurst and

Nerone 2002; Dicken-Garcia 1989; Schudson 1978) as a hegemonic structure in Western journalism.

There is no doubt that an adequate metaphor for journalism in crisis is far from a regular polygon in disequilibrium [inverted pyramid]. Even an irregular polygon composed of countless sides and countless diagonals, static in random and changing positions, would not answer the question. If one is needed to theorize journalism, the metaphor would certainly be much closer to an enormous, wide open oca [housing of Brazilian Indigenous peoples] (…) full of supports that sustain countless hammocks/networks[1] shared by anonymous, adorned, and naked Indigenous people (Corrêa 2017, 199, our translation).

Whereas Western journalism's narrative style is composed primarily of linear storytelling and codified structures as the inverted pyramid, Indigenous journalism employs narrative strategies rooted in oral traditions, cultural symbolism, and collective memory. These strategies include culturally appropriated storytelling resources, such as myths and traditional songs, often adapted to modern media formats like radio and video (Maldonado, Hãe, and Carneiro 2021; Ruiz 2020). They blend visual media with oral storytelling to articulate relational cosmologies and environmental ethics, inviting viewers into dialogues that bridge cultural divides (Ruiz 2020). These strategies are not merely tools for communication but also acts of cultural preservation, challenging dominant narratives and empowering Indigenous voices within and beyond their communities.

Organizational Structure

Western journalism is "largely monolithic, centered on profit-making, hierarchical organization and practice of journalism that, by the force of its routinization and codification as a profession, is implicitly exclusive" (Atton and Hamilton 2008, 78 on Downing, 1984s definition). The rigid hierarchical corporate structure of mainstream media influences what is considered real journalism. It might help explain the previously discussed limitations of Brohín and colleagues' review of Indigenous journalism studies, which fails to account for most Latin American experiences.

Indigenous media such as the Canadian Aboriginal Peoples Television Network (APTN), the Inuit Broadcasting Corporation's Qagik, the Sámi newspapers in Northern Europe, and the Yoububa newspapers in Nigeria bear some structural similarities to the Western models, which might make them more visible to researchers. However, they often rely on grassroots and community-based structures, with financial models that blend self-sufficiency, collaborative support, and external partnerships. They tend to operate with limited structures, and their organizational models are aligned with Indigenous community relations. For instance, Rádio Yandê in Brazil is structured to facilitate participation from a broad network of Indigenous communicators who collaboratively shape the programming, ensuring that diverse perspectives are represented while maintaining a focus on Indigenous autonomy and cultural expression (Maldonado, Hãe, and Carneiro 2021). Similarly, Indigenous radio networks in Bolivia, such as the Red Nacional de Pueblos Originarios, emphasize participatory governance (Morán 2020).

In terms of the financial model, most experiences of Indigenous news media arise from one of three factors: hard-won struggles to establish supportive state policies, the efforts of social movements and international cooperation, or initiatives by Indigenous

journalists and community leaders who sustain these media with their own resources. In Canada, broadcasting legislation in the 1980s and 1990s created the conditions to establish the Inuit Broadcasting Corporation and APTN (Budka 2015). In the United States, the Navajo Times was started by the Navajo Tribal Council, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and the Department of Education (LaPoe and LaPoe 2017). The Māori Television in New Zealand results from an extensive fight to push the government to uphold its responsibilities under the 1840 Tiriti o Waitangi/Treaty of Waitangi, ensuring the revitalization of the Māori language and culture (Smith 2015).

Philanthropic and international cooperation organizations have been supporting Indigenous media for decades. A Swiss-based media development organization funded the creation of three studios that broadcast content produced by Indigenous journalists in Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso (Heywood 2024). Catholic foundations fostered the creation of community radios in Bolivia (Morán 2020) and newspapers in Brazil (Kolling and Müller 2021). More recently, widespread access to digital technologies has enabled digital media such as Yandê radio, owned and maintained by Brazilian Indigenous journalists.

Resetting the Field Boundaries with Standpoint Journalism

A theoretical exercise like the one undertaken in this essay can be viewed as a form of boundary work, wherein we critically delineate the parameters of what constitutes journalism and, more specifically, Indigenous journalism. In the framework presented thus far, Indigenous journalism is viewed as a practice and an epistemology that challenges the boundaries of Western journalism to incorporate a diversity of experiences "from the peripheries and the depths" (Haraway 1988, 583). The literature on field boundaries tells us they exist to protect a field's autonomy, expulse deviants, and expand the field. It intersects with participants, practices, and professionalism to define what can be accepted (or not) as good journalism.

The first type of boundary work is the protection of autonomy, which journalism achieves through various practices. For instance, keeping out other informational participants, such as public relations and advertisers, helps journalism define acceptable practices (Carlson and Lewis 2015). However, it can also keep out practitioners who do not fit the Western prescriptions, such as Indigenous journalists in Latin America or elsewhere, who did not attend a formal journalism school. The second type of boundary work is expulsion, which separates professional journalism from deviant values, such as partisan news. This boundary alerts the profession to expel deviant actors and practices like plagiarism. Doing so separates professional journalism from what the mainstream considers unacceptable practices or deviant values (e.g., partisan news). But it tends also to keep out, or at least distant from its core, the non-mainstream types of journalism.

A third type of boundary work is expansion, a challenge to the limits of journalism's traditional practices that broaden its boundaries by including new practices and perspectives. Through this expansion boundary, journalism can broaden its perspectives and help challenge existing power structures. The expansion can occur by incorporating non-traditional journalists, adopting acceptable practices, and absorbing new media (Carlson and Lewis 2015). By looking at how Western and Indigenous journalism share similar values on a higher level of theoretical understanding but practice those values in different ways, we can argue that incorporating non-traditional journalists into the core

of the field is crucial. Such efforts are critical for boundary expansion, which diversifies and broadens journalism through boundary expansion. Moreover, the notion of "non-traditional" is often defined by hegemonic structures that dictate education and government policies, determining who holds power in journalism and what stories are told about communities, particularly historically marginalized ones.

We name things to position them within a specific place in the field. Thus, mainstream or Western journalism – two terms we have used interchangeably in this essay – occupies the field's core. Its values, roles, approaches, narrative styles, and organizational structures are often used as benchmarks to evaluate other types of journalism and determine their placement within the field, whether at the core, within its boundaries, or at its thresholds. Even though recent developments in the field have revisited the positivistic ideal of objectivity, coupling it with concepts like reflexivity, strong objectivity (Durham 1998), and transparency and accountability (Vos and Craft 2017), the illusion of an impersonal reporting of events persists at the core of mainstream journalism.

Feminist standpoint epistemology proposes that objectivity - be it reflexive, strong, or any other modifier we attach to it - should be viewed as the exercise of producing and situating knowledge in practice that "privileges contestation, deconstruction, passionate construction, webbed connections, and hope for the transformation of systems of knowledge and ways of seeing" (Haraway 1988, 585). Standpoint journalism leverages these principles to propose a practice that reconnects the journalists with their community and problematizes instead of purporting to eradicate bias, helping us to rethink the participants and practices in the field.

Standpoint epistemology recognizes the complexity and heterogeneity of social actors and the challenges of situating knowledges, best illustrated by Durhan's question, "How can social phenomena be best observed while taking into consideration the location of the observer?" (1998, 14). Haraway (1988) offers the idea of feminist objectivity, a redefined objectivity that incorporates responsibility, partiality, and the acknowledgment of the knower's position. She also states that "identity, including self-identity, does not produce science; critical positioning does" (Haraway 1988, 586).

It is to say that standpoint journalism does not translate into acknowledging the identity of the journalist reporting any given issue. Journalists must know that knowledge is always produced within specific contexts and locations. Thus, the standpoint reporter needs "to be able to decide on the validity of a knowledge claim regardless of who speaks it, while understanding that who speaks does have a bearing on what is made known." (Durham 1998, 18). Journalism is a knowledge profession, and as such, its mainstream practice, shaped by Western culture, favors individuality and the production of formal scientific knowledge. A journalism practice rooted in feminist standpoint epistemology recognizes that this is neither the only nor the most valid way of knowing, as illustrated by the Yanomami shaman and rainforest defender Davi Kopenawa (2013) when he explains the difference between his People and Western ways of knowing:

> "I did not learn to think about the things of the forest by setting my eyes on paper skins. I saw them for real by drinking my elders' breath of life with the yãkoana powder they gave me." (Kopenawa 2013, 23, italic in the original).

The Indigenous journalism practice, guided by values of transparency, ethnovision, and perspective, indicates a path for standpoint reporting that, if not honors, then at a

minimum, understands its community ties and allows "the emergence of news values such as solidarity and empathy" (Banjac 2024, 9).

Both Durham (1998) and Banjac (2024) recognize that mainstream news media corporate structures pose challenges for standpoint journalism. We can never forget that the news stories that reach the public in mainstream media outlets are also a product of organizational factors such as structures, roles, and policies, as well as extra media factors such as the economic environment, cultural and political values of the society where the outlet is placed (Shoemaker and Reese 1996). Even corporate efforts to increase the presence of women and Black journalists do not necessarily reflect more reflexive journalism, as corporate alignments and the core values of Western journalism influence newsroom culture.

Moving Forward

This essay aims to enrich the theoretical discussion of journalism values and norms by drawing from the feminist standpoint and Indigenous epistemologies. The intersection of feminist standpoint and Indigenous epistemologies provides a framework for reconceptualizing the core journalistic values to acknowledge the limitations of the situated knowledge produced in mainstream newsmaking. The five identified dimensions – values, roles, approaches, narratives, and organizational structures – serve as a lens for critiquing the limits of Western journalistic norms and expanding their theoretical horizons.

This essay contributes to future exploration of how Indigenous values could be applied within Western journalism practices by emphasizing its theoretical contributions. Moreover, despite recognizing the diversity of Indigenous journalisms, our analysis is restricted by the scope of available literature, as well as our perspective as non-Indigenous individuals, which limits a thorough examination of all relevant dimensions. This limitation points to opportunities for comparative analysis of Indigenous journalism across global contexts and collaborative, decolonizing methodologies. Studying the myriad of Indigenous journalism practices and forms can help the scholarly field of journalism acknowledge practices that fail to represent the diverse societies in which we live with respect and understanding.

Finally, we acknowledge the critiques made by Sigurjon Baldur Hafsteinsson, as cited in Budka (Budka 2015), that the predominant orientation of research on Indigenous media has largely failed to address questions raised by Indigenous Peoples themselves. Instead, much of this scholarship conceptualizes Indigenous media through a lens shaped by Western frameworks, sidelining the cultural, societal, and linguistic particularities inherent to Indigenous contexts. Furthering the research agenda of Indigenous journalism from a decolonizing perspective calls for collaborative methods, where Indigenous People are not participants but co-researchers who define research questions, data collection, and analysis.

Note

1. For a better understanding of the analogy, it is important to know that in Brazilian Portuguese, the words hammock and network are the same: rede.

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